Euphemism Trasnformation in the Context of Military Language

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Abstract. The article analyzes modern approaches to the interpretation of military euphemisms moreover understanding the difference between political correctness and hybrid war.

The article presents the study of the functioning of military-political euphemisms in modern English language on the example of war in Ukraine in the means of mass communication. Significance of the given research is stipulated by the vivid interest to the matters of euphemism, in the context of military terms, penetrated into all areas of activity, especially in mass media language style.

The results reflect the general state of achieving the goal and performing tasks in clarifying the concept of "euphemism", besides this determines the functional and pragmatic features of military-political euphemisms, linguistic means of countering the manipulation of the recipients' consciousness by using military-political euphemisms in the media space under the conditions of a hybrid war.

The article focuses on the importance of euphemism formation and its overcoming: an exposure of "language corruption" as one of the manipulation types, as well as, detection of the so-called "foreign meanings" in the war language.

The research deals with the theoretical background on the usage of military euphemisms not only in English-speaking media. Ukrainian example is taken into consideration. It fallows that there are differences between military euphemisms and other euphemisms.

Key words: military terms, euphemisms, political correctness, manipulation, hybrid war, roundabout expressions, interpretation.

Introduction. Linguistics of the 21st century is characterized by new directions, as well as the study of known phenomena in terms formation. Interest in the study of "language in action on the example of Ukrainian military euphemisms" brings to the problems of language functioning in society, various aspects of the use of language as a tool of human influence on communication, the study of ways reflecting language changes in public consciousness, terms development, the change of cultural and social values, in other words, the problems of actual use in the social and media context. In this regard, euphemisms are of considerable research interest, as they are a sensitive indicator of the cultural and social preferences of the language tradition of native speakers, record the traditional methods of substitution and register the most insignificant, immediate changes reflecting the peculiarities of public assessment of the phenomenon of reality.

Today in a globalized society the need for word substitutions while speaking on sensitive topics has increased. As a result, euphemisms are frequently used all over the world by speakers of various languages to soften the impact of concepts with the potential to cause offence and social disapproval. In this regard, euphemisms facilitate social discourse in a specific way by avoiding troublesome terms.

Aims. The given article is dedicated to consideration of military euphemisms used by the English language print media, politician speeches to describe various conflict-ridden actions in the course of military developments across the world. Our aim is to provide actionable insights for educators interested in the sphere of military euphemisms. The main of the work is to study the differences between the use of military and political euphemisms from other types of euphemisms and linguistic means of countering manipulation.

We are to analyze and search for milder alternatives to express opinions about war and death. Also it is important to find euphemistic expressions in military terminology and illustrate how language can be manipulated. We focus on value of certain words or ideas with the aim of masking or alleviating the violence that is an inevitable

part of military operations.

Significance of the given research is stipulated by the vivid interest to the matters of Euphemia penetrated into all areas of activity, especially in mass media language style. The aim of this paper is to examine the concept and the essence of euphemism and to reveal various military-political euphemisms widely used in press.

Objectives. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the use of euphemisms in a military context. It highlights how each side of the conflict uses language to promote their ideologies and demote the ideologies of others. But when we are talking about the war: is it polite to miss details of the real picture especially when war is in your country or tell the whole truth? I am going to analyze military euphemisms and correctness of using and transformation. The problem is Russia launched bombs and captured our territory as a result many people escaped from their homes, some don't have places for living, thousands were killed, wounded and got psychological trauma. All what happened is under one euphemism of Russian leader '*special military operation*'. In this context we can use euphemism '*correctional facility*' instead of jail or prison, the issue is what we want to read and hear and how people get used to it.

Literature Review. The concept of military language is a definition that is widely used today in the European and global communities. Many Ukrainian and foreign linguists study military language, such as O. Taranenko. To our mind there is a tendency to understand and overcome euphemisms in order to develop special terminology of war language. Tendency is possible to be defined as a certain counteraction to the "hybridization" of truth, which is more and more clearly evaluated today as a great danger (Taranenko, 2017).

H. G. Pocheptsov studied problem of informational influences on people and confrontations. Information plays new role and changes rules in business, politics and military sphere. It is the cheapest variant of aggression where is the problem to differentiate intentional from accidental (Pocheptsov, 2015).

L. Chik claims on that euphemisms conceal the true origin of a phenomenon, in order to create a positive or neutral meaning.

(Chik, 2015). Some have been studying linguistics, ideological and political euphemisms, the nature and mechanisms of the manipulative influence of mass media; semantic, functional and pragmatic characteristics of euphemisms are revealed in the dissertation of V.B. Velykoroda (Velykoroda, 2007).

Qi Pan suggests that euphemism (no matter military or business) is a common linguistic phenomenon, which is closely related to culture backgrounds, religious thoughts, life styles and country events, etc. The development of euphemism relies on the development of taboo words more or less (Qi Pan, 2013).

Research methods. The study used the observation method, aimed at identifying the terminology of military affairs in media texts, leader's speeches; the method of analysis and interpretation, which considered the specifics of manipulative influence on readers through military vocabulary; the descriptive method, followed by the method of sampling euphemisms from Anglophone as well as Ukrainian media. The results reflect the general state of military terms in speech or text, creates tension and manipulates the readers' minds, leads to associative meanings and representations associated with the war.

The purpose of using methods is to distract the recipient from the concept of prohibition. Worth noting that due to the amount of information that is available in modern society it complicates the positioning of language and critical evaluation, recipients are almost always unable to distinguish and understand a euphemism from the context (Chik, 2015: 122).

Results and Discussion. Language is usually manipulated to reflect the ideology of each conflicting side during wars. I'd like to mention that this takes place through many linguistic techniques, one is euphemism. Word derived from the Greek 'euphēmismos', which means "sounding good." According to A. Ivchenko "a word or phrase used instead of objectionable because it is unpleasant". (Ivchenko, 2002:120). The term 'euthymic' is a good state of mind and satisfaction, and it was interpreted as 'speaking words' that have a good omen, refraining from informing terrible destruction with sacrifices. In speeches and writing euphemisms used to

skirt around subjects that sound "bad"−taboo, embarrassing, sensitive topics−and include things like death, war, finance, and politics. The meaning of the euphemisms is a polite word or phrase that is used to avoid saying something embarrassing or offensive.

Euphemisms are characterized by a high sensitivity to historical changes. When war happens in separate area it has own euphemism for defense. '*Ethnic cleansing*' has become as the dominant euphemism used to deny genocide in Kosovo as '*military operation*' in Ukraine. Euphemized units are very unstable formations and quickly become obsolete; this is explained not only by the property of emotional vocabulary to be quickly erased, but also because as soon as a word becomes used it is again closely associated with the concept denoted and loses its euphemistic properties. Basically euphemism in different cultures shares the same psychological and linguistic pattern in formation. When a term has long been associated with the stimulus it causes, the word itself carries some characteristics of the stimulating subject. If some elements of the reaction are closely related with the word that describes them, people tend to substitute the word by a word, which does not have such negative associations.(Qi Pen,2013 :2108).

L. Kurahina notes that euphemisms are permanently used. An essential condition for the effectiveness of a euphemism is the presence of a "rough" or "unacceptable" equivalent. As soon as the unacceptable expression goes out of use, the euphemism loses its "positive" properties, as it becomes a "direct" name, and then requires a new substitution. (Kyrahina,2011: 210)

We consider the current functions and classifications of euphemisms in modern English. Euphemisms can be divided into personal ones, which relate to the life and personality of the speaker, addressee and third parties, and social ones, which relate to human relations with other people and society, with the authorities:

1. Personal: - some physiological processes and states (fried, pie-eyed); - certain parts of the body (loafer, bottom); - gender, sexuality and sex relationship (on the bus, wearing comfortable shoes, to go out with); - death and diseases (oil painting, other side, handicapped citizens).

2. Social: - politics (find Cook County - to be involved in fraud during elections); − repressive actions (sweep operation, cleaning); − state and military secrets (peacekeeping mission, air support); − military, police and authorities activity (military action, paddy wagon as a police vehicle); − business: distribution and service sector, education (vibrant area, verbally deficient − cannot read); − relations between different national and social groups, religions (go Dutch, West Briton); − some types of professions (cleaning lady, shipping manager) Thus, personal and social euphemisms can cover a variety of thematic groups of euphemisms.

The military euphemisms are secondly used nominative in the onomasiology (Biriukova, 2012: 20) and semantically classified as:

1. Metaphorical association, as the source of semantic change and the creation of new meanings: '*to buy a farm', 'the hawk', 'elite forces'* is a phenomenon commonly present within the semantic structure of polysemantic words in English. Flourish euphemisms like resettlement or special treatment were used to describe the death process in so-called '*bath houses'.*

2. Metonymic, involves a word or phrase substituting or standing in for another as '*Washington*', is typically a part of a larger whole*, 'new blood'*, '*boots on the ground'* is a phrase which generally refers to deployed members of the military and uses "boots" as a metonym for soldiers.

3. Oxymoron, when two opposite words are paired together in an ironic way, often for humorous effect: '*civil war', 'military intelligence', 'deafening silence', 'organized chaos'*, 'humane slaughter'. Military intelligence is contradictory word pair more ironic because we think of physical combat and mental intelligence as opposites.

4. Paraphrasing is to change the words in the original, while keeping the same meaning: '*combatant into militant or fighter'*, '*army doctrine - fundamental principles*' by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions.

5. Allusion is a reference to a well-known person, history, character, location, or event that makes it to deepen better understanding: '*game of thrones*' just disagreement among who will be the ruler of that empire; '*007*', '*5ᵗʰ Column', 'hare's hole',*

'Orcs', 'DNR', 'LNR'. Proprilalization is for the defining proper names as *Bill Jim* (Australian soldier), *Joe Ark* (English soldier), when a common noun becomes a proper name. (Velykoroda,2009:214)

Proceeding from the fact that language is an effective means of influencing conceptual constructions on the cognitive system of the recipient often with the aim of unconsciously imposing certain views, scholars use the term "ideological euphemisms". The use of ideological euphemisms in politics is aimed at achieving the approval of society through propaganda and imposition of favorable views to the dominant political regimes, as well as covering illegal actions against the people.

Thus, paraphrasing is typical to military euphemisms forming and causes compromise between sense and interests. Euphemistic renaming leads to "improvement" of the denotation, which is the main task of euphemism. We are to summarize various options for paraphrasing and identifies the following models:

- an amoral behavior – noble motive;

- adverse consequences - a valid reason;

- forcing - free choice;

- a violence - natural factor;

- a global nature of the problem - single nature of the problem;

- illegality of the action - legality of the action;

- loss for the object - benefit for the object of the action;

- responsibility from the 'I'- to 'they'

- intentional violation - accidental violation;

- a destruction of a person - destruction of an inanimate object;

The motivational basis for the use of all groups of military euphemisms (intention to convince the public in a military accuracy and justification of the use of such policy in the case of military-political euphemisms; desire to soften unpleasant messages, to convince the electorate or representatives of the opposition to hide political mistakes and mislead the recipient; achieving the approval of a certain organization by society through propaganda and imposition of views favorable to the ruling political parties to vail actions against people). That euphemisms can form a kind of code that distorts reality.

Nothing has changed, in George Orwell's classic 1946 essay "Politics and the English Language," he noted that his era's equivalents for "collateral damage" were "needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them." (Orwell). Obviously, not much has changed in the intervening eight decades. And this is, as Orwell intuited, a dangerous way to continue.

Not everyone is comfortable with 'death' and many of us like to dance around the truth. To my mind people have come up with a variety of ways to talk about death without ever mentioning the word. We'll say that someone *'gone over the rainbow bridge'*, *'departed'*, *'gone to heaven'*, *'passed away'*, *'sleep'* or *'kicked the bucket'*, *'he is no longer with us'* or *'bought the farm'*. All of these phrases are euphemisms, expressions that soften an unpleasant situation. Euphemisms also help criticize or satirize a delicate subject. Death euphemisms are actually euphemisms of fear: They base consciously or subconsciously on the idea that certain words are sacred or have the power to bring bad fortune once they are called by their right name; in keeping with the belief that to speak the word of death is to invite it. (Makovets, 2020:69). Due to that, the English language contains numerous superstition euphemisms related to dying, death, burial and the people, places and institutions which deal with death. Other superstition euphemisms are dealing with illness or with terrifying creatures like God, the devil, wizards or dangerous animals.

In terms of the word 'war' is the high frequency of using mild and somehow neutral euphemisms which don't refer to real war as 'work out steps to prevent a war in their region, often, used other terms repeatedly, such *as 'conflict', 'special operation', 'military operation', 'situation', 'crisis', 'tensions', 'issues', 'actions', 'move', 'step', 'intervention', 'confrontation', 'fight' and 'misunderstanding'.* (Holder, 2008). In fact, when we are analyzing the war in Ukraine previous euphemisms and more such as *'historical justice', 'Ukrainian crisis', 'gesture of good will', 'disorder'.* L. Shanaieva differentiates between two general types of euphemisms: positive ones that inflate and magnify, making the euphemized items seem altogether grander and more important than they really are" and negative ones that "deflate and diminish" in speeches and think that

phraseological units are fixed combinations of words that have a specific meaning that goes beyond the individual meanings of the words (Shanaieva-Tsymbal, 2023:130).

As an example, using euphemism can make an issue more comfortable for everyone involved. Politically correct language is also a way of writing or speaking that maximizes comfort and inclusion. Both are important tools for clear communication across social, religious, cultural, or political groups. The essential element in all sides of conflict is to justify and legitimize actions and attempting to convince the public that the side stands with moral values, such as peace, justice, and cooperation. For instance, the base form 'peace' is used many times in the analyzed articles, appearing in different forms (i.e., *comfort, peacemaker, order, peacefulness, stability, serenity in the region* etc.) and modifying different verbs and nouns to create an image that associates with the embracement of peace. The euphemistic phrase '*peacekeeping operations*' is frequently used for substitution to evade mentioning 'war.' Perhaps no military term has been more iconic or exploited in Ukraine than '*peacekeeping.*'

However, euphemism and political correctness are not the same thing. Politically correct language does not use figurative language, which purposely avoids the direct meaning of something. Instead, politically correct language is meant to express something in the most direct and respectful way possible.

Consequently, the term 'double-talk' refers to those euphemisms deliberately and frequently used by the government or the military in an attempt to confuse and conceal the truth. These euphemisms play down the degree of violence, objectivize the enemy as well as the means of warfare and can lead to social double-thinking by forming a kind of code that distorts reality. Thus, the term double-talk refers to euphemisms used e.g. by government or military in an attempt to confuse and conceal the truth. At this certain point, speakers and writers do not seek to avoid offense; they are deliberately using dishonest euphemisms in order to deceive their hearer and reader. As a consequence, such doubletalk is doubly dangerous and helps the users fool themselves.

No doubt that the public has become numb to the euphemisms that regularly accompany troops, drones, and operatives into imperial conflicts across many countries. Such euphemisms are meant to take the sting out of wars back home. We don't want to hear and know the real number of killed and injured. In this case, euphemisms help to ease stress or alleviate the pain of losses, such killed or injured in a war or accident are '*casualty*', '*loses*', '*bodies*'. Here are some phrases associated with a person who's been murdered '*they were done in*', '*got smoked*', '*they were dispatched*', '*rubbed out*'. (Holder, 2008). Many of these words and phrases are already so well-known and well-worn that no one thinks twice about them anymore. The horrible fact that we have got used to it. Killing is dramatic that's why euphemisms act as softer version.

Therefore, euphemisms were used to vail or conceal that war's bitter and brutal realities, over-the-top honorifics were assigned to embattled role in the world. Exceptional, indispensable, and greatest have been the three words most commonly used by presidents, politicians, and the gung-ho to describe this country. Russian leaders and officials—and the media that quotes them endlessly—employ euphemisms to cloak harsh realities of war in Ukraine, the more they ensure that such harshness will endure; indeed, that it is likely to grow harsher and more pernicious as we continue to settle into a world of euphemistic thinking. Instead of honest talk about war in all its ugliness and uncertainty, military professionals of our era have tended to substitute euphemisms in the context of buzz words, catchphrases, and acronyms.

I am keen on emphasizing the fact that euphemisms and snappy buzz words have a way of limiting genuine thinking on war. If we want to avoid wars in the nearest future instead of euphemism '*conflict*' professionals need to look more honestly at that phenomenon in all of its dimensions.

Thus it would obviously comprise classic examples like '*surge*', used in Ukrainian cities to obscure the way Russian government rushed extra troops into a battle zone in a moment of failure, only ensuring the extension of that failure, and the now-classic phrase shock and awe that obscured the reality of a '*massive air strike*', '*surgical strike*' instead of bombing attack by plane, using

precision, guided munitions or missiles that resulted in the deaths of dozens of civilians "*collateral damage*", but not the '*decapitation*' of a hated regime.

Terms can be frequently used in our mass media and implemented into society, that's why people don't pay attention to euphemisms because of everyday speaking, as an example; '*asymmetrical warfare*', '*the gray zone*' instead of real meaning of words and facts of occupied and seized territories. The "gray zone" is a fuzzy term used in military circles to describe the perplexing nature of lower-level conflicts, that don't qualify as full-fledged war.

Military euphemisms are dangerous in terms of their deceiving and manipulating double-function: People do not want to speak or hear words like assassinate, murder and kill but nevertheless, most of these military euphemisms attempt to play down the degree of violence that is being used in warfare in order to diminish people's awareness of this. Military routinely play down casualty figures because they are under increasing pressure from their superiors to minimize the perceived effects of the continuing attacks. Actually had been adopted in foreign newspapers over the last four years and were used in special contexts of war reporting.

Politicians are leaders in penetrating terms into mass media. To our study in the contemporary Ukrainian discourse, there is an attempt to develop special military terminology due to the war and express the most accurate description on painful issues that Ukrainian society is concerned about. This tendency can be defined as a certain counteraction to the "hybridization" of truth in Ukraine, which is increasingly clearly seen today as a great danger and threat to the national identity. (Taranenko, 2017:153).

In short, the dishonesty of the words which refers to military regularly wields illustrates the dishonesty of its never-ending wars. After so many years of failure and frustration, of wars that aren't won and

terrorist movements that only seem to spread as its leaders are knocked off, isn't it past time to ditch phrases like '*collateral damage*,' 'enemy noncombatant', '*no-fly zone*' (or even worse, "*safe zone*"), and '*surgical strike*' (Holder, 2008) and adopt a language, however grim, that accurately describes the military realities of this era. Governments could tell the shocking and awful truth about wars but I'm not sure that people want to hear and they will try to protect themselves.

Conclusions. It is worth mentioning, military euphemisms will exist and have be transforming due to wars. Nonetheless, it remains a fact of linguistic life that most euphemistic expressions deteriorate over time and often spectacularly. To our research there is a tendency to increase number of military euphemisms in a language of war, especially in political discuss and mass media. The Artificial Intelligence has chosen the Word of the year, according to the Cambridge Dictionary is '*hallucinate*'. The meaning of the word is to give untrue information. To our mind this is new military euphemism could be used in most speeches and mass media. Euphemism is a kind of effective language form used in communication, which aimed to produce reasonable communicative effect, especially in hiding true information or some actions done covertly.

The rapid development of information and communication technologies and media systems in modern society requires accurate use. While bearing the consequences of the historical crime in mind, one could almost think that we have learned our lesson during the twentieth century; the lesson that words need to serve the purpose of honest communication. But in fact, this consciously manipulation of language is still practiced today, with the result that euphemisms are still used to hide the truth and are therefore means of deceiving people.

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Трансформації евфемізмів у контексті воєнної мови
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Анотація. У статті подано результати досліджень воєнних евфемізмів та передумов виникнення явища евфемізації в англійській мові. Евфемізми особливо актуальні у зв'язку з війною в Україні та розглянуто адаптацію їх у суспільстві.

У статті проаналізовано сучасні підходи до інтерпретації військових евфемізмів, а також розуміння різниці між політкоректністю та гібридною війною. Представлено дослідження функціонування військово-політичних евфемізмів у сучасній англійській мові на прикладі війни в Україні в засобах масової комунікації. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена жвавим інтересом до питань евфемізації, в контексті військової термінології, що проникла в усі сфери діяльності, особливо

в стиль мови засобів масової комунікації.

Отримані результати відображають загальний стан досягнення мети та виконання завдань щодо уточнення поняття "воєнні евфемізми", крім того, визначено функціонально-прагматичні особливості військово-політичних евфемізмів, мовні засоби протидії маніпулюванню свідомістю реципієнтів за допомогою військово-політичних евфемізмів як у дискурсі політиків, так і в мові військових.

У дослідженні використано різні методи через призму лінгвістичного та історичного розвитку: спостереження, що допомогло вивчити евфемізми як спосіб комунікації; описовий метод; метод порівняння, що допоміг класифікувати евфемізми, а також методи аналізу та синтезу використано задля відокремлення та угрупування знайденої інформації. Як особлива частина словотворення, евфемізми є цінним джерелом лінгвістичних досліджень у різноманітних аспектах.

Установлено, що чинне використання евфемізмів спричинено ймовірніше позамовними чинниками: відвернути увагу від негативних подій, фактів, явищ, процесів; бажанням привернути увагу та уникати комунікативних конфліктів; замаскувати, або перекручувати неприємну правду; намаганням нав'язати власну точку зору, створити певний стилістичний ефект, а також пом'якшити негативні асоціації; спотворювати, викривляти факти; вводити в оману, створити фальшиву дійсність, цілеспрямовано впливати на громадську думку, керувати поведінкою реципієнта тощо.

У статті акцентується увага на складності перекладу та розумінні, інтерпретації воєнної термінології, тим паче евфемізмів. Надається загальна характеристика використання евфемізмів у контексті воєнних конфліктів. Особлива увага приділяється психологічному аспекту використання евфемізмів, що не в останню чергу обумовило виникнення явища політкоректності.

Ключові слова: військові терміни, евфемізми, політкоректність, маніпуляції, гібридна війна, обхідні вирази, особливості інтерпретації.