

Verbalization of Ukraine's Defense Strategy in the information Space during the Great War

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Abstract: The article characterizes the means of verbalization of Ukraine's defense strategy in the information space of the Great War period, analyzes them in terms of semantic specificity, emotional and expressive coloring, transformation, and communicative intentions. It is found that the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war significantly activated the processes of renewal and functional/semantic rethinking of the defense topics vocabulary. The information space became an environment for intensive production and dissemination of language units that represent Ukraine's defense strategy, reflect key areas of strengthening state security, and shape the public perception of military reality. It is established that the corresponding nominative array includes both terminological names and metaphORIZED, expressively marked constructions that are distinguished by high communicative and pragmatic potential. The analysis has shown the effectiveness of models with the components defense, line, belt, fortress, node, which verbalize the ideas of multilevel nature, inaccessibility, and scale of defensive lines. Epithets, metaphors, hyperboles, periphrastic nominations, and transformed stable compounds play an important role in the formation of Ukrainian defense' media image. Such linguistic means not only inform about fortification work and the functioning of defense systems, but also express the evaluative component, enhance the emotional impact on the audience, contribute to the consolidation of society and strengthening trust in the Armed Forces of Ukraine..

Keywords: lexeme, defense strategy of Ukraine, national security, military history, emotional-expressive coloring, metaphor, communicative-pragmatic function, noun, verb, adjective, Ukrainian language, media.

Introduction

The full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war became a powerful catalyst for changes in the linguistic space of Ukraine, actualizing new directions of linguistic research. In wartime, the ability of language

to quickly respond to a new reality, record it and form appropriate models of public perception is especially clearly manifested. One of the most noticeable features of modern Ukrainian media discourse is the active verbalization of the state's defense strategy. The mass media not only inform about the course of events on the battlefield, but also construct the linguistic image of national resistance, represent defensive actions, and outline tactical and strategic aspects of the country's defense (Fröhlich, 2020). In this process, lexical units that form the idea of stability, organization, offensive initiative and invincibility of the Ukrainian army acquire special importance. The military media space demonstrates an intensive renewal of vocabulary: special military terms are activated, commonly used words acquire new semantic shades, the role of expressive and evaluative vocabulary, metaphorical constructions, transformed stable statements is increasing. Such language resources provide not only the nomination of military realities that shape modern military history, but also perform important communicative and pragmatic functions, influencing public opinion, strengthening faith in victory, consolidating society and shaping confidence in the national security of Ukraine. In this context, the study of linguistic means, with the help of which the defense strategy of Ukraine in the current period of the Great War is represented in the modern Ukrainian media discourse, acquires particular relevance. The analysis of such units makes it possible to trace the trends in the development of military vocabulary, identify the mechanisms of formation of the linguistic image of resistance, and outline the role of the media in creating a national narrative of struggle.

Literature Review

The reflection of war and hostilities in the media information space became a critical subject of contemporary scholarly inquiry, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving digital communication environments. Modern media not only report on armed conflicts but actively shape public perception, influence political discourse, and contribute to the construction of narratives surrounding warfare. The proliferation of social media platforms, real-time reporting, and information warfare strategies has intensified the complexity of how conflicts are represented and interpreted. Consequently, analyzing the mechanisms, biases, and impacts of media coverage is essential for understanding both the societal consequences of war and the role of information as a strategic resource in contemporary hostilities.

According to Zeitzoff (2017), social media is becoming more and more involved in disputes and divisive politics. Protesters, leaders, rebels, and politicians have all used it as a communication tool. Through four interconnected points, the author offers a framework for comprehending social media's impact on conflict: (1) social media lowers communication costs; (2) it speeds up and disseminates information; (3) scholars should concentrate on the strategic interaction and competitive adaptation of actors in response to communication technology changes; and (4) the new data that social media provides is not only an important resource but also fundamentally alters the information available to conflict actors, thereby shaping the conflict itself.

The cognitive framework of WAR is the focus of Uberman's (2024) article. From the standpoint of cognitive linguistics, a frame is an intricate knowledge structure made up of several connected components. While the most current expansions are described based on specific online BBC News pieces about information, cyberwar, and hybrid war, conventional frame parts are supplied based on lexicographic sources.

According to Nnawulezi et al. (2025), information warfare has become a common tactic in contemporary conflicts due to technical improvements, posing new threats to national security and unity. The study uses a normative research approach to analyze current laws and rules pertaining to

information warfare and highlights how important it is to follow the necessity and proportionality criteria when dealing with other types of armed conflict.

With a focus on civic journalism, which swiftly surpasses the work of traditional reporters, Dzhambazova (2014) attempted to summarize the essential elements of modern war conflict media coverage techniques. In order to prevent hostile narratives from influencing public opinion and political decision-makers, Silveira et al. (2025) stress that the spread of narratives, particularly in digital media, challenges the European Union to adopt measures to scrutinize and hold the main communication channels accountable as well as to implement effective strategies to combat misinformation. In this context, the authors attempt to examine the effects of media discourses and false information on the creation of social representations regarding the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and refugees, as well as how people spread this kind of content on social media.

Within Ukrainian scientific discourse, a multi-faceted description of the diverse vocabulary inherent in the war period was reflected in the monographic publications *"The Russian-Ukrainian War in the Lens of Language"* (Kostusiak & Navalna, 2025) and *"The Experience of War. Media and Discursive Space of Modern Ukraine"* (Romaniuk, 2024). Many linguistic issues were raised in articles devoted to the study of language dynamics, the prerequisite for which was the Russian intervention. Gupta et al. (2025) The latest nominative processes were analyzed to the greatest extent in studies of secondary names of persons - participants in military actions. Lexemes of this variety are characterized in terms of metaphorization, emotionality, evaluation, derivation, ethnic marking, deaestheticization, as well as in terms of the linguistic axiological aspect and communicative/pragmatic potential (Bagan, 2023; Kostusiak et al., 2023a; Kostusiak et al., 2023b; Navalna et al., 2025). In a range of works, the main attention is focused on the updated and unofficial names of Russia, aimed at highlighting its dehumanization, aggression, and imperial ambitions (Bulyk-Verkhola, 2022). Neologisms selected from Ukrainian media resources, formed as a result of derivational processes and borrowed from other languages, became the object of research by Vusyk and Pavlyk (2022). Hrytsenko (2022) emphasized innovations, a significant part of which arose on the basis of anthroponyms and toponyms.

The scope of linguistic investigations includes language units that participate in creating the appropriate psycho-emotional background of modern media discourse and convey the author's communicative and pragmatic intentions (Mezhov et al., 2024). No less important is the description of the means of verbalization of manipulative tactics and strategies, propaganda narratives and the concepts actualized in them (Kyryliuk, 2023). Zavalnyuk and Melnyk (2022) analyzed the names of weapons, ammunition, and military-administrative units used in the remarks of the participants in the teledialogue through the prism of the Russo-Ukrainian war. The research focus was on language models that explicated the end of the Russo-Ukrainian war (Kostusiak et al., 2025).

A brief analysis of linguistic works shows that the verbalization of war realities and the language dynamics associated with it do not lose their relevance. The Russian intervention continues, which affects the dominance of military-themed lexemes in the information space, including those that have not yet found linguistic evaluation in the scientific literature. Rai (2024) Situational factors, in particular, resistance to the enemy and protection of national security, serve as a prerequisite for the use of defense-themed vocabulary in media sources, which requires multi-vector linguistic interpretation.

Aims and tasks of the research

The purpose of the article is to characterize the means of verbalization of Ukraine's defense strategy in the information space of the Great War period, to analyze them in terms of semantic specificity, emotional and expressive coloring, transformation, and communicative intentions.

To achieve the formulated goal, the following tasks are implied:

- 1) to outline the theoretical principles of studying media texts on military topics;
- 2) to identify the corpus of lexical units that represent Ukraine's defense strategy and characterize their structural and semantic features;
- 3) to clarify the functional and pragmatic potential of the analyzed nominations in the media space;
- 4) to determine the role of expressive and evaluative vocabulary, metaphorical models, and transformations in shaping the image of national resistance and protecting Ukraine's national security;
- 5) to identify communicative strategies and tactics implemented using linguistic units of the outlined topic;
- 6) to reveal the influence of the analyzed verbal means on the formation of public opinion and the consolidation of Ukrainian society in conditions of war

Methodology

The material for the study was selected from media publications of the period 2022–2026, in which stylistically neutral and marked linguistic markers of protection and national defense of Ukraine function. Priority was given to the most famous all-Ukrainian and regional information sources. The corpus of factual material consists of about 5,000 sentence structures with linguistic units of the outlined topic.

A complex of general scientific and special linguistic methods was used to comprehensively analyze the nominations that verbalize Ukraine's defense strategy:

- 1) descriptive, which made it possible to systematize and generalize the linguistic units of the defense theme, observed in the Ukrainian information space of the Great War period;
- 2) end-to-end writing, with the help of which a corpus of factual material from the texts of modern Ukrainian media was formed;
- 3) lexical-semantic analysis, used to identify the semantic structure of the studied units, clarify the features of their functioning, structural and semantic transformations within military media discourse;
- 4) contextual-interpretive method, which made it possible to determine the communicative-pragmatic potential of the analyzed lexemes, to trace their role in forming the image of the state's defense strategy and protecting national security;
- 5) stylistic analysis, used to identify expressive-evaluative language resources, metaphorical models, and transformed stable constructions as well as determine their role in the implementation of the author's intention, the formation of pragmatic influence on the audience;
- 6) discourse analysis, the elements of which made it possible to study the strategies and tactics of linguistic influence represented in the modern information space.

Results and Discussion

In the conceptualization of Ukrainian resistance, the dominant role is played by the lexeme *оборона* (defense), which in Ukrainian lexicography is interpreted as a multi-valued word. Considering it in the context of current military realities that shape the military history of Ukraine, we will first of

all highlight the following semantic shades of the analyzed linguistic unit: “3. A set of means necessary for the security and defense of the country. ... 4. troops. A system of firing points, fortifications, etc., on which troops are located, preparing to repel an enemy attack” (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language online, n.d.). Lexemes with both semantic shades are observed in Ukrainian mass media: “**Оборона** та економіка: Україна підписала з Німеччиною документи про співпрацю” (*Defense and economy: Ukraine signed cooperation documents with Germany*) (headline) (<https://www.ukrinform.ua>, April 14, 2026); “Латвія і **оборона** України: еволюція військової підтримки” (*Latvia and Ukraine's defense: Evolution of military support*) (<https://military.com>, March 16, 2026); “Від Київського водосховища до Сум: як Україна готується до **оборони**” (*From the Kyiv reservoir to Sumy: How Ukraine prepares for defense*) (headline) (<https://prm.ua>, April 28, 2026).

In addition to the separately used term *оборона* (*defense*), the dictionary contains several stable compounds built according to different models, which we will analyze in terms of their functional manifestation and transformation in media texts on military topics:

1. Verb + controlled substantive *оборона* (*defense*): “Займати / зайняти оборону” (“To take up defense”) – to prepare to repel enemy attacks by appropriately placing troops, firepower, etc.” (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language online, n.d.); “Займати / зайняти позицію (позиції)” (“To take up position(s)”) – to prepare for battle or defense by positioning oneself in a certain place” (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language online, n.d.); “Зламати оборону (фронт, опір, etc.)” (“To break the defense (front, resistance, etc.)”) – to break through the defense (front, resistance, etc.)” (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language online, n.d.). Among the indicated language units, the fragmentary nature of the expression is inherent in the compound *зламати оборону* (*to break the defense*), while the frequency of use of the constructions *зайняти оборону*, *зайняти позиції* and *прорвати оборону* (*to take up defense*, *to take up positions*, and *to break through the defense*) is approximately the same: “1-й корпус НГУ «Азов» **зайняв оборону** та блокує противника на Покровському напрямку” (*The 1st Corps of the Azov Naval Group took up defense and blocks the enemy in the Pokrovske direction*) (headline) (<https://armyinform.com.ua>, August 12, 2025); “Окупанти погрожують нападати на острів Зміїний, українські прикордонники **зайняли оборону**” (*The occupiers threaten to attack Zmiinyi Island, Ukrainian border guards took up defense*) (headline) (<https://investigator.org.ua>, February 24, 2022); “ЗСУ **зайняли** нові **позиції** в районі Миронілівського на Сумщині: деталі” (*The Armed Forces of Ukraine took up new positions in the Myroniv district of Sumy region: details*) (headline) (<https://nfront.org.ua>, April 13, 2026); “ЗСУ **прорвали оборону** РФ на Олександрівському напрямку: деталі успішної операції (відео)” (*The Armed Forces of Ukraine broke through the defense of the Russian Federation in the Oleksandriivske direction: details of the successful operation (video)*) (headline). “Підрозділи 132 окремого розвідувального батальйону ДШВ ЗСУ провели успішну операцію на Олександрівському напрямку та **прорвали оборону** російських військ” (*Units of the 132nd Separate Reconnaissance Battalion of the Ukrainian Armed Forces conducted a successful operation in the Oleksandriivka direction and broke through the defense of Russian troops*) (<https://tsn.ua>, March 1, 2026).

Semantically close to the compounds *зайняти оборону* and *зайняти позиції* (*to take up defense* and *to take up positions*) is a three-word construction structured by a verb and two subordinate nouns: “На Покровському напрямку корпус «Азов» **зайняв смугу оборони**: противник зазнає втрат” (*In the Pokrovske direction, the Azov corps took up a defense strip: the enemy suffers losses*) (headline) (<https://www.rbc.ua>, August 12, 2025). In addition to the above, other complex nominations, that participate in the formation of the image of the state's defense strategy, are also observed: “На Буковині нагородили п'ятьох нацгвардійців, які **тримали оборону** 173 дні” (*Five National Guardsmen who held the defense for 173 days were awarded in Bukovina*) (headline) (<https://www.ukrinform.ua>, March 3, 2026); “Герої, які стоять на обороні Вугледара. Фоторепортаж” (*Heroes who stand on the defense of Vugledar*.

Photo report) (headline) (<https://volnovakha.city>, March 3, 2023). There are also three-component models, which include a verb, a controlled noun, and a qualitative adjective dependent on it: "Прийшли, зачистили, зайняли: десантники **захопили важливу позицію**" (They came, cleared, occupied: the paratroopers **seized an important position**) (headline) (<https://armyinform.com.ua>, April 9, 2026); "Сирський: війська РФ мають незначні просування, ЗСУ **стоять в активній обороні**" (Syrskyi: the Russian troops have made minor advances, the Armed Forces of **Ukraine are on active defense**) (headline) (<https://volnovakha.city>, October 17, 2025).

2. Noun + nouns оборона (defense): "Лінія оборони (Defense line), military. – a system of certain defensive fortifications, firing points, etc." (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language online, n.d.); "Пояс оборони (Defense belt), military. – a strip of military fortifications that form part of a defensive bridgehead" (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language online, n.d.). The studied texts present the compound *лінія оборони* (defense line), while the *пояс оборони* (defense belt) is not attested in the corpus of factual material, although compounds with the figuratively used word *belt* occur in texts of a defense nature, and they will be discussed further: "Лінія оборони на півночі: до чого готуються ЗСУ" (**Defense line in the north: what the Armed Forces of Ukraine are preparing for**) (headline) (<https://ua.korrespondent.net>, April 28, 2026); "РФ готує прорив на півночі: Україна терміново будує **лінію оборони**" (The Russian Federation is preparing a breakthrough in the north: Ukraine is urgently building a **defense line**) (headline) (<https://ukrmedia.news>, April 28, 2026). Often, media professionals resort to modifying the specified stable unit, supplementing it with attributive language units: "На півночі України будують **гігантську лінію оборони** – чи є загроза наступу РФ" (In the north of Ukraine, a **giant defense line** is being built – is there a threat of an attack by the Russian Federation) (headline) (<https://glavred.net>, April 28, 2026); "Україна розбудовує **масштабну лінію оборони** від Сумщини до Київського моря" (Ukraine is building a **large-scale defense line** from Sumy region to the Kyiv Sea) (headline) (<https://glavcom.ua>, April 28, 2026). In the presented headline sentences, the three-component constructions *гігантську лінію оборони* and *масштабну лінію оборони* (giant defense line and large-scale defense line) serve as key semantic and pragmatic centers of statements.

Terminological military nominations not only denote a system of fortifications and defensive lines, but also form a large-scale, emotionally saturated idea of Ukraine's defense measures. Such functional potential is provided by the adjectives *гігантський* and *масштабний* (giant and large-scale), which act as intensifiers and allow emphasizing the exceptional scope of defense construction. In media discourse, these lexemes enhance the strategic significance of the object. The transformation of the neutral compound *лінія оборони* (defense line) into the emotionally marked *гігантська лінія оборони* and *масштабна лінія оборони* (giant defense line and large-scale defense line) ensures the fulfillment of a persuasive function, since the use of semantically and structurally complicated statements is aimed at convincing the recipient of the scale of the preparation, the ability of the state to protect its territory from a potential threat. Implementing the strategy of influencing the reader, in particular, by evoking a sense of security in him, the analyzed constructions perform an important pragmatic role. The modified compounds *гігантська лінія оборони* and *масштабна лінія оборони* (giant defense line and large-scale defense line) not only serve as components of an informative message, but also give it expressiveness and implement the hyperbolization strategy typical of headlines.

The specification of the defensive structures' nature and at the same time the persuasiveness of message are provided by headline constructions with emotionally neutral attributive modifiers *суцільна*, *багаторівнева* and *ешелована* (continuous, multi-level, and echeloned): "В Україні зводять **суцільну лінію оборони** від Київського водосховища і до Сум, – ЗСУ" (In Ukraine, a **continuous line of defense** is being built from the Kyiv reservoir to Sumy, – Armed Forces of Ukraine) (headline)

(<https://www.rbc.ua>, April 28, 2026); “В Україні будують багаторівневу лінію оборони від Сум до Київського водосховища” (In Ukraine, a **multi-level line of defense** is being built from Sumy to the Kyiv reservoir) (headline) (<https://24tv.ua>, April 28, 2026); “ЗСУ зводять ешелоновану лінію оборони від Сум до Києва” (Armed Forces of Ukraine are building **echeloned line of defense** from Sumy to Kyiv) (headline) (<https://nfront.org.ua>, April 28, 2026). Complementing the terminological compound *лінія оборони* (defense line) and emphasizing the length, complexity, and strategic thoughtfulness of the fortification system, the analyzed adjectives allow forming an idea of the reliability of the protective barrier and its effectiveness. A close functional potential is realized by complex adjective derivatives with numerical units in the first part: “В Україні будують 300-кілометрову лінію оборони до самого Києва: три цілі та карта” (In Ukraine, a **300-kilometer defense line** is being built to Kyiv itself: three goals and a map) (headline) (<https://news.telegraf.com.ua>, April 28, 2026). Ordinal numerals that are in attributive relations with the stable nomination *лінія оборони* (defense line) are attested as lexical concretizers. They indicate the sequence of the location of military infrastructure, combined into fortification strips: “Що таке перша, друга та третя лінії оборони: пояснення військового експерта Жданова” (What are the **first, second, and third lines of defense**: explanation by military expert Zhdanov) (headline) (<https://tsn.ua>, January 30, 2023). The sequentially used numerical names perform a gradational function, emphasize the multi-level and strategic thoughtfulness of the defensive structures. In addition, the specified homogeneous series enhances the informativeness of the title and at the same time orients the audience to the explanation of complex military terminology.

In media texts on military topics, a compound is observed, the emergence of which is outlined purely by the period of the Russo-Ukrainian war. This is about analytical nomination *лінія Сувовікіна* (Surovikin' line), the primary meaning of which is a three-level system of trenches, minefields, various obstacles created to deter the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The name of the defensive structures is associated with the General of the Russian Federation Sergey Surovikin. Borrowed from Russian military discourse, the complex name also functions in texts about the fortifications of Ukraine, giving the statements additional evaluative and political-symbolic content: “Україна будує власну «лінію Сувовікіна» – ЗМІ (headline). Україна також розпочала будівництво власної так званої «лінії Сувовікіна» – масштабної оборонної лінії, яка, за задумом, повинна зупинити російське вторгнення” (Ukraine is building its own “**Surovikin' line**” – media (headline). Ukraine has also begun the construction of its own so-called “**Surovikin' line**” – a large-scale defensive line, which, according to the plan, should stop the Russian invasion) (<https://varta1.com.ua>, January 21, 2024). Performing the role of a secondary nomination, the analyzed construction underwent semantic transformation and rethinking of the already known model of the defense system. In this way, the title not only performs an informational function, but also a pragmatic one: by evoking associations with hostile defense practices, it implements a strategy of analogization and reinterpretation of the borrowed image.

A number of other complex nominations representing defensive measures are built on a similar model. A striking example of the combination of terminological accuracy and expressiveness is the headline with the metaphorical units *стіна стримування* and *пояс фортець* (containment wall and belt of fortresses), which form the image of a powerful defensive barrier capable of stopping the aggressor and depriving him of the opportunity to advance further: “Україна зводить «стіну стримування»: яку ділянку терміново укріплюють” (Ukraine is building a “**containment wall**”: which section is urgently being strengthened) (<https://society.comments.ua>, April 18, 2026); “У 2026 році російські війська навряд чи зможуть захопити український «пояс фортець» – основну лінію оборони в Донецькій області” (In 2026, Russian troops are unlikely to be able to capture the Ukrainian “**belt of fortresses**” – the main line of defense in the Donetsk region) (<https://enovosty.com>, April 28, 2026); “Російський наступ на «пояс

фортець» приречений на поразку: аналіз ISW" (*The Russian offensive on the "belt of fortresses" is doomed to defeat: ISW analysis*) (headline) (<https://24tv.ua>, March 22, 2026). The means of verbalizing Ukraine's defense strategy and emphasizing the balance of military command include three-component compounds structured by two nouns and qualitative or relatively qualitative adjective forms: "Суцільний **пояс укріплень** простягнеться від Київського водосховища до Сум" (*A continuous belt of fortifications will stretch from the Kyiv Reservoir to Sumy*) (<https://glavred.net>, April 28, 2026); "**Сталевий пояс півночі**: Україна зводить грандіозну лінію оборони від Київського моря до Сум – деталі секретного будівництва" (*The steel belt of the north: Ukraine is building a grandiose defense line from the Kyiv Sea to Sumy - details of secret construction*) (headline) (<https://enovosty.com>, April 28, 2026). Metaphorical, evaluative, and at the same time high communicative-pragmatic potential is evident in the construction *сталевий пояс півночі* (*steel belt of the north*), in which the adjective *сталевий* (*steel*) actualizes the semes of strength, inviolability and reliability of defensive structures. The compound *грандіозну лінію оборони* (*grandiose defense line*) is aimed at expressing their scale, complicated by an attributive component that plays the role of an expressive intensifier and emphasizes the strategic significance of the fortification complex. Focusing attention on the structure of the title, which contains the analyzed linguistic units, let us add that it has a two-part syntactic structure: the first part (*steel belt of the north*) performs the function of an emotional-figurative beginning, the second one (*Ukraine is building a grandiose line of defense from the Kiev Sea to Sumy - details of secret construction*) is functioning as informative development of the topic. Such a composition is typical of modern media discourse, since it combines expressiveness with high informativeness.

The secondary means of verbalizing fortifications include the compound *вузол оборони* (*defense node*), which acquires a distinct figurative sound in headline constructions: "Покровськ на лезі: вуличні бої, інфільтрація та боротьба за **вузол оборони** Донбасу" (*Pokrovsk on the edge: street battles, infiltration and the fight for the defense node of Donbas*) (headline) (<https://daycom.com.ua>, October 29, 2025); "За словами генерала, Суми за короткий проміжок часу перетворилися на неприступний **вузол оборони**" (*According to the general, Sumy has turned into an impregnable defense node in a short period of time*) (<https://glavred.net>, April 28, 2026). The evaluative epithet *неприступний* (*impregnable*) used in the second sentence is aimed at actualizing the semes of strengths, protection, and inaccessibility for the enemy, which, together with the analytical nomination *defense node*, is aimed at expressing the image of Sumy as a strategic outpost in the northern direction and the defensive power of Ukraine.

3. Noun *оборона* (*defense*) + prepositively used dependent adjective: "**Кругові оборона** (Perimeter defense), military – a line of defense that forms a circle" (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language online, n.d.); "**Повітряна оборона** (Air defense), military – measures used to combat enemy aviation and a system of means to protect objects from air attack" (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language online, n.d.). The military nominations presented in the dictionary are also observed in the modern media space, they represent one of the most important components of Ukraine's defense strategy, related to the protection of its land and airspace: "Одещину постійно готують до **кругової оборони** – начальник ТрО «Південь»" (*Odessa region is constantly being prepared for a perimeter defense - the head of the "South" Regional Defense Organization*) (headline) (<https://bessarabiainform.com>, February 25, 2026); "**Кругова оборона** Куп'янська: експерт пояснив, як це відбувається і чому важливо" (*Perimeter defense of Kupiansk: an expert explained how it happens and why it is important*) (headline) (<https://www.rbc.ua>, December 21, 2023); "«У Київ майже нічого не долітає». Як змінилася **повітряна оборона** столиці і що потрібно, щоб масштабувати рішення на всю країну – інтерв'ю NV" (*"Almost nothing reaches Kyiv". How the capital's air defense has changed and what is needed to scale the solution to the entire country - interview with NV*) (headline) (<https://nv.ua>, April 2, 2026). It is important to clarify that in media publications during

the Great War, the terms *повітряна оборона* (air defense) and *протиповітряна оборона* (anti-aircraft defense), functioning to denote defensive measures, are sometimes personified: “**Повітряна оборона збила 95 із 123 ворожих БПЛА**” (*Air defense shot down 95 out of 123 enemy UAVs*) (headline) (<https://resonance.ua>, April 28, 2026); “**На Хмельниччині під час повітряної тривоги 27 грудня працювала протиповітряна оборона**” (*Air defense was operating in Khmelnytskyi region during the air alert on December 27*) (headline) (<https://ye.ua/sypilstvo>, December 27, 2025); “**Українська протиповітряна оборона у березні знищила майже 90% ракет і дронів РФ**” (*Ukrainian air defense destroyed almost 90% of Russian missiles and drones in March*) (headline) (<https://rubryka.com>, April 1, 2026). The highlighted linguistic units have a high degree of terminologization, but at the same time in information sources they go beyond purely professional usage, acquiring a significant pragmatic load. Their use forms an idea in the audience about the reliability of the defense system, the professionalism of the Ukrainian military, and the state's ability to counter air threats.

The means of verbalizing Ukraine's defense strategy and fortification system include the substantive-attributive nominations *оборонна лінія*, *оборонні рубежі*, *захисні рубежі* (*defensive line*, *defensive boundaries*, *protective boundaries*), often complicated by another adjective, usually with an evaluative meaning: “**Україна розгорнула рекордне будівництво оборонних споруд**, – WSJ” (*Ukraine has launched a record construction of defense structures*, – WSJ) (headline) (<https://www.rbc.ua>, August 1, 2025); “**У Запорізькій області оборонні споруди будують цілодобово та за новими стандартами, враховуючи сучасні виклики війни**” (*In Zaporizhzhia region, defense structures are being built around the clock and according to new standards, taking into account the modern challenges of war*) (headline) (<https://suspilne.media>, February 11, 2026); “**Україна будує потужну оборонну лінію вздовж північного кордону – ЗСУ**” (*Ukraine is building a powerful defensive line along the northern border - Armed Forces of Ukraine*) (headline) (<https://war.hab.media>, April 28, 2026); “**Україна будує масштабну оборонну лінію від Київського водосховища аж до Сум: що відомо**” (*Ukraine is building a large-scale defensive line from the Kyiv Reservoir to Sumy: what is known*) (headline) (<https://war.obozrevatel.com>, April 28, 2026); “**В Міноборони показали будівництво оборонних рубежів в Донецькій області (відео)**” (*The Ministry of Defense showed the construction of defensive boundaries in the Donetsk region (video)*) (headline) (<https://www.rbc.ua>, April 11, 2024); “**У Запорізькій області будують нові оборонні рубежі – ОВА**” (*New defensive boundaries are being built in the Zaporizhzhia region – OVA*) (headline) (<https://www.ukrinform.ua>, April 27, 2022); “**Захисні рубежі України: роботи йдуть 24/7, будують у три рівні та у всіх критичних зонах**” (*Ukraine's protective boundaries: work is underway 24/7, they are being built in three levels and in all critical zones*) (headline) (<https://kp.ua>, April 20, 2024).

The metaphorical rethinking is associated with the substantive-attributive compound *оборонний пояс* (*defensive belt*) to denote a territorially organized defense system: “**Оборонний пояс: що відбувається навколо Слов'янсько-Краматорської агломерації**” (*Defensive belt: what is happening around the Slavyansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration*) (headline) (<https://ua.news>, April 16, 2026). The first part of the headline is aimed at modeling in the recipient's imagination the image of a strategically fortified zone, while the second, which has an interrogative-informative form, focuses on the dynamics of the military situation. The lexeme *пояс* (*belt*) used in a figurative sense is observed in a range of other analytical nominations that serve as fortification system markers. This role is performed by the analytical nomination *фортечний пояс* (*fortress belt*): “**РФ готує великий наступ на «фортечний пояс»: в ISW назвали напрямки**” (*Russia is preparing a major offensive on the "fortress belt": ISW named the directions*) (headline) (<https://glavred.net>, February 3, 2026). Denoting a set of fortified positions located along a certain territory, the metaphor *фортечний пояс* (*fortress belt*) actualizes the idea of a defensive line that covers strategically important sections of the front. The adjectival derivative *фортечний* (*fortress*),

formed from the noun *фортеця* (*fortress*), strengthens the semantics of reliability, stability, and impregnability. It evokes associations with powerful defensive structures capable of withstanding a long-term onslaught of the enemy. As a result, the phrase acquires a distinct expressive color and forms the image of a strong defensive barrier. The design of the construction in quotation marks indicates its imagery, evaluation, and non-specialized expression. Secondary means of verbalizing Ukrainian fortifications include the juxtaposition *пояс-фортеця* (*belt-fortress*): “На Донбасі Україна створила **потужний оборонний пояс-фортецю**: чому це може виявитися марним” (In Donbas, Ukraine has created a **powerful defensive belt-fortress**: why it may be useless) (headline) (<https://tsn.ua>, January 8, 2026). Functioning in the first part of the title, the analyzed nomination expresses the scale, inaccessibility, good equipment and strategic weight of the strip of fortifications, its purpose for long-term resistance. The positive-evaluative epithet *потужний* (*powerful*) is aimed at expressing such semantics. In contrast, the second part contains an element of doubt, the lexeme *марним* (*useless*) employed in it sharply contrasts with the previous positive assessment, creating a stylistic antithesis. Namely this contrast enhances the intrigue, implements the pragmatic impact of the message and encourages the recipient to familiarize themselves with the material of the article.

A vivid image of the destruction of important defensive line is represented by the headline, which contains the compound *протиповітряний пояс* (*anti-aircraft belt*), the zoometaphor *щури* (*rats*), and the verb *підточували* (*undermined*) used in a figurative sense, which contributes to the colloquial transformation and expressiveness of the journalistic text: “Як «щури» підточували **протиповітряний «пояс»** довкола Києва” (How “rats” undermined the **anti-aircraft “belt”** around Kyiv) (headline) (<https://www.kashtan.news>, December 8, 2024). The article talks about representatives of the government during the time of President Viktor Yanukovich, who sold military property of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine for next to nothing, including air defense equipment, and at the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, deserted to the aggressor country. The compound *протиповітряний пояс* (*anti-aircraft belt*) denotes a set of air defense equipment located around the capital. The combination of the analytical nomination, usually presented in contexts about the reliability of protection, with the verb *підточували* (*undermined*), which indicates the weakening of the defense system effectiveness, emphasizes the long-term destructive impact. The derogatory secondary nomination *щури* (*rats*), which has a distinct evaluative connotation, is used to designate the persons involved. The analyzed headline not only informs about negative phenomena in society, but also appeals to emotions of the recipient.

A separate comment is needed for the expressively marked construction “Генерал Василь Сиротенко розповів, що **нові фортифікації вже чітко видно навіть із космосу**” (General Vasyl Syrotenko said that the **new fortifications are already clearly visible even from space**) (<https://glavred.net>, April 28, 2026). The hyperbolized fragment *чітко видно навіть із космосу* (*are clearly visible even from space*), which has a pronounced communicative and pragmatic potential, indicates forming ideas about the extraordinary scale of the fortification works and their significance. The title, presented as the general's indirect speech, implements an important author's intention, evoking in the recipient confidence in the reliability of Ukraine's defensive fortifications and trust in the military command's actions. The analyzed construction also performs a pragmatic role, since it not only contains information about a well-prepared defense system, but is also aimed at consolidating society.

Conclusion

In the modern military media space, the verbalization of Ukraine's defense strategy is associated with the activation of military terms and expressive-evaluative vocabulary, metaphorical constructions,

transformed by stable expressions. Such linguistic resources provide not only the nomination of military realities that shape modern military history, but also perform important communicative-pragmatic functions and convey authorial intentions. In the conceptualization of Ukrainian resistance, the dominant role is played by the lexeme *оборона* (*defense*) and the compounds *зайняти (прорвати, тримати) оборону, стояти на обороні (в обороні), зайняти (захопити) позиції (смугу оборони)* (*to take (break through, hold) a defense, to stand on the defense, to take (seize) a position (a defense strip)*), sometimes accompanied by qualitative adjectives. No less productive are stable units formed according to the *noun + noun* model, such as *лінія оборони* (*defense line*), which in news journalism undergoes modification, usually implemented by attributive components that perform the role of intensifiers. The same structure is inherent in the compounds *стіна стримування, пояс фортець, вузол оборони* (*restraining wall, belt of fortresses, defense node*), which amplify statement' expressiveness. The metaphorical, evaluative and high communicative-pragmatic potential is revealed by the construction *сталевий пояс німочи* (*steel belt of the north*) and the hyperbolized descriptive structure *нові фортифікації вже чітко видно навіть із космосу* (*new fortifications are already clearly visible even from space*). Among the substantive-attributive compounds, the following are observed: *кругова оборона, повітряна (протиповітряна) оборона, оборонні споруди, оборонний (протиповітряний) пояс (пояс-фортеця), оборонна лінія, фортечний пояс* (*perimeter defense, air (anti-aircraft) defense, defensive structures, defensive (anti-aircraft) belt (fortress belt), defensive line, fortress belt*), often complicated by another adjective with an evaluative meaning.

Thus, the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war significantly intensified the processes of updating and functional-semantic rethinking of the defense topics vocabulary. The information space became an environment for intensive production and dissemination of language units that represent the defense strategy of Ukraine, reflect key areas of strengthening state security, and shape the public perception of military reality.

We see the prospects of research in a comprehensive study of the dynamics of other thematic vocabulary groups, for example, the end of the war and the reconstruction of Ukraine, determining the pragmatic potential and features of the functioning of language units of this variety in different types of Ukrainian media discourse.

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