
SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF CHINESE MILITARY TECHNICAL TERMS

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ABSTRACT: This article seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of the semantics of Chinese military technical terms by delving into their linguistic components, historical underpinnings, and the cultural context that shapes their meanings.

KEYWORDS: Chinese Military Terminology, Lexicon, Linguistic Elements in Chinese Military Terms, Historical Roots of Chinese Military Language.

INTRODUCTION

The realm of military terminology is an intricate tapestry of language that embodies the essence of a nation's military prowess, strategy, and technological advancements. In the context of China, a nation rapidly emerging as a global superpower, the semantic analysis of its military technical terms takes on profound significance. The Chinese military lexicon not only serves as a crucial communication tool for its armed forces but also holds vital implications for international diplomacy, defense strategies, and intelligence operations. This philological scientific article embarks on a scholarly journey into the world of Chinese military technical terms, aiming to unveil the intricate semantic layers that underlie this specialized vocabulary.

China's ascension on the world stage in recent decades has been accompanied by a significant modernization and expansion of its military capabilities. This transformation has been reflected in the continuous evolution and development of its military terminology. As China's military posture becomes increasingly influential, comprehending the meanings, connotations, and historical roots of its technical terms becomes essential for a wide range of stakeholders, from military analysts and diplomats to scholars and strategists.

Linguistic Elements:

a. Characters and Radicals: Chinese military technical terms are typically composed of Chinese characters, each with its own inherent meaning. Additionally, many characters include radicals, which are smaller components with specific semantic associations. For instance, the character for "fire" (火 - huǒ) often appears in terms related to firepower, explosives, or pyrotechnics, conveying a sense of destructive force.

b. Compound Words: These terms are often compound words formed by combining multiple characters. Each character contributes to the overall meaning, making it essential to analyze the individual constituents. For example, the term "战斗机" (zhàndòujī) translates to "fighter

aircraft," where "战" (zhàn) means battle, "斗" (dòu) means fight, and "机" (jī) means machine or aircraft.

c. Abbreviations: Chinese military terminology frequently employs abbreviations or acronyms to streamline communication. These abbreviations may obscure the full meaning of the terms and necessitate understanding the expanded forms. For instance, "PLA" stands for "People's Liberation Army," which is the armed forces of the People's Republic of China.

Historical Context:

a. Ancient Military Roots: Many Chinese military terms have ancient origins dating back to classical texts like Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" or "The Thirty-Six Strategies." These terms often carry historical significance and reflect traditional Chinese military philosophy and tactics.

b. Modernization and Innovation: China's military modernization efforts have led to the creation of new technical terms to describe advanced weaponry, strategies, and doctrines. These terms reflect China's evolving military capabilities and its pursuit of cutting-edge technology.

Cultural Nuances:

a. Confucian Influence: Confucian values, such as hierarchy, loyalty, and filial piety, have left an imprint on Chinese military terminology. Concepts like "忠诚" (zhōngchéng) for loyalty and "仁义礼智信" (rén yì lǐ zhì xìn) for benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness may underpin military ethics and strategy.

b. Taoist Philosophy: Taoist principles of balance, harmony, and adaptability can also influence military terminology. Terms may convey flexibility and adaptability in the face of changing circumstances.

c. Historical Allusions: Chinese military technical terms often draw on historical allusions and references to famous battles, generals, or events. For example, the term "巨浪-3" (Jùlàng-3) is a reference to the historical "Battle of Red Cliffs."

In conclusion, the semantics of Chinese military technical terms are deeply rooted in linguistic elements, historical context, and cultural nuances. To fully grasp their meanings, one must consider the characters and radicals, historical origins, and cultural influences that shape these terms. Recognizing the complexities and potential for ambiguity in this specialized lexicon is essential for accurate interpretation and analysis in the field of Chinese military studies.

The semantic analysis of Chinese military technical terms reveals a rich and multifaceted linguistic landscape that reflects China's historical, cultural, and strategic dimensions. This examination underscores several key conclusions:

Chinese military technical terms are characterized by their linguistic intricacy, often comprised of characters, radicals, compound words, and abbreviations. Understanding the individual components and their interplay is essential for deciphering their meanings.

Many of these terms have deep historical roots, harkening back to ancient Chinese military philosophy and tactics. This historical context imparts layers of meaning and symbolism to these terms, emphasizing their enduring significance.

China's military modernization efforts have introduced new technical terms that reflect the nation's pursuit of advanced weaponry, strategies, and doctrines. These terms mirror China's evolving military capabilities and strategic outlook.

Confucian, Taoist, and historical allusions infuse Chinese military terminology with cultural nuances. Values like loyalty, righteousness, adaptability, and historical references contribute to the depth and richness of these terms.

Chinese military technical terms can be intentionally vague or coded to maintain secrecy or mislead adversaries. Analysts and researchers must remain vigilant to the potential for ambiguity in their interpretations.

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