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HYBRID WARFARE – A TERM OF THE 21st CENTURY

Abstract

In the past two decades, the term *hybrid warfare* has become one of the defining concepts in world politics. It refers to phenomena related to military, academic, and political aspects and their coverage in various types of media. However, due to the absence of standardized and unified military terminology in Georgian, the circulation of different forms of the term has become more prevalent. Along with *ჰიბრიდული ომი*, other terms, such as *ჰიბრიდული ოპერაციები*, *ჰიბრიდული ომები* and *ჰიბრიდული საბრძოლო მოქმედებები* have also been used. English terms such as *hybrid war* and *hybrid warfare* are often confused in Georgian texts or online articles, specifically in Georgian military manuals/doctrines by the Doctrine Development Center and online published scholarly manuals. Therefore, we focus on the following:

- Expression of both English terms with one Georgian term.
- Establishing several hybrid warfare matches, such as hybrid operations, hybrid wars, and hybrid combat operations.

This paper aims to interpret the term *hybrid warfare* semantically and explore it based on English and Russian military doctrines. Understanding the essence of the source term is crucial in establishing its Georgian equivalent. The investigation into the history and etymology of this term is based on identifying the pattern, types and methods of hybrid warfare and treating current political phenomena as war or conflict. Based on the explored data, it becomes clear that its semantic interpretation is necessary for establishing a term. Changes in context can lead to the polysemy of the term and its incorrect usage. The problem of harmonization of present-day terminology work comes to the foreground in search of adequate Georgian equivalents of the English terms. It is crucial to involve military specialists in establishing an appropriate term due to their great interest in the matter.

Keywords: battle, hostilities, hybrid, military, terminology, war, warfare.

“Military terms make and build the temple of military science.”

Valerian Tsagareli

1. Introduction

The development of modern technology and current global events have introduced new terms. One of these terms is *hybrid warfare*, frequently employed to describe the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Hybrid warfare combines different types of war and modern approaches and technologies. This term has been widely used in various media, books, military doctrines, political articles and papers.

This paper explores different forms of *hybrid warfare* based on military doctrine manuals in English, Russian, and Georgian, available glossaries, and scholarly articles. To study the research topic, we used descriptive and comparative methods, particularly descriptive and comparative analysis of existing entries as terms and notions based on Georgian military manuals/doctrines and existing dictionaries. In addition, we relied on personal observation of the doctrine development process and interviews with military experts.

Long-term experience of grammatical and stylistic analysis of foreign language (English, French, German, Russian) military doctrines at the Doctrine Development Center of the Ministry of Defense reveals that one of the most significant challenges is the lack of appropriate terms. Other causes of ambiguity identified when preparing military-themed materials for the multidisciplinary dictionary of the TSU Institute of Linguistics are different dictionary forms of the same term, widespread and, sometimes, normalized barbarisms, acceptable or generic terms used by the military personnel, as well as non-acceptance and suspicion to dictionary terms established by an online English-Georgian military dictionary. To establish Georgian-English-Russian equivalents, studying the etymology of terms is essential. As the terms in question are collocations, it is crucial to consider individual notions such as war, operation, battle, conflict, hostilities, and warfare when studying them.

When preparing and developing military manuals, a considerable problem emerges from the diversity of Georgian military terms and their inadequacy and/or lack. In the process of translating and editing manuals, what makes it difficult to find a Georgian equivalent of an English term are, on the one hand, few Georgian military glossaries and, on the other hand, a scarcity (almost inexistence) of Georgian scientific, military studies.

This problem would not have emerged without standardized and unified Georgian military terminology.

To establish a term, it is essential to conduct a contextual and semantic analysis of a corresponding notion based on the peculiarities of military terminology. Therefore, the author got acquainted with the available Georgian, Russian and English resources, predominantly addressing the definition of the term, its analysis and history, and the methodology and concept of warfare at large.

Studies of several aspects have demonstrated the necessity of normalized field-specific terminology, which avoids the diversity of field-specific terms, decreases parallel forms, and finds adequate Georgian equivalents for English terms.

2. Literature review and a history of the term

The terms *hybrid warfare* (*hybrid war*) and the related concept were proposed by Frank G. Hoffman, Lieutenant Colonel of the United States Marine Corps. In 2005, he developed his hybrid warfare strategy, providing for the term's prominence, and the related work published by him in 2007 resulted in

widespread discussions and criticism (Hoffman, 2007). In another work, Frank G. Hoffman states that conflict may be a preferred mission set or an opportunity to overemphasize a conventional, big war paradigm, which narrows our cognitive understanding of conflict (Hoffman, 2018). Hoffman emphasizes that the type and form of warfare in the previous centuries have changed in our days, and the type and form of conflict have also changed. Present-day conditions and requirements have changed the meanings of war and conflict since they acquired other properties; the change in the methodology of war has caused this.

James K. Wither discusses *hybrid warfare* as the most common term used to capture the complexity of twenty-first-century warfare, which involves many actors and blurs. Wither pinpoints that, during the 2000s, the term *hybrid war* became a common way to describe contemporary warfare, including cyber warfare (Wither, 2016).

The military historian P. R. Mansoor defines *hybrid warfare* as a conflict involving a combination of conventional military forces and irregulars (guerrillas, insurgents, and terrorists), which could include both state and non-state actors (2012: 2).

Based on some of the resources about the issue at hand, it is clear that *hybrid warfare* is an ongoing process and, thus, requires analyses of current events in the world and their consideration in the historical prism. Besides, the authors of related studies, Galeotti (2017), Vichova (2018), and Oganisian (2016), distinguish between *conventional warfare* and *hybrid warfare*; hence, conflicts are classified in a different way since *hybrid warfare* is preceded by *hybrid threats* which are a particular challenge for statehood. Responsive actions to *hybrid threats* generate *conflicts*, to which conventional and up-to-date approaches are applied, shaping up as a single entity and considered *hybrid Warfare*. The mentioned articles and overviews make it clear that to comprehend hybrid warfare as a term, it is necessary to consider the term *hybrid warfare* as a phenomenon. Both *hybrid warfare* and *hybrid war* occur in English and Russian articles. In Georgian articles, these terms are employed: *ჰიბრიდული საბრძოლო მოქმედებები* (hybrid combat actions), *ჰიბრიდული საომარი მოქმედებები* (hybrid hostilities), *ჰიბრიდული ომი* (hybrid war) and *ჰიბრიდული ოპერაციები* (hybrid operations). As we can see, only two collocations stand for the term, whereas there are several in Georgian resources.

On the one hand, there is quite an interesting history of *hybrid warfare* and related concepts. On the other hand, there is a process of exploring its Georgian equivalents used in Georgian scientific and online articles, scientific studies conducted by military experts or researchers interested in the topic, and manuals translated and prepared in the doctrine development center of the Georgian Defence Forces.

Therefore, to establish a Georgian equivalent of the term in point, to find definitions, and to consider field-specific properties, the author got acquainted with appropriate doctrinal publications and available bi(multi)lingual and explanatory glossaries. As for Georgian news articles, they were explored concerning the use of the term and its various forms. The volume *The Anatomy of Hybrid Wars*, published in 2018 and edited by Tina Khidasheli, includes chapters by civil and military experts in the field, addressing hybrid warfare, its constituents, opportunities and methods. The book expressly applies *ჰიბრიდული ომი* (hybrid war) and *ჰიბრიდული საფრთხეები* (hybrid threats).

Alongside the above-mentioned book, the issue is further discussed in Georgian articles about hybrid warfare published online. Having explored works by scholars of *hybrid warfare* and the definitions provided, Antadze uses *ჰიბრიდული ომი* (hybrid war) (2020-2021). In other sources, alongside *ჰიბრიდული ომი* (hybrid war), there occur the following terms: *ჰიბრიდული საომარი*

მოქმედებები (Karseladze, 2020), ჰიბრიდული ომი (Akhvlediani, 2019), ჰიბრიდული საბრძოლო მოქმედებები (Kalichava, 2015).

3. Findings of the research

During one of our conversations with Mamuka Kopeikin, Colonel of the Armed Forces of Georgia, about *hybrid warfare*, he argued for the necessity of the implementation of adequate and correct Georgian military terms as far as “meaning of new terms, such as *hybrid war*, *unconventional war*, etc., are obscure for many English-speaking scholars, and the lack of their precise Georgian equivalents provides for more confusion... The term ჰიბრიდული ომი (hybrid war) has been predominantly used in Georgian.” In his opinion, it is significant to discuss the phenomenon based on the levels of war to establish an adequate term.

Indeed, in the materials translated at The Doctrine Development Center, *warfare* is rendered chiefly as *ომი* (war). For instance, An Explanatory Military Glossary translates *Electronic warfare* as *ელექტრონული ომი*. However, its parallel version *ელექტრონული ბრძოლა* also occurs.

Those mentioned above Georgian scholarly papers and news articles do not display the borderline between *war* and *warfare*. However, as we see, *hybrid war* comprises various activities, such as *information warfare*, *electronic warfare*, *computer warfare*, *conventional warfare*, *irregular warfare*, *guerrilla warfare*, and *mine warfare*. The Georgian equivalents of these terms in the translated materials and Explanatory Military Glossary mainly occur as the following: *ინფორმაციული ომი*, *ელექტრონული ომი*, *კომპიუტერული ომი*, *კონვენციური ომი*, *არაკონვენციური ომი*, *არარეგულარული ომი*, *ასიმეტრიული ომი*, *პარტიზანული ომი*. However, *warfare* is rendered employing the following parallel equivalents as well: *ომი*, *საბრძოლო მოქმედებები*, *საომარი მოქმედებები*.

The Doctrine of Joint Operations, published in the USA in 2001, defines *war* with respect to three levels, specifically, the tactical level of war, operational level of war, and strategic level of war (JP 3-0, 2001a: 179-177-178). In its 2017 publication, *war* was replaced by *warfare* as far as the methodology of war was changed and the contemporary world was overwhelmed by warfare different from the existing one. Instead of large military formations and units, a team carries out a battle (JP 3-0, 2017a: 38). In the Joint Publication Joint Operations, published in the USA in 2017, *warfare* is also defined with respect to the three levels (JP 3-0, 2017b: 220).

It is noteworthy that *conventional* (regular, traditional; in accordance with the Geneva Conventions) *warfare* at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels is conducted in military regions and *theaters of operations* by using conventional weapons and battlefield tactics and engaging smaller formations and operational groupings, while an unconventional element is essential for hybrid warfare, displaying the hybrid (Lat. ‘mongrel’) meaning of the term and notion.

As emphasized in the NATO manual *Hybrid Threats*, “time-honored concepts of “conventional” and “unconventional” war and “traditional” methods versus “adaptive” methods are weapons to a hybrid threat” (Hybrid Threats, 2015a: 11). The term *hybrid* is used to refer to the diversity of involved actors and the difference between traditional and present-day understandings of conflict: „The term “hybrid” has recently been used to capture the seemingly increased complexity of war, the multiplicity of actors involved, and the blurring between traditional categories of conflict” (TC 7-100, 2010: 7).

Concerning the military field-specific doctrinal understanding, *the hybrid threat* may refer to *hybrid forces* well, specifically, “hybrid threat - the diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, and/or criminal elements all unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects” (Hybrid Threats, 2015b: 65). Based on its definition, *ჰიბრიდული ძალა* is used as its Georgian equivalent.

As we see, the term *hybrid* refers to conflict in which both parties participating in it use hybrid military activities, including a combination of conventional (regular), irregular, and other approaches. *Hybrid warfare* is forcible conflict in which conventional and unconventional military acts are used simultaneously by state and non-state actors, not being confined to either a physical battlefield or a territory.

Warfare involves a specific battlefield and is used in conflict as individual offensives. Such activities are used in conflict not only by states or armed forces but also by non-state actors, and this includes up-to-date elements.

Based on the definitions above, it is clear that *warfare*, at large, is a set of activities conducted in the *theater of military operations* and is sharply distinguished from military operations; meanwhile, *military operations* differ from *war* concerning the fact that they focus on ceasing war and maintaining peace (JP 3-0, 2001b: 22). Besides, the development and initial methodology of warfare depend on the depth of operations (according to its spread area).

It should also be noted that, in hybrid activities, *attacks* predominantly comprise political, military, diplomatic, economic, private, cyber, civil, and media endeavors (Power).

It seems that *attacks* in the theater or battlefield are basic activities that, alongside other elements, make up a hybrid approach.

I searched for terms and notions associated with *hybrid war* in Georgian doctrinal manuals of the Ministry of Defense (developed based on US doctrines), specifically, *ოპერაციები* (FM 3-0) and *ტაქტიკა* (FM 3-90), as well as *ჰიბრიდული საფრთხე (ჰიბრიდული ძალა)* (2017) which do not display the terms *ჰიბრიდული ომი* and *ჰიბრიდული საბრძოლო მოქმედებები*; however, *Operations* discusses *unconventional war*, *general war*, including *conflicts*, and *საომარი მოქმედებები* and *საბრძოლო მოქმედებები*, as equivalents of *warfare*, occur as parallel forms. Similarly, the field manual *Tactics* uses *საომარი მოქმედებები* and *საბრძოლო მოქმედებები* for *warfare*.

In the discussed military doctrines and information, scientific and political resources, *hybrid warfare* is associated with such notions as *war*, *battle*, *conflict*, *attack*, *hybrid*, *unconventional*, *operation*, *theater of war*, etc.

An Explanatory Military Glossary of the Ministry of Defense (2017), compiled based on the US field manual Operational Terms and Graphic (FM 1-02), *საომარი მოქმედებები* and *საბრძოლო მოქმედებები* used as parallel forms.

In the same glossary, other terms are also associated with *hybrid war*, specifically, *ოპერაცია* (operation), *საომარ მოქმედებათა თეატრი* (theater), *ბრძოლა* (battle), *კონფლიქტი* (conflict), *მასშტაბური ომი (საყოველთაო ომი [general war])*. According to these definitions, in the military field-specific meaning, *ოპერაცია* implies hostilities, with various forms of, for instance, *attack*; with its nature, an *attack* implies offensives against an adversary followed by battles, which, in turn, includes interconnected clashes. Hence, distinctions between *ომი* (war) and *ოპერაცია* (operation), *ოპერაცია* (operation) and *ბრძოლა* (battle), as well as between *ომი* (war) and *ბრძოლა* (battle) are unambiguous. The terms refer to different notions and, thus, cannot replace each other. Therefore, *საომარი*

მოქმედებები and *საბრძოლო მოქმედებები* cannot refer to one and the same notion. Hybrid actions mostly imply attacks and clashes (guerilla) and are predominantly responsive actions against hybrid threats, frequently represented by conflict and confined to a theatre or a battlefield. Obviously enough, a threat causes a reaction which grows into conflict. Scales of conflict and war differ when a battle is confined to operations/actions within a single theater, and, on the strategic level, the multiplicity of theaters conditions and the complexity of hybrid warfare. This is to say that, according to the US military doctrine, on the tactical and operational level, *hybrid war*, as a notion, implies operations going on within a single, specific theater of military actions.

Hence, when trying to establish a Georgian equivalent of *hybrid warfare*, we should depart from its referential meaning as far as it does not imply the use of large-scale forces in vast areas, which is characteristic of *regular (traditional) war* (definition), differing from it concerning the fact that to apply up-to-date methods does not consume vast operational areas and is confined to a *theater of war* or an *operational area*.

Various forms of terms occur in Georgian military doctrines. However, the overall picture is clear: extant terms provide a rather diverse spectrum both in the defence domain and in the civil sector.

The term *hybrid warfare* is not attested in any contemporary Georgian reference works, including the Georgian Military Encyclopedic Dictionary and English-Georgian military glossaries. Hence, to establish the term, I looked up definitions of individual notions associated with it.

Besides, I looked up English terms in English concise dictionaries as well.

In A Comprehensive English-Georgian Dictionary (Dictionary.ge) and English-Georgian Military Glossary (Mil.dict.ge), the collocations *hybrid war* and *hybrid warfare* do not occur. However, the following terms are present: *War* – 1.ომი, შეიარაღებული კონფლიქტი; 2. ომი, კონკრეტული სამხედრო კამპანია; 3. Met. ომი, ბრძოლა; [CEGD]. *Warfare* – 1. ომი; საომარ/საბრძოლო მოქმედებათა წარმოება; საომარ/საბრძოლო მოქმედებათა წარმოების მეთოდები [CEGD and EGMG]. *Battle* – 1. ბრძოლა; კვეთება, შებმა; მსხვილი ოპერაცია (mil.); [CEGD and EGMG]. *Attack*– 1. შეტევა, შეტევითი ბრძოლა; 2. თავდასხმა. *Operation* – ოპერაცია; [CEGD and EGMG]. *Conflict* – კონფლიქტი. *Fight* – 1. ბრძოლა, საბრძოლო მოქმედებები.

Explanatory Dictionary of the Georgian Language (Ice.ge) defines *ომი* as "1. Armed fight between states in order to achieve economic and/or political goals." *ბრძოლა* refers to the following actions: "1. Armed assault, clashes with an adversary, hostility in a specific area." The following collocations are also interesting: *პარტიზანული ბრძოლა* and *ბრძოლის ველი* "an area whereby a battle, war takes place," and *ოპერაცია* is defined as "2. Mil. Actions of military groupings to achieve a certain goal." *შეტევა* is defined as 1. Mil. advance by means aggressive actions of troops against (defending) adversary;" *კონფლიქტი* denotes the following: "1. Serious disagreement, disruption, clash of contradicting interests, views, aspirations."

The definitions of *warfare* in English dictionaries were checked in several, specifically, Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Oxford Learners Dictionary as well as in Multitran.com, where *hybrid war* and *hybrid warfare* are translated as single Russian term *гибридная война*. The following question naturally arises here: How is the term used in Georgian as the influence of the Russian language?

It goes without saying that *war* and *warfare* occur as parallel forms in Merriam-Webster; hence, they have synonymous meanings. However, as we already saw, they are individual notions concerning their military meanings, and it is necessary to render them with different equivalents in terms of military

doctrinal (as publications), political and strategic standpoints and applied linguistic aspects, including translation. An illustrative example is the paper's title: *Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Mattis et al. Hoffman, 2005). Within a single title, there are both *warfare* and *war*. Concerning individual contexts, rendering the English terms and notions using appropriate Georgian equivalents is worthwhile. What makes us confident in this is that our epoch is entirely of global changes. The character of current warfare will, in the future, cause changes in military doctrines and traditional approaches to *warfare* since “American military doctrine and culture has narrowed its perspective about the spectrum of war” (Hoffman, 2007:45). Besides, we witness an unambiguous transfer from a large-scale warfare volume to a multi-dimensional, smaller-scale volume of warfare. The semantics of the notions change alongside the change of “war as a chameleon” (Clausewitz, 2014).

JP 3-0 clearly defines “three levels of warfare — strategic, operational, and tactical — model the relationship between national objectives and tactical actions. The operational level of warfare links the tactical employment of forces to national strategic objectives” (JP 3-0, 2017a:38). In the 2001 publication, the definition of the *levels of war* (JP 3-0, 2001c: 32) coincides with that of *warfare* in 2017, confirming that, from the doctrinal point of view, *levels of war/warfare* share a meaning. However, it was modified, and the words replaced each other concerning a scale and methods and, generally, to a character of actions. It is unambiguous that *hybrid war* and *hybrid warfare* are collocations with different meanings.

4. Conclusion

Despite considering the military consultant’s approaches, “the three terms differ with respect to the levels: hybrid warfare – strategic level, hybrid war – operational-tactical level, and hybrid operations – tactical level,” based on the study and contrast of available data and dictionary entries, I believe that *ჰიბრიდული საომარი მოქმედებები* should be used as a Georgian equivalent of *hybrid warfare*, delimitating it from *ჰიბრიდული ომი* (hybrid war). *ჰიბრიდული საომარი მოქმედებები* and *ჰიბრიდული ომი* are individual notions and, hence, should be used as individual terms.

Hybrid warfare indeed implies elements, characteristic of a single theater, and one may assume that it is *ჰიბრიდული საბრძოლო მოქმედებები*, as far as, according to A Comprehensive Georgian-English Dictionary, *warfare* refers both to *ჰიბრიდული საბრძოლო მოქმედებები* and *ჰიბრიდული საომარი მოქმედებები*; however, concerning changes in military doctrines and peculiarities of current events, when *war* was replaced by *warfare*, the complexity of *hybrid warfare*, as a phenomenon, hence, a notion, is displayed in the fact that *battles and attacks* take place in several theaters, involving force which constitutes a threat, eventually rendering *hybrid warfare* as *ჰიბრიდული საომარი მოქმედებები* contained together into *hybrid war* (*ჰიბრიდული ომი*).

Hybrid—a blend of up-to-date technologies, tactics, and methods generates novel threats, and to respond to them, we need novel approaches and new, up-to-date terms. This is also confirmed by comparing the 2001 and 2017 editions of Joint Operations, which allows us to conclude that the replacement of *war with warfare* was caused by present-day military conditions.

Based on those above, despite the fact that the military consultant suggests that we should distinguish between the terms following the levels of war in order to avoid diversity of terms and semantic heterogeneity since “diversity endangers the future of a language. These terms gain circulation in a language, they are determinologized, making a language devoid of its naturalness and endangering it” (Karosanidze, 2022-2023a: 405), as well as concerning the fact that “here are no fixed limits or boundaries

between these levels” (JP 3-0, 2017: 220), it seems to be appropriate to use *ჰიბრიდული საომარი მოქმედებები* as a common term.

This study is another illustration of the significance of the availability of established and normalized terminology; for establishing and implementing military terms, it is essential to ensure the coordinated work of military service members, translators, linguists, and interested parties. It is also affirmed by the military consultant’s attitude and readiness: “I welcome attempts to establish Georgian military terms; however, it is a complex and time-consuming process owing to the fact that very few Georgian scholars have been involved in establishing and defining these terms.” Promoting the interest and involvement of scholars is a prerequisite for implementing an adequate language policy.

“Coordinated, adequately conducted work identifies individuals, the public and/or an institute responsible for terminology. The outcome is the following: terms are coined; they gain circulation; scholarly discourse uses terminology; field-specific terminology is developed” (Karosanidze, 2022-2023b: 393). Using adequate field-specific terms will help us avoid terminological inaccuracies, confusion and obscurity.

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