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COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC PROCESSES IN THE MENTAL REPRESENTATION OF MILITARY TERMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK AND ENGLISH

Fayzullayeva Khilola Djuraxodjayevna
Captain, senior officer of a subdivision of military unit 29013
Email: xilolaf15@gmail.com
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Abstract. This article offers a comparative analysis of the cognitive-semantic processes involved in the formation and mental representation of military terms in Uzbek and English. The conceptual content of military terminology, together with its semantic relations, associative links and thematic organisation, constitutes the principal object of analysis. Drawing on such Uzbek units as *askar* ("soldier"), *qo'shin* ("army"), *qurol* ("weapon"), *jang* ("battle"), *hujum* ("attack") and *mudofaa* ("defence"), and on their English counterparts *soldier*, *army*, *weapon*, *battle*, *attack* and *defence*, the study demonstrates how units of this kind form specific conceptual and associative networks in the minds of speakers. The results show that the mental representation of military terms is determined not only by their dictionary meanings, but also by interconnected structures of knowledge, by experience, by situational context and by their relations with other lexical units. Military terms are accordingly represented in the mental lexicon as interconnected conceptual nodes rather than as isolated lexical items. The comparison further reveals that, alongside universal cognitive-semantic models, nationally and culturally specific features of the conceptualisation of military reality are also present in the two languages. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between specialised vocabulary, cognition and conceptual knowledge within cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics.

Keywords: military term, mental representation, mental lexicon, cognitive-semantic process, concept, semantic relation, associative connection, conceptual field, Uzbek, English.

INTRODUCTION. In contemporary linguistics, the study of how linguistic units are formed, stored and processed in human thought and consciousness has become one of the leading research directions. Cognitive linguistics in particular, through its investigation of the relationship between language and thought, makes it possible to establish what conceptual content lexical units acquire in the mind of the speaker. Viewed from this standpoint, mental representation denotes the process whereby a person's knowledge of, and ideas about, a particular object, phenomenon or activity are given form in consciousness. Military terms are of special interest for research of this kind, since they are marked by a high degree of specialisation, by a restricted professional sphere of use and by the capacity to encode an entire system of domain-specific knowledge.

Military terminology constitutes a specialised lexical stratum closely bound up with the military-political, social and historical experience of a society. Uzbek terms such as *askar*, *qo'shin*, *qurol*, *jang*, *hujum* and *mudofaa*, together with English units such as *soldier*, *army*, *weapon*, *battle*, *attack* and *defence*, do not merely name particular notions: they also generate in the mind of the

speaker an extensive conceptual content associated with them. The term *qurol*, for example, may activate such notions as battle, protection, attack and military equipment. Restricting the meaning of military terms to their dictionary definitions alone therefore fails to reveal their cognitive-semantic properties in full.

The organisation of the mental lexicon, and the semantic and associative relations obtaining among the words it contains, provide an important theoretical foundation for explaining cognitive-semantic processes. Research carried out in 2015 has emphasised that units in the mental lexicon are connected through associative and hierarchical relations, and that the meaning of a word is activated in its relations with other conceptual units (Mikołajczak-Matyja, 2015; Van Rensbergen et al., 2015). These views make it possible to investigate the representation of military terms in the mind not as a set of isolated words, but as a system of interconnected conceptual units.

A comparison of military terms in Uzbek and English is essential for identifying both the universal and the national-cultural aspects of this process. Although the two languages possess such equivalent units as *askar–soldier*, *qurol–weapon*, *hujum–attack* and *mudofaa–defence*, their associative content, contexts of use and conceptual scope may in certain cases diverge. Divergences of this kind arise in connection with the historical experience, the military traditions and the national worldview of the respective speech communities.

Accordingly, the principal aim of the present article is to identify, and to analyse comparatively, the cognitive-semantic processes manifested in the mental representation of military terms in Uzbek and English. In the course of the study, the conceptualisation of military terms, their semantic and associative relations, and their place in the mental lexicon are determined. This approach serves both to deepen understanding of the internal semantic system of military terminology and to reveal the terminological and cognitive differences between the two languages.

MAIN PART. The cognitive-semantic approach constitutes one of the principal methodological foundations for the study of the mental representation of military terms. Within this approach, the meaning of a lexical unit is regarded not as ready-made, invariant information stored in the mind, but as a complex mental structure formed in connection with knowledge, experience, association and context. Investigating semantic relations in the mental lexicon, Mikołajczak-Matyja (2015) argues that words are organised in the mind on the basis of hierarchical semantic relations. In the researcher's view, relations of this kind ensure the semantic interconnection of words (Mikołajczak-Matyja, 2015). This theoretical position can be observed in the material of military terminology. The Uzbek term *qurol* and the English term *weapon*, for instance, function as superordinate conceptual units subsuming such specific notions as *miltiq*, *to'pponcha*, *pulemyot* and *raketa*, and *rifle*, *pistol*, *machine gun* and *missile*, respectively. The concept QUROL/WEAPON thus constitutes a higher-order unit in the mental lexicon, while the concrete designations it subsumes are formed as lower-order conceptual units.

Associative relations likewise occupy an important place in the mental representation of military terms. Van Rensbergen, Storms and De Deyne (2015) describe the mental lexicon as a system composed of numerous links between words, and demonstrate the mechanism by which words activate one another through associative connections. In their study, the relatedness of words is treated as an important factor in explaining the structure of the mental lexicon (Van Rensbergen et al., 2015). The same phenomenon is clearly observable in military terminology. The term *askar*, for example, enters into associative relations with such units as *qo'shin*, *komandir*, *qurol*, *harbiy*

xizmat and *jang*, while the English term *soldier* may activate such units as *army*, *officer*, *weapon*, *military service* and *battle*.

Semantic proximity is of particular significance in accounting for the cognitive-semantic properties of military terms. Units that are semantically close to one another are located in close proximity within the mental lexicon, and the activation of one may lead to the activation of the other. The study conducted by Mikołajczak-Matyja (2015) demonstrates precisely the significance of semantic relations for the structure of the mental lexicon, recording the organisation of lexical units on the basis of semantic links of varying degrees.

A further important manifestation of semantic relations among military terms arises through antonymic links. The Uzbek units *hujum–mudofaa* and the English units *attack–defence* are clear cases in point. Whereas the term *hujum* is associated with such notions as enemy, battle, weapon, strategy and attacker, the term *mudofaa* activates such notions as protection, security, border and resistance. Terms standing in an antonymic relation therefore exist in interconnection within a single military conceptual field, notwithstanding the fact that they express opposite meanings.

The 2015 studies of De Deyne and co-authors show that relations among words must be explained not solely in terms of semantic similarity, but also in terms of thematic relatedness. Analysing large-scale word-association data, the researchers established that thematic links between words occupy an important place in the human mental lexicon (De Deyne et al., 2015). In military terminology this process is manifested in the relations among such units as *askar–qurol–jang–hujum* and *soldier–weapon–battle–attack*. Although these units do not belong to the same grammatical category, they form a single thematic network on the basis of a shared military situation.

Conceptualisation is one of the key manifestations of cognitive-semantic processes. In perceiving a particular military event, a person activates in consciousness not only its individual features, but also the whole complex of knowledge and experience associated with it. The concept *jang*, for example, encompasses not merely an armed clash between two sides, but also a wide range of notions such as soldier, weapon, enemy, strategy, attack, defence and victory. The English concept *battle* possesses a closely comparable conceptual structure. The mental representation of a term is thus broader than its nominative meaning and incorporates the encyclopaedic knowledge associated with it.

The comparative analysis of Uzbek and English demonstrates the presence of both universal and national-cultural components in the mental representation of military terms. Units such as *askar–soldier*, *qurol–weapon*, *jang–battle*, *hujum–attack* and *mudofaa–defence* express common military concepts in both languages. The associative content and connotative properties of these terms may nevertheless differ in accordance with the historical and cultural experience of each language. For this reason, terminological equivalence between the two languages cannot be established on the basis of dictionary correspondence alone.

Contextual activation likewise plays an important role in the mental representation of military terms. One and the same term may activate different conceptual content in different contexts. The English term *operation*, for instance, denotes an operation in the general sense in ordinary usage, whereas in military discourse it designates a specific set of planned military actions. The Uzbek term *operatsiya* likewise acquires a special semantic content in military contexts. This indicates that the mental representation of a term is determined by its context of use and by professional knowledge, as well as by its dictionary meaning.

On the whole, drawing on the mental-lexicon research conducted in 2015, the mental representation of military terms may be interpreted as the result of the interaction of such cognitive-semantic processes as semantic proximity, association, conceptualisation, thematic relatedness and contextual activation. Military terms in Uzbek and English exist in the mind not as isolated words, but as constituent parts of an interconnected conceptual and associative network. This approach makes it possible to reveal more fully the internal semantic structure of military terminology, the common and divergent features of the two languages, and the mechanisms by which specialised vocabulary is formed in the human mind.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS. In order to identify the cognitive-semantic processes manifested in the mental representation of military terms in Uzbek and English, the present study employed comparative, semantic, conceptual and associative methods of analysis. Military terms actively used in both languages — *askar–soldier*, *qo‘shin–army*, *qurol–weapon*, *jang–battle*, *hujum–attack* and *mudofaa–defence* — were selected as the research material. In addition to the dictionary meanings of the terms, their conceptual content in the mental lexicon and their semantic relations with other units were analysed.

Semantic analysis served to identify the principal meaning components of the terms and to establish their synonymic, antonymic, hierarchical and thematic relations. Conceptual analysis, for its part, was directed at identifying the system of knowledge underlying the military terms. The term *qurol/weapon*, for example, unites as a superordinate concept such specific notions as *miltiq/rifle*, *to‘pponcha/pistol* and *raketa/missile*, while *hujum/attack* and *mudofaa/defence*, notwithstanding their opposed meanings, are interconnected within a single military conceptual field.

The results of the associative analysis showed that military terms are organised in the mental lexicon not in isolation, but as a network of interconnected units. The term *askar*, for instance, may activate the notions *qo‘shin*, *komandir*, *qurol*, *harbiy xizmat* and *jang*, while *soldier* may activate *army*, *officer*, *weapon*, *military service* and *battle*. This finding accords with the view advanced by Van Rensbergen, Storms and De Deyne (2015) that the mental lexicon is organised on the basis of associative connections.

The study established that four principal cognitive-semantic relations predominate in the mental representation of military terms: semantic proximity, hierarchical relation, antonymic relation and thematic relatedness. Semantic proximity is manifested in such units as *askar–harbiy xizmatchi / soldier–military personnel*; hierarchical relation in such units as *qurol–miltiq / weapon–rifle*; antonymic relation in the pair *hujum–mudofaa / attack–defence*; and thematic relatedness in such units as *askar–qurol–jang / soldier–weapon–battle*. The joint operation of these relations forms the conceptual network of military terms within the mental lexicon.

The comparative analysis showed considerable commonality in the core conceptual content of military terms in Uzbek and English. Certain differences are nevertheless observable in the associative and connotative layers of the terms. Differences of this kind are connected with the historical experience, the national military traditions, the socio-cultural environment and the professional knowledge of the speakers. Dictionary equivalence therefore does not always fully reflect mental-semantic equivalence.

The study further showed that the mental representation of a military term is activated under the influence of context. Whereas the term *operation* has a broad meaning in general speech, in military discourse it denotes a specific set of planned military actions. The mental content of a term is thus formed as a result of the interaction of its dictionary meaning, its context of use and the speaker's existing knowledge of the field.

The overall results indicate that military terms in Uzbek and English are organised in the mental lexicon as conceptual nodes, and that the semantic and associative links among them give rise to an integrated cognitive model of military knowledge. Although universal military notions are manifested in similar ways in the two languages within this model, their mental content is enriched by national and cultural experience. The cognitive-semantic study of the mental representation of military terms thus makes it possible to determine the internal structure of the terminological system, its reflection in the human mind, and the conceptual similarities and differences between Uzbek and English.

CONCLUSION. The results of the comparative analysis carried out here have shown that the mental representation of military terms in Uzbek and English is formed on the basis of complex cognitive-semantic processes. Military terms are manifested in the mind not as isolated lexical units, but as interconnected conceptual units that integrate particular knowledge, experience and ideas.

The study established that semantic proximity, associative connection, hierarchical relation, antonymy and thematic relatedness constitute the principal mechanisms of the mental organisation of military terms. Although such units as *askar–soldier*, *qurol–weapon*, *jang–battle*, *hujum–attack* and *mudofaa–defence* express common military concepts in both languages, their associative and connotative content may differ under the influence of national and cultural experience.

The comparison of Uzbek and English has shown that, while universal features predominate in the core conceptual content of military terms, the additional semantic and associative properties of their mental representation are determined by the historical, social and cultural experience of each people. For this reason, the translation and comparative study of military terms must take account not only of dictionary equivalence, but also of the cognitive and conceptual content of the terms.

In general, the study of the mental representation of military terms from a cognitive-semantic perspective is of considerable scientific and practical importance for a deeper understanding of the internal system of military terminology, for the identification of conceptual similarities and differences between Uzbek and English, and for the improvement of methods of teaching and translating specialised professional vocabulary. Research in this direction will serve to reveal still more fully the intrinsic relationship between language, thought and professional knowledge.

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