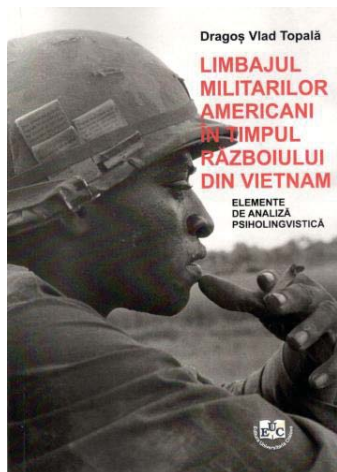


**Dragoș Vlad Topală, *Limbajul militarilor americani în timpul Războiului din Vietnam. Elemente de analiză psiholingvistică*, Universitaria, Craiova, 2020, 313p. (Simina Badea)**



The topic approached by Dragoș Vlad Topală in the volume “Limbajul militarilor americani în timpul Războiului din Vietnam. Elemente de analiză psiholingvistică” (‘The language of the US military during the Vietnam War. Elements of psycholinguistic analysis’), published by Universitaria Publishing House in Craiova, is a novelty in the national scientific literature. As far as we know, this subject matter has not been studied. The Vietnam War was an atypical war which generated its own language expressing the vicious character of the conflict and the effects of the pathological states induced by boundary conditions.

Even in the North American scientific literature, although there are some reference works, the subject needs a deeper insight.

The author, who confesses that he is not directly interested in Anglistics, mentions in the *Introduction* to the book that he has studied a special phenomenon in linguistics: the way in which a particular military conflict, the Vietnam War, has influenced the language of the military of the most powerful army worldwide, the US army. The language born during the Vietnam War is the most creative of all languages generated by wars involving the US. The scientific direction preferred by the author, as indicated in the subtitle, is the psycholinguistic approach.

In the introductory part of the book, the author delineates the theoretical background, offers elements of theoretical and practical analysis, describes the working method, provides information on the bibliography, etc.

The author shows that “Psycholinguistics implies the interdisciplinary analysis focused on the relationship between the message and the psychological processes of the individuals who generate it and receive (interpret) it in a given communication situation. This mixed specialization studies how thinking, memory, emotional states, temperament intervene in the structuring and reception of messages, the role of situational components, the effects of some pathological states on the communication activity” (p. 11). The theoretical apparatus relies on the contextual-dynamic method in psycholinguistics, in the theoretical synthesis formulated by Tatiana Slama-Cazacu (“Psiholingvistica, o știință a comunicării”, ALL, 1999), a reference specialist at international level. In the working method applied, Dragoș Vlad Topală mentions that “we initially aimed at collecting a

corpus of representative terms (translated into Romanian and formally analysed). This selection can provide enough information on the convergence of idiolects in a complex language, like the one that emerged in Vietnam, but by the quotations we offered, focused on the analysed key-term, we intended to capture the language facts 'as a living reality, as various particular messages' (Slama-Cazacu 1999: 230). Thus, we can find out extra data about how the participants in the communication act are pathogenically affected" (p. 12).

A research direction concerns the relationship between the language used in Vietnam and the American cultural matrix of the conquest of the Wild West. Another research lode is provided by racism. The racist and offensive words assigned by the Americans to the Vietnamese are characterized by a remarkable psycholinguistic stylistic variation. The analysis is relevant. By specific methods of analysis, the author describes the way in which the technowar influenced the psychology of the military (for instance, the analysis of the helicopter is interesting). The Vietnam War generated an authentic folk creation, based on several essential themes: fear of death and dangerous missions, attachment to the military equipment, seen as an extension of their own persons, the comradeship feeling, hatred against the enemy, the feeling of alienation and homesickness.

The work is complex. We also enumerate other domains approached by the author: terminology, metaphor, pidgin. All these aspects benefit from a detailed analysis from a theoretical and practical standpoint.

The working method (with reference to the "Analysis of the terms") is simple and effective. This sector was conceived for two levels of reading. We agree with the author: "The first part contains the selected terms and syntagms, with their translation into Romanian, analysed according to their specifics and complexity. All quotations in English (quite few) are translated here. The second part comprises quotations for the presentation of words in context (...). The quotations in English, although important from the contextual-dynamic perspective, are not indispensable for the understanding of the analysis and are not translated. This level of reading addresses the readers who are fluent in English and wish to get a deeper insight into the material from the perspective of Anglistics (...)" (p. 31).

Concerning the selection of terms, the author observed a firm criterion: the selected words appeared during the Vietnam War. These are words coined by the military; moreover, "each word must have a psycholinguistic foundation: directly, through the psychological foundation of an element of analysis, indirectly, by the stylistic and/or formal relevance" (p. 31). We have also come across some important words which emerged during other military conflicts; and also some representative words from slang, military jargon, and colloquial register of common language.

The author rightly states that “the whole analysis (and translation) of the words pertains to us, being in full the result of our research (...). The selection of quotations is original (by the generous access offered by *Google books*)” (pp. 32-33).

The volume written by Dragoș Vlad Topală is original, based on a vast bibliography, presents an extraordinary theoretical and practical synthesis, and the analysis he performs becomes spectacular sometimes. The book is representative of the scientific research activity carried out at the University of Craiova.