

Actual Issues of Linguistic Provision of Troops in the Conditions of Martial Law in Ukraine

Alina Sameliuk

Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract. The purpose of the current article is to conceptualize the essence of the linguistic support for forces (LSF) during the war, to define the role of LSF in the modern perspective and to discuss the actual issues of LSF that have matured or intensified during the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. LSF in the Ukrainian scientific discourse is understood quite broadly and covers the entire spectrum of the functioning of the communicative sphere, which concerns the military sector, although it refers to mostly military translation studies and foreign language training of the Ukrainian military. In the context of war, language as an instrument of understanding between its various participants (since it is clear that war always has a global character, although geographically concentrated locally) has a wide range of action, especially foreign languages, which perform an important operational and strategic, even ideological role in war narratives. The article analyzes the works of leading foreign scientists regarding LSF, highlights the long-time directions of development of LSF in Ukraine, emphasizes the importance of integration into the niche of LSF of special technical operations and software, which in the conditions of martial law would make it possible to quickly process large layers of information and conduct the necessary communication in a timely manner. With regard to foreign language training of the military as one of the central directions of LSF, it was noted that the trends of training in an authentic foreign language environment are preserved, and the format of such training is argued to be the most favorable for improving language training in the Armed Forces and bringing it into line with NATO standards.

Key words: linguistic support of forces (LSF), linguistic support of operations, martial law, Russian-Ukrainian war, language in the context of war, foreign language training of the military, English language.

Introduction

The problem of linguistic provision of the troops (LZV) is rather prospective, that is, not one that can be implemented in too short a time. However, at the same time, this is an urgent issue, which in the conditions of war requires attention, strategic planning and immediate integration. LSF requires a planned, systematic policy and systematic implementation in the context of comprehensive training of military personnel. Learning a foreign language, forming general communicative and specialized professional communicative competences requires a long time with the projection of lifelong learning. And the field of military translation, which is primarily associated with the applied use of LSF, requires in-depth knowledge of foreign languages in a professional (military) direction with constant dynamic skills of self-learning and development of their own professional competences by specialists in this field (Footitt, 2016: 209-221; Kujamäki & Footitt, 2019: 113-136; Tesseur & Footitt, 2019: 268-284). On the territory of Ukraine, LSF as a full-fledged direction of integrated work of philologists and military specialists began to be discussed only in the last few years. That is why it is too early to draw conclusions about certain established traditions in LSF of Ukraine or rich achievements in this area. It is also important to understand that the term LSF itself is not typical for NATO countries, where, as V. Balabin (2018: 100) rightly notes, the concept of linguistic

support for operations (ALingP-1, 2011) is used instead. In the doctrine of Great Britain as one of the NATO countries, it is stated that the linguistic support of operations is aimed at covering the appropriate management and joint linguistic practice of the armed forces and is the first step in the development of defense capabilities to meet future defense needs (Ministry of Defence, 2013). Thus, the term Language Operations (LangOps) is generally established in the English-language discourse, which refers to an interdisciplinary function that helps global companies, organizations, and institutions communicate effectively with their multilingual customers, employees, and other stakeholders. LangOps positions language as a means of growth and successful integration (Pedro, 2022).

The topic of the functioning of the language during the war is not disclosed at a satisfactory level in both domestic and foreign publications. This is an actual area of intersection of linguistics and the military sphere, which still needs a thorough study, especially against the background of new precedents that create the context of active military conflicts in the world and new full-scale wars like the one that unfolded on the territory of Ukraine.

Literature Review

In the writings, the opinion that the traditional science of war is markedly ethnocentric can be found in some places. Scholars tend to adopt a nation-state ontology of military conflict, avoiding what Tarak Barkawi, a professor at the London School of Economics and author of books on armed conflict, calls "the cultural mixing and hybridity of war" (Barkawi, 2006), positioning "foreignness" as some unproblematic given, the qualities of which are largely unrelated to the theme of war, within which preference is given to the "state against state" paradigm (Askew, 2019). In general, the historiography of the war continues to remain mostly outside the subject of foreign languages. In the Western context, so far, the historical discourse of warfare involving national and ethnic groups is usually understood as a monolingual operation carried out using the language of the dominant military force. When the context of the language is touched on, it is usually presented as a marginal topic, presented as an element that is benign and helpful in establishing diplomatic relations that help bring the end of the war closer. Sometimes wartime language is also seen as a source of useful lessons for the post-war period (Askew, 2019). And there is a valid point in this, especially if we take into account the nature of the war in Ukraine, the factors that led to it, as well as the degree of integration of the world community around the problem of armed confrontation on the territory of Ukraine, the role of world support in confronting the enemy, and the role of languages as a key factor in military relations at all levels: diplomatic, informational, ideological, interaction with existing foreign legions and the involvement of new units of international troops, receiving aid from abroad, training of the Ukrainian military and working with foreign equipment, etc.

As regards the narrow linguistic context and translation studies in the period of war, linguists and interpreters are increasingly interested in war and conflict, and in particular in the role that language mediators and interpreters can play in military situations. For example, researchers seek to expand contemporary conceptions of translation in a way that could be relevant to a "translation culture in an era of political violence" (Tymoczko, 2009: 178). The position of Mona Baker, professor of translation studies and director of the Center for Translation and Intercultural Studies at the University of Manchester in England, is interesting, and she appeals to the theory of narrative in order to position interpreters as participants in the construction of war narratives with sufficient arguments

(Baker, 2019). The result of this considerable body of research has been to highlight the complex and multifaceted role of interpreters in conflict situations, making an important contribution to the wider debates in translation studies concerning, for example, translation agencies and the ethics of translation as such. In wartime, translation professionals are not outsiders to military activity, but are in fact part of the very institution of war, “necessary to propagate and counter the narratives that create the intellectual and moral environment for violent conflict” (Baker, 2020).

The studies also emphasized the pragmatic purpose of the start of the discourse on LSF. Thus, it is said that the first peacekeeping operation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in 1995 revealed a language problem that had not yet been anticipated or that was not so acute until now, related to the need to communicate with the local population, which did not speak any of the official languages of the alliance – English or French. In subsequent operations in Kosovo (1999) and Afghanistan (2003), NATO countries also faced the need for linguistic support for peacekeeping missions. In each operation, the provision of language support was disorganized and improvised at first, but eventually led to the establishment of professional standard language services and finally to the development of the Operational Language Support Doctrine, which became prescriptive for all future military operations (Askew, 2019).

At the same time, the state of war is temporally, situationally, and ontologically such that it puts the entire sphere of LSF in extreme operating conditions. This is said, in particular, by V. Tesser and G. Footitt (Tesseur & Footitt, 2019: 268-284), expressing the opinion that in the conditions of military conflicts and the post-conflict period, representatives of different cultures speaking different languages inevitably meet. In such communicative spaces, language mediators (interpreters) are of great importance to achieve successful communication and timely efficiency, but their role and status are often neglected in research and do not become a key focus in war studies (Tesseur & Footitt, 2019: 268-284). Emphasizing the importance of foreign languages at the heart of war and conflict, Hilary Footitt and Michael Kelly argue that foreignness and foreign languages are key to understanding what happens during war. Through case studies, scholars trace the role of languages in intelligence, military deployment, military-civilian encounters, resistance to occupation, and peacebuilding (Footitt & Kelly, 2012). The authors speak of war as a context in which “language itself is a weapon” (Tesseur & Footitt, 2019: 268-284).

In view of the lack of research in the field of LSF and the need for simultaneous analysis of actual issues of LSF during the period of martial law in Ukraine, the purpose of the article is to conceptualize the essence of LSF during wartime, determine the role of LSF in wartime and discuss the pressing issues of LSF.

Materials and methods

The theoretical basis for the current article is the works of Askew (2019) and Baker (2019; 2020), the key positions of which are overviewed in the introduction and literature review. The results and conclusions regarding the actual issues of linguistic provision of the troops in the conditions of martial law in Ukraine are made on the basis of the analysis of the pre-war and current state of LSF, as well as in the light of the prospects for the development of LSF for the period of the war, which is currently not temporally defined and not limited even by approximate boundaries due to the unpredictability of enemy’s actions and the difficulties of predicting the entire further course of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The material for the analysis was the available trends in the study of foreign languages at the Higher Military Educational Establishment and foreign language courses at the Armed Forces of Ukraine, current issues of military translation, the analysis of foreign publications about the war in Ukraine and the impact of these publications on public opinion and on the categorization and ideologization of the war, the impact of the discourse on the war on diplomatic relations and support of Ukraine's foreign partners in confronting the aggressor.

Results and Discussion

We must mention the initiative of the University of Reading together with the University of Southampton and the Imperial War Museum in London – the large-scale project "Languages at War: policies and practices of language contacts in conflict". The project examines how the government, military and multilateral missions develop language policies aimed at preparing soldiers to work with foreign allies, face foreign enemies and deal with civilians who do not speak their language. In the context of an armed conflict, the military experiences first-hand the reality of these language clashes and the role of the average soldier's willingness to communicate in a language that is mutually intelligible and enables the achievement of pragmatic communication goals. Actually, when it comes to English-language research, the topic of LSF, as it is articulated in Ukraine, is covered from the opposite side: it is more about the study of less common languages of the world by English-speaking military personnel. For example, on the website of the authoritative publication *The Conversation*, the article "How the British military became champions of language learning" expressed concern that the number of linguists in the British Ministry of Defense who know certain foreign languages, including Arabic, is still extremely low, and according to the latest statistical data, there are no Ukrainian or Estonian speakers in the armed forces at the level of third (Professional) or higher (Expert or Highly articulate native)" (*The Conversation*, 2016). In our case, it is at least a qualitatively sufficient mastery of the military in the traditional language of international communication – English.

First of all, it is very important to broadcast to the world what is actually happening in Ukraine and how the highest state structures officially react to it, in particular the President of Ukraine as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Official presidential resources, which are always relayed in English and interpreted by foreign publications, were in the epicenter of attention. In this perspective, the publication of the Voice of America resource "100 Speeches in 100 Days of War: Zelenskyy Rallies Ukraine" dated June 4, 2022 is worthy of attention. General publications that officially articulate the position of the world community regarding the war in Ukraine are important: for example, the United Nations Human Rights Council on May 4, 2022 published the article "Ukraine: joint statement on the invasion of Russia and the importance of freedom of speech and information". All this, although not directly related to the ability of a serviceman to perform duties and serve in the conditions of the globalized context of war, nevertheless points to the role of language in the period of hostilities and the role of the availability of foreign language publications for both military and civilians as the key to access to non-engaged information. The military, competent in information flows, will certainly be ideologically more confident in its position.

The war belongs to an extra-ordinary factor that significantly affects the purpose, tasks and development of the LSF within the borders of the country that suffers from it. Against the background of the military confrontation with the aggressor and the intensification of military-diplomatic ties with Ukraine's partner countries, the importance

of the LSF is growing rapidly now and in future projections. First of all, we are talking about the English-language training of military philologists, whose task in the paradigm of the interdisciplinary multidimensional combat space is seen first of all in the deepening and development of the concordance of domestic military linguistics. On the one hand, work is being done in the direction of enriching the Ukrainian military glossary (codification of new terminologies, justification of their use in different styles and contexts). And on the other hand, in the direction of coordination with corresponding English terms, which unify both the system of international military communication and document creation, and the system of translation of military texts (from other languages into Ukrainian and vice versa).

In the conditions of martial law and under the influence of end-to-end digitization of the work of all key infrastructure niches, in particular in the military sector, the need for rapid document flow and prompt response and oral and written messages in communication in the domestic and international field is increasing. Especially with regard to the latter, the lack of special applications and software for high-quality automated translation of military texts of various directions (programmatic, business, intelligence, reporting, etc.) is noticeable (Kujamäki & Footitt, 2019: 113-136; Tesseur & Footitt, 2019: 268-284). Implementation of automated translation with the help of special narrow-field computer support would make it possible to speed up the exchange of documents of military-political, military-technical and military-special purposes for the performance of the tasks of the relevant structural divisions of the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. After all, ordinary, non-specialized in military online interpreters can lead to inaccuracies, which in wartime will cost lives and can cause the irreversible development of military events due to the inconsistency of tactical decisions (memoirs of interpreters at the Nuremberg trial became epic).

At the same time, it is impossible to provide all structures of the military sphere of the state with qualified military interpreters competent in the intricacies of military communication during the war. Foreign researchers emphasize that military competencies and military tasks should always determine professional language behavior on the ground. But the lack of specialists and the lack of an alternative, along with the urgent requirements of war, to provide high-quality military translations of a wide range, clearly shows that the so-called "civilian" linguists, recruited, as a rule, at the local level from non-military personnel, becomes a serious obstacle in the coordination of all parties to a military conflict (Footitt, 2016: 209-221; Kujamäki & Footitt, 2019: 113-136; Tesseur & Footitt, 2019: 268-284). In addition to performing technical tasks, there is a lot of other painstaking work within the LSF, related to editing military texts, conducting applied translation studies (or at least collecting material for processing in the post-war period), reference activities for communication on the public and business front, according to "open" or "closed" doors in the decision-making process. As mentioned, the listed directions of LSF require specially trained specialists. Instead, much of the routine work involved in wartime LSF could be outsourced to special militarized translation programs

In addition, the implementation of machine translation, the integration of ICT, computer dictionaries in the military sphere is an element of strategic communication and one of the long-time vectors of the development of LZV. This is established by the current military standard 01.003.001 – 2018 (01) "Administrative activity. Linguistic provision of troops (forces). Substantive provisions". Specially developed and narrowly targeted software automated translation software must be integrated with the achievements made in the field of LSF in recent years, in particular, it refers to Military Standard 01.030.001-

2020 – "Training and deployment of troops (forces). Basic Terms and Definitions Used in NATO" (Military Standard 01.030.001-2020). But both the standard itself and specialized translation programs must be intensively supplemented with new lexemes, clichés, etc., that is, form a dynamic system built on the principles of sustainable development.

What the state of war showed in terms of foreign language training of the military as the main subjects of LSF is the lack of direct communication between our military and native speakers, as well as the lack of specifically communicative foreign language training at Higher Military Educational Establishment, which makes it impossible to establish a sufficient level of communication with foreign colleagues, military journalists, observers, diplomats, etc. It must be said that just a few days ago, the ArmyInform resource, summing up the annual training of the Ukrainian army, half a year of which was occupied by a period of active military operations, emphasized that the 303 NATO standards implemented this year concern, among other things, information operations, communications, strategic communications. Mention is also made of the multinational Ukrainian-American military exercises Rapid Trident - 2021 (Provorny, 2022). This is one of the effective steps towards linguistic integration of Ukrainian soldiers with the world military community. The same resource reported last year (in 2021) that more than 1,500 Ukrainian military personnel took language courses abroad. Such a practice has every chance of becoming permanent and only increasing in intensity after the war. One of the main goals of education is to improve the level of mastery of a foreign language. It must be said that in the post-war period, Ukraine, having the experience of waging a successful war in the conditions of the 21st century, will undoubtedly become a bridgehead for the training of foreign military personnel, therefore one of the promising issues is the development of anti-aircraft weapons for training foreign military personnel on the territory of Ukraine.

Regarding the foreign language training of the military in Ukraine, the fulfillment of the points of the Roadmap for improving language training in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (for 2021-2025), approved in March 2021, plays a big role, even in war conditions.

In addition to the above, LSF in the conditions of a state of war faces a range of other problematic issues within the scope of the research, which have yet to be systematized and resolved, so that in the future, in the extreme conditions of armed confrontation, the communicative space could potentially qualitatively supplement the range of tools for achieving victory, and in the post-war state, contribute to the achievement security guarantees.

Conclusions

Therefore, the issue of anti-aircraft weapons is already relevant for Ukraine as a country that has set itself the goal of rapid integration into the global space, in particular, regarding the adaptation of the level of training of the Ukrainian military to NATO standards. During the war, a foreign language is an instrument of struggle and formation of the correct ideological position of the world community regarding the events in the country, which is suffering from the aggression of the enemy. Since the active discourse about LZV in Ukraine began a few years before the war and the first significant steps towards this had already been taken, now the goal of LZV and the main highways of the content of the activities of the structures responsible for LZV are increasing the pace and quality of foreign language training of the Ukrainian military, introducing technical means and information technologies, which in wartime conditions would enable the rapid processing of large layers of information. The special role and effectiveness of plans with LAZV was proven during the training of the Ukrainian military abroad, in a real foreign-

language and professionally oriented communicative environment, which takes place even before the war (first of all, we are talking about the training of the Ukrainian military in Great Britain, which takes place in an accelerated format and during martial law).

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