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THE DIGITAL FRONT OF MILITARY LANGUAGE: BALANCING STANDARDS AND SLANG

In recent years, digital transformation and the wide reach of social media have noticeably changed how different groups speak and write, including the military. In a context of active combat and heavy use of public and semi-public channels (YouTube, Telegram, TikTok, Facebook), two processes run in parallel: some traditional terms gradually lose their original precision, while a new layer of informal language emerges – field slang, abbreviations, and borrowings from other languages. These shifts bring benefits (speed, unit cohesion) but also risks (loss of formality, operational-security risks), which makes the topic both socially and practically important.

Digital platforms do more than spread information – they shape new genres of military communication: short situation clips, report-style briefings, field vlogs, and livestreams. Against the backdrop of hybrid war, this comes with structural changes in the information environment – growing polarization, a crisis of trust in the “global information space,” and the rising role of networked channels of influence [1, p. 119]. In these conditions, metaphor and expressiveness naturally intensify (from headlines to on-camera speech), and official discourse moves closer to everyday spoken practice [2, p. 37].

For official communications, the effect is double-edged. Advantages include speed and convenience, stronger team identity, and a mobilizing effect. Risks include the blurring of the official register, the danger of misreading orders in mixed registers, and greater exposure to influence operations (when public messages and “everyday” wording become part of information effects) [1, p. 119]. The practical answer is balance – keeping a regulated terminology system while accepting natural innovation online, supported by clear explanatory standards, teaching examples, and systematic work on common errors.

Field videos from Ukrainian units show how official style coexists with jargon. In footage from the 3rd Separate Assault Brigade, one can hear set phrases like “shift right” and “secured a strongpoint,” which combine concise official phrasing with the tempo of field speech. There are also conversational labels for vehicles and gear such as “bronik” (armored personnel carrier) and “korobka” (tank) – items often missed by formal

dictionaries but typical of combat talk [1, p. 119].

Materials from the “Kraken” unit feature names for modern strike means and shorthand: “FPV-shka” (an FPV drone), “sivalka” (mortar), “kasetka” (cluster munition). In combat videos these words mainly serve a technical labeling function, while remaining informal abbreviations understood mainly within the military community [2, p. 37].

Footage from the K-2 Battalion (54th Mechanized Brigade) shows active use of call signs and short identifiers such as “Dok,” “Starshyi,” and “Malyi” for addressing teammates. This reflects a distinct layer of military anthroponymy (naming practices) that preserves anonymity while enabling quick recognition in the group and efficient coordination [3, p. 463].

Comparative English-language material underlines the role of standardized terms and abbreviations. In the US Marines, items like “fireteam,” “LZ” (landing zone), and “CAS” (close air support) are common, while in informal talk one hears the in-group label “jarhead” [5, p. 12]. In the British Army, “squaddie” (enlisted soldier) and “kit” (equipment, gear) are frequent. The command “stand down” has a precise doctrinal meaning, yet it often slips into everyday banter as a light-hearted way to end a conversation [4, p. 4]. These examples show how official vocabulary coexists with conversational items and how abbreviation systems shape unit thinking.

Taken together, military slang and borrowed elements are an integral part of today’s communication environment. Integrating them into everyday practice requires a careful balance between speed and standards, and between openness and information security.

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