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## DERIVATIONAL PATTERNS OF UKRAINIAN WARTIME NEOLOGISMS AS REPRESENTED IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MEDIA

*This article explores the derivational and structural characteristics of Ukrainian neologisms that emerged in response to the Russian-Ukrainian war and were subsequently translated into English. The research focuses on identifying dominant word-formation patterns used in the creation of wartime lexical innovations from 2022 to 2025. The study analyzes a corpus of 50 neologisms selected from English-language publications in leading international media (The Washington Post, The New York Times, Reuters, etc.) and Ukrainian online dictionaries of new vocabulary. A descriptive-analytical methodology was employed. The findings reveal that morphological mechanisms, particularly affixation, compounding, and blending, account for approximately 70% of the analyzed neologisms, making them the most productive means of lexical expansion. Semantic derivation, encompassing metaphorical reinterpretations, euphemistic reappropriations, and ironic shifts, constitutes around 20% of the cases. Syntactic-type neologisms, such as multi-word expressions, make up the remaining 10% and serve as powerful tools for identity assertion and resistance. The study demonstrates that neologisms function as strategic communicative instruments during wartime, enabling speakers to construct narratives, dehumanize the enemy, express trauma, and reinforce national identity. These lexical innovations reflect not only linguistic creativity but also emotional resilience and ideological stance. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of wartime language dynamics and offer a foundation for future linguistic, sociopolitical, and translation studies focused on crisis communication and cultural resistance.*

**Key words:** Ukrainian neologisms, wartime discourse, word-formation, morphological processes, semantic shift, syntactic neologisms, lexical innovation, identity, cultural resistance.

**Statement of the problem.** The political, social, and economic landscape of the world, along with technological advancements, is reflected in language. Among the most visible linguistic layers where this evolution occurs is the lexical level, where new realities are most immediately reflected. In recent years, the Ukrainian language has undergone intense lexical innovation, much of it catalyzed by the Russian-Ukrainian war. Unfortunately, war acts as a potent stimulus for neologism formation, generating vocabulary that encodes violence, trauma, resistance, and national identity.

Today, the Ukrainian language serves as both a symbol and an instrument of patriotism, a vessel through which national identity, historical memory, and cultural resilience are expressed and preserved. It plays a dual role: as a creator of identity and as its representative on the global stage, delineating eth-

nic boundaries, conveying ideological stances, and archiving historical struggle [3–7].

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Neologisms have consistently drawn scholarly interest, both in Ukraine and internationally. A wide array of linguistic research [2–6; 10; 13; 15; 23] has focused on the study of neologisms across various languages. These works primarily explore general theoretical and descriptive aspects of neology. Nonetheless, many conceptual and methodological questions remain open to debate, including the precise definition of a neologism, the scope and nature of linguistic innovation, and approaches to its systematic study.

Neologisms emerge in a language as a response to social, cultural, technological, or economic developments. According to P. Newmark, they are defined as “newly coined lexical units or existing lexical units

that acquire a new sense” [17, p. 140]. A neologism can be defined as a newly formed word or a collocation that gains a novel meaning. Traditionally, it is described as “a unit of the lexicon, a word, a word element, or a phrase whose meaning, or whose signifier-signified relationship, presupposing an effective function in a specific model of communication, was not previously materialized as a linguistic form in the immediately preceding stage of the lexicon of the language” [13, p. 245]. Neologisms are typically formed by modifying existing words, combining them, or introducing entirely new linguistic elements. These processes follow specific linguistic patterns, with the most common word-formation mechanisms including derivation, abbreviation, compounding, borrowing, analogy, and meaning transfer [23, p. 293]. Based on P. Newmark’s classification, neologisms can be categorized into two main groups [17, p. 142]: 1) existing lexical items with new senses; 2) newly formed lexical units, such as new coinages, derived words, abbreviations, collocations, eponyms, phrasal words, transferred words (with new and old referents), acronyms (with new and old referents), pseudo-neologisms, and internationalisms.

Researchers argue that neologisms follow three stages before being fully integrated into a language: invention, probation, and stabilization [18, p. 756]. Initially, a newly created word appears in limited usage (in media, memes, or subcultural contexts). During the probation stage, it spreads within a broader discourse community. Finally, if successful, the neologism stabilizes through dictionary inclusion or mainstream institutional use.

**Task statement.** We can suggest that the process of neologism formation in wartime is not arbitrary but follows predictable linguistic patterns rooted in the structural properties of the Ukrainian language. Affixation, compounding, abbreviation, and eponymy are known among the primary mechanisms facilitating lexical expansion. Through these processes, newly coined terms integrate into public discourse, enabling speakers to articulate new realities effectively.

This study aims to analyze the predominant word-formation patterns that contribute to the development of Ukrainian neologisms translated into English within the context of war. By examining selected examples, the paper seeks to reveal the linguistic mechanisms underlying these lexical innovations and to explore their broader communicative and cultural significance.

**Materials and Methods.** This study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology, focusing on neologisms that originated in the context of the

Russian-Ukrainian war. We examined 50 neologisms that emerged between 2022 and 2025 and were later translated or adapted into English. The corpus was assembled from English-language publications in prominent online media outlets, including *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and *Defense Express*. The selection of neologisms was informed by Ukrainian online dictionaries of new words [1; 8], ensuring that the terms analyzed are both recent and representative of ongoing lexical innovation.

Data collection involved systematic monitoring of media content and online lexical databases that document war-related vocabulary. Each neologism was analyzed with respect to its morphological structure in the target language, semantic features, and discourse function. The terms were then categorized by dominant word-formation mechanisms, enabling the identification of key trends and patterns in their formation and integration into contemporary Ukrainian.

The linguistic analysis was further supported by contextual interpretation, evaluating how these neologisms function in contexts of political messaging, military communication, and cultural identity-building. This can contribute to uncovering the primary linguistic strategies underlying the creation of neologisms and demonstrating the relationship between form and communicative intent.

Outline of the main material of the study. Neologisms play an important role in the evolution and adaptation of language, reflecting societal, cultural, and technological changes, as well as other aspects of human life. Their accurate understanding and translating into other languages are essential in shaping narratives about warfare, influencing public perceptions, rallying support, and reinforcing ideological positions on both sides of the war.

Neologisms in wartime discourse are strategic communicative tools. Newly coined words help shape narratives in favor of one side or another. A striking example is the word *banderivtsi*, referring to Ukrainians, primarily from western Ukraine, who fought for national liberation from totalitarian regimes in the mid-20th century under the leadership of Stepan Bandera. The surname of this national leader and life-long opponent of Soviet rule and Stalinist oppression became a symbol of the Ukrainian liberation movement [20]. Today, Russian propaganda continues to exploit this narrative, using it to justify its aggression against Ukraine and to motivate and mobilize Russian soldiers by portraying the so-called ‘*бандерівці*’ (*banderivtsi*) as a fabricated enemy. This constructed

threat serves as a pretext for the occupation of Ukrainian territories, illustrating how neologisms can be instrumentalized to shape political and military agendas. In a similar vein, terms such as *'путінізм'* (*putinism*) – a political ideology associated with Vladimir Putin's authoritarian style of leadership, often used pejoratively – and *Z-patriot* or *Z-army*, which derive from the "Z" symbol adopted by Russian forces, highlight how neologisms can also emerge as tools of irony and resistance. Frequently employed in international discourse, these terms reflect broader opposition to Russian militaristic narratives and underscore the dual function of neologisms in both supporting and subverting ideological constructs.

Neologisms often function as tools of dehumanization, allowing speakers to portray the enemy as barbaric, irrational, or inhuman by amplifying emotional responses. In wartime, emotionally charged and derogatory language plays a critical role in articulating collective anger, frustration, and trauma. Such expressions not only reinforce group solidarity but also serve as psychological coping mechanisms. For instance, Ukrainians have coined terms like *'рашисти'* (*rashists*), a blend of *Russian* and *fascist*, *'свинособаки'* (*pigdogs*), and *'орку'* (*orcs*) to convey contempt toward Russian aggressors. The term *orcs*, originally defined by the *Cambridge Dictionary* as "imaginary creatures, resembling extremely ugly and violent humans" from J.R.R. Tolkien's works, has been resemanticized in Ukrainian discourse to describe the perceived cruelty, inhumanity, and moral degradation of both Russian soldiers and civilians who support the invasion [11]. These neologisms reflect a psycholinguistic coping mechanism and foster in-group cohesion, serving both communicative and emotional roles.

The war has also prompted neologisms that describe emergent realities, or previously uncommon phenomena: such words as *'Banderomobile'* (modified vehicles used by defenders), *RFia* (РФія, a satirical rendering of 'Russian Federation'), and *'mohylyzatsiya'* (могилизація, from мобілізація + могила – a bleak pun on conscription and death) encode everyday wartime experiences with linguistic creativity and cultural peculiarities.

Among the neologisms that emerged during the Russian-Ukrainian war, we identified nearly all categories outlined in Newmark's classification of neologisms [17, p. 142]. These terms reflect not only lexical creativity but also deep cultural, political, and emotional significance. Below, we examine the newly formed lexical items that have appeared in Ukrainian between 2022 and 2024, shedding light on the mecha-

nisms that drive their formation and integration into public discourse.

To better understand how such neologisms are constructed, it is essential to consider the main types of word-formation processes in contemporary linguistics. These processes are typically divided into morphological, syntactic, and semantic categories, each playing a distinct role in generating new lexical units. Morphological word-formation involves internal structural modifications and includes processes such as derivation, compounding, conversion, and clipping. It remains the most productive mechanism across many languages, especially in coining politically and socially charged neologisms [9; 16]. Syntactic word-formation refers to the creation of new multi-word expressions or fixed phrases through syntactic combinations, such as collocations or phrasal compounds (e.g., *Banderomobile* or *Ghost of Kyiv*), which often function as single semantic units in discourse [14]. Semantic word-formation (or semantic shift) involves assigning new meanings to existing words without altering their form. This includes metaphorical extension, metonymy, and resemanticization, strategies that are especially prominent in wartime discourse, where euphemisms, irony, and symbolic reinterpretation (e.g., *бавовна* for "explosion") are linguistically and emotionally charged [10; 22].

Based on our analysis, we observed a clear predominance of morphological word-formation mechanisms, which accounted for approximately 70% of all cases. This category includes derivation, compounding, blending, clipping, and eponymy, with derivation, particularly through affixation, being the most productive. Semantic shifts, encompassing metaphorical redefinitions, euphemistic reappropriations, and resemanticization, represented about 20% of the neologisms analyzed. These processes frequently involved emotionally or ideologically loaded reinterpretations of common lexical items. Finally, syntactic-type neologisms, such as phrasal constructions and collocational compounds (e.g., *Ghost of Kyiv*, *Banderomobile*, *Russian warship*, *go f\*\* yourself\**), accounted for the remaining 10%, highlighting the role of contextually rich multi-word expressions in constructing cultural meaning and wartime narratives.

Neologisms formed during the Russian-Ukrainian war reveals that their creation primarily relies on established morphological processes, which have been particularly active in response to the war's rapidly evolving sociopolitical landscape. The most prominent mechanisms include affixation, compounding, clipping, blending, and eponymy. Each contributes

to the expansion and expressiveness of the lexicon, enabling speakers to encode ideological, emotional, and experiential dimensions of wartime reality in succinct and powerful ways. These processes not only reflect structural linguistic patterns but also reveal the socio-cultural adaptability and resilience of language during crisis.

Derivation, particularly through affixation, is one of the most productive processes in the formation of war-related neologisms. The addition of prefixes and suffixes enables the nuanced modification of existing lexical items, allowing speakers to generate terms that capture ideological, emotional, or functional distinctions with precision. Prefixation, for instance, is evident in formations such as *'anti-putinism'* (*антимунізм*), where the prefix *anti-* conveys opposition to Putin's political ideology and policies, framing the term within a broader discourse of resistance and dissent. Similarly, suffixation plays a crucial role in producing expressive and often derogatory neologisms, as seen in terms like *'putlerism'* (a blend of *Putin* and *Hitler*, with the *-ism* suffix marking an ideological framework) or *'Z-bot'*, where the *-bot* suffix dehumanizes and mocks individuals perceived as mindlessly supporting pro-Russian narratives. Other examples include *'vatnikism'*, derived from *'vatnik'* (a stereotype of a blindly patriotic Russian), where the *-ism* suffix adds an ideological dimension, and *'Orcland'*, where the *-land* suffix transforms a fantasy-derived insult (*orc*) into a mock geopolitical label. In these formations, suffixes function not only to label and categorize, but also to intensify the speaker's evaluative stance through irony, satire, or contempt.

During the Russian-Ukrainian war, a significant number of neologisms based on proper names have emerged as powerful tools of both propaganda and resistance. These lexical innovations often reflect socio-political sentiment, irony, and national identity, and are commonly used in media, protest language, and online discourse. One prominent example is *'putler'*, a portmanteau of *Putin* and *Hitler*, widely employed to draw parallels between the authoritarian tendencies of the Russian president and historical fascism. Similarly, the phrase *'bunker grandpa'* (*бункерний дід*) satirically refers to Putin's perceived isolation and detachment during the invasion, reinforcing an image of cowardice or strategic withdrawal. The term *'Ghost of Kyiv'* (*Київський привид*) gained symbolic status as a mythical Ukrainian fighter pilot who became a morale-boosting legend, illustrating how proper names, real or fictional, can galvanize public imagination. *'Bayraktarshchyna'*

(*Байрактарщина*), derived from the Turkish-made drone *Bayraktar*, evolved into a cultural phenomenon celebrating Ukrainian military success, often accompanied by music, memes, and patriotic rhetoric. *'Stefania'*, the title of a Eurovision-winning song by Ukrainian band *Kalush Orchestra*, was similarly recontextualized as a wartime anthem, symbolizing maternal love and national resilience. *'Shoiguilo'* (*Шойгуїло*), a derogatory neologism derived from the name of Russia's defense minister Sergei Shoigu, exemplifies how personal names of military figures are reworked into forms of ridicule or critique. Collectively, these neologisms serve not only linguistic and communicative functions but also act as tools for shaping collective memory, political identity, and emotional expression amid conflict.

Another prominent mechanism of wartime lexical innovation is semantic derivation, whereby existing words acquire new, context-specific meanings without undergoing formal modification. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, this process reflects both linguistic creativity and the emotional urgency of conflict-driven communication. A notable example is the mentioned above term *'orcs'*. Similarly, the seemingly innocuous word *'bavovna'* (*cotton*) has undergone ironic resemanticization to serve as a euphemism for explosions, particularly those occurring in occupied territories. This metaphorical usage introduces a layer of dark humor and emotional distancing, allowing speakers to reference violence in a veiled or satirical manner. Another example is *'кіборги'* (*cyborgs*), a term redefined to honor the exceptional endurance and resilience of Ukrainian soldiers who defended Donetsk Airport, effectively elevating them to the status of mythologized figures. In Russian political discourse, the term *'скупену'* (*spiritual bonds*), initially used to promote conservative national values, has similarly undergone semantic shift, now functioning as a target of irony and criticism in Ukrainian and oppositional narratives. Finally, the Latin letter *Z*, once semantically neutral, has been ideologically charged as a symbol of Russian aggression and militarism. These examples illustrate how semantic derivation enables speakers to rapidly adapt language to shifting political and emotional realities, reinforcing group identity, ideological resistance, and the symbolic dimensions of modern warfare.

Conversion, or zero derivation [9; 14], is another productive mechanism in the formation of wartime neologisms, particularly in fast-evolving and emotionally charged conflict discourse. This process involves a shift in grammatical category without morphological change, enabling existing words, often proper names



or military terms, to adopt new syntactic roles while maintaining their original form. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, conversion allows for the rapid adaptation of familiar terms to express new actions or roles within the discourse. For instance, the proper noun *putin* has been converted into the verb ‘*to putin*’, used to describe acts of aggression, domination, or authoritarian control (e.g., ‘*They’re trying to putin the region*’). Similarly, the symbol *Z*, associated with Russian military vehicles, has been employed as a verb (“*to Z*”) to denote the act of marking or claiming territory in line with pro-Russian ideology. The noun *Bayraktar*, a reference to the Turkish-made drone, has also undergone conversion into a verb, as in ‘*to bayraktar*’, meaning to strike a target using drone technology. These conversions reflect not only linguistic creativity but also the discursive need for efficient, expressive terminology that captures new wartime realities and shifting communicative priorities.

In addition to single-word formations, the Russian-Ukrainian war has also given rise to a range of syntactic-type neologisms, multi-word expressions that function as semantic units and convey complex ideological, emotional, or symbolic meaning. These neologisms typically emerge through syntactic combinations, collocations, or phrasal constructions, often drawing from cultural references, current events, and ironic or satirical framing. Many of these terms have been translated into English in media and academic discourse, while retaining their original stylistic impact and cultural specificity. For example, ‘*Ghost of Kyiv*’ (Київський привид) became an internationally recognized expression, mythologizing an anonymous Ukrainian fighter pilot as a symbol of national resistance. Another widely circulated phrase, ‘*Russian warship, go f\* yourself*’, originated as a real-time act of defiance by Ukrainian soldiers and quickly transformed into a cultural slogan of resilience. Other expression, ‘*Palyanytsia test*’ (Паляниця-тест) designates a linguistic shibboleth used to distinguish Ukrainians from russians by their pronunciation of culturally specific words. These examples demonstrate how syntactic neologisms encode not only linguistic creativity but also serve as tools for identity assertion, ideological resistance, and

collective memory construction. Such phrasal units often present translation challenges, as their semantic weight extends beyond literal meaning into the realm of shared trauma, irony, and national myth-making. Their appearance in English-language media underscores the translatability of cultural resistance and highlights the growing global resonance of Ukrainian wartime discourse.

Abbreviations and acronyms are relatively uncommon among the neologisms that have emerged during the Russian-Ukrainian war. This can be attributed to the tendency of Ukrainian innovations to remain as clear and widely understandable as possible.

**Conclusion.** The Russian-Ukrainian war has served as a catalyst for profound linguistic innovation, generating a wealth of neologisms that reflect the conflict’s socio-political, emotional, and ideological dimensions. This study demonstrates that Ukrainian wartime neologisms are not arbitrary but emerge through systematic word-formation processes, including derivation, compounding, semantic shift, and eponymy. These mechanisms enable speakers to articulate new realities, express collective trauma, and resist ideological aggression with remarkable precision and creativity.

The analysis reveals how neologisms function as multifaceted tools: shaping narratives (e.g., *banderivtsi*, *putler*), dehumanizing adversaries, and satirizing oppressive systems (*Z-patriot*). Notably, proper names and symbols are repurposed as verbs or ideological labels (*to putin*, *Z-army*), illustrating language’s adaptive capacity in crises. Meanwhile, semantic derivation and affixation dominate morphological innovation, underscoring Ukrainian’s structural flexibility.

These lexical innovations transcend mere terminology; they are acts of cultural resilience and identity assertion. By codifying wartime experiences, neologisms preserve collective memory and reinforce national solidarity. However, their translation into English also exposes challenges in conveying contextual nuances, ideological weight, and emotional resonance, a critical consideration for international media and diplomacy.

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#### **Воскобойник В. І., Костенко В. Г., Сухачова Н. С. СЛОВОТВІРНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ НЕОЛОГІЗМІВ ВОЄННОГО ЧАСУ В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ МЕДІАДИСКУРСІ**

У статті досліджуються особливості творення українських неологізмів, які виникли у контексті російсько-української війни, та їхній переклад англійською мовою. Особливу увагу зосереджено на виявленні структурних моделей, що лежать в основі лексичної інновації у період з 2022 по 2025 рік. У роботі проаналізовано корпус із 50 неологізмів, відібраних із англомовних публікацій провідних медіа (*The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Reuters* тощо), а також словників новітньої української лексики. Застосовано описово-аналітичну методологію. Дослідження виявило, що найпродуктивнішими способами словотвору є морфологічні механізми (переважно афіксація, словоскладання, зрощення), які становлять близько 70% проаналізованих одиниць. Семантична деривація охоплює 20% випадків і відображає переосмислення вже існуючих слів, зокрема у формі іронії, евфемізмів або метафор. Синтаксичні конструкції (напр. «Привид Києва», «Руський корабель, іди...») становлять 10% і слугують засобом ідентифікації, культурного спротиву та збереження колективної пам'яті. Проаналізовані неологізми виконують різні функції: вони допомагають формувати наративи, демонізують противника, засвідчують

національну ідентичність та емоційно маркують досвід війни. Дослідження підкреслює важливість лінгвістичних інновацій як реакції на соціально-політичні трансформації та їхню роль у побудові дискурсу спротиву й солідарності. Запропонований аналіз може слугувати основою для подальших лінгвістичних і перекладознавчих студій, пов'язаних із кризовою комунікацією, ідеологією та воєнною риторикою.

**Ключові слова:** українські неологізми, воєнний дискурс, словотвір, морфологічні процеси, семантичне переосмислення, синтаксичні неологізми, лексична інновація, ідентичність, культурний спротив.