

**AUTHORIAL NEOLOGISMS AND OCCASIONALISMS OF  
MILITARY VOCABULARY IN WARHAMMER 40,000 TEXTS**

**Adaev Georgiy Borisovich**

Student, Chirchiq State Pedagogical University

[georgijadaev602@gmail.com](mailto:georgijadaev602@gmail.com)

**Scientific adviser: Akmalxonov Saidfozilxon**

Teacher, Chirchik State Pedagogical University

[akmalxonovsaidfozil@gmail.com](mailto:akmalxonovsaidfozil@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT.** This article examines lexical innovation in the military discourse of Warhammer 40,000 fiction published by Black Library, focusing on the structural, semantic and stylistic characteristics of neologisms and occasionalisms. The study analyzes how military science fiction constructs specialized terminology for futuristic warfare, institutions and technologies through processes of compounding, derivation, pseudo-Latin formation and semantic reinterpretation. Particular attention is paid to the distinction between stable terminological neologisms and context-dependent occasionalisms functioning as expressive stylistic devices. The research is based on continuous sampling from the novels *Horus Rising* and *False Gods*, with lexical units classified according to semantic domain, word-formation mechanism and degree of systemic stability. The analysis demonstrates that Warhammer terminology performs multiple functions simultaneously: it contributes to world-building, reinforces ideological structures, simulates bureaucratic and military realism, and intensifies narrative expressiveness. The article further argues that lexical innovation in military fantasy discourse represents not only a nominative process but also a mechanism of stylistic foregrounding and conceptual construction. The findings show that Warhammer 40,000 develops a hybrid lexical system in which terminological precision coexists with metaphorical and ideological symbolism, creating a distinctive military-fantasy linguistic environment.





**JOURNAL OF  
PEDAGOGICAL AND PHILOLOGICAL RESEARCH  
VOLUME-1, ISSUE-5, 2026**

**Keywords:** neologism; occasionalism; linguistic creativity; military discourse; Warhammer 40,000; military fantasy; lexical innovation; science fiction discourse; word formation; stylistic foregrounding

**ANNOTATSIYA**

Mazkur maqola Black Library tomonidan nashr etilgan Warhammer 40,000 asarlaridagi harbiy diskursda uchraydigan leksik innovatsiyalarni, xususan neologizm va okkazonalizmlarning strukturaviy, semantik hamda stilistik xususiyatlarini tahlil qilishga bag‘ishlangan. Tadqiqotda harbiy ilmiy fantastika futuristik urushlar, institutlar va texnologiyalarni ifodalash uchun maxsus terminologiyani qanday qilib kompozitsiya, derivatsiya, psevdolotin shakllari va semantik qayta talqin orqali yaratishi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Barqaror terminologik neologizmlar bilan kontekstga bog‘liq, ekspressiv stilistik vosita sifatida xizmat qiluvchi okkazonalizmlar o‘rtasidagi farqqa alohida e‘tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqot materiali sifatida *Horus Rising* va *False Gods* romanlari tanlab olinib, ulardagi leksik birliklar uzluksiz tanlash usuli orqali yig‘ildi hamda semantik soha, so‘z yasash mexanizmi va tizimli barqarorlik darajasiga ko‘ra tasniflandi. Tahlil natijalari Warhammer terminologiyasi bir vaqtning o‘zida bir nechta funksiyalarni bajarishini ko‘rsatadi: u badiiy olam qurilishiga xizmat qiladi, mafkuraviy tuzilmalarni mustahkamlaydi, byurokratik va harbiy realizmni imitatsiya qiladi hamda narrativ ifodalilikni kuchaytiradi. Shuningdek, maqolada harbiy fantaziya diskursidagi leksik innovatsiya nafaqat nominativ jarayon, balki stilistik foregrounding va konseptual konstruktsiya mexanizmi ekanligi ta‘kidlanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari Warhammer 40,000 terminologiyasi terminologik aniqlik bilan metaforik va mafkuraviy ramziylik uyg‘unlashgan gibrid leksik tizimni shakllantirishini ko‘rsatadi.

**Keywords:** neologism; occasionalism; linguistic creativity; military discourse; Warhammer 40,000; military fantasy; lexical innovation; science fiction discourse; word formation; stylistic foregrounding

**АННОТАЦИЯ.** Данная статья посвящена исследованию лексических



инноваций в военном дискурсе произведений вселенной Warhammer 40,000, опубликованных издательством Black Library, с акцентом на структурные, семантические и стилистические особенности неологизмов и окказионализмов. В исследовании анализируется, каким образом военная научная фантастика формирует специализированную терминологию для обозначения футуристических войн, институтов и технологий посредством словосложения, деривации, псевдолатинских образований и семантического переосмысления. Особое внимание уделяется различию между устойчивыми терминологическими неологизмами и контекстуально обусловленными окказионализмами, функционирующими как выразительные стилистические средства. Материалом исследования послужили романы *Horus Rising* и *False Gods*, из которых методом сплошной выборки были отобраны лексические единицы, классифицированные по семантическим группам, способам словообразования и степени системной устойчивости. Анализ показывает, что терминология Warhammer выполняет одновременно несколько функций: участвует в построении художественного мира, усиливает идеологические структуры, имитирует бюрократический и военный реализм, а также повышает выразительность повествования. В статье также утверждается, что лексическая инновация в дискурсе военного фэнтези представляет собой не только номинативный процесс, но и механизм стилистического выдвижения и концептуального конструирования. Полученные результаты демонстрируют, что Warhammer 40,000 формирует гибридную лексическую систему, в которой терминологическая точность сочетается с метафорической и идеологической символикой, создавая уникальную языковую среду военного фэнтези.

**Keywords:** neologism; occasionalism; linguistic creativity; military discourse; Warhammer 40,000; military fantasy; lexical innovation; science fiction discourse; word formation; stylistic foregrounding





## **Introduction**

Authorial neologisms are particularly significant in fiction, where they contribute to the construction of distinctive narrative worlds and conceptual systems. In stylistic terms, such lexical innovations can be understood through Leech G.'s concept of **foregrounding**, which involves deviation from established linguistic norms. Leech G. defines literature as “the creative use of language”<sup>1</sup>, often equated with the use of “unorthodox or deviant forms of language”<sup>2</sup>. When authors introduce new lexical items or unexpected combinations, these elements stand out against the background of ordinary language, attracting attention and guiding interpretation.

Military science fiction is marked by strong lexical innovation, as authors must create terms for futuristic warfare, technologies and institutions without real-world equivalents. This requires neologisms that name fictional objects and structures while remaining understandable to readers. *Warhammer 40,000* is especially notable for its dense and systematic terminology across narrative and dialogue. Black Library texts combine neologisms with occasional formations, particularly in military vocabulary where authority and technical detail must coexist. This interaction enhances narrative authenticity by simulating a fully developed military linguistic environment. The study of these lexical units reveals how fictional discourse constructs a coherent military ontology and supports the ideological structure of the Warhammer universe.

In linguistic theory, neologisms are generally defined as lexical units that emerge to denote new concepts and gradually become integrated into a language system through processes of repetition and semantic stabilization. Occasionalisms as Melkaeva R. describe them, are a unique phenomenon of language, the emergence of it is a continuous process, since language functions dynamically and, new speech formations appear within it<sup>3</sup>. By contrast to neologisms, occasionalisms are context-dependent

---

<sup>1</sup> Leech G. *Language in Literature*.– London: Longman, 2008.– P. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* pp. 21

<sup>3</sup> R. Melkaeva. *Occasional Words As a Way Of Realization Of Linguocreativity (Based On The English-Literary Discourse)*.-2022



formations created for expressive, stylistic or pragmatic purposes and often lack systemic stability beyond their immediate narrative environment. In Warhammer fiction, this distinction is particularly relevant, as the narrative simultaneously relies on stable terminological neologisms, such as *Astartes*, *Bolter* and expressive occasional formations which enhance the dramatic representation of combat. The coexistence of these lexical types reflects the hybrid nature of Warhammer discourse, where institutional simulation intersects with narrative stylization and metaphorical intensification. Moreover, the interaction between systemic terminology and stylistically motivated lexical creativity illustrates how fictional military discourse balances communicative precision with aesthetic expressiveness. The differentiation between neologisms and occasionalisms serves as an analytical framework for examining both the structural and stylistic dimensions of Warhammer military vocabulary.

### **Theoretical Background**

Weaponry and equipment represent a highly productive domain of neologization in the *Warhammer* universe, reflecting its militarized narrative core. Terms such as *Bolter*, *Chainsword*, and *Power armour* combine familiar lexical elements with speculative technology, creating hybrid and accessible designations. Their structure is often based on compounding and derivation, which ensures semantic clarity while maintaining fictional specificity. These formations allow readers to infer function through recognizable components, reducing the distance between real and fictional concepts. At the same time, their innovative combinations emphasize the uniqueness of the Warhammer arsenal and reinforce technological otherness. Weapon-related neologisms enhance immersion while sustaining the aesthetic of constant warfare central to the setting.

Military vehicles and war machines form a distinct group of lexical innovation in the *Warhammer* universe, reflecting its focus on mechanized warfare. Terms such as



*Stormbird, Thunderhawk, Drop-pod, Battle-barge* and *Warlord Titan* systematically name combat and transport platforms, combining familiar lexical elements with new meanings to indicate function and status. These compounds support semantic clarity while preserving fictional uniqueness. Their repeated use across narratives leads to lexical stabilization, reinforcing the sense of a coherent military–industrial system and enhancing the technological realism of the setting. In contrast to stable neologisms, Warhammer texts also use occasionalisms that serve expressive and stylistic functions in combat narration. Formations such as *man-tanks, spear-tip thrust* intensify battle descriptions by emphasizing the experiential dimension of warfare. These units are often based on existing military metaphors or idiomatic expressions but gain additional expressive force in fictional context. Their limited repetition and strong dependence on context distinguish them from systemic terminology, placing them in the category of authorial occasionalisms. Alongside canonical neologisms, they enrich the emotional and imagistic texture of the narrative and balance precision with expressiveness. Occasionalisms increase narrative intensity and deepen reader immersion, especially in depictions of close combat and tactical action.

Warhammer neologisms rely on several productive mechanisms. Compounding is the most frequent (e.g., *vox-chatter, battle-barge, drop-site*), enabling clear and accessible naming of fictional concepts. Pseudo-Latin borrowing (*Astartes, Mechanicum, Administratrix*) adds institutional authority and historical tone. Semantic reinterpretation gives existing words specialized meanings (*chapter*), while hybrid formations combine technical and metaphorical elements. Together, these processes ensure morphological productivity and semantic coherence within the fictional military lexicon. Functionally, military neologisms and occasionalisms perform multiple interrelated roles within the narrative, extending beyond simple referential designation. First, they contribute to world-building by constructing a coherent system of military institutions, technologies and practices that collectively define the operational reality of



the fictional universe. Second, they simulate bureaucratic and organizational complexity, thereby enhancing narrative realism and reinforcing the perception of the Imperium as an administratively intricate and historically layered polity. Third, they reinforce ideological framing, as institutional terminology reflects the hierarchical and authoritarian nature of Imperial governance while simultaneously sacralizing military authority. Fourth, occasionalisms intensify stylistic expressiveness, particularly in battle descriptions where metaphorical language amplifies emotional impact and foregrounds the experiential dimension of warfare. Additionally, both neologisms and occasional formations facilitate reader immersion by establishing a specialized linguistic environment that signals the distinctiveness of the fictional setting. These functions demonstrate the centrality of lexical innovation in shaping the military discourse of Warhammer fiction and highlight its role as a key mechanism of narrative, ideological and stylistic construction.

### **Materials, Methods, Analysis**

For detailed linguistic analysis, a representative sample of neologisms and occasionalisms was selected from the master corpus, covering hierarchical, technological, biological and stylistic domains of Warhammer military vocabulary. The selected lexical units were identified through continuous sampling from *Horus Rising* and *False Gods* and classified according to semantic domain, word-formation mechanism and degree of systemic stability.

The term “*Astartes*” represents a pseudo-Latin authorial neologism constructed within the Warhammer 40,000 universe. It appears to derive from the name of the ancient Near Eastern goddess Astarte, associated with war and power. Through the addition of a Latinized morphological form, the lexeme acquires an archaic and authoritative tone. Semantically, the word undergoes a complete transformation, shifting from a mythological reference to a designation for genetically enhanced super-soldiers. This reflects a broader tendency in military fantasy discourse to employ classical



linguistic elements in order to construct a sense of historical depth, ideological gravity, and cultural continuity.

The term “*Mechanicum*” is an authorial neologism formed through pseudo–Latin derivation based on the root “*mechanic-*,” originating from Greek *mēchanē* (“device, machine”) and Latin *mechanicus*. The addition of the suffix–*um* creates the appearance of a classical institutional noun, analogous to forms such as “*Imperium*.” Semantically, the lexeme represents an abstraction and institutionalization of the concept of machinery, denoting in the Warhammer 40,000 universe a techno–religious organization devoted to the worship and study of technology. The use of Latinized morphology contributes to the formal and authoritative tone, reinforcing the fusion of religious and scientific discourse characteristic of military fantasy.

The term “**Chainsword**” is an authorial neologism formed through compounding of two existing English lexemes: “**chain**” and “**sword**.” Structurally, it represents a determinative compound in which the first element modifies the second, indicating a mechanized variation of a traditional bladed weapon. Semantically, the lexeme arises from conceptual blending, combining features of a sword and a chainsaw to create a hybrid object characteristic of the Warhammer 40,000 universe. The juxtaposition of archaic and industrial elements reflects the broader stylistic tendency of military–fantasy discourse to merge medieval and technological imagery, thereby enhancing the setting’s distinctive aesthetic.

The expression “*Man–tanks*” functions as a contextual occasional compound within Warhammer 40,000 discourse, used to describe Astartes equipped with Terminator armour. Structurally, it represents a hyphenated noun compound combining the lexemes “*man*” and “*tank*.” Semantically, the expression is based on conceptual blending, whereby human soldiers are metaphorically reinterpreted as heavily armored combat vehicles. This results in a dehumanizing effect, emphasizing durability, destructive capacity, and mechanized warfare aesthetics. As an occasionalism, the term



operates primarily in descriptive and expressive contexts rather than as a stable lexical unit within the fictional lexicon.

The phrase “*Light of the Emperor*” functions as a phraseological unit within the ideological discourse of *Warhammer 40,000*, representing the perceived divine guidance and authority of the Emperor of Mankind. Structurally, it follows a genitive construction typical of religious expressions, such as “light of God.” Semantically, the lexeme “light” is metaphorically reinterpreted as a symbol of truth, salvation, and divine presence, while “the Emperor” is elevated from a political figure to a quasi-divine entity. This results in the sacralization of political authority, where governance and ideology are framed as manifestations of divine illumination. The expression thus contributes to the construction of a theocratic worldview characteristic of military–fantasy discourse.

The expression “*Blessed be Nurgle*” functions as a ritual phraseological unit within the *Warhammer 40,000* discourse, constructed on the model of traditional religious blessings such as “Blessed be God.” It employs an archaic subjunctive structure typical of liturgical language, thereby imitating sacred discourse patterns. However, the phrase is recontextualized through its association with Nurgle, a Chaos deity embodying decay and disease. This results in a semantic inversion, where the conventional positive value of blessing is applied to a corrupt and destructive divine figure. The expression thus serves as an ideological marker of Chaos worship and contributes to the stylized parody of religious language within military–fantasy narrative.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of military vocabulary in *Warhammer 40,000* shows that lexical innovation is a key mechanism of world–building and stylistic expression in Black Library fiction. The corpus combines stable neologisms, occasionalisms and resemanticized units, each fulfilling different functions within the military discourse. Neologisms form the institutional and technological structure of the Imperium, occasionalisms enhance imagery and emotional impact, while resemanticized words





**JOURNAL OF  
PEDAGOGICAL AND PHILOLOGICAL RESEARCH  
VOLUME-1, ISSUE-5, 2026**

adapt existing vocabulary to new fictional meanings. Their interaction creates a hybrid lexicon where terminological precision coexists with metaphor and ideological symbolism. This makes Warhammer military vocabulary a multidimensional construct shaped by narrative and stylistic factors rather than a purely technical system. At the same time, its complexity poses challenges for translation, especially in preserving both meaning and stylistic effect. The lexical system used in the Warhammer 40,000 terminology is predominantly based on compounding, which accounts for the majority of formations such as *Space Marines* and *Drop-pod*. This is followed by a significant use of Latinised derivation and affixation, including forms like *Astartes*, *Mechanicum*, and *Astropath*, which create a pseudo-classical and institutional tone.

**REFERENCES**

1. González Vela, G. (2024). *Lexical Innovation in Warhammer 40.000 Translations: the Creation of New Words*.
2. Черезов, М. Д. Special Aspects of Translating Military Vocabulary in Warhammer 40,000 - Related Literature / М. Д. Черезов ; sci. adv. N. V. Aksenova // Лингвистические и культурологические аспекты современного инженерного образования : сборник материалов II Международной научно-практической конференции, Томск, 10-12 ноября 2021 г. — Томск : Изд-во ТПУ, 2021. — [С. 103-107],
3. Black Library. (2006). *Horus Rising*. Nottingham: Black Library.
4. Black Library. (2006). *False Gods*. Nottingham: Black Library.
5. Games Workshop. (n.d.). *Warhammer 40,000 Universe*. [Website] <https://www.warhammer-community.com>
6. Leech G. *Language in Literature*.— London: Longman, 2008.— P. 30.
7. Melkaeva R. . Occasional Words As a Way Of Realization Of Linguocreativity (Based On The English-Literary Discourse).-2022

