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## MILITARY TRANSLATION AND ITS CHALLENGES

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**Abstract.** Military translation is one of the most challenging types of rendering meaning and sense from a source language into a target one. Military texts are characterized by a high level of formality, little emotional colouring, great number of terms, and abbreviations and acronyms. The main methods of translating military terms are direct translation, translation equivalents, description, transliteration, transcription, hybrid translation, and borrowings.

**Key words:** military translation, translation methods, accuracy, formality, context sensitivity.

One of the most important requirements in the course of international military communication is its translation accuracy. According to J. Richards, translation is the process of changing speech or writing from one language (the source language) into another (the target language), or the target-language version that results from this process. A translation which approximates to a word-for-word representation of the original is known as a literal translation [1, p. 389]. A very vital thing is to find the right translation equivalents which are linguistic units (words, syntactic structures) that are translated into a target language without loss of meaning. Military texts have their peculiar feature. S. Saprykin and A. Chuzhakin [2, p.103], well-known Ukrainian translators and interpreters, state that military texts are characterized by a high level of formality, little emotional colouring, great number of terms, abbreviations and acronyms. Translators have to know not only the topical vocabulary but to be well aware of the subject field as their inaccuracy may cause misunderstandings or even cost peoples' lives.

Translating military terms and names of weapons requires accuracy and sensitivity to the context. There are several steps and procedures that are usually taken in order to provide accurate translation. First of all, it is very important to understand the source material, that is the context in which the term is used (for example, historical, contemporary or strategic). In order to provide an accurate translation, it is necessary to understand the function, characteristics, and specifications of the weapon or term. In the course of translation, it is vital to use reliable dictionaries and manuals from both source and target languages. While translating military terms and names of the weapons a translator is to maintain consistency with established translations, especially for well-known terms and weapons. That is why it is obligatory to use standardized terms recognized by international military or other respected organizations such as NATO or UN. Another factor to be taken into account is localisation, that is consideration of the military terminology and nomenclature and

adaptation of the translated term to cultural and linguistic norms of the target audience.

The main methods of translating military terms are the following:

- a) Direct translation that is used for the terms that have direct equivalents in the target language: *infantry* (English) – *ніхрома* (Ukrainian);
- b) Transliteration or transcription that is applied when the term does not have a direct equivalent and is graphically or phonetically rendered in the target language. For example: *Kalashnikov* (English) – *Калашніков* (Ukrainian);
- c) Hybrid translation that combines borrowing that uses the original term and a translation equivalent but provides an explanatory note: *Stealth Bomber* (English) – *Стелс-бомбардувальник* (літак, який оснащений системою маскування «стелс») (Ukrainian);
- d) Borrowing that uses the original term directly, especially if it is widely recognized: *drone* (English) – *дрон* (Ukrainian), *bunker* (English) – *бункер* (Ukrainian);
- e) Hybrid translation that combines transliteration and descriptive translation: *AK-47* (English) [*Automat Kalashnikova model 1947*] – *AK-47* (Ukrainian) [*Автомат Калашнікова зразка 1947 року*].

In the course of translation of the names of weapons it is important to retain the original model numbers and alphanumeric codes. For example: *M16 Rifle* remains *M16 Rifle* across languages, e.g. *звинтівка M16* (Ukrainian).

As to the proper names it is advisable to retain proper names or use their established translations. For example, *Browning* remains *Browning* (Ukrainian *Браунінг*) in most languages.

While translating acronyms and abbreviations it is necessary to translate the expanded form if it is not well-known, otherwise retain the acronym. For example: *SAM* (*Surface-to-Air Missile*) – *SAM* or translate the expanded form: *ЗРК* (*ракета*

класу “земля-повітря”) (Ukrainian); *seabees* (CB - Construction Battalion) – будівельний батальйон (Ukrainian) [3, p. 127].

It is also very important to consider the historical and cultural significance of the name. For example: *Sherman Tank* (named after General Sherman) – *танк Шерман* (Ukrainian)) might require a note, explaining the reference, if it is translated into a language where the historical figure is not well-known. This practice can be justified by the statement, that even if a translator does not find a word in his/her language that corresponds to that in the original language, he/she still wants to retain its value by the addition of limiting or expanding definitions [4, p. 44].

There are several ways of translating weapons and military terms but the main ones are translation equivalents, transliteration/transcription, borrowing, and description. For example, *F-16 Fighting Falcon* (English) – *F-16* (Файтінг Фалкон) “Еф – 16” (Ukrainian, transliteration); *Tomahawk missile* (English) – *Ракета Томагавк* (Ukrainian, translation equivalent and transliteration); *Special Forces* (English) – *спецпризначенці/спецназ* (Ukrainian, translation equivalent); *Navy SEALs* (English) – “*Морські котики*” (Ukrainian, translation equivalent).

It is worth mentioning that in addition to military documentation, a military translator has to translate educational, propaganda materials, technical data for various types of weapons as well as personal data of the enemy, their correspondence, letters and chats in order to have a better understanding of their moral and emotional state.

By following these methods and guidelines, translators can ensure that military texts, terms and names of weapons are accurately and appropriately rendered in the target language, maintaining their intended meaning and significance.

So, present day military translation is rather challenging as translators are to find the right equivalents to new military items, take into account the differences in measurements, structures, and standards, for example, NATO and the Ukrainian military forces, and constant changes that take place on the battle fields.

### **A list of literature**

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