



## On the Etymology and Development of Military Terms in Chinese



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### Abstract

It is known that the study of the terms remains one of the most relevant areas of modern linguistic researches conducted by Chinese and Uzbek scientists. In this article, the formation and development of terms, particularly those related to military art, have been studied. The emergence and development of military thinking in China were studied based on valuable information provided in “The seven military classics of Ancient China”, written by Ralph D. Sawyer, a well-known U.S. orientalist, and military historian. The original Chinese military terms were lexically and genetically analyzed in the texts taken from the wenyan version of Sun-Zi’s “Art of war”, included in this collection. The original and modern military terms have been compared, the syllable structure and semantic differences between them have been analyzed. I.D. Klenin’s “Chinese-Russian military and technical dictionary” has been widely used during the study.

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## 1 Introduction

Chinese is one of the most complex languages in the world, with a history of several thousand years and a highly developed ancient culture. This language has had words with special meanings that can be called terms since ancient times. They included words denoting various religious-moral, philosophical (Taoism, Confucian) concepts and categories. For example 道 dào – “real way”, “doctrine”; 仁 rén – “humanity”; 德 dé – “goodness”; 法 fǎ – “law”; 儒家 rújiā – “Confucianists”; 法家 fǎjiā – “Legists” (Formed in the IV-III centuries BC, they are representatives of the philosophical school of the Warring States Period (Zhang)).

The Chinese have developed special terms with scientific content. Examples are 云 yún – “rhyme”, 词 cí – “type of poetic creation”, 字 zì – “word, hieroglyph”, 实字 shí zì – “complete words”, 虚字 xūzì – “empty words” (Used as linguistic terms to mean “independent words” and “auxiliary words”) and so on. While some of the above words have only a historical meaning, the rest have retained their terminological meaning to this day, while others have been reconsidered in terms of meaning and become terms with new semantics. For example, 词 (cí) new grammatical terminology means “word”. Such terms are formed precisely based on the Chinese language. Many of the terms are based on Venyanisms (文言词语 wényán cíyǔ) (Assimilations derived from ancient Chinese used in modern Chinese), and some are based on colloquial languages and dialects. Such terms have been formed and continue to be formed throughout the history of the Chinese language. This is the internal source of the term. Another important source of the introduction of terms is another culture, communication with another language, which is an external source of term formation (Tzitzikas et al., 2007; Atlam et al., 2002).

## 2 Materials and Methods

The word “term” 术语 shùyǔ is defined by Chinese linguists as follows: “Terms are special words used in science and technology. Many terms are used in every field of science and technology. Each term has a specific meaning within science and technology. According to Chinese linguists, the difference between a term and a simple word is that its scope is limited and it expresses a clear concept. In Chinese, too, the terms do not have the qualities of synonymy, homonymy, and expressiveness” (Nosirova, 2011).

The concept of terminology in Chinese is 11 and it is also given different definitions. According to the well-known Russian linguist A. Baranov, “Terminology in the broadest sense refers to the field of all terms in natural language, and in the narrow sense to the terms of a particular science or a field (Nosirova, 2011). S. Akobirov defined the terminology as follows: “Terminology is a special lexicon of a certain field in the narrow sense, but in the broad sense it is a part of the general vocabulary used in some areas” (Kungurov, 1992).

From the middle of the twentieth century, there was a need for a more in-depth study of the linguistic-theoretical terminology of modern Chinese. Terminology issues have become one of the most topical areas of linguistic research by Chinese and foreign scholars (Rohrer et al., 2009; Stenneken et al., 2005; Rets, 2016). The reason for this is the growing importance of terminology in the language and the fact that the processes of formation and development of terms in modern Chinese have not been sufficiently studied. The fact that the terminological layer of the lexicon is becoming one of the most vibrant elements of the Chinese language day by day, in turn, requires a more thorough and analytical study of the terms. Based on the above ideas, the study of the laws of formation of Chinese terms, their structure and semantics has become one of the most important tasks of modern Chinese studies (Miller & Tucker, 2015; Wrigley et al., 2021; Sekret, 2020). The formation of military terms is inextricably linked with the emergence of the ancient Chinese armed forces. Historical sources state that the country's regular army was formed around 2200 BC. But its heyday dates back to the Tan dynasty (Covering the years 618-907 AD, it is recognized in history as the “Golden Age of Chinese Literature and Art”).

Perhaps the beginnings of military thinking in China began with clashes between tribes 4 or 5,000 years ago. According to tradition, these battles involved legendary heroes and wise emperors. The strategy of conducting combat operations required the improvement of weapons and tactical art. Tribal leaders with large numbers of troops gradually expanded their spheres of influence and became a significant political force (Christman, 1994; Butterworth, 1979; Pujol, 2015). Early written sources and archeological excavations testify that at the beginning of the historical period there were constant conflicts between them, states were formed and the rulers sought to establish a dynasty by gaining monopoly power. With the expansion of battlefields and the increase in the power and efficiency of armaments, military strategy, tactics, and technology began to evolve. As a result, combat lessons and

command experience began to be studied purposefully. People tried to maintain the successes they had achieved and not repeat the mistakes of the past. In this way, the science of military tactics and strategy emerged in China (Sawyer Ralph, 1993).

By the second century BC, China had experienced thousands of years of uninterrupted conflict and was finally united into a vast and powerful empire. As a result of brutal battles, many skilled commanders emerged. Until now, wars have been going on almost non-stop, they have caused huge losses, countless people have died. Among the few military works that survived before the unification of the country were six major collections, including Sun-Tzu's famous "Art of War". They have been extensively studied and passed down from generation to generation. This process continued until the work was edited 12 centuries later during the reign of the Sun Dynasty (960-1126) and merged into a single collection. Along with the works created during the Tan dynasty, they form the "Seven Military Collections". This collection is the alphabet of military thought, and the pre-military imperial exams were taken based on these works (Sawyer, 1993). From the time of the Sun Dynasty, the following books were included in the "Seven Holy Military Collections" ("武经七书") of ancient China:

1.	《孙子兵法》	<i>Sūnzi bīngfǎ</i>	Sun-tzu "Art of War"
2.	《吴子》	<i>Wúzi</i>	"U-tszy"
3.	《司马法》	<i>Sīmǎfǎ</i>	"Syma Methods"
4.	《唐太宗李卫公问对》,	<i>Táng Tàizōng Lǐ wèigōng wèndu</i>	"Q&A between Tan Tai-tsun and Li Wei-gun"
5.	《尉缭子》	<i>Wèi Liáozi</i>	"Wei Lyao-tszy"
6.	《黄石公三略》	<i>Huáng Shíngōng sān lüè</i>	"Juan Shi-gun's Three Strategies"
7.	《六韜》	<i>Liùtāo</i>	"Six Secret Doctrines of Tai-gun"

Sun-tzu's The Art of War, the author of The Six Secret Doctrines, has always been recognized as the oldest and greatest achievement of Chinese military thought, even though Tai-gun (probably) lived centuries before Sun-Tzu. (Sawyer Ralph, 1993).

Naturally, most of the military terms are quoted in the very work of the great Chinese commander and thinker Sun Tzu. This work was created in the VI-V centuries BC and is a unique philosophical work on strategy, tactics, and management theory for commanders and heads of state. This book is an important guide to war strategy, and every part of it is taken as a word of wisdom (Sun Tzu, 2017).

"孙子兵法" is also known as "孙子" ("Sun-tszy"), "吴孙子兵法" ("U Sun-tszy binfǎ"), "孙武兵法" ("Sun U binfǎ"), and is the most famous work of martial arts in ancient China. It is also a source that reflects the oldest military work theory in the world that has survived to this day. This book came to Japan in the VIII century AD and to Europe in the XVIII century. Translated into Japanese, French, English, Russian, German, Italian, Arabic, and other languages (Cihai, 1999). The work consists of 13 chapters, the names of which contain ancient military terms:

1- chapter	始计	shǐjì	"Situation assessment and planning"
2- chapter	作战	zuòzhàn	"Go to war"
3- chapter	谋攻	móugōng	"Strategic attack"
4- chapter	军形	jūnxíng	"Tactical procedures"
5- chapter	兵势	bīngshì	"Military forces"
6- chapter	虚实	xūshí	"Strengths and weaknesses"
7- chapter	军争	jūnzhēng	"Maneuvers"
8- chapter	九变	jiǔbiàn	"Nine rounds"
9- chapter	行军	xíngjūn	"Troops on the move"
10- chapter	地形	dìxíng	"Geographical location"
11- chapter	九地	jiǔdì	"A place where nine armies are stationed"
12- chapter	火攻	huǒgōng	"Fire attack"
13- chapter	用间	yòngjiān	"Use of intelligence"

The following is the original text of "The Art of War" written in Venyan (Venyan (文言文) - m.a. The normative literary language in circulation in China from the 7th to the 6th centuries to the May 4, 1919 movement (total around

the 27th century).), its Baikhua (Bayhua (白话文) is the second literary language of medieval China, which originated based on spoken language in the X-XII centuries AD.) equivalent, and its translation into Uzbek:

Venyan:

夫兵形象水，水之形，避高而趋下，兵之形，避实而击虚。水因地而制流，兵因敌而制胜。故兵无常势，水无常形。能因敌变化而取胜者，谓之神。故五行无常胜，四时无常位，日有短长，月有死生。(Sun Wu, 2003).

Baikhua:

“所以说，用兵打仗没有固定的形式，水流也没有固定不变的形态。能够根据敌情的变化而采取相应战术取得胜利，就可以说是“用兵如神”。所以说五行（金、木、土、水、火）相生相克，没有哪一行占绝对优势；四时（春、夏、秋、冬）轮回更替，没有哪一季可以固定不动。一年之中，白天有时长，有时短；一月之内，月亮也是有盈有亏、有明有晦。”

Translation: “Therefore there is no immutable power of the army and no immutable form of water. A person who can possess change and win based on his enemy is the highest category (divine). That is why there is no constant winner between the five elements of nature (metal, wood, earth, water, fire), a continuous continuator between the four seasons. There is shortness and duration in the sun and life and death in the moon.

In the example above, the word “兵” is used, which means “army”. In modern Chinese, it is more often used to mean “soldier”. It is noteworthy that here the phenomenon of narrowing of the meaning of the word (词义缩小) can be seen. This phenomenon is unique to ancient Chinese and is almost non-existent in modern Chinese.

Below is another example from Chapter Assessment and Planning (《孙子·始计篇》):

Venyan:

兵者，诡道也。故能而示之不能，用而示之不用，近而示之远，远而示之近。利而诱之，乱而取之，实而备之，强而避之，怒而挠之，卑而骄之，佚而劳之，亲而离之，攻其无备，出其不意。此兵家之胜，不可先传也。(Sun Wu: 2003).

Baikhua:

“用兵打仗是一种诡诈之术。所以，明明能征善战，却向敌人装作软弱无能的样子;本来准备用兵，却伪装成不准备打仗的假象；要攻打近处的目标，却给敌人造成准备攻击远处的假象；要攻打远处的目标，相反却要装作准备要在近处攻击。敌人贪心就用小利来引诱他上当；敌人混乱就乘机攻取他；敌人实力雄厚就要谨慎防备他；敌人强大就暂时避开其锋芒；敌人容易激动发怒，要设法挑逗他，使其失去理智；对于小心谨慎的敌人，要千方百计让他骄纵，丧失警惕；敌人安逸就设法骚扰他，搞得他疲惫不堪；对内部团结的敌人，要设法离间他，让他分裂。在敌人没有准备时突然发起进攻；在敌人预想不到的情况下采取行动。”

Translation: “War is a way of deception. So, if you can do something, show your opponent that you can't do anything, if you use something, pretend not to use it, show yourself as far away as you are close, show yourself as close as you are far away, attract him with interest do and conquer; if all he has is enough, be ready (to attack); if he is strong, give him a left; provoke him to wrath, and cast him out; showing humility and arousing pride in it; if he is still alert and energetic, he is a toy without it; if he has friends, cause discord among them; attack him when he is not ready to attack; When he doesn't expect it, you try”. Finally, we consider and analyze the third example:

Venyan: 故曰：知彼知己，百战不殆；不知彼而知己，一胜一负；不知彼不知己，每战必败。(Sun Wu, 2003).

Baikhua:

“所以说：既了解敌方情况，又了解己方情况，便能百战百胜，不会有失败；不了解敌方情况，只了解己方情况，胜败可能平分；既不了解敌方情况，又不了解己方情况，那么每次战斗都注定会失败。”

Translation: “That is why it is said: if you know it and know yourself, you will not be in danger, even if you attack a hundred times; if you know yourself — if you don't know him — you win once and lose the next time; if you don't know yourself and him, you will lose every battle”.

In the example above, the following terms were used:

- 1) “战” zhàn - war (“战争” zhànzhēng in modern Chinese corresponds to the name zhànzhēng);

- 2) “败” bài - defeat (corresponds to “战争” zhànzhēng verbs in modern Chinese).

### 3 Results and Discussions

As can be seen from the above examples, the main part of the ancient military terms was simple, i.e. single-syllable terms. Analysis of the structure of the joints of military terms shows that the first place in terms of quantity - four joints (32.5%), second place - five joints (20%), third place - three joints (12.5%), fourth place - six joints (12%), followed by two-syllable (7%), eight-syllable (3.5%), nine-syllable (2%), ten-syllable (0.8%) and one-syllable (0.2%) terms (This analysis is the result of a selective study of 1,000 terms in I.D. Klenin's Dictionary “Sino-Russian military and technical dictionary”). From the above data, it can be concluded that the military lexicon of modern Chinese has the following characteristics in terms of syllable structure:

- first, the predominance of four-syllable terms;
- Second, the very small number of single-syllable terms.

The fact that the layer of four-syllable terms (complex terms) make up the majority of military terms is explained by the fact that these terms are noun phrases consisting of two-syllable words built on a mutually exclusive relationship. It is well known that the two-syllable word predominates in modern Chinese with its structural form (Klenin, 2013). The development of military work is accompanied by the emergence of new terms, i.e. neologisms, and the differentiation of outdated concepts. Differentiation of military concepts can be done based on different characteristics. There are more and more terms with a complex structure that combine into lexical-semantic categories. For example, 炮兵 pàobīng - the term “artillery” can be distinguished in the following ways:

- by caliber: 大口径炮兵 dà kǒujìng pàobīng – “large-caliber artillery”, 小口径炮兵 xiǎo kǒujìng pàobīng – “small-caliber artillery”;
- by organizational affiliation: 师炮兵 shī pàobīng – “divisional artillery”, 军炮兵 jūn pàobīng – “corps artillery”;
- by the method of movement: 机械化炮兵 jīxièhuà pàobīng – “mechanical artillery”, 驮载炮兵 tuózài pàobīng – “loaded artillery”;
- by types of weapons: 加农炮兵 jiānóng pàobīng – “artillery”, 榴弹炮兵 liúdàn pàobīng – “howitzer artillery”;
- by methods of combat use: 配属炮兵 pèishǔ pàobīng -attached (additional) artillery, 支援炮兵 zhīyuan pàobīng -auxiliary artillery;
- on the trajectory of the projectile: 平射炮兵 píngshè pàobīng – “ground artillery”, 曲射炮兵 qūshè pàobīng -vertical artillery;
- at the place of installation: 舰上炮兵 jiànshàng pàobīng – “ship artillery”, 坦克炮兵 tǎnkè pàobīng – “tank artillery”.

It is clear from the above examples that the differentiation of military concepts, on the one hand, enriches the terminological fund with the formation of compound terms, on the other hand, serves as a basis for future structuring of the entire terminology. The term, formed based on the differentiation of this or that concept, has a homogeneous structure, is descriptive, and its content is relatively easy to derive from the original meaning of the components. As mentioned above, the second feature of Chinese military terms in terms of syllable structure is that there are very few single-syllable terms. In I.D. Klenin's dictionary “Chinese-Russian military and technical dictionary” there are only more than a dozen such terms:

1.	枪	qiāng	“a firearm with a caliber of up to 20 mm”
2.	炮	pào	“a firearm with a caliber greater than 20 mm”
3.	师	shī	“division”
4.	旅	lǚ	“brigade”
5.	团	tuán	“regiment”



6.	营	yíng	“battalion”
7.	连	lián	“company”
8.	排	pái	“platoon”
9.	班	bān	“division”
10.	兵	bīng	“soldier”

From the above considerations, it can be concluded that in ancient Chinese, mostly simple terms were used. In modern Chinese, on the other hand, simple terms are very rare. This feature is more pronounced against the background of the syllable structure of the domestic lexicon, which accounts for 21% of single-syllable primitive words (Klenin, 2013). In this sense, Chinese is different from other languages, especially European languages. In particular, the content of single-syllable, simple terms of the English military lexicon (corresponding to single-syllable terms in Chinese) makes up 12-15% of the total military lexicon. The rarity of simple terms in the modern military lexicon is a special feature of the Chinese language, in particular, the military lexicon in which it is composed, which is explained by the specificity of military terminology, which is an important layer of language vocabulary.

Most of the military terminology appeared long after the everyday words (Almost all monosyllabic words - 水 shuǐ - “water”, 山 shān - “mountain”, 人 rén - “man”, 吃 chī - “to eat” and others - are part of the basic vocabulary) that make up the main vocabulary, and in exceptional cases (枪 qiāng - “spear”, 战 zhàn - “war”) formed based on the basic words of everyday vocabulary. For example, 地 dì - “earth” and 火 huǒ - “fire”, 地雷 dìléi - “mine”, 阵地 zhèndì - “position”, 地区 dìqū - “finish, border, the line”, 火力 huǒlì - “shooting”, 火器 huǒqì - “firearm”, 喷火器 pēnhuǒqì - served as the main source in the emergence of terms such as “shooting”. The formation of terms based on primitive everyday words has led to an increase in the number of complex terms and a decrease in the “specific gravity” of simple terms.

The peculiarity of the Chinese language is that in the stages of historical development it has undergone a transition from the norm of one-syllable word to more than two syllables to limit the growing spiritual (semantic) load of the morpheme (Chinese linguists call this one of the internal laws of language development). This process led to the replacement of single-syllable terms by their two-syllable equivalents. These equivalents have discovered different meanings of these words. This can be seen in the example of several terms taken from the “*汉俄词典* Chinese-Russian Dictionary”:

兵 bīng	兵器	bīngqì	weapons
	军队	jūnduì	army, troops
	兵士	bīngshì	soldier, warrior, ordinary soldier
	军事的	jūnshì de	military
战 zhàn	战争	zhànzhēng	war
	战斗	zhàndòu	battle
	作战	zuòzhàn	to fight
弹 dàn	子弹	zǐdàn	bullet
	炮弹	pàodàn	projectile

The pursuit of a two-syllable norm is explained by a certain degree of dependence of simple terms on context. They are usually used with an identifier: 步兵连 bùbīng lián - “infantry route”, 坦克连 tǎnkè lián - “营里 yíng lǐ”, 枪上 qiāng shàng - “battalion”, 坦克连 tǎnkè lián - “rifle, machine gun, submachine gun, etc.”. Often single-syllable terms themselves also serve as a determinant (排长 páizhǎng - “platoon commander”, 师部 shībù - “division headquarters”), in which case it often becomes a morpheme in a two-syllable word.

Finally, we will focus on the last factor that hinders the increase in the “specific gravity” of single-syllable terminology. It is known that one of the methods of formation of terms is the transfer of the name of the object used in everyday life to the object used in military work based on any similarity. If the metaphorical method of term formation in European languages allows the formation of complex units according to the structure, everyday words used to express any military concept in Chinese are not used independently but are always used in conjunction with single-syllable meaning specifiers. Let's look at this with the following examples:

1. 炮身 pàoshēn – “Gun barrel” (“gun body”);
2. 炮口 pàokǒu – “Rifle barrel” (“gun muzzle”);
3. 枪眼 qiāngyǎn - “Embrasure, shinak, hole” (“gun eye”);
4. 枪颈 qiāng jǐng – “The face of the gun” (“the neck of the weapon”);
5. 机身 jīshēn - 1) “fuselage”, “aircraft body”; 2) “base of the barrier” (“body of the aircraft or hardware”).

#### 4 Conclusion

Based on the results of the above analysis, the following general conclusions were drawn:

- 1) The first hotbed of military thinking in ancient China is from here
- 2) It was formed 4-5 thousand years ago and corresponds to the period of development of the Tan dynasty.
- 3) An invaluable source in the study of original military terms - the most famous and popular work in the “Seven Holy Military Collections” (武经七书) is Sun-tszu “Art of War”, which contains the titles of 13 chapters and several original military terms in the text.
- 4) “Seven sacred military collections” is the alphabet of military thought, and its original value is determined by the fact that the imperial examinations before admission to military service were taken based on these works.
- 5) Lexical-genetic and semantic analysis of military terms shows that they have a phenomenon of narrowing the meaning of the word (兵 armies).
- 6) It is recognized that one of the main differences between the ancient military terms is that they are mainly simple (枪, 炮, 师, 旅, 团, 营) and modern military terms, on the contrary, are complex structural (舰上炮兵, 坦克炮兵, 加农炮兵) terms.

#### *Conflict of interest statement*

The author declared that he has no competing interests.

#### *Statement of authorship*

The author has a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author has approved the final article.

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