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THE POWER OF LEXICON IN SHAPING MILITARY NARRATIVE

ЛЕКСИЧНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ФОРМУВАННЯ ВІЙСЬКОВОГО НАРАТИВУ

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The article dwells on the role of military lexicon as a significant component in the development of character portraying, and the overall aesthetic and semantic structure of military-themed fiction. The material for analysis is based on Heart of War, a novel by contemporary American writer and military journalist Luciano Truscott, which reflects the peculiarities of military-legal discourse in literary form. The study examines how various types of military vocabulary – terminology, abbreviations, jargon, and euphemisms – perform not only nominative but also stylistic, psychological, pragmatic, and sociocultural functions. Special attention is paid to the integration of these lexical elements into the narrative structure, their influence on the pace and logic of plot development, and their role in shaping the linguistic portraits of the characters.

The analysis demonstrates that military terminology in the novel is not merely a background element or a tool for creating a realistic setting – It becomes a full-fledged artistic instrument through which the author constructs the atmosphere, sets the rhythm of narration, defines the characters' value systems, and highlights the conflict between the institutional logic of military and the individual's moral stance. The use of military slang and abbreviations enhances the authenticity of dialogues, reveals the characters' affiliation with military subculture, as well as their emotional states, experience, and professional roles. Euphemisms, on the other hand, emphasize the detachment of military bureaucracy from the real consequences of warfare, underscore the psychological transformation of speech in wartime conditions, and serve as a means of implicit criticism of the system.

The methodological framework of the research is grounded in the principles of linguistic-stylistic and discourse analysis, which allow for the identification of both structural and functional characteristics of military vocabulary within the literary text. Elements of pragmatic linguistics are also applied, offering a deeper understanding of how the military lexicon shapes the reader's perception of the novel's moral and ideological content.

The article argues that military vocabulary in fiction serves not only as a mirror of reality but also as a powerful ideological tool, shaping a critical perspective on military events, bureaucratic mechanisms, and ethical dilemmas. Through linguistic means, the author creates a complex, multilayered structure of communication, where words function as markers of professional identity, inner conflict, personal transformation, and worldview

evolution. Thus, military vocabulary in *Heart of War* emerges as a powerful device for artistic modeling of conflict that intertwines the institutional, personal, and social dimensions of war.

Key words: military lexicon, text of fiction, narrative, discourse, stylistics.

Стаття зосереджується на ролі характеристики персонажів та формування загальної естетичної і змістової структури художнього твору військової тематики. Матеріалом для аналізу обрано роман сучасного американського письменника і військового оглядача Лучіано Траскотта «*Heart of War*», який репрезентує специфіку військово-юридичного дискурсу у художній формі. У роботі розглядається, яким чином різні типи військової лексики – терміни, аббревіатури, жаргонізми, евфемізми – виконують не лише номінативну, а й стилістичну, психологічну, прагматичну та соціокультурну функції. Особливу увагу приділено способам інтеграції цих лексичних елементів у загальну структуру нарративу, їхньому впливу на темп і логіку розвитку сюжету, а також на формування мовного портрету персонажів.

Аналіз показує, що військова термінологія у творі не є суто фоновим елементом чи засобом створення реалістичного антуражу – вона стає повноцінним художнім інструментом, за допомогою якого автор формує атмосферу роману, задає ритм оповіді, вибудовує ієрархію цінностей персонажів та підкреслює конфлікт між інституційною логікою війни й моральною позицією індивіда. Використання жаргону і аббревіатур сприяє автентичності діалогів, демонструє приналежність героїв до військової субкультури, їхній досвід, емоційний стан та професійні ролі. Евфемізми ж, навпаки, підкреслюють відсторонення військової бюрократії від реальних наслідків бойових дій, акцентують на психологічній трансформації мовлення в умовах війни та слугують засобом прихованої критики системи.

Методологічною основою дослідження є принципи лінгвостилістичного та дискурсивного аналізу, які дозволяють виявити як структурні, так і функціональні характеристики військової лексики в межах художнього тексту. Застосовано також елементи прагмалінгвістичного підходу, що сприяє глибшому розумінню того, як мова війни впливає на сприйняття читачем морального та ідеологічного змісту твору.

Стаття доводить, що військова лексика в художньому тексті не лише слугує дзеркалом реалій, але й виконує важливу ідеологічну функцію, формуючи критичне осмислення воєнних подій, бюрократичних механізмів та етичних дилем. Через мовні засоби автор створює складну багаторівневу структуру комунікації, де слова стають маркерами не лише професійної належності, а й внутрішньої кризи, трансформацій особистості та еволюції світогляду героїв. Таким чином, військова лексика у романі *Heart of War* виступає як потужний засіб художнього моделювання конфлікту, що поєднує інституційні, особистісні та соціальні виміри військової реальності.

Ключові слова: військова лексика, художній текст, військовий роман, наратив, дискурс, стилістика.

I. INTRODUCTION

Military vocabulary, despite the wide interest of linguists, is still not exhaustively covered in linguistic theory and practice. Studies of military language have mostly focused on the terminological aspect, in particular in the context of military documentation, command language, instructions, protocols and professional communication in the armed forces (Crystal, 2003; Fussel, 1975; Lerner, 2013; Lytovchenko, 2019; Myking & Guttormsen, 2010; Ozymai et al, 2020; Shainer et al, 2022; Yermolenko, 2014). However, military-themed fiction remains less researched in terms of the impact of military vocabulary on the artistic structure of the text, plot dynamics, and characterization.

Among the issues to be resolved are, on the one hand, determining the boundaries of the lexical layer that can be qualified as military vocabulary, and, on the other hand, substantiating the criteria for its classification. Military vocabulary includes numerous elements of military jargon, abbreviations, euphemisms, metaphors and idiomatic expressions that arise in the military environment and often have a semiotic load associated with the cultural codes of military life (Allan & Burridge, 2006; Fussell, 1975).

Of particular importance is the distinction between military terminology itself - as a system of officially established designations - and the broader corpus of military vocabulary, which includes expressive, emotionally coloured, situationally determined linguistic units (Lerner, 2013). Accordingly, the researcher needs to have methodological tools to recognize and classify such lexemes, taking into account their function, origin, level of stability and degree of formality.

In addition, it is important to analyse the structure of lexical items included in the military lexicon, to determine their semantic load and stylistic framing. The semantics of military vocabulary often reveals a multilayered structure, combining nominative precision with emotional tension or irony inherent in military jargon (Hughes, 2006). The stylistic framing of these units can influence the overall tone of the narrative, the shades of the author's assessment or the psychological atmosphere of the text (Bondarenko, 2002; Leech & Short, 2007; Tupytsia, 2018).

The issue of the influence of military vocabulary on the development of the storyline in a work of fiction is of particular relevance. Its functional load goes far beyond the description of the subject world of war - it serves as a tool for immersing the reader in a specific environment, forms an authentic atmosphere, increases the tension of the conflict, reveals the inner world of the characters, their social status, experience, and the level of adaptation to the conditions of war (Simpson, 1993; Stockwell, 2002). Thus, the study of military vocabulary in a work of fiction opens up prospects not only for linguistic but also for literary and cultural analysis.

The vocabulary is traditionally regarded as one of the most important resources of the author's intention, a means of reflecting socio-cultural reality, a tool for structuring the figurative system of the text. It is through the analysis of lexical units, their semantics, stylistic characteristics and functions in a text that researchers gain access to the deeper meanings of a work of fiction, the peculiarities of the linguistic world picture formed by the author. In this approach, vocabulary is not only a subject of description, but also an object of functional and communicative analysis, which allows us to study how the word 'works' within the artistic structure.

The study of lexical composition in a literary text is in the focus of scientific interests of both domestic and foreign scholars. In particular, at the level of word semantics, the emphasis is placed on identifying the peculiarities of polysemy, semantic derivation, and interaction of lexemes within thematic groups (Boyko, 2011, 2018, 2020; Khomych, 2015; Lyons, 1995). In the field of pragmatics and pragmatic linguistics, we are talking about the study of the communicative orientation of lexical units, their emotional colouring, and the speech acts in which they are implemented (Bekhta, 2020; Shainer, 2016, 2019).

One of the most important areas of modern lexicology is the study of specialised vocabulary, in particular military vocabulary in a literary text. Military vocabulary as a separate lexical and semantic group is characterised by dynamism, constant activation of new units, and a high degree of expressiveness. It includes both highly specialised terminology (e.g. *court-martial*, *AWOL*, *ROE*) and emotionally marked units that arise within military jargon (*grunt*, *jarhead*, *brass*), abbreviations and euphemisms that reflect the socio-cultural context of the army environment (Allan & Burridge, 2006; Hughes, 2006; Lerner, 2013).

Of particular interest is the functioning of military vocabulary in a literary text, since it is there that it realises not only nominative but also stylistic, ideological and psychological functions. It is these functions that allow military vocabulary to influence the plot dynamics, narrative structure,

characterisation and the overall ideological message of the work (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 1993).

The purpose of this article is to clarify the functions and role of military lexicon in the novel *Heart of War* by Luciano K. Truscott IV as one of the factors shaping the narrative, ideological background and description of the characters. The methodological basis of the study is a linguistic and stylistic analysis, taking into account the semantic, pragmatic and discursive levels. This comprehensive approach allows us to trace how military vocabulary functions not only as a means of conveying military themes, but also as a full-fledged artistic tool that forms the structure of the work.

The choice of the novel *Heart of War* is not accidental. Luciano King Truscott IV is an American journalist, writer and military analyst with deep personal experience of serving in the US Armed Forces. He was born into a family with rich military traditions: his father was a colonel, his grandfather was a general, and his ancestor was Thomas Jefferson himself. Thus, the author is well aware of the internal structure of the army, and this is reflected in the authenticity of the use of military vocabulary in the novel.

Heart of War is not just a military novel, but a deeply social text that exposes bureaucracy, corruption, and careerism in the military environment and political establishment. The central character is Major Kara Guidry, a top lawyer in the Judge Advocate General's office who faces systemic challenges in the military justice system. Her speech, as well as the language of the narrative, is full of legal and military terminology, which creates an impression of complete authenticity of the events described. Vocabulary plays a key role in constructing the characters' images, especially in reflecting the moral and ideological conflicts in which they are involved.

The military lexicon in Truscott's novel acquires a symbolic meaning – it not only describes reality, but also shapes it. For example, the use of euphemisms to describe military operations or legal mishaps in the army helps to create an atmosphere of tension, irony, or hidden protest. At the same time, slang vocabulary serves as a means of reflecting the social hierarchy within the military team. Thus, in the novel *Heart of War*, military vocabulary goes beyond a simple informational function and turns into one of the key stylistic means of shaping the artistic space of the work.

Research methods. To analyse the military vocabulary in Luciano Truscott's novel *Heart of War*, a set of methods combining traditional linguistic approaches with elements of modern discourse analysis was used. This multidisciplinary approach allowed not only to identify the relevant lexical units, but also to study their functional and stylistic role in the literary text.

The first stage of the study was the application of the method of continuous sampling of lexical items on military topics and pertaining to them from the full text of the novel. This allowed us to form an empirical basis for further analysis. The sample includes both highly specialised terms and jargon, abbreviations, and euphemisms that function within military or close to military discourse (Allan & Burridge, 2006; Gee, 2014; Holovashchenko, 2015; Holovashchenko, 2021; Hughes, 2006).

At the second stage, the structural method was used to analyse the internal organisation of lexical units. In particular, the method of analysing dictionary definitions (Jackson & Amvela, 2000) was used, which made it possible to trace the development of the meaning of the relevant words in English dictionaries, such as Merriam-Webster or Oxford English Dictionary (Merriam-Webster's Advanced Learner's English Dictionary, 2016; Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2023). This made it possible to determine the evolution of meaning, the degree of terminological stability and the potential polysemy of the lexemes.

Further analysis included the distributional method, which involves the study of the contextual environment of lexical items in a literary text (Mosinyan et al. 2020; Sukhorolska et al., 2009). This method helped to identify frequency combinations, typical syntactic positions and stylistic devices in which military vocabulary functions. This type of analysis is especially important when working with jargon and slang, where the meaning of a word often depends on the context.

Particular attention is paid to component analysis, which allows to split the meaning of a lexical unit into separate semantic components (Nida, 1975; Sukhorolska et al., 2009). This made it possible to identify key features that define terms as military or related to the military sphere.

The key to the study was linguistic and stylistic analysis, which takes into account the stylistic load of lexemes, their expressiveness, connotations, and the rhythmic melody of the characters' speech (Leech & Short, 2007). In the context of the novel *Heart of War*, this allowed us to consider vocabulary as an element of describing the characters, a means of creating an atmosphere of tension or drama.

At the final stage, discourse analysis was applied, focused on the interpretation of characters' speech in the communicative dimension (Gee, 2014). This method made it possible to study how military vocabulary functions within character speech, what social roles it represents, how hierarchies, conflicts, and social relations between characters are formed through linguistic content. It is especially important to take into account the gender aspect in the speech of the protagonist, military lawyer Kara Guidry, who uses a combination of legal and military terminology, often in combination with elements of official business style.

In general, the proposed set of methods made it possible to analyse the military vocabulary of the novel from different points of view – semantic, functional, and socio-cultural, which ensured the depth and multidimensionality of the results obtained.

II. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The plot of the novel under analysis envisages the problems of corrupted system both in the army and the political circles of top power. The issues tackled in the novel range from crime, imperfect judicial system, gender discrimination to lust of power and careerism. This results in the fact that the lexicon of the novel *Heart of War*, besides that of general use, is basically centered around some certain topics, namely: military, judicial, medical, etc., each being subdivided into smaller fractions (See Fig. 1).

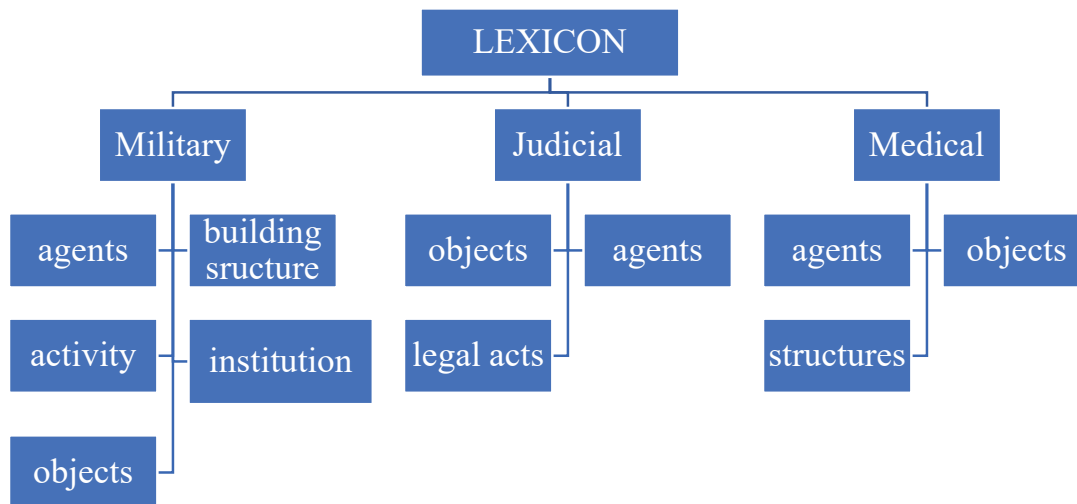


Fig.1 The Stratification of Lexicon (*HEART OF WAR* by Luciano K. Truscott IV)

The military lexicon refers to military ranks, weapons, commands, vehicles, aircraft, army structure, military institutions, military premises, military uniform and decorations, etc.

Military rank is an important part of a military life and in the novel we can observe abundant usage of various military ranks:

*"Another five miles passe before he asked her what military **rank** she was."* (p. 13).

(From here and further on the examples are taken from the *Heart of War* – V.B.)

Throughout the book we can come across almost all ranks possible that can be found in the US Army:

*"I'm a **sergeant**. You're a **major**..."* (p. 14).

*"You see me as a **lieutenant**?"* (ibid.)

"Seven officers were empaneled, all of them senior to Randy, serving on the Army's version of a jury: Two **colonels**, three **lieutenant colonels**, and two **majors**." (p. 365).

Here there are some more examples of the ranks used in the US Army: **general** (*"He turned to General King"* p. 229), **corporal** (*"Ma'am, this is Corporal Radley"* p. 222), **captain**, **major** (*"Major, it's Captain Taylor..."* p. 27), **brigadier general** (*"The guy who pinned on your stars when you were promoted to brigadier general?"* p. 82), etc.:

*"You can tell a lot about a **general** from the solar system of **aides** who are in perpetual orbit around him wherever he goes. Deputies, usually **brigadier generals**, are the planetary ring closest to the **general's** sun. Lesser bodies orbit farther away – a couple of **colonels**, a moon ring of **majors**, an asteroid cloud of **captains**, and in far space perhaps even a frightened **lieutenant** or two, floating out there like space debris in the command cosmos."* (p. 54).

Military ranks may be viewed as a part of military terminology which brings authenticity to the narrative as a result of its extensive use in the novel. The same goes for the military positions the officers take in the US Army (*"squad leader"* p. 37; *"platoon leader"* p. 42; *"company commander"*, p. 19; *"batallion commander"*, p. 143; *"commanding general"*, p. 18; *"Chief of Staff of the United States Army"*, p. 19), etc.

Another distinctive feature of military lexicon in the novel is the usage of lexical units to designate buildings (*"officers club"*, p. 27; *"headquarters building"*, p. 53; *"barracks"*, p. 23); premises (*"guardhouse"*, p. 45; *"rifle range"*, p. 25; *"firing range"*, p. 47; *"airfield"*, p. 27; *"parade field"*, p. 60; *"helicopter pad"*; *"chopper pad"*; *"motor pools"*, p. 18); vehicles (*"staff car"*, *"Humvee"*, p. 61; *"Bradley fighting vehicles"*, p. 126); aircraft (*"C-130"*, p. 216; *"UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter"*, p. 55), uniform (*"dress blues"*, p. 28; *"battle dress uniform"*, p. 235; *"Class-A uniform"*, p. 316), etc.

These lexical units may be called static as they designate objects and some agents of the narrative, but there is a large layer of military-themed vocabulary dealing with action (*"reveille run"*, p. 40; *"run the confidence course"*, p. 24; *"to dislodge General King"*, p. 198; *"fire-and maneuver exercise"*, p. 54), etc. These lexical units may be called dynamic and they indicate to various types of actions undertaken and are widely used throughout the narration creating the atmosphere of the Army functioning.

A special group forms lexical units naming the training military institutions. The author himself graduated from the well-known and privileged military academy West Point, which in the text is often referred to as *the Point* in a colloquial way:

*"Randy, I learned the same things you learned at **the Point**, but that doesn't stop us from loving each other, does it?"* (p. 83).

The author shows vividly the way cadets are trained in the academy. All the cadets are divided into four classes: the first-year cadets are called Freshmen aka Plebes, cadets in their second year are known as sophomores aka Yearlings or Yukes, then come Juniors aka Cows, and, finally, in the fourth year they are Seniors aka Firsties (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024). This is very important information for a reader to understand the military-themed narrative:

"It was the summer of her firstie year at West Point." (p. 40).

And then the author gives a picture of activities typical for this military institution:

*"During the final week of **combat training**, she put her **platoon** through five days of **Recondo School**, run by the 101st Airborne Division at a temporary camp another ten miles out in the boonies."*

Hand-to-hand combat, night patrolling, helicopter assaults, night attacks through a swamp – Recondo School was a grueling course that stretched the yearlings tight as a guitar strings” (p. 41).

Here, it should be noted that Recondo School (acronym from RECONnaissance commanDO) is a military school of specialized infantry training. There are also other schools mentioned in the novel, such as Airborne School, Infantry School, etc.

The military lexicon in the novel is also characterized by linguocultural peculiarities, i.e. the features peculiar for a specific ethnical culture which should not be ignored by a reader to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the narrative. For instance, the rank system in the US Army for non-commissioned officers includes: master sergeant (pay grade E-7), sergeant first class (pay grade E-6), squad leader sergeant (pay grade E-5), assistant squad leader, corporal (pay grade E-4). Besides, even these ranks may be differentiated by the responsibilities these people perform: staff sergeant, command sergeant major, specialists, and so on (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024):

*“Pay close attention to the **command sergeant major**”* (p. 54).

Sometimes these military may be referred to as Spec with only difference that these specialists are not non-commissioned officers and perform technical or skilled tasks in their military occupational specialty:

*“The doors opened again, and a **spec-4** appeared with a stack of hospital blankets”* (p. 34).

The judicial layer in the novel vocabulary is represented by actors of the narrative (agents), such as Staff Judge Advocate (p. 115; 322), Judge Advocate General’s (p. 116), prosecutor (p. 116), counselor (p. 312), attorney (p. 48), etc.:

*“That’s all you needed to know about the **staff judge advocate**...”* (p. 115).

*“Even though you’ve only been a **JAG** for less than a year, you’re already turning some heads.”* (p. 116). [**JAG – Judge Advocate General’s – V.B.**].

This layer is also characterized by extensive use of legislative acts, codes, laws, articles, rules, etc. (objects):

*“Your Honor, **Rule 703** states that I can call any reasonable witness for the defense...”* (p. 407).

*“The hell with **Article 134**. He was worth it”* (p. 15).

*“Charge One. Violation of **Article 118** of the **United States Code of Military Justice**, sub-paragraph D, felony murder.”* (p. 367).

And, finally, the judicial vocabulary is completed with all sorts of law institutions like staff judge advocate’s office (p. 115), court (p. 85), Court of Military Appeals (p. 408) etc.

The medical part of the novel’s vocabulary is also important for the plot as it gives a deeper insight into the issues of the crimes committed. This part includes agents (doctor, nurse, medics, etc.), objects (stretcher, gurney, suture, needle, stethoscope, etc.), and structures (hospital, morgue, waiting room, emergency room, etc.):

*“He was in a **hospital** on a **gurney**”* (p. 223).

*“He felt a **needle** and then he felt the warm rush of whole blood flowing into his **vein**”* (Ibidi).

The vocabulary of the military-themed novel under study is predetermined by the complexity of lexical units in their word-formation characteristics. The major word-formative types of the vocabulary of the novel under study are presented in Fig. 2.

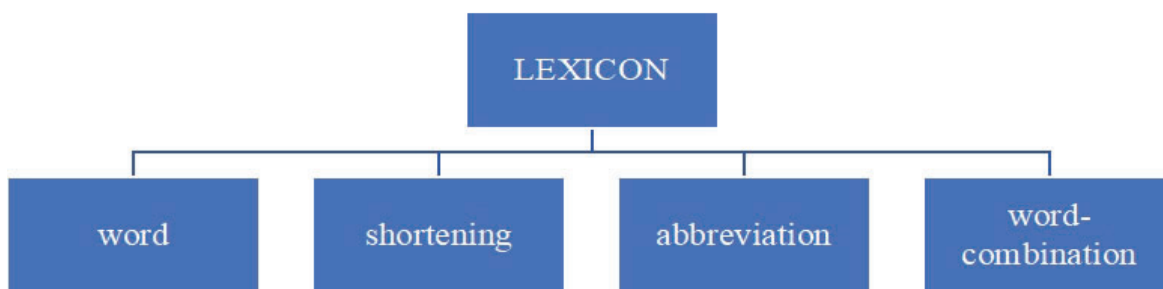


Fig. 2. Word-Formative Types in a Text of Fiction

Both derivative and non-derivative words serve to nominate the major notions and ideas of the novel's lexicon shaping the plot of the narrative (barracks, platoon, company, army, rank, stretcher, medics, prosecutor, etc.). Many complex notions including versatile characteristics are to be determined by word combinations (parade field, mess hall, motor pools, rifle range, staff car, etc.). But the dominant feature of the lexicon under study is an ample use of all sorts of shortening including abbreviations and acronyms (op-ed, Sec Def, MP car, BOQ, CO, XO, military ID, etc.). This may be accounted for the fact of realization of the law of language economy, on the one hand, and the influence of the style on the narration, making it more colloquial and natural:

"There were a couple of small scars on his chest and stomach, where splinters of wood penetrated his **BDU's** and left their marks" (p. 235).

"Why don't we get together for a D-3 **company** reunion" (p. 39).

"The blades of a big **UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter** were beginning to turn as **General Bernard King** neared **the chopper pad**" (p. 55).

"Ed's uniform jacket was hanging on a jacket stand, the stars on his epaulets gleaming in the dim light" (p. 146).

"Somebody from Fort Leavenworth is coming to meet us with the report on **Training and Doctrine from the TRADOC Analysis Center at the Command and General Staff College**" (p. 147).

Stylistically, the vocabulary of the novel may be distributed into two large groups including business and official style when it deals with military or judicial lexicon while discussing serious matters and colloquial style when the main characters communicate on an everyday, casual basis. Very often the colloquial style is enriched with slang, thus giving the speech of the characters of the narration additional expressivity (See Fig. 3).

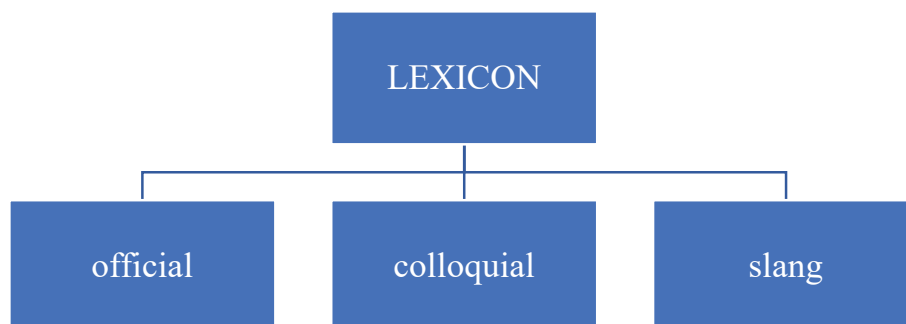


Fig. 3. Stylistic Peculiarities in a Text of Fiction

The stylistic peculiarities of the novel are first and foremost aimed at revealing not only the events described as such, but at portraying the inner world of the characters, exposing social conflicts and various problematic issues, such as sex discrimination, careerism etc.

The official style is basically used to reconstruct either military or judicial atmosphere of solemnity, formality:

“**Bradley fighting vehicles from the 24th Infantry** lined the drive to the officers club, headlights on, **a squad** standing at attention **in full field gear** next to each **track**” (p. 126).

“Bernie, your men hit the line of departure **at zero-two-hundred**” (p. 209).

“**Captain** Randy Taylor was standing at the coffee maker at **0700** when he looked out the window and saw a group leaving **the Fifth Army Headquarters** across the way” (p. 53).

An ample usage of military terminology adds up to creating military atmosphere of the novel. In the abovementioned examples we can see along with terminological units the way the soldiers refer to the time.

Sometimes literary or bookish style is employed by the author to depict the scenes, the characters, or historical events:

“Outside, the sky over the French Quarter had turned a strange ocher color, flooding the room with yellowish light” (p. 235).

“She stood, and **the water parted as she walked regally** to her husband’s side” (p. 131).

The social conflicts, such as inequality in the Army, may also be rendered with colloquial style in the novel:

“The men who **ran** the Army did **whatever the hell they wanted**, and were answerable only to each other” (p. 51).

The judicial discourse is represented by official style, especially when it concerns court procedures:

“Sir, **under the rules of evidence, I was permitted to question** Major Hollaway only about those subjects which the prosecution brought up during its case” (p. 390).

Still, the colloquial style intermingled with slang is dominant in reflection military environment, bringing emotionality to the narration:

“They **choppered** him straight to the hospital, ma’am” (p. 222).

“Everything that we’ve worked for will **go down in flames**” (p. 288).

“Jesus. It’s late. **I’ve got to get going**” (p. 301).

“**I owe you one**” (p. 129).

“It’s real **hush-hush**. The whole thing’s supposed to look like a regular **alert** till they **hit the field**, then they’re going **to pull the trigger** and give them **ops orders** and **turn ‘em loose**. Not even the **General** knew it was coming. He’s going out of his mind” (p. 193).

Many colloquial style expressions may include shortening or abbreviations:

“Frank, this thing is a frame that **fits my guy to a T**” (p. 339).

“I talked to the colonel in charge of **the ROTC program**” (p. 172).

“**I’ll get you a ride.**”

“I’ve got my **POV**” (p. 216).

“How are things on **the E-ring?**” (p. 78).

To understand these abbreviations a reader will have to consult reference sources, such dictionaries or encyclopedias (Oxford Dictionary, Merriam – Webster’s Dictionary, Encyclopedia Britanica). Only then it is clear that the expression “to fit to a T” means to “fit precisely”, which, obviously, is the evidence that T once stood for “a tittle” – the smallest mark like a dot on an “i”. With this knowledge a reader can easily grasp the meaning of the expression. Other abbreviations like ROTC are military terms (Reserve Officers Training Corps), POV (privately owned vehicle as opposed to a staff car or any military vehicle). The E-ring in the last example may be called a pseudo-abbreviation as the letter E cannot be decoded and implies rather only succession of something (cf. D-3 company (p.39)). In this case E-ring means the most privileged part of the Pentagon out of other five numbered with appropriate letter (A, B, C, D), where top officers are located.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The research shows that lexicon may be viewed as an effective tool in shaping narration. So, this brief summary of the lexicon used in the novel *Heart of War* brings us to certain conclusions.

First, the vocabulary of the narration is multilayered and include various lexical units belonging to the thematic problems raised in the novel, such as military issues, judicial procedures, medical terminology alongside with the vocabulary of general use.

Secondly, the complexity of lexical unit's structure varies from non-derived words to derived, compound words and word-combinations. Shortening, abbreviations and acronyms play tangible role in creating the lexical content of the narration and are the tools of characterization of the protagonists of the work of fiction.

Thirdly, the stylistic aspect of the vocabulary of the novel is important for the recreation of the atmosphere of the plot, on the one hand, and is a tool of describing the main characters and events.

The perspectives of further research we see in considering cognitive aspects of the vocabulary versus the plot development and text comprehension. Lexical items may be considered from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, which allows us to study mental models, concepts, and metaphors that are embedded in language use. The methods of corpus analysis and quantitative linguistics open up new perspectives in analysing the frequency, contexts of use, and stylistic marking of lexical items.

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