

Feminine Nominations in War Media Communication Narratives: Linguogender Aspect

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Citation: Shulska, N., Zinchuk, R., Sushkova, O., Sydorenko, N., Bondarenko, O., & Yevdokymenko, I. Feminine Nominations in War Media Communication Narratives: Linguogender Aspect. *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 10(2), 4812–4821. <https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i2.2352>

Published: November 24, 2025

ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the analysis of feminine nominations in the narratives of military media communication in the linguistic and gender aspect. The research focuses on the identification and interpretation of linguistic means that reflect the change in gender roles and the representation of women's experience in the realities of the Russo-Ukrainian war. Particular attention is paid to the formation of a female narrative of heroism, which affirms the image of a woman as an active participant in armed resistance, equal to men in the performance of military duty. The representative, identification, mobilization, and symbolic functions of feminine lexemes, which are increasingly used in journalistic discourse to name women serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine or performing other roles in the war, are noted. The active presence of names for female persons in the headlines and texts of various genres of journalistic materials – news, reports, interviews, articles, – is observed. This is due to a number of factors: linguistic economy, attracting the audience's attention, demonstrating editorial policy, gender differentiation, ensuring social visibility. Differentiation of the most common thematic groups of feminine media nominations (names by military positions and ranks, combat functions, technical or special training, medical and humanitarian role of women, status of participation in the war) showed that gender narratives of wartime demonstrate a gradual departure from traditional stereotypes, where women appear mainly as a symbol of motherhood, care or logistical support. At the same time, certain gender stereotypes still persist in military media communication. Quite often, the image of a female soldier is presented through the prism of a double standard: she "breaks the perception", "impresses", "proves" that she can be no worse than men. Such discourse, despite its positive connotation, hides a shade of comparison and the need for women to "assert themselves" in a traditionally male sphere (Santoniccolo et al., 2023). Modern Ukrainian media increasingly raise the issue of gender prejudices and manifestations of sexism that women face at the front, which indicates the growing sensitivity of society to the problems of gender equality. The most common word-forming models of feminine nominations have been identified: **-к-а** (воячка, воїнка, снайперка, піхотинка, волонтерка, солдатка, командирка); **-иц-я** (військовослужбовиця, захисниця, розвідниця, кулеметниця, гранатометниця); **-ин-я** (бійчиня, медикиня), two-component names (операторка БПЛА, військова ЗСУ). The results obtained show that the active functioning of feminine lexemes in military media communication not only linguistically reflects sociocultural transformations, but also contributes to the formation of a new, more balanced gender narrative of heroism, free from stereotyping.

Keywords: Feminism, Gender, Language nomination, Narrative, Russo-Ukrainian war, War media communication.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the role of women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine has increased significantly, especially since 2014, as well as after the full-scale invasion of 2022. During the Russo-Ukrainian war, the number of women in combat units, headquarters, medical units, and volunteer formations increased significantly. The language of the media has become an important tool for representing gender roles in military discourse, since the need for gender-sensitive coverage of male and female names has become more urgent. Linguistic marking of female presence in the military sphere, in particular, the use of feminine pronouns, is gaining significant importance.

Within the framework of military media communication, we observe an active rethinking of traditional gender roles, in particular, in the ways of representing women – not only as victims of war or logistical support, but also as active participants in hostilities, military professionals, commanders, medics, volunteers, snipers, drone operators, etc. This leads to the emergence of new feminine nominations, which reflect deep sociocultural transformations and linguistic understanding of women's experience in war.

The gender aspect in war media discourse is particularly important, because namely through linguistic means the construction of images of women in war narratives takes place. In public communication, feminine forms for designating military professions are increasingly appearing: *військова, командирка, стрільчиня, парамедикня, артилеристка* (*military woman, female commander, riflegirl, paramedic, artillerywoman*). Such linguistic innovations not only reflect real social changes, but also become an important element of the struggle for the symbolic recognition of women's presence in war. Linguistic gender analysis of war narratives allows identifying not only changes in the language system, but also deeper socio-cultural processes: rethinking femininity in war conditions, the formation of new roles for women in society, the affirmation of their subjectivity in spaces that were previously considered "traditionally male". Given this, the study of feminine nominations in media texts of the war period is relevant both in the context of the development of the Ukrainian language and in a broader sense, since it contributes to understanding how language reflects and at the same time shapes the gender consciousness of society during times of war.

Feminine nominations are increasingly becoming a subject of public discussion. In the context of military media communication, these linguistic units perform not only a nominative, but also a symbolic function, shaping the public perception of women as full-fledged participants in hostilities. The linguistic visibility of women determines their social presence. In addition to the identification and representational functions, feminines also perform a mobilization function, acting as a means of motivation: women articulate their belonging to the national resistance, record their own subjectivity, and create new models of war heroines. In journalistic practice, the nomination of female servicemen using feminines has a number of features related to both the linguistic norm and public perceptions of the female role in the army. We observe variability in the use of job titles and military ranks: along with feminines, masculines are often used, which indicates unstable linguistic practice, cf. *"Жінка-солдат – це універсальна жінка". Як живуть жінки-військові у стрілецькому батальйоні Сумщини* (*"A female soldier is a universal woman". How do female soldiers live in the Sumy Region Rifle Battalion*) (debaty.sumy.ua, February 21, 2023); *"Жінкам-військовослужбовцям доводиться боротись з російськими окупантами та сексистськими настроями у власних рядах"* (*"Female militaries have to fight Russian occupiers and sexist sentiments in their own ranks"*) (foreignukrains.com, August 20, 2023); *"У бригаді армійської авіації служить єдина жінка-пілот у ЗСУ"* (*"The only female pilot in the Armed Forces of Ukraine serves in the Army Aviation Brigade"*) (vsn.ua, May 19, 2025); *"Війна триває, тому саперам треба ще більше знань і зосередженості", – жінка-вибухотехнік із Житомира Ілона Куликівська* (*"The war continues, so deminers need even more knowledge and concentration," – Ilona Kulykivska, a female explosives technician from Zhytomyr*) (suspilne.media, June 23, 2025); *"У лавах Нацгвардії з'явилася перша жінка-сапер: як вона допомагає розмінювати Київщину"* (*The first female deminer has appeared in the ranks of the National Guard: how she helps demine the Kyiv region*) (tsn.ua, June 2, 2022).

On the other hand, the active use of names to refer to women in linguistic practice is an open gesture against discrimination and a manifestation of the struggle for equality, and in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war, a political affirmation of the values of dignity and freedom. The relevance of the study of feminine nominations in military media communication is determined by the need to show the visibility and role of women in the defense of the state, which forms an inclusive and fair discourse. Their use contributes to the destruction of stereotypes and the strengthening of gender equality in the sphere of national security.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The theoretical overview demonstrates a wide range of research on gender narratives, as well as the role of the media in the formation of gender stereotypes in society (Storozhuk & Bezhnar, 2021). Scientists describe trends in the use of feminatives and masculinatives in the mass media (Sydorenko et al., 2022), the formation of gender stereotypes on Ukrainian television (Formos, 2022). The scientific paradigm of research includes research on the feminization of the Ukrainian language, the impact of the war on women's nominations, and the regulatory and legal aspects of gender equality.

Researchers usually pay attention to the functional and word-formation features of women's nominations. The functional-cognitive nature of femininity in the Ukrainian language was characterized by Kostusiak et al. (2020). Arkhangelska (2020) examines the phenomenon of word-formation feminization of Ukrainian vocabulary and the variability of feminatives; Brus (2019) in her monograph comprehensively highlights the genesis, historical evolution, and functioning of feminine nominations; Vakulovich et al. (2024) analyze feminatives as a linguistic reflection of current social challenges, emphasizing the relationship between language and gender sensitivity in modern society. Syuta (2024) raises the problem of asymmetry in the use of military feminines in business and media styles, demonstrating the gap between the official norm and everyday practice. Grabovska (2021) draws attention to the socio-philosophical aspect of Ukrainian feminism. An important electronic resource that records established and new feminines is the "Web Dictionary of Female Names", created taking into account academic linguistic tradition and modern social practice (Synchak, 2022).

Scholars from all over the world have repeatedly drawn attention to the media role of women in military conflicts (Ette, 2013; Shulyaev & Band-Winterstein, 2024; Seidel, 2024). Modern scientific research shows increased attention by authors to media narratives of the Russo-Ukrainian war (Kostusiak et al., 2025), in particular gender narratives (Oyeleye & Jiang, 2023).

Since 2014, Ukrainian studies have appeared devoted to the feminine nomination of military discourse, and after the full-scale invasion in 2022, the attention of scholars to this lexical layer has especially increased. Researchers study aspects of gender equality in wartime (Tinín, 2023); women's experience in the context of war (Grabovska, 2022); pay attention to the value orientations of female military personnel (Sylkin, 2024); new female personal names in the military sphere (Synchak, 2023); media representation of the image of female military personnel with an indication of stereotypes and trends in overcoming them, emphasizing the change in public perception of the role of women in wartime (Zavgorodnia & Martsenyuk, 2024; Hraban & Samoilenko, 2023; Shulska et al., 2025); features of the translation of women's military ranks (Tarnavska, 2023); historical context of military feminatives (Danylchuk, 2024). Of particular interest is the research by Zavhorodnia and Martsenyuk (2024) in which the authors, through the analysis of media materials, consider how the image of a female soldier is changing, which stereotypes are preserved and which are transformed. The analyzed works constitute a solid foundation for further study of gender issues in Ukrainian society and linguistic space, in particular in military media discourse.

METHODS

The research material was texts from modern Ukrainian online media that cover the topics of war, women's participation in hostilities, volunteer activities, and military service. The main focus is on headlines, subtitles, news reports, analytical materials, and journalistic texts that update the image of women in wartime and use feminine nominations. The study covers media materials from the period 2022–2025 that reflect the linguistic trends of wartime. The corpus of analyzed texts includes publications from Ukrainian online resources that actively shape public war narratives. The choice of online media is due to their efficiency, dynamism of linguistic processes, and wide audience reach, which makes these resources representative for the analysis of modern Ukrainian media discourse. Special attention is paid to headline structures, as they concentrate the main communicative intention and at the same time reveal the gender strategies of the journalistic text: from the pursuit of gender equality to the reproduction of traditional stereotypes. The study analyzed headlines and texts in general, which recorded feminine nominations for female participants in hostilities (*військова, командирка, снайперка, медицина, артилеристка, операторка дрона, волонтерка*, etc.), as well as contextual synonymous substitutions and periphrases that mark female images. Such material allows tracing the functional-semantic, evaluative-pragmatic and ideological features of the use of feminatives in the media war narrative.

A well-chosen scientific methodology contributed to the holistic study of linguogender processes in modern military media discourse. The descriptive method was used to collect, systematize and describe the factual material – feminine nominations recorded in modern Ukrainian media texts on military topics. Thanks to this method, the most common forms of female names for military professions were identified, and their morphological models and functions in speech were clarified. Methods of structural-morphological and word-formation analysis make it possible to trace the mechanisms of creation of feminine nominations, to determine active models of feminization, their productivity and variability in the military lexicon. Thanks to the contextual-interpretative method, the

functioning of feminatives in the context of specific media narratives was analyzed. Based on the contexts, it was traced whether feminine nominations are used with a neutral, emotional-evaluative or symbolic load. This made it possible to establish how the image of a female soldier is formed through language: a heroine, a defender, a specialist or an object of sympathy. Discursive analysis was used to interpret feminine nominations as elements of media discourse, taking into account political, cultural and social factors. Thanks to the discursive approach, it was determined how the gender role of women was represented in the media during the Russo-Ukrainian war. The method allowed revealing narrative strategies: heroization, sacralization, paternalization, etc. Through the linguocultural method, it was analyzed how feminine nominations reflect the transformation of social ideas about femininity, masculinity and patriotism, how a new type of Ukrainian woman is fixed through language – a warrior, a symbol of strength and dignity.

Content analysis was used for quantitative and qualitative processing of media materials: identifying the frequency, topic, emotional tone and pragmatic characteristics of the use of feminatives. The pragmalinguistic method made it possible to trace the communicative intention and pragmatic function of the use of feminatives in media discourse. It was found out how feminine names contribute to strengthening solidarity, patriotism, identification with female soldiers, or, conversely, mark distance and appreciation. The method of critical discourse analysis is aimed at identifying hidden ideological and gender biases in war narratives. It was revealed how the media reproduce or destroy traditional patriarchal models through language.

The purpose of the article is to analyze feminine nominations that function in modern Ukrainian media in the context of military topics, as well as to clarify how linguistic means are used to construct new gender roles and represent female soldiers in the public space. It is planned to differentiate the most representative thematic groups, to investigate the word-formation features of female names in the context of modern Ukrainian society in war conditions, and to investigate how media narratives rethink the categories of masculinity and femininity, creating new models of heroism, solidarity, and national identity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historically, the Ukrainian military narrative has been deeply masculine: the army was perceived as a space dominated by men, strength, discipline, and physical endurance. However, with the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the number of women in the army increased significantly, not only in support positions, but also in combat positions. This led to the emergence of new gender narratives in which women appear not only as “guardians of the rear”, but also as subjects of resistance, defenders of the state, and active participants in military operations. On the one hand, heroic images of female servicemen are formed in the media and public discourse, symbolizing strength, courage, and self-sacrifice. On the other hand, we observe a certain ambivalence of perception: traditional stereotypes continue to influence the assessment of women’s participation in war. The “unusual” or “abnormality” of women at the front is often emphasized. Her dual role (warrior and defender) becomes a subject of public discussion and even moral assessment.

At the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war (2014–2016), most media materials presented women in the military through the prism of exclusivity: they were depicted as “unusual heroines” who “broke stereotypes” or “took up arms contrary to society’s expectations”. This approach, although positive in nature, emphasized the normativeness of the male image of a warrior and the exclusivity of female participation.

As the war developed, especially after the full-scale invasion of 2022, the tone changed. Ukrainian media began to create a narrative of equality and professionalism, where women appeared not as a symbol of “female courage,” but as a full-fledged part of the military system. In modern media communication, female military personnel are portrayed as commanders, medics, snipers, signalers, analysts, that is, as specialists who perform strategically important tasks.

In the context of the development of digital communications, alternative media narratives have emerged, created by female servicemen themselves in social networks, blogs, documentaries, and online media. These platforms are destroying the hierarchy of traditional journalistic discourse, giving women the opportunity to speak on their own behalf. Such narratives lack decorativeness or symbolization of female participation, but instead are present sincerity, emotional truthfulness, and reflection of experience. These media practices are becoming important tools for documenting the war and constructing a new collective memory.

The choice of using feminine nominations depends on the editorial policy of each media outlet for gender equality. The use of feminine nominations can be a tool not only for linguistic renewal, but also for social labeling - a demonstration of support for women at the front as active subjects, rather than an “auxiliary force”. Gender-marked tokens in journalistic discourse function as a means of identifying, recognizing, and normalizing female presence in a field traditionally associated with male dominance. Feminatives of military media communication combine linguistic practice, gender representation, and political symbolism. Their function goes beyond the purely grammatical, making women visible in armed resistance. This is an important step towards the

symbolic legitimation of female individuals in the structure of military power. Such gender-marked designations as *військова, бійчиня, командирка, офіцерка, снайперка*, etc. identify a woman as an active subject of hostilities, destroying the stereotypical dichotomy “man – warrior / woman – rear”. Today, feminine designations have become part of the narrative of national resistance, as the tokens *доброволка, ветеранка, героїня, захисниця*, etc. are actively appearing in the media space. One can trace the social acceptability and respect for gender-marked nominations through the actualization of feminine nouns in headlines and media texts, and posts by military personnel and volunteers on social networks.

We observe the active presence of names for female persons in the headlines and texts of various genres of journalistic materials: news, reports, interviews, articles. This is obviously due to the following features: linguistic economy (one token often replaces cumbersome syntactic constructions); attracting readers’ attention (a headline with the feminine is usually perceived as breaking the mold); reflecting the values of the editorial office (the choice of the word form demonstrates the ethical position of the publication regarding gender equality); differentiation of gender roles (the feminine clearly indicates that it is about a woman); social visibility (in such texts, a woman is depicted as a full participant in an event or process).

The analysis of feminine nominations in war media discourse allows identifying several of the most representative thematic groups.

Feminatives to Denote Military Ranks and Positions

These nominations reflect the official status of women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, their hierarchical position. They indicate the gender of the person, without changing the essence of the professional role. This group includes the general names of women serving in the military, as well as those who command a unit, have the rank of soldier, sergeant, major, captain, lieutenant colonel, colonel, officer, lieutenant.

In this group of feminines, the most common word-forming models in *-ка* are: general names of women serving in the military: *воєчка*: “Як на київському полігоні літню форму для воєчок тестували – фоторепортаж” (50vidsotkiv.org.ua, July 13, 2023); “Візит українських воєчок у Вашингтон: дякували за підтримку і просили про допомогу” (50vidsotkiv.org.ua, October 3, 2022); *воїнка*: “Воїнка розповіла про нову армійську спеціальність, яку зараз опановує” (tsn.ua, July 22, 2025).

This model also formed names denoting the names of women who perform certain military roles or hold military ranks: *солдатка*: “Солдатка Тетяна Моня: “Після полону я почувалася як дика тварина, яку випустили на волю” (visti.in.ua, August 15, 2025); *сержантка*: “Андріана Арехта – сержантка спецпідрозділу ЗСУ. Готується вертатись на передову” (bbc.com, August 7, 2023); “Історії військових треба розказувати зараз, поки вони живі – сержантка Збройних сил України Аліна Сарнацька” (hromadske.radio, October 18, 2023); *майорка*: “Уроженка Бердянська, майорка ЗСУ, заступниця командира Центру інформаційних ресурсів МОУ Шарлотта Хмельницька розпочала свій професійний шлях як помічниця народного депутата” (brd24.com, March 26, 2025); “Серед інших героїнь проєкту – майорка ЗСУ Валерія “Нава” Суботіна, яка постала в образі лави” (tsn, February 2, 2024); *капітанка*: “У Рівному капітанка ЗСУ Тетяна Камерістова презентувала свою третю збірку поезій (VIDEO)” (itvmg.com, February 26, 2025); “Капітанка Марія Павлівна. Мати загиблого захисника збудувала на Рівненщині спортивно-розважальний комплекс для дітей” (shotam.info, October 16, 2023); “Капітанка ЗСУ з Волині розповіла, як розпочалася її військова кар’єра” (volynpost.com, May 9, 2023); *офіцерка*: “Офіцерка ЗСУ Тетяна Чорновол наразі не йде у наряди й захищатиме Україну на фронті” (vchirniy.kyiv.ua, October 11, 2025); *лейтенантка*: “Жінки на фронті: 10 запитань старшій лейтенантці НГУ Христині, позивний “Кудрява”” (elle.ua, September 20, 2022); “Лейтенантка Катерина служить у 18 окремії бригаді армійської авіації” (vsn.ua, May 19, 2025).

A woman who heads a unit is called a *командирка*, cf. “Дорога життя”. Командирка ЗСУ Оксана “Ксена” Рубаняк видала другу збірку поезій, написану на фронті (“The Road of Life”. The commander of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Oksana “Ksena” Rubanyak published the second collection of poems written at the front”) (divoche.media, July 8, 2024); *Ксена* стала наймолодшою командиркою «чоловічого» взводу (“Machine gunner Ksena became the youngest commander of an “all-male” platoon”) (bilahata.net, January 8, 2025); Після закінчення школи пішла до військомату: 25-річна командирка “Руна” вже шість років захищає Україну (“After graduating from school, she went to the military enlistment office: 25-year-old commander “Runa” has been defending Ukraine for six years”) (tsn.ua, December 22, 2023).

Less common in this thematic group is the word-formation model in *-иця*: *полковниця*: “У Вінниці померла 101-річна ветеранка, розвідниця та полковниця Ольга Твердохлебова” (suspilne.media, March 24, 2025); “Ми переможемо, тому що ми нація захисників”. Історик, голова ОУН і полковниця ЗСУ про місію боронити Україну” (ukr.radio, October 10, 2025); “...полковниця Любов Киналь – начальниця відділення комунікацій повітряного командування “Центр” Повітряних сил ЗСУ” (shotam.info, November 21, 2024).

The most quantitative representation is *військовослужбовиця* (the *feminine military servicewoman*), which denotes the common name of a woman serving in the army: “10 років на війні: військовослужбовиця-кримчанка розповіла про бойовий шлях” (“10 years in the war: a Crimean servicewoman told about her combat path”) (suspilne.media, December 25,

2024); “The army does not mean death – a servicewoman of the Armed Forces of Ukraine explained” (tsn.ua, March 21, 2024).

The nomination *військовиця* (“*military woman*”) is sporadically used: “*Військовиця, поетеса, цьогорічна лауреатка Шевченківської премії Ярина Чорногуз розповіла Тижню про службу в Києві, розмови з донькою, військову літературу й мобілізацію жінок*” (“*Military woman, poet, this year’s Shevchenko Prize laureate Yaryna Chornobuz told Tyzhny about her service in Kyiv, conversations with her daughter, military literature, and the mobilization of women*”) (rozмова.wordpress.com, March 15, 2024).

We note other nominations for identifying women serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: *військова* (often used): “*Військова ЗСУ підтримує мобілізацію жінок – воювати “чудово виходить”*” (ukrinform.ua, February 27, 2024); *військовичка* (rarely used): “*Тоді військовичка попросила командира, щоб її відправили на навчання з оперування БПЛА*” (tyzhden.ua, December 4, 2024); “*Відтоді весь вільний час придивлялася до роботи номерів розрахунку, читала книжки з артилерійської справи, вивчала конструкцію САУ, а у 2019-му зробила дебютний постріл із гармати на полігоні, – розповіла військовичка*” (volyn.com.ua, June 11, 2022).

Feminatives Denoting Women’s Combat Functions

This group includes nominations of women directly involved in hostilities. We note the same representation of different word-formation models: *-к-а: піхотинка*: “*Станція Краматорськ: морська піхотинка Ярина Чорногуз розповість про службу жінок у війську*” (ukrinform.ua, March 12, 2024); “*На Херсонщині зникла безвісти морська піхотинка Оксана “Отаман” П’ятак*” (divoche.media, August 5, 2024); *снайперка*: “*Просилась на фронт снайперкою: у Вінниці померла 101-річна ветеранка Другої Світової Ольга Твердохлебова*” (vechirniy.kyiv.ua, March 24, 2025); “*Снайперка зі Львова після втрати ноги збирається повернутися на фронт: що її мотивує (фото)*” (unian.ua, January 18, 2024); *-иц-я: гранатометниця*: “*Гранатометниця, яка хоче стати диригенткою. Історія киянки, яка добровільно пішла на фронт*” (radiosvoboda.org, January 19, 2024); “*Стріляти неважко, ворог прийшов на мою землю*” – гранатометниця зі Львова, медсестра Христина Омельченко” (radiosvoboda.org, May 23, 2025); “*Жінки на фронті: гранатометниця, яка нищить русню*” (soroaka.ternopil.ua, June 10, 2025); *кулеметниця*: “*20-річна кулеметниця в бригаді Чорних Запорозжів Оксана Рубаняк: Вжити в бою – часто просто везіння*” (novynarnia.com, June 14, 2023); “*Кулеметниця з Івано-Франківщини Оксана Рубаняк на позивний Ксена отримала відзнаку президента “За оборону України”*” (suspilne.media, September 6, 2023); “*Єдина кулеметниця у взводі: 19-річна прикарпатка пішла доброволицею на війну*” (kurs.if.ua, July 20, 2022); *розвідниця*: “*Мобілізація жінок. Українська розвідниця зробила заяву, яка розбурхала мережу*” (glavcom.ua, March 14, 2024); “*На фронті загинула розвідниця-навідниця Людмила Шкуренко: “Жіночий ветеранський рух” відкрив збір на РЕБ для її підрозділу*” (divoche.media, June 5, 2024); “*Мобілізація жінок: відома розвідниця пропонує відправити на війну 100 тисяч українок*” (enovosty.com, January 12, 2024).

The most representative nomination in this thematic group is the *бійчиня* (word-forming model in *-иц-я*): “*Бійчиня на Волині захищає кордон зі своїм котом*” (tsn.ua, February 9, 2023); “*Тільки не пишійть, що от, яка нещасна дівочка з ампутацією – бійчиня Ада*” (hromadske.ua, December 12, 2024)

Feminatives Indicating Technical or Specialized Training

These names reflect the participation of women in military specialties related to technology, communications, etc. The most productive word-formation model of the analyzed thematic group is in *-к-а*, cf. *операторка БПЛА* (*female UAV operator*): “*Призвалася за покликом серця: історія операторки БпЛА з прикордонного загону Вінниччини*” (*Called by the call of the heart: the story of a UAV operator from the border detachment of Vinnytsia region*) (suspilne.media, May 19, 2025); “*Операторки БпЛА на позивні “Рівер” та “Галактика” служать у 13 бригаді Нагувардії “Хартія”*” (suspilne.media, August 23, 2024); *саперка (female deminer)*: “*67-річна українка стала саперкою заради корови і прославилася на увесь світ*” (*A 67-year-old Ukrainian woman became a deminer for the sake of a cow and became famous all over the world*) (life.rayon.in.ua, May 27, 2023); *Саперка Ніна Чигріна*: “*Після 8-годинної роботи в полі я... бігаю*” (sestry.eu, November 22, 2024); less common word-formation model is with *-иц-я: десантниця (female paratrooper)*: “*Мріяла про бойову посаду у війську. Історія ветеранки-десантниця Христини Омельченко*” (“*She dreamed of a combat position in the army. The story of veteran paratrooper Khrystyna Omelchenko*”) (suspilne.media, July 6, 2025); “*Як колишня десантниця та розвідниця сестра Анісія військовим душі лікує*” (armyinform.com.ua, September 17, 2022); “*Мене переполювала гордість, що вона така сильна, відважна. Розповідь мами про загиблу десантницю*” (n.20minut.ua, May 21, 2022).

Feminatives denoting the medical and humanitarian role of women

These names are usually used in rear and evacuation contexts. The most common nominations of the mentioned group are as follows: *волонтерка*: “*Наші помічники допоможуть цивільним краще зрозуміти військових, – Леся Олефіренко, волонтерка та колишня військова*” (“*Our manuals will help civilians better understand the military, – Lesya Olefirenko, volunteer and former military*”) (armyfm.com.ua, July 9, 2025); “*Волонтерка розповіла, кому слід готуватися до мобілізації*” (armiya.novyny.live, June 8, 2025); *медикиня*: “*Тішки із наплічником. Як у 119 бригаді ТрО служить медикиня, яку не хотіли брати у військо*” (suspilne.media, July 26, 2025); “*Обов’язкова мобілізація жінок в Україні: бойова медикиня Чорногуз підтримує цю ідею*” (tsn.ua, March 12, 2024).

Feminatives to Indicate the Status of Participation in the War

This group reflects the social or legal status of women in a military context, cf.: *захисниця* (*female defender*): (“*In the Armed Forces of Ukraine, everyone can find a job for themselves, – female defender Olga Vesnyanka*”) (rfi.fr, October 1, 2024); ““Ніколи не забуду той крик”: захисниця “Азовсталі” про знущання у російському полоні” (suspilne.media, January 12, 2025); “Маємо зараз усіма силами підтримати військо”: захисниця з Чернівців – про жінок на війні та допомогу ЗСУ” (molbuk.ua, September 2, 2023); *доброволіця* (*female volunteer*): “На Донбасі загинула доброволиця з Білорусі Марія Зайцева” (divoche.media, January 17, 2025); “У лікарні померла Ллона Капельницька – доброволиця й волонтерка, поранена під час атаки на Чернівці” (glavcom.ua, September 25, 2025); “Доброволіця з Кіровоградщини мріє про перемогу над росіянами та повернення до мирного життя (ФОТО)” (zpu.kr.ua, Marcj 14, 2023); *ветеранка* (*female veteran*): ““Коли немає дійсно важливих речей, ми навколо жінок тільки про шмотки”, – ветеранка Приймак. Відео” (holosameryky.com, April 30, 2024); “Сила ветеранок. Як працює жіночий ветеранський рух в Україні” (espresso.tv, October 31, 2024); *учасниця бойових дій* (*participant in hostilities*): “Олена Суслова: Близько 7 тис. українських жінок вже отримали статус учасниці бойових дій” (glavcom.ua, December 20, 2022).

We often come across a simultaneous combination of two feminine nominations: “Українська солдатка Джейн: історія командирки на передовій” (“*Ukrainian soldier Jane: The story of a female commander on the front line*”) (24tv.ua, May 21, 2022); “Просувала ідею вишанування загиблих та рятувала життя: згадаємо хвилиною мовчання медикіню-доброволіцю Ірину Цибук” (freeradio.com.ua, May 31, 2024); “На Донбасі загинула доброволиця й активістка з Білорусі Марія Зайцева” (zmina.info, January 19, 2024); “З бойової медицини в аеророзвідницю. Згадаймо Владиславу Черних з позивним Аїда” (glavcom.ua, December 17, 2023).

Having analyzed all the feminines, we record their use with the context of clarification, for example, *бійчиня ЗСУ*, *військовослужбовиця ЗСУ* and without clarification – *бійчиня*, *військовослужбовиця*. The form with clarification helps to avoid ambiguity. By adding an indication of ZSU, the speaker seems to legitimize the new feminine in public discourse, emphasizes the status of a woman as a representative of an important institution (army, civil service), enhances authority and reduces the emotional reaction from the perception of the new formation. The use of clarification along with the feminine is a transitional strategy for adapting new linguistic units to widespread use. Over time, when these femininities of military media communication become entrenched in the linguistic norm, the need for clarifications will decrease.

Differentiation of the most common thematic groups of feminine media nominations has shown that gender narratives in Ukrainian media today demonstrate a departure from traditional stereotypes, where women were associated mainly with motherhood, care, and home front. Only sporadically do we find publications that demonstrate the traditional image of women, usually embodied in the feminines *волонтерка*, *медикіня* (*female volunteer*, *female medic*), and occasionally in other nominations, cf.: “Годую хлопців так, аби вони добре були окупанта – воячка Ірина зі Львова”; “Я знаю, що це будуть їсти хлопці, і їм має бути смачно”: волонтерка із Запоріжжя готує захисникам сухі супи та борщі” (suspilne.media, October 10, 2025).

Sometimes, the media emphasize the external image of a female soldier, when they show her well-groomed, with makeup, smiling even in combat conditions, cf. “Справжня жінка й на війні знайде б’юті-салон та навіть хамам – медикіня “Sarah” у програмі «За спиною»” (“*A real woman will find a beauty salon and even a hammam even in war*” – *female medical worker “Sarah” in the program “Behind the Back”*) (ukrinform.ua, March 22, 2025). Such an image is stereotypical, and it emphasizes external attractiveness and femininity instead of professionalism or masculinity. Such narratives shift the emphasis from the role of a soldier to appearance, reproducing gender clichés that devalue the real contribution of women to military service.

However, today, the military media discourse is dominated by a new, strong image of a female military servicewoman, an equal participant in the struggle for the state, cf. *Бути українським воїном і воїнкою – найвищий рівень любові до своєї країни* (ukr.radio, June 14, 2024); “Без жінок ми програсмо війну”. Вийшов новий подкаст “Характеру”, героїнями якого стали штурмовичка, медикіня та молодша сержантка ЗСУ” (divoche.media, July 1, 2024).

The modern gender narrative in the media, which attests to the heroism and strength of women, destroys traditional ideas about the weaker sex. In media materials, women fighting are increasingly shown as full-fledged professionals, capable of performing complex combat missions, commanding units, making difficult decisions, taking responsibility and showing courage, cf. the headlines of journalistic publications: “Вона билась до кінця» – морська піхотинка Оксана, яка воювала в Кринках” (slidstvo.info, August 5, 2024); “Снайперка ЗСУ з позивним “Чилі” ліквідувала і покалічила десятки військових РФ (відео)” (kriminal.tv, January 27, 2025); ““Жінка мстить до кінця”. Бійчиня “Мать” 56-ї ОМПБр служить у піхоті на Донеччині: історія” (suspilne.media, January 26, 2015). A lot of materials testify to the participation of women in military operations since the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war: “Після закінчення школи пішла до військкомату: 25-річна командирка “Руна” вже шість років захищає Україну” (tsn.ua, December 22, 2023); “10 років на війні: військовослужбовиця-кримчанка розповіла про бойовий шлях” (suspilne.media, December 25, 2024). The narrative of female heroism also includes publications about older women who go to serve, cf.: “Я не бабуся, я солдатка». 72-річна військова “Азову” про службу, полон і роботу в

стабункти” (freeradio.com.ua, May 31, 2024). This is an example of an emancipatory gender narrative that expands the boundaries of traditional notions of women’s roles, demonstrating the conscious and equal participation of women in the national struggle.

At the same time, the media is trying to preserve humanity in covering such stories: they show female soldiers not only as soldiers, but also as women who have emotions, families, and needs for support: “*“Мріяла про щасливе майбутнє для сина”: загинула волонтерка і доброволиця Наталія Бойко*” (“*I dreamed of a happy future for my son”: volunteer Natalia Boyko died*)¹ (focus.ua, October 19, 2024); “*Жінок мотивують іти служити їхні діти*”. Військова про свою мобілізацію та дівчат на фронті” (dou.ua, May 14, 2025).

We identify media materials that demonstrate gender equality in the portrayal of female soldiers through the rejection of stereotyping, recognition of their professional subjectivity, and the depiction of women’s war experiences as an integral part of national resistance, cf: “*У війни немає статі: солдатки та лейтенантки 58 ОМПБр розповідають свої історії з фронту*” (konotop.city, March 7, 2024); “*Позитивна тенденція в бік сприйняття жінок в армії нарівні з чоловіками – майорка Дарія Гуда*”; “*Сержантка з миколаївської бригади працює на комплексі “Poseidon” та керує відділенням, де служать лише чоловіки*” (suspilne.media/mykolaiv, January 28, 2025); “*Жінки не лише воюють, вони можуть командувати на фронті – офіцерка ЗСУ*” (ukr.radio, November 28, 2023); “*Кулеметниця Ксена стала наймолодшою командиркою «чоловічого» взводу*” (bilahata.net, January 8, 2025). This approach forms not only a new journalistic ethic, but also a new social consciousness, where heroism, strength and patriotism have no gender boundaries.

However, certain gender stereotypes still remain. We repeatedly see how a female soldier in military media communication appears through the prism of a double standard: she impresses, breaks perceptions, proves that she can be no worse than men. This is evidenced by the following headlines of journalistic publications: “*На Київщині вперше в Україні координаторкою проєкту “Активні парки” стала жінка-ветеранка війни*” (suspilne.media, June 14, 2024); “*“Мені потрібно зробити внесок у нашу перемогу”: історія єдиної в Україні саперки-водолазки з Вінниччини*” (suspilne.media, September 17, 2023); “*Прикарпатська війнка Оксана Рубаняк потрапила до українського списку Forbes (ФОТО)*” (galka.if.ua, September 22, 2024); “*Лейтенантка ЗСУ Любов Плаксюк – колишня вчителька історії – стала першою жінкою в історії української армії, яка очолила артилерійський підрозділ*” (buknews.com.ua, May 30, 2022); “*Перша жінка-військовослужбовиця в Україні пройшла кваліфікаційний курс Сил спецоперацій*” (“*The first female military servicewoman in Ukraine completed the Special Operations Forces qualification course*”) (nv.ua, July 11, 2023).

Modern Ukrainian media increasingly raise the problems faced by women at the front, in particular gender bias and manifestations of sexism, cf. “*Жінки у війську: офіцерка ЗСУ розповіла про гендерні упередження, виклики та жіночий батальйон*” (“*Women in the military: an officer of the Armed Forces of Ukraine spoke about gender bias, challenges and the women’s battalion*”) (uspilne.media, June 10, 2023); “*Військовиця ЗСУ Вікторія “Руна” розповіла про стереотипи щодо жінок в армії та як її підлеглі сприймають жінку-командирку*” (divoche.media, May 27, 2024); “*Не пускав жінок у потяг: воячка розповіла про сексизм в Укрзалізниці*”; “*Українська військовиця розповіла про сексуальні домагання в ЗСУ: реакція Міноборони*” (omo.ua, August 14, 2023).

In addition, the publications draw attention to unequal treatment in military units, lack of proper equipment and conditions of service for women, underestimation of their professional skills, sexual harassment by men. Such materials perform an important social function, as they expose discrimination, draw attention to the problem, and form a public demand for equality and a change in attitude towards female soldiers as full participants in the defense of the state.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the activation of feminine nominations in military media communication not only testifies to changes in the linguistic norm, but also reflects the transformations of the gender paradigm in Ukrainian society. Media narratives about women in the military demonstrate the evolution of public perceptions of gender. From images of “defenders” and “heroic exceptions”, Ukrainian media culture moves to the concept of gender equality and professional competence. A woman in the military narrative of the 21st century is not only a symbol of resistance, but also a subject of action that shapes the national discourse of strength, responsibility, and dignity. Feminine names denoting women involved in hostilities cease to be exceptional or marginal; instead, they are gradually established as full-fledged linguistic units that reflect real social changes and the strengthening of the role of women in the military space.

A comparison of media narratives of the war period testifies to the rethinking of traditional categories of masculinity and femininity. A new gender balance is being formed in modern Ukrainian media: heroism, courage, professionalism and sacrifice cease to be exclusively male traits, and a female soldier appears as an equal participant in the struggle, a symbol of strength, dignity and national unity. Language in this process acts not only as a means

¹ Translation of some materials in Ukrainian is given for reference

of reflection, but also as a mechanism for creating a new social reality, in which gender equality is affirmed through military experience and media representation.

The linguistic strategy of introducing femininities performs an identification, socio-cultural, and mobilization function, contributing to the formation of the image of a woman as a full-fledged participant in socially significant processes during the Russo-Ukrainian war.

The analysis of feminine names revealed their growth and functional variability in texts of various genres, including news, reports, interviews, and analytical materials. It was observed that the most representative groups of feminines in military media discourse are the following: names denoting military ranks and positions; names indicating the active participation of women in combat operations; feminines of technical and special training; names reflecting the medical and humanitarian role of women; feminines indicating the legal or social belonging of women to the military context.

Gender narratives about female military personnel in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war demonstrate the process of rethinking social roles and expanding gender boundaries. Women in war not only destroy established stereotypes, but also create new models of civic responsibility and patriotism. Their participation in hostilities becomes a symbol of social emancipation, as well as a significant contribution to the formation of post-war identity of Ukraine.

Prospects for further scientific research lie in a multi-vector study of the dynamics of the use of feminine nouns in military media discourse from the point of view of their linguistic status and communicative load, and their influence on the formation of gender perceptions in society.

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