

**СЛОВО – ЗБРОЯ (ПРО НОВОТВОРИ ЯК МОВНЕ  
ВІДДЗЕРКАЛЕННЯ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ)**

**Алла ТКАЧ**

Буковинський державний медичний університет,  
tkach.alla@bsmu.edu.ua

**Максим ТКАЧ**

Чернівецький національний університет імені Юрія Федьковича,  
Навчально-науковий інститут фізико-технічних та комп'ютерних наук,  
tkach.maksym@chnu.edu.ua

**THE WORD AS A WEAPON (ABOUT NEOLOGISMS BEING A  
LINGUISTIC REFLECTION OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR)**

**Alla TKACH**

Bukovynian State Medical University,

**Maksym TKACH**

Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University,  
Educational and Scientific Institute of Physical, Technical and Computer Sciences,  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1108-0256; Researcher ID S-5800-2016.

**Алла Ткач, Максим Ткач. Слово – зброя (про новотвори як мовне віддзеркалення російсько-української війни).** Функціонування української мови набуває особливого значення в умовах повномасштабної російсько-української війни. Мова – це важливий складник національної ідентичності, потужний продуктивний засіб, завдяки якому утверджується народ, збагачується національна культура.

**Мета статті** – описати та систематизувати інноваційні процеси в сучасній національній лексичній системі української мови, що розвивається під час російсько-української війни.

У статті представлено нові ресурси мовомислення – неологізми й оказіоналізми, що вербалізують нинішні події воєнного часу в Україні і нагадують про тісний зв'язок історії та мови. Зроблено екскурс лінгвістичних напрацювань про мову як зброю; обґрунтовано необхідність нової номінації; розглянуто приклади й визначено основні функції неолексем; відзначено емоційно-експресивний складник у такому словотворенні; зацентовано увагу на активному функціонуванні неологізмів у мові; окреслено перспективи вивчення неологізмів на тлі сучасних подій в українському суспільстві та світі.

**Методи дослідження.** Для наукової інтерпретації фактичного матеріалу послуговуємося такими загальнонауковими методами, як спостереження й аналіз мовного матеріалу. Використовуємо описовий метод, прийоми компонентного і лінгвостилістичного аналізу.

**Висновки.** Фактичний матеріал статті засвідчує, що слово є особливою зброєю на мовному фронті. Утворення й активне функціонування нових лексичних одиниць у воєнному дискурсі – це своєрідне віддзеркалення подій сучасності; яскравий вияв словникового багатства української мови і високий інтелектуальний потенціал українського народу; засвідчення динамічності, безперервності й унікальності мови як живого організму.

**Ключові слова:** українська мова, мовна система, мовні ресурси, слова (лексеми), новотвори, фразеологізми, лексичний склад, російсько-українська війна, повномасштабна агресія, мова війни.

**Introduction.** World practice proves that wars and other turning points in society are not only associated with unbearable pain and unspeakable horror, destruction and death, millions of broken destinies and thousands of painful losses. Apart from that, it is also a powerful catalyst in the development of language and literature. And that is why the Russia-Ukraine war (2014 – to this day) was no exception. More and more works in the genre of “real-life stories” can be found on the shelves of bookstores, in the columns of popular science almanacs or mass media, and especially on the pages of social networks.

The truth about this terrible war was written in bitter lines both in the works of famous writers and those who had never written before. These are very different stories in terms of genre and writing styles varying from military personnel, journalists, doctors, chaplains, and volunteers. Among national writers, it is worth noting such individuals as: Vasyl Shklyar (“Black Sun”), Bohdan Zholdak (“Ukry”), Serhiy Dzyuba, Artem Kirsanov (“Call Sign Banderas”), Andriy Kurkov (“Grey Bees”), Nataliya Vorozhbyt (“Bad

Roads”), Serhii Zhadan (“Bread Armistice”), Svitlana Talan (“Naked Nerve”, “Return in the Rain”), Oksana Zabuzhko (“The Longest Journey”). Oleksandr Tereshchenko has presented the dialogue “Life after 16:30” to the public. The distinctive feature of this author is that he writes while holding a stylus in a prosthesis, since he does not have both hands and lost one eye. So, in a nutshell, the authors of war prose are just civilians (writers, journalists, volunteers) and war participants (mobilized writers or volunteer writers and fighters who had no writing experience before the war).

The analysis revealed that artistic and documentary materials not only bring to the forefront the terrible stories of Ukraine today, but also allow us to assert that the lexical and semantic system of Ukrainian language actively illuminates all historical changes in society, which clearly affects the dynamics of the language system and its vocabulary, emphasizes the connection between neologisms and social and political processes. The above is also mentioned in Olga Dubchak's work “Winning in Ukrainian”, where the author notes: “The hate speech is a

bad thing, but during war it is quite good and even necessary...”<sup>1</sup>.

The motivation behind the process of creating new lexemes during the full-scale Russia-Ukraine war lies in: surnames, names of prominent political figures or well-known public figures, their character traits, features of appearance, statements made by them, demonstrated actions, etc.; Ukrainian toponymicon; borrowing words etc. Our language knows how to repel enemies and be a firm cover, the so-called “language shield” is a special spiritual weapon against the invader, something that helps to identify the enemy and to express the main idea succinctly.

“What do we call the enemy? What speech features can we easily recognize an invader by? Do we know how to fight with words?” – these and a number of other questions are **the object of this scientific research**.

**The aim** is to describe and systematize innovative processes in the national lexical system of Ukrainian language that are taking place today, in particular, directly during the Russia-Ukraine war.

**The analysis** was carried out on the basis of modern Ukrainian mass media, Internet resources, social networks, conversational and everyday broadcasting of Ukrainians.

**Research methods** include *observation* and *analysis of linguistic material* for the scientific interpretation of actual material, i. e., *the descriptive method*, methods of *component and linguistic stylistic analysis*.

**Formulation of the problem.** The process of neologization is a typical phenomenon for any functioning and developing language system. The corresponding renewal of the lexical composition of Ukrainian language is explained by lingual and extra-lingual factors: mental and intellectual features of human existence, rapid development of society, economical and political progress or regression, communicative needs of society dictated by a change in the paradigm of reality perception, key historical stages and living in emergency situations, etc.

Thus, with the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion on the Ukrainian territory, the daily discourse of Ukrainians has undergone changes: users of social networks and mass media partake various means of communication and techniques to convey information to listeners; active creation of new lexemes, sayings and new folklore is observed. Such marker words help to define notions as “own” and “alien/foreign”, reflect the attitude towards what is happening in Ukraine and the world as well as record the most important moments of resistance and struggle.

Neology as a science first arose in the 1950s and is nowadays undergoing rapid development in the 21st century, especially in the current events. New words have been the object of scientific research by many domestic and foreign scientists. Among the Ukrainian researchers studying neologisms were K. Horodenska, S. Hrytsenko, O. Derkachova, L. Dovbnya, S. Yeliseeva, N. Yelnikova, V. Zhaivoronok, M. Zhulinska, E. Karpilovska, O. Kirilyuk, N. Klymenko, Zh. Koloyis, O. Styshov, O. Taranenko,

N. Tymoshchuk, M. Khar and others. According to most linguists, the emergence of neologisms is explained by: 1) the need to name new concepts, properties, actions; 2) the desire to figuratively nominate an object, phenomenon, process, concept, etc.; 3) replace some names with other notions; 4) supplement what was said with a special expression, etc. Linguist V. Zhaivoronok noted: “... either there was a need for a word, a symbol of a new concept, or there was a necessity to replenish this or that semantic field with a new or updated functional unit, or the new meaning of the old concept requires a new form, therefore a new word”<sup>2</sup>. Scientist N. Klymenko reminded us about extra-linguistic aspects of innovations, in particular, “the emergence of new realities of life”<sup>3</sup>.

Among new lexical units, textual materials testify to the traditional views on new lexeme emergence: a) neologisms (semantic derivation is the emergence of a new meaning in an already known word; word-formation derivation is known as the formation of new words in accordance with the existing word-formation models and morphemes particular to the language system); b) borrowings from other languages; c) revival of long forgotten or inactive words. Regarding the formative ways and reasons behind the appearance of new linguistic formulas, scientists contrast the concepts of occasionalism and neologism, characterizing the first as a component of speech (practical aspect), and the second as a component of language. The importance of such scientific works and corresponding interpretations is invaluable, since they capture ideas, concepts, feelings in the body of language, which quickly respond to the needs of society. Since neologisms are the fastest and the most effective linguistic response to the cognitive and communicative needs of society, therefore, “due to the new word being the basic unit, researchers of language dynamics are able to detect other types of linguistic innovations: spelling (orthographic innovations), morphemes (neomorphemes), word-formants (neoformants, neo-bases, new models of word formation), grammatical (morphological and syntactic), stylistic ones”<sup>4</sup>.

This scientific research is dictated majorly by military discourse. It is about the life of the country in the vortex of war, war events and everyday realities, which are reflected in the choice of language means to avoid negative connotations, to soften the stories about the destruction of infrastructure, psychological and physical injuries, the death of people, etc., as well as to rally the population, support and maintain the fighting spirit, manifest a high national and patriotic position.

Therefore, language was and still is an integral component of national culture as well as history of the Ukrainian people; a special litmus material that reflects everything that happens around and serves the societal needs. It is a powerful means of expressing views, actions and reasons for struggle during the period of armed aggression. This is a vivid example of its rapid development and close connection with people, its creator and bearer.

<sup>1</sup>Dubchak O. Peremahaty ukrayins'koyu. Pro movu nenavysti y lyubovi [Win in Ukrainian. About the language of hate and love], Kyiv: Vikhola, 2022, P. 3 [in Ukrainian].

<sup>2</sup>Zhaivoronok V. V. “Leksychna pidsystema movy i znachennya movnykh odynyts” [The lexical subsystem of the language and the meaning of linguistic units], *Movoznavstvo* [Linguistics], 1999, № 6, P. 35 [in Ukrainian].

<sup>3</sup>Klymenko N. Novotvorennyya chy mavpuvannya? [Neoplasm or monkeying?], *Urok ukrayins'koyi* [Ukrainian lesson], 2004, № 10, P. 23 [in Ukrainian].

<sup>4</sup>Karpilovska E. A. “Dynamika suchasnoyi ukrayins'koyi movy v slovnykakh novoho pokolinnya (proekt seriyi slovnykiv novoyi ukrayins'koyi leksyky)” [Dynamics of the modern Ukrainian language in dictionaries of the new generation], *Ukrayins'ka mova* [Ukrainian language], 2004, №3, P. 3 [in Ukrainian].

**Main material of the research.** Military and political neologisms arise under the influence of many factors: armed conflicts, the introduction of new technologies (primarily military), the emergence of new phenomena, linguistic economy, psychological support, etc. The language creativity of Ukrainians during the full-scale Russia-Ukraine war impresses with its realism, insight, vivacity, wit and sarcasm. The so-called „language shield“ identifies the invaders with the help of code words, determines that the speech of your interlocutor is not understandable for him, therefore, not native. This method is called „Shibboleth“ and is used to define a non-native speaker of Ukrainian language by a number of „special“ words: palyanytsia (festive bread), svitytsia (hall in the hut), sunytsia (strawberry), ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian train station), veselka (rainbow), merezhyvo (lace), terevenyty (to chat), filizhanka (cup), kohannya (love), ryshnutytsya (gun), etc.

Since February 2022, many new and reinterpreted words have appeared in the speech of Ukrainians. So, to designate the enemy (russian occupation troops) we use: *zaydy* (come in), *erefiya* (from the russian federation/uf), *ruskiy mir* (russian peace), *asvabadityeli* (liberators), *rusnya* (russian), *katsap/katsapnya* (pers/derogative for Russian), *rashisty*, *svynosobaku* (pig dogs), *imbecyly* (imbeciles). The semantic neologisms „Orcs“ and „Mordor“ are borrowed words from the work of the British author J. R. R. Tolkien, which appeared on February 25, 2022, on the official Facebook page of the Ukrainina Ground Forces, and are actively used in everyday speech by Ukrainians.

The emergence and active use of coarse, emotionally colored words and phrases is understandable, given the political situation that provoked their creation. However, we are convinced that in diplomatic communication it is worth using the words *russians*, *russian troops*, *russian army*, *russia*, *russian federation*, in order to accurately and unambiguously name the perpetrators of this war, who will bear collective responsibility for their actions and the deserved punishment of the military tribunal.

The words *Bayraktar*, *Javelin*, *Stinger*, *HIMARS* has been popularized to denote military equipment and weapons. With the help of Ukrainian word-formation models, vocabulary was replenished with new colorful verbs: *bayraktaryty*, *javelinityty*. We distinguish even more verbs formed by the prefix method: *vidjaveli(y)nyty* (*zadjaveli(y)nyty*), *zastingeryty* – “to destroy the invaders with known guided missiles”; *otbayraktaryty* (*zabayraktaryty*) – “to burn enemy fortifications using appropriate aircraft”; *vidZSYshyty*, *vidkatyuzhutu* – “to destroy the invaders, destroy the enemy's equipment”; *vidkobzonyty*, *viddvokhsotyty*, *zatoryhsotyty* – “to crush, neutralize the enemy; to ghost somebody”. The neologism “*chornobayutu*” originates from the village of Chornobayivka in Kherson region and is associated with the place where the Armed Forces systematically destroyed enemy equipment. This village has become a symbol of the enemy destruction, and occasionalism was popularized in social networks and means “systematically doing the same thing without getting any different result”. As with the example of *vidchornobayutu*, with time the following neologisms were formed – *nagostomelyty* (*peregostomelyty*), *vidzyumyty*, *zabuchyty*, *vidyrpenyty* – from the names of Ukrainian territories liberated from occupation. Such neologisms as *mogylizatsiya*, *mogylizuvaty* derived from the word *mobilization* and mean “disarming

of russian occupiers”.

A considerable layer of vocabulary is not new, but it is perceived and interpreted in a new way today in a society where a full-scale war is going on. Such words have their own new complementations, word-forming series, semantic loads, for example: *humanitarian (green) corridor*; *Teroborona (TrO)* – *teroboronivets* – *teroboronivskyi*; *lendlease* (fully borrowed from English) – *pertaining to lendlease*; *pereselents* – *displaced person, internally displaced person, temporarily displaced person*; *vygnanets* – *evacuated, deported, forcibly removed*.

The prefix *de-* is considered as a productive formant and it means “to perform some action”: *deaktyvuvaty* (deactivate), *deblokovaty* (unblock), *destabilizuvaty* (destabilize), *dekomunizuvaty* (decommunize), *denatsyifikuvaty* (un-Nazify), *demilitaryzuvaty* (demilitarize), *derusyifikuvaty* (de-Russify).

The prefix *na-* is used in the following words: *nadonatyty* (to donate), *navolonteryty* (to volunteer) – “to help, support, pay, find anything, at any price and deliver it anywhere”.

The online dictionary of English-linguistic neologisms and slangisms represents a new word dedicated to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people – *zukurayinyty*, *zaukrauinyyty* (to ukrainite) – “to try to take something by force, deception and get a harsh response”<sup>5</sup>.

The formation of occasionalisms based on anthroponyms has become a common phenomenon in the modern military lexicon, such as:

*arestovlennya* (*arestovyty*) – reassuring message, positive news, desired information;

*kimyty* – radiate optimism even in difficult circumstances;

*kadyryty* – to pass off wishful thinking; empty chatter;

*banderyty* (*vidbanderyty*) – to kill, to destroy;

*makronyty* (*promakronyty*) – to pretend to be very worried about a certain situation, to show it to everyone, but not to implement anything productive;

*merkelyuvaty* – to be self-interested, to solve profitable issues only for oneself;

*shojguvaty* – to misinform, to pretend at the workplace that everything is going according to plan, to deny defeat;

*pushkinopad* – the demolition of monuments to Russian cultural figures and the renaming of toponyms with their names.

New proverbs, sayings, phraseological units are born in the linguistic space, e. g.:

*God wears the uniform of the Ukrainian Armed Forces* – boundless trust and gratitude to the defenders of Ukraine;

*ghost of Kyiv (Kyivskyi Pryvyd)* – ace pilot (collective image of pilots of the 40th tactical aviation brigade); a virtuoso of his craft;

*Bandera smoothie, Bandera brew* – national resistance; *like a wardrobe from Borodyanka* – survive, endure under any circumstances;

a symbol of endurance of Ukrainians during the war;

*a Russian warship* – contempt for a thief, a murderer; courage to resist evil, aggression;

*to start a tractor* – the most unexpected argument in any dialogue; unpredictable course of events;

*in three days* – unrealistic, ill-founded ideas, plans and sincere faith in them;

*to return to Chornobayivka* – to repeat one's mistakes, step on the same rake.

<sup>5</sup>Pryama mova Lvova, URL: <https://www.nta.ua/zukurayinyty-u-slovyku-urban-dictionary-zyavylosya-nove-slovo/>

There is an addition to the already well-known phrase “give a pumpkin” (to refuse), that is to “give a watermelon” (wait for the Armed Forces of Ukraine – liberation of Kherson).

Semantic contamination is demonstrated in the pejorative *putler*, which was formed on the merger basis of two surnames: the Russian president Putin and the German misanthrope Hitler. Ridiculous nicknames and paraphrases for the leader of the aggressor country are based on the characteristic features and actions of a certain person: height (*kurdupel*, *lilliputian*, *nedopalok* (lighter), *nedomirok* (undersized)), mistrust of the environment (*bunker worm*, *stsykun* (extremely frightful person)), mental state (*crazy with a nuclear button*), a brutal style of management and disrespect for the rights of others (*Cadebist maniac*, *kremlin terrorist*, *racist Führer*), physical condition (*blida pogan* (pale heathen), *golomozuy vozhd* (bald leader)).

We suggest paying attention to expressive and evaluative spelling, or graphoderivation. It is about the peculiarities of writing the words *russia*, *putin*, *kremlin*, *russian federation* – especially with a lowercase letter as a manifestation of contempt, rage and condemnation.

**Conclusions.** This scientific work reminds people that the denotation and research of language modifications is an urgent issue of applied linguistics. After all, neologisms play an important role in the linguistic system, allow scientists to analyze the worldview features of speakers, reflect trends inherent in historical changes, current problems, everyday phenomena and processes.

The factual material of the article proves that the word is a special weapon on the linguistic front. The formation and active functioning of new lexical units in military discourse is somewhat a reflection of contemporary events; a vivid manifestation of rich Ukrainian vocabulary and high intellectual potential of the Ukrainian people; attesting to the dynamics, continuity and uniqueness of language as a living organism.

It is worth noting that the layer of vocabulary collected and analyzed in this research is not exhaustive and final, since, unfortunately, the war goes on, therefore, the process of enriching the language with new words and phraseological units is a continuous process requiring further scientific consideration.

**Ткач Алла** – кандидат філологічних наук, доцент закладу вищої освіти Буковинського державного медичного університету (кафедра суспільних наук та українознавства). Автор та співавтор понад 140 наукових, навчально-методичних та публіцистичних праць, з-поміж яких 1 монографія, 2 фрагменти до колективних монографій, 1 термінологічний словник, 5 навчальних посібників із грифом МОН та МОЗ України, 3 навчально-методичні посібники. Наукові інтереси: сучасна українська медична (фармацевтична) термінологія; методика викладання української мови як фахової у вищій школі; мовленнєва культура лікаря.

**Tkach Alla** is a candidate of philological sciences, Associate Professor of the Establishment of Higher Education, Bukovynian State Medical University (Department of Social Sciences and Ukrainian Studies). Author and co-author of more than 140 scientific, educational, methodological and journalistic works, among which 1 monograph, 2 fragments of collective monographs, 1 terminological dictionary, 5 training manuals with the seal of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, 3 training and methodical manuals. Scientific interests: modern Ukrainian medical (pharmaceutical) terminology; the method of teaching Ukrainian language as a professional language in higher education; linguistic culture of the doctor.

**Ткач Максим** – студент Навчально-наукового інституту фізико-технічних та комп'ютерних наук Чернівецького національного університету імені Юрія Федьковича (спеціальність “Інженерія програмного забезпечення”). Наукові інтереси: менеджмент проєктів програмного забезпечення; комп'ютерна лінгвістика; розробка штучного інтелекту; англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням.

**Tkach Maksym** is a student of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Physical, Technical and Computer Sciences in Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (majoring in “Software Engineering”). Scientific interests: software project management; computational linguistics; development of artificial intelligence; professional English.

**Received:** 19.05.2023

**Advance Access Published:** June, 2023

© A. Tkach, M. Tkach, 2023