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MILITARY TRANSLATION AND AI

When a translator makes a one-word mistake in a military document, the meaning of an order changes, and that can cost a unit's safety. This is why the coupling of military translation and artificial-intelligence technologies today is not about “a fad” but about a vital necessity in multinational operations, exercises, and joint planning [2, pp. 37–38].

The issue's relevance is driven by two concurrent processes. On the one hand, military discourse imposes strict requirements for accuracy, standardized terminology, concision, and structural clarity. A translator must reproduce formulaic constructions and vast arrays of terms, abbreviations, and symbols with zero leeway [1, pp. 116–118, 122–124]. On the other hand, modern AI tools already personalize learning, automate routine operations, and act as intelligent assistants, while also carrying ethical risks related to confidentiality and accountability for error [3, pp. 27–33, 35–36].

Research shows that the military term system is highly codified and relies on international standards, in particular NATO glossaries; this reduces variability and secures mutual understanding among allies [2, pp. 37–38]. At the same time, translation in this field is complicated by polysemy, differences across branches of service and national traditions, and a constant influx of new names for weapons and technologies [1, pp. 120–121; 2, pp. 39–40]. Under such conditions, combined strategies are appropriate: rely on unified terms, use up-to-date dictionaries and glossaries, monitor stylistic adequacy, and build specialized text corpora – all of which can be reinforced by AI tools [1, p. 124].

A few telling examples. First, semantic shifts across branches: battalion renders as “батальйон” in infantry but “дивізіон” in artillery; section in the United States can be “секція” in heavy weapons and “зряддя” in artillery, whereas in the United Kingdom it corresponds to an infantry “відділення”; number can also change meaning: defense (“оборона”) versus defenses (“оборонні споруди”) [1, p. 120]. Second, false friends: military academy is not “військова академія” but “військове училище”; ammunition means “боєприпаси”, not “амуніція” [1, p. 120]. Third, commands must be rendered without variability: Advance – «Вперед!», Cease fire! – «Припинити вогонь!», Hold your fire – «Не стріляти!»; any inconsistency here is dangerous [2, p. 40]. Finally, abbreviations such as IFV or SAM require stable equivalents and contextual verification [2, pp. 38–39].

How exactly does AI amplify the translator's work? First, through automatic term extraction and the construction of updatable, standards-aligned glossaries, which lowers the risks of synonymy and inconsistency [3, pp. 31–33; 2, pp. 38–39]. Second, through corpus-based models for style control: systems can flag deviations from set phrases, excessive informality, or violations of the syntactic brevity inherent in military documents [1, pp. 116–118; 3, pp. 30–31]. Third, through intelligent assistants that propose translation candidates with explanations and references, while the translator takes a responsible decision informed by context and data secrecy [3, pp. 35–36; 1, pp. 122–124].

Military translation and AI technologies form a complementary tandem: standardized terminology, corpora, and glossaries provide the bedrock of accuracy, while intelligent tools accelerate analysis and strengthen quality control. Yet ultimate responsibility remains with the human: it is the professional translator who preserves the context, cultural realities, and style that an algorithm does not “see” [1, p. 122; 3, pp. 35–36].

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