

The Reshaping of Professional Discourse among Young Military Leaders during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ukraine

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Received: 11/28/2021

Accepted: 12/14/2021

Published: 1/24/2022

Abstract

The research aimed to outline the features of “new normal” communication behavior of young military leaders due to the COVID-19 pandemic influence. To study this critical problem we used some general scientific and empirical methods like literature analysis, synthesis and theoretical modelling, pedagogical experience, statistical data processing. The author found that the changes include development of closed and indirect forms, introduction of new lexical, grammatical, and stylistic units, fake information spread, misuse of information and communication technologies (ICT), periodical refusal to message with non-verbal tools. The findings show that professional discourse among young military leaders changes fast because of the COVID-19 pandemic. And the transformations involve different communication behavior, the more significant role of leaders in study group especially in the context of peer-to-peer learning, critical thinking development, independent production and comprehension of professional utterances, higher responsibility of a speaker. The experiment demonstrates that military officers and cadets are likely to cope with new “rules of the game” and they continue to carry out security tasks prioritizing discipline, considerable motivation, psychological readiness to high-risk conditions and adaptability to counteract dramatic challenges. The article is one of the early researches reviewing the features of young military leaders’ discourse and describing its current transformations. The research can contribute to development of recommendations for professional discourse improvements and, consequently, to enhance the efficiency of professional activities of military officers.

Keywords: communication behavior, COVID-19, professional communication skills, professional discourse, readiness, transformation, young military leaders

Cite as: Bhinder, N. (2022). The Reshaping of Professional Discourse among Young Military Leaders during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Ukraine. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) 2nd Special Issue on Covid 19 Challenges (2)* 85-103.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/covid2.6>

Introduction

The success of professional communication depends on text appropriateness, language accuracy, and fluency, speaker's language personality, their knowledge of current language norms and the ability to apply it, expertise to change information into correct and adequate messages regarding communication objectives and language situation. Professional discourse is generally understood as communication between specialists when they use the unique strategies typical for specific professional environment (Beilinson, 2009). Currently, we are facing a dynamic era of discourse transformations due to the Internet, social media networks, employment characteristics, working environment modification, professional relationship profile change. As the COVID-19 pandemic brought dramatic changes within the professional structures and communication behavior, the professional discourse of military officers acquires new characteristics and forms (Cherif & Okros, 2020, Joshi, 2020). In 2020-2021 we have faced the objective reasons for discourse transformations. The situation is complicated as we cannot avoid "new normal" changes; we may only get ready and reduce the negative impact. This involves hard preparatory work among young military leaders who do not have high competence to cope with extraordinary or extreme conditions or make errors during professional communication.

Analyzing the military officers' professional duties, we must admit that many of operational activities and service tasks are currently implemented through professional discourse. This means communicative interactions between members of the Armed Forces require optimization and objective improvements in response to challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, we hoped that the findings could be useful for linguists, instructors of higher military educational establishments, future military officers, and learners who try to develop readiness to adapt to "new normal" transformations of academic surrounding and decide how to respond to these changes. During this study we are to answer four research questions. They are the following:

1. What is the professional discourse of military officers? What significance does it possess within the military environment?
2. Does it have typical features and forms? How are these features described by discourse participants?
3. What "new normal" changes reshape professional discourse of young military leaders and what transformations we regard as positive or negative ones?
4. What is the realization model of positive professional discourse in a post-pandemic period?

Answering these research questions will help us find out the main challenges young military leaders have faced regarding professional discourse since 2020.

Literature Review

Today, we study discourse within the framework of communicative, cognitive, sociolinguistic, pragmatic approaches. Also, these approaches include the synthesis of various directions allowing us to investigate discourse as the communicative process (Chetverikova, 2020). According to some findings (Aznacheeva & Mamonova, 2017, *Geluykens & Pelsmaekers, 1999*, Ponomarenko, Magirovskaya, & Orlova, 2020), discourse is a complicated phenomenon and it deals with the text itself and extralinguistic components like speaker's

knowledge about the world, thoughts, attitudes, and recipient's objectives that are necessary to understand information. Also, it involves methods used by speakers within the interactive environment oriented towards its different aspects and levels. The methods refer to the following: characteristics of communication that explain the approach to partners' understanding and, therefore, the use of appropriate text form (order, advice, complaint, request, etc.) (Petrochenkova, 2016); cognitive schedule of communication that controls optimal solving of task with flexible and guided techniques (Polanyi, 1988,); plan of optimal realization of communicative intention, that determines the internal and external structure of statement on the basis of objective and subjective factors or conditions; mechanism used to synthesize different texts and organize the reports properly making sure the piece of information transfers specific communicative objectives (Beilinson, 2009, Ponomarenko, Magirovskaya, & Orlova, 2020).

According to Aznacheeva & Mamonova (2017), "person's professional activity determines professional discourse is a combination of the corpus of texts united by the theme, thesaurus and professional worldview together with extralinguistic factors" (p. 33). Many scholars describe the professional discourse on the basis of its general characteristics (Beilinson, 2009, Couture, 1992, Chetverikova, 2020, Fakhrutdinova, 2008, *Geluykens & Pelsmaekers, 1999, Kong, 2019, Polanyi, 1988, Ponomarenko, Magirovskaya, & Orlova, 2020*), roles of discourse participants (Decock, De Wilde, Van Hoof, Van Praet, & Clerck, 2018, Van Durme, 2012, Pathak, Rani, & Goswami, 2016), typical features, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic qualities (Hoskins, 1985, Khranchenko, 2019), roles of discourse participants (Besley, Garlick, Lambert, & Tiffany, 2021, Irimiea, 2017, Sarangi, 2017). Some works are devoted to professional discourse of military officers (Çakıroğlu, Caetano, & Costa, 2021, Fuiorea, 2011, Kraft, 2019, Maltby & Thornham, 2012). Other studies differentiate the specific type of military professional discourse – war discourse (Amer, 2017, Flusberg, Matlock, & Thibodeau, 2018, Parker, 2013). Thus, professional discourse means communication process in the military sphere to exchange information between participants or institutions that may influence military decision (Kraft, 2019). The works of Kapinus (2019), Kolosovych (2013), Malanchii (2019), Mittelstadt (2011) are devoted to detailed analysis of professional activities of military officers; they helped, particularly, to outline the features and forms of professional discourse within the military unit. Also, special attention must be paid to the research of Seixas (2021) who analyzed war metaphors in political communication on Covid-19. But there no recent works are describing the objective features of professional discourse of military officers and analysing the transformations of professional discourse among young military leaders caused by the COVID-10 pandemic.

Methods

To evaluate the reshaping of professional discourse of young military leaders, we used a combination of general scientific and empirical methods. They include specific literature analysis to define the key terms, synthesis and theoretical modeling, pedagogical experience to conceptualize the research problem, survey of cadets, statistical data processing. Based on the analysis of scientific literature (Carvajal-Miranda, Mañas-Viniegra, & Liang, 2020, Cherif & Okros, 2020, Joshi, 2020), we generated the hypothesis that the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to professional discourse of young military leaders.

Participants

To verify the hypothesis, we conducted a survey among 254 young military professionals – 34 military officers attending Leadership Course (Level 1) and 217 third- and fourth-year cadets of the Odesa Military Academy. We conducted the survey between September, 2020 and January, 2021. The survey helped us to describe the typical features and forms of professional discourse used before 2020 and focus on “new normal” transformations that have occurred since 2020.

Instruments

To conduct the study we used three instruments. Firstly, we analyzed anonymous reports from young military leaders on the role of professional discourse in their service activities. The information contained the data on the skills that the officers need to increase the efficiency of their work. Secondly, we used a two-phased empirical survey to find out the features of professional speech. Initially, we interviewed the respondents and listed the peculiarities of professional discourse. Then, to support their ideas, we observed the cadets and young military officers' communication behavior in the classroom and registered the specifications of professional discourse that the participants used. The data was processed and we managed to generalize the list of highly used “new normal” features of professional discourse. And thirdly, we conducted the ranking of the obtained information – the participants evaluated the features of professional discourse in five degrees, where 5 means very positive, 4 – positive, 3 – neutral, 2 – negative, 1 – very negative. Based on the results we developed the realization model of positive professional discourse in a post-pandemic period.

Results

To describe the transformations of professional discourse of young military leaders it is necessary to study its forms and typical characteristics in details. Initially, we indicate that such type of discourse involves the relationship determined by professional roles of its participants (speakers/listeners/readers/author) (Van Durne, 2012). If they realize their professional discourse, the participants do not use the certain spontaneity of reactions, actions, feelings, and sometimes sensibility. The findings show (Çakıroğlu, Caetano, & Costa, 2021, Pathak, Rani, & Goswami, 2016) that since every participant brings their individuality and uniqueness in the professional role they perform, all images and actions can be assigned externally.

The analysis of literature sources (Bjornestad, Olson, & Weidauer, 2021, Holth & Boe, 2017, Lewińska, 2015, Naser, Salaheddin, & Zakarya, 2016, Petrochenkova, 2016) and the practice of professional activities of military forces and other law-enforcement agencies (Malanchii, 2019) shows that military officers need strong skills of professional communication. It is supported by the survey conducted at the Odesa Military Academy among active-duty officers attending Leadership Course (Level 1) and third- and fourth-year cadets (figure one). The results show that 83.2 % of respondents confirmed the need for formation of firm professional communication skills to carry out professional duties freely and effectively. At the same time 12.4 % of participants think that readiness to apply professional discourse is a crucial component of professional competence of military officers. Still, one may perform professional duties without professional communication skills. And 4.4 % of officers and cadets interviewed are sure that they do not need professional communication skills to carry out military duties.

Therefore, the problem of professional discourse is significant for the military sphere and it creates one of the crucial components of professional competence of military officers.

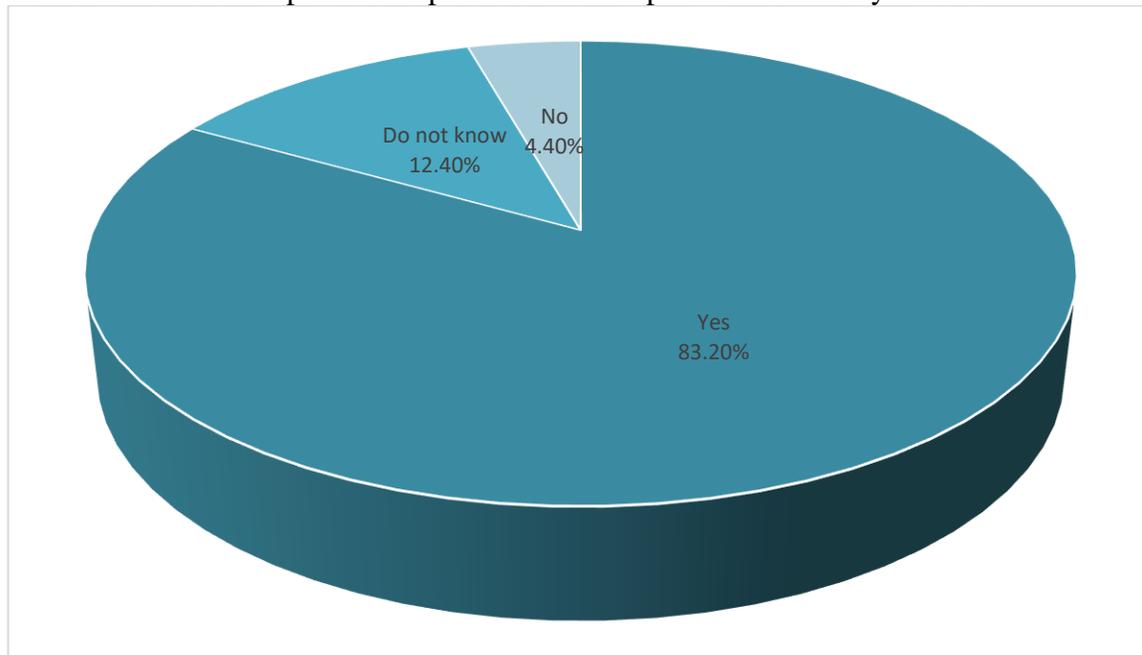


Figure 1. Need for professional communication skills by active-duty officers and cadets

Taking into consideration the specificity of professional activities of military officers (Kapinus, 2019, Kolosovych, 2013, Malanchii, 2019), its manifestation include certain forms: oral professional speech (salutation, face-to-face conversation, phone conversation, command, discussion, reception, presentation, meeting, conference, press-conference, conference call, training, instruction); and written professional speech (documents of different types used within the Armed Forces by military officers to perform their professional duties) (Fakhrutdinova, 2008, Petrochenkova, 2016). Professional discourse of military officers is a complex communicative-speech process combining both written and oral forms and it requires texts and statements used in military interaction, topical thesaurus, speech actions and genres typical for communication between the Armed Forces officers (Petrochenkova, 2016).

Professional discourse of military officers is characterized by its standard structural components (Fuiorea, 2011, Hoskins, 1985, Kraft, 2019, Polanyi, 1988). They include the *subjects* of speech where discourse participants – officers and cadets). Also, in regards the following: the *needs* for professional communication oriented towards the importance of service mission and its execution; the *motives* substantiating the reason to initiate professional discourse; the *communication act* itself being an elementary unit of professional discourse; the *tasks* of professional discourse enabling to reach the goal or perform service mission using the *instruments* of professional discourse. For example, during the dialogue between a cadet being on guard duty at the checkpoint and a person entering the territory of military base, the sentry and the visitor are the subjects of professional discourse, the need for professional communication concerns the wish to perform the service mission (to check the documents) and the cadet having strong motivation and attitudes initiates communication act. In this case, the service mission is to identify a person and to prevent a violation. The sentry uses professional

clichés (e.g. *You are kindly required to show your documents. Give your pass, please. Could you show your driving license and vehicle permit. Whom are you going in the building.*) and produces a short dialogue with the person entering the military base.

The knowledge about professional discourse and also practical skills help young military leaders to solve professional tasks and act at the high level. The scientific literature (Kolosovych, 2013, Malanchii, 2019, Mittelstadt, 2011) and normative documents (Viiskovi statutory, 2016) together with the survey of officers and cadets, allowed us to differentiate three sides of professional discourse: communicative, perceptive, and interactive. For young military leaders the *communicative side* of professional discourse means obtaining and transitioning the information that is necessary to execute service missions. The participants realize the communication at three levels: verbal, non-verbal, and paralinguistic. At the verbal level, the participants collect information, situation report, provide instructions, etc. Non-verbal level provides a military officer with necessary psychological and physical information like surrounding inspection, map reading, the use of weapons and vehicles. At the paralinguistic level, the participants exchange the information using gestures and mimics. All levels of communication interact in the process of communication between young military officer and subordinates, commander, civilians – employees of the Armed Forces.

The *perceptive side* of professional discourse is caused by the perception and comprehension of statements. The elements of internal behavior such as mimics, intonation, etc. and personal qualities are the most significant ones as they help establish normal interpersonal relations. The *interactive side* of professional discourse provides the realization of role structure of professional activity of young military leader when he/she communicates with other people, demands all reserves to organize target-oriented interaction to solve professional tasks.

This characteristic of professional discourse suggests the performance of specific roles by a member of the Armed Forces (Besley, Garlick, Lambert, & Tiffany, 2021, Sanders, 2018). Firstly, a military officer is a commander and they use military discourse to exercise the authority and provide operational functionality of the unit as an effective leader. Secondly, young military officer is a subordinate and must perform commander's orders and instructions, attend orientation sessions, and operate with documents. We must admit that professional discourse of both superior and subordinate show strict requirements of subordination and discipline. This guarantees standardization of service actions and a shared understanding of orders. Thirdly, military officer maintains horizontal (peer-to-peer) interaction with colleagues within the professional team. Fourthly, every service member interacts with the civilian population and is obliged to sustain a positive image of Ukrainian military officers. Fifthly, commanders at all levels make presentations during conferences, meetings, briefings, negotiations, and sometimes they interact with the media that requires special skills of oral monologue professional discourse. Sixthly, military officers work with large quantities of documentations as a reader and author. This implies strong skills to work with closed and indirect speech – professional texts, written statements, statistical reports, etc. Seventhly, recent years for Ukraine mark intensification of international cooperation with NATO member countries that provides for communication with representatives of foreign Armed Forces and, as a result, extensive usage of the English language while performing service duties. Simultaneously, the adoption of some documents like the *Matrix of responsibility for processing*

and deciding on the implementation of NATO standards, the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Military Standards” (Order, 2019) means that professional discourse of military officers acquires operational standards affecting current and future military activities and procedures.

We further note the professional discourse of young military leaders typically possess certain features like normative orientation, binding nature, extremality, non-standard character, participants’ responsibility, personnel management, use of foreign language, social orientation, psychological dynamics, semiotic specialization, accuracy and credibility, adequacy, use of professionalisms, morality, and existence of communication barriers. Appendix A shows the typical features of professional discourse before 2020 within the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Since 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, professional discourse of young military leaders has undergone profound changes as lockdown restrictions have affected military community as well. Between September, 2020 and January, 2021, we conducted the survey among 34 military officers and 217 third- and fourth-year cadets of the Odesa Military Academy to establish recent transformations of professional discourse. The findings show that the participants outlined the following significant changes: the use of ICT (100 %), change of use of professional discourse tools and refusal to message with non-verbal tools (99.21 %), development of indirect professional discourse (94.49 %), development of phone anxiety (90.55 %), need for increased motivation of young military leaders to efficient professional activities with the use of professional discourse instruments and forms (90.55 %), transmission to on-line events (87.01 %), change of profile of professional discourse barriers that leads to dominance of technical and linguistic barriers (85.43 %), change of professionalisms used in professional discourse like new terms, acronyms, contractions, jargonisms, and speech patterns (83.46 %), need for time management skills and self-discipline (77.56 %), demand for immediate answers via technical devices (70.87 %), need for verification of information authenticity (70.47 %), change of professional discourse context due to new conditions of society development, security threats (65.75 %), development of additional psychological qualities (57.09 %), spread of peer-to-peer learning while undergoing on-line trainings (51.97 %), development of critical thinking (46.86 %), independent production and comprehension of professional utterances (48.83 %), emergence of added pressure among military officers and cadets (49.21 %), orientation towards future and establishment of clear vision for future activities (43.70 %), requirement to strengthen of resilience within the military unit (37.01 %), feeling uncertainty and failure to cope with difficulties effectively (34.25 %), leadership crisis and, as a result, occasional discourse errors of young military leaders (33.86 %), increased frequency of communication due to the use of technical use and video-conferencing services (31.10 %), necessity to develop considerable attention during professional discourse process (27.17 %), use of repetitions and session rehearsal to avoid misunderstanding and technical errors (13.39 %), encouragement to strengthen community ties (4.72 %). Appendix B shows detailed description of impacts upon professional discourse of young military leaders caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The comparative analysis of professional discourse profile between 2020-2021 demonstrates that the COVID-19 pandemic causes the change in the usage of communication forms. Thus, we witness the objective shift from polylogue and dialogue interaction to monologue statements, including indirect and asymmetrical. Table two shows that after 2020

monologue forms of professional communication among young military leaders increased significantly (+15.4 %). At the same time the use of dialogue and polylogue forms reduced. It testifies that the number of face-to face contacts slightly decreased and the commanders abolished non-urgent meetings. Also, the number of public events were cancelled in order to avoid infection transmission.

Table 1. Change of professional discourse profile between 2020-2021

	monologue		dialogue		polylogue	
	before 2020	after 2020	before 2020	after 2020	before 2020	after 2020
Statistical changes	30.5 %	45.9 %	42.2 %	40.5 %	27.3 %	15.6 %
Difference	+15.4 %		- 1.7 %		- 11.7 %	

Since 2020 new conditions for social development have appeared and they have affected the professional discourse of young military leaders. “New normal” features include: uncertainty, change of environment, decreased number of discourse participants, indirect and closed nature of professional discourse, avoiding of non-verbal tools, enrichment of lexical, grammatical, and stylistic units used for communication by young military leaders, increased number of communication acts and more significant volumes of information obtained by professional discourse participants, need for an immediate response, necessity to form psychological readiness, orientation towards future tasks, development of critical thinking and need for verification, objective development of ties with civilian community, need for vivid leadership readiness. Appendix C shows detailed description and manifestation of “new normal” features which characterize professional discourse of young military leaders in addition to typical ones.

The experiment results confirm that the COVID-19 pandemic brought a number of transformations in professional discourse of young military leaders, including both positive and negative. The military officers and cadets of the Odesa Military Academy were interviewed to group the transformations of professional discourse of young military leaders into positive and negative. To do that, we provided the respondents with the list of “new normal” transformations. We ranked them based on the assessment of result towards professional activities in general and professional discourse in particular. They evaluated the effect in five degrees, where 5 means very positive, 4 – positive, 3 – neutral, 2 – negative, 1 – very negative. Appendix D presents the cumulative analysis of transformation of professional discourse affected by COVID-19 based in average mark based on answers of 254 respondents.

Based on the survey, we claim that most “new normal” transformations (Enrichment of lexical, grammatical, and stylistic units; Formation of psychological readiness; Orientation towards future tasks; Critical thinking and need for verification; Need for vivid leadership readiness) were evaluated as very positive by military officers and cadets and, therefore, they may bring significant improvements in professional discourse. Other transformations (Avoiding of non-verbal tools; Increased number of communication acts and more significant volumes of information; Need for immediate response; Development of ties with community) were evaluated as positive that may bring some slight improvements. Change of environment and Decreased number of discourse participants were evaluated as neutral as they are objective

changes and cannot be abolished due to preventive measures. The indirect and closed nature of professional discourse was described as negative feature because some instructions require immediate response but written documents suggest answering in written form. Uncertainty was evaluated as a very negative transformation because young military leaders, cadets in particular, do not have enough experience to work in unpredicted special conditions.

Discussions

The findings raised the question how to adapt to new conditions of society development and gain more effectiveness from “new normal” transformations of professional discourse in a post-pandemic period. As a result, the realization model of positive professional discourse in a post-pandemic period was developed (figure two).

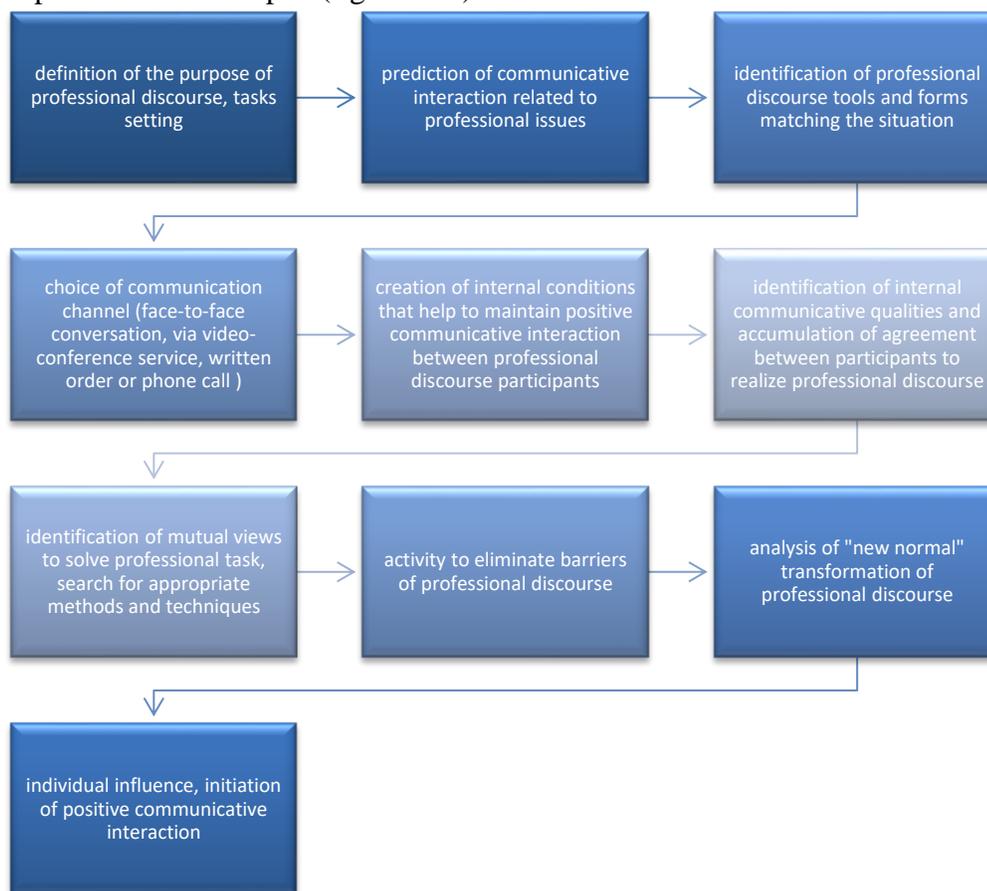


Figure 2. Realization model of positive professional discourse in a post-pandemic period

We will now explain the model stages in details. Thus, the first stage is to define the purpose of professional discourse and set the tasks of communication act. The military officer studies instructions of service task and assess the objective. The second stage deals with the prediction of communicative interaction related to professional issues. To reach the purpose while communicating, service members must analyze the preliminary data on service situation for possible actions planning. Then the participants identify professional discourse tools and forms that match the communicative situation. Based on situation information the speaker and addressee choose the communication channel to realize professional discourse. The fifth stage concerns the creating internal conditions to maintain positive communicative interaction between

professional discourse participants. In each case, an officer tries to perform their duties efficiently to create all possible conditions for positive professional interaction. The seventh stage is to identify mutual views and solve professional task, search for appropriate methods and techniques. Often professional discourse of military officers is characterized by negative orientation vector but they have to control his activities and eliminate communication barriers. Professional discourse of young military officers is usually the joint activity of the military unit. It means that to solve professional task using professional discourse and thus is necessary to find out mutual views and develop mutual strategies. Moreover, young military officers should know how to overcome communication barriers: remove noises, switch to the language of other speakers, understand psychological conditions of addressees. Simultaneously, the service member analyzes "new normal" transformation of professional discourse and orientations of their positive and negative impacts. To improve professional discourse we recommend to focus on positive change and get ready to negative ones. The last stage concerns individual influence of participants and initiation of positive communicative interaction.

Study limits

This study had some limitations. First, the pandemic brought a number of transformations in professional discourse of young military leaders and they are currently very vivid. The experiment resulted in preliminary model of realization of positive professional discourse in a post-pandemic period. We think that in the nearest future the model may include some changes because of different pandemic vector of its development. Second, the research involved active-duty military officers and cadets studying at the Odesa Military Academy. We have unified organization of educational process in higher military educational establishments but it would be interesting to compare the survey findings with other institutions. Most "new normal" transformations bring mainly improvements to realization of professional discourse but, at the same time, and we require to form specific skills among young military leaders to cope with negative transformations like uncertainty or indirect nature of professional discourse.

Conclusion

The study showed that the COVID-19 pandemic influences upon communication of young military leaders significantly and it stipulates the changes in their communication behavior. Professional discourse of young military leaders is a combination of oral and written texts united by the theme, thesaurus and professional views, extralinguistic tools. The survey proved that new conditions of society development does not eliminate typical features of professional discourse or change formal structural components. But new reality brings positive and negative transformations. Most "new normal" transformations like enrichment of lexical, grammatical, and stylistic units; formation of psychological readiness; orientation towards future tasks; critical thinking and need for verification; need for vivid leadership readiness were evaluated as very positive by military officers and cadets and, therefore, they bring significant improvements in professional discourse. Avoiding of non-verbal tools; increased number of communication acts and more significant volumes of information; need for immediate response; development of ties with community were described as positive transformations that bring some improvements in professional discourse. The change of environment and decreased number of discourse participants were evaluated as neutral transformations as they are objective changes. Indirect and closed nature of professional discourse was outlined as negative because it reduces the rate of information exchange. The respondent described uncertainty as very negative

transformation because young military leaders do not have enough experience to work in unpredicted special conditions. To avoid negative impacts of “new normal” transformations of professional discourse we developed the 10-staged model of realization of positive professional discourse in a post-pandemic period. The research proved that professional discourse of young military leaders, despite of its normative orientation is getting slowing more flexible and adaptive. This means servicemen will have possibility to develop new skills and psychological characteristics to perform professional duties using professional discourse. The dynamics of professional discourse over the past two years indicates that by 2023 professional discourse of young military leaders will reach some more modifications as the pandemic itself is not over yet and some changes may further occur.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Typical features of professional discourse of young military leaders

Typical features	Description and manifestation in professional discourse
Normative orientation	Regulation of professional discourse with legal acts and instructions. Connections with norms or juridical deontology. Prohibition of violation of human rights and freedoms, including civilians and prisoners of war.
Binding nature	Obligatory for all participants as it transmits oral or written orders, instructions, commands, etc.
Extremality	Execution of professional duties under special or extreme, life-threatening conditions.
Non-standard character	Requirement for creative thinking, rapid and correct decisions.
Participants' responsibility	Understanding that actions following the professional discourse text or statement are important, urgent, and far-reaching.
Personnel management	Requirement to create optimal working climate at the unit and form readiness to combat actions, enhance working capacity, and encourage creativity.
Use of foreign language	Approximation to NATO STANAG 6001 and introduction of interoperability with partner countries to realize international defence cooperation programmes, conduct international exercises, scientific conferences, workshops, etc.
Social orientation	Awareness of psychological influence of professional discourse upon addressees (directly or indirectly, symmetrically or asymmetrically) and development of their motivation to actions.
Psychological dynamics	Connection of professional discourse act with assessments, experience, and attitudes of participants and their willingness to achieve professional results. In the long term, professional discourse affects all participants' behavior demonstrating both positive and negative tendencies.
Semiotic specialization	Variety of verbal and non-verbal tools used but discourse participants.
Accuracy and credibility	Dependence of efficiency of professional duties on degree of statements accuracy and credibility
Use of professionalisms	Use of jargonisms, terms, acronyms, and speech patterns.
Morality	Relying on moral principles: professional activity priority, honesty, moral firmness, obligation, respect to speaker, politeness.
Communication barriers	Existence of social, psychological, technical, and linguistic barriers of professional discourse

Appendix B. The transformations of professional discourse caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

Transformations	Number of participants emphasized the transformations	Impacts upon professional discourse of young military leaders
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Use of ICT	254 (100 %)	Extended use of ICT including Skype, Zoom, Google Meets video communication services, phone, e-mail to exchange information and maintain professional interactions due to reducing the number of face-to-face contacts causes change of letter formats, emergence of new speech patterns (e.g. <i>Is all your staff present? Can you hear me clearly?</i>) that one avoids in face-to-face communication, and necessity to form readiness among officers of operative positions to work at the computer longer.
Indirect discourse	240 (94.49 %)	Dominance of indirect professional discourse through written instructions, reports, messages, summary records of video-conferencing.
Change of non-verbal tools	252 (99.21 %)	Because of wearing protective masks professional discourse participants challenge the change in usage of non-verbal tools and transmission from gestures and mimics in the process of interpersonal communication to technical signs and marks.
Phone anxiety	230 (90.55 %)	Staying on the phone 24/7 develops negative behavior of cell phone users among young military leaders.
Change of professionalisms	212 (83.46 %)	Emergence of new terms, acronyms, contractions, jargonisms, and speech patterns in informal and formal professional discourse.
On-line trainings	221 (87.01 %)	Forced transmission to on-line training, distant conferences, refusal from service trips and official visits that requires increased digital literacy and technological competence among young military leaders.
Demand for immediate answers via technical devices	180 (70.87 %)	The commander's requirement to obtain immediate answers due to the usage of technical devices and, as a result, increased number of tasks during the working day that actually reduces the quality of statements.
Added pressure	125 (49.21 %)	The COVID-19 pandemic brings additional pressure to young military officers who worry about their family members and subordinates. It creates new speech patterns related to health issues and vaccination within professional discourse.
Increased time management skills and self-discipline	197 (77.56 %)	ICT and independent activities demand firm time management skills and strong self-discipline from military officers and cadets. Further we notice the keeping of time-codes for some tasks by some servicemen.
Orientation towards future	111 (43.70 %)	The pandemic creates preconditions to change the focus to future events and establish of clear vision for future. Professional discourse demonstrates more frequent usage of future tenses and future forms.
Feeling uncertainty	87 (34.25 %)	Presents the weakness of some future officers to cope with difficulties. The transformation was mostly described by third-year cadets. The officers who have 5-year experience or longer did not feel uncertainty. From linguistic point of view, uncertainty among participants concerns the usage of modality expressed by means by <i>may, can, could, might</i> .
Context change	167 (65.75 %)	New conditions of society development and security threats lead to professional discourse context transformations connected with topic modifications,

		greater emphasis on personal safety to group security,
Authenticity of information	179 (70.47 %)	Necessity to verify authenticity of information obtained via phone, e-mails or with the help of other people assigned.
Building organizational resilience	94 (37.01 %)	Added pressure and change of security threats require strengthening of resilience within the military unit. Young military leaders need to use special vocabulary and grammar constructions in their speech to build supportive statements and to reassure the subordinates. Also, the speakers develop unique sentences to announce new safety rules to prevent spread of COVID-19.
Frequent communication	79 (31.10 %)	Due to the use of technical devices and video-conferencing service communication is organized more frequently. Besides, a number of meetings and conference calls is increasing as participants of professional discourse are responsible for reporting of COVID-19 statistics within the military unit.
Repetitions	34 (13.39 %)	Technical barriers of professional communication require the session rehearsals, repetition of some words and phrases to avoid misunderstanding between participants taking into consideration the importance of information. They pay special attention towards number pronunciation.
Considerable attention	69 (27.17 %)	Because of refusal to message through non-verbal tools, professional discourse participants develop more attention to words speech patterns to avoid misunderstanding. In some cases military officers are to be ready between lines during informal conversations as we notice extensive usage of phraseological unit, phrasal verbs, neologisms, jargonisms, and borrowings.
Strengthening community ties	12 (4.72 %)	Military officers choose specific vocabulary units when talking with civilians and not to spread unreliable information.
Peer-to-peer learning	132 (51.97 %)	Transition to on-line training events involves the implementation of horizontal learning to enhance the efficiency of learning outcomes.
Development of additional psychological qualities	145 (57.09 %)	“New normal” causes development of additional psychological qualities among young military leaders within their professional competence. They include: self-discipline and self-control, creativity, optimism, imagination, target-orientation, independence, rapid response, self-possession, hard work, identification with team, sense of humour, vigilance, firmness of views, objectivity, interest to new knowledge, self-education, honesty, dynamic behavior, adaptability, insistence.
Development of critical thinking	119 (46.85 %)	COVID-19 pandemic caused the emergence of many fake information pieces, unreliable data and production of manipulating material. Young military officers are to identify fakes and strengthen critical thinking skills. Service members are also required to differentiate vocabulary units and lexico-grammatical constructions bringing unreliable messages.
Independent production and comprehension of professional utterances	123 (48.43 %)	Decreasing of number of face-to-face contacts implies the development of higher responsibility for utterances produced and communication tools used.

Need for increased motivation	230 (90.55 %)	Added stress, existence of permanent security threats, low-intensity conflict require increased motivation among young military leader who seek for comfortable work conditions and refuse to stay in isolation for long.
Change of profile of professional discourse barriers	217 (85.43 %)	Earlier, before 2020, psychological barriers of professional discourse dominated, but since 2020 we notice the increased number of technical and linguistical barriers.
Leadership crisis	86 (33.86 %)	Requirement for independent actions, production of credible and accurate utterances, need for rapid response cause that one third of young military leaders to make mistakes and to demonstrate low readiness to leadership skills at least ones during the recent two years.

Appendix C. “New normal” features of professional discourse of young military leaders

“New normal” features	Description and manifestation in professional discourse
Uncertainty	Hesitations and doubts while perceiving the messages and the use of modal words to express confusion
Change of environment	Staying in the territory of military base and avoiding spontaneous and unnecessary face-to-face contacts with representatives of other military units
Decreased number of discourse participants	The communication is not realized in front of the big audience due to the COVID-19 preventive restrictions
Indirect and closed nature	Preferrances to written forms of professional discourse
Avoiding of non-verbal tools	Refusal to use non-verbal tools because of wearing protective masks or inability to see the gestures/mimics during on-line presentations
Enrichment of lexical, grammatical, and stylistic units	New social conditions brought a number of new lexical, grammatical, and stylistic units in professional discourse of young military leaders. Some of them are connected with health issues or vaccination, but mostly new realities deal with ICT, computer technologies, advances in the sphere of defence and security.
Increased number of communication acts and more significant volumes of information	Vast use of ICT leads to increased number of communication acts between servicemen and, as a result, they get more significant volumes of information of different quality. Consequently, messages get concise and terse.
Need for immediate response	More significant volumes of information and frequent communication acts require immediate response, providing accurate and credible messages as soon as possible
Formation of psychological readiness	“New normal” forms new components of psychological enthusiasm of young military leaders including self-discipline, self-control, creativity, optimistic thinking, imagination, target-orientation, readiness for independent actions and utterances, self-possession, dynamic behavior, adaptability, insistence and others.
Orientation towards future tasks	Long-term crisis provokes the natural wish to overcome difficulties and to plan future events. Professional discourse oriented towards future provides for future tenses and forms.
Critical thinking and need for verification	Working with significant volumes of information and Internet sources leads to encountering fake news and manipulations. Practical professional discourse obliges young military leaders to think critically and to verify fakes in information pieces.
Development of ties with community	Military officers and cadets play the role of stable and faithful community members whose image and authority reflects upon the image of the whole community.
Need for vivid leadership readiness	The COVID-19 pandemic strengthens the role of leader/commander within the military team. This imposes special requirements to young military leaders and

	obliges to form readiness to avoid errors while performing professional discourse.
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Appendix D. *Cumulative analysis of professional discourse transformations affected by COVID-19*

Transformation	Evaluation	Explanatory notes
Enrichment of lexical, grammatical, and stylistic units	4.97	Emergence of new lexical, grammatical, and stylistic units makes professional discourse rich and more effective as the participants may name new phenomena and express notions. Moreover, some respondents noted that the usage and adaptations of borrowings in the Ukrainian language improves foreign language comprehension.
Formation of psychological readiness	4.9	New conditions require higher level of psychological readiness of young military leaders. “New normal” tendencies obligatory presence of the following psychological characteristics like self-discipline and self-control, creativity, optimism, imagination, target-orientation, independence, rapid response, self-possession, hard work, identification with team, sense of humour, vigilance, firmness of views, objectivity, interest to new knowledge, self-education, honesty, dynamic behavior, adaptability, insistence.
Orientation towards future tasks	4.75	The respondents admitted that every military officer must possess strategic thinking and have clear vision about the future. Orientation towards future tasks is a must-have quality of modern military officer.
Critical thinking and need for verification	4.6	The intensification of psychological warfare against Ukraine denotes that all military staff must possess critical thinking skills and know how to verify fake information, identity manipulating messages. The COVID-19 pandemic deepened this problem and, as a result, young military officers improved information literacy significantly.
Need for vivid leadership readiness	4.58	Recently, the great attention is paid towards leadership of low-ranking officers and granting authorities to NCOs. Isolation caused the necessity to produce rapid and accurate decisions, effective and credible utterances.
Avoiding of non-verbal tools	4,1	Most respondents evaluated the transformation as positive because military service is regulated by a number of normative documents. Therefore, professional discourse of military officers is required to be impersonal and accurate. Some gestures or wrong mimics may be misunderstood that is unacceptable during service within the military unit.
Increased number of communication acts and more significant volumes of information	3.81	Increased number of communication acts and more significant volumes of information help young military leaders to adapt to “new normal” tendencies and develop new psychological characteristics (time management, ability to select and to assign priorities).
Need for immediate response	3.67	Every young military officer must be ready for special and extreme conditions. Immediate and correct response shows their ability to perform duties using professional discourse.
Development of ties with community	3.64	This helps to show positive image of the Armed Forces among the community, to attract young and talented people to military service.
Change of environment	3,13	New requirements to social contacts involve change of environment where professional discourse is realized and the
Decreased number of	2.8	

discourse participants		decreased number of participants
Indirect and closed nature	1,83	Recommendation to use indirect and closed discourse forms (written documents, instructions, duty details, orders, commands) instead of face-to-face contacts to avoid virus transmission. But this causes additional challenges to effective professional discourse (additional time for performance, authenticity verification, procedure for obtaining of written order).
Uncertainty	1,18	Despite psychological firmness and flexibility, the majority of respondents declare insufficient readiness to professional discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic was unpredicted and changeable. This does not mean that young military leaders are not ready to perform professional duties, but they need to assess risks and sustain psychological competence as well.

Note: red colour means very negative effect, orange – negative effect, yellow – neutral effect, blue – positive, green – very positive