

# Foreign Languages And Military Terminology At The Hellenic Army Military Academy

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**Abstract.** Teaching English and French and English and French Military Terminology at the Hellenic Army Military Academy aims at aiding cadets in understanding military books, irrespective of the difficulty of the texts, reproducing military texts in spoken language or in written form, and working on projects concerning military issues. It also helps cadets to acquire the necessary oral and written language skills that help them to cooperate with foreign cadets and officers; attend the annual Military Erasmus Program; participate in military conferences about NATO or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The courses comprise the writing of dissertations concerning geopolitical and geostrategic issues and the study of presentations at international military science conferences. The courses also succeed in helping cadets to learn how to use the electronic means of communication; the mechanisms of translation; and the evolution of language through time.

**Keywords:** English courses, French courses, military terminology, language skills, course books, international organizations, military translation, military neologisms, dissertations, and electronic communication.

## INTRODUCTION

At the Hellenic Army Military Academy (HAMA) cadets are taught two foreign languages, namely English and French, at B2 level. The aim: to help them to attend the annual Military Erasmus Program; communicate with their fellow cadets abroad; and sit examinations at military schools.

Cadets at HAMA are also taught military terminology at B2 level, i.e. they study military texts and memorize military terms and orders, in English and French, in order to acquire the skills that will help them to read and understand military articles and books; develop their oral, listening and writing skills in order to be able to exchange information, convey thought, understand foreign lecturers and have access to military information on the Net.

The present study will not attempt to deal with the method of teaching English or French at the HAMA but to introduce the method of teaching military terminology both in English and French in order to help cadets to succeed in participating in military conferences, attending military colleges abroad and accomplishing NATO missions.

## **PART ONE**

### **THE AIM OF TEACHING MILITARY TERMINOLOGY AT THE HAMA**

The aims of teaching military terminology at the Hellenic Army Military Academy are the following:

- To help cadets to understand different types of military books, irrespective of the difficulty of the texts;
- To reproduce military texts in spoken language or in written form;
- To produce well-written essays and projects concerning military issues.

The courses on military terminology are based on the cadets' knowledge of the two foreign languages, namely the already acquired skills, like the skills of reading and comprehending, discussing issues and completing language assignments according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR). Strasbourg: Political unity and linguistic diversity in Europe, 2000.

The acquired knowledge of English and French helps cadets to accomplish the military demands of the Hellenic Army Military Academy and the Hellenic Ministry of Defence provided they attend the courses on military terminology and study the military course books that include the most common military terms used in the English and French speaking armies of the world. This is the way to help cadets to become able to read and understand English and French military books and acquire the necessary language skills that will help them to cooperate with foreign cadets and officers.

## **PART TWO**

### **THE METHODOLOGY OF MILITARY TERMINOLOGY AT THE HELLENIC ARMY MILITARY ACADEMY**

Teaching English or French military terminology at the Hellenic Army Military Academy includes comprehensive examinations that check the cadet's understanding of military texts, military terms and orders; strengthening test taking skills; memorizing military terms with the help of the Net; using military e-encyclopaedias concerning military treatises that will become the basis of his/her military literature, military strategy and tactics texts, as well as completing projects or assignments.

The books that provide the knowledge of military terminology are four (4): two (2) English military terminology course books and two (2) French military terminology course books:

1. *A Workbook for Learners of Military English* Volume I (2014) by Elizabeth Hatziolou and Stavroula Romoudi that comprises 135 pages and includes seven units involving the following military texts: Fundamentals of Combat Operations, The Principles of War, Retrograde Operations, Army Aviation, Field Artillery, Engineering and Logistics.

The texts are accompanied by activities that require cadets to achieve the following:

- Comprehend the texts with the help of multiple choice quizzes;
- Memorize the definitions of the military terms in the passages;
- Match military words or terms with their definitions (word or definition matching);
- Elaborate, orally or in writing, on the titles of military articles and essays concerning military operations, campaigns, strategies and plans (title elaboration);
- Complete open sentences by using an appropriate military phrase or term (fill in the gaps);

- Form military collocations by using a military e-dictionary;
- Use prefixes or suffixes to enrich their vocabulary (word building formation).

In addition, the course book includes the following: *tables that* list all the standard army ranks and insignia; a glossary of army general orders; a military time chart; the NATO phonetic alphabet; exercises on listening to dialogues about military issues and taking quizzes on military English audio-visual CD-ROMs .

2. *A Workbook for Learners of Military English* Volume II (2014) by Elizabeth Hatziolou and Basil Chaldoupis that comprises 160 pages and includes seven units involving the following NATO texts: Defence Matters, Operational Priorities, Kosovo, Counter-Piracy, Support to Turkey, The Future of NATO and NATO Forces 2020.

The course book also includes the following exercises:

- ✚ Comprehension and composition;
- ✚ True or False;
- ✚ Preposition and prepositional phrases;
- ✚ Word building or Word formation, i.e. use a root and create an appropriate word to fill the gap in a text.
- ✚ Graph analysis and pie or bar understanding;
- ✚ Use of military terms;
- ✚ Subject-verb inversion and the theory and practice of the subjunctive.

A special glossary of military terms is also included in the course book; as well as tables of military collocations, listening and audio-visual CD-ROMs dialogues about adjusting to military life and war, etc.

The French military terminology course books are the following:

1. *Français sur Objectifs Spécifiques* (2014) by Stamatia Sofiou that comprises 182 pages and is divided into two sections. The first section includes nine units that involve the following texts about NATO:

- ✚ Les pays membres,
- ✚ La charte des Nations Unies,
- ✚ Qu'est-ce que l'OTAN ?
- ✚ La réforme des structures militaires de l'OTAN,
- ✚ Opérations et missions de l'OTAN,
- ✚ Coopération civilo-militaire,
- ✚ Les principales fonctions de l'Etat-major militaire international,
- ✚ Evolution du partenariat euro-atlantique,
- ✚ L'organisation pour l'interdiction des armes chimiques.

The texts are accompanied by the following activities:

- Comprehension (compréhension écrite) and military vocabulary (vocabulaire militaire);
- True or False (Vrai ou faux);
- Matching verbs with nouns; and nouns with adjectives by using an e-dictionary;
- Finding the synonyms and antonyms of the vocabulary in the text;
- Matching Greek and French military terms;
- Translating Greek into French and vice versa;
- Memorizing the army ranks and units; reading military charts, maps and geographical terms;
- Understanding words with multiple meaning: for example, the word *το σύνταγμα* = *la constitution* and the phrase *το σύνταγμα των στρατιωτών* = *le regiment*;

- Discovering the role of NATO.

The second part of the book includes passages for translation purposes involving L'Ecole spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr in France and L'Académie militaire de West Point in the USA; as well as an analysis of the Army Services, i.e. Infantry, Artillery, Engineering, Armour, Signals and Army Air Corps.

2. *Textes Militaires* (2014) by Stamatia Sofiou that comprises 182 pages and includes the following six (6) military texts distributed in six (6) units:

- La Guerre de Corée
- La Guerre du Viêt Nam
- La Guerre des Six Jours
- Les Guerres d'Afghanistan
- Les Guerres du Golfe
- La Guerre de Yougoslavie

The units include the following activities:

- ❖ Compréhension écrite exercices;
- ❖ Preposition and article exercises, i.e. *en in être en campagne* and *être à la campagne*;
- ❖ Adjective and participle activities, i.e. the word *poste* can have several meanings: *la poste* (the post), *le poste* (the position), *un poste de combat* (a combat post), *un poste de commandement* (the administration office), *être nommé à un nouveau poste* (be appointed to a new job), etc.
- ❖ Imperative and subjunctive exercises related to the verbs in the text;
- ❖ Active and passive voice exercises; indirect speech activities; subordinate clauses, i.e. time, relative pronouns, causative, deductive and conditional exercises;
- ❖ Translation exercises that help cadets to recognize grammar differences between the two languages.

The course book also includes a glossary that refers to the following military terms:

- La Préparation à l'attaque;
- L'Offensive;
- La Patrouille de nuit;
- L'Entraînement militaire;
- La Guerre nucléaire;
- Le Combat de rue;
- Le Maniement des armes;
- L'Espionnage;
- Réfugiés et Guérilla;
- Sigles matched with Greek acronyms.

The course of English military terminology is complete with a. the study of neologisms; b. the writing of dissertations concerning contemporary geopolitics or the relationship of geography to politics and the existence of international antagonism; contemporary geostrategic, a subfield of geopolitics or the study of strategy to the political situation of a country or region; military power or strength; the history of international organizations, like the United Nations and NATO, which deal with conflict; and the study of presentations of international military science conferences.

Concerning the study of neologisms, cadets can visit the following website <[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Elizabeth\\_Hatzoulou](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Elizabeth_Hatzoulou)> and learn about the new words or expressions in contemporary military technology and army jargon. On the website, the article “Neolexia: How

helpful can it be in class?” aims at explaining the nature of the new words/phrases through different types of neologisms, like *nonce words*, *blends*, *portmanteau* and *buzzwords*; giving examples; and revealing the educational value of neologism and how it can be used in class.

In order to keep cadets informed on the evolution of the French language, there is the Hellenic Army Military publication entitled *Scientific Publications 2014-2016* in which the essay “Détection et utilisation des néologismes dans l’enseignement du Français Langue Etrangère” by S. Sofiou is divided into two parts.

1. The theoretical part that includes a historical study of neologisms that shows their evolution and underlines their diachronic influence on society and culture; and a list of neologisms that record their complicated nature and creativity that can help cadets to consolidate the French language.
2. The part on the application of neologisms and the role that they have played in contemporary army terminology satisfies institutional targets and responds to educational needs by involving cadets in the effective and reactive procedure and keeping their interest in the language while contributing to their work progress.

International presentations on neologism, like the one by S. Sofiou entitled “L’étude des néologismes dans l’enseignement du FOS à l’Ecole militaire de Grèce,” delivered at the 3rd International Conference of the University of Belgrade in September 2014, also help cadets immerse themselves in the study of military terminology.

As far as the dissertations of senior cadets are concerned, the ones written in English pertain to contemporary topics, like the following:

1. “UN Peacekeeping and Diplomacy” or the history of the United Nations, an intergovernmental organization tasked to promote international co-operation and to create and maintain international order; and the art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of states.
2. “Operation Desert Storm,” involving authentic newspaper articles about the War in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Syrian Civil War and the Guerilla War of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).
3. “The Breakup of Yugoslavia” about the collapse of Yugoslavia in the Nineties and the formation of smaller states, like Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Skopje.
4. “The Arab Spring 2010-2014” that involves the riots in the Middle East from 2010 to 2014 to liberate the people from the oppression of dictatorship.
5. “The Crisis in North Africa: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco” about the mass protests of the peoples of North Africa, from 2010 to 2014, against authoritarianism or the form of government characterized by strong central power and limited political freedom.

Besides the texts, the dissertations include comprehension questions, vocabulary activities graph analyses, listening and video activities, with regard to military issues, which cadets download from the Net.

The dissertations of the French speaking cadets concern the following topics:

1. «La personnalité du Général de Gaulle » or the contribution of the French general to the defeat of the Nazis in World War II.
2. «Les Forces de Défense et la Protection de l’environnement», a study on the protection of the environment during military drills and joint and combined military operations.

3. «Une étude générale des ponts et une étude détaillée du pont Bailey» or a project on the construction of bridges for communication purposes and the construction of the Bailey bridge to facilitate the transport of men and weapons in rocky and steep terrain.
4. «La Première Guerre Mondiale et les Ecrivains Français ». The language of the «poilus» used in the French war fiction and the emergence of dystopia in the novels about the Great War.

Through dissertations cadets make good use of their knowledge in relation to military terminology and world war history.

## CONCLUSION

By using the above methods, the courses on military terminology succeed in accomplishing three targets, i.e. using English and French terminology in speech and writing; consolidating foreign linguistic information; and enriching cultural knowledge.

What is more, cadets have the opportunity

- ✓ To learn how to use the electronic means of communication with the help of the inductive approach /méthode inductive.
- ✓ To learn the mechanisms of translation and understand the interdependence between the structures of the two languages, because as Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), the Swiss linguist, said, “la langue est instrument pour la parole et en même temps le produit de la parole».
- ✓ To understand how language functions and evolves through time.

Lastly, as General Dmitri Skarvelis, Former Chief of Staff at the Hellenic Ministry of Defence once said, “Competence in foreign languages is a necessity in the army, a necessity that is increasing gradually”.

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