Russian Military Dictionaries of Soviet Period

Biderkesen Durdu
Kazan Federal University, Russian Federation

ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the military lexicography of the USSR period. We found that the main attention in the science of this period was given to the creation of translated dictionaries, bilingual and multilingual. It is noted that this is connected with the history of the USSR, with the difficult international situation in which the country was constantly located. Military conflicts, as well as military cooperation, stimulate the creation of translated dictionaries, which are necessary both for the organization of international communication and for the training of cadets in military schools. Less active in Soviet times were published monolingual dictionaries of military vocabulary, addressed primarily to those who study the basics of military affairs. The publication of encyclopedic dictionaries, addressed to a wide range of public interested in military affairs, containing information about military history and personalities, was also inferior to bilingual translated lexicography; the first such dictionary was published only in 1984. We drew a conclusion about the need to preserve the traditions of Soviet lexicography, whose representatives made a great contribution to the development of military dictionaries. Also, it is important to develop military lexicography in those areas that in the Soviet period were less developed – the field of military encyclopedic dictionaries and the field of monolingual military dictionaries.

Keywords: lexicography, Soviet period, military dictionary, encyclopedic dictionary, military vocabulary.

Introduction

The appearance of dictionaries has become a significant phenomenon: not only from linguistic, but also social perspective. It symbolized the transition of society to a new stage of development, when it becomes important for people to understand and classify the observed realities and phenomena of language, to fix their constantly changing appearance. The dictionary became to serve as a method of fixing reality in written form, as a tool for its typology and understanding.

A new section of linguistics – lexicography – “the science of composing dictionaries” [2, p.215] started to develop with the purpose of of studying and composing dictionaries. Lexicography refers to a special scientific field that is dedicated to fixing information related to a particular field of knowledge and/or language in dictionaries or books. The main unit of lexicography is a dictionary, and dictionaries are “divided into encyclopedic and linguistic”; the latter, in turn, “include bilingual (less often multilingual) and monolingual” dictionaries [7, p.159]. Lexicography is of great interest to modern researchers and linguists.
Today, corpus lexicography [13] and lexicography of various languages is being developed [14; 15], as well as much attention is being paid to computer lexicography creation[16]. Nowadays new approaches are applied to the compilation of dictionaries [12], but the issues of the history of dictionary creation are also extremely important for us. It helps us to determine its scientific prospects based on the analysis of lexicography development features.

It should be noted that attention of lexicographers is not paid evenly to all areas of life and phenomena of language. The purpose of this article is to analyze military dictionaries created by USSR scientists in the twentieth century.

Methodology
In conducting this research, we used general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis; a descriptive method, necessary for studying the structure and content of various military dictionaries; an observation method, aimed at obtaining objective information about lexicographic sources; and a method of typologizing dictionaries that represent military vocabulary and information related to the military field.

Results
The concept of “military dictionary” is an ambiguous term, because it is not defined precisely in lexicography. We will understand it as a lexicographic source that fixes the realities of life and the phenomena of language associated with the military sphere of society. In accordance with the generally accepted classification, military dictionaries are primarily distinguished as encyclopedic ones. A source of this type is “a dictionary representing in a condensed form the state of modern scientific knowledge achieved in those areas that are indicated by the words collected in it” [2, p. 421]. In other words, the encyclopedic dictionary serves to record the realities of life, while the linguistic material, serving the description of reality, is secondary.

The military encyclopedic dictionary presents the phenomena connected to the war, army, military operations, and military history. In Soviet times, several military encyclopedic dictionaries were published. Despite the importance of this type of dictionaries, the first of them was released only in 1984. It was a military encyclopedic dictionary edited by Marshal of the Soviet Union N.V. Ogarkova [6]. This single-volume scientific and informative publication, combines more than 14 thousand dictionary entries in which concepts, phenomena and events related to war and military affairs are described. Some dictionary entries are accompanied with black and white illustrations (drawings, portraits of generals, schemes, maps, etc.), and at the end of the publication there is a large number of color illustrations (maps, military awards, honorary distinction, badges, identification marks, military uniform of armies of different countries, etc.). Subsequently, this military encyclopedia was repeatedly reissued, particularly in the post-Soviet era, which indicates its demand among the country’s population. The constant involvement of Russia in military operations makes information related to the military sphere relevant and interesting for people.

The lexicographers’ predominant attention in the Soviet period was dedicated to the compilation of language dictionaries. In the 30s and 40s decades of the 20th century, interest for military vocabulary increased in linguistics science. The reason was the raise of tensions on international arena, as a result of which various translated linguistic dictionaries of military vocabulary appeared, including both bilingual and multilingual.

Bilingual and multilingual military dictionaries aim to facilitate the establishment of military contacts between representatives of different countries. They are used for translation of military-related text from one language to another, during business and interpersonal communication, and in training cadets of military schools in a professional foreign language. Bilingual military dictionaries appeared earlier than monolingual ones, due to their applied nature and importance for various types of international contacts. Given that the main reason for the appearance of bilingual dictionaries was often the war or military confrontation between two states, it becomes clear that bilingual dictionaries were designed to serve this conflict. A huge contribution to the creation of military bilingual dictionaries was made by A.M. Taube. He compiled a French-Russian military dictionary published in 1931 which included about 20 000 words and phrases [5], and an English-Russian military dictionary published in 1938, which contained 25 000 words and phrases [3]. In collaboration with F.E. Kuznetsov in 1931 he published a German-Russian military dictionary, which included 25000 words from the main branches of military affairs [4]. All dictionaries of A.M. Taube included applications in the form of a dictionary of abbreviations.

Ultimately, dictionaries, the author or co-author of which was A.M. Taube were repeatedly reprinted, and each of the reprints was supplemented by the compilers, who were taking into account the practical use of dictionaries by translators, and changes in military vocabulary during the time elapsed between reprints. It should be noted that military vocabulary is a very dynamic system: the constant appearance of modern weapons leads to the continuous replenishment of it with new words and phrases, which is derives from extralinguistic factors. Moreover, there is a tendency toward specialization in the field of scientific and reference literature related to military affairs. For instance, A.M. Taube excluded naval terminology from the publication of the English-Russian military dictionary of 1949,
because by that time it had already entered a separate dictionary published in 1943 in collaboration with V. A. Schmid and included 22,000 words and phrases related to the naval sphere [8].

A great contribution to the development of military lexicography was made by G. A. Sudzilovsky, who edited the English-Russian military dictionary in 1960 [1], which contained 50,000 words and expressions. Afterwards his lexicographic manual was also reissued with clarifications and additions. The peculiarity of G. A. Sudzilovsky's approach was to include in the dictionary of not only terminological words and expressions themselves, but also professionalisms and jargon, that are emotionally-colored words and expressions commonly used in the oral communication of the military.

Another compiler of bilingual military dictionaries is L. F. Parparov. In 1978, under his editorship was published the German-Russian military dictionary [10], which included military and military-technical terminology common in the German Democratic Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The dictionary was very voluminous, including about 70,000 words and expressions related to various branches of military affairs. Subsequently L. F. Parparov published and reissued several German-Russian and Russian-German dictionaries.

Due to the diversity of military affairs and therefore the diversity of military vocabulary, many dictionaries in the second half of the twentieth century were specialized, aimed at fixing military words in only one area. For example, the Illustrated military-technical dictionary By L. L. Nelyubin, published in 1968 [9]. This is a five-language dictionary, where technical terms of military affairs are arranged on a thematic basis, with more than 10,000 terms presented on 200 topics.

The choice of languages by lexicographers in the above-mentioned bilingual and multilingual dictionaries was connected with the history of military cooperation and military conflicts between the USSR and other countries. These languages (German, English, French, and Spanish) can be called indicators of which countries the USSR entered into military cooperation with.

Monolingual dictionaries were created less actively in Soviet period. They contain the military vocabulary used in the Russian language. The most famous and widespread among such dictionaries was the "Dictionary of military terms" by A. M. Plekhot, published in 1988 [11]. It includes more than 2,800 of the most common military terms, words and combinations in the Russian language. The dictionary is aimed at students of the basics of military affairs, who receive primary military education.

Discussion

As we can see, the greatest attention of lexicographers in Soviet period was paid to translated military dictionaries – bilingual and multilingual. The reason lies in the international situation: the USSR was constantly in conflict with capitalist States, in a state of “cold war”, and also concluded pacts on military cooperation. The countries that were the main strategic enemies and partners of the USSR can be identified by the languages of military translation dictionaries. These were German, English, French and other languages. Bilingual and multilingual dictionaries had a practical implementation, they were aimed at helping translators as well as military educators. Such dictionaries were of great importance in the process of training Soviet cadets in military schools, where they received knowledge that would help them to communicate effectively with foreign counterparts in the future.

Summary

Military lexicography of the USSR period can be assessed a considerably developed field of philological science. At the same time, the publication of military encyclopedic dictionaries was less active, the first such dictionary was published only in 1984. Encyclopedic dictionaries are addressed to a wide range of people interested in military affairs, whereas linguistic dictionaries, primarily translated ones, had a narrower target and a pragmatic orientation, which explains the primary attention of lexicographers to dictionaries of this type.

Conclusion

Russian military lexicography should take the best achievements of the Soviet period's science, which includes a rich experience in compiling military dictionaries. No doubt, dictionaries compiled by A. M. Taube, G. A. Sudzilovsky, L. F. Parparov, and L. L. Nelyubin, A. M. Plekhot and other researchers-lexicographers of the Soviet period should be supplemented by the vocabulary and phraseology that appears in the military sphere to name new types of weapons, new military equipment, as well as professional and slang vocabulary, which is also rapidly developing, and reprinted. Priority should be given to publishing and republishing military encyclopedic dictionaries designed to stimulate the attention of a wide range of readers to military affairs and military history.
References