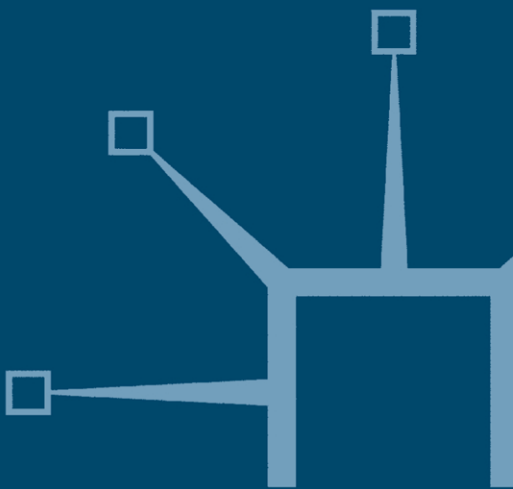
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Languages and the Military

Alliances, Occupation and Peace Building

Edited by
Hilary Footitt and Michael Kelly



Languages and the Military

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Preface

The contributions in this volume come from an international conference held at the Imperial War Museum, London, in April 2011 as a result of the Arts and Humanities Research Council project *Languages at War: Policies and Practices of Language Contacts in Conflict* (http://www.reading.ac.uk/languages-at-war).

We are grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for their support for the whole project and to the British Academy for its contribution to the final conference. The Imperial War Museum, which hosted the conference, proved to be an excellent and supportive venue for our discussions, and we are particularly grateful to Samantha Heywood, James Taylor, Suzanne Bardgett, Roger Tolson and the Director of the Churchill War Rooms, Phil Reed.

The conference provided a forum in which war studies specialists, historians, cultural studies analysts, linguists and translation scholars could meet together with practitioners in order to explore the place of foreign languages in war and conflict. The discussions we had were marked with openness and a genuine desire to cross disciplinary boundaries and learn from each other, and we are immensely grateful to all who participated.

Hilary Footitt
Michael Kelly

Notes on Contributors

Louise Askew has been a professional translator, interpreter and reviser working between English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian for, amongst others, the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague and the NATO Stabilization Force HQ in Sarajevo where she set up and headed the translation and interpretation service from 2000 to 2004. She has a PhD on international language policy in post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina from the University of Nottingham. Louise would like to thank her interviewees for giving so generously of their time and the Centre for Russian, Central and East European Studies based at the University of Glasgow for providing funding for her PhD research.

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Constadina Charalambous is a Lecturer in Language Education and Literacy at the European University of Cyprus. She specializes in language education in contexts of conflict, and her broader research interests include linguistic ethnography, intercultural communication and peace education. She has recently co-written 'Other-Language Learning, Identity and Intercultural Communication in Contexts of Conflict' (in *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, 2011).

María Manuela Fernández Sánchez is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Granada, Spain. A teacher of Interpreting Techniques (French–Spanish) and Translation Theories at both undergraduate and graduate levels since 1986, she has also taught abroad in Belgium and Mexico. She has published widely in the areas of translation theory and interpreting history. She is currently researching the diplomatic and international situation which required high-level interpreting during the first two decades of the Cold War era.

Linda Fitchett is a member of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and coordinator of the Interpreters in Conflict Areas project. She may be contacted at l.fitchett@aiic.net. She has recently been elected President of AIIC.

Nicholas Fletcher has worked in English language teaching, teacher training and project management since 1973 in Italy, UK, Venezuela, China, Romania, Poland, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Colombia and Afghanistan. This includes sixteen years managing English language projects in various Ministries of Defence.

Hilary Footitt is Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Modern Languages and European Studies in the University of Reading and was Principal Investigator for the AHRC project *Languages at War*. She has three areas of research activity. Firstly, she has written on the role and discourse of women in politics (*Women, Europe and the New Languages of Politics*, 2002), and was a participant in the nine-country 'Media Representation of Women in European Elections' project. Secondly, she has worked extensively on Allied–French relations in the Second World War (*War and Liberation in France: Living with the Liberators,* 2004) and is a member of the EURO-HISMEDIA European network, 'Médias, guerre et imaginaires en Europe'. Her articles have appeared in *Intelligence and National Security*, *Journal of War and Culture Studies* and *Cold War History*. She is on the editorial board of *Journal of War and Culture Studies* and is currently an investigator in the Leverhulme 'Liberal Way of War' programme. Over the past ten years she has been active within fora that promote foreign language study in the UK and was chair of the University Council of Modern Languages and a trustee of the Association for Language Learning. She wrote the government report *HE and the National Languages Strategy* (2005) and is currently co-convenor of the Language Alliance.

Peter Hare has worked in English language teacher training and project management since the 1990s in Hungary, China, Georgia, Mongolia and, currently, Ethiopia.

Franziska Heimburger is finishing a PhD at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris on languages in the Allied coalition on the Western front during the First World War. Languages at war in this context provide access to the functioning of a curiously understudied military coalition, be that on the level of military operations or in coordination of British units with French civilian authorities behind the lines. After secondary education in Germany and an undergraduate degree in Britain, followed by postgraduate work in France, she intends to pursue research in the larger field of history and languages.

Michael Kelly is Professor of French at the University of Southampton and a specialist in modern French culture and society and in language policy. His most recent book is *The Cultural and Intellectual Rebuilding of France after the Second World War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). He was co-investigator in the *Languages at War* project. He is also Director of LLAS Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies. He is currently working on the policies and

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Sylvie Kleinman is a historian and translator based in Dublin, whose main focus of research is the late eighteenth century in France and Ireland. She is a Research Fellow at the Centre for War Studies, Trinity College Dublin, where she also lectures in eighteenth-century Irish history. Apart from her interest in the role of languages and communication in war, she is currently developing a multi-disciplinary undergraduate course at University College Dublin which examines cultural depictions of war throughout the long eighteenth century. Students will explore representations of the soldier as patriotic hero in popular culture, the martialization of public space and elitist allegories of conflict in dynastic and ideological warfare.

Pekka Kujamäki is Professor of German (Translation and Interpreting) at the Philosophical Faculty, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, where he teaches translation theory and German–Finnish translation. His publications include studies on Finnish translation history, translators' networks and agencies in Finnish–German cultural/political exchange as well as papers on experimenting in translation class. He is in charge of the four-year project 'In Search of Military Translation Cultures: Translation and Interpreting in World War II in Finland with Specific Reference to Finnish, German and Russian', which is funded by the Academy of Finland (2011–14).

Lieutenant Colonel Justin Lewis RE runs the UK Defence Operational Languages Support Unit (DOLSU) as the languages Training Requirement Authority for the UK MOD. DOLSU is responsible for articulating military language needs to guide the delivery of training. DOLSU also sponsors military language examinations and recruits volunteers to train and deploy as operational military linguists.

Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost is Reader in the School of Welsh, Cardiff University. A Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Historical Society, his publications include research monographs on *Language, Identity and Conflict* (2003), *The Irish Language in Ireland from Goídel to Globalisation* (2005) and *Language and the City* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). He has given lectures by invitation at universities in Europe, Northern America and Australia and has advised national and regional governments on language policy and planning.

Petra Svoljšak is a research counsellor at the Milko Kos Historical Institute of the research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and Assistant Professor in the department of Cultural History of the University of Nova Gorica, where she teaches the history of twentieth-century wars. She is the author of *Soča, sveta reka: Italijanska zasedba slovenskega ozemlja*

1915–1917 (*Soča, the Sacred River: Italian Occupation of the Slovene Territory 1915–1917* (2003) and several articles on the Slovenes and the First World War, refugee problems during the war, the war's demographic impact and First World War memory.

James Taylor is Head of Research and Information at the Imperial War Museum. He has developed interpretational approaches and developed content for a number of major IWM exhibitions. These include the Holocaust Exhibition and the Churchill Museum at the Churchill War Rooms as well as temporary exhibitions such as T.E. Lawrence: the Life, the Legend (2006) and Camouflage (2007). He was also Historian for the Their Past Your Future learning programme. James is now directing the Museum's team of historians and researchers planning a new First World War gallery. This will open to the public in 2014.

Simona Tobia currently teaches Modern European History at the University of Reading, where she has also contributed to the *Languages at War* project. With Hilary Footitt, she is currently preparing the monograph *War Talk: Foreign Languages and the British War Effort in Europe 1940–46*, forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan. She is also the author of *Advertising America: the United States Information Service in Italy (1945–1956)* (2008).

Christopher Tozzi is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. His dissertation project, which has been supported by a Chateaubriand fellowship from the French government and an International Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council, deals with foreigners and minority groups serving in the French army and navy under the Old Regime, the Revolution and the First Empire.

Introduction: Languages and the Military: Alliances, Occupation and Peace Building

Hilary Footitt
University of Reading

For those who participate in military campaigns, report on wars, or study the conduct and cultures of conflict, war is largely a foreign-language-free zone. The tacit assumption has been that international wars are generally fought with allies and against enemies who obligingly speak our own language. However, a recent Arts and Humanities Research Council project, *Languages at War: Policies and Practices of Language Contacts in Conflict*,[1] took as its starting-point the centrality of foreign languages in war and proposed that languages should be seen as key to an understanding of armed conflict – for the military who are fighting, for the civilians who meet the armies 'on the ground' of war and for those academics from a range of disciplines who engage with the multiple meanings of war and conflict. This book, *Languages and the Military: Alliances, Occupation and Peace Building*, brings together these various constituencies to discuss the role of languages in military operations, a dialogue which began in the project's international conference at the Imperial War Museum, London, in April 2011. The conference provided a forum in which war studies specialists, historians, cultural studies analysts, linguists and translation scholars could focus together on one key theme – the role of languages in war. An integral part of this multidisciplinary perspective was the contribution of practitioners – the military who deploy soldiers in war, the professional interpreters who seek to protect language intermediaries in conflict zones, the agencies which develop languages as peacekeeping tools and the war museum curators who tell the story of war to the general public.

War is tragically a widespread phenomenon, both historically and geographically. From the eighteenth century, to World Wars I and II; from the Korean War and the conflicts in Cyprus through to Northern Ireland and Bosnia-Herzegovina and on to Iraq and Afghanistan today, armed conflict has marked our histories. The armies involved in these campaigns were seldom solely monolingual, and their activities inevitably brought them into sharp contact with peoples who spoke different languages from their own. In the theatres of conflict discussed in this book, languages proved vital to

operational effectiveness, to communication on the ground, to mediation and to peace building, an integral part of the whole economy of war.

Disclosing what has previously been hidden away and discounted, however, inevitably raises major analytical problems. To begin with, where are the sources from which accounts of languages in war can be drawn? Richard Aldrich memorably urged scholars of intelligence to 'Grow your own' resources (2002: 135), to adopt a lateral and imaginative approach when challenging the apparent absence of traditional historical documentation, and his advice holds equally good for those who research languages in war. Some contributors to this volume have found evidence by radically rereading existing national and diplomatic archives, where the presence of languages has generally passed unnoticed. Sylvie Kleinman, for example, rereads eighteenth-century documents in the French administrative, diplomatic and military archives in order to discover the role of linguists in the Franco-Irish campaigns against Britain, whilst Christopher Tozzi finds the linguistic diversity of the armies of France embedded in ordinances issued by the military authorities and in the *contrôles de troupe* for each regiment. Franziska Heimburger builds up her picture of how a military alliance communicates across languages by confronting material in the British National Archives at Kew with documents from the French Military Archives at Vincennes. Personal memoirs, contemporary accounts from the period, and archived testimony sit alongside these official documents of armies at war. Petra Svoljšak for example contextualizes Italy's occupation policy in the Slovenian territories (1915–17) by including the indignant responses of newspapers like *Slovenski narod* and *Slovenec*, and Simona Tobia's discussion of how World War II refugees were interrogated in Britain uses first-hand testimony from those involved (archived in the IWM), as well as detailed War Office reports from the reception centres.

With more contemporary conflicts, however, archives are often closed and relevant documents classified. In these cases, contributors have interviewed people closely involved in the particular campaigns – military participants, language intermediaries or those who resisted army authorities. María Manuela Fernández Sánchez for example views US negotiations with North Korea in 1951 through the experiences of the US Army interpreters, whilst Catherine Baker recreates British peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the words of those locally-recruited interpreters who worked with the military from 1995 to 2007; and Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost interviews former Irish republican prisoners in order to understand the part played by the Irish language in the conflict in Northern Ireland.

In a sense, such a necessary eclecticism of sources signals the second problem in addressing languages at war: what methodological and analytical frameworks are most appropriate to developing an understanding of the role of languages in conflict? One particularly useful body of research comes from translation scholars who have been interested in the role that

language intermediaries, interpreters and translators, play in conflict zones (Apter 2006; M. Baker 2006; Dragovic-Drouet 2007; Inghilleri 2008; Rafael 2007; Salama-Carr 2007; Simon 2005; Stahuljak 2000, 2010). In some of this scholarship, frameworks common in cultural studies and literary theory (Bermann and Wood 2005) are adopted in order to enlarge contemporary concepts of translation in ways which might aid our understanding of the implications of 'translating culture in an age of political violence' (Tymoczko 2009: 179). Stahuljak (2000), for example, has called on frameworks of testimony and witness as a means of understanding the voices of interpreters in conflict, whilst Baker has drawn on narrative theory to position translators as participants in the construction of war narratives (M. Baker 2006, 2010). Others, like Inghilleri, have taken a Bourdieusian perspective, positioning translators and interpreters within the social and professional contexts of war (Inghilleri 2005, 2009), or have concentrated more specifically on the ethnography of the interpreting situation (Blommaert 1999), the social biography of those who mediate in what may be a 'material history of interpreting' (Cronin 2002: 52). The relevance of this body of scholarship is evident in many of the contributions in this volume. Thus Pekka Kujamäki's work on Northern Finland in World War II examines the fields of practice of translation and the extent to which Cronin's distinction between autonomous and heteronymous translation systems (2002) is applicable to this highly complex political situation. Simona Tobia contrasts her discoveries on the interrogation of wartime refugees with studies of contemporary asylum interviews in the UK (Maryns 2006; Inghilleri 2007), and María Manuela Fernández Sánchez concludes that American interpreters reflecting on their habitus in the Korean peace negotiations may help us to understand more about the nature of interpreting as a profession.

The problematics of interpreting and translating are, however, only one element in the world portrayed in *Languages and the Military*. Military operations, whether invasion, occupation or peace support, tend to be organized in broad phases: pre-deployment, deployment (itself understood in discrete operational stages) and post-deployment. Archival documentation – Foreign Office committees, War Office reports, situation analyses – all follow this trajectory. Military and civilian participants when interviewed relate naturally to the military phases of operations, placing their narratives within an overall military timescale, either by accepting the chronology proposed or positioning their experiences as implicit or explicit resistance to it. Viewing this military framing as key to approaching the role of languages in conflict has enabled contributors to engage with some of the conceptual heterogeneity and messiness of conflict – the competing agencies involved in pre-deployment preparations and the experiences of different levels of operational command in distinct phases and geographies of the missions. Catherine Baker for example sees the development of language provision in Banja Luka in the late 1990s and early 2000s as closely related to the

changing nature of the British Army's engagement in this geographical area, in terms of its mission, organization and corporate experiences.

In this perspective, languages are not separate from military engagement or concentrated solely in the figure of language intermediaries but rather (to use Bruno Latour's formulation) 'translated' (Latour 2007) into each stage and element of war, part of the overall landscape of war, conflict and peacekeeping. Occupying a country, as Petra Svoljšak argues, involves setting the terms of an encounter between invaders and local residents, an exchange in which foreign languages are crucially implicated. Resisting the terms of such an exchange, as Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost suggests, can, as in the case of IRA prisoners, take the form of a linguistic challenge which reinforces the shared sense of a community at war. In the aftermath of 'hot war', teaching a particular language can be positioned as a means of resolving conflict, as in the 'Peacekeeping English' Project described by Peter Hare and Nicholas Fletcher, or can be seen as a contribution to greater intercommunal understanding, as in Constadina Charalambous' work on Cyprus.

At the root of this holistic approach to languages in war is the expectation that any war will create its own particular languages landscape, produced by all participants in the conflict, whether such groups talk overtly about military language policy, as in the case of Lieutenant Colonel Justin Lewis, or whether languages become subsumed in the multiple activities of war. In this scenario, interpreters/translators are one element in an overall linguistic landscape which has been produced by war. They are not only language intermediaries, placed, as Linda Fitchett argues, in highly dangerous physical situations, but also key transmitters of the surrounding languages environment, in some senses the embodiment of those disruptions which war and conflict typically engender in their societies.

This framework of a languages landscape of war assumes from the outset that there is no such thing as a typical war, that conflict is radically context-dependent. War brings together a range of variables: the purpose and focus of the mission, the constitution of the military forces, the modes of encounter with civilians and the composition and attitudes of the local people. What tasks, for example, have the military been given in any conflict? Are they intended to occupy a country, liberate an area, pacify a region, make peace between warring groups or build a long-term and stable peace? Is their deployment expected to be short-term or extensive? Are the armies drawn from one nationality or several? Have they been deployed as a national force, or are they organized with others, either in a loose coalition of foreign partners or in a tighter treaty organization? On the ground, do they seek to have direct relations with foreign civilians through their own personnel or do they delegate some of these encounters to third-party nationals, either recruited on the ground or brought in by a civilian agency? How do local attitudes towards the military differ according to the particular groups involved, and how do these attitudes change over time, mirroring

the behaviour of the armies concerned and/or the evolution of the conflict itself? Assuming the contextuality of languages in war in this way underlies all the contributions to this volume.

Languages and the Military: Alliances, Occupation and Peace Building brings together detailed case studies of languages in war, ranging temporally from the eighteenth century until today, and geographically among Ireland, Britain, France, Eastern Finland, Slovenia, Korea, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cyprus. Each case study is grounded in empirical evidence and seeks to adopt what Chris Rundle and Kate Sturge term an 'outward-looking approach to translation history' (Rundle and Sturge 2010: 3), broadly engaging with the relevant historiography and seeking to contribute a distinctively languages dimension to future discussions of each conflict. The case studies are grouped around three principal organizing themes: the role of languages in military alliances, the part played by languages in 'occupying the ground of war' and the ways in which languages contribute to the aftermath of conflict. In each theme, at least one writer from the practitioner community provides a description of their own agency's concerns on the subject – from the viewpoints of the UK Ministry of Defence, the International Association of Conference Interpreters, the British Council and the Imperial War Museum.

The chapters address a number of key questions about the place of languages in military dispositions, their role in military/civilian encounters on the ground of war and the part they play in the post-conflict period. The monolithic monolingualism of armies in war has, as Ardis Butterfield (2009) contends in relation to the Hundred Years' War, been something of a given among historians and war studies specialists. The implicit assumption, in what Tarak Barkawi (2006) rightly sees as a markedly ethnocentric approach to war scholarship, has been that military action is nearly always undertaken in the language of the dominant force or at least in that of the observing commentator or academic. The first section of the volume challenges this assumption in four contrasting case studies which seek not only to reveal the presence of foreign languages in the armies of war but also to pose questions about the ways in which cultural hybridity is welcomed, managed and integrated as armies prepare for and fight wars. In practice, linguistic military alliances, these chapters argue, come in many different shapes and forms.

For Christopher Tozzi, the military alliance is the coalition of foreigners who served in the French army of the eighteenth century, from the *Ancien Régime* and on to the Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire. He argues that the ways in which this military hybridity was contained in each distinct period were conditioned by contemporary conceptualizations of the nation and of the relevant political regime. When linguistic and cultural uniformity were of relatively minor importance in defining the nation, during the *Ancien Régime*, the state recognized and explicitly addressed the linguistic

diversity of its army. During the Revolution, however, the Jacobin anxiety to see the nation as a linguistically homogeneous entity and the general suspicion generated towards foreigners at this time, rendered efforts to manage linguistic diversity in the army extremely difficult. In comparison, the transfer of legitimacy under Napoleon Bonaparte to notions of military success and personal loyalty to the sovereign made it possible for the military authorities to recognize and seek to accommodate the presence of different foreign languages within their armed forces. The official acceptance and encouragement of hybridity and multilingualism in an army is closely related to the state's understanding of its identity and of the bases of its legitimacy.

Sylvie Kleinman turns our attention away from the authorities and their management of language diversity to focus on the actual experiences of foreigners employed in the French army of the period, in particular Irishmen who served during the joint Franco-Irish campaigns against Britain (1792–1804). The biographies of these civilian and military interpreters, who espoused the ideology of Revolutionary France as a means of achieving Irish independence, demonstrate forcibly how the roles of soldier and linguist were in practice merged when some of the key tasks of warfare had to be undertaken: providing information, interrogating prisoners, dealing with civilians, diffusing propaganda. Kleinman's Irish bilinguals took on the persona of the foreign soldiers with whom they fought but also used their linguistic competence to carve out a space in which they could also distance themselves from their adopted army. The wavering border between belonging and not belonging for foreign members of the military inevitably passes through the conflicted zone of language transfer.

Franziska Heimburger's alliance is the bringing together of two national armies (the British and the French) in the Allied coalition of World War I. Heimburger looks at how preparations to communicate with the foreign ally were strongly influenced by the two countries' distinct experiences of the role of languages in nineteenth-century colonial warfare. These experiences, she argues, were translated into very different organizational structures and resulted in markedly different approaches to valuing the work of those involved. The systems we establish to communicate between allied military forces owe a great deal to the corporate memories of our armies and to the language structures they have inherited to deal with enemies and allies.

Lieutenant Colonel Justin Lewis, head of the UK Defence Operational Languages Support Unit, brings discussions up to the present day by examining how a contemporary armed force prepares its languages capability in relation to the multiple challenges and varying alliances it may face, particularly at a time when non-kinetic warfare, winning the hearts and minds of local populations, is seen to be increasingly important. Lewis argues that the inter-services model seeks to provide a military capability which is both responsive and cost-effective, based on a mixture of military linguists and

civilians either directly employed by the Army or recruited via third party agencies. The different representations of the professions of military and civilian linguist – one a facilitator for army objectives, the other potentially a neutral mediator between opposing parties – leads naturally into the second organizing theme of the book, the part played by languages in encounters on the ground of war.

Whatever the purposes of foreign troops entering a country, they effectively occupy its space, imposing their own geography on what is to them a deeply unfamiliar territory. Formal and informal practices of naming space are of course ubiquitous, exerting what Pratt has described as 'the power of naming' (Pratt 1992: 33). In this process, a perception easily develops that naming a space amounts to the same as possessing it, so that once the space is already in one's possession there is little need to strive towards understanding. The contributions in the second section of this book examine the role of languages in these power relationships of occupation. Petra Svoljšak explores the way in which languages can be a fundamental political tool in the hands of an occupying military force. The Italian Army based in the Slovenian territories between 1915 and 1917 employed languages, she argues, as the basic instrument of their occupation regime, Italianizing Slovenian place names or adjusting them to Italian orthography. The previous school system was uprooted and replaced with an Italian one, based on the Italian language and school curriculum, with the Slovene language removed from public space and ghettoized in churches and private homes. This linguistic occupation paved the way for the subsequent annexation of Slovenian territories into the Italian state.

If the borders between occupiers and occupied were clearly delineated in the Slovenian case, the example of occupation which Pekka Kujamäki studies is one in which these frontiers are a good deal more permeable. In World War II Finland, a Finnish–German zone was created in the north of the country in which the German military occupied the territory but civilian administration remained in Finnish hands. The German army presence in Lapland constructed an apparently independent military society but one which in fact required the linguistic cooperation and mediation of others in order to operate successfully. Kujamäki argues that the particular circumstances of this German occupation problematized easy definitions of 'them' and 'us', a fact exemplified in what he terms the 'fragmented profiles' of those who mediated across and within the lines drawn by occupation and collaboration.

Catherine Baker continues this theme of the blurring of loyalties and identities produced by foreign occupation by looking at the effect which the British presence in Bosnia had upon those who worked with the military as language mediators between 1995 and 2007. She traces a developing set of relationships from an early phase of improvisation and adaptation through to a more settled, but often locally distrusted, employment with NATO

forces. After the gradual drawdown of foreign troops, she suggests, Bosnian interpreters were left with a cultural capital which, whilst personally satisfying, could not easily be redeemed in the contemporary employment market. The military creation of a kind of Commonwealth enclave in Bosnia produced a lasting affinity with elements of Britishness among many of the language intermediaries who worked with the army.

Occupying territory is also ensuring that one's own country's national concerns continue to be protected and enhanced within the disputed space of international relations. María Manuela Fernández Sánchez looks at the role of language mediation in the fraught negotiations ending the Korean War in 1951. The framing Cold War metaphor of 'containment', she suggests, structured the peace talks as a continuation of war, with language mediation positioned as an integral part of the continuing hostilities. Gaining ground in the negotiations was intimately connected to a linguistic war of words passing through the often traumatized figures of interpreters and translators.

With the papers by Simona Tobia and Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost, conflict is played out in a much tighter interior space: a one-to-one interrogation or the inside of a prison cell. Tobia turns our attention towards the ways in which a country protects the occupation of its own space against incursions from perceived external threats. The influx of refugees during World War II led the British to set up a complex military system of security vetting and intelligence sifting. For those caught up in the conflict as victims of war, she suggests, the first contacts with British authorities were primarily language encounters, interviews with local officials, extensively recorded by the military, with information obtained cross-checked to establish its credibility. Entering into this occupied space of safety was via an exchange of words in the foreign language, in conversations normally conducted by linguistically capable intelligence officers.

In the case of Irish republican prisoners during the Northern Ireland conflict, language operated not as a means of entering a potentially prohibited space but rather as a way of constructing and occupying a new space of resistance. Mac Giolla Chríost describes the situation of IRA prisoners who carved out a community space inside their prison walls through the learning and use of Irish Gaelic. Irish language classes in the early 1970s began to mark out what the prisoners termed their resistance space, the 'Jailtacht' (a play on 'Gaeltacht', the official Irish-speaking parts of the Republic), with the Irish language itself becoming a means of resistance in this part of the prison system.

If IRA prisoners in Long Kesh were deliberately eschewing language contact with their captors, many of the case studies in this section suggest that military occupation and defence of space relies to some extent at least on finding suitable language intermediaries. Linda Fitchett, from the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), brings the discussion up to

date by examining the Allied presence in Iraq and Afghanistan and the effect that these operations have had on the lives of interpreters and translators recruited to work with the military. The official invisibility of these men and women, with no central registry of interpreter deaths and a relative failure to protect and respect them as professionals in their own right, has much to do, she argues, with continuing suspicions of the hybrid identity of language mediators and their potential untrustworthiness in war. AIIC's project on 'Interpreters in Conflict Areas' aims to place basic responsibilities for the care and protection of interpreters on the shoulders of the military forces that employ them.

In the last section of the book, contributors address questions relating to the aftermath of war and conflict. In the late twentieth century, there has been a much more systematic interrogation of the terms 'war' and 'peace' and of any apparently sharp disjuncture between the two time frames – when exactly does war end and peace begin? Rather than seeking to locate an artificial caesura between war and peace, these chapters start from the assumption that conflict and peace are often on a continuum, with one feeding into and repositioning the other. Constadina Charalambous' account focuses on the current absence of 'hot war' between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and the attempts to exploit this lull in hostilities through language learning initiatives aimed at developing intercultural understanding between the two groups. Her study of the teaching of the Turkish language in Greek Cypriot schools suggests that the symbolic value attached to the two languages in Cyprus continues to create hegemonic educational discourses which provide relatively little space for positive representations of 'the other'.

One approach on the conflict/peace continuum has been to promote effective communication through the improved use of a third language, foreign to many of the parties involved. Peter Hare and Nicholas Fletcher discuss the ways in which a language teaching project, the British Council's 'Peacekeeping English', has operated in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mongolia and Ukraine. The British Council's aim has been to produce a self-sustaining English language capacity which can be owned by each country concerned. 'Peacekeeping English' has been particularly effective, Hare and Fletcher argue, in supporting defence force interoperability in multi-national peacekeeping missions, and in UN and OSCE (Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe) initiatives.

The last two contributions raise the question of the continuance of war and peace through their specifically language memories. Louise Askew explores the fate of languages after the international peacekeepers have nearly all left Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since the early 1990s, the language of Serbo-Croat has completely disappeared from the area. Instead, the official languages of the post-war state are now Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian, and these constitute potent ethnic indicators of identity. Askew argues, however, that beneath this peace settlement of distinct languages there remains a sub

stratum of Serbo-Croat, a language memory of the past particularly audible in discussions with those Bosnian interpreters and translators who were called upon to bridge the new languages' divide.

The role of foreign languages in our corporate peacetime memories of war is discussed in James Taylor's forward-looking contribution. As Head of Research and Information at the UK's premier war museum (the Imperial War Museum), Taylor traces the recent history of the Museum and the changing relationship that it has had with the 'foreign' in war. He argues that a significant proportion of the IWM's collections in fact rely upon a foreign language for their full meaning but that this 'international' context of conflict is still to be fully exploited in the displays and exhibitions. Making the foreignness of war clearly visible to the visiting public, Taylor suggests, may destabilize inherited Anglocentric interpretations of history and promote the sort of dialogue, exchange and confrontation which will stimulate new perspectives and discussions.

Languages and the Military: Alliances, Occupation and Peace Building aims to place foreign languages at the centre of our discussions on war and conflict, using detailed empirical evidence and bringing together the comments of academics and practitioners. The contributions in this volume, taken as a whole, argue that an understanding of the role played by foreign languages in war may serve to further problematize some of the key frameworks often given to military deployments. Alliances, these chapters suggest, can be found inside our national armies as much as outside, within formal Allied coalitions. An army which operates today needs foreign language supporters as much as the Franco-Irish contingents required Anglophone speakers in the eighteenth century. The occupation of territory by military forces, our contributors suggest, has a micro as well as a macro dimension – the blurring of language identities on the ground, the creation of one-to-one language encounters and the linguistic defence of space should all be seen alongside the broader language policies for occupation and colonization. In the so-called aftermath of war, the continuum between conflict and peace is as visible in the language traces and memories it leaves behind as in the transformation of our military forces from fighting soldiers to conciliators and peace builders.

Note

1. See http://www.reading.ac.uk/languages-at-war.

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1

One Army, Many Languages: Foreign Troops and Linguistic Diversity in the Eighteenth-Century French Military

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Napoleon Bonaparte reportedly once declared of the Alsatian soldiers serving in his army, 'Let them speak German as long as they wield their swords in French' (Maugué 1970: 146). This statement, though perhaps apocryphal, alluded both to the linguistic diversity among French troops during Napoleon's lifetime and to his toleration of such heterogeneity so long as it did not interfere with military operations. Yet Napoleon's attitudes on the topic of linguistic diversity in the army were far from representative of those of other French regimes during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In an era of considerable political tumult in France, policies on the languages spoken by soldiers as well as the strategies intended to bridge language barriers among troops varied widely, reflecting the broader agenda of the state and the changing notions of political legitimacy which underlay it.

Nowhere were these shifting approaches to language in the military more apparent than in the experiences of the thousands of foreigners who served in the French army under the Old Regime, the Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire. These foreign soldiers in French service provide an excellent opportunity for studying the difficulties that can arise from linguistic diversity within a military context, the different approaches which commanders and governments might adopt to address such issues and the broader political and ideological factors which condition heterogeneity of language among soldiers.

The Old Regime

In large part, it was the soldiers of Louis XIV who, through their successful military campaigns, facilitated the emergence of French by the turn of the eighteenth century as the *lingua franca* of European elites. Without the feats of arms that royal troops performed for the Sun King, it is doubtful that

French would have become the language of diplomats, scholars and aristocrats throughout the continent, which it remained until the nineteenth century (Blanning 2007: 434–7). Yet ironically, many of Louis XIV's own soldiers, like those of his successors, spoke French with difficulty or not at all. Bourbon monarchs enjoyed great success exporting their language and culture abroad, but France itself, including its military, remained the centre of remarkable diversity in these areas until the Revolution of 1789.

Almost all recruits for the French army, whether they were born in France or beyond its borders, contributed to the heterogeneity of language within the military ranks. Inside France, the lack of standardization of French itself and the persistence until the Revolution of localized *patois* dialects among the peasants who comprised the bulk of the French army's recruits, ensured that large numbers of the king's native subjects spoke idioms which diverged substantially from Parisian French. At the same time, considerable portions of the French population living on the periphery of the kingdom spoke foreign languages which had little in common with French, including German in the eastern provinces, Italian and Catalonian dialects in the south, Flemish in the northeast and Breton in Brittany. This plurality of languages and dialects within France, a topic which several scholars have studied at length, suggests that the French regiments of the royal army were a space of considerable linguistic diversity (Brunot 1905–38; Cohen 2000). The divergent idioms spoken by the king's subjects, however, were often mutually intelligible enough to permit effective communication between individuals from different provinces; in addition, as David Bell has shown, the growth of the royal bureaucracy and press, as well as the orientation of local elites toward the royal court and Paris rather than regional centres of power, contributed over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the ability of steadily increasing numbers of the inhabitants of the kingdom to understand Parisian French (Bell 2001: 171–2). As a result, linguistic difficulties among French subjects serving in the army were rarely a concern of military officials under the Old Regime.

Such was not the case for the thousands of foreigners enlisted in the French army, whose linguistic deviance was more pronounced. In 1789, thirty-two of the French army's 168 regular regiments, including eight cavalry corps and twenty-four infantry regiments, were designated as foreign (Rapport 2000: 49). Together, these units nominally represented five different nationalities, with the foreign cavalry comprising two German regiments and six Hungarian hussar units, and the infantry counting twelve Swiss regiments, eight German, three Irish and one Liégeois. In addition, two other foreign infantry units, the Swiss Guards regiment and the company of the Hundred Swiss, comprised part of the military reserve of the royal household, destined to protect the king and his family (Fieffé 1854: 393–420). Two Italian infantry regiments had existed as well until 1788, when they were converted into light-infantry battalions which no longer

recruited foreigners but retained the Italians who had enlisted prior to the reorganization.[1]

Moreover, while the five (or six, with the Italian units included) nationalities which the foreign regiments nominally represented brought to the military a great deal of national and linguistic diversity on their own, in practice the heterogeneity of the foreign contingent of the army extended even further. This was particularly true by the second half of the eighteenth century, when the drying-up of traditional pools of foreign recruits left officers of the foreign units increasingly eager to enlist any willing man they could find, regardless of his nationality. As a result, the Irish regiments by the final decades of the Old Regime counted within their ranks not only natives of the British Isles but also many Dutch, Belgian and German soldiers, as well as some French subjects. Similarly, the German regiments recruited Poles, Swedes and Hungarians, among other nationalities, and the Hungarian cavalry regiments by the later eighteenth century were comprised largely of German-speaking French subjects, although the Hungarian language survived within the units (Fieffé 1854: 279). The Swiss, Italian and Liégeois regiments were generally more homogeneous in composition, but nonetheless occasionally included men born in diverse regions of Europe. Meanwhile, small numbers of non-Europeans trickled into the recruitment depots of some of the foreign regiments throughout the eighteenth century, with natives of such distant regions as sub-Saharan Africa, New York, Pennsylvania and even the Mughal Empire occasionally appearing on the rosters of these units.[2] Thus the soldiers comprising the foreign regiments represented an immensely extensive array of nationalities and linguistic groups blended together within the French army.

Politically and ideologically, such linguistic diversity was of little concern to French monarchs, who beginning in the sixteenth century had replaced Latin with Parisian French as the official language of state bureaucracy but cared little which tongues their ordinary subjects spoke (Bell 2001: 171). Within the army, however, the failure of personnel to understand orders effectively in whichever language they were given could prove deadly. Aware of this challenge, Old Regime military authorities pursued various strategies for ensuring that officers and soldiers in the foreign regiments could communicate both with French speakers outside their units and with one another. These solutions traditionally centred on the employment of polyglot personnel. Some of the foreign corps, beginning with the Hundred Swiss in 1626, maintained special ranks for interpreters who were fluent in both French and the national language of the group with which their regiment was nominally associated (*Discours sommaire* 1676: 16). A royal ordinance of 7 April 1773, which required all foreign regiments to employ an interpreter, made this practice universal (Malaguti 1892: 92). At the same time, multilingual commanders helped ensure smooth communication within the foreign regiments; foreign-born generals such as Ulrich Frédéric

Woldemar, Count of Lowendal, who spoke Latin, Danish, German, English, Italian, Russian and French, went a long way toward bridging language barriers within the army (Bois 2009). In addition, the Crown worked to attract to the foreign regiments French natives who were fluent in foreign languages, going so far as to grant them special exemptions from prohibitions against the recruitment of French subjects for the foreign corps.[3]

These *ad hoc* strategies for dealing with linguistic diversity in the army by employing interpreters as needed and counting on officers to be fluent in the languages of the men they commanded remained the chief solution to the problem for most of the Old Regime period. Toward the middle of the eighteenth century, however, an initiative aimed at regulating the languages spoken within the French army as a whole added a new imperative to language policy within the foreign regiments. On 6 May 1755, Louis XV issued a decree establishing an official list of standardized military commands which all officers of French-speaking regiments were to adopt, in order to improve the interchangeability of detachments from different units within the army.[4] Although the royal ordinance itself concerned only commands issued in French and made no mention of those of the foreign regiments, officers within those units produced their own official translations into German, Italian and English of the French military instructions shortly after the decree appeared.[5]

While officers within the foreign regiments experienced little difficulty producing lists of official commands in different languages, convincing their superiors and comrades to agree upon their translations proved more problematic than many translators appear to have anticipated. It is at this juncture that the inherent difficulties of regulating commands within a multilingual military during the eighteenth century become clear. For one, French military authorities were suspicious of many of the translations and questioned their accuracy. Such concerns stemmed in many cases from a total lack of familiarity on the part of military administrators with the foreign languages in question, an ignorance underlined by reprimands such as the following, addressed to the officer who had produced the English translations: 'The word *your* appears to be employed indifferently in place of *le la vostre* [and] *vos*, and *the* is used to translate both *le* and *la*'.[6] Similarly, a French official complained that the German article *die* appeared variously in the German translation before both singular and plural nouns, which to the administrator seemed impossible because all noun markers should have been unambiguous with regard to number, as they were in French.[7] Examples such as these highlight the fundamental lack of multilingual competence among many French military authorities, which contributed to the difficulties involved in administering the foreign regiments.

At the same time, several of the individuals involved in the translation project of 1755 recognized the inherent ambiguity of language itself as a limitation which would render their work imperfect. The soldier behind the

English translations declared to his superiors that he had taken every effort to ensure that his work would be understood by as many English-speaking troops as possible, but cautioned nonetheless that 'a single thing can be translated from one language into another in any number of different fashions, according to the particular expressions of different individuals. An officer commanding several detachments will therefore be understood perfectly only by his own troops.'[8] Along similar lines, Settiers, the Swiss officer who produced the German translation of the commands for use within the Swiss regiments, suggested that some of his work might be adapted for the German regiments as well, but cautioned: 'I think it would be inappropriate to subject them to the same terms because some of their words are different, as are ours.'[9]

Finally, the fact that the native tongues of soldiers in the foreign regiments, particularly during the decades preceding the Revolution, corresponded only loosely with the nominal national designations of the units calls into question the effectiveness of the entire translation initiative. Even if all officers within the Irish regiments had adopted a standardized set of commands in English, for example, their usefulness for the numerous speakers of Walloon and Dutch serving under them (to say nothing of Irish recruits whose native language was not English but Gaelic) would almost certainly have been limited (O'Callaghan 1870: 161–2). Conditions may have been better in the somewhat more nationally homogeneous German and Swiss regiments, but even in those units communication remained a problem. The Duke of Bouillon, colonel of the German regiment of his name, addressed a memorandum to the Minister of War in 1789 observing that, as a result of the unit's recruitment of many officers and soldiers from Flanders, the regiment's personnel 'speak the German language very poorly'. He unsuccessfully lobbied the War Ministry to replace German with French as the official language of command of the regiment.[10]

The revolutionary decade

Whereas linguistic diversity in the army of the Old Regime troubled authorities only insofar as it mitigated military efficiency, the French Revolution transformed language into an issue of political and ideological import (Bell 2001: 171–95). As the French revolutionaries constructed a new model of the nation defined, in part, by a common language and culture, the presence of foreign languages in the army, like foreign soldiers themselves, became incompatible with the self-presentation that the French state sought to cultivate.

For the foreigners enlisted in the French army, lack of linguistic conformity helped to fuel charges of disloyalty to the Revolution and the nation. For example, the Prussian Colonel Dambach, who commanded the Germanic Legion, an auxiliary unit of the French army raised in September 1792 to

recruit German speakers sympathetic with the Revolution, was denounced before the National Convention in 1793 on charges that he spoke 'not a single word of the French language and has an immutable hatred for everything French' (*Archives parlementaires* 1903: 70). In a similar vein, the author of a play produced in the wake of the overthrow of the monarchy on 10 August 1792 depicted soldiers of the Swiss Guards regiment, who had infamously shed buckets of blood on that date defending the Tuileries palace against a mob bent on attacking the royal family, as incompetent brutes barely capable of communicating in French ('La Grillade' 1792). Vilified Swiss soldiers in the piece spoke lines such as the following:

> L'y être pas de mon faute, monsir le tiable, si j'être mort en tuant les autres; on m'avoir tonné depuis long-temps pour boire et al mes camérates, pour tirer sur la nation quand on nous le dire . . . aujorthui on dire *feu*, nous obéir . . . on nous avoir dit: vous embrasser auparavant, tirer après.

It is impossible to transliterate perfectly the grammatical errors of the French passage into English, but a rough attempt might read:

> It be not my fault, mister devil, if I been killed while killing others; somebody have given me a drink, my comrades too, and [told us] to fire upon the people when we are told. Today someday say fire, we obey . . . they tell us: 'hug the people first, shoot them afterwards'.

In contrast, other characters in the play communicated in perfect French. Indeed, the only Swiss soldier speaking in valid French declared himself to be of mixed nationality, son of a Swiss citizen and a French woman, and, in eloquent verses, expressed profound remorse for the actions of his comrades:

> Fils d'un Suisse et d'une Marseilloise, je suis né Français: je ne suis que plus criminel d'avoir trahi ma patrie; mais l'apât de l'or ce métal qui séduit les hommes, m'a ébloui, sans cependant étouffer les remords qui s'entassèrent dans mon ame, dès le moment où je me laissai gagner par mes officiers corrumpus. Nous avons été les fatals instrumens dont la cour s'est servie pour répandre le sang français.

This text, which is free of grammatical errors apart from a minor spelling mistake, means in English:

> Son of a Swiss man and a woman from Marseilles, I was born French; thus I am especially guilty for having betrayed my country. The lure of gold, the metal that seduces men, blinded me, but it did not smother the remorse lodged in my heart from the moment I allowed myself to be

> bought by my corrupt officers. We became the deadly instruments that the royal court used to spill French blood.

By associating the Swiss Guards' lack of competence in the French language with their role in the bloodshed of the day of 10 August, this play pointed to linguistic diversity within the army as a political danger to the nation. Similar texts, such as a satirical dialogue between two women, a French volunteer and a Swiss soldier, had the same effect ('La Mère Duchesne'). Suspicions of the loyalty of Swiss soldiers contributed to the Legislative Assembly's decree of 20 August 1792, which, published in French, German and Italian, disbanded the Swiss regiments definitively.[11] The National Assembly had already reorganized the other foreign regiments in 1791 into units free of any foreign designation, with the result that, by the autumn of 1792, official policy was to regard all regular units of the army as purely French.[12]

In practice, however, the army remained far from homogeneous after that date in either national or linguistic composition. While the formerly foreign regiments were officially permitted to recruit only French subjects in the wake of their reorganization, they continued in many instances to enlist foreigners as well. In addition, most of the foreign soldiers who had been in service before the reorganization of 1791 remained in their regiments, and many of the Swiss soldiers discharged in August 1792 simply re-enlisted in other corps. At the same time, a number of 'legions' levied to recruit specific groups of foreigners sympathetic to the Revolution were raised as auxiliary units in 1792 and 1793. Even the revolutionary army's volunteer battalions, ostensibly comprised of patriotic French citizens, in some cases counted large proportions of their personnel as foreign.[13] Thus, despite the government's intentions, foreigners and foreign languages retained a significant presence within the army even after they had theoretically been purged.

Revolutionary political and military leaders, however, disregarded this fact and failed to undertake pragmatic initiatives to address the problems associated with linguistic diversity among the troops. This policy made matters of command and administration more difficult, an issue illustrated by the decree of 27 Pluviôse Year II (2 February 1794). The law, which mandated that all officers in the army with the rank of corporal or higher be literate, was intended to ensure the efficient administration of military units.[14] Following the publication of this decree, most of the officers in the second battalion of the 53rd Regiment, a unit which had formerly been designated as German and which spent most of the Revolution stationed in the South American colony of Guyana, learned to read and write, skills which most of them had not previously possessed.[15] The language in which they became literate, however, was German, not French, and as late as 1798, only fifteen of ninety-two officers in the battalion exhibited any ability to read or write in the latter tongue. Of these fifteen officers, moreover, the most competent

was far from fluent in French, able only to 'write some words' in that language. Other units of the army displayed similar linguistic deficiencies, with fifteen of twenty-six officers in the first battalion of the 53rd Regiment (which was not deployed overseas) and seven of forty in the first battalion of the 98th literate only in German in 1794.[16] Nonetheless, these men were allowed to retain their ranks because the decree regarding literacy in the military had not specified in which language the skills were required, since the legislators behind the law had rested their designs on the false assumption that there were no more foreigners in the military. Such oversight posed a variety of difficulties for officers in regiments which retained large numbers of foreign personnel, as a lack of reading and writing skills in French left them unable to fulfill administrative tasks adequately.[17]

Beyond creating problems for the administration of troops, language barriers that officials in the army or government failed to address during the revolutionary era contributed to insubordination and indiscipline within military units, according to contemporary accounts. An officer of the Germanic Legion named Schwartz charged the National Convention in 1793 with having sabotaged the corps by mixing French speakers into its ranks, preventing the unit's German-born officers from communicating effectively with their troops.[18] Similarly, a reviewer of the 2nd Foreign Battalion, another auxiliary unit, warned in 1805 that, although the corps contained many 'educated and distinguished officers, several do not speak the language' of the soldiers, preventing the maintenance of good order within the ranks.[19]

The Napoleonic Empire

The fall of the Jacobin regime in 1794, followed by Napoleon Bonaparte's rise to power in 1799, transformed the French political landscape and brought to an end many of the military policies of the revolutionary decade. One consequence of these changes was the official re-establishment of foreign regiments and other foreign units of the French army. The forces of the First Empire comprised vast contingents both of foreign troops enlisted directly in the French military, as well as allied forces serving under French generals, to the extent that only 52.5 per cent of the soldiers of the Grande Armée in 1812 were French (Brun 2009). Indeed, Napoleon's dependence on soldiers who did not speak French was such that in April 1815, as he raced to raise a new army in the wake of his return from Elba, he circulated a decree along the French frontier calling on former soldiers to re-enlist, ordering 15,000 copies printed in German, 5000 in Italian and 4000 in Dutch but only 6000 in French.[20]

In his strategy for accommodating the linguistic diversity of his armies, Napoleon revived the *ad hoc* solutions of the Old Regime, relying on bilingual officers to command foreign troops. Polyglot talents thus became

an important asset for personnel seeking promotion in a military which counted among its ranks such large numbers of men who could not speak French. A French soldier named Chesnard was recommended for the position of adjutant-major in the 1st Foreign Regiment in 1809, for example, because he had served previously in Germany and spoke German fluently.[21] Another French subject called Bougel became a sous-lieutenant in the same regiment because he had 'completed his studies in Strasbourg, where he learned at the same time to speak and write with ease in German'.[22] Few officers, however, could match the linguistic skills of the lieutenants Ferdinand Matt and Roldanus, both of the 7th Regiment, who spoke French, Dutch, Italian, German and Latin and French, Dutch, German, Latin and Greek respectively.[23]

Besides enjoying advantages when seeking promotion, troops with foreign language skills during the post-Jacobin era represented a particular asset to the French army as it waged campaigns on an unprecedented geographical scale across Europe. Although he spoke no French, the American William Tate, who had fled to France after unsuccessfully attempting to levy a legion of Americans for the French army in South Carolina, received command of a small army which invaded Britain in 1797 partially because military planners deemed his knowledge of English crucial to the expedition (Jones 1950: 54–5, 57). Similarly, the landing of British troops in Holland prompted French generals to transfer to that region Irish soldiers serving in the French army in the hope that their ability to communicate with Irish troops fighting on the British side might prove useful.[24]

Perhaps more unique for their language skills than American and Irish soldiers were the men of the Maltese Legion, formed by Napoleon during his conquest of Malta on the way to the Middle East in 1798. A French general in 1801 recommended that the legion's personnel be deployed to serve as guides for French troops in Egypt because 'all of the men of whom it is composed speak the Arabic language perfectly'.[25] The general perhaps oversold the ability of the Maltese troops to communicate with Egyptians, since Maltese, although a Semitic language which originated during the Arabic colonization of Malta in the Middle Ages, had been heavily influenced during the early-modern period by Sicilian and Italian (Brincat 2004: 213–24). Nonetheless, the importance assigned to these troops because of their perceived linguistic talents is clear.

The Napoleonic army's need for troops fluent in languages as exotic as Arabic was unprecedented in its time. Yet the significance of linguistic diversity within the French military remained a constant throughout the early modern period, from the origins of the professional army in the seventeenth century through the unravelling of the Napoleonic Empire in the nineteenth.

Also persistent throughout this period was the centrality of different conceptualizations of the nation and the various self-presentations cultivated

by changing political regimes in shaping policies on the languages spoken by France's soldiers, particularly those of foreign origin. Under the Old Regime, when linguistic and cultural uniformity played relatively minor roles in defining the nation and underpinning the political legitimacy of the absolute monarch, the state recognized and addressed at an official level the fact of language barriers among its troops. The effectiveness of the different efforts directed toward this end varied and was often restricted by authorities' failure to understand fully the makeup of the army and the functioning of language translation itself, but the presence of consistent policies designed to deal with linguistic diversity at least mitigated many of the problems that stemmed from it.

For the first half of the 1790s, however, the Jacobin fixation with viewing the nation as a linguistically homogeneous entity, combined with general suspicion of foreigners serving in the army, rendered comprehensive endeavors to address linguistic diversity within the military impossible. The effectiveness of the revolutionary army suffered as a result. It was not until the political triumph of Napoleon Bonaparte, who fixed his legitimacy on military campaigns, the maintenance of order and personal loyalty to the sovereign rather than the autonomous will of the people, that foreign languages within the army were once again recognized and accommodated by military authorities.

Notes

1. The Regiment of Royal-Italien and Regiment of Royal-Corse, both Italian corps, were dissolved by royal ordinances of 17 March 1788 which reorganized them into light-infantry battalions intended in the future to recruit only French subjects. Soldiers of Italian origin already enlisted in the regiments were allowed to remain in the French army. See 'Ordonnance du Roi, Portant réforme du régiment Royal-Italien', Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF), Paris (1788); 'Ordonnance du Roi, Portant réforme du régiment Royal-Corse', BNF (1788). The Regiment of Royal-Corse, although nominally associated with Corsica, retained its designation as a foreign regiment until its dissolution in 1788, despite Corsica's annexation to France in 1769.
2. Examples of non-Europeans included Frantz Balthazard, a native of the Mughal Empire who enrolled in the German Regiment of Bouillon in 1766, and Jean Newton, born in New York, who served with the Irish Regiment of Clare in 1744. These soldiers are listed on the *contrôles de troupe* for their respective regiments in Vincennes, Service historique de la défense (SHD), 1Yc 158 and SHD 1Yc 259. On a broader level, the Volontaires de Saxe cavalry corps, levied by Maurice de Saxe during the War of the Austrian Succession, contained an entire squadron of cavalrymen, about 100 in total, of whom a majority were black soldiers born in Africa or the New World. For their birthplaces, consult SHD 3Yc 278.
3. An ordinance of January 1763 (the exact date is unclear), which forbade recruiters for the foreign regiments to enroll French subjects, allowed an exception

for those who spoke foreign languages: 'Tous ceux des Sujets de Sa Majesté qui Sauront parler la Langue Allemande, Italienne, ou Irlandoise, pourront etre recus en qualité d'officiers dans un des Régimens qui sont a son service de la nation dont ils scauront parler la Langue' ('All His Majesty's subjects who can speak German, Italian or Irish may be admitted as officers in one of the regiments from the nation whose language they know how to speak'). SHD 1M 1722.

4. 'Ordonnance du Roy sur l'exercice de l'infanterie, du 6 mai 1755', BNF (1755).
5. By September 1755, a major in the Regiment of Swiss Guards named Settiers had published a German translation. A corporal-major in the Regiment of Royal-Italien submitted an Italian translation around the same time, while an unnamed officer in the Irish Regiment of Clare had completed a translation into English by the end of the year, providing commands largely identical to those used in the British Army at the time. All of these translations are available in SHD Xg 1. For comparisons between the English translations and the commands used in British service at the time, consult the military instructions published in Lambart 1776.
6. The original text of these criticisms reads: 'Ce mot your parvins aussi esté employé indifferement pour expriemer *le la vostre vos*, et cependant un trouver quelquefois *the* pour rendre *le* et la'. 'Observations sur l'Imprimé de la Traduction angloise', SHD Xg 1.
7. 'Observations sur la traduction des Commandemens pour les Regs. Allemands', SHD Xg 1.
8. Unsigned memorandum dated 1755, SHD Xg 1.
9. Letter of 2 September 1755, SHD Xg 1.
10. Memorandum of 1 April 1789 from the Duke of Bouillon to the Minister of War, SHD 1M 1722.
11. A copy of the law abolishing the Swiss regiments is available in SHD Xg 25.
12. Apart from the Swiss units, the foreign regiments of the French army had been reorganized in early 1791, when all units of the line army were ordered to cease identifying themselves by the names of their proprietary colonels and adopt a numerical designation. See BNF, 'Règlement Sur la Formation, les Appointements & la Solde de l'Infanterie Allemande, Irlandoise & Liégeoise' (BNF), 1 January 1791. Further, a decree of the National Assembly on 21 July 1791 ordered the German and Irish regiments to assimilate organizationally to the rest of the army, meaning that their special pay, regulations and uniforms were to be abandoned. It did not mention language. On the decree, see *Le Patriote Français* 712, 22 July 1791 (BNF). The Swiss regiments were preserved with their privileges intact until 20 August 1792.
13. The most extreme example is the 8th Battalion of the Haut-Rhin. Of the 456 volunteers enlisted at the time of its formation on 21 May 1793, forty-four had been born outside France. Most of these latter were from various German states, but Italians and at least one Belgian were present as well. *Contrôle de troupe*, SHD 16 Yc 442.
14. Information on literacy among officers in other formerly foreign units prior to the decree of 27 Pluviôse Year II is available in Paris, Archives nationales (hereafter AN) AF/II/372 3012 (on the 98th Regiment, which until 1791 was the German Regiment of Bouillon) and AN AF/II/371 3002 (on the first battalion of the 53rd Regiment, formerly the Regiment of Alsace, which despite its name was designated as a foreign German regiment).
15. SHD Xi 20. According to a roster in this box describing literacy skills among the 53rd Regiment's officers, 'La majeure partie des militaires compris au present Etats n'a appris ce quelle sait, que depuis son séjour à Cayenne et notamment depuis la

promulgation du Décret du 27 Pluviose an 2' ('The majority of the soldiers listed on this roster have acquired their skills only since their deployment to Cayenne and in particular since the publication of the decree of 27 Pluviôse Year II'). The roster is dated 2 Messidor Year VI (20 June 1798).

16. On literacy rates within these two units, see respectively AN AF/II/371, dossier 3001, and AN AF/II/372, dossier 3012.
17. Common tasks required of officers included, for example, maintaining records on the personnel serving under them, corresponding with other officers and civilian authorities and balancing the regimental account books. Under the Old Regime and into the first years of the Revolution, the foreign regiments were provided with templates of administrative documents printed in the languages of their units, but this ceased to be the case after the abolition of the foreign corps. For examples of these templates, see the review of the German Regiment of Salm-Salm, SHD Xb 76.
18. Printed pamphlet on the Germanic Legion, SHD Xk 3. Other German officers serving in the legion issued similar complaints; cf. AN AF/II/16 dossier 13, item 15, in which the officer Frédéric de Haindel lamented that French officers had been dispatched to the corps 'to command men whose language they do not understand' ('comander des homes dont ils nentendoint pas le langage').
19. Inspection report of 30 Thermidor Year XIII (18 August 1808), SHD Xh 2a.
20. Napoleon issued instructions for the printing of this decree and its circulation along France's frontiers in a letter of 10 April 1815 to the Minister of War, SHD Xh 7.
21. Letter of 10 July 1809, SHD Xh 9.
22. Letter of 17 August 1809, SHD Xh 9.
23. A roster dated 13 September 1810 (SHD Xl 13) recorded the linguistic abilities of officers in the 7th Regiment.
24. The Irish soldiers Leslie and Howard described their transfer from the Army of Italy to forces serving in Holland, and the importance of their linguistic skills to the French war effort, in letters of 22 Thermidor Year VIII (10 August 1800) and 28 Fructidor Year IX (15 September 1801), SHD Xk 21.
25. Letter from General Meyer to the Minister of War, 9 Floréal Year IX (29 April 1801), SHD Xl 33.

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2

'Amidst Clamour and Confusion': Civilian and Military Linguists at War in the Franco-Irish Campaigns against Britain (1792–1804)

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The two following references to the pragmatic role of linguists in war were both made by Irishmen involved, willingly or not and embracing opposite sides, in the strategic and military partnership against Britain that was first forged between Revolutionary France and Irish separatists in 1796 and triggered the ill-fated Rebellion of 1798.

> The enemy marched directly into my courtyard . . . and demanded to see *M. l'Évêque*. I appeared, and have had full employment ever since as an interpreter . . . (Stock 1799: 4)

> as to rank . . . I could be of use . . . in the family of the *général en chef* . . . speaking a little French, to interpret between him and the natives. (Tone 2001: 142)

The two individuals who uttered them match the prototypes of bilinguals acting as translators and interpreters in settings of conflict, who emerged from history when identified by pioneering researchers.[1] The first was a Francophone Irish civilian who became trapped in the role of linguistic intermediary when a small French expeditionary force landed in a remote spot of County Mayo and requisitioned his home during a month-long occupation; as he was also a priest, his experience of and sensitivity to mediation and conciliation would fuse with the interpreting function. The second was a revolutionary and exile who went to France on a clandestine mission, convinced the political and military decision-makers to include Ireland in their war strategy against Britain and was recruited into the French army to serve in the ensuing campaign. Trained as a lawyer, he would combine several skills and become a highly effective staff officer, though at first he had feared his lack of military experience would diminish

his usefulness. However, even with what he perceived as only a basic command of French, he had identified this imbalanced bilingualism as a potential pragmatic asset. Both these men have enriched our insights into the past practices of *ad hoc* translators and interpreters because they kept insightful diaries of their experience of conflict, in which the question of both written and oral cross-linguistic communication *and* their personal agency in facilitating it are recurrent (if not dominant) features (Stock 1799, 1800; Tone 2001). Both texts are widely recognized as essential primary sources for the historiography of this period, due to the richness of their observations and the prominence of their respective roles: the first the Anglican Bishop of Killalla, Joseph Stock, the second in fact the iconic hero of Irish nationalism, Theobald Wolfe Tone. However, as in numerous other cases, their agency as linguistic mediators facilitating communication across language barriers, and the agency of more obscure individuals, has long been overlooked.[2]

This fraternal coalition led to several French attempts to invade Ireland not only to harass the common British enemy but also to support a rebellion which would bring about Irish independence. The disastrous failure of the substantial French fleet, commanded by the iconic son of the Revolution, General Hoche, to land at Bantry Bay in December 1796 remains one of the greatest 'what-ifs' of European military history. 1798 was to become 'the Year of the French' in Irish folkloric memory, when no less than three expeditionary forces attempted landings. That of General Humbert succeeded on 22 August and led to the month-long occupation of County Mayo which inevitably brought foreign soldiers and native civilians together. This defining moment in Irish history, when the nationalist impulse became rooted in an international context, has been amply discussed in both academic histories and popularized narratives of Ireland. One romanticized (and unashamedly biased) account of Ireland's French moment exaggerated the political role of 'official' interpreters serving the liberator (Hayes 1937: 8, 30).

Generally, though the command of troops from varying cultural backgrounds has always been a reality of military life, linguists have until recently been a 'missing dimension' (Footitt 2010a: 1) of the study of conflict. This weakness has underestimated their agency in terms of communications, logistics and propaganda and has overlooked traces of their practices in contemporary sources. From a commander's perspective, the 'instrumentality of men speaking the same language' had been identified by Colonel William Tate, an exiled American serving under Hoche in 1796–7; pragmatically, he had noted that the availability of men sharing a common language was a convenience 'in warlike operations'.[3] This study will examine compelling micro-historical evidence scattered through the abundant archival material to have survived on Franco-Irish contacts in the 1790s, which highlights the often ambiguous role of linguists as facilitators of communication. Whether officially recognized as translators or not, these famous or obscure actors in history were keenly aware of their own 'instrumentality'.

'In the service of two masters':[4] Irish civilian translators in Revolutionary France, *c.*1793–6

Theobald Wolfe Tone, the most influential of Irish agitators, travelled clandestinely to Paris in February 1796 and there undertook a sustained lobbying mission; it resulted in the French launch of a substantial naval expedition to Ireland in December. The renewal of war between Britain and France in 1793 had dramatically shifted the strategy of Irish radicals towards revolution, but they knew that a rebellion (with legislative independence as its political goal) could only succeed with France's military support. Though Tone arrived at a propitious time, when Anglophobia had been rekindled and was shaping the French Directory's war strategy, he would have to mobilize all his intellectual resources to convince political and military decision-makers of the feasibility of such a fraternal coalition against Britain. Relentlessly, he campaigned and petitioned during endless interviews and protracted negotiations, in which it is self-evident that measures to overcome language barriers became central to the process.

Tone kept a very detailed (and at times romanticized) diary which minutely deconstructs various acts of communication and from which two relevant issues emerge (Tone 2001, 2007). Firstly, he repeatedly agonized about how his weak level of French was frustrating his lobbying, leading him to make numerous insightful observations on bilingualism and translation which are discussed in the next section. Secondly, Tone identified Nicholas Madgett (1740?–1813)[5] and his nephew John Sullivan (1767?–1801?),[6] two exiled Irishmen employed by the government as translators and assigned to prepare his lobbying memoranda. Not only does he describe the process of liaising with them, initially expressing resentment at his reliance on them but then acknowledging the quality of their work, but he also describes various documents they all worked on which are easily traced in the relevant archives.[7] Unusually for the work of government employees, many of these are signed, and they not only corroborate Tone's account but contradict the standard neutrality of the translator and here their activity as linguists in France's support of the Irish cause.

Delacroix, Minister for External Relations in 1796, had immediately advised Tone to go to Madgett, 'a gentleman [who] spoke both languages perfectly and was confidential', and explain himself without reserve (Tone 2001: 56). Tone later described Madgett's overlapping functions as the minister's bilingual confidante, but also head of a 'Bureau de Traduction' within the ministry. There is scattered but sufficient information on this bureau to reconstruct a profile (Masson 1877: 354, 366, 388). Madgett and Sullivan were useful as government translators *and* cultural informants on machinations in the host country. They were genuinely supportive of Tone's mission but were also free – or indeed expected to – actively engage in political agitation through their language skills.

From Tone's subjective observations on Madgett, there emerges a slightly dubious portrayal of the sempiternal translator-cum-fixer:

> Finished my second memorial on the present state of Ireland for the French government and delivered it to Madgett for translation. [He] has the slowness of age and at present the gout. Judge oh ye gods how that suits with my impatience . . . Madgett has not yet finished the translation. Hell, Hell! He has lost two or three days in hunting for maps of Ireland, and would have been much better employed in translating. His slowness provokes me excessively but I keep it all to myself . . . he is always hunting for maps and then he thinks he is making revolutions . . . (Tone 2001: 97, 121)

Madgett and Sullivan's role was, however, never confined to translation, and Tone's (ultimately successful) interaction with them can only be understood once their careers *prior* to 1796 have been discussed. Their experience must be seen in the broader context of the expectations of their employers which included, among other things, mustering and mastering intelligence-gathering and spy networks on British soil and special missions among British prisoners of war in France. Translations and personal papers outlining Madgett and Sullivan's skill-set supplement the scholarship on purposeful translation as a form of interaction, by which 'translators quite regularly do much more than translate texts' (Nord: 1997: 17–20). They also reveal *their own* perceptions of their agency during one of the most turbulent times of modern history, the middle years of the French Revolution and the excesses of the Terror (1793–4).

Madgett's name surfaces relatively often for about a decade in French archives (1793–1803), almost always in the context of Anglo-Irish affairs and frequently, but not exclusively, as a translator.[8] Irish-born but a long-term exile in France, Madgett had been awarded a doctorate in theology in Toulouse. He was thus a multilingual who had inevitably practised translation for scholarly purposes, and he was not the first or last priest to become a linguist due to circumstances. The first trace of political activity places him at the heart of the expatriate community of English, Scottish and Irish radicals in Paris, at a special banquet to celebrate the Rights of Man and the progress of the Revolution (November 1792).[9] The influential English pamphleteer Tom Paine, by then an honorary French citizen, had been a key participant. Despite his active involvement in parliamentary politics, Paine remained a monoglot and so continuously reliant on linguistic mediators, including Madgett with whom links have been traced as late as 1803 (Keane 1995: 482).[10] Madgett may have worked briefly in journalism, which was then a widespread political activity ensuring the dissemination of new ideologies but also one which would develop fluency in composition. Precise details of how he was recruited as a translator are not known, but

his name appears in correspondence with Lebrun, then Minister for External Relations, from February 1793 onwards.[11] Sullivan later described himself and his uncle as having formed the initial core of a translation bureau when it was established in 1793 in the Department of Marine Affairs; it is likely that they had been asked to identify a useful skill during the enforced labour requisitions of that year (Rapport 2000: 194).

While it is safe to assume that as Anglophone translators they had performed routine desk tasks linked to trade and commerce, our insights into the functional use of foreign languages in war are sharper. From 1793 onwards, Madgett and Sullivan were both expected to select and translate extracts from the British press displaying official or popular opinion on events in France. One effort of Sullivan's reads more like a memorandum in which he gives free run to the Anglophobia his paymasters expected from him: 'Nothing could be more silly and nasty [bête et méchant] than the monstrous absurdities with which *The Times* "Les tems" [*sic*] is full of thanks to the bribery of Pitt and his agents.'[12] To officialize the faithfulness of translations, several of the samples we have from Madgett and Sullivan end with the standard phrase 'Conforme à l'original' accompanied by their signature, and Sullivan also signed his invective against the *Times* with his surname. It is not uncommon for the translator to become an anonymous link in cross-linguistic communication, but here their identity reinforced the accountability of the work they submitted. Clearly they were also satisfying the expectations of their target audience by employing the official ideological rhetoric, but they seem to have genuinely subscribed to Jacobin dogma. This also made it possible for them to later agitate for the cause of Irish independence, partially through translation, an activity 'neither transparent nor innocent' (Footitt 2010a: 271).

Madgett's earliest documented exchange with Lebrun (not only a former priest, but one trained in an Irish-run seminary) highlighted the importance of countering British governmental efforts to prevent the spread of the French 'epidemic' (that is, republican fervour). In Paris, Madgett could suggest names of British expatriates 'who had demonstrated their civic qualities' and could protect the capital from English spies.[13] He then proposed that the Ministry of War sanction the dispatch abroad of Irish patriots known to him in France, who could 'spread the principles of liberty and equality' in contributions to the press and thus enlighten English and Irish public opinion. This entailed translating existing French texts, composing new ones in English, and then, in a 'field' phase, proselytizing in political clubs and gatherings. Madgett also seems to have had direct dealings with the redoubtable Committee of Public Safety, as confirmed in a list he addressed to Robespierre as 'in charge of the Translation Bureau' ('chargé du Bureau des traductions'), requesting finance for key polemical texts he suggested would do 'the greatest good' when circulated to an English public.[14] The tone implies he was free to air his views, and he proposed a Paris-based

print shop run by exiles who used English typeface, which would make 'George and Pitt tremble' as they would think these seditious reprints of banned or French works had been produced under their noses. Within a few weeks of the outbreak of war, Madgett also proposed to Lebrun seditious forms of direct action targeting the enemy's combatants. He suggested that handbills be 'prepared' for distribution among English seamen, reminding the Minister that a substantial proportion of them were Irish.[15]

In 1796, the bureau was due to be downsized or closed, and (conveniently for our purposes) Sullivan petitioned Delacroix to be kept on. Passionately, he summarized the patriotic services he had rendered to the Revolution since the bureau's creation. Firstly, he had been dispatched to Brittany by the Bureau in 1793, there charged with 'a special mission among the prisoners of war.'[16] One may presume this was to facilitate interrogations, because that same year a decree[17] had stipulated the appointment of interpreters for any depot holding foreign prisoners of war, within the framework of regulated Franco-British prisoner exchanges.[18] Had Sullivan been required to take an oath similar to the one proposed for court interpreters (aged at least twenty-five), by which they promised to translate 'faithfully and following their conscience'?[19]

Sullivan does not refer to himself as an interpreter. However, a prominent Irish radical who had fled jail in Dublin only to be locked up again in Brittany, Archibald Hamilton Rowan, did. Appreciative of Sullivan's agency in negotiating his release, he described him as an 'interpreter for prisoners of war for the 13th Division', an official title corroborated by another administrative reference relating to Sullivan's pay.[20] To his minister, however, Sullivan stressed other functions and made the purpose of his mission obvious when highlighting its success. At Dinan, no less than 200 prisoners had 'offered' to serve in the Republic's navy, due to his 'zeal in preaching the principles of our revolution to the prisoners of war . . . and contempt and horror for King George and his ministers'.[21] This task of political persuasion could only be performed effectively by linguistic skill. Though Sullivan is silent as to whether coercion was involved in such 'missions', Tone was not, as will be seen.

Sullivan also boasted of his written efforts in war propaganda. He had helped smuggle 'patriotic tracts' into England, some of which he had 'worked on himself' (in other words, simply composed in English, recycling the standard French rhetoric), thus corroborating that Madgett's plans outlined above had been carried out. Sullivan also contributed to the plan for an invasion of Ireland by 'writing up in French' the memorials addressed to the Committee of Public Safety by Rowan, in other words, by simply translating. We know that Madgett too was actively involved in such recruiting missions, an initial source of irritation for the newly-arrived (and militarily naive) Tone. In a note to Delacroix, Madgett had suggested his (experienced) nephew as ideal 'to go *endoctrinate* the Irish seamen', that is, among the

British POWs held in French Atlantic ports.[22] Sullivan's brief testimony also helps us reconstruct what Tone referred to as 'Madgett's scheme', delaying translations, when he set off 'on a pilgrimage to root out the Irish prisoners of war . . . and to propagate the faith among the Irish soldiers and seamen'.[23] The language of Jacobin proselytizing was not merely the result of Tone's sarcasm, and implies a coercive dimension, again facilitated through fluency of language.

Theobald Wolfe Tone: iconic nationalist hero as linguist at war

Having to communicate credibly in French to achieve his goal, Tone depicted himself in his diary as a struggling foreigner. This self-dramatization was embellished with relevant literary citations: 'Damn it rot it, and sin it for me, that I cannot speak French! . . . "Oh, that I had given that time to the tongues that I have spent in fencing and bear baiting"' (Tone 2001: 43; Shakespeare *Twelfth Night* I, iii). Generations of empathetic readers were thus convinced that, despite this human failing, their hero had succeeded against all odds and persuaded the French to assist Ireland. Romanticized, a pillar of his posthumous legend, Tone's presumed ignorance of French was eventually questioned and investigated to better understand the pragmatics of communication in war (Kleinman 2004; 2009: 175–9). His repeated references to cross-linguistic communication, related to his own performance or the evident need for such activity which a joint Franco-Irish expedition implied, are worthy of scrutiny. These personal anecdotes are not only useful historical evidence of communicative behaviour but even reflect applied linguistic perspectives developed in the twentieth century relevant to translation.

Tone, pragmatically, distinguished between the four language skills later covered by STANAG 6001, the NATO benchmark for assessing language skills. Though it may seem anachronistic to do so, applying the STANAG 6001 level descriptors (*Campaign* 2004) helps assess how operationally effective he truly was. Oral communication is the most problematic of skills for psycholinguistic reasons, and Tone (an experienced barrister) was acutely aware that the art of persuasion 'presupposes a common language' (Palmer 2001: 49). He described as follows his very first contact (August 1795) with Adet, the French envoy to Philadelphia: 'He spoke English very imperfectly, and I French a great deal worse; however, we made a *shift* to understand one another' (Tone 2001: 337, author's emphasis). Using the term 'shift' as any layman would simply describes the reflex of adapting one's speech to make it comprehensible to a non-native speaker, though this often implies a dilution or loss of the original meaning. That the French Republic had dispatched a plenipotentiary to America with a weak command of spoken English seems questionable. Adet, a scientist by training, had not only published several translations, but even one by an Irishman Tone knew

(Kirwan 1789). However, even on foreign soil, diplomatic protocol dictated that Adet was at liberty to impose French as the language of that exchange. Once in Paris, Tone was guided by the American ambassador, Monroe, as to which French officials would be amenable to his pleas and *also* spoke English. The diplomat had received orders from his paymasters recommending he stick to his native tongue and reiterating the usual doubts about the reliability of interpreters.[24] As luck would have it, the Directory's military section was headed by General Henri Clarke, the French-born son of an Irish exile, who spoke English fluently. Tone had regular dealings with him, and though they conversed and corresponded[25] in English, Clarke could also relay their dealings to his superiors. Tone further exaggerated his case in a reply to no less than Napoleon who, during their first interview (December 1797), had asked where he had learned French: 'to which I replied that I had learned *the little* that I knew since my arrival in France, about twenty months ago' (Tone 2001: 185, author's emphasis). Having by that stage become a fully functional staff officer in the French army, his claims clearly had no foundation.

Quickly admitted to private interviews with high-ranking officials, Tone had been justifiably anxious about his oral performance. His account of his first (favourable) audience with the great Carnot (Director for War) in the Luxembourg Palace is one of the most cherished episodes of his life in Irish folkloric memory. Wily, Tone claims he 'began the discourse by saying, in horrible French, that I had been informed he spoke English', and then casually contradicted previous statements in noting Carnot's reply: 'A little, Sir, but I perceive *you* speak French, and if you please we will converse in that language' (Tone 2001: 76, author's emphasis). The ensuing conversation as related in Tone's diary covers two pages and reads as a perfectly coherent exchange, each speaker responding promptly in regular turns of conversation. Similar entries recording equally productive conversations with Delacroix further expose Tone's posing and his humouring of the more powerful interlocutor, as when he apologized for his 'execrable French' and begged to be interrupted if he was not clear (Tone 2001: 83). Internal French memos never allude to Tone's incapacity to convey meanings in French, potentially leading to misunderstandings, and Carnot even commented that the Directory intended making good use of 'this quick-witted Irishman' ('cet Irlandois qui a beaucoup d'esprit').[26] Even if struggling with pre-articulatory planning in English, we may speculate that his speaking ability was at minimum Level 3 of the STANAG rating.

Tone's first detailed letter to Delacroix had been written in English and translated by Sullivan (Tone 2001: 80–3).[27] The earliest trace of Tone's written French was a brief note which contains basic grammatical errors; clearly he had not asked his Irish contacts for help, but though this autonomous effort is a bit stilted, after Tone's three months in Paris it is perfectly comprehensible (Tone 2001: 181).[28] Since the French intended dispatching an agent

to Ireland to gather intelligence and update local revolutionaries on their plans, Tone had written instructions in English, but he then also copied Sullivan's French version[29] (for internal records); though a passive exercise, rewriting his own words in the target language could only have been fruitful. He also copied Madgett's French translation of two major memorials on Ireland that Delacroix had requested. Though irritated by his translator-cum-fixer (whose role was also to advise decision-makers) and his slow work pace, he appears to have been satisfied with them. He evidently *had* learned French in Ireland and the passive skill of reading was probably his strongest, equivalent for instance to STANAG Level 3 ('can read all styles and forms of the written language used for professional purposes'). The bungling stranger had within a fortnight of his arrival purchased a copy of the French Constitution, hardly leisurely reading for a beginner, although a logical choice for a revolutionary lawyer containing familiar 'professional–specialist material' (STANAG Level 4).

Conversing is always the most problematic of skills, and even if Tone had learned French with native tutors in Ireland this would not have prepared him for rapid exchanges in colloquial French, which was still mixed in 1796 with regional dialects which made routine host–tourist encounters more difficult for a foreigner. Typically for the age, Tone attended the theatre nightly, and seems to have easily followed the plots, assisted by the visual–auditory inputs of character play and stage action. Adults often learn effectively in naturalistic settings and *through* communication in purposeful exchanges, and his self-deprecations become far less frequent as the lobbying progressed and his agency was recognized. Apart from his evident motivation, Tone had a highly developed memory due to years of practising oratory without notes, a pillar of both the educational practices of his age and his profession. If twentieth-century training models defined listening for understanding as a fundamental skill for interpreters, this would have been as relevant to college debating and the readiness to retort required in the courtroom. Thus we note that, in the account of one key meeting with Delacroix, Tone noted no less than forty verbs to signpost turns between the speakers, for instance, 'I *told* him, he *interrupted* me, I then *said*, . . . he *asked* me', and so on (Tone 2001: 83–6, author's emphasis). Interestingly, the English in these diary entries relating an intense conversation in French is never tainted by gallicisms, and Tone appeared to be managing his growing bilingualism efficiently. While this evidence of genuine foreign-language performance may appear to be only angst-ridden self-perceptions, it is in fact revealing of Tone's goal to 'use the language with great precision, accuracy, and fluency for all professional purposes' (STANAG Level 4, Speaking). Somewhat astonishingly, Tone came to see his bilingualism as his most valuable skill when assured he would be offered a commission in the French army.

When the logistics of deploying the expeditionary force to Ireland could finally be discussed, Clarke and Tone mused about which renowned French

general would be the ideal commander. Clarke 'said it would be absolutely necessary the general *en chef* should speak English', but Tone replied 'it would undoubtedly be convenient, but not absolutely necessary' (Tone 2001: 205–6). He had given the issue some thought, and probably discussed it with Madgett; when Clarke raised the issue of his own rank, though admitting he had no prior military experience, he suggested that he could be useful in a strategic communicative role:

> As to rank . . . I should wish to be in the family [in the staff] of the *général en chef* . . . speaking a little French, to interpret between him and the natives. (Tone 2001: 142)

The French intended landing in a remote spot of Ireland, where Irish was still widely spoken. Tone never used Irish, nor gave any indication that he knew it, though it is likely he had some basic understanding of it. Even before leaving France, he could also have been useful as an Anglophone to command a corps of released Irish prisoners attached to the French force. With time, his naive dismissal of Madgett's recruitment drives among the British POWs had matured into pragmatic approval. He thought they could be useful as scouts, but clearly saw their front-line role as a communicative one, 'to serve with the advanced guard of the army not only as soldiers . . . but as *éclaireurs* to insense [inform] the country people' (Tone 2001: 210). In June, the Directory nominated General Lazare Hoche as commander, and specified they would send him 'some English-speaking officers who could be employed advantageously in this expedition.'[30] Diary entries make clear that Hoche's exchanges with Tone were in French, and, though it is not verbalized in relevant French documents, it was probably anticipated that Tone could also when required act as a liaison officer. Several Irish officers (exiled or second-generation) served under Hoche, and, though their linguistic liaison role is implicit, it would not be till the later 1798 expedition that we find evidence of a formal commission as an interpreter (for Henry O Keane, see below).

By November, Tone was stationed in the naval port of Brest and serving as a staff officer. He relates one revealing incident, when Hoche needed him to 'assist' with the interview of a captured American captain claiming intelligence of unrest in Ireland. As Tone is not specific, we can only speculate that he (combining linguistic skill with professional experience) questioned the witness in English and relayed replies in French to Hoche and the others present. He found the man was not trustworthy, prevaricated, and as he spoke in a broad Scottish accent was no American. The French officers present, even if they *understood* English and could observe body language, may not have been able to 'recognize' such subtle linguistic 'nuances of meaning and irony' (STANAG Level 4, Listening) the way a native Anglophone with advance listening skills could. Then, by Hoche's orders, Tone duly emulated

Madgett's 'scheme' and himself went to the Breton depot of Pontanezen to 'offer liberty' to British POWs willing to serve France's fleet (Tone 2001: 371). Sixty accepted, of whom fifty were Irish, the destination of their sailing unknown. He had no qualms about making them 'drink heartily' before leaving the prison, and he seemed proud that they hoped *he* would be going with them. By entrusting this subversive role to an Anglophone, the French had allowed Tone to discover certain leadership qualities.

Ideological propaganda as a pillar of the French Revolution's domestic success, and its use in France's expansion through liberation and conquest, has been well documented. However, the agency of translators vital to the dissemination of republicanism abroad has remained hidden from history. No less than eight addresses and proclamations of a tactical or strategic nature were prepared by Tone and French associates to be distributed immediately after the landing. Though they targeted Anglophones, they were either written in French and translated or written directly in English with French versions prepared for internal records; Clarke was involved, as was his uncle, Colonel Shee, another second-generation Irishman. Most of this bilingual corpus has survived.[31] As stated above, English was the only target language used in these strategic documents, though in situ their content may have been relayed orally in Irish. Many studies of psychological warfare, while recognizing that forms of propaganda have existed since the dawn of time, stress that its practice was defined in the early twentieth-century and give prominence to the Allied innovation of 'sykewar' in 1944, so crucial to countering the Nazi model (Lerner 1971: 1–9). Yet the Franco-Irish alliance of the 1790s provides a wealth of historical insights on how language requirements were addressed, even in an *ad hoc* manner, to ensure the circulation of ideology abroad and also how forms of psychological coercion were practised by bilinguals. Indeed, the definitions of propaganda provided in the Allied 'Sykewar Charter' commissioned by Eisenhower are easily applicable to these Franco-Irish texts.[32] Thus the key item of 'consolidation propaganda' devised for the civilian population of Ireland, to ensure what the Allied Charter would later describe as 'friendly cooperation . . . essential services . . . and opinion favourable to the war' (Lerner 1971: 347), was the *Proclamation to the People of Ireland* (Tone 2001: 196–8). On behalf of the French commander, it outlined the political mission of the expedition (to liberate and not conquer) and fulfilled a hearts and minds mission by promising to respect persons, property and religion; the *de rigueur* demonization of the English enemy is here relatively mild, featuring typical accusations of avarice, tyranny and despotism. Tone had been working on it for months at Delacroix's request; initially he felt challenged at 'writing [in English] in the character of a French general . . . the French loved metaphors' and he preferred his language 'plain as a pikestaff' (Tone 2001: 125). Echoing the translator's dilemma of appropriating the voice of another and experiencing the standard problems of French to English transfer, he had

also, like Madgett and Sullivan before him, become 'highly important to the political purposes of the regime, not least its expansionist policies', in the words of Franz Pöchhacker's commentary on interpreters in Nazi Germany (Pöchhacker 2006). Other texts akin to 'combat propaganda' were more subtly subversive, and some exhorted the Irish militia (most of the rank and file being Catholics) and the Irish in the British Navy to desert (Tone 2001: 392–6; 420–2).[33]

Studies on total war stress how, during this transformative period in the history of belligerence, French nationalist zeal legitimized a new type of ideological conflict, mobilizing civilian masses to destroy a demonized enemy and often employing dirty guerrilla tactics. When the Revolution spilled over France's borders, its armies became, according to one exaggerated study, rapacious hordes 'gratuitously' terrorizing civilians, 'burning what they could not loot' (Blanning 2002: 131–2). The scholarship has overlooked this Irish chapter and how translation became vital to French plans for deployment. When Hoche planned a commando raid as a distraction to the Irish expedition, he appointed the Anglophone Tate to lead his 'banditti' to destroy Bristol and spread the mayhem and horrors of war to the Welsh coast. Landing near Fishguard in February 1797, Tate was quickly forced to surrender, upon which the authorities seized his written instructions, in English. These were printed to publicize the 'abhorrent intentions' of French warfare to disunite and thus destroy 'all ranks of [British] society' (*Authentic Copies* 1797: p.v.) and were appended to a Commons Report which had investigated the treatment of British POWs in France (Committee of the House of Commons 1798). No copy of Hoche's French version has been located, but it was Tone who had been assigned the task of translation, and his clear discursive style is recognizable in the transposed expression of Hoche's Anglophobic tactics. Tone's diary yields clear insights on the moral dilemma triggered by the effort of semantic transposition: 'I transcribed with the greatest *sang froid* the orders to reduce to ashes the third city [Bristol] in the British dominions' (Tone 2001: 399), and thus to 'strike terror and amazement into the very heart of the capital of England'.[34] Focusing on what would later comprise that fundamental definition of total war, which blurred the divide between combatant and non-combatant, Tone was painfully conscious of 'what misery the execution of the orders' he had 'transcribed and assisted in framing' would have on innocent civilians, reducing thousands of families to beggary (Tone 2001: 399).

The proselytizing activities of our Irish linguists were corroborated when some of Tate's men (English or Irish, and former prisoners in France) had been interrogated and satisfied the English authorities that in France, 'all efforts [had been used] to inveigle them . . . and advantage was taken of them when in a state of intoxication'.[35] The Pontanezen depot was mentioned, but not that it had been native Anglophones, or specifically Irishmen, who had 'debauched [them] into the scheme'.

At times resentful of Irishmen who had been in France longer than him – and so had become more acculturated – Tone was particularly scathing of his younger adjutant, Captain Bernard MacSheehy, who had been at the 1792 banquet with Madgett. Personality clashes aside, Tone probably simply envied MacSheehy's prior experience as a linguist at war. Arrested during the Terror and probably released on the proviso he serve some function, the twenty-year old MacSheehy had been appointed to serve as a *secrétaire-interprète* to a General Félix for a (later aborted) expedition to the West Indies.[36] Apart from O Keane's commission mentioned below, this is the only documented reference to a linguistic role being appended to a military one for this period. As an agent for Hoche in 1796, MacSheehy had travelled to Ireland to gather intelligence and on his return compiled a detailed report in perfect, eloquent French. A later appointment to command Napoleon's Irish Legion exposed his poor leadership skills; however, he was pro-active in terms of devising for his men, as *bilingual* soldiers,[37] a prototype of 'foreign-language . . . operational training [using] cultural material closely related to anticipated work in the field' (Footitt 2010b: 118).

The Legion's muster roles actually specified the communicative competence in French of the Irish recruits, and distinguished between the four skills, for instance: 'speaks no French, writes it a little; . . . Speaks and writes passable French.'[38] MacSheehy had his officers translate their regulations and manuals into English (which he recommended be published[39]), and the Irishmen among them copied the same in French; French recruits were given English lessons. His own prior experience had led him to harness the additional potential of his men as linguists and develop it with appropriate training. If Napoleon never did succeed in invading Britain, this does not diminish the importance of him having decreed the formation of a company of Anglophone 'guides-interprètes' or interpreter-guides.[40] Though this corps was never deployed, its very existence signals an increasing push towards regularization. Article 3 stipulated that potential recruits had to have topographical knowledge of England, know English but *also* be able to translate it (*Arrêté*: 1803). The Irish in France were the only 'national' group singled out in the decree as encouraged to enlist and its commander, a Captain Fleury, had been Clarke's aide-de-camp in 1796 and met Tone.

'Amidst clamour and confusion': languages at war during the French occupation of Ireland (September–October 1798), and their civilian and military mediators

As commander of one of the three expeditions to sail to Ireland in 1798, General Humbert had anticipated the need for liaison officers. He had sailed under Hoche in 1796, heading a free corps intended for guerrilla raids which included some released Irish POWs, and so had experienced a multilingual

campaign. His request in 1798 that 'individuals speaking the language of the country report to Brest' is noteworthy, as the authorities in Paris had not pre-empted the need.[41] Four Irishmen presented themselves and were recruited to the rank of captain, and of these it is not surprising that the multi-skilled (and ideologically-driven) John Sullivan was appointed as Humbert's aide-de-camp. The order is ambiguous as to whether English or Irish was the native language in question, though a knowledge of the latter to glean information from, but also credibly engage with, local informants would be a self-evident bonus. Of the other three, one Henry O Keane was by coincidence a native of the precise spot where Humbert landed and was evidently useful as a local guide. However Stock's observation that 'being also expert in Irish as well as French, he was able to render considerable service to his cause . . . to be of great service as an interpreter' is welcome (Stock 1799: 25; 1800: 72). O Keane is also the only one for whom there are traces of a specific enlistment as an *interpreter*.[42] Tone's brother Mathew also served under Humbert, and like his brother probably knew little Irish; when captured, in a futile attempt to minimize his republican fervour, he stated it was only his 'knowledge of *two* languages [which] did induce those who planned the expedition to require my cooperation', by which he meant English and French.[43] The fourth, Teeling, was a northern Catholic who had received an enlightened education and was probably trilingual.

Stock instinctively contrasted his own 'instrumentality' as a language mediator for the good of the community to that of others induced by political motives, and in so doing left vital traces of communicative activities usually hidden from history, if implied or presumed. The invasion began with his eldest son being taken prisoner because, according to the father, 'the French wanted him for an interpreter' (Stock 1799: 4). It is more likely the lad was deemed useful as a local guide but especially as a hostage, being the son of the foremost local civilian, since the invaders had brought their own bilingual officers to serve that purpose. After seizing Killalla, the French interrogated a local yeomanry officer, and their 'queries were interpreted by some Irish officers who came with the French' (Stock 1800: 11). Despite his own unwavering loyalist politics, Stock spoke well of O Keane, possibly empathizing with the fact that he was a former priest forced into soldiering because of the Revolution. In observing that during the occupation some local priests became 'useful interpreters, most of them (from their foreign education) being able to speak a little French' (Stock 1800: 97), Stock had highlighted the obvious paradox of penal legislation which forced Catholics to seek seminary training abroad but exposed them to revolutionary politics (until 1794), in yet another example of priests becoming linguists in situations of conflict. Stock noted that, from the moment Humbert requested to meet him, he too had been employed 'ever since as an interpreter' (Stock 1799: 5). In this complex role, the bishop had to balance multiple allegiances and interrelations, and he had to entertain strategic

relations of trust while maintaining a front of neutrality even if appropriating the words of the invading enemy.

As in many occupations, the arrival of an external enemy aggravated pre-existing local tensions, and the initial binary clash between invader and invaded (French republican plus Irish rebel allies versus anti-Rebellion loyalists) broadened in a paradoxical way. The region had been generally quiet until the invasion, and the French military mission was hampered by the absence of organized cells of trained revolutionaries to rally to them. Instead, many peasants who flocked to them engaged in indiscriminate plunder which was deliberately sectarian and targeted wealthier Protestants. Under the laws of war, the occupiers were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in their zone, and so the French officers – ordered to strictly enforce the respect of persons and property and to punish marauders – duly policed the district and even armed local Protestants and Catholics opposed to their presence. The supposed allies of the French opposed this with intimidating behaviour, and in this tense and complex setting Stock's agency was pivotal. It was also greatly facilitated by the complicity which developed between himself and Charost, the French commandant left behind by Humbert, who delegated some responsibility to the bishop-cum-fixer and even consulted him privately on his management of peacekeeping (including the secret burial of nearly three hundred barrels of gunpowder). Exhausted but now imbued with a sense of mission (and hampered by his ignorance of Irish though not stating it): 'The bishop laboured hard to pacify the malcontents, amidst darkness and clamour and the confusion of three languages . . . Willing to do his best, he interpreted . . . went from house to house in to the town' (Stock 1800: 52). It could even be argued that the French were happy to let Stock take on a role comparable to a Civil Affairs officer in the Second World War, the 'considerable cultural implications' of which have been highlighted by Footitt as the 'interface between the Allied Army and local civilians' (Footitt 2010b: 115).

Stock also verbalized the dilemma faced by many practitioners in having to appropriate the message of the original speaker, with which he evidently did not necessarily concur: 'Night and day I am busied as an interpreter, so as really to *think* in French, though not *as* a Frenchman' (Stock 1799: 13–14, emphasis original). At times, though, his efforts seemed futile: 'Yesterday was a day of sad confusion and of utter waste of my substance, attended with intolerable slavery in interpreting and striving to obey orders next to impossible to be executed' (Stock 1799: 8). When a mischievous rebel complained to Charost that as a 'friend of liberty' he was entitled to a firearm, he did so 'still by [through] the bishop, who made it a point to interpret faithfully, even where the matter of discourse made him shudder' (Stock 1800: 84). Stock stressed that Charost 'would not trust' the interpretation of local Catholic priests: 'if he wanted to know the truth, he waited till he could see the bishop' (Stock 1800: 97). Stock had published translations of classical

texts, and possibly this scholarly experience of the ethics of truthfulness had urged him to apply it to oral transfers of meaning, in parallel to his spiritual duty to maintain transparency in all human transactions.

Not needing a linguistic intermediary (and being lucky with such amenable invaders), Stock evidently became closer to the French than some of his counterparts. The narrative of a neighbouring pastor, Reverend Little, conveys much angst-ridden antipathy towards the French due to his abhorrence of their politics, but also to his ignorance of French, which increased the distance and exacerbated ideological differences. Indeed, as a Dubliner, Little even stressed that he could not really 'know' the people of the locality as he spoke no Irish, which was the 'common dialect here used among the peasantry' (Little 1941: 72). He confirmed that a proclamation in English had been immediately distributed, but was totally cynical as to the boundaries of the mission it stated. His demonization of the enemy yielded one insightful example when French officers forcefully requisitioned his neighbour's horses, but, having no English, found they could only 'negotiate' with him through Latin. Little obfuscated, they scolded him for prevaricating as a man of the cloth should *not*, to which he retorted that his schooling had emphasized written Latin and not oral skills. Little was particularly scathing (and thus observant) when describing how the French had brought with them 'associates . . . inhabitants of this kingdom . . . in order to assist them in the organizing (as they called it) i.e. the seduction and enlistment of the Irish [local peasants]' (Little 1941: 81–2). He not only named the four Irish officers (as above) but also specified that O Keane was 'actively employed in *haranguing* the people who resorted to the French camp . . . *persuading* the young and active to enlist' (Little 1941: 81–2, author's emphasis). This could only be done effectively through a common language, or in this case even two, English and Irish.

After the (short-lived) French victory at Castlebar, an Irish militia soldier taken prisoner also described how two Irish-born French officers were charged with organizing their wards and urging them to turn their coats (switch allegiance). He described how one 'Roche' launched into a rhetorical diatribe about their country's oppression and slavery to the English and how their French brethren had come to 'break the tyrannical yoke of England, and free them' (Hayes 1950–1: 280). The proselytizer was in fact Sullivan, who had adopted 'Laroche' as a *nom de guerre*: he has thus left a considerable archival footprint as a linguist at war, doing what *we* may conceive as much more than just soldiering.

Conclusion

> 'but such a thing is war!' (Tone 2001: 399)

With the exception of Bishop Stock, all of the linguists described above were 'instrumentalized to serve [the] dominant' (Pöchhacker 2006) ideology

of Revolutionary France, rhetorically packaged as the cause of liberty. This was at first simply a survival tactic, but then clearly and emphatically they worked 'within and for a particular ideology' in this case the cause of Irish independence. While they themselves highlight the instrumentality of their linguistic skills at a time when the role of military interpreter was not yet clearly defined, they certainly would have seen their function primarily as that of a soldier. And while the elusive and fascinating Madgett remained a civilian, his prior role as head of a ministerial translation bureau was notably not incompatible with him touring POW camps, to 'tamper with the Irish prisoners there'[44] and even form his own 'Legion' at Orléans in July 1798 as Humbert's expedition was getting under way (Hayes 1950–1: 142).

Scholarly interest in the role of language mediators as meaningful actors of history was initially confined to translation studies. However, recent shifts in war studies, prompted by the role of linguists being exposed through new types of war in the twenty-first century, has broadened interest in the self-evident need to address cultural communication gaps. Historians have usually 'cheerfully recorded the burden of parleys without wondering about the precise mechanics' of how they were conducted, despite the evidence left by practitioners themselves (Palmer 2003: 257). Yet this historical study has demonstrated that, even with such close languages as French and English and the political cultures they defined, monoglots were at a disadvantage and mediators were required. We have seen that, even among educated Enlightenment figures, Francophilia was not always synonymous with sufficient fluency in the language to get on. Embedded in the memoirs of an iconic figure of Irish nationalist history is an insightful case study of the pragmatic *instrumentality* of linguists in military campaigns.

The combined observations of Tone and Stock shed light on military linguists, and, though the profession was regulated by the time of the Second World War, the anecdotes of the 1790s do not seem all that distant from the *ad hoc* measures depicted in *Saving Private Ryan* to recruit field interpreters in Normandy. If the reluctant Corporal Upham protested that he only 'made maps' and translated written texts, Captain Miller simply insisted on his instrumentality as a bilingual soldier (Roday n.d.). And, if Tone were not so eminent a hero, would the agency of Madgett and Sullivan, supporting the definition of the 'cultural consultant . . . doing much more than just translating' (Nord 1997: 17), have ever come to light? By recruiting Irish exiles in Paris, at a time when their national identity increasingly distanced them from the English, Madgett had solved the sempiternal problem for governments of sourcing reliable agents with cultural and foreign-language competence. Though this 'paradoxically implied relying on people who generally had a history of close and sustained contact with that enemy's language and culture' (Footitt 2010a: 272), the Irish reversed the paradox by exploiting their mastery of English to survive, then serve, the French Revolution. Another bilingual Irish exile, William Duckett, had worked in Madgett's

circle, translating and initiating propaganda in English. Particularly active in the project to foment a mutiny among Irishmen serving in the British navy,[45] Duckett had asserted that written propaganda was the most formidable weapon one could wield at the enemy. He was confirming how the 'sykewar' of the revolutionary age – as in 1944–5 – was waged by the activity of linguists. If prompted, Madgett and Sullivan would no doubt not have seen any ethical incompatibility between their subversive, underhand recruiting among Anglophone POWs and, in other contexts, their translating truthfully and according to their conscience.

Though most chose the profession of soldiering simply to survive, at this time of politicized war the Irish serving in France's forces were clearly ideologically driven and acquiesced to the prevailing methods. If self-evident that the French occupation of Mayo would expose how 'foreign languages [were] integral to embodied communities in conflict' (Footitt 2010b: 111), Bishop Stock's account convincingly demonstrates how they were. He even provided crucial testimony that O Keane had exerted himself to defend civilians, and especially Protestants, from sectarian massacres. This was an influential role enforcing humanitarian boundaries and was far more effective because the message was communicated directly to locals in not one but two common languages.

The testimony of Bishop Stock is unique in studies of this kind. His bewildered neighbour, Reverend Little, had claimed that it would be impossible to remain neutral during the occupation, and Stock's second, reworked and romanticized narrative places great emphasis on 'the bishop's' agency as a linguistic mediator and appeaser for the good of the community. He also portrayed the French officers as friendly enemies, much to the dismay of loyalist readers, but it is evident that the absence of a communication barrier brought him closer to them, if not in a political way. Possibly privately relishing a 'military' role, it is probable that he found atonement for his enforced collaboration by fulfilling a pragmatic and highly useful role, which *he* ensured was not hidden from history.

Many of the texts on which Madgett, Sullivan and Tone had worked were most certainly intended to 'stimulate disorder' among soldiers and civilians and entice them to desert and rally to the invader (Lerner 1971: 326). That this demonstrated the 'intrinsically aggressive' nature of psychological warfare was fully felt by Tone when translating the order for Tate's raid (Lerner 1971: 335). The semantic deconstruction of meaning needed to transfer the French orders and select appropriate equivalents in English, for one so driven by the creative impulse of language, reinforced the implied horrors which the words conveyed. He recognized that the task of linguist, inseparable from that of the soldier and one he could not refuse his commander, had been dehumanizing: 'I do not think my morality, or feeling, is much improved by my promotion to the rank of adjudant general . . . but such a thing is war!' (Tone 2001: 399).

Notes

1. See, for instance, Bowen et al. 1995.
2. This paper draws on my doctoral thesis (Kleinman 2005). It is currently undergoing revision for publication under the working title: *The War in Words: Ireland in French Military Strategy 1792–1805: Translating, Persuading, Invading*.
3. Tate to General Clarke, Archives Nationales de France [AN] AF/III/186^{b}/858/62^{r}–3^{v}, 27 July 1796. The following abbreviations have been used in citing archival references: Archives diplomatiques, formerly Archives des Affaires étrangères Quai d'Orsay (AD); sub-series of AD, Correspondence politique Angleterre (CPA); Archives nationales de France (AN); Service historique de la Défense (SHD, Armée, Marine). All translations from French are the work of the present author unless stated.
4. This phrase is borrowed from Delisle and Woodsworth 1995: frontispiece.
5. AN/MC/I/733, Madgett's will, 13 April 1813.
6. As n. 7; SHD/Armée, 2Y^{e}, Sullivan's personal file.
7. See Tone's diary for February to July 1796. The key documents are in the French administrative, diplomatic and military archives (for instance, AN AF III, 186b, AD CPA 589, and SHD/Armée/11B^{1}, 11B^{2}, 17y^{d} 14 GP: Tone's personal file; SHD/Marine BB^{4}.
8. See personnel files for Madgett and Sullivan in AD/Pers.1, 47, 65; for traces of their activity as translators and Madgett's propaganda and intelligence role, see CPA/Vols 587–90.
9. AN/C, 241, f. 41^{r-v}, Address of British, Irish and Scottish patriots in Paris to the Convention nationale, 19 November 1792 [following White's Hotel banquet].
10. For instance, CPA/584, 150; 588, 12, in which Paine requests interpreters to assist him.
11. CPA/584, Madgett to Minister Lebrun, 13 March 1793; translation is not mentioned, but Madgett relays intelligence about British officials receiving a report of the November 1792 meeting of radicals, thus demonstrating he had contacts in London and was acting as an ad hoc advisor on Anglo-Irish affairs.
12. CPA/588, 179, 8 June 1794 (author's translation). The date is highly significant, as on 10 June the infamous law of 22 Prairial would instigate the Great Terror.
13. CPA/587, 20^{r}, Madgett to Lebrun, 13 March 1793.
14. AD/Pers.1, 47/85-6^{r}, 15 April 1794.
15. AD/CPA 587, 46, no date. Secret expenditure confirms that, on 26 April 1793, sums were allocated for the translation of placards addressed to the 'braves matelots anglois' ('brave English seamen'): AN AF II, 7.
16. AD/Pers.1, 65/58^{v}, Sullivan to Delacroix, 30 October 1795.
17. *Archives Parlementaires* 78:16, 29 October 1793.
18. The Cartel agreed and signed in London on 13 September 1798 (updating the 1780 one) was printed in bilingual format, and includes a 'table of corresponding ranks in the English and French service': SHD/Marine [SHD/M] FF^{1}/33/V1; also reprinted in *New Annual Register* 1799.
19. Collection générale des décrets rendus par l'AN 1789–1798, 159, 25 October 1795.
20. CPA/588, 280^{r}, Rowan to the Comité de Salut Public, 11 October 1794; Hamilton Rowan 1972 [1840]: 232; AN/AF II*226, 503, 'J. Sulivan [*sic*] En réquisition comme interprete [*sic*] des prisonniers de guerre pour la 13e division à Brest'. In

an earlier decree, he is described as needed to 'inspect papers on seized ships' in the ports, that is, to draw up reports in French on their content in English: AN/AF II, 230, Dubois-Crancé, 30 December 1794.

21. AD/Pers.1, 65/58^{v}, Sullivan to Delacroix, 30 October 1795, author's translation.
22. CPA/589, 182^{r}, Madgett to Delacroix, author's emphasis.
23. Tone 2001: 121 (for 22 March 1796), 124.
24. Such doubts were voiced, for instance, by Alexander Hamilton: 'No business of consequence should be carried on verbally or in writing but in your own language. The minister of each nation has a right to use his own national tongue, and few men can confide in their exactness when they do business in a foreign one . . . great care is necessary in the choice of interpreters, when they are resorted to' (Hamilton 1903: 8).
25. See AN/AF IV/1671, f.65^{r}–67^{r}, Tone to Clarke, 'Memorandum on the encouragement of *chouannerie* in Ireland, 4 April 1796'.
26. CPA/589, 260^{r}, Carnot to Delacroix, 28 May 1796.
27. CPA/589, 169–70, Tone to Delacroix, 26 February 1796.
28. AN/AF III, 369, f. 50, Tone to Delacroix 12 May 1796.
29. CPA 589, 270–271^{r}.
30. SHD/Armée, 11B^{1}, Directory to Hoche, 23 June 1796, author's translation.
31. Most for 1796 are reprinted in Tone 2001; manuscript copies are filed in SHD/Armée, 11B^{1} and 11B^{2} (1798 expeditions).
32. 'The Sykewar Charter', Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, Operation Memorandum No. 8, 11 March 1944; reprinted as Appendix A in Lerner 1971: 347–9.
33. French translations made by Henri Shee, another French-born Irish officer who was also Clarke's uncle, are in AN 186^{b}/859.
34. Ibid.
35. Committee of the House of Commons 1798: 9, and following.
36. SHD/Armée/2Y^{e}/MacSheehy personnel file.
37. On the multilingualism of the French army, see Tozzi, this volume.
38. SHD/Armée/Xh^{14}, *Etat nominatif des officiers de la Légion irlandaise* (October 1804), author's translation.
39. MacSheehy to Minister for War Berthier, 30 January 1804, reprinted in Desbrières 1902 III: 592. This may explain why William Macneven, a Legion recruit who emigrated to New York, later published a pamphlet entitled *Of the Nature and Functions of an Army Staff* (Macneven 1812). Its English is cumbersome and reads like a literal translation from French, despite Macneven's otherwise fluid style.
40. SHD/Armée, 2Y^{e}: Jean-Louis Cuvillier-Fleury, personal file; X^{R}30–2.
41. SHD/M: BB^{4}/123/170, Humbert to the Minister of Marine, Paris, 17 July 1798.
42. First, in a 'backtranslated' version of his commission seized upon his arrest: 'on account of [his] civism [Humbert had chosen] citizen Henry O'Keon [*sic*] to be employed in the quality of an interpreter' (Musgrave 1802: 139); in a reference written after his release and return to France when seeking a new post, SHD/A, 2Y^{e} Henry O Keane (1763–1817).
43. Trinity College Dublin Manuscripts, TCD/872/137^{v}, court-martial proceedings 1798, deposition of Mathew Tone 21–26 September 1798 (author's emphasis). There is no evidence that he spoke Irish either.
44. English intelligence report quoted in Tone 2001: 312.
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3

Fighting Together: Language Issues in the Military Coordination of First World War Allied Coalition Warfare

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There are essentially four different situations within a setting of military conflict in which languages come into play. A given armed force may, first of all, be composed of components which have different mother tongues. The handling of colonial troops is a classic example (Van Den Avenne 2005; Fogarty 2008: 134–68), but there are of course numerous cases of specialist units with a different first language to that of the parent army (Montagnon 2008: 22).[1] Secondly, language skills may be needed against the enemy, be this for intelligence purposes or for propaganda. Hansi, the Alsatian caricaturist, thus used his German language skills to draw up French propaganda material during the First World War (ANOLIR 2008) while WREN listeners worked in the British intelligence facility at Bletchley Park during the Second World War (Footitt 2010). Next, languages can be an issue 'on the ground' when hostilities occur in a place where a different language from that of the troops is spoken. The written exams for German officers wishing to qualify as military interpreters in French after the war of 1870–1 included a paper which consisted of translating public announcements to the local civilian population (Püttmann 1903). Fourthly and finally, warfare conducted as part of a coalition may require the bridging of language gaps between coalition partners – this is the case up to the present day in NATO and UN missions.

These four situations of language interaction are widely repeated throughout history but each repetition is likely to concern different language pairs, necessitating a wide range of language skills and specific services (Craig 1965; Wallach 1993; Weitsman 1994; Rice 1997; Alexander 1998; Prete 2009; Luft 2010). The Allied coalition on the Western Front during the First World War presents a particularly interesting case study when viewed through this taxonomy. From the British and later the US point of view, the language needed for the third and fourth situation – the language required on the ground and the language used by part of the coalition – was the same: French.

The Allied coalition's successful bridging of the language gaps apparent on the Western Front during the First World War ultimately played an important role in the military success of the Franco-British alliance, with its eventual US partners. This is true on all levels, from the high-level strategic talks on joint command structures under Allied High Commander Foch (Philpott 1996; Greenhalgh 2005), down to the ground-level negotiations necessary in so many villages behind the front lines in order for British troops to obtain billeting and supplies from the local French population (Gibson 1998, 2003). The functioning of the Allied coalition has not yet been the subject of a complete study taking all these levels into account, and anecdotal evidence which has been circulated has not been analysed from the point of view of language differences and gaps between the coalition partners. This chapter concentrates on the most neglected linguistic aspect of the Allied coalition – the process of *fighting* together.[2]

The chapter first introduces the background and historical context of language policy in the Allied coalition during the First World War. After a quick overview of the sources and approaches used, it then summarizes the main archival findings in two distinct sections. The first investigates the contribution of the rank interpreter, destined essentially for contact between British troops and French civilians, to the actual fighting. The second takes a closer look at the enigmatic figure of the liaison officer, in many ways the 'middle management' of coalition language administration.

Several reasons make the Allied coalition on the Western Front during the First World War a particularly interesting case in which to study 'languages at war'. In the British Army, this conflict was the first time that an intelligence service using enemy language material had been truly operational (Beach 2004, 2008a, 2008b). Overall, it is probably the first case of the systematic provision of military interpreters to liaise with the local population on the ground. Finally, the language pair for communication with the local population and authorities and that for inter-Allied tactical negotiations was the same, French–English, which allowed for quite a lot of leeway in the organization of language services.

In order to understand how precisely the different levels of Allied language management functions, their origins must be sought in both British and French experiences of what was essentially colonial warfare during the nineteenth century. One key feature on the British side was an elaborate language qualification system which had seen a considerable number of individuals qualify as first- and second-class interpreters by 1914. The second crucial experience in language handling for the British side came from the Boer War and the extensive use of local 'scouts' with knowledge both of the terrain and the language of the population (Jones 2011). French forces had established distinct corps of military interpreters first under Napoleon in Egypt and then for the ultimately aborted invasion of England (Kleinman, this volume). They had continued this on a more important scale with the

conquest of Algeria in 1830. These precedents gave them experience in running a hierarchical language service composed of local recruits at the lower ranks of 'interprètes auxiliaires' ('auxiliary interpreters') and of Metropolitan French expatriates in the roles of 'interprètes stagiaires' ('trainee interpreters') and 'officiers interprètes' ('officer-interpreters') (Messaoudi 2010).

Secret negotiations between 1905 and 1914 had outlined how what was at that stage still a hypothetical Franco-British military alliance and military intervention on the continent would function. As early as 1905, the British side had specified that the French were to provide interpreters as 'guides and orderlies'[3] and that these men were to be distinct from any liaison officers who might be exchanged. This system was then put into practice. In early August 1914, when the British Expeditionary Force landed in France, 576 French rank soldiers and NCOs, selected because they spoke English for any of a number of reasons but neither prepared nor trained for their tasks to come, were standing ready to accompany 'their' units from the landing ports. The BEF had crossed over with a small number of designated military interpreters of its own, but soon found they were not needed as the French interpreters already filled all the necessary posts. The British interpreters were thus, by the beginning of 1915, turned into Intelligence Officers to serve in the nascent Intelligence Service where they could make the best use of their wide range of language skills and their often considerable general education (Beach 2008a, 2008b).

The French enlisted and NCO interpreters ('rank interpreters') remained French soldiers during their detachment to serve alongside the British troops. They came under the authority of French liaison officers, organized through the French Military Mission to the British Army (Mission Militaire Francaise auprès de l'Armée britannique) and attached, in their liaison duties, to the various British army headquarters. While the British did not provide rank interpreters, they did send liaison officers to the neighbouring French army headquarters and ran a British bureau at the French general headquarters (GHQ).

As the numbers of British troops increased dramatically over the following years of the conflict, so did the numbers of individuals detailed to bridge the language gap. There must have been more than 3000 French rank interpreters and perhaps quite significantly more. It is pretty much impossible to establish figures on the number of liaison officers detached from either side. These different groups of men played distinctive roles in the various aspects of coalition warfare on French territory. The following discussion concentrates on the military aspect of fighting together in coalition formation and examines to what extent the distinction between rank interpreters (essentially in charge of civilian–military relations) and liaison officers (charged with tactical cooperation), while officially upheld and in place in the structures on the ground, actually persisted during the war and its different phases of combat.

Elizabeth Greenhalgh (2002) has pointed out the wide variety of sources available for research on the Franco-British coalition during the First World War. This paper has been able to draw upon official military records both from the French military archives preserved at the Service Historique de la Défense in Château de Vincennes and from the British side at the National Archives in Kew. Interpreters and liaison officers left a multitude of memoirs and other recollections, published or not, and these are obviously a very important complement to official military records, especially in understanding the subtle differences between official language policy and the practice through which it was then implemented. In two particularly well-documented cases (discussed below), it is possible to view one individual from both sides – an interpreter for whom there are both French administrative records evaluating his work alongside the British troops and an appreciation in the published memoirs by the British officer he worked with (Gubb 1978).

Fixers or fighters?

French rank interpreters at the beginning of the war had no prior warning and even less training to acquaint them with their new duties. In the course of the war, selection procedures were developed through which men instead applied for such positions and training courses were eventually established. Memoirs written by interpreters give an idea of the preconception of their function they arrived with:

> I asked to be instructed as to the role of interpreter: I thought it meant transmitting messages from an English unit to a French unit and vice versa. Poireux [from the Military Mission] explained to me that 'liaison work' was the exception; interpreters served as 'truchements' between the French civilian population and the British Army. During combat activity you would often be put in a safe place. (de Vibraye 1937: 23)

Civilian liaison duties, essentially to do with billeting and compensating damages, were indeed the primary activities of these military interpreters. These, however, are not the primary focus of this paper. Memoirs and appreciations of interpreters' work written by their superiors give a sense of the military tasks that they were asked to complete:

> Malleray told me that we would have to carry written and oral messages from the Command Post of the Nth French Infantry division, advancing parallel to us, but separated from us by the road from Amiens to Roye.
>
> He explained the oral part of the message which was not very difficult. We would find the Command Post near Mézières . . . This time it is real war and doing liaison duty between two armies participating in the same

> attack might give us the chance to witness actual combat. (de Vibraye 1937: 50)

The transmission of messages, often in situations when technological devices had broken down, put the French military interpreters into the position which the British Army had reserved for its orderlies, who were 'complementary to communication by signal' and in general recruited from 'suitable civilians' (General Staff War Office 1912: 41). The work they were doing was not purely that of a linguist but was very much integrated into a military communication system.

The role played by rank military interpreters during the First World War was naturally dependent to a very high degree on the larger military situation in which they and the units to which they were attached found themselves. Here, for example, is a British officer's verdict on the work of his interpreter:

> I should like to bring to your notice Sergt. Cellerier, the interpreter attached to the Battalion under my command.
>
> At Paturages, close to Mons, on the night of August 22nd/23rd 1914, my Battn found itself unsupported & out of touch with the Division on its right. M. Cellerier went out with a patrol under Capt. Edwards (Bedf. Regt.) to Frameries, some two miles to our right & established communication with the troops there, having to pass close to large German forces in doing so. On this patrol he proved of great assistance in visiting houses & questioning inhabitants as to the exact whereabouts of the advancing Germans. Next day he was present at the fighting round Paturages. At the battle of Le Cateau he was present with me in the front trenches. In October 1914 he assisted at the capture of Givenchy & in the subsequent defence of the village under heavy shell-fire. I understand he assisted in the evacuation of the wounded.[4]

This short appreciation includes a wide range of contributions to the fighting by the interpreter: intelligence work, lateral communication, accompanying officers in their front-line duties and even attending to wounded soldiers.

One very interesting case involves documentation from both the French and the British side: that of the interpreter Rimbod. Rimbod's evaluation booklet contains the following verdicts in French:

> Did liaison work on 27 May 1918 between French and British units, personally carrying orders under fire after the destruction of the telephone lines. Showed great courage in these circumstances.
>
> This NCO particularly distinguished himself during the German attacks on the Craonne plateau on 27 May 1918. Having twice escaped death miraculously, he showed great energy maintaining liaison contacts

between the French and English engineering units. Received the Military Medal on 8 July as recompense for his excellent services.[5]

The British officer writes the following evaluation:

To O.C. French Mission 19th Don 8 Aug.16

Dear Mr Bertrand,

It is a great blow losing Mr RIMBOD in this way. He has always done so well for us, and is exceedingly popular with all ranks. I cannot speak too highly of his help to us during a complete year's service in France, and always so bright and cheerful.

He understands a good deal about buying RE Stores and has been most useful in that way.

I sincerely hope to meet you and the good fellow again some day.

Yours sincerely

Signé R. A. Butterworth[6]

These two evaluations present two very different verdicts – one insisting on a courageous military contribution, one on the practical aspects of daily life behind the front. I struggled to make sense of them when I first discovered them. This is, in fact, a recurring pattern in the appreciation of interpreters' work: the French insist on the interpreter's role in combat, while the British side hardly mention it, preferring to discuss their contribution to daily life and its practicalities. The published memoirs of the British officer to whom Rimbod was attached illustrate this:

I forgot to mention that Rimbod is still with the company, and has been given the French Médaille Militaire and the British Military Medal. After the disastrous battle at Reims, the head of the French military mission at divisional headquarters had asked McQueen if he could recommend Rimbod for a medal, on the grounds that all the other interpreters had been recommended, so it would be bad luck if he were not. McQueen, who was always conscientious, had replied that as Rimbod never went near the front line, they could not, of course, recommend him for gallantry. However, he was a nice fellow and had done a very good job at buying food for us in the back areas. On the strength of which he had received the above medals. (Gubb 1978: 200)

There seems to have been a very different perception of the role of the military interpreter on the two sides of the Allied coalition. The French military

administration was particularly conscious of the strain these individuals were under – Frenchmen, under arms but in non-combatant posts, far away from their compatriots who were defending their homeland. The French military authorities therefore felt a particular need to emphasize the contribution to the actual fighting by these interpreters of whom at least a certain number could have been considered 'shirkers against their own will' (Ridel 2008: 53–5).[7]

'His life is spent between the hammer and the anvil': liaison officers

The organizational structure of the military language service provided by the French for British and then also US forces has a double origin in the French experience of nineteenth-century warfare. First of all, the colonial experience in Northern Africa had led to the employment of large numbers of military interpreters. From the conquest of Algeria in 1830 onwards, the French military authorities and increasingly also civilian authorities had worked towards improving and perfecting the language service. As Messaoudi (2010) has explained, the corps of military interpreters on the ground in Algeria developed gradually from a body composed of individuals from very diverse origins, recruited *ad hoc* and strongly criticized for their perceived lack of trustworthiness and penchant for corruption, into a professionalized corps recruited by competitive exam and divided into essentially local 'interprètes auxiliaires' and essentially metropolitan 'officiers interprètes'.

In a 1933 article, D. De Saint-André, himself a veteran interpreter of the First World War, described the three facets of the role of the *Officier de liaison* (De Saint-André: 1933). According to De Saint-André, during the First World War liaison officers on the French side were simultaneously administrators, interpreters and combatants. They had to run a language service with between thirty-six and 140 rank interpreters under their orders, with the express responsibility of protecting and defending French civilian populations against British military interests. They had to provide interpreting services during meetings of Allied commanders. Finally, they, and the rank interpreters under their orders, had to ensure that lateral liaison between French and British units on the battlefield was upheld, which could mean considerable personal risk, for example in carrying messages.

Interpreting coalition leaders to one another was an area fraught with difficulties. One liaison officer, Spears, observed the following episode:

> Sir John did not speak long. Realising as his annoyance spent itself that he was not understood, since most of the Frenchmen present spoke no English, he turned to General Wilson and asked him to translate. Wilson did so, modifying and softening somewhat what his Chief had said. This bowdlerised translation did not efface the impression Sir John's tone had made on General Lanrezac. (Spears 1930: 234)

One case enables a wide overview of the duties of liaison officers: the protracted negotiations between the British and the French over the delimitation of their respective military zones and the provision of British reserves for the French sectors of the front in 1918.[8] This makes apparent the impressive amount of paperwork completed by the liaison officers, who translated written requests and other communications from the Coalition partners. Although there were meetings between the respective leaders, most of the decisive preparatory work happened through written communication beforehand.

Liaison officers handled translations of all kinds of documents that passed through their offices. Cases in which both the original and the translation have been preserved in the archives are rare. However, the following case shows the type of imperfect but nevertheless functional translation accomplished by a US liaison officer working with the French military mission alongside US troops:

> Original:
>
> Referred. I request that if practicable, the matter be taken up with the Commanding General for this district to release this man from military service, for use in operating a section of the cold store plant . . .[9]
>
> Translation attached to the document for transmission to the competent French service:
>
> Transmis pour informations [*sic*]. Je demande si cela est possible que l'affaire soit prise en main par le Général Commandant le [*sic*] Subdivision, afin que cet homme soit mis en surcis [*sic*] pourêtre employé à maneuvrer [*sic*] une partie de l'appareil frigorifique . . .[10]

Looking at liaison officers' tasks in the context of the First World War coalition clearly shows the important component of written translation that military interpreters could be asked to handle. In consequence, it demonstrates the importance of written language and translation in coalition warfare.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown to what extent pre-war planning drew on two separate and essentially colonial traditions. In the French case, distinct corps of European officer-interpreters and locally-recruited auxiliary interpreters contributed to the colonial set-up, mainly in Algeria but also elsewhere. In the British case, language qualifications were acquired by regular officers rather than being the preserve of specially recruited linguists, but their efforts were always coupled, especially during actual military conflict, by the recruiting of local scouts, hired as much for their language skills as for their knowledge of the terrain.

The system put into place as an essentially French service for the use of British and later US forces mirrors the division of work in two distinct hierarchical levels; at least on paper. In practice, the two hierarchical levels contributed both to administrative and military tasks, and the smooth running of the service was probably due in part to the fact that there was no disjunction between these two areas of provision. The most interesting verdict on the functioning of the service is probably a 1919 report on the Mission Militaire Française auprès de l'Armée Britannique, which explicitly states that, for any future conflict, it will not be necessary to train and prepare men to fulfil interpreting or liaison duties before the intervention but that it would be useful to keep a list of suitable men (those with language degrees and those who live abroad) in order to call them up separately and ensure that the appropriate number of men are available.

Two further issues emerging from this work are applicable both to the other conflicts discussed in this volume and to conflicts yet to come. One is that the French–English language pair during the First World War allowed for close links between civilian administration roles and military liaison. However, in a conflict situation where the coalition languages and the languages on the ground are not the same, separate language services and structures will most probably take care of the two. This requires further research to understand the consquences of this difference from the close integration shown in this case study. A second important issue, which could only be hinted at here, is the profile of language intermediaries beyond those officially assigned to intermediary roles. The considerable number of military interpreters and liaison officers discussed in this chapter were not the only people bridging language gaps during the First World War. Great mystery surrounds the part played by the hundreds of qualified interpreters among the British officers of the First World War. Looking more broadly, however, researchers must consider how those whose job descriptions have not included language duties can be integrated into the study of languages at war.

Notes

1. See Montagnon (2008: 22), who describes the French Foreign Legion's early phase of separating battalions by nationality and language. All translations from French are the present author's unless stated.
2. So far, this has only been discussed by Greenhalgh (2003).
3. 'Memo Lt Gen Grierson', National Archives Kew, WO 106/0049 C Preparation for Expeditionary Force.
4. Evaluation by Ch. Griffith, Lt. Colonel Commanding 1st Battn Bedfordshire Regt., dated 23 September 1915, Carnet Cellérier Georges Charles, SHD Vincennes 17 N 467.

5. SHD Vincennes 17 N 447, carnet Rimbod.
6. SHD Vincennes 17 N 447, carnet Rimbod.
7. While the exact mortality rate for interpreters during the First World War is not known, it was certainly significantly lower than that of the infantry and interpreter postings were thus sought after as 'safer' positions. This led to a certain level of criticism in the press questioning the utility of interpreters and considering them as actual 'shirkers'.
8. National Archives, Kew, WO 106/1455, WO 158/71, WO 158/77.
9. SHD Vincennes 17 N 237, Mission Militaire Francaise auprès de l'Armée Américaine, letter dated 29 June 1918.
10. SHD Vincennes 17 N 237, Mission Militaire Francaise auprès de l'Armée Américaine, letter dated 29 June 1918.

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4

Languages at War: a UK Ministry of Defence Perspective

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The UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) has a keen interest in the Languages at War project and has been pleased to support its work, providing a perspective to inform lines of investigation and to learn the lessons of history that have a bearing on today's and tomorrow's operations. This paper was prepared to present at the Languages at War Conference at the Imperial War Museum, London, in April 2011.

The UK and its MOD is in a similar situation to many other nations and organizations, working with constantly evolving contexts, a variety of agendas and increasingly taut resources; each instance is unique. Therefore, this paper does not suggest that the UK MOD can put forward a model for the use of languages in war that is simple or, in some way, a paradigm. Rather, the perspective set out below should be seen more as a case study for the project, representing one balance between policy, resources and reality.

The paper is titled: A UK MOD Perspective. The subject of Culture and Languages (the two being closely associated) is high on the list of capability issues falling out of the UK's recent Strategic Defence and Security Review;[1] further analysis alongside policy and resource decisions is in hand, so a single perspective has yet to emerge. Therefore, the views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the MOD or HM Government.

The paper will look at the governance of languages in the UK MOD and the role of the key organizations; what the UK MOD needs of a military linguist; how its capability is generated; and linguistic challenges for the future. The paper considers 'war' in its widest sense as being any operation in which the UK military may be involved, from humanitarian

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intervention through peacekeeping and stabilization missions to combat operations.

Governance

The governance of language capability in the UK MOD is characterized by clear ownership, mechanisms to build stakeholder consensus and devolved delivery, summarized in Figure 4.1. Ownership of the language capability is vested in a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), in this case the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel and Training), a 3* officer able to represent the capability at the highest levels in the MOD and across government; DCDS (Pers & Trg) owns language policy. His principal executive is the Head of Training, Education, Skills and Resettlement (TESR). They lead capability boards, consisting of military stakeholders, at relevant levels; the boards build consensus and address policy, resources and other capability generation issues. Having DCDS (Pers & Trg) as SRO acknowledges that an appreciation of culture and language must be widely embedded in military culture and developed over time, and should not be a niche capability that is only ramped up on an as-required basis.

The wider stakeholder community for language capability is varied. Understanding that crisis management is a cross-Government effort, led by the political/diplomatic lever of power (a Comprehensive Approach, in MOD terminology), the MOD confers with other government departments on language issues through the UK Inter-Departmental Standing Committee on Languages (UKIDSCOL); this body has scope for facilitating increased collaboration across government in this area. Another external body is the NATO Bureau for International Language Coordination (BILC), of which the UK MOD is a member and from which UK military language standards are derived. These standards are discussed later in the paper, but their assessment in the UK is through a partnership between the UK MOD and the University of Westminster.[2]

The internal stakeholder community includes a number of customer agents who represent their employment communities, such as Intelligence, Defence Diplomacy and operational employers. These stakeholders are key members of the governance boards. Service Manning Authorities are important as they assign linguists and manage their career development. Finally, deployed commanders, staff and units have a key role to play in reporting back on the latest applied usage to inform the development of the capability. First amongst the internal stakeholders is the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations) (DCDS(Ops)), whose task it is to represent all stakeholders collectively (when necessary) and to define the operational requirement for the capability.

Capability is delivered through three principal organizations. The Defence School of Languages (DSL) acts as the Training Delivery Authority for

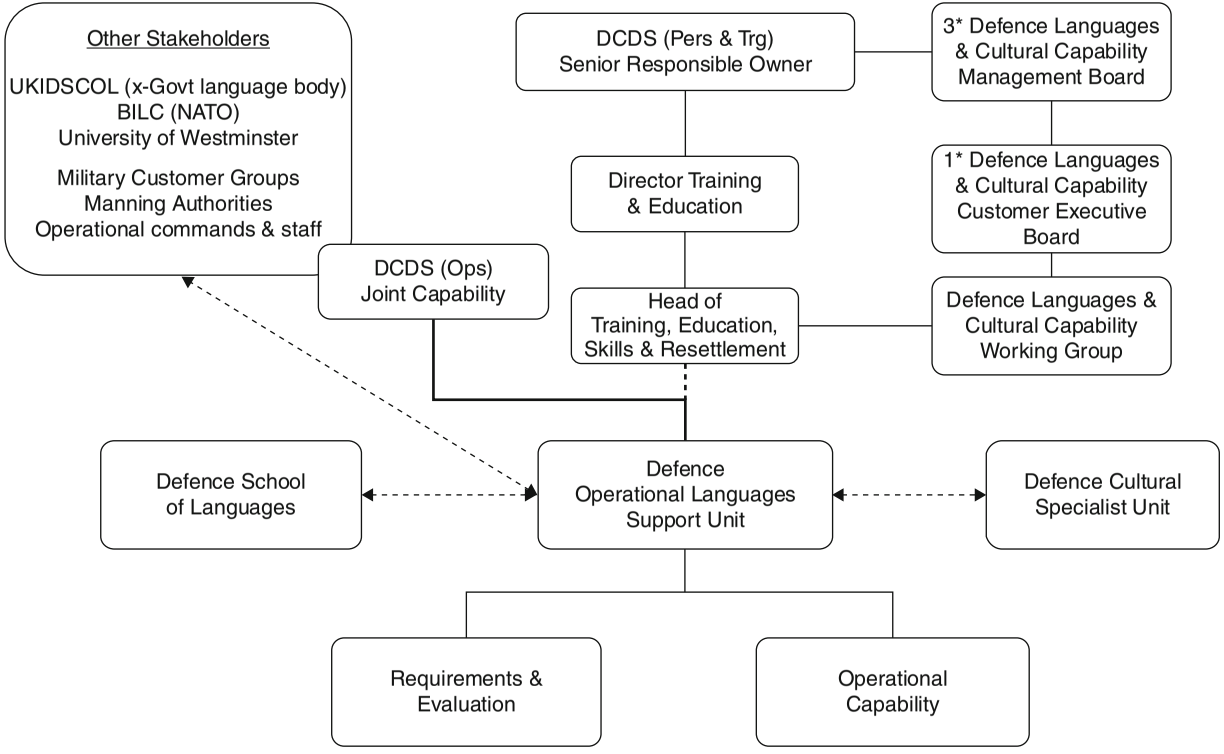


Figure 4.1 Organizational chart of the governance of language capability in UK MOD

languages. It provides residential training itself in languages that are required most frequently or in the greatest volume. Lesser requirements for long language training are contracted out to external providers where that is the best-value solution. Short operational language courses for pre-deployment training are delivered locally but overseen by DSL. Cultural capability is led by the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit (DCSU), which acts as the Training Requirement Authority (TRA) for cultural training and whose training delivery method is evolving. DCSU also generates Cultural Advisors (CULADs), whose training includes higher-level skills in an appropriate language. The third organization is the Defence Operational Languages Support Unit (DOLSU), currently owned by DCDS (Ops) pending a wider review of resource ownership.[3]

DOLSU's responsibilities include the generation of higher-level linguists to deploy as augmentees on operations. Selected volunteers undergo eighteen months of language and other training before undertaking a six-month deployment as a full-time linguist. However, DOLSU's main function is to support the coordination and development of the defence language capability through the role of Training Requirements Authority, answerable to the capability SRO. Tasks include defining language standards and competencies; advising employers on language needs for each post; identifying the annual Statement of Trained Requirement (SOTR),[4] leading the MOD Languages Examination Board (in partnership with the University of Westminster), financial award schemes for languages and external validation of training. Some of these responsibilities are discussed throughout the paper.

The military linguist

It will be noted that this chapter refers to 'linguists', as opposed to interpreters or translators. Civilian, professional interpreters and translators have a particular understanding of the competencies and skills necessary to provide their service, including language skills in at least two languages to the standard of a highly-educated native speaker, along with sophisticated techniques, preferably used in ideal circumstances. Perhaps confusingly, military linguist terminology includes labels such as 'Professional' and 'Expert' at competence levels lower than the educated native-speaker description associated with civilian interpreters and translators. However, military linguists are called upon to interpret and translate within their competence, usually in less than ideal circumstances, and they are required to provide additional functions that are unlikely to be found in civilian practitioners. Whilst they may be in similar roles, it might be best to consider military linguists and their civilian counterparts as cousins rather than siblings, with different outlooks, loyalties, strengths and weaknesses.

Military linguists are required to use their language skills in practical ways. Personnel with lower-level skills use language to be culturally aware, to build

confidence in relationships and to facilitate simple military tasks as part of their primary role. Higher-level linguists can have another primary role for which the language skills are essential, but most are dedicated to the linguist role. In this role they are required to mediate, that is, to facilitate the exchange of information between two languages and actors; this requires judgement and discretion as to what constitutes critical information and the ability to filter less important content. They are also required to act as an employer's trusted representative to further business, such as arranging meetings, conveying messages and retrieving information, all in line with the employer's objectives. The military linguist must have sufficient field skills to be robust in adversity and not to be a liability to those around them.

Pure language standards for military linguists are in accordance with NATO STANAG 6001 Edition 4.[5] The STANAG has two functions, firstly to guide NATO member nations who need to learn one of the two official NATO languages (English and French) and secondly to establish a common scale of competence in any given language. Several other language scales exist, but the STANAG is particularly relevant to the military environment. Table 4.1 characterizes the key features of the STANAG scale, including an indicative equivalence in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The UK describes competence up to level 2 as being a low-level linguist and above level 2 as a higher-level linguist. Level 2 linguists who trained to a level 3 syllabus and achieved a strong assessment result[6] may be employed as a level 3 linguist at risk. The UK sees Level 3 as the lowest level at which an employer can reasonably expect an assured, accurate service. This is important in military scenarios where mis-communication can cause commanders to make incorrect decisions, which may have undesirable consequences, or put the lives of others at increased risk.[7]

Another feature of the STANAG system is a Standardized Language Profile (SLP), consisting of a four-digit code indicating the level attained in the discrete skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (in that order). A level 3, 'Professional', linguist would be expected to have a profile of at least 3333 within NATO. However, the UK, recognizing the importance of verbal communication, will accept that a linguist with SLP 3321 (for example) can be referred to as level 3/Professional, in particular in the context of financial incentives for languages.

Generating capability

It is an important feature of the UK MOD's current model that being a linguist is voluntary. The UK finds that the best linguists are volunteers and that the strong motivation inherent in volunteers is the most significant factor in achieving good training outcomes. Personnel may join the military

Table 4.1 Key features of STANAG 6001

STANAG Level	Approx. CEFR Level	Tasks/Functions	Content/Topics	Accuracy
0		No functional ability.	None or isolated words.	Unintelligible.
Above 0 (UK-Basic)	A1	Can make short utterances and ask very simple questions using memorized material and set expressions.	Immediate needs: greetings, personal details, numbers, time, common objects, commands.	Understandable with difficulty, even to a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners.
1 Survival	A2	Can create sentences; begin, maintain and close short conversations by asking and answering simple questions; satisfy simple daily needs; resolve basic situations.	Everyday survival topics and courtesy requirements.	Intelligible with some effort to a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners; often mis-communicates.
2 Functional	B1	Can describe people, places and things; narrate current, past and future activities in full paragraphs; state facts; give instructions or directions; ask and answer questions in the workplace; deal with non-routine daily situations.	Concrete topics such as own background, family, interests, work, travel and current events.	Understandable to a native speaker not used to dealing with foreigners; sometimes mis-communicates.
3 Professional	B2	Can converse in most formal and informal situations; discuss abstract topics; support opinions; hypothesize; deal with unfamiliar topics and situations; describe in detail; clarify points.	Practical, social, professional and abstract topics, particular interests and special fields of competence.	Speaks readily, with only sporadic non-patterned errors in basic structures. Errors almost never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.
4 Expert	C1	Can tailor language to fit the audience; counsel, persuade, negotiate, represent an official point of view, advocate a position at length. Can express subtleties and make culturally appropriate references.	All topics normally pertinent to professional needs.	Nearly equivalent to a well-educated native speaker. Speech is extensive, precise, and appropriate to every situation with only occasional errors.
5 Articulate native speaker	C2	Functions in a manner that is equivalent to that of a well-educated native speaker.	All subjects.	Performance equivalent to that of a well-educated native speaker.

intending to use a previously taught or un-taught language skill in one of the few career streams requiring specific languages. Others may join for other reasons but are subsequently attracted by language opportunities as an option within a more varied conventional career plan or to maximize their experience on operations through a language specialization. Opportunities exist for members of the Volunteer Reserve or ex-full-time personnel to serve an extendable twenty-six-month contract, training and deploying as a linguist on operations.

All volunteers for language training take the Modern Languages Aptitude Test (MLAT)[8] and should be interviewed before selection to explore the variety of factors that influence successful training and employment: strong recommendations, motivation, confidence, intelligence, memory, existing language skills and experience (including English), along with general military and educational experience. MLAT is a limited tool, in particular for non-European languages and where English is not the candidate's first language, but experience shows it can be an indicator of eventual competence limits. Raw results fit on a percentile scale (compared to all other candidates) and the UK interprets them as follows:

<50	Unlikely to achieve desired progress and standards at any level.
50–60	May be able to achieve Level 1.
60–80	Probably suitable for Level 2 training.
80–100	Potential ability to succeed at Levels 3 and 4.

It can be seen from this that only 20 per cent of personnel may have the aptitude for higher-level training and, once other factors are considered, there will be a limit to the scope for the UK MOD to meet the potential demand for higher-level operational linguists from its own resources.[9] There are many second-language speakers in the UK MOD's branch of the civil service, but such employees cannot be obliged to declare their skills or to use them beyond their current post. Therefore, the UK MOD accepts that its deployed higher-level linguist capability will be found from a balance of military linguists, contracted civilians and Locally-Employed Civilians (LEC). This is not as great a constraint as might be imagined, as each group has strengths and weaknesses that can be best matched to particular situations; a comparison of employment factors for dedicated linguists is summarized in Table 4.2.

Once selected for training, students attend a course at DSL of between nine and eighteen months' duration. The length of courses and training resources available are synchronized to the operational cycle, so most students do not have time in initial training to reach their full potential. They are trained in a balanced syllabus with a priority to the skills required in the range of available employments for each cohort. This does allow the most gifted linguists to achieve the full range of skills at a given level but acknowledges that lesser performances by others are still desirable and intended training

Table 4.2 Employment factors for dedicated linguists

	For	**Against**
Military	Readiness Security clearance Flexibility Working in hostile/basic environments Familiarity with military business Information assurance Quality control of other linguists Contribution to language training	'Waste' of other military skills Potential impact on career prospects Down-time for training Capability management and training overhead Release by employers and manning authorities
Military (reserves)	A resource that can be turned on or off No career impact Motivation	Variable experience
MOD civilians	Existing resource Reachback capability Wide range of language skills Higher skills more likely Cost-effective trainers	Limited deployability and utility in theatre Limited willingness to be employed as linguists Limited opportunities to take/train for MoDLEB exams
Contractors	Outsources/de-risks provision of capability Backfills shortfalls Low-risk theatres	Expensive Inadequate provision is slow to manifest Security clearance limited
Locally-Employed Civilians	Native target language Comparatively cheap, numerous and available Culturally sensitive	Risk to base and operational security Loyalty (In)Ability to teach Personal vulnerability to coercion Slow to set up English skills variable and unassessed

outcomes. A view is taken mid-course about the achievement and potential of each student in order to prioritize the thrust of training and to earmark them for particular posts.

The UK MOD has an interest in about fifty languages, in particular those relevant to current operations such as Pashto and Dari (known as operational languages). In order to encourage the declaration of language skill amongst military personnel, a Basic Language Award Scheme will, once an exam has

successfully been passed, award linguists a lump sum relating to the level of pass and difficulty of language. Payments range between £140 and £2300, with three-yearly requalification payments at about one-third of the qualification rate. A separate scheme exists for operational languages, with qualification awards between £1800 and £11,700 (and similar one-third awards for requalification). In addition, linguists in operational languages can earn a daily active use award between £3.60 (a level 1 linguist on their first tour) and £70.20 (a level 4 linguist on their fifth tour) every day. These incentives are an important part of recruiting linguists to training, encouraging further deployments and maintaining essential capability in the longer term.

Future challenges

It is recognized that today's military linguist requirements will not necessarily be an accurate guide to future requirements. Today's requirements, certainly in terms of low-level skills and volume, are dominated by the need to support operations in Afghanistan. As that requirement diminishes from 2014, the standing requirement for non-operational linguists will reassert itself as the baseline for capability generation. Without a particular, demanding requirement for linguists to support operations, decisions are required on what contingent capability should be developed and maintained; which languages, at what competence levels, in what numbers and at what readiness? Not all linguists need to be immediately competent; given a degree of warning, lower-level linguists can be trained ab initio or higher level linguists' skills can be refreshed before having to deploy.

One approach to identifying a requirement would be to better understand the possible threats to current global systems and what the implications might be for the UK MOD's linguist needs. Many credible studies exist to inform such an analysis, including from the UK MOD's own studies organization, the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC). It publishes, amongst other work, a periodic study on Strategic Trends[10] and a study on the Future Character of Conflict,[11] which give insights into possible future causes of international or regional crises and the possible contributions of the military lever of power to crisis management.

The UK MOD cannot make unilateral assumptions at this level. From a national perspective, crisis management is cross-Government business, led by political/diplomatic bodies, and many possible scenarios are unlikely to have a significant military input. Therefore, UK MOD must look to the National Security Strategy and its own Strategic Defence and Security Review[12] for further policy on what it should plan to be able to do. Still, the range of possible demand for military linguists could be wide and deep; decisions on the future linguist capability will depend on judgements concerning risk (that is, likelihood and impact) and resources that are beyond the scope of this paper.

What is clear from this is that military linguists will be employed in a range of scenarios that will stretch their skills and experience. At one extreme, they may be required to provide interpreting and translation services under similar circumstances to civilian professionals, suggesting closer alignment with civilian practice and standards, in particular for contracted and LEC linguists. Both communities must respond to the use of language in new media, such as social messaging, perhaps as a new dialect or a new transnational culture. However, the greater the physical danger, autonomy of action, sensitivity of content and need to understand military business, the more likely that military linguist requirements will diverge from those of civilian practitioners.

One particular area of divergence might be professional ethics. This is not to suggest that civilian and military language practitioners might inevitably drift towards 'good' or 'bad' ends of the moral spectrum. However, there may be an assumption that all language practitioners should be neutral, both in terms of accuracy and in terms of being between opposing parties. Accuracy of facts may be possible, but the application of culture and context will often make literal interpretation inappropriate, a difficulty for all linguists. The military linguist must also understand that (s)he is a facilitator for his/her employer and therefore not only not neutral but active in pursuing the commander's objectives.

UK military doctrine increasingly recognizes the importance of influence in achieving campaign objectives, reaching out to the hearts and minds of all those involved.[13] This requires an understanding of culture and an ability to communicate our messages in a way that third parties understand, predominantly through language. Therefore, language cannot be neutral to those engaged with a crisis; if we choose to think otherwise, adversaries will exploit that choice and undermine our chances of success. Strategic communication or influence activities are no more or no less acceptable in crisis management and military operations than they are in commerce; we accept marketing and advertising. However, there may be a debate to be had and comparisons might be drawn with anthropology, key to understanding modern social systems (for instance, the Human Terrain or Human Factor in military terminology), whose practitioner community has an instinctive non-interventionist ethic.

A final challenge for the military linguist community is recruiting and retention. The current model described earlier in this paper has its limitations, so it is likely that if aspirations to improve the UK MOD's linguist capability are resourced, it will require the model to change. In order to retain the necessary motivation, voluntary service is likely to remain the cornerstone of the capability. Steps could be taken to target recruiting at those with an existing second language or those who demonstrate some aptitude for further language training by having other language GCSEs, A levels or equivalents. However, this action is of limited value where the

naturalized UK-based diaspora with a desirable language is small or, in the case of recruiting teaching staff or tutors, there are few teaching-trained native speakers with an equal command of English available.

Given that English schoolchildren are not obliged to learn a second language at GCSE level, there must be many potential linguists with aptitude whose interest in learning a second language may emerge later. The UK MOD needs to develop a mechanism to identify and foster such potential, but in a more assured manner. Whilst there are a number of alternative language aptitude tests to MLAT, none has a strong correlation with training outcomes given the number of other success/failure factors in play. Also, given the additional skills required of a military linguist, it may be that other psychometric assessments such as Myers–Briggs or emotional intelligence tests may provide stronger or complementary indications of suitability for language training and employment.

Remuneration will probably remain a powerful incentive to meet and maintain capability requirements, whether as recruitment incentives, qualification awards or daily active use payments. Remuneration can also be in kind; that is, providing the means by which an individual can be helped to maintain their skills. Examples include time every year for full-time skill refresher activity (preferably immersed in a native-speaking community) and day-to-day access to other-language media to keep cultural and current affairs knowledge up to date.

Conclusion

The UK MOD's perspective on the importance of language is clear. Language skills are an essential capability in support of operations, not just to enable communication between actors in crisis resolution but also, alongside cultural skills, to enable understanding; understanding of contexts, situations and the impact of actions. Integrated military language capability is both slow and expensive to grow and maintain, so there will always be a place for a civilian contribution to military language needs, either contracted or locally-employed. The challenge for the future will be to build on the best practice from the past that will remain relevant in the years to come and to afford the best balance of capability to meet the most likely and demanding language needs.

Notes

1. A copy of the SDSR can be found at: http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/PolicyStrategyandPlanning/SDSR/StrategicDefenceAndSecurityReviewsdsr.htm.

2. Example language examinations can be found at: http://www.westminster.ac.uk/schools/humanities/modleb. A new style and format of examination was introduced in early 2012.
3. Since this paper was written, language TDA responsibility has transferred to the UK Defence Academy, which now owns DSL. DOLSU is now owned by DCDS (Pers & Trg) pending transfer to the new Joint Forces Command, which is expected to become a leading stakeholder for language capability.
4. The SOTR is the aggregated training requirement for future years, based on posts for which a language-trained incumbent is essential. The requirement is abated by an estimate of trained personnel returning to linguist employment, reducing the need for 'ab initio' training.
5. This NATO Standardization Agreement can be found at: http://www.bilc.forces.gc.ca/stanag/index-eng.asp (accessed 21 December 2011).
6. The STANAG allows for '+' suffixes to indicate a standard almost at the next level. However, the UK assessment system does not recognize a '+' performance.
7. For example, a linguist must accurately convey the difference between 'there is a bomb in the market' and 'there may be a bomb near the market' in stressful circumstances.
8. MLAT is described at: http://www.2lti.com/htm/LangAptitudeTesting.htm (accessed 21 December 2011).
9. However, up to 10 per cent of a deployed force is likely to be trained to a Basic or Survival level in a relevant language. Such personnel have another primary role and use their language skills to support that role, not for interpreting tasks they do not have the skills to undertake.
10. http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/MicroSite/DCDC/OurPublications/StrategicTrends+Programme/ (accessed 21 December 2011).
11. http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/MicroSite/DCDC/OurPublications/Concepts/FutureCharacterOfConflict.htm (accessed 21 December 2011).
12. Both documents are available at: http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/PolicyStrategyandPlanning/SDSR/StrategicDefenceAndSecurityReviewsdsr.htm.
13. There is much unclassified military doctrine available on the DCDC website (http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/microsite/dcdc/), including publications on *Strategic Communication* (JDN 1/12) and *Security and Stabilisation* (JDP 3–40) (see Chapter 3, 'Influence: the Central Idea').

5

The Language Policy of the Italian Army in the Occupied Slovenian Territories, 1915–17

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Language is one of the fundamental constitutive elements of a nation. However, in the case of the Slovenes, language is also a fundamental element of national consciousness, since the Slovenes primarily define themselves as a nation on the basis of language and culture. In the long decades of growing national awareness under the Habsburg Monarchy, a process most visibly marked by the struggle for the use of Slovene in public life, especially in education, any violation of hard-won rights was also a threat to the nation's body politic. An even greater threat, however, came from the Italian state and its preconceptions about the intellectual and cultural situation of the Slovenes, which it clearly propagated throughout its occupation during the First World War and even more so during the Second World War. In both instances, the conduct of the Italian authorities may be described as patronizing, drawing on the two-thousand-year-old Roman tradition and assumed superiority of Italian culture and aimed at eventually bringing Slovenian culture and language under its sphere of influence. Hence, it is little wonder that before the First World War the course of action introduced by the Italian authorities in the Littoral had already become known as cultural policy. In the Slovenian territory, this cultural policy posed a direct threat to the very foundations of national existence during both the First and Second World Wars.

Soon after the unification of Italy, Italian military strategists had begun to seriously consider the scope and significance of the Slovenian ethnic territory, which was to be included in the Kingdom of Italy for military and strategic reasons. The demarcation line of the Treaty of London (1915) had been drawn as early as 1845 by the military headquarters in Sardinia. The demarcation of this line was also part of the Italian state leadership's

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political 'unification' plans and the aspirations of Italian irredentists to 'redeem' the unredeemed brothers and the final unification of Italy. The plans found their 'confirmation' in 1915 through the Treaty of London, the final act of Italy's negotiations with both warring sides to obtain the largest possible territorial acquisition after victory in the First World War.

Before joining the war, the Italian government wanted to know how the Slovenes and Croats in the Habsburg territories of Trieste, Istria and Gorizia would react to Italian occupation. It therefore sent to Trieste a shrewd diplomat, Carlo Galli, with the task of persuading the Slovenes and Croats to acquiesce to Italian occupation in return for respect of their national rights, especially cultural freedom and the freedom to use their mother tongue (Svoljšak 1999: 393–408). The astute diplomat built up a clear picture of the Slovenes:

> Over the last decades Austria has developed their national culture, afforded them an independent entity, separate from other Slavic groups, and elevated to a respectable stature their poets, whose reputation was formerly limited to the territory inhabited by Slovenes. However, this is a compact and homogeneous group that congregates around its clergy, with specific character traits and views that make it important. (Galli 1951: 8)

In his opinion, Italian cultural power would be imposed successfully through what he called '[f]reedom and understanding, as well as broad-based and open-minded tolerance. And then unlimited trust in Italian civil and cultural supremacy' (Galli 1951: 8). Galli also highlighted the differences between the members of various South Slavic peoples that ought to be given due consideration when introducing the 'national' policy across the future Italian territories: 'The Serbo-Croatian sentiment, however, differs from the Slovenian one. Other than both being Slavs, they are distinguished by major psychological and educational differences. The Slovenes are mostly of rural origin and all devout Catholics' (Galli 1951: 8).

As Galli wrote, he followed the same instructions that Napoleon had given to General Lafon after the siege of Corsica in 1797: to allow the local population to retain their religion, priests and bell-towers, so that they would be good citizens and love the French, or, in this case, Italians. In order to demonstrate the success of the chosen strategy, the Italian authorities referred to the domestic example of Venetian Slovenes, who, 'being allowed at all times to speak and pray as they please' (Galli 1951: 8), served as loyal Italian citizens and soldiers. The authorities speculated that if permitted to maintain their language and culture the Slovenes and Croats would be, in one or two generations' time at the most, completely assimilated into Italian culture:

> Do we not see, indeed, the enduring Triestine phenomenon of foreign settlers blending in? Already the sons of the first generation consider and

> proclaim themselves Italians, adopting a different language, culture and national sentiment than their fathers. This holds for the Germans, Slavs, Jews and other ethnic groups that settle here, including the many Greeks, who form the most resistant ethnic group to environmental influences[.] (Galli 1951: 10)

In the first onslaught at the end of May and in June 1915, the Italian Army seized the Slovenian territory on the right side of the border drawn by the Soča (It.: Isonzo) Front or, in more general terms, the Soča River, which belonged to the Province of Gorizia–Gradisca with a population of approximately 260,000. In the occupied territories (*terre occupate*) or 'redeemed territories' (*terre redente*), the Italian Supreme Command took over the political and administrative authority and established the General Secretariat for Civil Affairs (Segretariato generale per gli Affari Civili), which in the occupied areas of Trento and the Soča basin assumed the tasks of civil authority in all spheres of public life. The goal of the meticulously-planned regime of occupation was to prepare the occupied territories for the post-war period, when peace negotiations would confirm their annexation to Italy. However, on arrival in the Slovenian territory, the Italian army carried out a series of suppressive measures (arrests, internments, expulsions and decimation of the civilian population), demonstrating that the authorities were racked with suspicion of espionage for enemy interests and were mistrustful of the local population (Svoljšak 2003: 39–90).

Apart from dealing with current administrative and public matters, the primary task of the Supreme Command was to prepare the occupied territories for their incorporation into the Kingdom of Italy. Therefore, language and its use in public were regarded as a basic tool for achieving a gradual but effective fusion of public administrative and 'domestic' Italian life. The language used by public administrative services was Italian, although during the initial stage of the occupation military decrees, especially those concerning public security and the movement of the population, were issued both in Italian and Slovene. On the other hand, the orders issued by the Supreme Command and documents drawn up by civil authorities were written in Italian, whereas mayors and judges had the discretion to decide whether or not their decrees would also be published in Slovene. Public offices also accepted Slovenian personal, municipal and church documents, which were translated by authorized officers and then subjected to routine bureaucratic procedures. Transactions between a civil commissioner, who maintained the broadest range of direct contacts with the civilian population, and municipalities were facilitated by the domestic officials' command of the Italian language and the presence of Italian officials in the civil administration. The occupying forces considered such a language policy as compliant with the principle of official use of the state (Italian) language, while at the same time having no prejudice against the use of the language spoken in the occupied territory in matters concerning the civilian population.

The next step towards establishing the Italian language in the Slovenian territory and setting the groundwork for the future was a systematic transformation or adjustment of Slovenian personal and family names, as well as Slovenian toponyms, to Italian orthography. As early as February 1915, the Italian De Agostini Geographical Institute had published a map that determined the new Italian–Austrian border crossing the Slovenian territory and labelled Slovenian places with Italian names. The border of the so-called Italian Alps was delineated by the watershed of the Soča and Sava Rivers. The author described the language conditions with the use of various colours but left areas higher than 1300 metres above sea level without a colour mark indicating who lived there, in order to demonstrate the scarcity of the Slovenian population and the logical soundness of the use of Italian place names (Svoljšak 2003: 140–2). Toponymy was therefore a crucial part of the preparations for the incorporation of 'unredeemed' provinces into the 'home' country. To this end, a special toponomastic commission was set up which, in spring 1916, embarked on developing a framework for place-name reform.

The first 'problem' was encountered during the preparation of a statistical analysis of the occupied territories that was made at the end of August 1916, after Italy's occupation of Gorizia. The instructions issued by the Supreme Command recommended using place names as they appeared on maps and replacing the 'arbitrary' designations of the Austrian administration with the original ones used by the local population. With regard to 'Slavic names, especially those in the upper Gorizia province, they introduced topography consistent with Italian pronunciation and accentuation, which was also used on Venetian maps'.[1] Even though the Italian authorities generally complied with international regulations banning legal acts on place-name changes during military occupation and prior to annexation, they began to take the first active steps towards place-name reform as early as 1917. This was as much for the sake of bringing the new place names into direct practical use in the civil administration and armed services as for 'having all the necessary elements ready, complete and reviewed when the time comes for the government's final act in this area'.[2] Therefore, in February 1917 the Supreme Command set up a special toponomastic commission whose task was to lay down the general principles of reconstructing and transforming the place nomenclature in the occupied territories.

Slovenian place names were thus to be brought in line with the graphic and phonetic requirements of the Italian language or translated into Italian, such as Kobarid (in Slovenian) to Caporetto (in Italian), Bovec (Slo.) to Plezzo (It.) or Mount Krn to Monte Nero. Names were to remain unchanged only when the foreign forms were not translated either by Italians nor by Italian-speaking Slovenes, or when the Slovene language form sounded Italian enough to cause no orthographic problems. At the end of 1917, the draft manual of place names, containing more than 2500 entries, was submitted for approval.

Every last piece of the occupied territories, the newspaper *Slovenski narod* wrote with indignation, was given an Italian name.[3] The streets of one small village, Kojsko, which had mostly been spared the ravages of war, were renamed Via Avellino, Via Toscana, Piazza Forli' and Corso Vittorio Emanuele. In Kobarid, too, the locals could now take a stroll along Via Vittorio Emanuele and Via Cividale. 'Oddly, however, the monument to Volarič and the memorial plaque on his birth house remained intact.'[4] Everything was Italianized, according to the reports of the newspaper *Slovenski narod*:

> Italian inscriptions, Italian officers, Italian military, Italian schools, courts, municipal offices, everything instantly became Italian. . . . The Slovene language was confined to the Church. And even there it would rarely be heard, since who on earth would want to attract the attention of an Italian surveillance officer well-versed in Slovene standing in God's temple, listening and reporting on conversations. The Italian authorities found it difficult to tolerate the Slovene language even in church.[5]

Despite the Italians' painstaking efforts to present Slovenian places as a natural part of the Italian state, external observers noted that it was not so. A war correspondent for the London *Times*, John Carriage, who visited the Soča front after completing his coverage of the situation in Serbia, wrote in the *Journal de Genève* about the Slovenes in Gorizia, whom he named Yugoslavs and who, to his surprise, spoke a 'Yugoslav dialect'. When he inquired where they had come or fled from, he realized that they were, in fact, natives living on Slovenian soil. The newspaper *Slovenec* summarized his report with the following words: 'He was bewildered, having always taken the area as Italian; and Italian papers would constantly write about the unredeemed brothers who were longing for their caring mother to take them back in her arms.'[6] The Slovene language was thus confined to liturgical use, as it would later be in the second half of the 1920s and 1930s, when the Slovenian population of the Julian March was placed under the control of the Italian Fascist government (Svoljšak 1997: 115–36).

The Italian occupational authorities were most effective and efficient in introducing Italian in the Slovenian territory with the youngest generations of the Slovenian population, especially in the education of Slovenian children. After all, the language education of the future citizens of the Kingdom of Italy was regarded as the most successful strategy for preparing the population for its future annexation to the Kingdom of Italy. One should bear in mind that the General Secretariat was the 'assembly centre' of Italian irredentists, who during the war had already been trying to take an active part in the administration of the occupied territories and hence the realization of the *Risorgimento* in the (future) Julian March. They were also the most committed to the covert objective of the Italian occupational authorities – the thorough preparation of the occupied territories for the

post-war period – which was nowhere so clearly manifested as in the organization of educational activities. The establishment of the General Secretariat was actually an 'experiment in administrative practice, with which Italy aimed to undertake the administration of the eastern provinces' (Andri and Mellinato 1994: 1–2). With such an office in place, along with the additional setting-up of a political-administrative office that would take charge of administering civil matters, the Italian government was able to successfully coordinate the advances of the Italian Army during the first months after the war. The inhabitants of the occupied territories to be annexed to Italy after the war would thus perceive the Italian army not as an occupying force but as a liberating army which had from the very beginning worked towards their welfare. Thus, the administration became the first sphere in which the paternalistic way of understanding the problems of the occupied or 'unredeemed' territory found its expression. This interpretation of the occupying policy was adopted by the Italian government as well as by the royal circle.

The Slovenian inhabitants of Friuli viewed the arrival of the occupying army and its administration with great distrust and suspicion. However, whereas the Italian authorities were prudent in their expectations of an enthusiastic reception, the Italian soldiers apparently expected nothing less than a warm welcome. As one newspaper wrote at the time: 'a Slovene is a quiet and patient man and he believes that the present situation in his area will continue for some time, but not indefinitely'.[7] The same opinion was held by some Italian soldiers. Mario Mariani described his meeting with the Slovenian population as follows:

> On our entering the territory, the population did not receive us with open arms, but neither did they show hostility. They remained quiet, somewhat gloomy and distant . . . The Slavs [that is, the local Slovenian population] are as much loyal to Austria as the settlers in the valley of the Natisone are to Italy. [They] maintain their own dialect, legends and poetry, some distinctive features of their life, mysticism; they have a calm and contemplative character, and suppressed passion. (Pavan 1997: 389)

Only rare representatives of the Italian occupational regime could fully grasp the complexity and delicacy of the military occupation. The most sympathetic stance towards the population of the occupied territories was certainly demonstrated by the Commander of Kobarid, General Achille Papa, who endeavoured throughout his term to win the trust of the local inhabitants and acquired a very realistic understanding of the situation:

> They are quite suspicious, the Slovenes; however, I still think I was able to placate them, and they seem to have embraced the idea of an entertainment facility. Now I ought to be carefully navigating between their suspicions and the suspicions of the commanders . . . We must penetrate

> into the population without hurting their feelings or colliding with their language, which they hold so dear. It will be a time-consuming, arduous job, but we must undertake it without delay and prove that the current war was a necessity for us and that we proceed with the best intentions wherever we can to alleviate the horrendous damage that the war is causing. (Martinelli 1989: 67)

But how was it possible to win over the distrustful, unfriendly and despondent Slovenian (and Friulian) population? There were various ways to attain the objective, and the educational system made the biggest strides in this process (as indicated by the Commander of Kobarid) by targeting the youngest generation, which could be influenced on both a material and educational level. In disregard of binding international rules prohibiting any change to the existing legal and administrative (in the Slovenian territory, the Austrian) regime, the Italian occupying authorities introduced the most drastic measures precisely in this very sphere, in education. They thus set up a completely new educational system that was, indeed, adapted to wartime conditions but in its essence was completely Italian.

In the early stage of the occupation, the General Secretariat had established its fundamental positions on the organization of the educational system in the occupied territories in the document *La scuola nei territori occupati* (*Schools in the Occupied Territories*).[8] This was a typical attempt at 'aligning' the old system 'with the demands' of the new times and making it 'compatible with the character of our [Italian] liberal institutions'.[9] Despite initial plans to retain the existing teachers, most of them were soon held politically unreliable and were replaced with irredentist refugee teachers (from Austria-Hungary) or teachers from Italian border provinces. But, regardless of the initial commitment to abide by international legal norms in administering the occupied territories, the General Secretariat made drastic changes in the educational system in the very first year of the occupation, once it realized that it would be utterly impossible to align the rigid and outdated Austrian system with the idea of the nation and nationalism that fed from the irredentist well.

Introducing the Italian educational system was an extremely complex issue, not only because of purely administrative questions but also, and above all, because of linguistic problems and other substantial problems that confronted the Italian administration in the occupied territories. At the same time, this was also a question of the complete incompatibility of the Austrian and Italian educational systems and their relative effectiveness in eliminating illiteracy. In this regard one should not ignore the fact that nearly 90 per cent of the Slovenian population was literate. This figure was also known to the Italian authorities, and, compared to the 55 per cent literacy rate in the most developed Italian provinces (Piedmont and Lombardy), presented them with a unique challenge (Vivante 1945: 153).

Before the outbreak of war, schools in the (occupied) Slovenian territories provided Slovene-language instruction. This had allowed for Italian to be taught as a second foreign language, but the idea was never put into practice, with German-language instruction gaining a foothold (Svoljšak 2008: 356–64). Hence, the establishment of schools with Italian as the language of instruction posed a political and national problem, as well as a specific educational issue (Svoljšak 2003: 219–76).

Although Italian was the designated official language in the occupied territories, the central occupying authorities were aware that the introduction of Italian as the exclusive language of instruction was a delicate matter. Mention should also be made of the unfruitful initiative of the military chaplain and Barnabite, Pater Giovanni Semeria, who in November 1916 suggested that bilingual schools be introduced in Slovenian-populated areas of the Julian March in compliance with the principle of nationality. Prime Minister Paolo Boselli and Secretary General D'Adamo merely took note of his suggestion without ever giving it any serious consideration (Svoljšak 2003: 222–3).

The question regarding the language of instruction was closely connected with the organization of instruction, which was affected by the overall wartime situation in the occupied territory. From the technical point of view, the commencement of instruction was thwarted by the occupation of school buildings by the Italian army and the lack of security at the immediate rear of the front line. In the hope that the situation would soon improve, the General Secretariat nevertheless continued making plans for schools for Slovenian children in the occupied territory. However, it was immediately confronted by two problems. The first was the shortage of teachers with knowledge of Slovene and the ability to adapt Slovene-language instruction so that, rather than serving as a tool for fuelling distrust or even direct anti-Italian propaganda, it would contribute to the peaceful assimilation that the occupation had, according to the Italian authorities, successfully introduced in all other spheres of public life. The second problem was the scarcity of Slovene-language textbooks which could be replaced with Austrian ones, since 'a thorough revision showed that the hatred towards Italy and the unbearable fetishism of the Austrian supremacy emanated even from the commandments of the catechism and mathematical numerals'.[10]

Any measure taken by the occupying authorities with regard to teachers and textbooks would inevitably have political implications, especially for the future. However, aware also of the fact that it would be equally harmful and politically erroneous to leave an educational vacuum, the Italian authorities decided to introduce a substitute form of instruction which was to be of a temporary nature. They therefore opted for a special programme to be implemented within the framework of special institutions called educational entertainment facilities. Since the establishment of a Slovenian school during the war would provoke a wave of dissatisfaction in Italy, especially in groups

that were against any kind of acquiescence to Slovenes within 'the natural borders of their new homeland', instruction was to be adapted in such a way as to create appropriate conditions for gradual and peaceful assimilation.

Selecting this format of curriculum, which did not constitute 'proper school', was a way for D'Adamo to postpone the actual decision-making on the language of instruction until after the war, so as not to prejudice decisions about the post-war arrangements. In Kobarid, General Papa once again took heed of the apprehension with which the Slovenian inhabitants received the introduction of Italian, and he allowed Slovene instruction. He knew that it 'would be not be wise . . . at the moment to impose our language' (Martinelli 1989: 68), but on the other hand he firmly believed that it would not be long before the population of Kobarid began to speak in Italian. In any event, the free form of curriculum ensured greater freedom of language use, and there were many possibilities to introduce more flexible and attractive work methods, among which the Secretary General highlighted:

> generous school nutrition (three meals daily) and giving out presents such as shoes and clothing, which has and will continue to win many sympathies, even among families that are generally opposed to our occupation and especially to any form of schooling that should follow in the future, almost naturally, through this gradual, harmless and benevolent effort. (Martinelli 1989: 68)

Failing to understand this generosity, the newspaper *Slovenski narod* wrote that:

> Kobarid . . . had an Italian face on the outside, but its heart was Slovenian. Kobarid's Slovenian heart was breaking with despair when mothers were forced to send their children to Italian schools where they were mostly taught to shout: *eviva Italia!* [long live Italy!][11]

Just before the end of the first Italian occupation, the educational authorities organized additional training programmes for teachers from the occupied territories to equip them with knowledge of Italian teaching methods and help them obtain permission to teach. The training programmes focused, above all, on infusing the curriculum with a strong national connotation. This especially applied to the Italian language, pedagogy, history and geography, and even to mathematics, drawing, penmanship, and physical education – subjects that were undergoing the most drastic 'reform'. The new Italian curriculum placed major emphasis on homeland geography (*geografia patria*) and the history of the Italian *Risorgimento*; Italian instruction began in the second grade, after first-graders had acquired basic skills in reading and penmanship, which was based on block handwriting as 'the most hygienic style of writing, forcing the pupil to sit straight rather than

developing bad habits that negatively affect the spine'.[12] The Italian language was taught mostly through daily dictations and corrections and was improved with reading comprehension, while lessons in Italian grammar would only follow later. Arithmetic and mathematics were given proper attention in all grades. While religious instruction was optional, choir lessons were compulsory for all grades, so that children learned the Italian national anthem as soon as possible. Whereas the selection of teaching methods was left to teachers, the educational authorities recommended regular communication between teachers and pupils, many practical exercises and drawing in all school subjects, as well as out-of-classroom learning, practical lessons, working with newspapers, picture-postcards and illustrations, school exhibitions and natural science instruction in a natural environment.

With a view to ensuring the smoothest possible learning process in the occupied territories, the Italian authorities provided all necessary teaching accessories and thus equipped every school with spelling books, abaci, flexible rulers and scales; the walls of every school lobby were covered with posters featuring the four directions of the sky and the measuring system. Classrooms were decorated with portraits of the King, photographs of princes, and didactic pictures and images from the history of the *Risorgimento*. Other indispensable accessories were maps of Italy and historical atlases, notebooks and textbooks. Textbooks that were selected for pupils from the occupied territories and primarily focused on geographical–historical content were free for all pupils or, rather, were bought by every (occupied) municipality. The authorities made use of existing libraries and organized reference libraries, and the occupied territories were also supplied with travelling libraries. By promoting intense 'literary' activities, the General Secretariat aimed to create a satisfactory book collection in every school that would serve as a basis for the future organization of popular and school libraries, while during the occupation the founding and reviving of libraries was carried out in compliance with principles determined by the central, Milan-based federation of Italian popular libraries (Federazione italiana delle Biblioteche Popolari). During the war, libraries in the occupied territories had already become honorary members of the Bologna-based National Association for Elementary School Libraries (Associazione Nazionale per le Biblioteche delle scuole elementare). In a spirit of friendly cooperation, the association prepared six hundred 'patriotic bundles' (*pacchi patriottici*) of books and brochures for the new members to make sure that 'love of good literature spreads ever more widely, from schools to families, to become a popular custom and thus effectively contribute not only to general culture but also to imparting the sentiment that fosters and strengthens national consciousness'.[13]

The organization of the educational system also served as a safety measure by enabling the authorities to remove children from the streets, and as a social and healthcare measure by subjecting pupils to physical examination and vaccination against infectious diseases and providing them with food

and clothes. During the war, these services were of invaluable importance, especially at the time when the population of the Austro-Hungarian provinces was struggling with rapidly deteriorating standards of living as a direct result of the severe economic and social crisis (Svoljšak 2009: 107–9). On the other hand, it is important to recall the long-term objective of the Italian administration, that is, its step-by-step preparations for establishing the Italian education system and incorporating the occupied territory into the Italian state. A high-ranking Italian official described such a policy as expensive but effective (Ojetti 1964: 37).

On account of their difficult living conditions, children had difficulty embracing the new school and educational system. The educational authorities indeed tolerated a more relaxed approach towards teaching the Italian language, but teachers devoted more attention to geography and history, which were supposed to raise children's awareness of belonging to the Italian nation. This belief was to be strengthened through correspondence between Slovenian and Italian pupils, which was also promoted by the Italian senator Pio Foà, who was then the president of the Italian Union for Popular Education (Unione Italiana dell'Educazione Popolare). Foà saw this as a basis 'for building new connections of sympathy and solidarity between the new and the old provinces of Italy'.[14]

The correspondence of Slovenian children with their Italian peers was an important aspect of learning Italian, and a means through which the Italian authorities encouraged the 'exchange' of brotherly feelings and promotion of literacy in the Italian language. In addition to regarding correspondence as a pleasant and useful exercise in writing, the Italian authorities also saw it as an opportunity to imbue children with the Italian spirit. Furthermore, in order for the transfer of subjects taught to be successful and given the specific (re-)educational mission of the regime, much care was invested in the teachers recruited by new Italian schools. They were Italian refugees who came from provinces bordering on the 'liberated' territories and possessed an intimate knowledge of the neighbouring places, customs and traditions, which made them all the more competent to carry out the educational tasks assigned to them by the Italian government. Schools also recruited professional teachers – soldiers whose work was organized and supervised by the Union of Italian Teachers for the National War, which was responsible for spiritual propaganda. Nevertheless, Italian teachers would not have been able to perform their everyday school work successfully without the help of local women, former teachers, who served as an indispensable communication link between teachers and pupils.

Following the developments in the Italian educational system and its impact on the occupied territory, Slovenian newspapers concluded with resignation that 'little bright [Slovenian] minds will soon speak Italian'.[15] On the other hand, senior Italian officials described the educational work as the foundation for the inclusion of the population of the occupied territories in

the new homeland and as 'an act of spiritual liberation, endurance, invigoration and planting new seeds, an act that will, wherever it reaches, open little souls to discovering the Homeland'.[16]

Alongside, and in close connection, with language policy, the strategy of incorporating the occupied territories into the post-war state framework attributed an important role to celebrating Italian national holidays, which proved to be one of the most effective and efficient ways to establish Italian authority in the occupied territories. This was a tool of mass and thunderous propaganda that the 'redeemed territories' were a self-evident part of the Italian state territory. The cult of the fallen (Italian) soldiers was carefully maintained with commemorations and further strengthened by epic narratives of about the *Risorgimento* and other heroic events from the Italian past. The most convenient breeding ground for so-called patriotic feelings was, of course, schools, where 'children would march in parades, all wearing Italian cockades with the Heart of Jesus (!) imprinted in them and holding Italian flags',[17] even though celebrations were generally intended for the entire population. Clamorous speeches by military commissioners or army corps commanders, accompanied by military bands and recitals of so-called patriotic poetry, gymnastic shows, didactic exhibitions, essays and drawings, were used as means to commemorate 'patriotic' events, anniversaries of the occupation, victory and the seizure of Gorizia, the Capture of Rome on 20 September 1870,[18] the Day of the Dead, as well as birthdays of the members of the royal family, which were ideal opportunities for reawakening patriotic sentiment.

Re-education within the framework of school instruction was conducted as part of civic education. To this end, the Italian authorities even enabled the use of advanced technological methods and means. They distributed books among the population for the purposes of propaganda, the success of which was, according to the Secretary General, infallible:

> [T]he act of spiritual liberation . . . was persistent, invigorating, fruitful and intended, wherever it would reach, to open children's souls to the knowledge of the Homeland, which was systematically denied by the Austrian regime; it is a propagandistic act, in the highest sense of the term, that has – given that the Italian sentiment was perhaps somewhat superimposed upon but never effaced by the Austrian government – planted the seed into fertile soil. (General Secretariat [n.d.]: 1)

However, the thunderous celebrations did little to convince the local inhabitants to trust the Italian authorities. This did not escape the notice of Mussolini when he made a repeat visit to Kobarid on 15 February 1916. On that occasion, he wrote with disappointment:

> The population has not changed either. When I entered a few shops I could still find the same mysterious faces I encountered the first time.

> No. These Slovenes have yet to grow fond of us. They tolerate us with resignation and covert hostility. They think that we are merely passing through, that we do not intend to stay, and they are not willing to compromise themselves in case their masters of yesterday return tomorrow. (Mussolini 1992: 141)

On 27 October 1917, following the Austro-German army's successful invasion in the Twelfth Soča Offensive, the Italian military administration withdrew from the Slovenian territory to Padua, thus bringing an end to the twenty-nine-month occupation. The period between November 1917 and the end of the war was in administrative terms a period of relative anarchy; the displaced population slowly returned to their ruined homes, and provincial representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy began organizing the post-war reconstruction from Vienna, where they had fled at the outbreak of the war between Italy and Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, the Italian authorities would not surrender their control over the territory they had temporarily lost and, in anticipation of victory, they hastened plans for a renewed occupation in compliance with the Treaty of London. The occupation began immediately after the signing of an armistice on 4 November 1918, bringing to culmination the aspirations of the Italian national movement, Italia Irredenta and Italian official politics about the unification of the Italian national territory. Occupational administration was entrusted to the same office as it had been during the war and to the same personnel, since such a solution was considered (until January 1919) to provide a solid and tested backbone of administration. However, the new (or exacerbated) problem that was now facing the authorities in the Julian March was the multi-ethnic composition of the population, with 450,000 Slovenes and Croats living within the borders of the new Kingdom of Italy (Svoljšak 1997: 115–36).

During the first days of the occupation the Governor of the Julian March, General Carlo Petitti di Roreto, issued a series of measures that had an especially devastating impact on the inhabitants of the occupied areas, such as the disarmament of national guards, the establishment of a military court, the introduction of press censorship, a ban on movement across the demarcation line and unauthorized movement in the Julian March, and the prohibition of unauthorized public gatherings. Soon afterwards there followed an order prohibiting the public use of Yugoslav and Austrian flags and Yugoslav tricolour cockades. Due to stringent regulations, Slovenian intellectuals started to flee to the State of the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs within the very first days of the occupation. At the same time, the inhabitants of the Littoral organized a petition for the incorporation of the province into Yugoslavia, and the population in the occupied Slovenian municipalities collected signatures for a letter of protest against the Italian occupation. Due to Italy's violation of the armistice provisions and its strict regime of occupation, the

Littoral Slovenes submitted to the central authorities of the SHS State and to the authorities in Trieste their demand to replace the Italian army with the Allied Forces. This, however, was to no avail. The Italian authorities retaliated by further intensifying their measures in the Julian March, which mostly resulted in internments and deportations of the civil population and men eligible for the draft.

The main wave of internments hit the Julian March in February and March 1919, mostly targeting teachers, priests, officials and doctors. The military administration of the occupied territories lasted until 1 August 1919, when civil administration was passed into the control of the Central Office for the New Provinces (Ufficio centrale per le Nuove provincie) led by the Italian irredentist Francesco Salata. Having isolated Slovenian areas from their natural hinterlands, the Italian occupation caused national, social, economic and political change that wreaked havoc on the local population. In January 1919 the Paris Peace Conference was convened to settle the border dispute between Italy and Yugoslavia. This was finalized or, rather, confirmed by the bilateral Treaty of Rapallo in November 1920, which annexed the occupied territories to the Kingdom of Italy (Svoljšak 1997: 127–36).

In the second half of the 1920s, Fascism gradually and systematically undermined the democratic foundations of the Italian state while simultaneously intensifying nationalist pressure on the Slovenian and Croatian minority. The beginning of the systematic denationalization of the Slovenian and Croatian minority in the Julian March was foreboded by the educational reform, also known as 'Gentile's Reform', which – though coming into force on 7 October 1923 – had its origins in the decade before World War I. This educational reform modernized the obsolete Italian school system. As regarded the Slovenian educational system in the Littoral, which had comprised 321 primary and secondary schools before World War I, it prescribed the introduction of Italian as the language of instruction in primary schools from the first grade onwards. The language of minorities could only be taught as an extracurricular subject at the behest of parents, but only until 1925, when Italian was mandated as the exclusive language of instruction. By 1927, around four hundred Slovenian and Croatian primary schools in the Julian March had been converted into Italian schools, forcing 1000 Slovenian and Croatian teachers into retirement. Thenceforth, Slovene was taught by Slovenian priests who managed to preserve the Slovene language and culture by confining social life within the church walls (Kacin-Wohinz and Verginella 2008).

With regard to military occupations and their consequences, World War I demonstrated that the upper hand in post-war border negotiations lies with the state that has acquired positions during the preceding war. This holds especially true for Italy's policies during the First World War. Having developed a meticulous administration system, it set solid foundations for the future, even in the sphere of nationality policy, which further intensified after the war and became the backbone of violent nationalism.

Notes

1. Archivio centrale dello Stato (Rome), Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Guerra Europea, Paesi stranieri occupati dall'Esercito Italiano, fasc. 19-2-64. Prospetti statistici della Provincia di Gorizia e Gradisca e del Trentino ed Ampezzano.
2. R. Esercito Italiano, Comando Supremo, Segretariato Generale per gli Affari Civili, 'La gestione dei servizi civili'. Relazione, Fascicolo II, 31 October 1917: 23. Hereafter 'La gestione'.
3. *Slovenski narod* 11 (15 January 1915): 9.
4. 'Črtice o Kobaridu', *Slovenec* 262 (25 November 1917): 5. Hrabroslav Volarič (b. Kobarid, 1863; d. Devin/Duino near Trieste, 1895) was a Slovene composer and choir leader.
5. *Slovenski narod* 281 (7 December 1917): 4.
6. 'Anglež o slovenskih Brdih', *Slovenec* 105 (8 May 1917): 1–2.
7. *Slovenski narod* 232, 9 October 1915, p. 2.
8. Issued by Regio esercito italiano, Comando Supremo, Segretariato generale per gli affari civili.
9. 'La gestione', Relazioni I: 71.
10. ACS, PCM, Paesi stranieri occupati dall`Esercito italiano, fasc. 19-2-70, Istruzione scolastica nei territori occupati.
11. *Slovenski narod* 281 (7 December 1917): 4.
12. PANG, Civilni komisariat za politični okraj Tolmin 1915–1917, Programma didattico, 1 November 1916.
13. 'La gestione', Relazione II: 55.
14. 'La gestione', Relazione II: 56.
15. *Slovenec* 262 (15 November 1917): 4–5.
16. ACS, PCM, GE, Paesi stranieri occupati dall'Esercito italiano, fasc. 19-2-70. Padre Semeria, 'Proposta di organizzare le scuole popolari nei paesi sloveni della Venezia Giulia di tipo bilinguo. Istruzione scolastica nei territori occupati'.
17. *Slovenec* 262 (15 November 1917): 4–5.
18. On 20 September 1870, the *bersaglieri*, led by General Raffaelo Cadorna, had attacked Rome near Porta Pia and crushed the resistance of the army of Pius IX ('the Breach of Porta Pia'), completing the unification of Italy.

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6

Mediating for the Third Reich: On Military Translation Cultures in World War II in Northern Finland

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Finland was involved in three military conflicts in World War II: the Winter War (1939–40), the Continuation War (1942–4) and the so-called Lapland War. Unlike the Winter War against the USSR, in which international support had been minimal, Finland started the second war as an ally of Nazi Germany in its offensive to the East, that is, in Operation Barbarossa. In Finnish Lapland, the cooperation created an exceptional wartime context, 'a Finnish–German zone, in which the military leadership was in the hands of the Germans but the civilian administration in those of the Finns' (Lähteenmäki 1999: 241).[1] Three years later, in autumn 1944, this alliance turned into a Finnish–German confrontation on Finnish territory, the so-called Lapland War, as the peace terms imposed by the USSR dictated that Finnish troops must drive the Germans out of Northern Finland.

Like any other war, military encounters with the Soviet enemy, or with brothers-in-arms of the Third Reich, were social encounters of a special kind in which – stereotypically – weapons were used but in which language use, including translation and interpreting, also played a significant role: wars had declarations, reports and narratives made about them for other nations, and conditions of peace were negotiated between the parties (see Baker 2006: 2). Military manoeuvres were planned in headquarters on the basis of intelligence reports, and for this purpose prisoners were captured and interrogated on the front, in the rear area or in the prisoners-of-war camps. Military occupation was established with communicative acts, problems in logistics and maintenance of troops were solved with local inhabitants, and – finally – disagreements between local authorities, civilians and military representatives were negotiated in official or unofficial meetings.

For almost six years, the three wars created a multi-national and multilingual setting in which the practice of translation and interpreting was constantly present though often forgotten – not only in research on military history but also in translation studies. This goes for the international as well as the Finnish historiography of World War II, in which military

language mediation policies or the translators or interpreters as subjects have remained, until quite recently, largely invisible.[2] This is, however, hardly surprising, considering that it was only at the turn of the millennium that historical research in Finland started to move from descriptions of war to the description of individual experiences of war. As Markku Jokisipilä (2009: 188) puts it: 'The image of war has become more fragmented and individualized. Historical research is more and more interested in the fates of the group of people previously neglected like women, children and various minorities.' Translators and interpreters working in military conflicts certainly belong to this group of neglected people, perhaps for the simple reason that historians have been unaware of the experiences and potential agency of these seemingly innocent and neutral subjects.[3] This situation is now changing, both internationally and in Finland. In January 2011, a research project funded by the Finnish Academy was launched to take a closer look at translation and interpreting practices during the aforementioned Finnish military conflicts. The first observations of this project are made in this chapter.

Towards military translation cultures: fields of practice

As the title of the Finnish project – *In Search of Military Translation Cultures* – indicates, the communicative situations and mediation practices are approached as 'military translation cultures'. The concept 'translation culture' (*Translationskultur*) was coined by Erich Prunč in 1997 to denote a set of socially determined norms, conventions, expectations and values of all those involved in translation and interpreting activities in a given society or institution. The concept opens up a socio-cultural perspective on translation and interpreting, a perspective in which the actual practice is combined with the normative–ideological professional space as well as the status of the practice and the practitioners in the particular society. For Prunč (2007: 331), 'translation culture' is a social construct: it reflects the social agreement and disagreement over acceptable, recommended and obligatory forms of translation and interpreting in a given time and space.[4]

Through this definition, Prunč's concept creates a link to official language mediation policies as well as to the unofficial practices and personal agencies of those involved as military interpreters and translators in the military operations on the Finnish–Russian front, in the headquarters or with the Third Reich troops stationed in Northern Finland. In addition to the descriptions of translation cultures and translation events ('tasks') in general, the project seeks to reconstruct translator and interpreter profiles with information on their ethnic background, education, language skills and training in interpreting and translation tasks. Special attention is paid to networks of interaction and the status of translators and interpreters in different social settings of military practice. For this objective, Michael

Cronin's (2002, 2006) concepts of autonomous translation or interpreting strategies (military forces use their own professionals or otherwise linguistically-versed people) versus heteronymous translation or interpreting strategies (military forces have recourse to the services of natives to interpret for them) are of central importance. Using Cronin's concepts, a German 'Divisionsdolmetscher' working in the German headquarters in Rovaniemi could be regarded as a case of *autonomous interpreting*, whereas a Finnish civilian interpreting between German pilots and Finnish airport mechanics would constitute an example of *heteronymous interpreting*. However, Cronin's categories are only seemingly clear-cut and easy to apply. The problem is that at least in the context of Northern Finland, where several nationalities were involved, determining the narrative figure of 'us' as opposite to the 'other' or 'them' is not as simple as is, for example, implied by the opposition of 'colonizer' and 'natives' in Cronin's concepts.

The project has drawn on various research materials in the reconstruction of military translation cultures: information extracted from biographies and academic writings on military history have been used as shortcuts to hypotheses on translation cultures and translators' or interpreters' identities. War novels are analysed as fictional representations ('narratives') of military translation and interpreting situations. Additional important information is anticipated from 'oral history', that is, from interviewees who experienced language mediation situations or worked as translators and interpreters during World War II. The most significant research material, however, is to be obtained from archived records in Finnish, German and Russian national and military archives.

The following account is a summary of information that has been extracted mainly from academic writings on military history and memoirs. These findings point to four military contexts with potential military translation cultures. In this first phase of research, however, *fields of translation and interpreting practice* referring to geographical locations and to different fields of military activity will be established; the concept of 'field' also creates a handy allusion to wartime fields of combat. The information on translation and interpreting practice as well as norms, conventions and values obtained so far is not yet sufficient to define wartime translation cultures in depth.

The four contexts and fields are as follows:

1. *The Finnish–Soviet military front and rear area* in Eastern Finland as well as behind the Red Army lines: handling of prisoners-of-war (POWs) on both sides of the front. Use of interpreters and translators in the interrogation of POWs for intelligence purposes. Organization and daily management of POW camps by the Home Office, including the allocation of interpreters in the camps. Use of East Karelian POWs as interpreters in the camps (see Pasanen, 2011).

2. *The Finnish General Staff in Mikkeli*: use of linguists and other academics for processing material from encoded Soviet radio messages and documents. Translation of intelligence reports for German liaison officers. The role and mediation practice of German translators and interpreters in German liaison staff (*Verbindungsstab Nord*) in Mikkeli.
3. The city of *Helsinki* with the State Information Bureau (*Valtion tiedoituslaitos*): production and translation of radio and newspaper bulletins by linguists from foreign broadcasts and newspaper materials and the production and translation of propaganda materials for distribution abroad.
4. *The Finnish–German Zone in Northern Finland*: mediation practices of Finnish liaison officers, German interpreters and Finnish civilians in the collaboration of German and Finnish troops as well as in negotiations between German troops and the Finnish civilian administration and local inhabitants. Interpreting practice in German camps (*Stammlager*) for Soviet POWs.

The following discussion focuses on the Finnish–German Zone, introducing the specific circumstances in Northern Finland from 1941 to 1945 and then discussing the most important interpreting and translation activities and actors in these fields.

On the German presence in Lapland

From June 1941 to September 1944, large parts of Finnish territory were occupied by the armed forces of the Third Reich. The specific feature of this 'occupation' was that the German forces were stationed in Lapland with the full agreement of the Finnish War Cabinet with the purpose of preparing the nations for a war in which Finland and the Third Reich were to fight as brothers-in-arms against the common enemy, the USSR. The joint project, which began with the so-called Agreement on Transit, continued with the establishment of a permanent supply line from Finnish ports on the Gulf of Bothnia via Rovaniemi to the northernmost parts of occupied Norway. In June 1941, it turned into Operation Barbarossa, an offensive to the East (Vehviläinen 1987: 345–7; Lähteenmäki 1999; Junila 2000: 43–9).

The main purpose of the German presence was to secure possession of the nickel mines in Petsamo and to advance, in collaboration with the Finnish troops, from Northern Finland to the Murmansk railway. However, the German attack proceeded much slower than planned and soon the defensive line between the German and Soviet forces froze to the east of the Finnish national frontier for several years (Vehviläinen 1987: 345). During the war, practically the whole of Northern Finland functioned as the rear area of the German troops: their logistics, transportation and construction troops were located there and their communication and supply lines

led through it (Vehviläinen 1987: 346). As a consequence, the presence of German troops more than doubled Lapland's population: as early as July 1942, one year after the Continuation War had broken out, the German armed forces had stationed 180,000 soldiers in Lapland, while the number of native residents was 150,000, including thousands of men who were fighting on the front. Rovaniemi was in every respect the German capital of Finland. In addition to the seventy headquarters of different army units in Rovaniemi, the main field hospital, the principal supply centre and the major supply depot all operated in this area. Because of this, the population of the town increased from 7500 to 13,500 (Vehviläinen 1987: 248; Junila 2000: 90–1; Westerlund 2008).

The collaboration of Finnish and German troops created an exceptional wartime context, the 'Finnish–German zone', in which the German armed forces had command over military operations but had to leave civilian administration to the Finns. The German forces constructed, at least in principle, an independent military society in Northern Finland, a society with extraterritorial rights, according to which the Germans were subject to German military law only. The military society was also responsible for the maintenance of its own forces, including the production of newspapers and informative and entertaining radio programmes and the establishment of POW or labour camps in the Far North (Otto 2008; Westerlund 2008). In practice, however, the successful management of the tasks was largely dependent on cooperation and communication with local authorities and civilians. The opportunities and benefits as well as the friction and problems created by and experienced on both sides are described in detail by Marianne Junila (2000). Revealingly, Junila often explains friction and disputes as arising from communicative problems caused by an insufficient command of German or Finnish, yet the linguistic measures needed or taken by civilians, local authorities or military personnel are hardly mentioned at all. The need for translation and interpreting in this Finnish–German coexistence is, however, obvious.

Mediating in the Finnish–German zone

For local inhabitants, especially female civilians, the German troops brought several well-paid working opportunities. Finnish women worked in German hospitals, laundry houses, supply centres and canteens. Because many of the educated younger women had studied (or were still studying) German at school – in the 1940s, German was the first foreign language learned in Finnish schools – they were also employed as interpreters in German military airports and in other German rear area units such as Organization Todt, the military engineering unit.

Unfortunately, there is only fragmentary information on these interpreting and translation activities. As shown in the following examples from

academic writings on military history, the little bits and pieces of information consist of sweeping remarks, in which interpreting is mentioned as one task among others but the content of the task remains very vague:

> Some of the girls worked officially as servants, household workers and *interpreters* in German barracks, camps and constructions sites; some of them sold their bodies and, in order to avoid being arrested for prostitution, they took jobs as maids or other tasks. The demand for open-minded women was high and the benefits good in the wartime game of poker. (Lähteenmäki 1999: 116; author's emphasis)

> The Germans needed workers and hundreds of hard-working hands were hired for kitchens, casinos and laundry houses, for sewing and cleaning. A much smaller group worked as clerks, *translators and interpreters*. According to a survey conducted [1943] by a labour committee in Rovaniemi, two thirds of the women working for the Germans had reached their majority, the rest being younger than 21 years. (Junila 2000: 320; author's emphasis)

Another group of translators and interpreters working in this field consists of German military interpreters (the so-called *Wehrmachts* – or *Divisionsdolmetscher*), trained in Germany for military purposes before being ordered to the front. Stationed in the German headquarters of different troop formations, the interpreters can be assumed to have been mainly responsible for the interrogations of Soviet POWs.[5] So far, there is no evidence of any German interpreters for the Finnish–German language pair working in Northern Finland, and it can be assumed that the interpreters of the Third Reich in Lapland were indeed mainly trained for their tasks with the Soviets on the front or in the occupied parts of the USSR.

For example, as early as 1938, official regulations for linguistic education in the German Air Fleet (*Bestimmungen über die Sprachausbildung in der Luftwaffe*) make it very clear that in linguistic training Russian and Polish were of top priority, whereas languages spoken in Finland, Estonia and other '*Randstaaten*' ('fringe nations') such as Lithuania and Latvia were introduced at the bottom of the list of priorities. Perhaps this explains why German troops commissioned young Finnish men with a sufficient command of German to act as military interpreters moving with the troops. Both female and male Finnish interpreters received substantial compensation for their services, which – together with other material benefits and the status associated with military rank as well as the uniform of a military civil servant – must have made the task attractive for those involved. These benefits are expressed in passing in the following two extracts. The first is taken from a liaison officer's report dealing with harsh discipline and deaths in German prisoner-of-war camps, whereas the latter describes the exceptional

wartime nourishment as listed by a woman who interpreted in a German barrack kitchen:

> The prisoners are obviously now held under a regime of iron discipline, and recently one prisoner was shot at his workplace because he repeatedly refused to obey orders and didn't work properly. As reported by interpreter Bo Gadolin, working as a military civil servant in Ivalo (18 years, civilian, has permission to use the uniform of a military civil servant, lieutenant, the Germans pay him 4000 Finnish marks per month, additionally free housing), prisoners-of-war have escaped from this workplace before, and a guard sustained severe injuries. (Liaison officer G. Stude, quoted in Alftan (ed.) 2005: 111)

> [S]picy meat or soup, frozen fruit for dessert, red wine more often than milk, and finally black coffee to finish the meal. The late meal contained tea, bread and some savoury snacks: a bowl of cheese or sardines, a piece of sausage or canned meat. Portions were so generous that there were always leftovers to be taken back home. (Junila 2000: 315)

The attraction of being employed by the Germans becomes clear when the wages and other benefits are compared with contemporary wages in Finland: a shop assistant earned one-third of the salary paid by the Germans to a 'barrack barmaid' (Lähteenmäki 1999: 117), and an untrained and unqualified schoolgirl earned 3000 Finnish marks as an interpreter, a salary equivalent to that of a schoolteacher in the war years (Junila 2000: 323). In contrast to this, a Finnish civilian working as an interpreter for Russians in the Finnish POW camps received only 1750 Finnish marks per month plus daily allowances for his services (see Pasanen and Karhunen 2011). Little wonder that many people decided to leave their home villages and start a new life.

> Additional benefits, such as learning a foreign language or gaining some professional skills, or just increased opportunities to enjoy cultural and social activities provided by the German war colony, attracted young women from all over the country to head for work in Northern Finland. This, in a country struggling with labour shortage and wartime rationing, caused some national confusion and bitter public remarks about 'gold diggers'. Adolescent, uneducated girls were not supposed to rise above others in the food chain. (Heiskanen 2009: 154)

By all appearances, Finnish girls or boys recruited as language mediators never received any training for the task. The German forces suffered from a chronic shortage of linguistically-versed people (Junila 2000: 322), which is perhaps why the only required prerequisite for the job was (mostly not

more than) a modest command of German and Finnish; everything else was learned by doing.

One further group of translators and interpreters working in Northern Finland consists of Finnish liaison officers under the command of the Liaison Staff Roi in Rovaniemi. The liaison officers who moved with the German troops on the front or in different parts of Northern Finland or observed the military actions in the German High Command worked in two ways (see Westerlund 2008: 19–20). Firstly, their task was to assist German troops in their manoeuvres with Finnish troops under their command. In practice, this meant activities such as translating Finnish or German documents from a variety of fields plus interpreting between Finnish and German soldiers, between Finnish civil servants and German military officials, and between local civilians and German soldiers. Despite their extraterritorial rights, German forces in Finland were 'guests in a friendly country', as declared by the commander of the AOK Norwegen in his Order of the Day, and accordingly no colonialist behaviour toward Finnish citizens was tolerated. Tolerated or not, such behaviour occurred regularly, and liaison officer reports contain examples of mediation situations between Germans, local police authorities and – for example – a reindeer-owner whose reindeer had disappeared in the German barrack kitchens (see Alftan (ed.) 2005). Secondly, Finnish liaison officers working in the north were responsible for the observation of German troops and officers. On commission of the Finnish General Staff in Mikkeli, they reported regularly on troop movements, advances and retreats on the front and evaluated the mental atmosphere in the German headquarters. For this purpose they wrote summaries of discussions and translated German documents (such as daily orders, propaganda leaflets and educational materials) into Finnish (Alftan (ed.) 2005; Westerlund 2008: 20).

One important category of interpreting practices in the context of Northern Finland is that which prevailed in the German prisoners-of-war camps that held Soviet soldiers either captured by German armed forces themselves or handed over to the Germans by the Finnish military authorities. Although the group of soldiers employed as guard personnel usually included a couple of interpreters as well (Otto 2008: 93), all evidence collected so far points to the hypothesis that in these camps, just as in Finnish POW camps, camp discipline was to a great extent dependent on the mediation practice of bilingual camp inmates, born for example in the German-speaking areas of Ukraine or in the Baltic countries. In contrast to the more or less chosen agency of the interpreters discussed above, what seems to have been characteristic for the camp interpreters is their *enforced* role as interpreters between the captor and other captives, imposed on them in an *ad hoc* way and entirely on the basis of their apparent otherness that made them stand out from the other inmates. These interpreters were mostly Ukrainian POWs who in many cases were engaged

as 'volunteer' camp policemen (*Hilfswillige*); not unlike the notorious *Kapos* (*Kameradschaftspolizei*) in the German concentration camps, they learned or were forced to use their power against their comrades. The material benefits were mostly the same as those of the Soviet POWs from Eastern Karelia who were engaged as camp interpreters in Finnish camps, namely a bigger slice of bread, a couple of extra cigarettes and decent clothing (Pasanen and Karhunen 2011). However, the benefits went hand in hand with the risk of being regarded as a traitor by one's fellow countrymen. As reported by Westerlund (2008: 273), after the war dozens of volunteer interpreters and camp policemen were killed as apostates by Soviet soldiers who had survived their captivity.

Some of the German POW camps in Finland were used for screening (*Aussonderung*) of political commissars and other specialists of intelligence interest. The screening was usually conducted by the Gestapo according to the Commissar Order, a written order given by Adolf Hitler before Operation Barbarossa, which demanded that all Soviet political commissars should be executed immediately after identification. In this task, the Gestapo was assisted by officers and interpreters from the Finnish Secret Police (*Valpo, Valtiollinen poliisi*). At that time, as reported by Oula Silvennoinen (2008), the Finnish and the German secret police had made an agreement on an anti-Bolshevist task force, and for this purpose the Finnish side enlisted officers as well as interpreters whose task was to assist the Gestapo in interrogations and in daily routines with the Finnish authorities. The interpreters were all born in St Petersburg, were well-versed in Finnish, German and Russian and were considered ideologically suitable for the task force by the Finnish secret police.

Fragmented profiles

The theatre of war in World War II in Finland contained a multitude of intercultural settings with a multitude of actors for linguistic mediation tasks. A case in point is the Finnish–German zone in Northern Finland, where the joint military operation was largely dependent on translation and interpreting services provided by German and Finnish military authorities ordered to perform the task, by volunteer Finnish civilians or, finally, by bilingual Soviet prisoners. As this list and the above descriptions show, they constituted a heterogeneous group of mediators with a variety of national or ethnic backgrounds (German, Finnish, Russian, Ukrainian) and a different narrative positioning in the war (brother-in-arms, enemy). All this suggests different interpreter and translator profiles, who each had varying mediating roles, power relationships and economic rewards through their mediating practice and different concepts of personal space and freedom in their task performance.

For the description of translators' and interpreters' identities, Cronin's (2006) distinction between autonomous versus heteronymous translation

and interpreting strategies or 'systems of recruitment' (as in Cronin 2002: 393) offers one interesting starting-point. Autonomous translation or interpreting refers to a sort of 'self-translation', where it is for example 'the colonist himself who acquires the language of the native (through a relationship with the natives)' (Cronin 2006: 40). In contrast to this, heteronymous translation and interpreting refers to the 'dependent' translation practice, where the 'colonizers have recourse to the services of the natives to interpret for them' (Cronin 2006: 40, 85; see also Dragovic-Drouet 2007: 33). In the historical context of the present study, the choice between the German bilingual soldier and the Soviet bilingual POW as an interpreting agent in the POW camp is an obvious example of the choice between autonomous and heteronymous interpreting. Through the narrative (ethnic) categories of 'us' and 'them', the two profiles seem clear and identifiable, at least in the geographic isolation of the German *Stammlager*.

However, outside these camps, which were like small-scale German colonies in Northern Finland, the application of Cronin's framework becomes slightly problematic. The basic division into two strategies does not quite help to distinguish mediated contact situations between different ethnic groups from one another – or to understand the different shades of concepts like 'trust', 'loyalty' or the assumed 'neutrality', which were all connected to these categories. This is caused by the specific circumstances of the 'Finnish–German zone' as a multicultural area, where in fact both colonizers and colonized were imported categories and both were 'hosted' by a third party, the Finns. The categories of 'us' and 'them' become fuzzy.

What separates a Finnish boy engaged as an interpreter for a German construction unit in Rovaniemi and a Ukrainian POW interpreting German commands for his camp inmates – both of them examples of heteronymous interpreting utilized by German armed forces – is their positioning in the war as well as their narrative roles. For the Germans, the Finnish interpreter was a brother-in-arms, fighting the common enemy, the USSR, as represented by the Ukrainian interpreter. (This may, of course, be a gross generalization, as the Ukrainian soldier may have defined himself first and foremost through his ethnic background rather than his Soviet citizenship. This did not, however, change his position as an enemy in the theatre of war.) The Finns and the Germans had a common goal in the war, defined through shared narratives (such as 'preventing the spread of a communist "infection"' (Otto 2008: 96)) or by uniting motivations (such as securing new *Lebensraum* and raw materials for Germans and correcting the great injustice of the Winter War peace resolution for the Finns). In other words: the ethnic 'otherness' of the two parties is overlooked in favour of their shared narratives. As a consequence, if a Finnish interpreter born in the former St Petersburg with a multicultural family background shared anti-Bolshevist ideology with his German employer, he might very well have ended up interpreting at a violent interrogation of a Soviet political commissar in an agency which was

most probably defined less by his ethnicity than by the ideological framework of the interrogations. The interpreter becomes a representative of the military authorities in command, a part of the autonomous strategy.

Therefore, in the context of Finnish–German military cooperation, it seems necessary to define the narrative oppositions of *us* and *them* that loom behind Cronin's division. These oppositions 'precede and accompany all wars [and] constrain practically every form of interaction in this context' (Baker 2010: 198) according to the (ideological) narratives that are shared by the actors or that separate them – rather than according to their ethnic background only. How these shared or opposing narratives manifest themselves in the socio-cultural position of the military translators and interpreters, in their mediation practice and in the consequences thereof, is a research avenue that will be taken in the future phases of the ongoing project. The consequences can, of course, be approached both from the users' and from the interpreters' perspective. As Cronin (2006: 85) writes, 'the recurrent danger with the heteronymous strategy was, of course, that the native's loyalties would revert back to the native'. It remains to be seen to what extent the risks of infidelity are linked to ethnic rather than to ideological narratives active in the mediated communication. The few examples collected so far, however, make ethnic affinity a strong candidate to prompt such changes in interpreters' or translators' loyalty. In his biographical 'story of a prisoner-of-war', Alava (2002: 88) describes the violent interrogations conducted by a Soviet officer and assisted by an interpreter, a born Finn, who had defected to the USSR after the Finnish Civil War. Alava shows that in the end 'blood was thicker than water': the interpreter got tired of interpreting the same contents over and over again and started to advise the prisoner 'to talk less so that they wouldn't ask so much' and smuggled him extra portions of bread. Similarly, Westerlund (2008: 66) reports on a translation event in which a fugitive Ukrainian prisoner was executed in front of other camp inmates as a warning. As his last words he shouted 'kahi žive Radjanska Ukraina' ('long live the Soviet Ukraine'). The officer in charge requested the interpreter to translate the message into German. The interpreter did not want to repeat those patriotic thoughts and interpreted that the executed prisoner bade farewell to the other POWs. Instead of a faithful interpretation, the German officer is provided with nothing more than a speech act with which the interpreter uses his minimal power and positions himself on the side of the fellow captives, perhaps for the simple reason of protecting them. In this situation, the dependence of the German officer on the camp interpreter reveals language as his real 'point of weakness', which the interpreter uses in his resistance and becomes a 'power-broker for the powerless' (Cronin 2006: 91).

These two examples highlight the issues of 'trust' and 'loyalty' that constantly confront interpreters and translators in military conflicts. Given the fact that we are dealing with a violent conflict situation between two armed

forces, it is rather surprising to observe in how many situations captors are indeed dependent on captives acting as interpreters, or, in other words, how surprisingly often captors are forced to trust their enemy in the role of heteronymous interpreter and to trust something that could not have been checked: the interpreter's fidelity. There are reasons to believe that the trust was based on the recruited interpreter's real fear of death. But, as the above example shows, even this risk did not always prevent interpreters from using the only personal space that their commissioners could not control, namely the space of infidelity. The dramatic dimension of the military interpreters' agency and the risks thereof is that by the end of the war many of the heteronymous interpreters had made themselves vulnerable to acts of revenge from their countrymen, in cases where they had survived their wartime superiors.

Conclusion

For four years, the joint military operation of German and Finnish armed forces against the USSR made Northern Finland a multicultural theatre of war, where the successful management of military operations between the brothers-in-arms on the front as well as daily routine in the rear area continuously called for linguistic mediation. Drawing mainly on recent military history publications from Finland, this chapter outlines the fields of military translation and interpreting and the groups of people who were engaged in these tasks on command, by force or voluntarily. In addition to the official mediation services provided by the more-or-less-educated German military interpreters or by the Finnish liaison officers, the persistent shortage of linguistically-versed people in all areas of warfare led to the *ad hoc* recruitment of Finnish civilians or Red Army prisoners-of-war as translators and interpreters. This ethnically as well as ideologically heterogeneous group of mediators is not easily defined with the concepts of autonomous versus heteronymous interpreting, but Cronin's opposition nevertheless offers a valuable tool for the description and analysis of emerging interpreter profiles. In the next phase of the ongoing project, the focus will be on archival material and the search for written records that help to determine the framework of norms, conventions and expectations in which each military interpreter or translator developed his or her personal agency.

Notes

1. All translations from Finnish are the present author's unless stated.
2. For a more international overview, see Baker 2010.
3. See also Stahuljak 2010: 393–4.

4. For comments on the concept, see Pym 2006: 23–4.
5. On language and Nazi concentration camps, see Taylor, this volume.

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7

When Bosnia was a Commonwealth Country: British Forces and their Interpreters in Republika Srpska, 1995–2007

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I interviewed Bojan in a bookshop café in the centre of Banja Luka.[1] He was turning thirty-two that year, only four years older than me, but he had started working as an interpreter in 1996 while attending a *gimnazija*, the most academic Bosnian secondary school, near his hometown in north-west Bosnia. Bojan and I talked about his work on several British bases around Multi-National Division South-West, the zone of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) where the multi-national military force had been commanded by a British division headquartered in the so-called Banja Luka Metal Factory. His mother and father, a schoolteacher and a private-sector employee, had depended on his earnings, which he remembered as over a thousand Deutschmarks for a month's full-time work. After various part-time contracts for other international organizations and private clients, he won a foreign postgraduate scholarship and returned to teach at a private college in his hometown. Afterwards, over coffee, he reflected on what the British presence had meant to Banja Luka. He associated British forces with a calm efficiency missing from local practices and suggested to me that when the British had been in Banja Luka, Bosnia had practically been a Commonwealth country – a foreign territory drawn into Britain's cultural ambit through the exercise of British power.

Bojan was one of fourteen interpreters I interviewed who had worked for British forces in the Serb entity of BiH, usually known even in English as 'Republika Srpska' or 'the RS'.[2] This paper aims to show the experiences most common to local people who were employed as interpreters through the Metal Factory headquarters during the British deployment to north-west Bosnia. Local interpreters facilitated communication during, and were essential to, British troops' peace support activities: weapons inspections, liaison visits, mine clearance, civil–military relations, patrols. Their accounts point to a semi-British cultural space within the Banja Luka area that was produced on military bases yet carried over into interpreters' homes and

friendship networks. However, they also show many factors impeding affinity between interpreters and the force. Workers could have been supported and the quality of language mediations could have been improved if interpreters or their users and supervisors had been equipped to recognize the impact of everyday practices or policies not thought through.

The RS group unexpectedly represented the largest single cluster of interviewees in my study of language support for peace operations in BiH.[3] Originally, I had expected respondents semi-evenly spaced throughout Bosnia besides a predicted Sarajevo cluster. However, my research team connected two British universities from large English cities and one public institution associated with semi-official military history (Southampton, Reading and the Imperial War Museum), and I was a British national and native English speaker. These links influenced the structure of the dataset and also shaped the data. The RS speakers were conscious of an immediate British listener and a remote British audience: even before speaking, they had chosen to acknowledge their Anglophone audience and perform identities as experienced English users by giving the interview in English, not their native language. Studies of oral history remind us that 'the story that is actually told is always the one preferred amongst other possible versions' (Summerfield 1998: 17). The RS stories were told at or near the end of unexpected careers to an imagined collective audience that had never appreciated the impact of British presence in north-west Bosnia.

First impressions of work

The British contingent that moved into the Metal Factory in December 1995 was the first foreign military unit permanently stationed in Banja Luka during the post-1992 international intervention in Bosnia. Banja Luka was the RS's largest city, a symbolic headquarters location with easy access to smaller towns near the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. British forces arrived with three years' experience of managing language support in central Bosnia using a few British military linguists and colloquial speakers plus more than a hundred locally-recruited interpreters. NATO rather than the UN organized the multi-national force after Dayton, making human resources, pay and testing at the Banja Luka Metal Factory a British responsibility.[4] Candidates at the first recruitment day sat speaking, listening, reading and writing tests and received one of five general pay-grades for local civilian employees.[5] Among the candidates were two of British forces' longest-serving interpreters, 'Mitch' and Slađana. Mitch recalled the start of his twelve years of employment as almost a happy accident (he had accompanied a female friend), while Slađana had heard of the recruitment day through her university's English department. Mitch and Slađana's longer accounts both suggested that young women had been reluctant to approach foreign forces for work and overcame this by attending in groups or with male friends. Reconciling

on-and-off-duty lives was harder for female interpreters: besides the local unpopularity of SFOR, female behaviour was more strictly policed by gossip and they had to ensure their own actions were seen to be morally proper.

The actual tests gave little idea of strengths and weaknesses. Passes mapped to grades 3 or 4 on the British pay-scale for Locally-Employed Civilians;[6] most field interpreters began at grade 3 as 'language assistant'. Worse yet for precision, the test equated English-language knowledge with interpreting proficiency and did not assess skills such as memorization or calmness under pressure which would determine in-the-field performance. In 1999, the Metal Factory's Pioneer Labour Support Unit retested interpreters during a civilianization scheme that opened certain administrative posts to locals but still used the four basic language competencies and five pay grades. British forces never retested interpreters as precisely as HQ SFOR, which retested all the headquarters organization's interpreters in 2000 when it professionalized. British language support remained within the logistics chain of command, where neither managers nor interpreters were expected to know the interpreting profession's own standards.

Successful candidates waited for vacancies at their assigned pay grade. These were often short-term assignments such as sickness/vacation cover, dealing with gatehouse enquiries (seen as entry-level work) or even travelling abroad for OPTAG exercises (see below); one former Red Cross press officer was assigned directly to British generals at divisional headquarters. Many interpreters lived in or near Banja Luka when they took the tests, but their work was often further away. Most posts were elsewhere in the RS or even as distant as Tomislavgrad (a Croat-majority town in the Federation), so interpreting usually involved weeks or fortnights away from home, working twelve-hour shifts and living four-to-a-room (the standard for soldiers' rather than officers' accommodation) in prefabricated Corimec containers. Living and working extended hours together produced deep friendships that often continued after teams were broken up. Weekly/fortnightly shifts could be convenient for those who travelled long distances but could also upset family life, as Dubravka recalled: 'when I had a baby, I used to drive at eleven [or] twelve at night and travel back in the morning, just to see baby'.[7] Some other new mothers chose to quit work or took weekday office-hours jobs in administration or the Metal Factory's small office-based language support unit.

Encountering the other through language

Ten to fifteen years after starting work, interpreters' first impressions of the job and its unfamiliar surroundings contained a strong common theme: the linguistic alienation of entering a landscape of abbreviations, military slang and obscure regional accents. Interpreters had grown up learning and being tested on what they termed 'BBC English' or 'the Queen's English'; yet Her

Majesty's Forces, every new interpreter soon discovered, did not speak the language of Her Majesty. The regional recruitment pattern for British infantry and cavalry regiments meant that most soldiers in a unit communicated in one regional dialect and accent. Interpreters identified Welsh, Scottish and 'Geordie' (Newcastle) accents as the hardest to understand – though noticed that officers (graduate-level, trained at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, and not necessarily from their regiment's home region) spoke more comprehensible standard English. Even one of the most proficient interpreters in the RS cluster – Sara, who passed HQ SFOR's tests in 2000 – remembered struggling with spoken regional English: 'that was my first impression, that oh my God I can't understand anything . . . But then later on I just got used to the dialects, and it was better then.'[8]

Certain units did not even speak English among themselves, exposing interpreters to two thoroughly alien languages: Welsh and Nepalese. Britain's Nepalese-speaking Gurkha units represented several dimensions of otherness simultaneously: non-Europeans within a force that interpreters associated with England and tradition; non-native English speakers whose command of the Army's working language could be poorer than interpreters'; non-white men whose racial difference attracted the local gaze (some townspeople apparently read them as 'Chinese'). Since the Royal Gurkha Rifles served more tours in BiH than any other British regiment, many interpreters worked with Gurkhas for long periods. These interpreters' accounts reflected a concept of culture in which a given people all shared a certain culture and displayed a certain common mentality. Interpreters mainly described Gurkhas' difficulties with English pronunciation as counterbalanced by a positive attitude to problem-solving and, in one account, a higher aptitude for local language acquisition than Anglophone British soldiers had. Many nonetheless told of confusion caused by Nepalese-accented pronunciation or an inflexible flexible 'mentality'. For Mitch, this last was epitomized by an incident where a Gurkha soldier had confused a village man's reference to the nineteenth-century Serb poet Vuk Karadžić with information about the war-crimes suspect Radovan Karadžić and had then reported Mitch to his unit for mistranslation. The anecdote illustrates the procedural mistrust that underlay day-to-day camaraderie. Beneath soft surfaces of friendship, there still stood a structure of operational security in which interpreters, as local nationals, were kept apart from sensitive information and would be held to account for suspicious behaviour.

Identification

The RS interpreters faced dilemmas of loyalty and identification because of prevailing Serb perceptions of the intervention and foreign soldiers' perceptions of the Serbs. The RS army was the only belligerent that NATO targeted with airstrikes in 1994–5; post-war prohibitions on war-crimes indictees

standing for election were interpreted in the RS as interference with Serbs' political self-determination; in spring 1999, NATO again launched airstrikes against Serbs in Serbia/Montenegro during the Kosovo War. Mass-mediated RS public opinion framed the foreign forces, with the partial exception of Orthodox Christian soldiers, as enemies not allies. Peace operations in this entity therefore came closer to the post-war occupation paradigm than any other aspect of the BiH intervention, and working for the British Army in 1999 meant working for the armed forces of a state whose prime minister, Tony Blair, had led the world in calling for military intervention against Serbia. Several interpreters had witnessed verbal abuse against interpreters working for 'occupying forces', though they emphasized that only a minority of people were openly hostile. The most direct abuse or threats were occasioned by street demonstrations against international policy in BiH, particularly a) a March 1999 ruling constituting the town of Brčko as a neutral district outside the RS; b) the Kosovo War; c) the reconstruction of the main city mosque destroyed in 1993 (riots in May–June 2001). Mitch had accompanied a British unit to the Brčko demonstrations, where he had been insulted by protesters. He considered that protesters 'always know how to recognize the interpreter' even though interpreters wore British uniforms:

> [T]hey are considering me as someone who is a traitor, for them I have . . . disrespect to my roots, to the interests of the nation, and I have gone to work for the local occupiers.[9]

Mitch could not take comfort in the convention that wearing the employer's uniform should protect the interpreter – a practice that Slađana, in contrast, *had* found reassuring when she nervously accompanied British troops to visit Bosniak officers (the wartime 'other side') in 1996. Instead, Mitch dealt with the potential dangers of interpreting work by privileging personal courage and resourcefulness, which had allowed him to maintain integrity through several difficult language encounters. Mitch's rationalization through displacement ('it's not my face, it's the uniform that I'm wearing and the job that I do'[10]) was one common way to make sense of conflicting demands on interpreters' sympathy; another was weighing the implications of working for British forces against the more unpalatable idea of working for leaders implicated in collective violence and corruption. To explain divided loyalties, both Serb and non-Serb interpreters sometimes invited me to imagine a fundamental other to the West: how would I feel if China had sent soldiers to the UK, or how would a US soldier feel working with the Iranian army in Tehran?

Often, interpreters resolved sympathy and loyalty problems by turning to a discourse of professionalism – drawing on British military understandings, not the linguistic profession. During several years' employment (when

the resolution of the Northern Ireland armed conflict and Scottish/Welsh devolution were occurring in Britain), some had identified positive aspects in their conception of British culture such as workplace politeness or the peaceful resolution of political disputes. Challenging townspeople's attitudes to SFOR could move beyond self-justification into advocacy. Interpreters still had doubts about working for NATO, especially during the Kosovo War when NATO airstrikes caused both civilian and military casualties. Most Banja Luka Serbs would always have had friends or relatives in Belgrade and many would also know Bosnian/Croatian Serbs who had been displaced to Belgrade in 1991–96. During the Belgrade bombing, Stojan had been working for a Dutch unit within the British zone while relatives from Belgrade were staying with him in Banja Luka:

> I was in NATO uniform during that time. So I was also, in my mind, against Milošević and against that regime in Serbia, but . . . I was in a really bad situation. Because I was against those strikes, personally. I was really really against those strikes. Because the whole of Serbia was bombed . . . But I was [going] back to my apartment in uniform, and we would go together, and it was an interesting time, you know, let's say.[11]

The need to reassume the identity of 'neighbour' off duty made periods of tension between SFOR/NATO and local Serb populations awkward for interpreters. Jovana recalled that she 'kept a low profile' when she lived in Belgrade between interpreting shifts during 1999 but that neighbours' opinions improved 'once they realized that you were actually helping locals as well'.[12] Dubravka compared her embeddedness in two such different social and cultural environments to being 'a spy in old books, living a double life, with completely different rules, different clothing'.[13] Linguists who were indeed spies used to experience severe anxieties about whether their performances as ordinary local residents and native speakers would convince their civilian and military audiences (Pattinson 2007: 15). Yet even linguists with ostensibly nothing to hide found themselves, in the specific context of the late-1990s RS, developing dual identities and personas for their two different communities. Traces of their work were still audible in their easy use of British military slang, while experience and rumour spoke of others who had committed to longer-lasting identification with the British. Most had heard of women marrying British soldiers and moving to the UK; a story I first heard from a former British commanding officer and encountered again in Banja Luka spoke of a young man from Travnik or Maglaj who had become so fascinated with the British Army while working for the Coldstream Guards in his hometown that he aimed to join, or may even have joined, the British military himself. The story served as an uncomfortable limit case for narrators working out the contradictions of their identification with the foreign force.

OPTAG

Another experience most Banja Luka interpreters shared was travelling to Britain and/or Germany to take part in pre-deployment field exercises. In the early 1990s, feedback from the Defence School of Languages and supervisors of military linguists had convinced the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to incorporate simulated language encounters with genuine native speakers into troops' pre-deployment training.[14] These took place during field exercises in Cold War-era mock villages localized for Bosnia with road signs in the local language(s) and graffiti in Cyrillic and Latin scripts. Operational Training Group (OPTAG) exercises drew native speakers from several sources (MOD civilian language instructors; Bosnian émigrés in the UK; working field interpreters) to role-play interpreters and Bosnian interlocutors in scenarios like checkpoints and weapons inspections; for many soldiers, OPTAG was a first contact with Bosnia's language(s) and with Bosnians. From a MOD viewpoint, involving active field interpreters was a cost-effective source of linguistic and cultural authenticity, injecting up-to-date experiences from 'theatre' into an iteratively updated training programme.

OPTAG training in interviews was a subject for pleasant reminiscence – the photos they shared were usually happy OPTAG souvenirs – and, significantly, reflected experiences on the margins of the official rationale. Travelling to OPTAG represented spending time in rural or historic English landscapes that corresponded to the enduring touristic images of Britain in former Yugoslavia (one woman had visited the cathedral city of Canterbury several times and had open invitations to visit military colleagues near Windsor). However, OPTAG also intersected more deeply with pre-war travel experiences. Yugoslavia had been distinguished among European socialist states by its citizens' legal and economic ability to travel for leisure and shopping. This mobility, taken for granted by the Yugoslav professional strata in which most interpreters had grown up, had vanished for most people during and after the conflict: as citizens of Yugoslav successor states they had to make costly and humiliating visa applications even for short tourist trips and travel was substantially less affordable (Jansen 2009). OPTAG travel briefly restored interpreters' mobility and a pre-war 'normality' that was rarely accessible to post-war Bosnians. Interpreters incorporated OPTAG mobility into their off-duty lives in ways irrelevant to, unseen by and sometimes even confusing to their employers: one interpreter working part-time had been dismissed when she alarmed her unit by staying on an extra week to visit her British boyfriend, while one of her colleagues had returned late from Germany because he was driving back a new car.

Even memories of work *during* OPTAG ran on parallel tracks to the official and British understanding. OPTAG was memorable not for the opportunity to influence soldiers' preconceptions of BiH but for the sheer fun one could have with friends in role-playing scenarios, defraying the boredom

of repeating simple scenes for multiple trainee groups. Within the typical scenario of an improvised three-way conversation between British soldiers, an interpreter and Bosnian interlocutors, native-speaker participants could amuse each other with in-jokes such as naming an elderly blind grandfather's character 'Filip Višnjić' after the famous nineteenth-century blind folk poet;[15] the freedom of speaking and not being understood even allowed native speakers to comment on the trainers' conduct or appearance. Humour and its untranslatability in the face of power perhaps separated the inherent simulacrum of crisis from the reality of upsetting and abnormal experiences that Bosnian participants might themselves have undergone. Moreover, these practices are strongly suggestive of the 'hidden transcripts' identified in subordinates' behaviour by the political anthropologist James Scott: such backstage critiques, including rumours, jokes and gossip, may be seen as working to 'create and defend a social space in which offstage dissent to the official transcript of power relations may be voiced' (Scott 1990: xi). No topic was more ripe for dissent than the strongest negative theme of interpreters' narratives, anxiety surrounding contracts and employee welfare.

Welfare

Negative experiences of interpreting were largely rooted in the British force's perceived disregard for local employees' financial – and cultural – wellbeing. Simultaneously, they emphasized that among several rotations' worth of troops they had experienced friendly, 'normal' and 'human' treatment as well as rudeness and depersonalization. Interpreters highly valued a working relationship where shared goals and reciprocity bridged or masked gaps of privilege and origin; they felt personally affronted when the working relationship instead treated them as interchangeable not-fully-human tools. This was compounded by the upsetting lack of cultural knowledge they observed in many British soldiers:

> It happened that soldiers would think that they . . . were coming to God knows which country. Like we were supposed to be total peasants over here or God knows what – we used to call ourselves peasants because they thought that we were – and then they would be surprised that we actually have electricity, we have TV, we have satellite, we have internet. And then they were like, 'What the hell are we doing here?' . . . So they would compare us with Afghanistan, with Iraq . . . well, I guess that we are – I can't say that we are much better than them, but in this development, this is Europe.[16] (Dejan)

The interviewed interpreters respected the soldiers who tried to improve their historical and cultural knowledge, who used even just enough local

language to participate in everyday social rituals, who maintained contact with the area after leaving (such as by returning on holiday) and who accepted local hospitality and reciprocity practices – thus accepting Bosnian norms of neighbourliness – rather than staying cold and distant. These judgements should be set in the context of the immense social value placed on education by the professional urban middle classes of former Yugoslavia, where 'being educated' signified reason and decency, fulfilled selfhood and distanced one from poorly-educated internal migrants of village origin (who were imagined to be the core audience of nationalist politics). This had often led professional parents to put their children through private language classes.[17] Through role-reversal, interpreters implied that if they had been foreigners deploying somewhere unfamiliar they would have worked harder to acquire knowledge.

These observations went wider than the RS or British contingents. A woman working for Canadian forces in the Federation part of MND (SW) experienced similar misconceptions:

> They expected to find savages here, I would say. One girl, I'm still friends with her, she told me that they were told to bring lots of shampoo and toothpaste and hygienic items because you could not find it here.[18] (Emina)

US Army interpreters in Tuzla were offended by soldiers who lacked basic knowledge of Bosnian geography (Tarik: 'He had no idea that Sarajevo was even in Bosnia. He was like, "You know what? There's a war in Kosovo and I'm not going down there"'[19]) or who expected strict Islamic practices in Bosnia (Azra: 'they expect, I don't know, women to be staying at home, not working, being covered, praying all the time, going to the mosque and et cetera, which we don't do'[20]). Tuzla's distinctive socialist, secular and multi-ethnic urban identity made the last expectation particularly inappropriate.[21]

At the root of this discomfort were symbolic practices of resolving the deep-seated cultural ambiguity of formerly-Ottoman South-East Europe. The Balkans, while geographically European, have been 'culturally constructed as "the other"' to developed Western Europe in political and creative texts since at least the nineteenth century (Todorova 1994: 455; Hammond 2007). The Balkans' own 'nesting' discourses of cultural identity typically maintain the Europe/Balkans, west/east and civilized/backward oppositions but use various symbolic markers to inscribe one's own group into Europe and certain others into the Balkans (Bakić-Hayden 1995). Even within one country, social practices are constructed as 'European' or 'Balkan' to produce symbolic stratifications and distinctions that add an urban/rural dimension to the oppositions, resembling (though not identical to) the symbolic construction of class in Western Europe (Jansen 2005). Interpreters, generally the children of professional families, tended to situate themselves within

a consciously 'urban' taste-culture that rejected practices coded as rural or Balkan. This context meant that soldiers expecting to find barbarism and poverty were utterly infringing on a fragile Bosnian sense of self which in certain areas had already been damaged by the moral compromises necessary to survive in war.

Bosnians' dissatisfaction at foreign forces' non-recognition of their claim to westernness and Europeanness also exacerbated problems of financial welfare. Most employees did believe that high hard-currency wages ultimately justified their insecure fixed-term contracts and the disruptiveness of residential shifts and workplace transfers. Their complaints focused on employee welfare, in particular maternity leave, health insurance and compensation for on-the-job injuries. Until the late 1990s, when several female interpreters lobbied the divisional personnel unit, maternity and sick leave were limited to the standard fourteen-day leave period in all contracts – contravening local pre-war expectations of employer responsibility. Interpreters were similarly not registered for social security or health insurance, meaning they would have to provide for themselves even if injured at work.

Poor workplace compensation upset interpreters and compounded their anxiety about inexperienced and adventurous young male soldiers' risky behaviour. One particular incident where a woman was wounded in the leg and sued the MOD for compensation resonated through several Banja Luka interviews.[22] The interpreter had been accompanying an infantry patrol on Operation Harvest duties, door-to-door home inspections where soldiers confiscated arms and ammunition. When a soldier, possibly a Gurkha, negligently handled a confiscated pistol – or when a group of soldiers were playing with the pistol – the gun was fired and the woman was shot in the leg, either directly or by ricochet. After being taken to hospital by Army helicopter, she spent several years pursuing her legal claim.

Accident stories, which spread very quickly around close-knit interpreter teams, dramatized the limits of fellowship between interpreters and soldiers. Distance was situated where people came to harm, lost their jobs or would need to depend on a state social welfare system – yet the Bosnian state had handed responsibility for interpreters to the foreign force and the British state did not give them the same protection as UK employees. Interpreters' pre-war expectations about socialist Yugoslav employee welfare were not met by British forces, who hired them under flexible neoliberal conditions. High wages and potential savings were implicitly supposed to balance short notice periods and lack of welfare; risk fell on employee not employer, without state regulation. Interpreting was not a return to normality – the condition post-war Bosnians strove so hard to achieve – although the earnings might allow interpreters to work towards normality in other areas of life. Instead, it was a reordering of socio-economic relations, incorporating the Bosnians who joined this economy into the global economy of development, security and casualized short-term work.

Resentment at welfare provisions could sometimes be alleviated by an environment of mutuality where interpreters believed foreigners were relating to them as humans not lower-status employees or tools. During most interviews, my usual welfare question elicited complaints; with one woman who had worked at the Šipovo field hospital, it instead stimulated a warm recollection of the base's mutual aid scheme. This improvised social security scheme aligned with other positive contributions to Šipovo she remembered the foreign force making: employing four hundred people in a town of only 10,000; injecting €10–20,000 a month into the town's economy in rent; collecting goods and gifts to send back to Šipovo after rotating out; accepting invitations to family celebrations. The voluntary system was no substitute for compulsory welfare and did not benefit interpreters in Banja Luka, Mrkonjić Grad or the other British bases in MND (SW). The warmth with which it was remembered in this account nonetheless suggests it would have improved workplace relations at other bases.

Employees of other national contingents and HQ SFOR faced the same problems (though conditions gradually improved at HQ SFOR). Emina, who had spent an unhappy month working for Canadian forces in Bihać in 1996, was extremely offended by the Canadians' failure to observe reciprocity after an interpreter was injured in a road accident, asking me to imagine 'if the two of us are wounded together in a car accident, and you're taken to Zagreb, to the best hospital ever, and I'm taken to the local hospital here'.[23] (Canadian troops had organized voluntary contributions for her care but the inequality of the evacuation outweighed this in Emina's account; the interpreter injured during Operation Harvest had at least been treated by foreign medics.) Women working for HQ SFOR in the late 1990s had had to make the same choices as British forces' female employees after giving birth. At least one RS interpreter, however, believed that RS and Federation interpreters had noticeably different working conditions. This appeared more rumour than policy; it may even have reflected how rumour had made sense of the greatly improved conditions at HQ SFOR.

Drawdown

British forces remained in the RS until 2007 but began to reduce troop and financial commitments as early as 1998 by piloting schemes to replace soldiers with local civilian employees. While certain occupations such as cleaners and interpreters had always been hired locally, the civilianization scheme (which one British officer compared to the Army's employment of civilians in West Germany) covered several blue-collar and clerical occupations. Up to four hundred posts were eventually civilianized in Šipovo, starting with skilled carpenters and mechanics who replaced British reservists at the Army workshop in one of the three British bases. Jelena, the interpreter who started in the British field hospital, welcomed and had benefited from

the last stage of civilianization which opened finance clerk positions to locals with strong English test results. Local interpreters for British forces or other national contingents did not have skills training organized – yet, as a finance clerk, Jelena had been sent to the UK and Germany for three training courses alongside soldiers working in payroll. British forces valued accuracy in finance far higher than accuracy in language, even though a poorly-translated document or conversation could have a much worse impact on force activities than a poorly-reconciled budget.

Most interpreters began to notice the British troop drawdown in the early 2000s when smaller bases such as Gornji Vakuf and the Mrkonjić Grad shoe factory closed. Close-knit teams that had grown up around repeated residential shifts were either reassigned to larger bases or disrupted as individuals moved to fill vacancies, reducing the interpersonal appeal of the work for some. British troop contributions reduced sharply after the force changed from NATO to EU control in 2004, and ended in 2007 when the Metal Factory closed and made six to seven hundred local people redundant. Among them was Slađana, one of the first interpreters hired in Banja Luka, who had become a procurement clerk in the commercial office using her dual language skills to negotiate low-value procurement deals. Her role was reversed in July–August 2007 when she had to sell off the goods the Army had decided to leave in theatre.

Following redundancy, Slađana and several other ex-interpreters sought private-sector administrative jobs but found it difficult to adjust to local business practices after becoming accustomed to the foreign norms of a workplace they experienced as more ordered, friendly and efficient. Corruption was endemic if businesses wanted to obtain contracts or procure advantages from local authorities and firms; interpreters had worked outside these practices for years and been embedded in an environment where anti-corruption campaigns were part of international discourse. 'I will just be sitting around . . . trying to find some other job . . . without very good connections', Saša remarked of his likely future after foreign troops left BiH, turning the trope of Balkan backwardness on to his own evaluation of Bosnian society: 'It's how it works in the Balkans.'[24] As when interpreters in late 1990s Republika Srpska had been connected by a shared experience of divided loyalties and misunderstanding, the search for work after redundancy was also a type of isolation within one's own community that created strong bonds between those who went through it.

Interpreters' work histories after the Metal Factory closed followed four main patterns: a) interpreting for other EUFOR contingents (though some commented that interpreting for non-native English speakers was markedly less satisfying); b) working as an interpreter or project officer for various international organizations and NGOs; c) living on a portfolio of freelance court interpreting, interpreting/translation for private clients, and language tuition; d) permanent migration abroad for postgraduate study or (in the

case of female interpreters) through marriage. Those who had interrupted professional career trajectories, such as prospective doctors or civil engineers, sometimes regretted staying so long but recognized that interpreting paid better than their chosen profession so long as the work lasted. What might have been a cohort of skilled, resilient professionals was instead left without any clear direction in the depressed labour market of Republika Srpska and BiH.

Conclusion

British forces' initial language support management in BiH had been a history of improvisation. By 1996, the force had routinized key lessons from 1992–5 (such as use-of-interpreters training for soldiers), though it now had to handle its own human resources support and testing. New interpreters, however, entered the role with no training or preparation; they were socialized into the job and the conventions of working on a military base through learning from more experienced interpreters, supervisors, 'users' and the small number of British military interpreters and colloquial speakers. Emina's comment on interpreting for UN monitors in Bihać could apply anywhere in wartime BiH: 'Nobody had experiences like being an interpreter in the war'[25] – or even in the post-war reconstruction and reshaping of the country. To learn how to be an interpreter in the war, current and former holders of the post – or owners of the identity – would have preferred training or briefing to support them through the initial disorientation of the first weeks at work. Local interpreters had neither professional or cultural training to help them perform their roles; yet embodied as native speakers in field exercises they *were* the training all troops received before deployment. The omission is remarkable, considering that most locally-recruited interpreters would spend longer on the ground implementing the military's policies than any soldier.

For the Banja Luka cluster of interpreters, narrating their accidentally acquired professional selves implicated both interlocutors in an attempt to produce meaningful narratives from lives characterized by personal and collective ruptures: the destruction of pre-1992 town communities; the interruption of educational or professional trajectories; the physical and emotional toll of war on selves, friends and families; the shock of entering a new, less secure economy. Some succeeded in composing a narrative even it was shaped by setbacks such as frequent job changes, family upheavals or poor health: 'Every experience gets you to your main occupation', concluded Jelena, 'I'm quite happy now.'[26] Others were more ambivalent, like Saša (whose work history was actually more consistent): 'I could work much more during that time on myself, my education, maybe, have a career nowadays, were I not involved in that work.'[27] Present-day anxieties and satisfactions unsurprisingly coloured memories of working lives.

Interpreters' extended contact with British military working practices, amounting to repeated temporary English-language immersion without having to cross the Bosnian border, produced a cultural capital that was often personally satisfying but could not be easily redeemed in any 'market'. For some, language was an entry-point to an entire system of identification, values and alternative masculinities contrasting with the subjectivities they perceived in the country's new elites: Bojan thus related the impression left by a British officer who turned a relaxed blind eye to locals collecting surplus diesel vapour but calmly yet forcefully pursued an ammunition thief into a café using a Challenger tank. Jelena considered that 'Brits brought back to us culture' after Bosnians had been reduced to 'bare survival' during the war: 'they showed us how to combine things, and how to still be liberal and . . . still honour and respect everybody at the same time as respecting yourself, and building your self-esteem'[28] – observations which were, of course, delivered to an interviewer from the ex-employer's country, in the language of the institution which had represented a privileged but at least non-nationalist form of power in Banja Luka for twelve years. Interpreters' disaffection with the character of post-war BiH and disappointment with RS politics did shape their narratives of working with British forces. While showing clearly that issues of cultural and financial welfare remained a barrier to fellowship, they nonetheless suggest that the widespread hiring of local interpreters in the Banja Luka area produced a strong affinity to elements of Britishness which has remained, outside immediate ex-military circles, almost unknown in Great Britain itself.

Notes

1. All interview participants are referred to by pseudonyms.
2. The RS had declared autonomy from the Bosnian state in March 1992 and was recognized by the Dayton Peace Agreement (December 1995) as one of two state entities. The other entity, the Federation, contained ten Bosniak- and/or Croat-dominated 'cantons'.
3. The collection (fifty-one interviewees total) included seventeen other Bosnian interpreters and twenty foreign soldiers and foreign or ex-Yugoslav professional linguists.
4. The NATO force was known as IFOR (Implementation Force) in 1996 and became SFOR (Stabilization Force) after twelve months.
5. Candidates were also screened by interview to ensure that they had not been indicted for war crimes; this may have doubled with the speaking test.
6. On the recruitment of local residents as interpreters, see also the chapters by Kleinman, Lewis and Kujamäki, this volume.
7. Interview, May 2010.
8. Interview, May 2010.
9. Interview, May 2010.

10. Interview, May 2010.
11. Interview, May 2010.
12. Interview, November 2009.
13. Interview, May 2010.
14. On British language preparation, see Kelly 2011.
15. Streets, folklore societies and cultural centres were often named after Višnjić in pre-war Yugoslavia and the RS.
16. Interview, May 2010.
17. Interpreters' narratives of education are further discussed in Baker (2011).
18. Interview, May 2010.
19. Interview, May 2010.
20. Interview, May 2010.
21. See Armakolas 2011.
22. A similar story concerned another woman who had sustained pelvic injuries in a car crash.
23. Interview, May 2010.
24. Interview, May 2010.
25. Interview, May 2010.
26. Interview, May 2010.
27. Interview, May 2010.
28. Interview, May 2010.

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8

A Bilingual Officer Remembers Korea: a Closer Look at Untrained Interpreters in the Korean War

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> The armistice talks are military. They are neither political nor diplomatic. Hence, in these discussions, the language of diplomacy is inappropriate and ineffective.
>
> (General Ridgway, instructions to Vice Admiral Joy and the negotiating team[1])

Interpreting is one of the oldest human activities in the world and has an intrinsic relationship with central human experiences such as war, commerce and diplomacy. Regarding the first of these, war, military history has offered students of interpreting history a wide range of situations that have required the presence of translators and interpreters in times of war: code-breaking, prisoner interrogations and meetings on topics ranging from commonplace concerns to critical issues, to mention but a few.

The association between war and linguistic needs is commonplace, and communication through translators and interpreters seems essential before, during and after armed conflicts. It is important to gain more specific knowledge on this topic and thus to understand how far and why interpreting matters in the experience of war, and in the different communicative situations imposed both by government policies tailored to meet various priorities in conflicts and by the way in which specific conflicts evolve. On the other hand, the extent to which war as experience constrains or transforms the interpreter's work and personality cannot be neglected either. This dual approach could help identify the multi-faceted profile of interpreters in conflict situations and do justice to their silenced, forgotten interpreting experiences.

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As a modest contribution to the topic of interpreting in armed conflicts, therefore, this chapter distinguishes between the experience of war and war as an experience. The analysis of interpreting in the experience of war responds to various issues related to the following themes:

- The global and domestic settings of the specific conflicts and the different levels on which political, diplomatic and military communication take place in the course of a violent conflict: intelligence services, personal contacts, military negotiations, staff meetings and political summits, among others (Fernández Sánchez 2010, 2011).
- The social biography of interpreters serving in wartime – a 'material history of interpreting' in Cronin's words (2002: 52), or an 'ethnographic eye' according to Blommaert (1999: 7). Who are they? Why are they there? How have they acquired their hybrid identity and bilingualism? Are they recognized interlocutors as bureaucrats, diplomats or military officers, or anonymous interpreters? (Baigorri and Fernández 2010).
- The multiple role of interpreters: linguistic assistants, vital links, survivors or 'double agents' (Gentzler and Tymoczko 2002: xix; Salama Carr 2007: 3).

The notion of 'war as an experience lived by interpreters' refers to the need to pay attention to interpreters' testimonies of their personal experiences in war. Taking part in a war can be traumatic. Translators and interpreters involved in armed conflicts are often eyewitnesses and victims of the atrocities of war: violent acts, casualties, torture, detention centres, exile and famine. They are exposed to further risk because they are physically present in dangerous situations, and they also face personal risk because they are often considered traitors by the local population.[2] Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, grounded mainly in sociological and anthropological studies, this chapter pays attention to the interpreter's testimony and to the exact words interpreters use when describing their personal position or situation in conflicts. It seeks to understand the role of personal ideologies and emotional factors associated with the act of remembering and to explore the 'processes of appropriation, conflicting interests and overlapping discourses' entangled in the politics of memory (Argenti and Schramm 2010: 18).

The Korean War and the study of interpreting in this conflict

This chapter discusses the Korean War, the first armed conflict that took place during the period of history known as the Cold War (1946–91). It began on 25 June 1950, when the North Korean Army invaded the Republic of South Korea. Three days later, the US President, Harry Truman, ordered troops to help defend South Korea. He also requested the assistance of United Nations members in supporting the Republic of Korea. The war officially ended with

an armistice three years later, on 27 July 1953. The negotiations that led to the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement were conducted between US military officers, representing the UN command, and Chinese and North Korean military personnel. As historians specialized in the area have pointed out (Foot 1990: 1), the negotiating process that began in Kaesong on 10 July 1951 – moving to Panmunjom on 25 October 1951 – could be considered one of the most difficult and complex of the entire Cold War. Negotiations stretched over two years and involved 159 plenary sessions and some five hundred meetings at other levels (Bailey 1992: 70). Throughout this long negotiating process, interpreters from each delegation were present. They facilitated communication in the three working languages: English, Korean and Chinese. Each delegation also had a team of language assistants including translators and shorthand typists.

One reason for studying interpreting history is that it has not been done before (Pym 1998: 15). This is precisely the situation with the Korean War, where interpreting has been an unjustly neglected topic. One reason for this neglect may be the fact that researching interpreting in the Korean War is a significant challenge because of the wide range of sources to be consulted, the many languages involved and the difficulty of gaining access to archives. Generally speaking, historical research takes time and requires multilingual teams to carry out the inquiry. The present author has fortunately been able to turn to colleagues, proofreaders and library personnel for support and is extremely grateful for their assistance during her research.

On sources

Like professional historians, students of interpreting history are looking for 'unwitting testimony as much as witting' (Marwick 2001: 139). In this sense, much of what we know about interpreters in armed conflicts generally comes from unintentional or unwitting sources such as legal and military documents, the press, letters, or photographic records – especially pictorial histories of wars or the memoirs and diaries of military personnel. In addition to this, interpreters' direct testimonies are found in diaries, memoirs and other personal accounts written by the interpreters themselves or by applying techniques drawn from oral history.

This chapter draws primarily on the author's personal communication with Richard Underwood,[3] a bilingual US Army officer who served as a Korean language interpreter at the truce negotiations. It considers his biography as well as that of his brother, Horace E. Underwood. Underwood's testimony is complemented with other primary sources such as interviews and oral testimonies.[4] The research has also used press documents, blog entries on the topic, diaries of military personnel and of civilian advisers to the UN delegation, and written memoirs of interpreters from different geographic and cultural backgrounds who worked as translators and interpreters during the armed conflict or in the negotiations that led to the armistice. Finally,

further data come from two interviews with Robert B. Ekvall[5] and from veterans' memoirs posted on the Korean War Educator website.[6]

The next section of the chapter also seeks to place the armistice negotiations in their global and domestic settings. Data for this part of the study are drawn from secondary sources such as monographs and history books on the topic but also from electronic archives such as the *FRUS*[7] series and the *Cold War International History Project*.[8]

Interpreting in the experience of the war in Korea

The global and US domestic settings

The Korean War is associated with 'notable firsts' (Cowley 2005: 155): the first armed conflict of the Cold War, the first 'limited war' and the first conflict fought under the UN flag, among others. Following the Truman administration's doctrine of containment, most Americans accepted the idea of the Korean War as part of the containment of communism (Edwards 2006: 143). If one agrees that metaphors are not mere words but constitute the very structure of discourse, the foreign policy discourse of the time, which included terms such as 'containment', 'security' and 'totalitarianism', may be seen to have provided the frames of reference to understand US foreign policy after World War II. In regard to the war in Korea, the outbreak of armed conflict 'revitalized the use of the term totalitarianism and in particular the idea that it was more than a longer word for Soviet Communism' (Abbot 1995: 90). The war in Korea was a real, destructive war, and American prisoners' experiences in North Korean and Chinese camps developed the idea of Communists as fanatics as well as a belief in a dangerous and divided world (Abbot 1995: 94).

From the point of view of interpreting, the communicative needs of the war in Korea represented an extraordinary challenge for all involved in the conflict because of the US domestic political context – 'generally hostile to the formulation of agreements with the Communist world' (Foot 1990: 17) – the great differences between the languages and the limited experience of direct contact between the cultures. The urgent need for translators and interpreters was present throughout the course of the conflict and in a number of varied settings. To solve the problem of the lack of Korean translators and interpreters, the US Army had to rely on *Nisei* soldiers (second generation Japanese-Americans) who served in the US armed forces and consequently 'had proved their loyalty in uniform'.[9]

The pressing need for interpreters is mentioned directly by the officer-interpreters studied in this chapter. Major Hee Sung Lee,[10] who served as an office boy in the US Embassy in Seoul before the war and later as an interpreter near the front lines and in the field medical stations, comments that 'after the cease-fire, the need for interpreters became even greater due to the pending POW exchanges and the need to work out the terms and

conditions of the agreements' (Lee [n.d.]). Interestingly enough, Major Lee comments on the suspicious attitude of the North Korean General Nam II, who refused to allow interpreters who were in the military to conduct prisoner interrogations 'so both sides had to resort to the use of interpreters from field hospitals, because they were deemed to be neutral' (Lee n.d.). Much archival work needs to be conducted on the influential role that sociopolitical factors such as trust, power and control played in interpreter-mediated communication during the Korean War.

Colonel Robert B. Ekvall (1960) has described the linguistic situation of the armistice negotiations in spring 1953 when he arrived in Panmunjom to replace other interpreters. The negotiations were in their final stages but communication through interpreters was still necessary. Ekvall was in charge of the Military Armistice Commission's language division, dealing with logistics and technical issues about the demarcation line and supervising prisoner exchange. This involved concurrent meetings at various levels. In addition to interpreting – very often for eight or more hours a day – Ekvall was required to establish training courses and manage a wide range of linguistic and nonlinguistic tasks.

Finally, bilingual officers like the Underwood brothers returned to active duty when war broke out. Later, they were selected to work as interpreters in the truce talks on account of their knowledge of the Korean language. In an interview in *Korea Time*s, dated 20 June 2000, Horace G. Underwood describes vividly the circumstances surrounding his selection, and he mentions the shortage of US Korean interpreters:

> there weren't all that many Korean language speaking officers floating around. I was on the staff at Admiral Turner's headquarters. When they first started it, it was an Army run show and my brother was in the army and he was selected to be one of the interpreters. He went up on the preliminary talks. But my friends in the naval headquarters said hey we've got a naval admiral being the boss of this thing, we ought to have a naval interpreter for him, so they arranged for me to go. (*Korea Times* 2000)

One additional implication of these interpreters' testimonies is that they reveal US military commanders' strong expectations that bilingual military personnel would function as efficient interpreters. Some early interpreters' testimonies contained identical unquestioned assumptions.[11] This seems to confirm the view of speakers as social actors (Duranti 1997) and the variability they adopt concerning their roles and ideologies in different discourses (Blommaert 1999).

The negotiations as 'fighting'

Many scholars have noted that those around the negotiating table – US military personnel representing the UN command and Chinese and North

Korean military – had to come to terms with being physically present at a negotiation with their enemies whilst effectively receiving orders and instructions from the White House and State Department on one side or from Beijing on the other. They were neither diplomats nor politicians but military men unfamiliar with the intricacies of negotiation. It is now known that the Communists assigned experienced political leaders to their delegation, whereas the US/UN delegation was headed by US military officers who 'deeply distrusted their adversaries' (Matray 1992: 477) and 'found the process of bargaining tedious and distasteful' (Foot 1990: 73). Both the military hierarchy and internal negotiations between US delegates and military authorities in Tokyo or Washington imposed further pressure on the negotiators from the US side (Goldhamer 1994: xxiii).

From the beginning of the talks, it was clear that the delegations saw the negotiating process very differently. The US/UN delegation wanted to limit the talks to purely military matters; the Chinese/North Korean delegation sought a political and military settlement to the war. What is more, languages, cultures and ways of conducting negotiations differed enormously in Panmunjom, and this took a toll on communication; the more-than two years of talks are blatant evidence of this. According to Goldhamer (1994: 69), a civilian observer in the earlier months of negotiations, one of the most important deficiencies on the UN side during this early stage of the truce talks was the failure to understand the Communist negotiating style. In addition to this, as Goldhamer goes on to say (1994: 169), the Communists saw the negotiations as a way of bringing pressure on the UN delegation by employing tactics such as using insulting behaviour or showing obvious inattention to the US delegates' discourse (Goldhamer 1994: 169).

The 'war of nerves' at the negotiating table should not lead us to forget the linguistic war, 'the war of words', that took place in Panmunjom and that, in turn, characterized the entire negotiating process. However, factors such as the distrust and enmity between the parties, their mutual ignorance and their lack of experience in dealing directly and personally with Americans or Chinese or Koreans complicated the whole process even more (Chengwen 2001: 188). Furthermore, this mutual ignorance led each delegation to pay great attention to their opponents' gestures and nonverbal behaviour (Chengwen 2001: 188).

Interpreters at the Korean Truce Negotiations

On 10 July 1951, both delegations met in the Communist-controlled town of Kaesong. Representatives were accompanied by staff members, interpreters and secretaries. Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy was the chief representative at the initial stage of the negotiations representing the UN/US delegation and General Nam Il was the key speaker representing the Chinese–North Koreans. From this moment on, each speech at the meeting was translated into three languages: Chinese, Korean and English. Interpreters only

worked for their own delegates: that is, US interpreters worked from English to Korean and Chinese. Likewise, Chinese and North Korean interpreters worked only from Korean or Chinese into English.

In no time at all, difficulties appeared that were more than linguistic in nature. According to General Chai Chengwen (Chengwen 2001: 194), on several occasions Admiral Joy 'kept going on with his speech without waiting for the Chinese translation'. On the UN/US side, Joy recalls (1955: 26) that 'Nam Il appeared to be somewhat irritated by the inevitable delays of translation.'

In addition to this lack of practice regarding communication through interpreters, sources consulted record contradictory information in regard to the linguistic knowledge of interpreters. This can be understood by studying the social biography of certain interpreters who worked in the first stage of the truce talks and throughout the armistice negotiations.

1st Lieutenant Richard Underwood (b. 1927), Lieutenant Horace E. Underwood (1917–2004) and Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Wu

Richard Underwood was assigned to interpret from English to Korean for the initial liaison team of UN command officers who flew into Kaesong to do the groundwork prior to the truce talks. Having first joined the US Army in 1945, he served as an intelligence officer and later, in 1950, returned to active service, being sent to Korea at his own request because he felt that there might be an urgent demand for Korean-speaking officers. In personal communication, Richard Underwood admitted he was not a professional interpreter and that he had always felt inadequate because he had had no formal training in the Korean language; he had just learned Korean naturally while growing up and playing with Korean children.[12]

Richard Underwood and his brother Horace E. Underwood had a missionary background as grandsons of Horace Grant Underwood (1859–1916), a pioneer among Protestant missionaries in Korea. The Underwood brothers were born in Seoul and received their early education at the Seoul Foreign School. The elder brother, Horace, joined the delegation later – 'at Richard's urging' (Li, Millet and Yu 2001: 260) – and became Chief Official Interpreter for the UN Command at Panmunjom. Horace had studied Korean and Chinese characters and had taught English at the Chosen Christian College before the war. During World War II, he had served as a US Navy officer. He later participated in the Korean War and in preparing the famous Incheon landing.

Little is known about Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Wu, apart from the fact that he was an Asian-American Army US officer, born in Burma, and that he served as a Chinese interpreter for the UN armistice delegation between 8 July 1951 and 27 July 1953. In a brief report in *Life* magazine, dated 31 August 1953, Captain Bertrand R. Brinley (1953: 9) called for public recognition of Kenneth Wu's extremely valuable service at Panmunjom because 'for 25 arduous months he represented the only constant link of understanding

between the UN Command and the Chinese People's Volunteers'. According to General Chai Chengwen, at the first stage of the truce talks, the Communist side 'tried to keep the records of the other side's speeches in English since Underwood did not speak Korean very well, nor did Wu speak Chinese well' (Chengwen 2001: 194). However, he also says that Richard Underwood 'set high standards for himself' and that interpreter Wu's language ability 'improved quickly during the process of the negotiations' (Chengwen 2001: 194). On the part of the UN command, Joy (1955: 26) considers the US interpreters 'were impeccable linguists, adding keen intelligence to their talents as interpreters.' In addition to this, Joy (1955: 26) uses the words 'exacting function' to refer to the interpreters' work at the truce talks.

Communication through interpreters at the Korean Truce Negotiations

The success or failure of US interpreters cannot be understood without a close examination of the specific settings where their assistance was needed and the specific requirements demanded of them. With the exception of Colonel Robert B. Ekvall, the interpreters studied in this chapter learned how to work as interpreters 'on the job'. Their unique personal backgrounds as well as their motivation to act in their delegations' best interests were important resources in facing the complexity of situational constraints at such a sensitive setting as the Panmunjom negotiations. Examining some examples of interpreting assignments helps to show the complexity of these negotiations.

Richard Underwood served as a Korean interpreter at the truce talks for one year. His brother Horace stayed in Panmunjom until the signing of the armistice. Richard Underwood told us that his brother 'did virtually all the interpreting at the plenary sessions'[13] whereas he preferred working at the liaison meetings. He also makes an interesting distinction between interpreting after having been involved in discussions at staff meetings and interpreting without this preparation. In his words:

> I mentioned that I had no problem at the liaison meetings. I did have very great problems at the formal meetings because all of a sudden, we came up with all sorts of technical language that I had no competence to interpret, and it was a really, really miserable time. (Underwood 2010)

Untrained interpreters at this initial stage were not briefed by the delegates; they knew neither the topic nor what was at stake. He goes on to say:

> At this time, our officers didn't tell us ahead of time, they didn't tell the interpreter ahead of time anything of what was going to be said, so this all came to us just out of the blue. And that night, I talked to Admiral Joy and some of the others about it, and said: 'I really have to be in your staff meetings. I've got to know what you're talking about beforehand so that I can be ready to express what you're saying.' (Underwood 2010)

From this moment, US interpreters received permission to sit in on the staff meetings and they also had copies of the prepared 'position papers', although this alone was not enough. As Richard Underwood said:

> Before every meeting, Horace, I and the Korean stenographer would review all of the pre-prepared [*sic*] to be sure there were no snags due to vocabulary. Some few times we persuaded our delegate to slightly alter his wording to make the message more crystal clear in Korean. After each meeting three of us would review the speeches of each side to try and ensure that we and the enemy had indeed been accurate in the interpretation made that day.[14]

This overload of linguistic work was justified because accuracy was one of the main functions of interpreting in the truce negotiations. In fact, when asked about the most difficult task he had faced as an interpreter in the truce talks, Richard Underwood mentioned the constant effort to convey 'the true thoughts behind the words', to be ambiguous or very specific, when ambiguity or specificity were required.[15] He also mentioned particular problems with idioms and, specifically, regional expressions.

As Brian Harris observes in a blog post devoted to the Panmunjon talks, military and diplomatic interpreting 'often merge because wars end in armistice negotiations between the generals on the opposing sides and they bring their military staff interpreters with them' (Harris 2010). Interpreters at the truce negotiations acted as diplomat-interpreters, since they had to work into their 'foreign' language and served as interpreting monitors, correcting the errors made by the interpreters on the other side and checking words with double meanings or ambiguities.

Translators and interpreters in Panmunjom invested countless hours in eliminating wording differences in agreed texts or preparing texts for delegates on the basis of details that had been discussed and recorded in documents produced at lower-level meetings. This process of revision, drafting and editing documents was not an easy one because major differences existed between the languages used and a supreme linguistic effort was required on the part of the team of translators and interpreters, as was an in-depth knowledge of the subject or subjects they were to be interpreted or translated. In these cases, linguistic mediation emerged as an essential tool in moving forward the negotiations, and it was greatly appreciated by the delegates in the two opposing parties.

Interpreting and verbal violence

In Ji's memoirs, the chapter where he describes his experiences as a note-taking translator at the negotiating table is called 'Two Years of Perfidy and Fleas' (Ji 2008: 100). The hostile tone of armistice negotiations, as a result of the military confrontation on the battlefield, affected the team of translators

and interpreters in many ways and contributed to making their work technically and emotionally difficult.

From the technical point of view, Goldhamer (1994: 43, 169, 175) reports many occasions where delegates asked the Underwoods as well as the Chinese interpreter, Kenneth Wu, for the meaning of particular phrases or for the translation of terms that carried an emotive charge, particularly insults. As explained above, the Underwoods and other interpreters who served in the negotiating process – such as Colonel Ekvall, who was born to missionary parents on the China–Tibet border – had unique backgrounds with different levels of bilingualism and biculturalism, which proved to be of great value in the special circumstances of Panmunjom.

However, in many situations, interpreters found themselves trapped by their mediator role as 'true interpreters' (Harris 1990: 118) and by the risk of losing face as participants in the face-to-face communicative event. The variability of responses in interpreting insults and other derogatory uses of language is nevertheless important and is grounded to some extent in the setting-related constraints and in the position and social status of interpreters in this mediated event.

One example is provided by Richard Underwood, who describes the reaction of himself and his brother when they detected a more polite interpretation – by comparison with the denigrating language used by the Chinese or Korean delegate – on the part of interpreters for the other side. He remembers that the tactic 'of using denigrating language . . . while sugar-quoting the English was not uncommon and was a tactic we all kept our ears open to detect and report'.[16]

The war as an experience lived by untrained interpreters

The discussion so far has considered the technical but nonetheless essential role that untrained interpreters performed at the Korean truce talks. This was a challenging experience for many of them on a professional level because they had to learn to function as interpreters 'on the job'. Panmunjom was in some way an interpreter training and practice centre. Alfred D. Wilhelm, Jr. (1994) has analysed oral interviews with forty people who participated in negotiations between the USA and China in the decisive period between 1945 and 1983. Many of the non-native speakers of English admitted that they had perfected their English in interminable, boring meetings in Panmunjom (Wilhelm 1994: 228). However, Panmunjom, for many translators and interpreters, was also a challenging experience on a personal level (Ji 2008: 16).

The second part of this paper focuses on the question of interpreters as eyewitnesses of the war in Korea. The interest here lies in understanding how the devastation and military violence of the war in Korea was experienced by ordinary individuals, considering that Korea was the Underwood

brothers' adopted country. It should not be forgotten that their familiarity with the Korean language and what amounted to their hybrid identity were the reasons they served as interpreters in the negotiations. It is therefore worthwhile to ask: how far does this experience make them relevant witnesses? On what terms is war remembered? And how are personal memories of the war transmitted?

In this research into untrained interpreters in the Korean War, the idea of compensating for silenced and forgotten interpreters' experiences makes perfect sense. Furthermore, the discussion of oral material is an opportunity to develop many neglected methodological questions in the field of oral history (Kurkowska-Budzan and Zamorski 2009), including the reliability of memory and the relationships between memory and history and between violence and memory.

A personal experience

One of the challenges of conducting interviews about events that have taken place in the distant past is the inherent effort to recreate that past. Memory is what makes an eyewitness, but memory fails. As Horace Underwood asks himself: 'How does one describe the feelings of fifty years ago?' (*Korea Times* 2000). Similarly, Richard Underwood admits: 'It has been fifty-eight years and my memory fails me in some regards but there was a great deal of tension.'[17]

As recent work on memory in the social sciences has shown, memory and history do not compete against each other. Memory and history are different modes of being connected to the past (Mate 2008). Consequently, if remembering is different from historical recording, it should fulfil other tasks. Likewise, remembering should find its expression in places other than historical records, such as verbal accounts and even bodily practices (Connerton 1989).

Listening to Richard Underwood's verbal account, the interviewer might not be prepared to find firm convictions that are probably related to ideology and American cultural values in the early years of the Cold War. When Richard Underwood remembers his experiences as a military interpreter in Panmunjom, he refers to the Communist delegation's interpreters as 'enemy interpreters', which raises issues such as the scope of remembering as a political act, particularly as an act of justification and control (Argenti and Schramm 2010: 19). Some examples from his personal communication are provided below:

Example 1
Question: . . . How did you take notes, how did you prepare the meetings?
Answer: . . . Our note-taking was limited to brief scribbles to help us during the few times when the enemy interpreters goofed.[18]

Example 2
Question: Irena Dobosz, a young Polish journalist at that time, who worked in Panmunjom describes interpreting in a very graphical way . . . Does that sound familiar to you?
Answer: . . . At our sessions we would only whisper messages to our delegate when/if we felt the enemy interpreter was not communicating the full and correct content and tone of their message.[19]

Example 3
Question: . . . both sides used to work together after or before plenary sessions, particularly when they worked on agreed texts.
Answer: After each meeting, the three of us [the Underwood brothers and a Korean stenographer] would review the speeches of each side to try and ensure that we and the enemy had indeed been accurate in the interpretation made that day.[20]

One cannot simply assume that this choice in Richard Underwood's account is ideologically motivated and therefore unmistakable evidence of the Cold War mentality. One should instead go beyond metaphors and rhetorical effects in order to ask questions about the relevance of some particular discourses (Blommaert 1999: 8). Underwood is remembering his experience as an interpreter in a real war. The military and the war context in Korea may adequately account for the fact that interpreters who worked for the Chinese–North Korean delegation were enemies for the US interpreters. Similarly, when Wilhelm asked his respondents why there was such hostility in Panmunjom; they said: 'Americans were enemies and that's how enemies are treated' (Wilhelm 1994: 57).

Moreover, the references to the 'enemy interpreter' or to 'the enemy' belong to a conflict in Richard Underwood's discourse: he is bringing to the present a conflict in which he is taking sides as he did in the past in Panmunjom. He is telling us where he comes from and how this remembering is an occasion to be connected with a specific historical situation where he was, in his view, not only on the right side ideologically speaking but, as a military interpreter, in a clear position of control. He is also telling us what his values are: the military and fighting for one's country. In the same way, his brother says in the previously-cited article in *Korea Times*: 'I am a Korean War veteran' (*Korea Times* 2000).

In a different passage, Horace Underwood remembers another difficult subject: the destruction of places that the Underwood brothers had known and loved before the war:

Example 4
When you see places that you know and love destroyed or damaged or something, yes, you feel badly about it. . . . I was up on the top of a hill

> looking down as the Old Severance [a hospital] was burning up in front of the Seoul railway station . . . that was a kind of a wrenching sight to watch all that going up in flames. (*Korea Times* 2000)

These are emotional testimonies that inform us about feelings of identification and belonging. Landscapes and places 'can be said to work *as* memory' (Argenti and Schramm 2010: 25, emphasis in original). The Underwood brothers were born in Seoul and raised there. Tensions and mixed feelings as a result of a hybrid identity are often the interpreter's heritage. Finally, in the Underwoods' personal accounts – as well as in those of many others – we have found testimonies of fear and danger related with being at war. In this regard, the fact of being interpreters in a war is no different to being soldiers in a war, particularly if serving near the front line or on special missions (Lee [n.d.]). The focus on memory in these interpreters' personal accounts highlights strong feelings and emotions that rarely have a place in historical records. Memory is partial, selective and opportunist in many situations, but memory is also a form of knowledge about the past that enables us to save alternative histories of the interpreting profession.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on an untapped area in interpreting history. This is an exploratory study, and much remains unknown about the intricacy of the role and functions of interpreter-mediated communication in the Korean War. As the chapter has shown, US military commanders had an urgent need for bilingual officers who were fluent in Chinese, Korean and English. Difficult military negotiations presented specific tensions, and untrained interpreters at the Panmunjom talks experienced a number of practical constraints. The lack of specific preparation in interpreting compounded the constraints related to the setting of the talks, making made the interpreters' work technically and emotionally difficult.

The voices of interpreters in conflicts are normally considered of little relevance, since interpreters widely viewed as mere linguistic assistants. The personal accounts presented here shed light on the communicative challenges of their work in the difficult circumstances of the Korean War. In recounting their experiences as interpreters in a war, they contextualize discourse on interpreting in a wide range of assignments, from practical as well as historical perspectives. More specifically, they reflect on their *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977: 82–3), that is, on the practices and concerns related to their activity in facilitating understanding, to their constant effort 'to get the message across' or to convey 'the true thoughts behind the words'.

Finally, the focus on war as experience highlights personal experiences of interpreters as eyewitnesses of war. In this sense, their accounts display mixed feelings in relation to the act of remembering a traumatic

experience: patriotic pride, vulnerability, pain and a sense of danger, to mention only a few emotions that point to the tensions inherent to the act of remembering as well as to the need to claim public recognition for themselves or for all those who served and fought in Korea.

Notes

1. CinCFE (Ridgway) to JCS, August. FRUS, 1951, VII, 787–8.
2. See, for instance, the chapters by Kleinman and Kujamäki, this volume.
3. The author is very grateful to Richard Underwood for answering my questions when first contacted by email on 27 May 2010, as well as for later resolving further questions and doubts that the subject brought in its wake.
4. Underwood 2010; *Longines Chronoscope Interviews*, 1953, v. 16, Horace E. Underwood. Recording provided by the National Archives of the United States, release date January 2007.
5. http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/092.html (accessed 22 June 2010).
6. The author gratefully acknowledges the permission of Lynnita Jean Brown to use the material posted on her website http://www.koreanwar-educator.org.
7. http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/frus.html.
8. http://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project.
9. http://www.state.nj.us/military//korea/factsheets/asian.html (accessed 8 July 2011).
10. 'Freedom is not Free', http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/memoirs/lee/index.htm (accessed 6 July 2011).
11. *Longines Chronoscope Interviews*, 1953, v. 16, Horace E. Underwood. Recording provided by the National Archives of the United States, release date January 2007.
12. Personal communication, 28 May 2010.
13. Personal communication, 28 May 2010.
14. Personal communication, 29 May 2010.
15. Personal communication, 2 June 2010.
16. Personal communication, 2 June 2010.
17. Personal communication, 29 May 2010.
18. Personal communication, 28 May 2010.
19. Personal communication, 2 June 2010.
20. Personal communication, 29 May 2010.

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9

Victims of War: Refugees' First Contacts with the British in the Second World War

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Among those who 'meet the other in war and conflict' are the hundreds of thousands of refugees, displaced people, exiles and escapers – all of them 'victims of war' – who for various reasons had to leave their countries during and after World War II. At the end of the conflict, this massive forced migration represented a problem of great magnitude, as millions of people had been expelled, or had chosen to leave their homes: more than ten million slave labourers had been forcedly deported by the Nazis to work in German factories and mines; a series of compulsory population transfers, the changes in national boundaries, the Third Reich's effort to build a new racial order and direct Nazi occupation had affected millions of Europeans (among them Germans, Italians, Yugoslavs, Bulgarians, Romanians, Soviets, Hungarians, Czechs and Poles) (Reinisch 2007). In the first, still widely cited, work on this topic, Malcolm Jarvis Proudfoot (1956) estimated that more than sixty million Europeans were displaced from their homes during the conflict and in its aftermath.

This chapter looks at a very specific aspect of this problem, those refugees who escaped from their countries of origin, largely in Nazi-occupied continental Europe, and arrived in the United Kingdom between 1941 and 1945. Examining the way Britain related to this group of refugees who were dealt with at the Royal Victoria Patriotic School (RVPS) in Wandsworth, the chapter tries to locate the importance of languages in the system established at RVPS, which included a process of interviewing and vetting refugees arriving to the country followed by other sets of interviews aimed at collecting valuable intelligence.

Historians have dealt widely with British attitudes towards forced migration in the Second World War, with particular interest in British policies towards wartime refugees (see Conway and Gotovitch 2001; Dove 2005), and the Holocaust (see Wasserstein 1979; Hirschfeld 1984; Berghahn 1984; London 2000). The problem of displacement in the aftermath of World War II, on the other hand, has been largely overlooked (Shephard 2008)

until a number of recent studies on post-war reconstruction of Europe and on relief (Reinisch (ed.) 2007; Gemie and Humbert 2009; Shephard 2010). Whereas research into the politics and practices of relief and asylum in the aftermath of conflict is now well-established, it could be argued that historical research has still only looked into a few aspects of the way that refugees and displaced people were dealt with during the conflict by the British. In fact, Nicholas Atkin's pioneering work on *The Forgotten French: Exiles in the British Isles* (2003), openly admits that, in the absence of secondary literature, it had to rely quite heavily on primary sources (Atkin: 2003, viii–xi).

Research in areas such as linguistics and translation studies has recently shown a great deal of interest in contemporary asylum procedures (Inghilleri 2004–7; Maryns 2006) and in the role of languages and language intermediaries within those procedures. However, the role of languages in security procedures established to deal with refugees and the collection of human intelligence has been largely overlooked in this body of work.

The analyses by Maryns and Inghilleri both highlight the deep and predominantly negative influence of defective interpreting systems on the overall outcome of asylum interviews. In comparison with these situations, the method developed in British reception centres during World War II seems to have been quite successful in overcoming language and cultural difficulties. As we shall see, interviewers and interrogators were carefully selected: their cultural awareness was of primary importance and was an essential part of their skills as intelligence officers.

Louise London's research (London 2000) represents one of the most comprehensive studies regarding the British response to the problem of refugees coming to Britain. In her account of immigration controls on the admission of (particularly Jewish) refugees, London shows how British policy severely restricted refuge during the conflict (and during the Holocaust) and consistently limited admissions on a purely humanitarian basis, considering British self-interest first and foremost:

> Alien admissions were severely restricted and evaluated by reference to the requirements of the war. The policy of non admitting refugees – alien or British – to the United Kingdom solely on humanitarian grounds was repeatedly affirmed at Cabinet level. (London 2000: 173)

To be granted entry into the UK, being a war refugee or even a racial refugee was not enough. One had to fit into the 'war effort' category or to qualify on political grounds (London: 2000, 178). There had to be a compensating benefit for Britain from any humanitarian scheme for refugees.

During the conflict, many refugees arrived at ports from Nazi-occupied continental Europe even without permission to enter, and these people had to be dealt with. Procedures were established to deal with them for reasons other than relief or humanitarian concern; they were dealt with mainly for

reasons of security and intelligence. This chapter argues that the authorities' focus on British self-interest had an important impact on the way in which linguistic difficulties were overcome and consequently on the final outcome of these language encounters. The RVPS was not established primarily to offer relief to those who had managed to reach British shores to escape from Nazism but in fact to collect valuable intelligence, thus substantiating once more the idea of Britain as 'reluctant asylum' (Atkin 2003: 32; see also Sherman 1973; Wasserstein 1979; London 2000).

Victims of war encountering the British

British plans for the reception of refugees of all nationalities started in 1940. They were tardy and, on the whole, badly implemented. Initially, it was decided that the Ministry of Health would deal with the matter, but foreign refugees were generally regarded with suspicion because they would consume precious resources and could disrupt home defence. When the exodus of civilians from continental Europe started, the first refugees arrived at Southampton and Portsmouth, and from there they reached London by train. The Ministry of Health thus instructed the London City Council to assist in the reception of refugees (Atkin 2003: 33–6), a questionable decision which implied that refugees were to stay in the capital at a time when Londoners were being relocated to safer areas. Very quickly, nine reception centres were installed in the capital, where refugees were 'fed, bathed and medically examined before being transferred to the twenty cooperating borough councils for billeting' (Atkin 2003: 35). At this stage, however, the reception of refugees in London was chaotic. Since places in reception centres were becoming scarce, refugees were often housed in prisons until their credentials could be proven.

In late 1940, the government was forced to recognize the unsuitability of this situation and sought alternative venues for the processing of refugees arriving from the continent. The RVPS in Wandsworth was eventually made available to the security services. To enable the Security Service to examine aliens arriving in the UK thoroughly, the premises of the RVPS in Trinity Road, Wandsworth, London SW18, were taken over by the Internment Camps Division of the Home Office. The facility opened on 8 January 1941 for the reception of aliens of allied and friendly countries, but it would soon also be used to receive those coming from territory occupied by the enemy. Women and children were housed in nearby buildings. The centre was administered by the Home Office, with a Camp Commandant with military rank and a staff of civilian wardens plus a Pioneer Corps guard. RVPS would not normally deal with German or Italian civilian refugees, who were sent to Internment Camp 001 at the Oratory Schools: 'German and Italian civilian arrivals, who were sent to the Oratory Schools in London, were interrogated when their history showed that they should have information of interest.'[1]

When refugees arrived at ports they were usually kept in prison for one night, until the first available train to London was ready to leave, but there were exceptions. In Bristol, for example, they were kept in their vessels until a train was ready to depart for the capital. Once at the reception centre, internees were presented with a set of rules which summarized the purposes of the centre itself:

1 This Reception Centre has been established with the purpose of offering temporary lodging to allied and neutral subjects who arrive in Great Britain.

2 It is duly the duty of the Centre's officers to assist you in proving your identity and, to this effect, of seeing all the documents to be found in your possession, and to ask you for all the information that they will judge necessary.

   Your interest is therefore to reply in a frank and explicit manner to the questions that are put to you.

3 As soon as your identity and good faith have been established, you will be sent to the representatives of your country in Great Britain, and every help will be given to you in order that you can reach your destination. In waiting, you will understand that, for reasons of security, no communication will be permitted with the outside, either by message, letter, telephone, or any other means. (Atkin 2003: 45)

It was very clear that arrivals from continental Europe first of all had to supply good information, they had to be security-cleared, and only after that could they be assisted and released to their own authorities in Britain.

On the outbreak of war, security control officers at ports of arrival in Britain were responsible for collecting military information from aliens entering the United Kingdom. Once the Axis powers had gained control of most of Europe in 1940, it was obvious that every arrival from territory occupied or directly governed by the enemy must have had information of value. The collection of this information at the ports by MI5 officers soon proved to be an impossibility because of primary security interests and because the 'reports were scrappy and valueless to service departments'.[2]

MI9, although normally responsible only for prisoners of war, accepted the additional responsibility of dealing with aliens arriving in the UK in a meeting held on 14 May 1941. MI5 initially remained responsible for those aliens who proceeded directly to their destinations from the ports of arrival, for the interrogation of British subjects and for producing advices of interesting arrivals to service sections who might wish to interrogate in detail. The London Reception Centre (LRC), also known as RVPS, initially

under MI9's responsibility, was therefore in charge of the 'a) interrogation of Alien refugees and escapers; b) collection of intelligence requirements and dissemination of Refugee intelligence'.[3] MI5, MI6, MI9, Prisoner of War Interrogation Section (PWIS) and immigration officers were all given office accommodation at the premises. The PWIS officer arrived at the Centre on 25 May 1941, after the agreement had been made.

By 12 August 1941, a little over two months after it started its operations, the LRC and RVPS had issued 172 interrogation reports with intelligence collected from refugees and displaced people. These early days saw a consistent flow of escapers from Norway and to a lesser extent from other countries: 'These men, and sometimes women and children, risked their lives in small boats. They were of an exceptionally high standard and brought good information.'[4] On 12 August 1941, the organization was absorbed into MI9 (a) (the section which would became MI19 from December 1941). From January 1942, the organization at the London Reception Centre (LRC) became MI19 (RVPS). It included officers from PWIS(H) and RNVR and an officer from the Political Intelligence Department (PID) of the FO. By the end of November 1942, there had been 10,529 arrivals. 1100 reports had been written, as well as 77 supplementary reports.

Interestingly, official documents do not always refer to this group of people as 'refugees'. Sometimes they are instead referred to as 'informants', showing how deeply attention was focused on the British interest rather than on humanitarian issues. They arrived not only from enemy and enemy-occupied territory but also from French possessions in Africa under Vichy control. Before the landings in North Africa, much information of interest was forthcoming from these parts. Between November 1942 and September 1943 large numbers of refugees arrived, many in direct escape parties from continental countries, chiefly from France, Norway and Denmark. All of them brought operational and topographical intelligence.

Since the information obtained from refugees was proving vital in preparation for the Allied assault on the continent, an expansion of the establishment was started at the end of September 1943. From then on, there were nine interrogating officers, who all worked in the same manner despite being from different departments. The period between October 1943 and June 1944 was the peak of activity, due to preparations for the landings in Normandy. Thousands of refugees were expected to arrive from the continent, and preparations to deal with them went on feverishly from January 1944.

Since the spring of 1941, one Miss Davies had been working as a photographer at the LRC (RVPS), when she answered an advertisement in *The Daily Telegraph* for a position as 'Confidential Government Clerk'. On 5 May 1944, she wrote in her diary that 'things are beginning to liven up for the expected invasion' and that she was 'frantically busy all day, photographed

30 people'.[5] Arrivals totalled 4000 in the period (for a total of 21,400 since the LRC had into being), and 433 intelligence reports were written.

After D-Day, civilian aliens continued to arrive in the UK in large numbers, but their value for intelligence purposes steadily declined. Those who had anything of operational value had already given it to intelligence officers of the expeditionary forces. The anticipated influx of refugees from the beachheads in Normandy did not materialize and the few persons who did arrive had been interrogated by field units. Therefore, before the end of 1944, the staff of the RVPS was reduced. After January 1945 many officers and clerks were released for more important work elsewhere, and the unit was finally disbanded as of 31 May 1945.

Selection

Among the main purposes of examination at the RVPS was the selection of persons for examination, which involved two phases: security interviewing to clear new arrivals and interviewing to collect intelligence. Reports estimated that about one in ten people examined there were able to give information of value.[6] The greater part of these were interviewed and vetted as to their possible knowledge and 3768 were able to give information which was embodied in official interrogation reports.[7] Direct arrivals from enemy or enemy-occupied territory by sea or air always brought the most valuable and up-to date intelligence, and interrogators gave such persons priority.

Many individuals had already given their information to Military Attachés or officials in neutral countries. They were only interviewed if they had something of importance to tell or if they had previously failed to give the information in sufficient detail. It seems quite evident that women were not considered to be capable of giving information of value, because they were given accommodation in a different centre. Those who were thought to have some information of value were, however, interviewed at RVPS.

Refugees, who in this context were considered as 'informants', were graded as listed below. It is very interesting to note that only informants, and not the quality of their information, were valued:

1.
A) A reliable first-class source such as a highly qualified technician, eminent doctor, extremely intelligent observer, etc.
B) A competent source or one with good powers of observation.
C) A source of medium reliability.
D) Unobservant or unreliable witness.

2.
No attempt was made to grade the information.

3.
An otherwise A source talking on a subject with which he was not conversant was down graded B or C.

4.
Following the grading of source there sometimes appeared the letter (Z). This indicated that at the time of writing the report, the witness had not been wholly cleared from the security point of view.

5.
Weekly lists were issued indicating that the informants in question had subsequently been cleared by the Security Service.[8]

Reports

A total of 2641 intelligence reports were written between 25 May 1941 and 31 May 1945, plus other additional reports (total 3768). These were the result of a process of co-authoring, as they were usually drafted after more than one interview, after consultation with other services (Admiralty, War Office or civil sections, or even foreign governments in exile) to assess the precise type of intelligence needed against what was already known, and a careful control of the index card of informants, to cross-check every piece of information. The interrogation took place in the language of the interviewee (therefore interrogators did not usually speak their own language, while interviewees did), but the interrogation report was then produced in English, and it usually included other types of materials such as sketches, maps or any documents found on the refugee which might have been useful. A lot of clerical work was also involved in this, before the final report was produced.

Interrogation

When a refugee arrived at the LRC (RVPS) he (or in very few cases she) was asked three main questions:

1) Where had he been in enemy or enemy-occupied territory?
2) What was his occupation in those places?
3) What periods of time were spent in such occupations and places?[9]

Interrogations could last between a few minutes and many hours, and they were carried out between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and 2 and 5 p.m.

The Security Service in general preferred to avoid the use of external interrogators, but if someone had some important technical information then experts might be needed. Furthermore, before D-Day numerous teams of US interrogators would spend between three and six days with MI19 (RVPS).

A sound principle laid down in this organization was that military information should not be disseminated until the informant had been cleared by the Security Service, and this principle gave rise to a few difficulties. For example, days or weeks might well have passed before MI5 was satisfied that an arrival was not an enemy spy, and time factors were of the greatest importance in intelligence dissemination: 'Informants, upon arrival, were bursting with information and full of enthusiasm. If, after a few days, they had not been interviewed they lost interest in everything except the question of how long they would be kept in "prison".'[10]

MI5 was quite strict, and aliens might sometimes stay at RVPS for as much as two or three weeks before MI5 could deal with their case, several weeks more before being cleared, and a few more days to be interviewed if their information was considered of value. This system was eventually changed so that the whole process only took a few days, not weeks. Those cases which could not be cleared by the Security Services, were then sent to other prison camps (such as Camp 020 or CSDIC) for detailed interrogation.

Space was so limited at RVPS that it was the exception for officers to be alone with their informants during an interrogation. Often two or more interrogations would take place in a small room, and one officer might interrogate several members of the crew of a boat together. It is interesting to note that, when official documents describe the accommodation for this type of interrogation, there is no mention of any interpreting/translating: in fact the evidence does not show that any interpreting/translating as we understand it today ever took place. Instead, multilingual officers were employed, who could easily interview their informants – whether to clear them from a security point of view or to collect intelligence – in their own language:

> Interrogation officers and other staff should not be fit for active service. The officers should be older men and, in addition to linguistic qualifications, they should have a good knowledge of the countries from which refugees are expected, and if possible in addition they should be drawn from different professions and occupations in civil life.[11]

These officers were instructed to use the same interviewing method taught in War Intelligence and German Interrogation courses, although those were clearly conceived for the interrogation of enemy prisoners of war.

However, a post-war report on the RVPS also points out that:

> Obviously to a friendly informant an entirely different approach was necessary to that when an interrogator was confronted by a resistant German P/W.
>
> . . . the approach of MI5 examiners was from the nature of their investigations inclined to be hostile to the alien. On the other hand the

> approach of MI19 (RVPS) officers was cordial. Aliens were welcomed with a handshake, offered a cigarette, and put at their ease with a few friendly words of welcome to our land of liberty after their escape from a country under German rule. . . . An intelligent informant, at his ease and full of enthusiasm, needed guidance rather than interrogation. It became the task of the officer to explain what was wanted, and restrain the informant from exaggerations. An unintelligent informant might need to have his information dragged out of him, but goodwill was almost inevitably met with. Only in a few isolated cases did an informant try to withhold his knowledge in the belief that he should talk only to a member of his own government in London.
>
> . . . There were dangers against which interrogators had to guard themselves. Informants were usually so eager to talk that patience and tact were necessary to sort out the essential and the superfluous. It was necessary to keep the enthusiasts to facts and to assess the value of tall stories told by the braggart. Often unlikely information turned out to be true. To ask leading questions was an invitation to the informant to romance. Some interrogators were themselves prone to romance in order to write a good story. It was necessary to give a frequent warning that information received should not be embellished but faithfully reflected to convey the exact intelligence given.[12]

For the sake of winning informants' confidence and good will, and to counteract the effects of enemy propaganda, informants were given good food, good accommodation, a sympathetic person, a message of greetings from their own national governments and from the British Prime Minister.

The system actually seemed to be quite effective, mainly because of the amount of reports produced, but confirmed also by the memories of those who had to go through the PRS' structure. Mattis (from Norway), for example, recalls his journey in good detail:

> From Edinburgh we went by train, . . . rounded up by military escort, we went to London to the Royal Patriotic School [*sic*] who was the centre that all, all refugees came to be cleared from security point of view. . . . well it took about one week before you were cleared to be able to come out of the RVPS, of the group of some sixty that came with the boat that I came with, was two detained because they turned out to be Nazis infiltrators. Two of them were stopped. So the next thing was that we were sent down to County Hotel . . . not only refugees coming there, but also sailors waiting for their next boat . . . next door was Norwegian security office who checked [info on] military security installations that we knew about in our own location in Norway. I suppose it was very important info.[13]

Kaspar, who also arrived from Norway, where he had joined the resistance, agrees:

> From Shetland to Scotland, from there to Aberdeen by train, then to London to the Patriotic School were we were interned. All the people who came, until they were able to check our background. That took normally approximately one week, then we were released and handed to the Norwegian authorities.
>
> . . . There was great staff of people from the MI, other British intelligence. They had connections of people from home. I believe it was impossible for anyone from Norway to escape and hide as an agent, in the Patriotic School. But there were all sorts of nations, they were all coming from elsewhere. There were at least two or three hundred.
>
> . . . They asked what were we doing . . . normal daily questions, find out if we were up to something . . . anything that could be of interest. . . . They were collecting us at Patriotic School.[14]

Interrogating officers: 'knowledge of the language is essential but interrogators need not know a foreign language perfectly'

Interrogators were required to have the skills and qualifications necessary to deal with the interrogation methods outlined above. Languages obviously featured among those skills:

> Knowledge of the language is essential but interrogators need not know a foreign language perfectly. Informants knew they were being interrogated by British officers. However, the command of a language should be sufficiently great for the interrogator to put his questions clearly and concisely and he should be able correctly to comprehend with accuracy shades of meaning and dialects, although he himself would not be capable of expressing himself in such idiom or dialect.[15]

This is obviously quite contradictory. The idea of 'knowing a foreign language perfectly' is very unclear in itself: 'perfectly' is not quantifiable, and today it would not be accepted as a way to describe the level of language knowledge. This seems to imply that a near-native level of fluency was not needed for this type of job, yet later on the report states that interrogators needed to understand shades of meanings and dialects, which even some native speakers themselves might sometimes find difficult. The vagueness of this statement shows how unclear language policy was at the time, even for a task such as this, where the purpose of the exchange was primarily to obtain valuable tactical and strategic information to the sole interest of the

British authorities – as opposed to the case of asylum interviewing where, at least in theory, the interest of the applicant should be the primary purpose of the exchange. Yet the system seems to have worked quite well:

> In order to understand and cope with refugees from all parts of Europe, a very good knowledge of both peoples and countries was essential. Furthermore wide general knowledge and continental experience were necessary as informants gave facts of interest on every conceivable subject, not merely on naval, military and air matters, but on commerce, industry, politics, religion, health and a host of other topics.[16]

Languages certainly played a major role at the RVPS, as the evidence seems to show that everyone, except for the clerks, was required to speak some foreign idioms. The fact that, when there was little work to do, some clerks took the opportunity of learning some languages from the interrogation officers shows how those who worked there were fascinated by this skill, although official documents very rarely refer to this very much needed skill. Miss Davis in fact reports in her diary that 25 May 1944 was 'rather a dull day except that I heard that Captain Cox has offered to teach Wing and I German. I am seriously considering taking him up on it.'[17]

Interviewers also needed to have what would today be called exceptional interpersonal skills: the language and cultural knowledge needed to adapt to their informant, plus other more human abilities, needed to win the trust of people who were escaping from their own countries or to nail down enemy spies.

> The psychology of a person who had left enemy or enemy-occupied territory needed study. Some, for example, had been hunted by the Germans, had been for months in constant fear of arrest, torture and death, and had finally made a hazardous crossing of the Channel or North Sea. Others were completely bored and 'browned off' by a long sojourn in Stockholm or Lisbon. It did not take long to realise that a different approach would be necessary in the case of each individual. Moreover there were racial and national characteristics to be considered.[18]

Many of those who arrived at RVS had had incredibly tough experiences, and the small amount of testimonies of these experiences does not do justice to their value. Kaspar's first attempt to get to Britain had been on a small fishing boat, about twenty-five feet long. The trip, attempted in February, took about one day and one night. 'In that area we were all used to be in boats.' The first attempt failed, so he returned to Alesund, and from there he tried to find a new boat but did not have the money to pay for it. Eventually, he sailed with sixty people: "We left on March 4th, with him two Jewish doctors, and others, people coming from other parts of the country. We had

a Norwegian–German agent who infiltrated and tried to send signals to the Germans. He shot twenty-two escapers', but they still managed to arrive in the Shetland Islands.[19]

Mattis landed on the shores of the Shetlands in a fishing boat as well. When he arrived, he was with a party of seventy refugees and had absolutely nothing with him. It 'took us about three days to get over. First of all it was very dangerous because the German coastguard had spotlight following the boat. They had to do as if they were fishing. I came over to Shetland Island . . . for three days we didn't have any food so we were shocked to see bread thrown out of the boat.'[20] In November 1944, Miss Davis photographed 'a party of Norwegians and French who were chased by the Gestapo, a plane which attacked them killed one member of the party – such a tragedy when they were so near goal',[21] and in February 1945 she worked with another group of Norwegians 'who are starving to death. They looked dreadful. I felt fatter than ever, most of them have to go to bed immediately they are in such a sad state.'[22]

Some interrogating officers had previous experience in the Forces, but some others had worked in business, in the arts, in civil service or in journalism. Many had lived in various European countries, and all had travelled widely:

> They could cope with the languages of all these countries from which operational intelligence for the conquest of Hitler's 'FESTUNG EUROPA' was essential. There was definitely one lacuna – no officer spoke the languages of East and South East Europe. As a result persons from these countries were interrogated either in language foreign to them or not at all.[23]

> . . . Quite apart from the fact that young officers are needed for active service, the older man, with wide experience, is definitely the better type for the detailed interrogation of alien refugees and infiltraters [*sic*].[24]

Poumeau de Lafforest

Only one complete case of those dealt with at RVPS has been preserved and reached us as a complete dossier. Jean Abel Louis Poumeau de Lafforest was a Breton journalist and claimed to be a resistance activist. He arrived in Britain on 21 July 1942 and reached the RVPS the following day.

> Port of departure: Carantec, 20 July 1942;
> Port of arrival: Plymouth 21 July 1942;
> Date of arrival at RVPS: 22 July 1942.[25]

A report written on him on 8 June 1943 included a summary of his story:

> Jean de LAFOREST . . . came to this country by small boat from Brittany last year and passed through LRC. The whole crew was under slight

> suspicion, and one of them was sent to Camp 020, but the LRC decided that LAFOREST was quite harmless from the point of view of Security and he was released to the FFC. They however, took a very low view of him and would not enrol him in their Forces. They treated him rather badly, and in consequence, he, on his side, did not wish to join. He is working for the news agency Agence Française Independente. I do not think it is correct to say that he has valuable information to give to the British Intelligence authorities, as he had ample opportunity of doing this while at the LRC. He knows Brittany well, being a native of that part.

Captain C. A. W. Beaumont of the Aliens Department of the Home Office wrote that, although the British were quite satisfied that Lafforest was not a danger from a security point of view, the 'Free French did not like him at all, and were unwilling to employ him except in a military capacity for which he is unfit. His eyes being extremely weak.'

Lafforest arrived in Britain on a boat with another four men, one of whom, Lagall, was then found to be suspicious. Lafforest was ruled out as an accomplice German agent because he was not physically fit for the job, he had no role in the recruitment of the party (he himself was recruited by Lagall) and his story was considered satisfactory by his interrogators, who found that it was confirmed by the accounts of the others. Lagall was later cleared, as he was not a German agent, but he was sent to Camp 020 for further investigation. All the names that Lafforest mentioned in the course of his interrogation were crossed-checked against the RVPS' card index, and a 'Look-up summary'[26] was produced, including a card for each of the people mentioned by Lafforest, with the information already known by RVPS on those individuals.

Lafforest was interrogated because he was thought to have interesting information on the constitution of underground organizations in Brest, details of military dispositions and sabotage activities and plans of the effects of the bombing on Brest, and, more importantly, he had claimed that he had possibilities of liaisons in France. His interrogations were carried out by different officers in the French section of RVPS, all of whom showed a very good level of French in their correspondence with the French governmental authorities in London. The RVPS eventually produced three reports after interviewing Lafforest: on 23 July (a report for MI6 only, with a list of his relatives and all his previous addresses, his documents and his personal history), 31 July and 15 August 1942. The conclusion was the following:

> Regarding Lafforest, I can find no point in his story which arouses suspicion and do not consider that he can add any more in the way of evidence, to what he has already given.[27]

Lafforest was subsequently released to 'FFF' (France Libre, re-named France Combattante by the time Lafforest arrived to Britain) as a 'war refugee'.

He subsequently married a British woman, Louise, and worked as a journalist at first for Agence France Independante, then with the Ministry of Information and as News Editor for the Office of War Information (OWI) at the US embassy. He finally became a freelance journalist and translator in London.

Conclusions: successful language encounters with refugees?

The system developed at the LRC (RVPS) seems to have worked well and to have achieved all its objectives, since there is no evidence of its malfunctioning. It is true that the evidence is far from being complete and accurate, but based on what is available today one may conclude that the system worked well and that it was successful in overcoming language difficulties, especially in comparison with the systems analysed by Maryns (2006) and Inghilleri (2004–7). Both these authors have stressed the high (and mostly negative) impact that an imperfect and sometimes non-existent interpreting system has on the outcome of asylum interviews.

There are two major differences between the interviewing in this situation discussed in this chapter and the types of interviewing procedures analysed by Maryns (2006) in Belgium or Inghilleri (2004–7) in Britain: a) the reasons for interrogations/interviewing, and b) the way that informants were perceived and treated both during their time in the facility and during the interviewing itself. Perceptions regarding interviewing as a language encounter, on the other hand, do not seem to have changed. In fact, language barriers are not perceived as a problem in principle, and a thorough fluency in the language used for the interview is not requested in principle.

How were language difficulties overcome at LRC? Firstly, there were no intermediaries in the communication process and no interpreting was involved, but interviewing and the power to decide the refugee's fate and to collect intelligence were still not left to improvised linguists: mature intelligence officers were selected for the job. Although there is no evidence of assessment of language knowledge, having experiences of living abroad was a requirement, as it was expected that this type of experience was proof of deep knowledge of the language as well as cultural awareness. Culture seems to have had primacy over language, although the only complete dossier available shows that officers with a very high level of French were employed. As final reports were produced in English as part of a co-authoring process, no translation was ever involved either.

Extra-textual issues such as the British need for valuable intelligence and the way informants were treated seem to be highly relevant in the process of overcoming linguistic and cultural difficulties. Inghilleri notes that:

> The relationship of the interpreter to the host community and to the community of the asylum applicant is an important variable. While an

> 'ideal' position is widely felt to be a balance of the immigrant perspective and the host perspective, in practice *the degree of assimilation into or adaptation to the host culture appears to be important to how and when this balance is achieved*. (Inghilleri 2004: 6)

In the interviewing which took place at RVPS, the information and the informants were relevant for reasons from which the interviewing authorities could greatly benefit, and therefore informants were treated with care. The better disposition of interviewing authorities towards informants and information (valuable intelligence) led to a more objective system, which was set up in the best interest of the British receiving authorities. Furthermore, an extra-textual system of cross-verification was set up to establish credibility by checking carefully every single piece of information received from a refugee, whether to clear the person or to collect useful information. The card index system proved very useful in this sense because it helped to verify every piece of information against information obtained through other sources (other services, or other refugees). In contrast to today, officers' disposition towards interviewees was substantially better: they did not have in front of them thousands of desperate people coming from underdeveloped areas of the world which also happened to be devastated by war. In front of them, instead, they had sources of potentially vital intelligence and a mixed group of people who included professionals, intelligent informants and some informants who had had roles in the Resistance. All efforts were made to win the informants' trust and confidence: they were treated very well and given good food and shelter, although they sometimes felt like they were being imprisoned. In the cases described by Maryns (2006) and Inghilleri (2004–7) it was the asylum seeker who had to win the interviewer's confidence, and not the other way around as at RVPS.

The interaction between refugee and officers is not only a discursive process but is also a process in which other non linguistic elements come into play to powerfully influence the cross-cultural encounter. The initial MI5 interviews, on the other hand, seem much more similar to the process described by Maryns.

Notes

1. National Archives (NA), WO 208/4970.
2. NA, WO 208/4970.
3. NA, WO 208/4970.
4. NA, WO 208/4970.
5. Imperial War Museum (IWM) Documents 03/43/1.
6. NA, WO 208/4970.
7. NA, WO 208/4970.

8. NA, WO 208/4970.
9. NA, WO 208/4970.
10. NA, WO 208/4970.
11. NA, WO 208/4970.
12. NA, WO 208/4970.
13. IWM Sound Archive 20358.
14. IWM Sound Archive 23218.
15. NA, WO 208/4970.
16. NA, WO 208/4970.
17. IWM Documents 03/43/1.
18. NA, WO 208/4970.
19. IWM Sound Archive 23218.
20. IWM Sound Archive 20358.
21. IWM Documents 03/43/1.
22. IWM Documents 03/43/1.
23. NA, WO 208/4970.
24. NA, WO 208/4970.
25. NA, KV 4/344.
26. NA, KV 4/344, 139.
27. NA, KV 4/344, 138.

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10

Jailtacht: the Irish Language and the Conflict in Northern Ireland

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The revival of the Irish language was a constitutional aim of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The organization would not turn out to realize this aspiration in the field in Northern Ireland but rather would realize it in prison; however, the impact of these Irish-speaking prisoners was eventually felt far beyond the walls of their cells. This chapter examines the mechanics of the acquisition of the language by Irish republican prisoners along with their linguistic behaviours and practices from 1972 onwards. It therefore moves through the different phases in this history: internment (1972–6), protest (1976–81) and strategic engagement (1981–98). Its aim is to provide the reader with the bare bones of the historical narrative that is at the core of this particular case of a language bound up with political violence and armed conflict.[1]

Internment (1972–6)

During the early years of the conflict in Northern Ireland, around 2000 (Connolly 1998: 261) Irish republicans were imprisoned at HMP Long Kesh (popularly known as 'the Cages' by Irish republicans), a complex of ex-British Army Nissen huts located beyond the southwestern hinterland of the city of Belfast. In the period between 1972 and 1976, the prisoners, whether interned without trial or imprisoned following conviction in court, were subject to Special Category Status. This meant that they were allowed to wear their own clothes, to freely associate with each other, to not do prison work, to receive food and other parcels from a regular stream of visitors and generally to organize themselves according to their membership of various paramilitary groups.

In this period, the Irish republican prisoners organized Irish language classes for themselves as part of a curriculum which included a broad range of activities. The views of Séanna Walsh (also known as Séanna Breatnach / Breathnach and Sid Walsh), now a prominent member of Sinn Féin and a former leader of Irish republican prisoners, accurately reflect the motivations

of those prisoners who had an interest in the language at that time. It can be deduced that he first acquired the Irish language in school in Belfast and in the Donegal Gaeltacht, like many others in Northern Ireland. Upon imprisonment, he quickly became aware of the ideological significance of the language for Irish republicanism and set about becoming fluent in Irish. He describes this in the Irish republican magazine *An Phoblacht*:

> I first got an interest in Irish in primary school and developed it at secondary school. I was in Loch an Iúir Gaeltacht in Donegal when Internment erupted across the North. Within 18 months I found myself in prison, in the Cages of Long Kesh. I dived into the language with a passion. It was clear to me at a fairly early stage that the Irish language was much more than a medium of communication, that wrapped up in it was the history of conflict and dispossession, genocide and emigration. (Walsh quoted in Walsh and Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2005)

Irish republican sources dating from the early 1970s indicate how the prisoners acquired the Irish language at that time. It would appear that, during this particular period, they learned the language in what one could reasonably describe as an unremarkable classroom format, including the use of commercially-produced teaching materials. Based upon uncited interviews with former Irish republican prisoners, the US sociologist Denis O'Hearn incidentally implies that the Irish language lessons were rather conservative:

> Billy McKee appointed his closest friend, Prionsius Mac Airt, to travel around the cages and keep an eye on organization and morale. A committed Irish speaker, as Mac Airt went around, he taught Irish in classes of five to seven students. Mac Airt taught the students classical Irish, using the old script rather than the Roman alphabet. The Irish language really took off when two Irish speakers from the south [the Republic of Ireland] arrived in the cage and began teaching classes. (O'Hearn 2006: 56)

The prisoners also adopted the badges of the Gaelic League (Conradh na Gaeilge).[2] These badges, known as the 'Fainne Glas', were to be worn by individuals as an indicator of their level of fluency in the language:

> It happened in June 1973 that men with ten years and more were sent to the new Cages with cells in them. And after a couple more weeks we were moved into one of them. In a month there were four new Cages of 'Provos' [provisional IRA] adjacent to each other . . . After that they collected names of people who wanted to learn Irish. I took advantage of this again. It was better than in the Crumlin, we had chalk, blackboards, books and so on. After they collected the names there were thirty of them and they decided to establish a Gaeltacht. That Monday I was informed

> of the class that I was to be a pupil in. We weren't working for more than six weeks until we got the Fainne Glas, our first Fainne. We got it and wore it on our coats. I was over the moon at getting it.[3] (Republican Press Centre 1977: 35)

Several contemporary and other later sources claim that the prisoners created a 'Gaelic hut' or 'Gaeltacht huts' where the Irish language was to be dominant, but it is clear from the 'Prison Struggle' collection that such a Gaeltacht was largely made up of learners of the language, many of whom had very limited competence in the language. That said, the cages were important sites of Irish language learning for Irish republicans such as Séanna Walsh:

> There were Gaeltacht huts in the cages, during the early 1970s. Proinsias Mac Airt [aka Francis / Frank Card and Frankie Cards] taught Irish to me then. I had some, very limited Irish from school, a few words.[4]

It is asserted in the 'Prison Struggle' collection (Republican Press Centre 1977: 35) that there was a Gaeltacht in each of the Cages but other, mostly later sources (including interviews with ex-prisoners) confirm only the certain existence of two 'Gaeltacht huts', namely Cages 11 and 17, with sleeping accommodation for around twenty in each half-hut. Mac Ionnrachtaigh (2003) elicited accounts of the language ethos and activities in these Cages from some ex-prisoners. For example, Cage 11 is described in the following terms by Liam Ó Maolchluiche:

> All the emphasis was on the Irish language, we were immersed in it. There were classes throughout the day on politics, literature, other aspects of language and all of this was through the medium of Irish. We promised newcomers that they'd be fluent inside six months. We weren't allowed to look at English-language television or radio. If you broke the rules or if you spoke English you were excluded from the Gaeltacht and there was a big list of people waiting to take your place. (Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2003: 22)

The Irish language activity in Cage 17 is similarly described by Gearóid Mac Siacais (aka Jake Mac Siacais or Jake Jackson), another ex-prisoner, as follows:

> The Irregular Verbs were written on the wooden walls of the huts in huge letters; you learned these by heart as a part of the basic class. After that, you joined the middle class, then you went to the higher class and then to the 'treasrang'. The 'treasrang' showed that you'd developed and that you were ready to go into the Gaeltacht. You had the bare bones of the

> language. All you needed now was oral fluency. The teacher praised you but there was always a waiting list. (Mac Ionnrachtaigh, 2003: 22)

One of these 'Gaeltacht Huts', Cage 11, appears to have been particularly important as a focal point for a cohort of future leaders of the Irish republican movement. It was known by the Irish republican prisoners as 'the generals' hut'. Cage 11 was home to a number of individuals who subsequently became central figures in the Irish republican struggle against the British state, both inside and outside the prison. Amongst their numbers were Bobby Sands (aka Roibeard Ó Seachnasaigh, Roibeard Mac Sandair and Marcella, who would subsequently lead the fatal hunger strike of 1981), Gerry Adams (aka Gearóid Mac Adaimh and Brownie, who would go on to lead Sinn Féin to government in the Assembly in Northern Ireland) and Séanna Walsh (who would become a key figure in the story of the Irish language in Long Kesh). Allen Feldman, a US anthropologist conducting fieldwork in Belfast during the late 1980s, refered to the existence of Gaeltacht huts at Long Kesh in his book of 1991, along with the use of the term 'Jailtacht' by the Irish republican prisoners:

> The compound huts were self-governing communities. Political prisoners had little contact with prison staff. All prison administration-prisoner interaction was mediated by the paramilitary officer commanding each hut. Within the compound, military hierarchies and ranks prevailed. This social structure replicated and intensified the paramilitary social structure on the outside. The Republican compounds engaged in extensive political and military education-training programs. Most noteworthy were the Gaeltacht or Jailtacht huts, dormitories where only Gaelic was spoken. Prisoners resided permanently in the Gaeltacht huts. (Feldman, 1991: 296)

Feldman is, of course, mistaken in this regard. To use the term 'Jailtacht' in relation to the 'Gaeltacht Huts' is anachronistic. The term was not coined in the Cages of Long Kesh during the 1970s but rather in a very different sort of prison during the 1980s.

Protest (1976–81)

On 1 March 1976, the particular prison world of 'the Cages' was brought to an end when the British government implemented a new policy direction aimed at breaking the IRA's campaign of political violence. The prisons in which Irish republican prisoners were held were to be a crucial part of that initiative. The end of Special Category Status for all prisoners convicted after that date signified an attempt by the British government to 'criminalize' the Irish republican prisoners and the Irish republican movement generally.

From 1 April 1980, Special Category Status was removed from all prisoners regardless of the date of their conviction. Their resistance to this process of 'criminalization', along with the opening of a set of new H-shaped prison buildings at the site (renamed HMP The Maze by the British government but still known as Long Kesh by the prisoners themselves) based upon a cellular design, enormously altered the situation.

At around this stage, a total of approximately four hundred prisoners were in HMP The Maze and approximately 380 were claimed by the IRA as members (Melaugh [n.d.]). In response to the change of direction in British government prison policy, the prisoners embarked upon on a series of protests – beginning in September 1976 with a refusal to wear prison uniform (the blanket protest), escalating in March 1978 with a refusal to slop out the cells (the dirty protest) and culminating in two sets of hunger strikes which were held during 1980 and 1981. The first set of hunger strikes (October to December 1980) had very little political impact, but the impact of the second was enormous.

The second set of hunger strikes began in March 1981 and ended in October of the same year. During its course, ten of the twenty-three hunger strikers died and three of the prisoners, of whom two were on hunger strike and the other was on the blanket protest, were elected to the British and Irish parliaments. The first and by far the most dramatic election was that of Bobby Sands as MP for Fermanagh / South Tyrone (Northern Ireland) in April 1981. This was followed in June 1981 by the election of Kieran Doherty as TD (Teachta Dála: Member of the Irish Parliament) for Cavan / Monaghan (Republic of Ireland) and of Paddy Agnew (on the blanket protest) as TD for Louth (Republic of Ireland). According to many of the prisoners, the events of this period of protest marked a very significant turning point for the Irish language in prison. Laurence McKeown, ex-Irish republican prisoner (H-2 and H-6) and ex-hunger striker, recalls that the new conditions in the 'protesting wings' of the H-blocks meant that the prisoners were now confined to their cells (in pairs or in solitary confinement) under 24-hour lock-up and they were denied access to any Irish-language material – there were no books, no chalk, no blackboard, no classrooms:[5]

> As more and more republican prisoners were sentenced [subsequent to the removal of Special Category Status on 1 March 1976] they followed the example of Kieran Nugent [the first Irish republican prisoner to challenge the new prison regime of 'criminalization'] and refused to wear the prison uniform or do prison work. Their numbers in the early days were still small, however, and they felt very vulnerable. A very strict regime was imposed by the guards and prison authorities in an attempt to break the protest. The prisoners had nothing in their cells except cell furniture, a Bible and the prison uniform which they refused to wear. They had no cigarettes, radio, TV, papers, books, magazines, pens, nothing. They were

> not even allowed to communicate to one another. Anyone caught doing so was assaulted by the prison guards. Neither were they allowed to speak to the conforming prisoners who were held in the same wing. A regime of 'silence' was strictly imposed. (McKeown 1998: 144)

Despite the initial 'regime of silence',[6] it was this change of prison policy and the prisoners' response to it which brought the language to the forefront of the Irish republican struggle inside prison. As another of the prisoners (Jackie McMullan) recalls, the rapid increase in the number of protesting prisoners (perhaps as many as several hundred) contributed to the erosion, in practice if not as a matter of policy, of this regime:

> The increase in our numbers meant greater contact with the ordinary prisoners, which led to more cigarettes and a greater flow of scéal [lit. 'story' but meaning 'news' or simply 'gossip']. Our confidence also began to grow at this time and we spent more and more time talking to each other, down at the pipes and even out the doors. It was harder for the screws to handle the increased numbers, and the less committed among them became less diligent in enforcing the countless petty rules. (Jackie McMullan [H-6] in Campbell et al. 1994: 18)

It is possible to gain an impression, from the prisoners, of how lessons were now conducted from various sources. The obstacles to normal adult second language acquisition were overcome in a number of ways. For example, the ban on Irish-language material was undermined with some external help. Those prisoners still with Special Category Status, housed in the Cages adjacent to the H-blocks, helped those learners of Irish in the H-blocks through smuggling Irish language material to them, often through Catholic priests. One such prisoner, Liam Ó Maolchluiche, recalled the practice in interview with Mac Ionnrachtaigh (2003):

> No new faces at all were coming into the Cages and life there became rather boring and lonely. We felt particularly powerless with the struggle against criminalization worsening in the Blocks . . . We sent Irish language lessons to them through the priests in order to raise their spirits, especially as the blanket protesters had no facilities at all . . . We would have to be really certain that it was exactly perfect Irish in case we disseminated mistakes [that is, faulty Irish] throughout the blocks. It was a great experience and it helped our own Irish. (Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2003: 24–5)

The inability to freely associate and thereby conduct language classes for the teaching and learning of Irish was overcome in a number of ways. These lessons were led by those, such as Bobby Sands, Séanna Walsh and

Gearóid Mac Siacais, who were regarded as having a greater command of the language.

The teaching of the Irish language is one example of how prisoners developed an informal system of education during the years of the blanket protest in which 'pupils' became 'teachers' once they had arrived at a particular level of competence. No one had to be fully qualified according to some previously set criterion; all that was required was that those more advanced than others passed on what they knew and attempted to raise others up to their standard whilst simultaneously trying to acquire a higher standard themselves. The same applied to other knowledge that people acquired, be it about economics, socialism or history, but it was in the teaching of the Irish language that the principle was most apparent (McKeown 1998: 162). Séanna Walsh puts it in his own words as follows: 'theagasc daoine le Gaeilge mheasartha daoine le beagán Gaeilge agus theagasc daoine le beagán Gaeilge daoine gan Gaeilge ar bith agus d'fhás sé mar sin cé nach raibh ach dornán beag daoine ag an bharr le Gaeilge líofa acu' ('People with a moderate amount of Irish would teach those with a little Irish and those with a little Irish would teach those without any Irish at all and it grew like that even though at the start only a small handful of people were fluent in Irish') (Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2003: 29).[7] The teacher would shout out the lesson from behind his cell door for the benefit of those learning Irish on that particular wing. This is how it worked, in the words of Séanna Walsh again:

> The key turning point was the removal of political status. During the blanket protest the Irish language became the language of resistance. Irish was necessary for survival. At that time there were four or five who were very good at Irish and they taught the language to the others. This started with the learning of key phrases. These would be shouted through the doors of the cells or they would be scratched onto the walls with religious medals.[8]

According to some sources, there was a fairly rigorous routine to the teaching and learning of Irish with lessons occurring at set times of the day and being of a certain length and organized according to the particular levels of ability in the language of the learners. For example, one ex-prisoner described the lessons in the following terms in an interview with an Irish republican (IRA) prisoner conducted in the late 1980s by Feldman:

> In the Blocks the main way you communicated was shouting out the doors. So that was one of the reasons that the Gaelic became so prominent was that you had no way of communicating except by shouting out the door in Gaelic . . . The way we learned it was that a fellow got up and shouted the lesson out the door, the spelling of the words. It was

> just a methodical thing. You had a set of rosary beads, a screw, or a nail, and you scratched the lesson on the walls which were whitewashed. The beginner's class was on Monday, Wednesday, Friday between 12:00 and 1:00 pm. Tuesdays and Thursdays from about 3:00 to 5:00 you had advance classes, and on a Sunday from 12:00 to 2:00 pm you had the class for the teachers, where the teachers all got together and improved each other's Gaelic. At the end of the week you would set aside a day of storytelling, and then I done the history, Irish history all done in Gaelic from the head. (Feldman 1991: 213–4)

Gearóid Mac Siacais, who was sent to the H-blocks halfway through 1977, describes his own role in the initiation of the acquisition of the Irish language in the H-blocks as follows:

> A small crew of us started drawing up plans while on remand in Crumlin Road. We had experience of the Cages and we decided to organise the people in the Blocks into education classes. Politics was used to incite a combative mentality and Irish was used to build morale and identity . . . It was an enormous challenge because we were confined to our cells throughout the day without any facilities at all. A 'scairteoir' [lit. 'shouter'] in each wing and they would shout the classes out through their cell door in a slow, phonetic manner. The Irish language started as a basis for security but ended up as the spoken language of the Blocks . . . The progress was really incredible, truth be known. At the start, there were no more than seven or eight with Irish from the Cages; within eighteen months there were 300 prisoners fluent in Irish. (Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2003: 28–9)

Peader Whelan describes his learning process from complete beginner to fluency as follows:

> When I joined the Blanket protest in H3 in 1978, I had no Irish. There were no *ranganna* [lit. 'classes', but meaning 'lessons'] in the wing where I was placed and, while a few men already there had some very basic Irish, they did not have enought to teach it . . . However, not long after I joined the Blanket, Eunan Brolley from Dungiven came onto our wing. He had spent his remand in the Cages where, with the organisation of *ranganna* and the access to books that the conditions provided, the tradition of speaking and promoting Irish was stronger. Eunan had Irish before coming to jail and he used his time in the Cages to improve his command of the language . . . We began with the verb 'to be' learning it bit by bit and hoping not to get mixed up with the tenses when the *múinteoir* [teacher] asked us about it. Our *ranganna* were conducted by calling to each other out the door – so any mistakes were very public, adding to the pressure.

> Needless to say, *ranganna* were organised with the minimum of equipment . . . Lacking pen and paper . . . we wrote with a piece of toothpaste tube on the formica-topped table in the cell – the lead tubing was just like a pencil and brilliant for writing. The main drawback, though, was the fact that our only resource was the Irish that Eunan Brolly had in his head. He did have a fair amount and could confer and cross-check with the *múinteoirí* in the other wings, but the refusal by the prison administration to provide any educational materials imposed severe constraints in those early days. (Whelan 1991: 2)

Kevin Campbell, interviewed in a book compiled by a group of ex-prisoners, confirms that, in the absence of normal writing materials, the cell walls were used for writing down the basic content of some lessons:

> [I]n every wing the ranganna Gaeilge [lit. 'Irish classes' but meaning 'Irish lessons'] were organised. Men who had acquired the language, either in the Cages or in school, took the classes. Since we had no writing materials, we had to write the ranganna on the cell walls. We would keep a patch of the wall clean to write on and, using a broken piece of a liberated toothpaste tube, we would scratch the Gaeilge on the walls. Within a year [during 1978] Irish became the first language within the Blocks. All the news and business was given out the doors in Gaeilge [Irish]. (Kevin Campbell interview in Campbell et al. 1994: 48)

The contemporaneous writings of Bobby Sands provide a more immediate account of the conduct of such a lesson:

> I went back to my pacing once again as one of the boys shouted *Rang anois* [lit. 'class now'], summoning the lads to their doors for an Irish language class. The teacher was at the far end of the wing. He began to shout out the lessons at the top of his voice from behind his heavy steel door, asking questions, spelling out words and phrases, while the willing pupils scratched and scribbled them upon the dirty, mutilated walls. It was a rough and rugged way of teaching but it worked, and everyone endeavoured to speak what they learned all the time until the words and phrases became so common that they were used instinctively. The Irish class continued in the background as I returned to my thoughts. (Sands 1998: 42)

Of course, during the 'dirty protest' the prisoners spread their own excrement on the walls of their cells, so it was necessary to keep an area, or areas, of the walls clean for the writing down of the 'ranganna'. Mac Siacais: 'Dá mhéad na constaicí inár n-éadan, is amhlaidh is mó diongbháilteacht a thaispeáin muid . . . choinnigh muid bloc cearnógach glan ó shalachar ag

bun an chillín ar mhaithe le nótaí Gaeilge' ('However great the obstacles against us, the fact is that we showed that we were even more steadfast . . . we kept a square block clear of excrement at the lower end of the cell for Irish language notes') (Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2003: 31).[9] Another prisoner of that period, Brendan 'Bik' McFarlane (leader of the Irish republican prisoners following Bobby Sands), recalled in an interview first published in the Irish current affairs magazine *Magill* in 1986 that different spaces of the filthy cell walls were used for discrete linguistic units:

> The prisoners shouted to each other from cell to cell, passing information, leanring Irish, and so on. They sang and played quizzes to keep their spirits up; they had reckoned that it was going to be a short protest. Towards the end of 1978, forced washes and hair cuts were being introduced. Brendan McFarlane resisted and got a busted eye. As the men in the H-Blocks began to be moved from cell to cell, they were learning [Irish] from the writing on the wall. For example, the past tense of an Irish verb might be on one wall, the future tense on another and the present tense on another – 'Jailic', they called it! In the beginning, they scratched out. Later on, they were written in shit. (Dunne 1986)

Richard O'Rawe (aka 'Rick' and 'Ó Rathaigh'), another prominent member of the Irish republican prisoners during the late 1970s and early 1980s and a member of the IRA, recalls in his autobiographical work how he had similarly used such a linguistic space in his cell. This was in July 1981, in the middle of the second hunger strike, and he was sharing the cell at that time with Colm Scullion: 'I turned towards the wall. The names of birds in Irish were written on the wall; strikingly, there was Bobby's favourite bird, the lark, or fuiseóg' (O'Rawe 2005: 201).

Not all prisoners were equally interested in the language and some did not engage with the lessons. But, according to Laurence McKeown (aka Labhrás Mac Eoin), such was the prevalence of the language that it was all but impossible to avoid acquiring some Irish, perhaps even fluency in it:

> My cellmate at that time was Paul Montgomery from Newington, North Belfast, and Paul had decided that he would know the Irish language by Christmas 1977. Pacing up and down the cell for hours on end he would repeat the irregular verbs; Ar chuala tú? – Did you hear?; Chuala mé – I heard; Níor chuala mé – I did not hear. Despite efforts on my part to resist it I soon found myself mentally repeating, Ar chuala tú, chuala me, níor chuala me, and that was how I began to learn the Irish language. Later in the Blocks the Irish language was as commonly heard as English and many people, including myself, became fluent speakers. (McKeown 1998: 161–2)

Other techniques in the acquisition of the language included the translation from English into Irish and the learning by rote of complete chunks of text from the Bible (a copy of which was permitted in the cells) and iconic, historical Irish republican texts such as the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic and the poem 'Mise Éire' by the 1916 martyr Patrick Pearse. Also, some prisoners sharing cells created their own rules regarding the use of Irish as their language of communication. Colm Scullion, who shared a cell with Bobby Sands for a period, laid claim to both of these practices during an interview with Laura Friel in *An Phoblacht*:

> 'Most of my Irish was taught to me by Bobby Sands,' says Colm. A copy of the Bible was the only written material allowed in each cell. 'Bobby and Jake Jackson would shout out the reference to a passage in the Bible and we'd try to translate it into Irish,' says Colm. When Colm and Bobby shared a cell, 'we made it a rule to speak Irish all day.' Only after 11pm each night did they allow themselves to lapse back into speaking English. (Friel 1998)

Another ex-prisoner, Pilib Ó Rúnaí (aka Phillip Rooney), confirms these techniques and, in addition, indicates how some of the essential material, such as paper, pencils and Irish-language text, was acquired and concealed from the view of the prison warders:

> I first came across it through the command structure, through the OC [Irish republican prisoner officer commanding on any given wing]. He'd give orders like 'Faoi ghlas anois' ['Lock down now']. John Davey [sp.?] tried to do classes when I was on remand [the Cages] but too many people were coming and going. There was no structure even though there were books. I really learned on the blanket [the H-blocks] from Eddie Fay. He had a bit of Irish. He would teach me the irregular verbs. When the screws moved us to different cells and washed down the walls and all we'd start again. Eddie Fay [later killed by a loyalist assassination gang] was in the cell next door to me for about a year. He passed some material to me through the pipes on toilet paper, sometimes we'd pass messages by hanging the towel through the window but it was mostly oral. I always had to write it down. I had a pencil lead. I hid it behind my foreskin. I'd write it down on the wall and on toilet paper. We devoured the stories brought from the Cages by visitors. Within about two to three months I'd reached a fair bit of fluency. A later cellmate spoke Irish – around 1980. He'd learned his Irish from another cellmate in another cell. I was writing it correctly. I'd check it with the priest. Eddie was a bit ahead of me but by that stage he'd moved on a bit. It was different to the Cages. You were very dependent on the other learner. Fr. Brian Brady had a bit of Irish and he could check things with us. We had some material in Irish

> smuggled in like Fiachta's [sp?] 'History of Ireland' [?]. They were ideal circumstances for learning Irish, there was nothing else to do. It kept the prisoners' morale up.[10]

Visiting Catholic priests who were highly educated in the Irish language were used by the prisoners to explain some points of grammar and idiomatic phrases as well as offering guidance on pronounciation:

> We used Cardinal Ó Fiaich and Fr Faul to explain some phrases and pronounce some of the things we didn't understand or know how to say. We used stuff from *Ireland's Own*, there was an Irish-language cartoon in it. Irish material would be smuggled between the Blocks. Block 5 was very Irish. If we knew somebody was on their way to Block 4 we'd give them the stuff to take over. It wasn't as good if you were on Block 4. There weren't many good Irish speakers there then so you had to learn from just text, just reading text. You wouldn't know how to say it.[11]

Levels and types of fluency varied, as this account of an encounter with another prisoner by Peader Whelan illustrates:

> One such move [change of cell] brought me together with the *comrádái* [comrade] who, having been in H5 for about a year before coming to H3, had much more Irish than I, his boast was that he knew 70 verbs. That was impressive. However, his ability to actually speak Irish was very limited . . . I'm not sure why this was so, although it might simply have been due to their way of teaching: learn something by rote, memorise it and so know what tense of a verb to use when asked a question. Something was missing and I think that that something was comhrá [conversation] . . . Eunan held *ranganna* with me every day and, importantly, he conducted these classes through the medium of Irish. This was significant, I feel, because it meant I was not accumulating words, verbs, adjective, etc. As did the cellmate I mentioned. Instead, I would describe the process as one of building a practical awareness of the language and so gradually increasing my ability to converse. (Whelan 1991: 2)

He provides a particular example of how that converstional ability was developed in his own case during the course of one of these 'ranganna' with Eunan Brolly:

> [O]ut of the blue he asked: 'An bhfeiceann tú an t-éan ar an sreang?' (Do you see the bird on the wire?). 'An bhfeiceann tú?' was about as much as I knew, so he tried to explain what he was talking about by using Irish that I did know. In describing the scene in front of him and leaving it up to me to interpret what he was seeing, he was creating a situation where

> I could actively use my Irish rather than mechanically follow a pattern of question and answer around a particular verb. (Whelan 1991: 2–3)

The prison warders would, on a fairly regular basis, interrupt the Irish language lessons in a rather unstructured manner, usually through shouting and other oral/aural interference but also, on occasion, through using physical violence. Bobby Sands noted such attempts at disruption in his contemporaneous writings, for example:

> A screw [prison warder] began jeering and shouting from the top of the wing trying to disrupt the ongoing Gaelic [Irish language] class but the lads [Irish republican prisoners] continued, disregarding him. It happened all the time. The screws, achieved nothing, soon got fed up and departed. (Sands 1998: 43)

It was also the case that the prison warders routinely absented themselves from the wings in which the prisoners' cells were, while not actually leaving the H-block. As a result the prisoners were left largely to their own devices for substantial periods of time, albeit confined to their cells:

> They [prison warders] weren't able to stop us communicating in Irish as after lights out there were only prisoners on the wards, in the blocks. We were left to our own devices. There'd be forty or fifty prisoners on a wing and only four or five warders so it was impossible for them to control it.[12]

> The first guy who got the breakfast would shout out in Gaelic, 'Porridge on the air!' . . . If there was a break in that [prison] routine it could mean violence would be happening. Again in Gaelic somebody hearing the break in the timing would shout out, 'What's happening?' and the reply in Gaelic would come, 'No problem, just checking something.' There was a whole regular sound pattern that either meant or did not mean violence . . . If nothing happened it was shouted out in Gaelic, 'It's okay!' or 'They're battering!' . . . From ten to twelve noon the routine was silence from the screws, interspersed with the sounds of people coming on and off visits . . . As you came off the visit you walked through the front gate. We would stand on top of the heating pipes looking through the glass into the main yard. People would shout in Gaelic, 'There's so and so back again!' . . . Around half twelve a deep silence would come because the screws had gone off to their dinner. That silence told you that was them away, that it was safe. We could start the Irish classes then. The one screw who was left on the wing wouldn't interfere. If they did it usually meant water or piss being mopped in under the door of the cell. (An Irish republican (IRA) prisoner in Feldman 1991: 207)

It was prison policy, in this period, to move the prisoners regularly from cell to cell. This meant that on occasion the prisoners would get to see the Irish lessons that others had recorded on the cell walls:

> I continued on my journey to nowhere as I circled the cell floor like a guinea pig, stopping here and there for a moment or two to identify the scratched names on the door and walls; simple testimony and reminder that others had been and still were in my position. A certain quality of pride seemed to attach itself to the scrawled names of the tortured writers. They were entitled to be proud, I thought, as I moved off to read the scribbled Gaelic [Irish language] phrases and words, noting the progress of the other wings in the Gaelic classes. 'Gaelic classes,' I said it again. It sounded rather odd. But then it was odd, considering that it meant standing at the cell door listening to your mate, the teacher, shouting the lesson for the day at the top of his voice from the other end of the wing when the screws happened to be away for their dinner or tea. (Sands 1998: 30)

But it would appear that, more often than not, the prison warders would erase the Irish from the walls on the occasion of moving prisoners between cells: 'They [prison guards] would steam clean the walls and spray over the wall, with white paint covering the Irish and all the political slogans scratched in', according to an Irish republican (IRA) prisoner interviewed by Feldman (1991: 184).

The prisoners communicated in writing both with each other and with their comrades in the world outside through smuggling material in their body cavities. One of the most prolific writers in the H-blocks was Bobby Sands, and Gerry Adams claims that this prodigious output was only possible because of such activity:

> As well as being the leader of the blanket men and of the second hunger strike, Bobby Sands was also the most prolific writer among the H Block prisoners. He not only wrote press statements, but he also wrote short stories and poems under the pen name 'Marcella', his sister's name, which were published in *Republican News* and then in the newly merged *An Phoblacht / Republican News* after February 1979. Bobby's writings span the last four years of his life in H Blocks 3, 4, 5, or 6. They were written on pieces of government issue toilet roll or on the rice paper of contraband cigarette roll-ups with the refill of a biro pen which he kept hidden inside his body. He also wrote as a 'young West Belfast republican' and as PRO of the blanket men in the H Blocks 3, 4, and 6. (Adams 1998: 11)

David Beresford, a journalist writing for the British newspaper the *Guardian* at the time of the 1981 hunger strike, describes in some detail the mechanics

of this means of communication, knowledge which is derived from his close contacts with the Irish republican movement at that time:

> The H-Blocks are intended to facilitate control by restriction of both movement and communication. So the IRA leadership put a priority on the organization of communications, developing a highly efficient system. The monthly visits were to some extent under the control of the prisoners, who were required to submit requests to the governor stipulating what person was to be invited in and on what date. The applications were carefully staggered so that, as far as possible, each wing of each block had a prisoner meeting a visitor every day. Family and friends – mainly women – acted as couriers, carrying the steady stream of tiny 'communications' or 'comms', etched on cigarette papers and wrapped in household cling-film, in their mouths, in their bras, under their breasts, in their panties, sanitary napkins and vaginas. The prisoners carried them to the visiting area in their backsides, tucked behind their teeth, jammed up their nostrils, or in their foreskins. The pay-loads could be formidable – one prisoner was reputed to have set the record by carrying over forty cigarette papers in his foreskin. The system became so efficient that on occasion the external leadership could expect to get a message in, a reply out and a second message back in a single day. (Beresford 1987: 30)

In his description of a particularly invasive means of searching the prisoners by the warders, McKeown provides an intimate account of the concealment of Irish language and other material on their bodies. They coined the word 'bangling' for this practice:

> The mirror search was meant to discover anything hidden between prisoners' hips, which (up until then) was indeed the securest place for contraband items such as tobacco, pens, cigarette papers and articles written in Irish to be hidden. With the introduction of the mirror search, however, prisoners were forced to hide such items inside their bodies. They wrapped them securely in cling film and then put them up inside their anus. The practice of hiding items in this manner became known as 'bangling' (McKeown 1998: 151–2)

The prisoners also communicated by towel line. This involved using a thread of towel to which they would attach a paper message. The thread, or towel line, would then be swung by the deliverer of the message in the direction of the intended recipient between cell windows, under cell doors or through cell door windows. Bobby Sands describes this in his prison writings: '"Seán," I called, "I'll rig up a line with a bit of towel thread and swing a few tissues into you, mo chara [Translation: my friend]"' (Sands 1998: 39).

Sands also describes how the prisoners used the water and heating pipes to communicate:

> Seán knocked on the wall. 'Down to the pipe,' I said, getting down to the corner on top of my mattress with my head right to the wall where the pipes ran through. There wasn't a great deal of heat coming through the pipes. What there was went streaming out the open window into the dark cold night. 'Well, Bobby,' came Seán's enquiring voice through the small hole in the wall . . . I continued my conversation with Seán for some time until I began to feel cramped lying in my unnatural position at the pipes and wall. So I decided to go back to pacing the floor once again. My feet were numb with the cold. Seán understood. He was in much the same condition. I told him that I'd call him later and we both left our corners to resume where we had left off in our endless pacing. (Sands 1998: 67–8)

The Irish language quickly became very widely used by the Irish republican prisoners to communicate generally with each other. This communication apparently included important information regarding tactics and action by the prisoners as they developed their cycle of protests against the prison's regime of 'criminalization'. Thus, many prisoners regarded Irish as central to their being fully engaged with activity in the prison during this intense period of protest:

> We knew the Dark [Brendan Hughes] was not going to be content to let things go as they were. A little bit of excitement began to generate as we anticipated his next move – how to make the Blanket [protest] effective. With the knowledge that plans were afoot to escalate the protest, the staleness of the Blanket became apparent and I grew impatient for action. Bobby [Sands] was in regular contact with the Dark's wing. Messages were shouted back and forward in Gaeilge and code and it was obvious to us all that he was receiving the details of the next phase of action. Like many others, it was then that I decided that I must learn Gaeilge, because I was afraid of missing something. (Jaz McCann interview in Campbell et al. 1994: 30)

> All the news was in Irish. You had to understand Irish to know what was going on.[13]

This period of violent protest against the prison regime effectively concluded when the six remaining hunger strikers brought their action to an end on 3 October 1981 as it became increasingly clear that their families would intervene to save their lives. The family of Laurence McKeown, for example, initiated medical intervention to save his life as he entered a coma on the seventieth day of his hunger strike.

Strategic engagement (1981–98)

The demoralizing end of the hunger strike, from the point of view of the Irish republican prisoners, was accompanied by the decline of the language in the prison for several years. For around eighteen months or so after the end of the 1981 hunger strike, it would appear that Irish language classes proper were re-commenced but in very limited form:

> With only one class per block limited to 15 POWs per class, almost 40 prisoners in each block were left with no cultural outlet. Despite these rules the prisoners have had tremendous success in examinations in both 'A' level and 'O' level standard. An excellent feat when you consider that the POWs were not given access to reading or writing material and had but one miserable hour long class per week. (Cnamh 1985: 9)

These classes were brought to an end by the prison authorities following a mass escape of Irish republican prisoners from H-7 in September 1983. In addition, all Irish-language material was considered contraband, including articles in Irish in English-language newspapers. Irish classes were facilitated again by the prison authorities two years subsequent to this, but through distance-learning courses, with the numbers of learners limited to around thirty (Cnamh 1985: 9). Irish-language books remained proscribed items until 1986, but even afterwards they were subject to censorship (Mac Cormaic 1991: 18–19).

The eventual revival of the morale of the prisoners and the resurrection of the Irish language seems to have coincided with the return of Séanna Walsh to serve a new sentence in the H-blocks:[14]

> We always thought that the hunger strike was the secret weapon; that it never failed. The blanket protest peaked with around three hundred republican prisoners on it when I came in. At that time more were coming off than going on – it was at tipping point. We were all very young at the time. One republican who was thirty-four years old was called granda! Our generation was absolutely sure it would work. It was the ace in the pack. As far as we were concerned it was unsuccessful. People were thoroughly demoralized. The reason Bobby went on it was because he realised people were demoralized . . . People were thoroughly demoralized. The confusion and demoralization took very firm leadership. Séanna Walsh gave that. The first thing was to achieve segregation, to get them [loyalist prisoners and other prisoners, described by Merlyn Rees, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at the time of the removal of Special Category status in 1976 as 'ordinary decent criminals']. It was a brutal time. It was them or us. It involved a lot of casual violence. The language was used to differentiate with other prisoners. For some the language was a means of

> politicizing the non-political prisoners. '79 to '82 was very intensive, after that less so. But Irish was still there. Though we'd no access to Irish books until 1983 or '84, there was still a ban on Irish books until then. After Séanna Walsh came back it became a much more forward approach . . . There was a decline in the Irish language at that time. It took the best part of two years to change that.[15]

Under the leadership of Séanna Walsh, the Irish republican prisoners developed a policy of 'strategic engagement with the conforming prison system'.[16] The Irish language was reintroduced and, once again, became a central part of the everyday lives of the prisoners. But, since the prisoners were no longer in a continuous state of protest and in violent, direct conflict with the prison authorities (despite the mass escape of 1983), the conditions under which the language was now acquired were much more amenable, though not consistently so. Also, there appears to have been a greater awareness of some of the practical pedagodical issues regarding the effective acquisition of as second language. One reult of this was the introduction of an intensive course in Irish, the development of which is recalled by Séanna Walsh as follows:

> After the blanket protest, during the early 1980s, there was a decline in the Irish language in the prison but during the late 1980s some of us decided that we'd revive the language again. An intensive six-week course was developed by Máirtín Ó Muilleor and brought into the prison. There was no official access to Irish language teaching material – books, tapes, etc. – so the course had to be written and brought in specially. You needed to do the Dianchúrsa [Intensive Course] to get fluent in Irish. It wasn't enough to just do a few hours a week, here and there. You needed to do it all the time, morning and afternoon for six weeks and then you'd be fluent. We used it to get around ninety prisoners fluent, really fluent. The use of the Irish language in the prison at this time was different. It was used all the time, in the communal areas and in individual cells. You would even dream in Irish. It wasn't like the old Gaeltacht huts in the Cages where you'd only use it in the communal area. Around three hundred of the four hundred Republican prisoners became fluent in the Irish language.[17]

The tactics of 'strategic engagement' included a number of court cases being initiated by some of the Irish republican prisoners, challenging the prison authorities' policy with regard to the Irish language and other aspects of traditional Irish cultural activity. According to one source (Rolston and Tomlinson 1988: 188) there was, in October 1987, litigation regarding the confiscation of Irish-language Bibles from the prisoners. Then, in June 1989, two prisoners, Eoghan Mac Cormaic and John Pickering, lost a similar case

and subsequently lost the appeal in September 1990 (Mac Cormaic, 1991). Their complaints were against the following:

> Cosc ar chomhfhreagras trí mheán na Gaeilge;
> Cosc ar labhairt na Gaeilge le linn cuairteanna;
> Cosc ar fháil is caitheamh an Fháinne;
> Cosc ar úsáid ainmneacha Gaelacha;
> Moill leatromach ar chinsireacht leabhair Ghaeilge seachas leabhair Bhéarla;
> Cosc ar imirt spóirt Ghaelaigh. (Mac Cormaic 1991: 17)
>
> (1. Ban on correspondence through the medium of Irish; 2. Ban on speaking of Irish during prison visits; 3. Ban on obtaining and wearing the Fáinne; 4. Ban on use of Irish-language version of personal names; 5. Undue delay with regard to the censoring of Irish-language books compared to English-language books; 6. Ban on the playing of Gaelic games.)

The policy of the prison authorities was not to change substantially until the IRA ceasefire of 1994. But, in the meantime, the prisoners developed a considerable body of literature of their own, including material in the Irish language (see Fanning 2003; Whalen 2008). Many of these literary efforts appeared in the prison magazine *Scairt Amach* (*Shout Out*), produced from 1989. This was circulated only within the prison. Between 1987 and 1990, the magazine *Iris Bheag* (*Little Magazine*) was created and managed by Sinn Féin and included material by prisoners. Also, much creative writing was published in *An Glór Gafa / The Captive Voice*, initiated in 1988 by prisoners from the H-blocks. A range of this material was subsequently published in 1991 in the volume *H-Block: a Selection of Poetry*. Also at this time, significant numbers of Irish republicans came to the end of their sentences and were released from prison. Their return to various parts of Northern Ireland was to have considerable impact upon the Irish language in society beyond the prison walls. While it is the case that the Irish language had been growing in Northern Ireland for a number of years at that stage (Mac Giolla Chríost 2005: 134–71), beginning with the creation of an urban neo-Gaeltacht on Shaw's Road in west Belfast in the early 1970s, there can be little doubt that the politicization of the language, initiated in the Cages and completed in the H-blocks, added substantial momentum to this growth. This was particularly so during the second half of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s as many Irish republican prisoners left prison to become actively involved in the Irish language at a community level in various areas of the northern part of Ireland.

After the IRA ceasefire of 1994, the prison regime relaxed considerably. This included the end of twenty-four-hour lock-up, free association

(McKeown 1998: 308–10) and a more enlightened position on the language. The prisoners were allowed access to Irish-language material and were allowed tuition and guest speakers were brought in to hold classes in the Irish language and literature. According to the prisoners, the most substantial benefit of this new regime was that they were now largely in control of their own lives in prison.

The achievement of total control of their living environment twenty-four hours a day was a critical milestone in the prison struggle of republican prisoners. It signalled an end to all attempts by the government and prison authorities to criminalize them and heralded a new era whereby those responsible for the running of the prison on the administration side recognized the leadership and command structure of republican prisoners and liaised with them on all matters concerning the daily running of the prison. A situation similar to that existing in the Cages prior to the removal of Special Category Status had been achieved. In fact, in this instance it exceeded what republicans in the Cages system had had. Most significant was the agreement by the prison authorities to close the punishment Block, the 'boards'. From that time onwards the prisoners' staff (both loyalist and republican) were to take full responsibility for discipline. Not since the time of the Frongoch internment camp in Wales in 1917 had such recognition and authority been bestowed by the authorities upon political prisoners of war (McKeown 1998: 320).

Laurence McKeown notes that Northern Ireland Prison Service recorded in its 'Corporate and Business Plan for 1998–2001' that by that time the prison authorities recognized that the 'prisoners largely manage their own lives' (McKeown 1998: 21). As a result of this new power to manage themselves, the Irish republican prisoners, during the course of the next three to four years, created two wholly Irish-speaking wings in the H-Blocks: 'The 1994 ceasefire meant we were able to get access to Irish language teachers, tapes, books, CDs. A Gaeltacht wing was created at this time and by 1998 there were two Gaeltacht wings.'[18] The prisoners adopted the name 'Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige' ('The Gaeltacht of the Lark') for this new Irish-speaking community in the H-blocks.

Documents written by two of the prisoners at that time provide a direct and immediate insight into this development. The first was written by Gearóid Mac Aoidh from D wing in H-5 in 1996 (Mac Aoidh 1996) and is a review of the creation of the Gaeltacht wing and an overview of current activities in it. It has the feel of an internal discussion paper aimed at the republican movement. The second document is a report of a contemporaneous educational project (McAllister 1997), conducted and written in H-5 by Jimmy McAllister, one of the Irish republican prisoners. According to these sources the first Gaeltacht wing was created by around twenty-five Irish republican prisoners in H-6 (C wing) on 29 May 1995.[19] A third untitled and anonymous document ('Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige', 1995?), which is an

unpublished Irish republican prisoners' internal discussion paper, confirms this date and further adds that this 'full Gaeilge speaking wing' ('Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige' [1995?]: 3) comprised the following individuals:

> Paul Duffy, Tarlac Connolly, Tony O'Neill and Conor Gilmore were moved from H4; Peter Cunningham, Kevin McMahon, Colman McCrossan, Rory McCarthy and Martin Malloy were moved from H7; Davy Adams, Collie Duffy, Arnie Averell and Ricky Sadlier were already there. A fortnight later Bik McFarlane, Paddy McGilloway, Pat Sheehan, Jimmy McAllister, Gerry Magee and Micheal Talun were moved on. ('Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige' [1995?]: 3)

It was then re-located to H-5 (D wing) in March 1996 (Mac Aoidh 1996: 2). A second Gaeltacht wing was established by a further twenty-five prisoners in H-8 at some time during 1997 (McAllister 1997: 3). By the end of 1997, according to two contemporaneous sources, *An Phoblacht* and Saoirse (an organization founded in the context of the emerging peace process and with the purpose of lobbying on behalf of 'Irish political prisoners'), H-5 (D wing) appears to have been made up of nineteen Irish republican prisoners. These included Séanna Walsh and also Tarlac Ó Conghalaigh (aka Tarlach / Tarlac / Turlough Connolly), a leading creative writer amongst the prisoners. The same source lists twenty-one prisoners in H-8 (D wing), which would appear to be the Gaeltacht wing on that particular block. Their numbers include Feilim Ó hAdhmaill, the author of an important attitudinal survey on the Irish language published in 1985, who was transferred from an English jail in order to facilitate the then fragile political process.

Some of the new cohort of Irish republican prisoners of this period recall that the members of these Gaeltacht wings were admired as the 'nios díograisí' ('most zealous') of their members and that there was a very considerable waiting list to join those wings.[20] McAllister's document provides us with a more prosaic profile of the typical member of 'Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige':

> The average adult learner is twenty nine years old, of a working class background, is an ex-comprehensive school pupil who left school with little or no qualifications, had little or no interest in education and an abiding feeling of having made little or no progress during his school years. The GnaF [Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige] member has on average spent six years and four months in prison of which thirteen have been spent on GnaF. Despite having little or no Irish language experience before his arrest and no academic qualifications in the subject . . . All members are actively involved in academic courses GCSE (32%), ACSE (16%) or post ACSE (52%) as well as the daily informal classes held among themselves on the wing. Here the more experienced members undertake roles of

> facilitators to guide and help newer members in their development. In addition after spending the time on GnaF 72% of respondents declared an accomplished or proficient ability with the Irish language. While 60% described their progress to date as either excellent (28%) or very good (32%). (McAllister 1997: 8–9)

The more relaxed prison regime allowed the prisoners to obtain Irish language teaching materials freely, from a wide range of authoritative sources outside of the prison, for the first time in many years. It is clear from the document by Mac Aoidh (1996) that they were provided with such material by several organizations competent in Irish language teaching and learning:

> Once sufficient numbers of Irish speakers had settled into H6, Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige became publicly known following a series of articles in *The Irish News, Lá, An Glór Gafa* and *AP/RN*. We required a wide range of books, dictionaries and other materials to enable our Gaeltacht to be an effective learning environment and so we wrote to many of the Irish language organisations throughout Ireland for assistance. Within weeks many materials arrived and we now have a library on the wing well stocked with books in Gaeilge, thanks to the support of: the Cultúrlann in Belfast, Conradh na Gaeilge, Gael Linn, Glór na nGael, Roinn an Chultúir Sinn Féin,Bord na Gaeilge, An Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann, Áras Mháirtín Uí Cadhain, Coiscéim, Cló Iar-Chonnachta, An Gúm, Comhar na Muinteoirí, An Iontaobhas Ultach and several secondary/grammar schools in Belfast and Armagh. (Mac Aoidh 1996: 2–3)

However, these organizations tended to supply the prisoners with only single copies of their products (books, tapes and so on), so the prisoners subseqently developed their own, specially adapted Irish language courses from which they were easily able to make multiple copies for their own use.[21] I have been able to obtain a copy, through Tarlac Ó Conghalaigh, of the foundation course, *An Bunchúrsa*, developed by the prisoners around 1995. The immersion in the Irish language which was possible at this stage produced a number of very fluent speakers. One prisoner recalls recognizing that he was what he considered to be wholly fluent when he attended one of the talks given by Aodán Mac Póilin, the director of the Irish language organization Ultach Trust, during August 1995 and understood absolutely everything that was said. Other Irish republican prisoners felt that being able to listen to and understand the radio shows of presenter Rónán Mac Aodh Bhuí on Raidió na Gaeltachta (a Republic of Ireland government-sponsored radio station broadcasting in Irish) marked this rite of passage.[22] It would appear that some of the former Irish republican prisoners look with nostalgia upon this particular period as a kind of zenith.

Take, for example, this comment on the *Slugger O'Toole* blog by 'Fuiseog' on 23 October 2006:

> Over a decade later by August 1999 we had 100% de facto political status, we ran our own communities, we had our own internal education programmes including a gaeltacht in H-block 5, coupled with access to formal educational opportunities that I personally availed of to Masters level. In all life was bearable, we made the very best of what we had improving ourselves and our conditions as was our duty. ('Fuiseog' 2006)

Of course, the political agreement of 1998 and the subsequent prisoner releases brought down the final curtain on this prison story but not upon the relationship between the ex-prisoners and the Irish language.

Conclusions

Séanna Walsh was one of the first prisoners to be released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement (or Belfast Agreement) of 1998, which brought peace to Northern Ireland. It is not a coincidence that the Irish language formed an important part of that agreement. Clause 3 states, for example, that '[a]ll participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are a part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland' (NIO, 1998). Upon release, Walsh quickly began to play a major role in the further political development of Sinn Féin with regard to the Irish language. He currently directs the party's Department for Culture and the Irish language features very strongly on the policy agenda. It is, perhaps, the ambition for the language within the party which is most striking. He puts it as follows:

> The most interesting aspect of our reinvigorated Roinn a' Chultúir [Department of Culture] will be our project to turn Sinn Féin from an English speaking party, which is fairly good on the language question, to a bilingual party involved in all areas of radical language development and promotion . . . Sinn Féin aims to develop from being a party which campaigns on Irish language issues to a party that epitomises the struggle for the repossession of the language. (Walsh in Walsh and Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2005)

The values that have shaped the life of Séanna Walsh and his peers are likely to have an impact beyond the north of Ireland, given that he was appointed in 2007 as a member of 'Foras na Gaeilge' (the Irish Language Board), a cross-border agency with statutory responsibilities for the Irish

language, along with three other Sinn Féin nominees. It was noted in the Irish-language media, on the main news programme of the Irish-language television channel TG4, that these northern appointees brought 'blas láidir Ultach' ('a strong Ulster flavour') (*Nuacht TG4*, 18 December 2007) to the membership of the new board whilst also noting that Séanna Walsh was a friend and one-time cell-mate of Bobby Sands (*Foinse,* 16 December 2007: 11). Other Irish republican ex-prisoners are involved in the Irish language in the field in a number of different ways, including the development of a Northern Ireland Assembly-funded 'Gaeltacht Quarter' (Dutton 2004) in Belfast, Irish-medium education, Irish-language film and television production, journalism and writing. Indeed, visitors to Belfast are now actively encouraged by the City Council to spend time in this Gaeltacht Quarter, while *The Rough Guide to Ireland* informs tourists that their encounter with the Irish language there touches upon the raw material of the recent conflict: 'In the North, the rise in the use of Irish has been both cultural and political: in the 1970s Republican prisoners began to learn Irish, though owing to the insular nature of its usage and the lack of professional teaching, it mutated into a kind of pidgin that was known as *jailic*' (Greenwood et al. 2001: 741). Thus, the unique prison community of the Jailtacht and their peculiar style of Irish, known as 'Jailic', is now an integral part of the fabric of the city. Moreover, the presentation of this linguistic landscape as a commodity for the gaze of visitors both from Ireland and internationally invites the engagement of even the most casual of viewers.

Notes

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1. On imprisonment and language, see also Taylor, this volume.
2. The Gaelic League was a movement founded in the late nineteenth century in Ireland with the aim of promoting the Irish language. It later became implicated in the Irish republican Easter Rising of 1916.
3. Translations from Irish are by the present author unless otherwise stated.
4. Interview, 2007.
5. The protest was confined to H-5 to begin with, but by 1979 there were several 'protesting blocks' (O'Dwyer 2006).
6. According to Babington (1968), a central function of incarceration is to silence the prisoners as a form of punishment and as a means of imposing the discipline of the prison regime upon them.

7. Original: 'theagasc daoine le Gaeilge mheasartha daoine le beagán Gaeilge agus theagasc daoine le beagán Gaeilge daoine gan Gaeilge ar bith agus d'fhás sé mar sin cé nach raibh ach dornán beag daoine ag an bharr le Gaeilge líofa acu'.
8. Interview, 2007.
9. Original: 'Dá mhéad na constaicí inár n-éadan, is amhlaidh is mó diongbháilteacht a thaispeáin muid… choinnigh muid bloc cearnógach glan ó shalachar ag bun an chillín ar mhaithe le nótaí Gaeilge.'
10. Interview, 2007.
11. Interview with Pilib Ó Runaí, 2007.
12. Interview with Séanna Walsh, 2007.
13. Interview with Pilib Ó Runaí, 2007.
14. Walsh had been released after the 'segregation campaign' around 1984 but was reimprisoned by the end of the 1980s.
15. Interview with Pilib Ó Runaí, 2007.
16. Interview with Séanna Walsh, 2007.
17. Interview, 2007.
18. Interview with Séanna Walsh, 2007.
19. A slightly later Irish republican source (de Faoite 1998) suggests that Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige was first established in H-7: 'People were enormously proud when the "Jailtacht" Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige was founded three years ago in Block 7' ('ba mhór an bród ar dhaoine nuair a bunaíodh an "Jailtacht" Gaeltacht na Fuiseoige trí bhliain ó shin i mBloc H7'). Another source, a response posted on the *Slugger O'Toole* blog by 'Fuiseog' on 23 October 2006, suggests that H-5 was the location ('Fuiseog' 2006). As the Mac Aoidh and McAllister documents were written in the H-Blocks at that time, it is reasonable to afford them greater accuracy.
20. Interview with Declan Moen (aka Deaglán Ó Mocháin), 2007.
21. Tarlac Ó Conghalaigh, personal communication, 2009.
22. Interview with Declan Moen (aka Deaglán Ó Mocháin), 2007.

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11

The AIIC Project to Help Interpreters in Conflict Areas

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About AIIC

The International Association of Conference Interpreters, known by its French acronym, AIIC (Association international des interprètes de conférence), was founded in 1953 in France to defend and promote the interests of conference interpreters and is still the only international association of conference interpreters in existence, with more than three thousand individual members throughout the world. In the years after World War II when a world in ruin was being reorganized, some colleagues had the vision to realize that the introduction of simultaneous interpretation, particularly since its use at the Nuremberg trials, and the creation of many new international organizations would lead to rapid growth in the multilingual conference 'industry' and in the number of interpreters required. In order to ensure proper pay and working conditions, they realized that they would need to negotiate with their employers and band together to defend themselves.

AIIC developed a code of ethics and standards of practice that have been recognized and carried forward by conference interpreters throughout the world, even though the origins of these practices may have been forgotten. In so far as they can apply, many of these practices are also followed by other branches of the profession, such as court interpreters and amongst the burgeoning groups of 'community interpreters'. These practices are recognized because they are based on good sense and help to guarantee the quality and professionalism which clients require, whilst ensuring a healthy working environment for the interpreters.

The conference interpreting profession therefore became organized early on and AIIC's efforts in standard-setting and negotiating agreements with major employers have always benefited both members and non-members alike. Today, AIIC continues to work with schools of interpretation, standard-setting bodies (especially in the field of conference technology), major clients and international organizations and other branches of the profession,

such as court interpreting and sign language interpreting: we are still redefining our work in a changing world. Now, as we witness the events which often precede the major peace conferences where we traditionally work, we have become involved in an area where we believe regulation is very necessary for the benefit of both the interpreters involved and those who use their services. Interpreting in conflict and post-conflict areas is not new, but the sheer number of interpreters involved in recent events is.

Creation of the project

At the January 2009 AIIC Assembly, when the Interpreters in Conflict Areas project was created, our guest speaker was Tim Washington, who had himself been involved with UN missions to conflict areas and had worked with the local interpreters there. Washington reminded us in his speech that we were in an organized profession, whereas the local interpreters in conflict areas had 'no tools and no rules'. They could not 'defend themselves'. He thought that as an organized profession we could help not only the (local) interpreters in conflict areas but also those using their services by giving advice about working with interpreters (see Fitchett 2009).

By 2008, a number of our members had become frustrated by the fact that AIIC had remained silent whilst news of the death and injury of interpreters in war zones began to percolate through the media. When journalists such as Florence Aubenas, Daniele Mastrogiacomo or later Stephen Farrell were kidnapped, vast campaigns were launched to save them. However, journalists were seldom kidnapped alone, because foreign journalists working in countries whose language they do not speak need help to obtain contacts and to communicate with them. They hire interpreters and/or 'fixers', as the journalists call them, who are often local journalists themselves, with valuable local knowledge and contacts. While foreign journalists generally survived their kidnapping, the 'fixers' and interpreters often did not. They were murdered as traitors or to prevent them from talking by their captors, or they died in the rescue attempt.

Soldiers from foreign powers operating in a country whose language they do not speak need similar help. In Iraq and Afghanistan, thousands of interpreters were recruited both locally and internationally to assist foreign troops, and they even rendered assistance on the front lines. Where soldiers die or are wounded, their interpreters must surely follow, but little was known about the figures until some became available in the US in 2009 together with other information about how interpreters had been used and then discarded by the withdrawing troops.

Whilst interpreters working for NGOs may not be in the same danger as those working for the military or for journalists in the front line of conflict, it was a former USAID worker, Kirk Johnson, who created the List Project in the US to help resettle Iraqi refugees, including interpreters, who had

worked for the US government but had to flee their own country after receiving death threats. Some had been his own colleagues.

Clearly AIIC had to speak out and try to do something to help all these interpreters.

The plight of the interpreters

There is no central registry of interpreter deaths, and individual armed forces are often loath to give figures. Partial figures released in the US and published by T. Christian Miller in an article in *ProPublica* in December 2009 showed that, among those working for US forces alone 360 interpreters had been killed and more than 1200 injured in Iraq between 2003 and 2008 (Miller 2009). Those figures do not give a breakdown of the nationalities of the interpreters involved. More recently, an article by Sam Marsden in *The Scotsman* reported in August 2011 that twenty-one Afghan interpreters working with British forces have been killed and more than 90 injured over the past five years (Marsden 2011), although their deaths are generally not announced by the Ministry of Defence. The article states that British forces in Afghanistan employed 650 local interpreters in mid-July 2011. The figures, which in the article are said to come from the Ministry of Defence in response to a freedom of information request, show that the deadliest year for Afghan interpreters working with UK troops was 2009 (when seven were killed and twenty-three injured), followed by 2010 (four killed and thirty-three injured), 2007 (four killed and fourteen injured), 2011 up until the article's date of publication (three killed and nineteen injured), 2008 (two killed and three injured) and 2006 (one killed and none injured).

If all nationalities' armed forces are included and figures updated, interpreters working for employers such as NGOs and journalists are added, and the figures are extended to earlier conflicts and peacekeeping efforts such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, then the figures on the death and injury of interpreters must by now be in their thousands. A registry is needed.

Interpreters in conflict areas are rarely professionals. Although lacking in formal professional training, they provide a vital service to armed forces, journalists, NGOs, politicians and businesspeople. They are recruited locally or worldwide, often through agencies, and are therefore rarely directly employed by those who use their services. Contrary to popular misperceptions, they are often well educated, speak a foreign language and, for those recruited locally, have been forced to turn to an unfamiliar profession in order to earn a living and feed their families in a country in turmoil.[2] Similar reasons of economic difficulty attract interpreters recruited in the home countries of the armed forces and NGOs who use them. These are generally residents or citizens of the home country deemed to be less of a 'security risk'. Some are recruited into the ranks of the armed forces and sometimes a desired naturalization process is the lure into this very dangerous profession.

One of the major problems when users do not recruit these linguists themselves but rely on agencies to do so is that responsibility for the interpreters is shifted and may become blurred. Control over agency practices may be difficult to exercise. According to press reports, this seems to have been the case in Iraq and Afghanistan, at least in the case of the largest US recruiting agencies for the military. Required to provide thousands of linguists in a short time, the agencies preferred quantity to quality, and the screening of candidates from the home countries of troops did not necessarily take proper account of linguistic skills or physical aptitude. Pay could not always be ensured in remote localities where the agency had no representative. Medical care and insurance or compensation in the case of injury or death were inadequate or difficult to claim. Psychological trauma was rarely treated. Prior safety instruction was lacking and physical protection cannot, in any case, be ensured. Armies themselves sometimes had issues about who should provide body armour, whether to allow face masks to protect identity, about allowing local interpreters to use camp medical, purchasing or other facilities or even allowing them to remain in the protective camp environment when not on duty. Little attention was given to defining rights and obligations or limitations to the interpreters' role.

It should be remembered that many local interpreter deaths or injury are not incurred in the field but as a result of violent attacks on them or their families by factions who consider them to be traitors. This danger increases as the troops withdraw. Some countries, such as the US and UK, have state-sponsored refugee schemes to help those who helped their armed forces. In many ways, however, these schemes are inadequate, either being restrictive in numbers and conditions or leaving the beneficiaries unaided once they arrive in the receiving country. Priority may not be given to interpreters and the promised and necessary recommendations and certificates to benefit from such schemes are not always forthcoming from the military hierarchy. Several of these schemes are now almost at a standstill, the processing of applicants being so slow. But some countries regrettably do not have a scheme at all. At best, their interpreters are passed on to other bodies or forces with whom they can find work and protection; at worst, they are killed or flee to neighbouring countries, swelling the ranks of refugees. In the UK, forty-six Iraqi interpreters or their next of kin are now involved in a legal battle against government offices for compensation for personal injury or financial losses incurred whilst employed by those offices as interpreters in Iraq.

Many military personnel have taken up the cause of the interpreters who helped them. Recently, however, the *Times* published an article by its defence editor, Deborah Haynes, suggesting that some serving British soldiers had warned the government not to set up a special asylum programme for Afghan interpreters who were facing death threats from the Taliban, saying it would deprive Afghanistan of some of its best talent (Haynes 2011).

The talent has therefore been recognized. No mention is made as to how dead talent might help a country.

Several journalists have also taken up the story of the interpreters. These have included T. Christian Miller and his colleagues, writing for *ProPublica* in the United States, and Deborah Haynes for the *Times* in the UK (whilst a correspondent in Baghdad). Both wrote a series of articles largely in support of the interpreters, focusing on the difficulties they or their families had in obtaining medical treatment and compensation in the event of death or injury and on the insufficiency of programmes to help them obtain residence or asylum abroad. Journalists' reports and other awareness-raising activities have been important, providing first-hand information about the plight of the interpreters. But government aid programmes are largely stalled and the threats, death and injuries to interpreters continue. There is still a long way to go. We see our own project in the long term.

The project so far

The intention of the AIIC project is to help to support and protect interpreters in conflict areas initially by

- drawing attention to their fate
- advising them and their users of their rights and obligations and of the major principles of the profession of interpreter, and of how best to work together
- supporting other projects offering training to non-professional interpreters
- calling for protection of interpreters both during and post-conflict
- calling for proper employment contracts for them.

Generally speaking, our ultimate aim is to achieve what we would call a new social contract, a new understanding between employers or users and the interpreters, encompassing also an effort to achieve international recognition of the role and status of interpreters. We believe that ultimately a change in the way that society in general sees interpreters, and indeed in the way the interpreters see themselves, is the only way to achieve true protection for them, imperfect as that protection may always be in hazardous situations (see Kahane 2009). By gathering information and disseminating it, organizing debates and making presentations, we hope to raise awareness of the plight of interpreters in conflict throughout the world.

In doing so, we have initially taken an overall approach to the definition of 'interpreter'. We recognize that a more differentiated approach could be taken: recognizing the blur between the two functions of 'interpreter' and 'translator' or the considerable difference in the skills of the interpreters or for whom they are working. We believe, however, that the first objective must be to save lives.

We have been working together with a US-based organization called The Red T whose aims are very similar to ours. We have also worked with the International Federation of Translators to produce first a basic field guide and later a code of best practice for interpreters and their users in areas of conflict which, if adopted by all parties and applied, will be a first step towards the new understanding that we seek.[3] We hope that greater awareness and political pressure will cause government schemes to be initiated or improved to provide asylum and assistance for interpreters and their families who had helped them and are persecuted in their own country for doing so.

Training and selection are important questions. Many of the people recruited to act as interpreters in conflict zones have never done the job before and have little idea of how to do it. They receive little or no training and seldom any help or further training on the job. Their linguistic skills may be inadequate to some tasks. They may be deployed in areas whose dialect they do not fully understand. A video news report called *Lost in Translation*, first published online by the UK newspaper the *Guardian* by John D. McHugh, a photo journalist embedded with US troops in Afghanistan, gave rise to a public outcry when shown on US television. Its depiction of the mistranslation of talks between US troops and local Afghan elders led to a polemic about the failure of interpreter recruitment policies and fear that troops were in greater danger because of not being understood or not understanding what was being said or happening around them. But the film also showed that the troops, the users of interpreter services, are equally ill-prepared to work with the interpreters or to communicate in general. It may be said that this is not the role of troops. But what if the major slogan of a military campaign is that it is supposed to be winning the hearts and minds of the people?

Although our project is not intended to be involved in the training of interpreters, we support and encourage efforts in this area. We support one of our AIIC members who has launched a humanitarian project in the University of Geneva for the online training of interpreters working with NGOs which operate in conflict areas. We would like other interpreters, such as those recruited to work for the military, to receive better training. We would like governments to recognize the role of interpreters and support interpreter training. In pursuing our mandate in the political sphere, we have successfully gained the interest of some forty members of the Council of Europe who signed a members' Declaration calling for the protection of interpreters in conflict areas (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2010). We intend to take this political initiative further and to other political fora.

Following up a study made for us in 2009 by Professor Giulio Bartolini, a member of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, we shall pursue the idea of an internationally-recognized status to protect

interpreters in conflict zones. Although the need for linguistic mediation is recognized in the Geneva Conventions in order to protect the rights of others, interpreters' own rights are not specifically mentioned at all in national or international legal texts. While interpreters – unlike the journalists or the staff of humanitarian organizations recognized for their neutrality (such as the International Committee of the Red Cross) – have no special protected status, nothing obliges the international community to protect them.

The interpreter's role: neutrality, traitors and spies

In theatres of war or post-war and peacekeeping situations, the 'conflict' is the context within which the interpreters work. But we recognize that all interpreters, in whatever branch of the profession, in whatever context, may find themselves in conflict either with their own conscience ('should I work for these people whose views I really do not share, thus helping them to spread those views?') or with others because of common misperceptions of interpreters and their role. Interpreters working in prisons or courts of law or between clients and their lawyers may themselves be threatened. Their identities may be voluntarily or inadvertently revealed, placing them in danger. Community interpreters may be caught in a conflict of loyalty between an individual or community and national administrations. Professional interpreters learnt long ago that in order to be trusted they must exercise their profession as independently, that is, impartially, as possible. This is not always easy for non-professionals or in certain circumstances.

Theatres of war, post-conflict situations and peace operations confront us with the question of interpreters' 'trustworthiness'. 'Traduttore/tradittore' (translator/traitor) is a popular duo often quoted outside the profession, and some within it would definitely have qualms about the interpreters' role in wartime. Can an interpreter, caught between two stools, not be considered a traitor? And are all interpreters spies?

We know that economic reasons, or other lures of a brighter future, drove most interpreters to work for foreign forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. One paper presented by Catherine Baker to a Languages at War workshop in 2010 showed that interpreters often offered their services to peacekeeping troops in Bosnia in order to survive in a war-torn economy: not for any ideological reason (Baker 2010). Many interpreters are professionals from other fields. After conflicts both their old and new skills may be invaluable in rebuilding a war-torn country or surviving in a new society – if indeed they do survive.

To perceive that interpreters sympathize or identify with their clients (meaning the party who pays them, since interpreters work for all parties in communication) is a misunderstanding of the motivation and of the role of the interpreter. Interpreters are not neutral: they have opinions, they have consciences, they are human – and will remain so until machines have

been invented to replace them or until the whole world sadly speaks only one language. Learning a foreign language implies exposure to, and generally openness, to other peoples, cultures and influences. The motivation to work as an interpreter may spring from many sources. Doing it well requires certain qualities and the adherence to certain principles which many non-professionals and users of their services would benefit from knowing. The principles can be taught. To earn trust from all sides, an interpreter must seek impartiality and observe strict confidentiality. Interpreter-advocates cannot, we believe, properly fulfil their role, which is to accurately transmit a message from one language/culture to another and for all parties. Accuracy will depend on linguistic and cultural knowledge but can be acquired with help, learning, practice and training.

To those who do not believe in contacts or 'fraternization' with the enemy, the interpreter perceived to be 'from their side' will perhaps always be considered a traitor if employed by 'the other side'. To those who believe that the future can only lie in an understanding of peoples, the interpreter is an aid to mediation, whenever this is possible, between peoples in conflict.

There cannot be a guarantee that no interpreter will ever be a spy. But there can be no guarantee that others will not be either. Expecting interpreters to act as spies – to provide information which will help one side or another – is to condemn them to be traitors to one party. In a military context where linguists are needed to help in intelligence-gathering,[4] this is perhaps the most difficult question for us to deal with. The much-vaunted idea of the interpreter as 'cultural intermediary' is another case in point. Whilst the interpreter must certainly be able to transpose a message from one linguistic culture to another so that both parties are able to understand it, it may not be the role of the interpreter to 'teach' one side or the other about customs which would give advantage to one side or another.

Researchers are taking a closer look at these questions which may be central to the future treatment of interpreters and our objective to protect them. Knowledge, for both the interpreter and the user, is important for decision-making. For interpreters, or would-be interpreters, knowledge of the risks involved in certain tasks and in the perception of themselves by others may influence the decision to take on certain jobs in certain circumstances. For users, knowledge may help to change their perceptions of interpreters, of the roles interpreters play, of the tasks they expect interpreters to fulfil, and of how users must seek to protect interpreters in the light of the dangers they face.

A brighter linguistic future

The stated aim of the *Languages at War* project was to 'open up a new area of academic research which is recognized as important in government and military circles, but which has yet to be studied systematically'. This

research was to focus on the official foreign language policies of government, military and multilateral agencies, the foreign language experience of those involved in those conflicts, and how these experiences relate to the policy frameworks set. At the end of the project, conclusions were to be drawn 'on the ways in which the foreign language experience of participants in invasion or occupation and peacekeeping relate to the language policies of the official agencies involved' (Languages at War 2008).

The British government in recent times has not given priority to language-learning in schools or universities. It recently closed down the only course in the UK providing a European Masters degree in conference interpreting. The United States – and Britain in the past – has forged a worldwide military and cultural supremacy. Their language, English, has become a lingua franca and an arm of that supremacy which perhaps leads them to believe that learning other languages is a waste of time or a sign of weakness: everyone speaks (should speak) English, don't they (shouldn't they)? Global English has indeed become a problem in the conference industry, where few countries – apart from the French, whose resolve is also weakening – hold out against the spread of what may in the future become an 'English' language with so many regional variants that these will become mutually unintelligible: so it seems unlikely that the need for interpreters will die out altogether. But, as cultural and linguistic supremacy has changed from one area to another in history, so it is likely to do in the future.

In 2009, participants in the Languages at War Workshop suggested that the change from the 'kinetic' role of the military towards 'soft' intervention would require more linguists but that the military's preparedness to meet this need seemed to be relatively low. This situation may change as the government becomes more and more aware of the difficulties of linguistic communication in areas of conflict and in a world where peoples are increasingly asserting their cultural independence.

It may be unclear for many whether Western intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan should be described as 'kinetic' or 'soft'. But the need for linguistic support was definitely underestimated, and thousands of linguists had to be recruited with great difficulty and in mostly very sorry circumstances. It will certainly never be viable to think that the armed forces will themselves be able to recruit into their ranks the necessary number of linguists for all possible needs. We would surely all prefer to see our armed forces in a 'soft' rather than a 'kinetic' role in the future, but conflict is not, it seems, about to disappear from our planet for good. Linguists, and therefore to a great extent non-professional interpreters will continue to be needed on an *ad hoc* basis, perhaps again in great numbers. We would hope that they can be recruited and protected both during and post-conflict in a way that will not shame us in the future as it has done recently. This requires policies and planning well in advance.

We would like to see cooperation between the academic world, governments, the military, NGOs, journalists, recruiting agencies, professional linguistic bodies and interpreters themselves, all working towards the training of linguists in the field, the recognition of their services and their protection during and after conflict – as well as the training and awareness-building of those who employ or work with them. We hope that the Languages at War network will encourage academic research in this field and will be seen by governments as a source of information and inspiration to do something urgently for a better linguistic future and for the survival of those interpreters who have served them in recent conflict. AIIC would be pleased to offer its services to that end.

Notes

1. Linda Fitchett is a member of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and coordinator of the Interpreters in Conflict Areas project. She may be contacted at l.fitchett@aiic.net.
2. See Baker, this volume.
3. In 2012, AIIC, The Red T and the IFT drafted a short *Conflict Zone Field Guide for Civilian Translators/Interpreters and Users of Their Services*. It outlines the basic rights, responsibilities and practices recommended by the three organizations and applies to translators and interpreters serving as field linguists for the armed forces, journalists, NGOs and other organizations in conflict zones and other high-risk settings. The guide is available at: http://aiic.net/community/attachments/ViewAttachment.cfm/a2872p3853-2490.pdf?&filename=a2872p3853-2490.pdf&page_id=3853.
4. See Tobia, this volume.

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12

Learning the Language of 'The Other' in Conflict-Ridden Cyprus: Exploring Barriers and Possibilities

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Following current conceptualizations of language as social and cultural practice, language teaching policies in many countries have broadened their traditional focus on grammar and vocabulary so as to include culture. Countries are nowadays adopting an intercultural perspective on language teaching and learning, and the Council of Europe has recently included a series of sociocultural and intercultural objectives in the 'Common Framework of References for Languages' (Council of Europe 2001). Furthermore, learning modern foreign languages is often expected to contribute to democratic citizenship (Starkey 2002, 2005), and, according to the Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies, it 'provides the basis for peaceful coexistence' (Council of Europe 2007: 49). Along the same lines, Turkish language learning has been introduced in Greek Cypriot secondary schools as a means of promoting intercultural/inter-communal understanding and bringing the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities closer. However, as this chapter reveals, the dominance of nationalist Hellenocentric ideology in Greek Cypriot education does not leave much space for the renegotiation of traditionally and historically hostile ethnic relations.

This chapter first presents the Cypriot context, focusing on the Greek Cypriot community and highlighting a) the symbolic value that has been historically attached to language, b) the leftist tradition in promoting the idea of bicommunalism and c) the hegemony of Hellenocentric and anti-Turkish discourses in the Greek Cypriot educational field. Secondly, it discusses the Turkish-language classes in light of theories arguing that language learning can contribute to intercultural understanding and the reduction of prejudice and conflict. As this chapter shows, the specificities of the Cypriot sociopolitical context and the available ideological representations of 'us' and 'others' have significantly influenced the processes and outcomes of these classes. They thus pose a serious challenge both to the aforementioned theories and to educational practitioners – in this case, the Turkish language teacher. Still, the chapter argues that there is some space

for considering these classes as a first step towards a symbolic encounter with the 'Other'.

The historico-political and educational background of Cyprus

In Cyprus, the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities[1] have a long history of conflict that dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century, when the two hitherto religious communities (Christian and Muslim) came to imagine themselves as part of the broader – and at the time rival – ethnolinguistic groups of Greeks and Turks (Bryant 2004). Language played an important role in the two communities developing an 'ethnolinguistic' identity, because it could confirm their sameness with their 'motherland' and difference to the other Cypriot community. In general, scholars agree that language was perceived by both communities as a salient part of their ethnic identity and as a precondition to their survival (Bryant 2004; Karoulla-Vrikki 2004; Kizilyürek and Gautier-Kizilyürek 2004).

By the mid-twentieth century, nationalist discourse had become hegemonic in both communities and had resulted in Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots seeing each other as culturally and historically incompatible. Arguing about the 'Greekness' and 'Turkishness' of the two communities respectively, the ultimate aspiration of both nationalist movements in Cyprus was union with the mainlands, something that would later have a negative impact on the actual foundation of the state of Cyprus in 1960. As Kizilyürek and Gautier-Kizilyürek explain, the two communities' dependence on the corresponding mainlands resulted in

> the denial of state-building within Cyprus and the development of two mutually exclusive ethnocultural communities. Cyprus was not perceived as a self-contained territory, in which an independent state could be created, but as a piece of territory, which assumes meaning only as a part of the 'supra-family' of the Greek and/or Turkish nation. (Kizilyürek and Gautier-Kizilyürek 2004: 38)

Nevertheless, at around the same time (the first half of the twentieth century) an alternative ideology also emerged, which remained repressed by the dominant nationalisms. In contrast to nationalist discourses, this ideology emphasized the common identity, the common 'Cypriotness', of all Cyprus people, and in both communities it emerged predominantly from leftist circles (Mavratsas 1997; Papadakis 2005; Panayiotou 2006a, 2006b).

The Republic of Cyprus was founded in 1960 with both communities being represented in the government and parliament. As early as 1963, however, serious intercommunal troubles resulted in the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots from all government posts. Due to intercommunal fighting in the same year, around 20,000 Turkish Cypriots moved to ethnically

pure enclaves in the north of the island. The growing and violent hostility between the two communities led to the overthrow of the legal government by a pro-Greek coup in July 1974, and to the Turkish forces' invasion a week later. Since the 1974 war, the island has been de facto divided into north (under Turkish Cypriot administration and not recognized by the UN) and south and its population has been displaced accordingly. Around 196,000 Greek Cypriots are estimated to have been displaced to the south (Canefe 2002), which is controlled by the recognized government of Cyprus. Communication between the two parts was almost impossible until 2003, when the Turkish Cypriot authorities decided partially to lift the restriction of movement in Nicosia.

Within this context, speaking the language of the opposite community seemed not only undesirable but indeed also a sign of betrayal towards one's own nation and ethnic group.[2] Unsurprisingly, Greek (L1)–Turkish (L2) bilingualism[3] was never developed on the island, and the Turkish language, though an official language of the Republic of Cyprus, did not exist in any formal Greek Cypriot school curricula until 2003.

In general, education in Cyprus has been 'strictly communal' and monolingual (Karyolemou 2003: 364–5), and, in both communities, schools were responsible for maintaining links with the respective 'motherlands' and creating what Bryant (2004) calls 'true Greeks' or 'true Turks'. It is noteworthy here that, although an alternative ideology did exist and the leftist Greek-Cypriot party AKEL, even after the war, promoted the idea of 'rapprochement' organizing several bicommunal events in the buffer zone or abroad (Papadakis 2005; Panayiotou 2006a, 2006b), this ideology had never been part of official educational discourses.

Concerning Greek Cypriot education, on which this chapter focuses, there is common agreement amongst most educational researchers that it has been dominated by ethnocentric discourses, with 'Hellenic Paideia'[4] being the ultimate goal of formal schooling (Koutselini-Ioannidou 1997; Spyrou 2006). 'Hellenic Paideia' in the Greek Cypriot context directly evokes Greek Cypriots' Greek 'cultural heritage'. As an educational objective, it is seen as both a goal and vehicle through which young people could be educated – or even 'enlightened' – along with the idea of 'Greekness'. Furthermore, ethnographic research in Greek Cypriot schools has shown that 'the Turks' are constructed in Greek Cypriot classrooms, textbooks and national celebrations as the 'primary Other' (Christou 2007; see also Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis 2000; Spyrou 2006), and that the emotion of 'fear' is often evoked for maintaining the division between 'us' and the 'enemy' (Zembylas 2009). The ethnocentric character of the educational system has been also pointed out in a recent report by a committee responsible for educational reform (Committee of Educational Reform 2004). It appears, therefore, that the dominance of ethnocentrism in the Greek Cypriot educational sphere has traditionally left little – if any – space for a reconciliatory discourse. After 2003, however, things began to change.

Introducing the language of 'the Other'

In 2003 and 2004, 'Cyprus underwent a major transformation' (Panayiotou 2006a: 278). In April 2003, the two communities, who had until then been in almost total isolation, were able to cross the 'borders' for the first time (since 1974, or for some areas even 1963). Furthermore, in April 2004, the two communities had their first opportunity to solve the political problem (the so-called 'Cyprus Issue'), along the lines of a UN plan known as 'the Annan Plan'. People in both communities were asked to vote in a public referendum, which was finally rejected by the majority of Greek Cypriots.

These sociopolitical changes did not leave the educational field unaffected. In April 2003, in the midst of negotiations for Cyprus's entry into the EU, the (Greek) Cypriot Government announced the introduction of the Turkish language as an optional course in the formal modern foreign language curriculum in Greek Cypriot secondary schools. The introduction of Turkish in formal state education was part of a package of measures offered by the government for support to the Turkish Cypriots, as a response to the Turkish Cypriot authorities' partial lifting of the restriction of movement across the buffer zone in Nicosia, which had been announced only a week earlier. As part of the same measures, free Greek and Turkish language classes were also established for Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot adults respectively. This was the first time in the history of Greek Cypriot education that the Turkish language had been recognized and legitimized in formal educational institutions, and its introduction seemed also to have symbolic significance. At least in the official Ministry of Education discourses, these classes appeared to be meant as a first reconciliatory step,[5] as they were expected to bring the two communities closer and, by extension, to contribute to the two communities' peaceful coexistence. The reconciliatory purposes that these classes were expected to serve is evident in the following extracts:

> Extract 1
> Especially here in Cyprus, this [learning the language of the other] means that *the two sides will keep coming closer and closer to each other*, . . . by learning the language you get many things out of that country and in the particular case I'm sure that the Turkish Cypriots who learn Greek come also closer to Greek-Cypriots, they understand better as well as they feel . . . *it [language learning] brings you closer with the culture and the tradition, the civilization of the people that speak this language* and I think that learning the language of the other *brings you closer and combats racism, bigotry and any separatist phenomena*.[6]

> Extract 2
> We are a bicommunal state and it is definitely good . . . the knowledge of Turkish for our part for us the Greeks . . . *it will definitely help the*

> *cohabitation in this island*, the *peaceful and harmonious cohabitation* . . . if the accession of Turkey to EU proceeds and the Cyprus problem gets resolved, we will definitely have to be taught Turkish and they will have to be taught the Greek language in their schools . . . *It is the best way to come closer, I believe*.[7]

Language learning and intercultural communication

The senior ministry officials' statements above, explaining the government's rationale behind the introduction of the Turkish language, are in line with current theories arguing that language learning can assist learners' development of intercultural awareness and positive attitudes towards the target community. As a matter of fact, 'intercultural awareness' or 'intercultural competence' emerge as major issues in recent Modern Foreign Language (MFL) debates, and language learning has been considered one of the key subjects for developing intercultural understanding (for example Byram 1997; Byram and Risager 1999; Kaikkonen 1997; Mughan 1999). A recently-published EU guide for the development of language education policies states:

> For individuals, [foreign languages] contribute to quality of life, the multiplication of personal contacts, *access to other cultures*, and personal development and achievement. *For societies, knowing each other's languages may provide the basis for peaceful coexistence*, while multilingualism can be an enrichment of the environment and recognition of minority and foreign languages a precondition of democracy . . . *The acquisition of language thus involves acquisition of cultural competence and the ability to live together with others*. (Council of Europe 2007: 49; author's emphasis)

The idea that language learning can lead to intercultural awareness, as expressed in the extract from the EU guide quoted above, resembles significantly the discourse of the Greek Cypriot ministry officials cited earlier. However, language has often been exploited by politicians and governments for achieving various political purposes, such as constructing a sense of collective similarity or difference (see Charalambous and Rampton 2011). As Colin Baker points out, 'bilingual education has become associated with political debates about national identity, dominance and control by elites, power relationships amongst politicians and civil servants, questions about social order, and the perceived potential subversives of language minorities' (Baker 2003: 101). Similarly, the MFL curriculum has been also used as a political project for constructing and shaping 'national identity', or conversely 'a country's current allegiances and oppositions could impact the choice of languages to be offered for modern language study' (Pavlenko 2003: 329).

Indeed, in Cyprus, the introduction of Turkish language lessons in the formal MFL curriculum had an explicit political intent. This was also indicated by the fact that this language policy was included in a package of measures that the government of Cyprus offered the Turkish Cypriot citizens of the Republic[8] (the 'Measures for Building Trust', as they were often called in the media and press). Within this context, the establishment of Turkish language classes, as well as Greek classes for Turkish Cypriots, can be seen as an emblematic gesture of solidarity and of will for 'rapprochement'. Adopting Ben Rampton's term 'crossing' (Rampton 1995; see also Rampton and Charalambous 2010), which is a term highlighting the sense of strong ethnolinguistic boundary transgression involved when using a language that does not 'belong' to you, we can describe official 'Other'-language learning in Cyprus as a kind of *institutionally-sponsored crossing* that can signal willingness for reconciliation and legitimize the establishment of inter-ethnic/intercommunal contacts.

Things appeared to work well with the adult learners; however, when this policy was enacted into secondary school classrooms, the reconciliatory purpose of these lessons came into conflict with the discourse of Hellenocentrism, which has been traditionally dominating Greek Cypriot formal education.

From theory to practice: a linguistic ethnographic project

From September 2006 to January 2007, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork and observed a total ninety-five hours of other-language learning classes, out of which forty-six were recorded. Data were collected from both secondary-school classrooms and governmental institutions with adult language classes. As this chapter is primarily concerned with formal education, I will only focus here on the thirty-two hours of observations and thirteen and a half hours of recordings that I carried out in two Turkish-language classes in a Greek Cypriot High School (Lykeio) in Nicosia. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with Turkish-language teachers and students as well as with Ministry of Education officials. Data collection and analysis were in line with UK Linguistic Ethnography, a research approach that combines ethnographic methodology with analytical frameworks from sociolinguistics in order to examine the relation between macro-social processes and the micro-reality of moment-to-moment interaction (Rampton et al. 2004; Rampton 2007).[9] Examining classroom interaction – whilst taking also into account the historical and educational background described earlier – it emerged that the dominance of Hellenocentrism in formal education had a very significant impact on the language classes, and the history of conflict was a constant backdrop in the lessons.

First of all, dealing with Greek Cypriots' animosity against the 'Turks' was a problem that all three Turkish language teachers interviewed appeared to

face. Mr A, the main teacher participating in this research, stated that several times he had faced negative reactions from fellow teachers when he revealed his teaching subject to them. Dimitris, another Turkish-language teacher, reported that he was often questioned by students (non-Turkish-learners) in his school about his decision to study the Turkish language. Despite his authority-status as a teacher, Dimitris seemed to hesitate to provide the students with an answer, and he adopted a rather apologetic position. As he admitted: 'The reply I give them is like Pythia: "whether you see them as friends or enemies you need to know their language."'[10] Similarly, all the twenty-one students interviewed reported being called 'traitors' by their peers because they had chosen Turkish as their MFL option.

The similarity between the purpose of these classes (as expressed in official discourse) and the leftist ideology promoting the ideal of bicommunalism and encouraging intercommunal contact and events posed an additional complication. Indeed, some students reported that they were often called 'communists' by their peers because they had chosen to learn Turkish. For example:

Extract 3
Interview with sixteen-year-old Greek Cypriot students, learners of Turkish. Students are talking about their peers' reactions against Turkish language learning. The interviews took place in Greek.

Giorgos: They say that Turkish language is for communists and for communism and . . . –
Monica: Yeah! They [school peers] think we are traitors because of learning their [Turkish] language! They told that to me many times

The different ideological representations of 'us' and 'them', offered by different political traditions in Greek Cypriot society, also presented a significant challenge also to the language teacher. Adopting the established educational discourse of inter-ethnic hostility could result in clearly rendering Turkish in the classroom as the language of the enemy, whereas adopting explicitly reconciliatory talk could have leftist connotations and therefore result in the teacher being considered politically biased.

Furthermore, during Turkish language lessons students often made negative comments about the Turks or Turkish Cypriots. Being aware of the dominant discourses of Turkish otherness, students resisted any attempt to introduce a positive representation of the Turkish people, even though outside the formal lesson they appeared to have access to alternative (such as leftist and anti-racist) discourses (see Charalambous 2009). For example, when Mr A tried to argue that Turkish people 'are polite', he met with strong and loud negative reactions from students. Tapping readily-available

popular discourses and media representations, the students invoked examples of Turkish impolite behaviour from a TV show (*Survivor*) as 'concrete' proof against the teacher's argument.

The way the language teacher found to deal with this situation – despite both the 'rapproaching' purpose of these classes and theories that argue in favour of language learning for intercultural communication – was to disassociate the language from its speakers and reconstruct it as a linguistic system free from any cultural resonance. Having to face the reactions of his students and society, Mr A avoided any talk during lessons that could result in a classroom argument. He explicitly forbade any kind of 'political discussion' and, focusing on grammar and vocabulary, he consistently avoided referring to the Turks or Turkish Cypriots as far as possible.

Even when the teacher explicitly named two sessions as 'teaching culture', he still managed to avoid talking about the Turks and Turkish Cypriots. In the first case, he restricted his talk to 'Muslims', thus creating an ambivalent category in which Turks or Turkish Cypriots were sometimes implicitly included and most of the times explicitly excluded. In the second 'culture' lesson, which consisted of a Turkish song, the song he brought to the class was in fact an adaptation of a Greek one, limiting again the 'Turkishness' of the lesson's content to merely the language. The following section presents an example from the lesson with the song, and is particularly illustrative of the (mostly) unspoken discourses that Mr A felt he had to argue against.

'They didn't steal our song'

The song used in the second culture lesson was entitled 'Olmasa Mektubun' ('If it wasn't for your letter') and was a Turkish adaptation of the Greek song 'Όλα σε θυμίζουν' ('Ola se thimizun'/'Everything reminds [me] of you'), originally composed by Manos Loizos, a famous Greek composer. The existence of a hybrid song with Greek music and Turkish lyrics seemed to be considered rather controversial, and the teacher felt the need to provide a justification for it, as demonstrated by extract 4 below. In this extract, although the class remains quiet, Mr A seems to argue against a powerful – albeit unspoken – discourse, that is, that 'the Turks stole our song':

Extract 4[11]
Turkish language lesson. The class has just finished listening to the song. The students have been quiet since the teacher took the floor and there is no background talk.

1 Manos Loizou has written <many songs with Turkish lyrics> (.)
2 I mean this . . . is not . . . (.) I don't know about this song (.)
3 <they don't steal> (.) eh (.) it's not – ehm: (.)
4 They didn't steal it children from us the Turks (.)

5 I mean we also –
6 Eh we take from the Turks and the Turks take from us

Mr A's efforts to deal with the institutional representation of the Turks as 'the Other', as well as with the Greek Cypriot discourses of animosity, are depicted clearly in his talk in the extract above. Trying to justify the existence of a Greek song in Turkish, Mr A uses the word 'steal'. The use of this word here is very interesting because 'stealing' is not a word normally used on the occasion of a song being officially remade in another language, and the Greek word 'διασκευή' ('diaskevi', 'adaptation/version') – would have been more suitable in this case. Moreover, the adaptation or remake of a song is not something unusual in general. In the Greek music scene specifically, there are many Greek adaptations of songs from the USA, UK, Italy and other countries, which are very popular and sometimes are popular in both the original and the adapted version. Nonetheless, Mr A appeared rather convinced in every case that his audience would assume that the song was 'stolen'.

These kinds of discourses are not unusual in Greek Cypriot society. Greek Cypriot refugees, especially, often talk about Turks or Turkish Cypriots having stolen their houses and properties in the North. Furthermore, similar references were also made in some interviews conducted with Greek Cypriot adults, where people mentioned the word 'stealing' to refer to the Cyprus Government's measures of support to Turkish Cypriots. These measures were perceived as unfair and as 'the Turks stealing "our" tax money'. Moreover, during the fieldwork for this study, there was an episode in the school staff room during which some teachers agreed that the Turkish language had many Greek phrases of which the origin had not been acknowledged by the Turks, and they thus considered those words to be 'stolen'.

The extract above was not the only case in which Mr A used the word 'stealing'. A very similar episode, involving the same song, occurred with two more and considerably different audiences: in another Turkish-language classroom, which had been Mr A's favourite – very well-behaved – class, and in the staff room, where Mr A played a few seconds of the song to his fellow colleagues. Mr A's certainty that all three different audiences would have thought that the Turks 'stole our song' reveals how widespread he considered the discourse of 'stealing' to be and points to the challenge he was facing in his effort to confute it. His uneasiness and discomfort, evident in the way he delivered his talk in the extract cited, suggest that the stereotype he was trying to argue against was not only widespread but also very powerful. The hesitations, pauses and repairs that mark his speech reveal him being in a somewhat difficult situation, even though he does not meet any resistance in accomplishing his task.[12] Still, although he gradually rejects the word 'stealing' and manages to replace it with the word 'collaboration', he

does not manage to argue against the more general discourse of the 'Turks stealing', as evident by the subtle shift in his talk in line 19:

18 <ðen kl`e:˚v:un˚> (.) e (.)ðen – em: (.)
18 <they don't steal> (.) eh (.) it's not – ehm: (.)
19 ðen mas to `eklepsan peði`a i T`urki (.)
19 They didn't steal it children from us the Turks (.)

In line 19, Mr A repairs his almost half-pronounced utterance of line 18, and this time the phrase is fully articulated and actually pronounced with more confidence (without lengthened syllables, pauses or hesitations). Comparing these two lines, it emerges that the element being remediated was actually the tense of the verb 'steal' (line 19: they don't steal [den klevoun], line 21: they didn't steal [den eklepsan]), along with the addition of a direct and indirect object ('it' [to]/ 'from us' [mas]). These grammatical and syntactical changes did cause a change in the meaning of the phrase, transforming it from a general statement to a more specific one. The fact that Mr A had difficulties in expressing the first suggests that he felt less safe or comfortable to challenge the fact that 'the Turks do not steal' in general. On the other hand, claiming that – at least – they have not stolen the particular song appears to be much easier, since it could also be proven by the fact that many of 'their' lyrics have been used by Greek composers and in particular by the same composer of that song. Indeed, in the part of the lesson following the extract presented above, Mr A talks about the famous Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet, pointing out to the students that many Greek composers, amongst them Manos Loizos (the one who wrote the song) have used his lyrics in their songs.

Conclusion

According to Byram and Risager:

> For foreign language teachers, the changes in the nature of the nation-state and its relationship to other states are crucial, since the very notion of 'foreign' depends on the clear definition of frontiers and boundaries. When the frontiers and boundaries become less clear-cut, when opportunities for crossing are then made easier, the purposes of language teaching change. (Byram and Risager 1999: 1)

In 2003, the partial lifting of the restriction of movement in Cyprus was a crucial change in the relationship between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. This change was followed by a change in language education, when the Turkish language was introduced for the first time in

Greek Cypriot formal education. This change was accompanied, as described in this chapter, with a rhetoric regarding the role of language in promoting 'mutual understanding' and thus contributing to 'peaceful coexistence'. However, the data reveal, on the one hand, a contradiction between the 'official purpose' and its enactment and, on the other hand, another contradicton between theories about cultivating intercultural awareness through language teaching and everyday teaching practices and classroom realities.

According to Stephen Ball (1993), 'policies from "above" are not the only constraints and influences upon institutional practice' (Ball 1993: 15). This chapter has identified and illustrated several of the constraints that Mr A had to face whilst teaching the language of 'the Other'. Moreover, again according to Ball:

> [P]olicies are textual interventions into practice . . . The point is that we cannot predict or assume how they will be acted on, what their immediate effect will be, what room for manoeuvre actors will find for themselves[.] (Ball 1993: 12)

From this analysis of thirty-two hours of Turkish language lessons, it emerges the 'manoeuvre' Mr A employed in order to deal with the powerful discourses of otherness and the students' reactions was to depoliticize the lesson and 'erase', as far as possible, any talk or references to the Turks or Turkish Cypriots. Although Turkish language learning was introduced as a step to bring the two communities closer, Greek Cypriot formal education instead appears as a site that resists change and reconciliatory discourses. The hegemony of Hellenocentrism in the Greek Cypriot educational system poses a challenge for teachers of Turkish, who have no or very limited space to negotiate alternative representations of the Other. Within such a restricted space, Mr A retreated to teaching the language as a formal system detached from ideologies, history and culture. In contrast to language-learning theories that argue for an inextricable link between language and culture, the intercultural dimension was absent from the lesson, and Mr A's priority was rather to avoid any negative reactions by the students that could potentially lead to derogatory talk about the Turks. In the extract examined, Mr A appeared to be very preoccupied with preventing students from expressing what he predicted that they could be thinking: 'the Turks stole our song'.

The examples described here are, of course, not described as 'good practice', but neither are they described in order to accuse the teacher of failing to cultivate the students' intercultural competence in the way that theory might suggest. On the contrary, this example is intended as a study of the particular constraints and the various challenges that teachers of Turkish have to face when teaching the language of 'the Other' in Greek Cypriot classrooms. These challenges, which are closely associated with the very

specific context where the language teaching takes place, also present a challenge for the theories of language learning and intercultural education, which might not always take into account the particularities of each different context.[13]

The historico-political sketch at the beginning of this chapter gives an idea of the symbolic value that language has come to acquire in both communities, as well as of the powerful educational discourses that have dominated Greek Cypriot education. Within this context, the fact that Turkish has for the first time been recognized and legitimized in Greek Cypriot formal educational institutions is a first step that is not without significance. Students' contact with Turkish in the Greek Cypriot classroom can be seen as a symbolic encounter with 'the Other' that can perhaps encourage further encounters in the future. Indeed, 'Other-language' classes have also been established in other troubled societies such as Israel and Macedonia as part of an effort to overcome conflict and reduce prejudice (see, for example Tankersley 2001; Bekerman and Shhadi 2003; Bekerman and Horenczyk 2004; Bekerman 2005). Although more research is needed to compare the processes taking place in these classes, the establishment of 'Other-language' learning in these contexts seems to point to the symbolic value that 'Other-language' learning can acquire, functioning as a conscious crossing of ethnolinguistic boundaries and signalling willingness for 'rapprochement' (Charalambous and Rampton 2011). In the case of Cyprus, nonetheless, the potential for using Turkish language classes as a site for positive intercultural dialogue seems to have remained unexploited, and further consideration is needed, particularly of the serious issues surrounding the practicalities of teaching Turkish. However, such an attempt (including the design of new material, teachers' training seminars, teachers' guides and so on) should be grounded not only in current theories but also in research that sheds light on the specificities of Greek Cypriot education and on the type of problems documented in the examples given here.

Notes

1. The Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities are the largest ethnolinguistic groups in Cyprus. In 1960, Greek Cypriots were estimated to be approximately 77 per cent, and Turkish-Cypriots 18 per cent, of the population. According to the 2001 census, Turkish Cypriots are now thought to compose approximately 11 per cent of the population, not including Turkish settlers and Turkish troops. The UN estimates the number of Turkish settlers to be 109,000–117,000 and Turkish troops 30–35,000 (Euromosaic 2004).
2. In the late nineteenth century, Greek was introduced as a subject in Turkish Cypriot high schools, but it was removed in the 1950s.
3. Turkish (L1)–Greek (L2) bilingualism did exist, as the Cypriot variety of Greek, spoken by the majority of the population on the island, was used as a lingua

franca (Ozerk 2001). However, with nationalism reaching its apex in the 1950s, there were official efforts in the Turkish Cypriot community to reduce it (such as the so-called 'Speak Turkish campaign'). This is discussed by Kizilyürek and Gautier-Kizilyürek (2004).

4. 'Paideia' (παιδεία) is usually understood in Greek as a concept much wider than 'education' (ekpedefsi [εκπαίδευση]), which has a more narrow and institutional sense.
5. Also in 2008, an educational objective was introduced by the Ministry of Education which called on all teachers to promote the idea of 'peaceful coexistence' between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The objective, though undoubtedly significant, was still met with strong resistance by teachers and teachers' trade unions (Charalambous 2010; see Zembylas et al. 2011).
6. Interview, Mr F, Head of Governmental Institutions, 8 January 2007. Author's emphasis.
7. Interview with senior ministry official, 9 January 2007. Author's emphasis.
8. As argued elsewhere (see Charalambous 2009), these measures, as part of the political negotiations at the time, were a) in line with EU Protocol 10, which states that Cyprus's entry into the EU should benefit all Cypriot citizens including the Turkish Cypriots; b) an emblematic gesture of 'goodwill' towards the Turkish Cypriots that aimed to demonstrate the government's commitment to rapprochement and reconciliation and thus to improve the relations of the two communities on both a political and an individual level.
9. Although the potentials of this model for examining inter-ethnic/intercommunal dynamics in the classroom have been explored in the UK and elsewhere, educational research in Cyprus seems to have focused mainly on the examination of textbooks and curricula. Some notable exceptions such as the ethnographic studies of Greek Cypriot classrooms by Spyros Spyrou, Miranda Christou and Michalinos Zembylas must be mentioned here for their important contribution to researching classroom practices (Spyrou 2002, 2006; Christou 2007; Zembylas 2009); however, none of these studies has systematically examined classroom interaction with the tools of micro-discourse analysis.
10. Pythia, according to Greek mythology, was a famous priestess at the Delphi Oracle who used to utter oracles in an enigmatic way, therefore the meaning of her answers was never clear.
11. Transcription annotations:
    < > indicates talk that is delivered slower than the usual rhythm,
    ˚˚ indicates a syllable that is pronounced quieter
    : elongated sound
    (.) micro-pause, audible in interaction but less than 1 second
    – interrupted utterance
    underlined: utterance audibly louder
12. In general, Mr A appeared very preoccupied with preventing the students' possible reactions against the 'Turks' from being expressed. In his justification for bringing in this particular song, there are several markers of 'dispreference', as described by Schegloff (2007: 58–96) and Levinson (1983: 284–370). For example: a) the main topic is delayed: the example is stated first (line 1) and the main argument is only clearly stated in line 6; b) use of prefaces and hesitation markers: 'I mean' (lines 2 and 5) and 'ehm:' line 3; c) self-editing and repairs: lines 2, 3 and 5; d) anticipatory account. By marking his account as 'dispreferred', Mr A is perhaps aligning himself here with the students' possible reactions, trying

to provide a justification before a request to do so can be articulated by the students.

13. For a more comprehensive theoretical discussion, see Charalambous and Rampton (2011).

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13

Resolving Conflict via English: the British Council's Peacekeeping English Project

Peter Hare and Nicholas Fletcher
Peacekeeping English Project[1]

This chapter aims to examine the British-Council-managed Peacekeeping English Project (PEP), an English language training programme that has worked in the field of English language training for the military in about forty countries since its inception in the mid-1990s. It begins by providing an overview of the project's structure and its political context. It then looks at pedagogical issues before moving on to four case studies in different countries around the world to illustrate the varying contexts in which the project has worked. Lastly, the chapter attempts to assess the impact of the global PEP, bearing in mind that most of the individual country projects have finished.

Overview and political context

The overall aim of the PEP has been to ensure an increased contribution to international peace support, security and humanitarian and disaster relief operations through the improved interoperability in English of partner nations' military, security or justice and home affairs personnel by establishing locally sustainable systems of English language training. It has sought to achieve this in the short term by facilitating the build-up of a specific number of English language users to meet a country's multi-national peace support obligations or aspirations and its needs for senior personnel to have international contact. In the longer term, it seeks to develop sustainable host nation infrastructures.

The programme has been funded by the UK government's Conflict Prevention Pool since it was established under the joint auspices of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Department of International Development (DFID) in 2001. The purpose of this initiative is to 'promote international security and stability, promote human rights and reduce poverty' and thereby prevent conflict (DFID, FCO and MOD 2001: 3). The funding agencies have selected participating countries according to their strategic priorities with the management of the project then carried out by the British Council, a decision based on the Council's experience in English language teaching projects. The goals of each individual country project, whilst

keeping to the overall aims and objectives of the project as a whole, have been agreed with the host partner, as has an agreed timescale for the project, although this has been subject to funding decisions made on an annual basis.

The involvement of three British government departments is part of a 'joined-up government' exercise which aims to reduce and prevent conflict through a wide range of activities to help countries recover and rebuild, and thereby to contribute to the alleviation of poverty. Under this scheme, language training is not viewed as technical training but as an activity that includes an understanding and engagement with alternative values and concepts, leading to cultural change (DFID, FCO, MOD 2001). The project has also reflected the British government's strategic objectives as set out in the Ministry of Defence's Adelphi Paper 365 (Cottey and Forster 2004) which stated that in the aftermath of the 11 September attacks on the United States there was still a demand for defence diplomacy to help construct a more cooperative and stable international environment. In addition, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Command Paper 6052 (FCO 2003) argued for the importance of creating a basis of teamwork and shared objective-setting, aspects which are at the very core of the PEP.

Until 2009, the British Council structure included a global manager based in the UK who reported to the funding partners' steering committee, with in-country managers (and teacher trainers for the larger projects) who are able to develop the sort of longer-term professional relationships that have enabled partnerships to develop in a way that short-term consultants are not able to achieve. The relationships they have developed in-country have included ministers and have focused on language training reform as well as teacher training, syllabus development and methodology.

For the partner, the benefits have been in three areas. The project has worked as an enabler for increased participation in United Nations and other peace support operations, for liaison postings to multi-national agencies and for international cooperation on security and combating organized crime and trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings. A second benefit has been for humanitarian purposes, so that partner country forces have been able to interact more effectively with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other agencies in conflict and post-conflict situations, disaster relief and the treatment of refugees. Thirdly, there has been a benefit in training and information exchange, for instance prior to and after peace support missions, participation in international courses, workshops, seminars and conferences.

Of the countries where PEP has worked, only three projects are still in existence at the time of writing (September 2011). These are the projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia and Afghanistan (which is funded differently but has broadly similar activities, discussed in the case study below). The project went through two phases in terms of the UK government's strategic objectives. The first corresponded with the European Union and NATO accession goals and with the development of the Partnership

Table 13.1 The two phases of the PEP

First phase (1996–2001)	Second phase (2001–present [2011])
EAST/CENTRAL EUROPE Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia	ASIA Afghanistan, China, *Iraq*, Mongolia, *Sri Lanka*, Vietnam
FORMER USSR Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, *Moldova*, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan	AFRICA Angola, *Botswana*, DRC, Ethiopia, Libya, Mozambique, *Djibouti*, *Rwanda*, *Burundi*
	AMERICAS Colombia, *Cuba*, Guatemala, *Nicaragua, Honduras*

for Peace (PfP) initiative which existed alongside NATO. This lasted from 1996 until 2001, although some country projects lasted until 2009. It involved states that had been either a part of the former USSR or under its influence in Central Europe. The second phase started in 2001, coincided with the DFID becoming a funding agency, and included an emphasis on training personnel for peace support operations. It also included a wider global approach in the UK government's priorities. In theory this phase has not finished, although many projects closed in 2009 and 2010, in some cases because they had reached maturity but in others (including some that had only been in existence for between one and three years) because of funding cuts related to the financial situation. The countries involved are listed in Table 13.1.

Countries shown in italics in Table 13.1 did not have full projects but were linked to a project in another country (Moldova with Ukraine, Djibouti with Ethiopia, Rwanda and Burundi with DRC), had limited input that did not amount to a project (Iraq, Cuba, Botswana, Nicaragua, Honduras), or had activities on a long-term basis but were not integrated into the PEP structure (Sri Lanka). The projects in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan both closed prematurely due to the deterioration in relations between them and the UK. In addition, certain British Council teaching centres have worked with military forces, for instance in Sudan.

The PEP's approach contrasted with the United States' Defense Language Institute programme

Rationale

The PEP's rationale for the teaching, learning and testing of English for armed forces has much in common with that of its analogue, the US Defense

Languages Institute (DLI) based at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. Both agencies that believe it is much more cost-effective for officers to receive English language training in-country than in the US or UK, where expensive training time is better devoted to military-specific training. Both agencies also believe that English language proficiency is vital for defence forces to collaborate effectively with multi-national forces both in-country (as in DRC or Afghanistan) or in multi-national UN or AU (African Union) peace support operations. However, the two agencies have very different ways of achieving these common aims.

Syllabus

The DLI uses the American Language Course (ALC), which is a highly-structured course based on short dialogues, emphasizing listening and speaking skills. Language is mostly non-military and is culturally focused on life in the USA. Only specialized military courses outside the mainstream American Language Course present military terminology.

On the other hand, the PEP uses a variety of course material – whatever is best suited to the military or security context in which the course is run. Coursebooks, for example the *Campaign Military English* series, are used with serving military officers for peacekeeping missions. Unlike the ALC, *Campaign* is totally focused on life in the armed forces and is multi-national in outlook, using a variety of Englishes from both native and non-native speakers. In other contexts course books that have been written as part of the PEP, such as 'English for Modern Policing' with police forces and 'Command English' with cadets, have been used. However, the syllabus is far from coursebook-dominated, as subsequent sections reveal.

Methodology

The DLI approach to language learning is based on audiolingualism and is suited for use in language laboratories. The system dates back to World War II when large numbers of GIs had to learn foreign languages in a few months before being posted to theatre in the Pacific. The instructor introduces new language through short dialogues which are then drilled and practised. The approach is very much instructor-centred with the teacher as a language model working in lockstep with the trainees, but it allows few opportunities for the students to have real communicative oral practice with each other.

The PEP's approach places more emphasis on student-centred approaches where foreign language acquisition is seen as developing all four skills. It is open to the array of approaches to foreign language learning that exist. Military English is presented and practiced very much in the real-life context in which it is used, for instance, briefing junior officers on a convoy route or radioing in a map reference for a helicopter to evacuate a casualty.

Teacher training and development

The DLI approach to teacher training is to send young officers (usually graduates of a university English language faculty) to its base in Lackland, Texas for a six-month grounding in the ALC plus a crash course in the use of language laboratories. Occasionally, instructors receive more specific training, such as how to run a junior staff officers' language course or a language course for aircraft technicians. There is minimal teacher development, since it is assumed that once instructors have been trained in the US they need no additional in-service training.

The PEP has always invested heavily in its 'human resources' and provided extensive in-service training and development of its English teachers, because they are absolutely vital in the sustainability of the teaching, learning and testing systems it has helped to establish. Teachers have usually used very old-fashioned teaching materials and, in terms of pedagogy, are heavily influenced by the teacher-centred approaches that were common in the former USSR and its satellites as well as in other contexts. These more modern approaches are vital in getting the maximum benefit from a coursebook like *Campaign*. PEP has run courses recognized by Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages, such as CELTA (Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults) and ICELT (In-Service Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language). It has also developed its own teacher-training and trainer-training courses, plus courses in materials writing, developing self-access centres and management. In addition, the PEP has participated in NATO courses for teachers, which include input on modern military concepts and terminology. Many PEP-trained teachers have thus become trainers, materials developers, syllabus designers or self-access centre managers.

Testing

To put trainees into the correct level of an ALC course, DLI uses the multiple-choice American Language Course Placement Test (ALCPT), which does not actually require the candidates to produce any written or spoken English. At the end of each ALC coursebook, the trainees sit a multiple-choice book quiz which determines whether they pass on to the next level. At the end of the complete course the trainees sit an English Language Competency (ELC) test, which is similar in format to the ALCPT, the scores of which determine whether they go to the USA to undergo their required military training.

In contrast, the PEP uses a variety of tests – placement, progress and achievement. However, to finally measure students' English-language proficiency, it will use examinations which are based on the NATO STANAG 6001 language proficiency descriptors. These descriptors are based on the US Interagency Language Roundtable rating scales (Herzog 2007) and outline what a trainee should be able to perform at levels 1 to 5 in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Candidates are awarded a Standard Language Profile (SLP), which describes their proficiency in these skills.

These four-digit scores are recognized in all NATO military or police institutions (except in the USA where DLI ELC scores are required) and have been adapted in some other contexts where the project has operated.

In addition, individual projects have usually trained testing teams to be able to develop their proficiency tests based on the descriptors of STANAG 6001, a principle that the DLI system avoids by entrusting all test developments to US personnel and the administration of high-stakes tests to the local embassy staff. This has entailed the PEP providing specific training, including to Masters level in some of the earlier projects, and the collaboration of national testing teams. This has proved a challenge because there is only limited knowledge of the target language use domain, NATO and the UN do not publish needs analyses. What is more, the definition of a SLP has remained a rather vague notion, and the term 'native speaker' is itself contentious in testing circles (Green and Wall 2005).

Autonomous learning

As previously stated, the DLI course material can be used in audio language laboratories, and instructors receive training in using such laboratories. Students can practice their dialogues independently in their individual booths. Some of the audio-only systems have been replaced by laboratories with computers that have video clips of the dialogues introduced in the coursebooks with the possibility of interaction with the trainee. These powerful technical tools are rarely used for self-access learning, however, simply because the instructors have not received the necessary technical and pedagogical training in managing such autonomous learning.

From the start the PEP has attempted to integrate autonomous learning into its courses and has established numerous Military and Police English self-access centres in the host institutions. The project aims to make the centres genuinely multimedia with zones for computer use, audio, video and reading. Each centre has its own manager(s), whom the project trains either through a dedicated self-access management course or through having them shadow a trained and experienced manager. Teachers provide guidance in autonomous learning with counselling and study logs. The centre has certain hours dedicated to self-access, when it is open to any officer or cadet who wishes to raise his or her level in English, whether they attend a taught course or not. Some projects integrate the centre into their curriculum. The project has developed its own material for self-access, one example being the *Peacekeeper* computer software which it co-produced with a Hong Kong software company. This self-access concept subtly shifts the responsibility of learning the foreign language from the teacher to the trainees.

Sustainability

To be sustained in the long term, the DLI ALC courses require funding to purchase ALC course materials, maintain language laboratories and to pay

for instructors' salaries and training. Instructors trained in the DLI system cannot easily adapt to more flexible and diverse language teaching, learning and testing systems.

In the relatively sophisticated and well-funded defence ministries of the former Warsaw Pact countries and former Soviet republics, PEP has managed to ensure that the English language teaching, learning and testing systems it established have been handed over to the local ministry of defence and stand a reasonable chance of being maintained and funded in the long term. The key to this has been establishing a cadre of well-trained, well-motivated and well-resourced English language teachers, trainers, self-access centre managers and testers who are recognized, valued and appropriately rewarded by their ministry of defence. In some countries (oil-rich Kazakhstan is an example), teachers expensively trained by PEP are often lost to higher-paying jobs in other sectors. However, especially in the former Warsaw Pact countries, accession to the European Union and membership of NATO has imposed increased requirements for foreign language proficiency (especially English) on defence ministries which now have to inter-operate with the armed forces of other NATO member states. Thus the ministries have no option but to maintain the working systems established by PEP – proficiency in the English language has now become an absolute necessity for almost every serving officer and is often a pre-requisite for promotion.

Case studies

Afghanistan

The project in Afghanistan is not a PEP as such, because it is funded exclusively by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and is managed jointly by the British Embassy, Kabul Defence Section, and by the British Council, Afghanistan. It is known as the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) Language Capability Project. It started in mid-2009 and will probably run until UK armed forces leave Afghanistan in 2014. Originally, the project primarily aimed to set up self-access centres in ANSF military and police training centres and to run teacher training courses for English language instructors in the national Military Academy, the Kabul Military Training Centre and in the national Police Academy, Kabul. The rationale of the project is to enable the ANSF to collaborate effectively with multi-national partners in both the short and long term, not to enable the ANSF to participate in peace support operations. This is a similar scenario to the PEP in the DR Congo.

In 2011, apart from setting up and running self-access centres and teacher training courses, resources have been allocated to running intensive IELTS preparation courses for ANSF officers selected for military training in the UK. Achieving a defined band in IELTS is a pre-requisite for military training

in the UK and many selected Afghan officers were failing to achieve these band scores, frustrating the Defence Section's efforts to place bright young officers in the Military Academy, Sandhurst, and in RAF Cranwell. From 2012 onwards, the project will develop Military English curricula in the planned Foreign Languages Institute of the future ANSF Defence University, working towards the long-term development of a sustainable English language teaching infrastructure.

To date the project has trained approximately 1000 ANSF officers either through direct Military English courses or through self-access learning, mostly in Kabul Military Training Centre. In the near future, it plans to open a two-room training centre in the Afghan Ministry of Defence in collaboration with the US Afghan National Army Development Programme. This centre will function as a teaching, training and self-access centre for Military English, and the plan is that it will be managed by two female ANSF officers which the project will train.

Ethiopia

The Ethiopian project was established in early 2008 in recognition of Ethiopia's major role as a peacekeeping nation, which dates back to Congo (1960) and resumed in Rwanda (1994) after a hiatus during the military regime of 1974–91 (known as the 'Derg') when Ethiopia was allied to the socialist bloc. The country is currently the twelfth largest contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, with over 2000 troops on the UNAMID mission in Darfur and other recent contributions to the UN/African Union missions in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Ivory Coast amongst others. In 2011, it became the sole contributor to a mission in Abyei when the state of South Sudan was formed. Ethiopia is the leading contributor to East Africa's Standby Brigade (EASBRIG) in which it cooperates with nine other countries, and it hosts the headquarters of both EASBRIG and the African Union in Addis Ababa, making it a significant regional diplomatic power. The Horn of Africa is known for its instability, and Africa hosts half of the UN's peacekeeping missions. The current Ethiopian government's commitment to peace support operations, its comparatively large armed forces, the fact that the armed forces operate as a disciplined and unifying force amongst the eighty-three ethnic groups in the country and the representation of Orthodox Christianity, Islam and other religions amongst its personnel mean that Ethiopia's contributions to peacekeeping missions can potentially provide African solutions to African problems.

In 2008, however, the armed forces faced a major problem as regarded the interoperability of their personnel, due to the non-achievement of English language proficiency, which is required for most missions. As a result, there was a high dependence on interpreters, and a significant proportion of personnel who supposedly had English skills were in fact either repatriated or redeployed because they did not meet UN requirements. The type of

thwarted potential was expressed (through a translator) by one peacekeeper in 2008:

> Serving on the mission [in Liberia] was a great experience. It gave me the opportunity to serve alongside many other officers from Kenya, Ghana, Senegal, Croatia, India, Pakistan and many others. I can say that English language skills were extremely important and that there were occasions when our [lack of] English skills held us back from contributing more fully.[2]

The PEP has worked with its hosts at the Peacekeeping Training Centre of the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence to establish a language training system at seven centres throughout the country, based on a redefined language training policy that provides intensive 250-hour courses at three STANAG 6001 levels. To date (September 2011) approximately 1200 officers have been trained, many of whom have done all three courses, and 75 per cent of them have been deployed on missions, with a marked reduction in repatriation due to the lack of proficiency in English. A mentor and trainer training system and a testing team have been established to enhance the prospects of sustainability. By the end of the project, planned for March 2013, the system will be fully embedded into the ministry.

Mongolia

While experiencing transition from a close alliance with the former USSR to a multi-party democracy in the 1990s, Mongolia's armed forces underwent a significant reduction in numbers, with a greater emphasis on their role in civil defence missions. Although there was an acceptance of the fact that that international political-military security could be achieved only through a collective security system, the commitment of the government to participate in such a system dates from 2000, when it was recognized that the country's security would be enhanced by an active contribution to global peace initiatives. Participation in peacekeeping began in 2002, and to date Mongolia has deployed in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone (providing security at the Special Court as part of the UN mission to Liberia). It has sent military observers to the DRC, Western Sahara, Sudan, Georgia, the Ethiopia–Eritrea border, Chad and Darfur.

The PEP in Mongolia was established in 2005 and lasted till 2009. During that time, it worked alongside the US DLI programme at the General Staff of the Mongolian Armed Forces, establishing three other centres at the Peace Support Operations Training Centre and two peacekeeping battalions. Given what has been discussed earlier about the different approaches of the US and UK programmes, the project in Mongolia is an interesting example of the degree to which they can work alongside each other, of how a three-way relationship with the host partner evolved and of the legacy of a UK project

that lasted for less than four years whilst the DLI programme continues. The DLI was the mainstay of the teaching programme, with the PEP providing, according to the Mongolian director of the programme, approximately 20 per cent of the courses specifically in military English, proficiency testing, the development of speaking skills, in-country teacher development, self-access centres and training on how to exploit them. The Mongolian programme has taken the strengths of both systems. Two years after closure, the PEP programme is still judged as 'very effective to the military personnel who would deploy on missions' by one of the senior teachers.[3] During the project's lifetime, 450 personnel were trained on this dual programme, with 90 per cent deployment.

Ukraine

The Ukraine project started in 2002, when Military English self-access centres were set up in MOD training institutions in Lviv and in Sevastopol. The Hungarian Ministry of Defence sponsored one-to-one English language training for top Ukrainian generals. In 2004, the PEP set up the ICELT teacher training programme for English language instructors working in defence ministry training institutions throughout Ukraine. The next year PEP established the *Campaign* coursebook as the official English language syllabus in all military institutions, and it handed over direct English language teaching to the Ministry. An English Language Teaching and Methodology unit was formally established in the Ministry in 2006, and in the same year the self-access centres in Lviv and Sevastopol were handed over to the Ministry. In 2007 the project worked with the Ministry to establish four new self-access centres in Kiev and in Kharkiv, and the next year the ICELT teacher training programme passed to Ministry ownership, which has meant Ukrainian trainers delivering the Cambridge University validated course. The entire programme was handed over to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence in 2009. As one of the outcomes of the project, Ukrainian peacekeepers have played key roles in multi-national peace support operations in the territories of the former Yugoslavia and in Africa, where their key asset of heavy-lift helicopters and experienced pilots has been much in demand.

Impact of the PEP

Since the inception of the PEP, the project has trained approximately 55,000 personnel. However, it is difficult to know precisely how many of these trainees have actually served on peacekeeping missions. One reason is because, in the first phase of the project, the PEP was associated as much with NATO and EU accession goals as with peacekeeping itself. Indeed, it was only in 2006 that individual projects were required to collect precise data on personnel who served on missions, and this procedure relied on

accurate reporting from host ministries. It was also regarded as confidential information for the funding partners. However, it is clear that the capacity to provide English-language-trained personnel for missions has been significantly increased. In late 2009 all of the fifteen UN peacekeeping missions, and just over half of the non-UN missions, had personnel from countries where PEP had operated. These countries made up just over 8 per cent of all uniformed personnel deployed on UN missions, rising to 26 per cent of military observers. What appear to be relatively low figures are explained by the fact that, of the 'PEP countries', only Ethiopia and China are amongst the leading twenty contributors of personnel to missions, and these other eighteen countries contribute 65 per cent (Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2010).

There is evidence from UK government sources on what they see as the importance of the English language training and the role that the PEP has played. In a Peacekeeping English Project newsletter of 2009, the Ministry of Defence stated:

> The British Council-run Peacekeeping English Projects supported by the UK's Conflict Prevention Pool have delivered a strong, indigenous English language training capability across the world. English, as one of the two peacekeeping languages in the world, is vital to effective multinational peace support operations. PEPs have been a central pillar in supporting troop and police contributing countries deploying on multinational peace support operations. PEPs across the world have been praised for their delivery. . . . The sustainability of PEPs has been a unique quality of PEPs, and one which provides value for money. (PEP Newsletter 35 2009: 2)

Individual defence attachés have substantiated this; in 2004 the attaché to Serbia and Montenegro stated that the project was a fundamental tool in having a direct, beneficial effect on regional stability, particularly with Albania and Romania, whilst the attaché to the South Caucasus regarded 'PEP trained personnel [as] well-placed in the emerging reform structures after the 2003 Rose Revolution' (PEP Milestone Survey Report 2004: 3, in McIlwraith). The British High Commissioner to Mozambique stated that project was contributing 'to increase the capacity of the Defence Ministry to actively participate in peacekeeping operations . . . one of the main requisites for the participants in some of these operations is proficiency in the English language' (PEP Newsletter 35 2009: 7). On a visit to the project in DRC, the then UK Minister for Africa, Asia and the UN, Lord Malloch-Brown, recognized the project's contribution to the 'important steps towards meeting the objective fixed by the government of DRC of a well-trained and fully functioning arm' (PEP Newsletter 33 2009: 4).

The value of the project to the host countries has also been recognized. On the opening of a self-access centre at the Academy of the Chinese People's Armed Police Academy, its president, Major General Yang Jun, noted its value, vowing that the staff would 'make the best use of the self-access centre, further develop the training materials and provide as much access as possible to UN peacekeepers [to Haiti] as well as to those who are enthusiastic about becoming peacekeeping police officers' (PEP Newsletter 31 2008: 5). The implied political–diplomatic role of the project was also highlighted in his comment that, as permanent members of the UN Security Council, China and the UK might 'promote communication and co-operation, strengthen friendship and further improve the UN's peacekeeping police work' (PEP Newsletter 31 2008: 5). During a visit by Lord Kinnock, then Chair of the British Council, the Head of the Ethiopian Ministry of National Defence Peacekeeping Centre recognized the value of PEP. 'Preparing peacekeepers for the management of the kind of complex security situation is a critical challenge and language training is one of the main areas of capacity building that faces a developing country such as Ethiopia' (PEP Newsletter 35 2009: 7). In Turkey, Ali Osman Elmastas, the Director of the National Police Academy, stated that:

> I think that the Peacekeeping English Project, our joint project with the British Council, is very useful for Turkish national police as Turkey appoints a high number of officers to international duties such as UN and OSCE [Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe] missions. Perhaps it will take some time for us to see the results of our Law Enforcement English training programme at the Turkish National Police Academy, but I think the police cadets who graduate with knowledge of both General and Law Enforcement English will be more successful and effective while performing their international duties. (PEP Newsletter 30 2008)

The importance of English on missions (potentially lifesaving) and the benefits gained from studying on PEP programmes have also been recorded by individual officers on missions. Major Ruslan Holubstov from Ukraine served in Sudan in a multi-national team of advisors to the Sudanese Police south of Khartoum. He referred to his English training, specifically the preparation for his own future role as a trainer:

> At the start I talked too much when giving training and this confused my trainees, and I had to learn to make my speech clear and to the point. Just before I left the mission, this proved to a life-saving skill. We were visiting a police station when some young men, protesting against the recent international arrest warrant for the Sudanese president, surrounded the building and started chanting anti-western slogans. On this occasion

> I had to give very clear on-the-spot training to the local police on how to keep the situation under control long enough for us to get to our vehicle and drive away. (PEP Newsletter 34 2009: 2)

Major Mamuka Mchedelidze from Georgia was in Iraq:

> I served as a liaison officer in 2005 in the Tactical Operations Centre of a US Infantry Battalion. I was sent to a Forward Operations base near Samarra. We got a task from our HQ to deploy in the intersection near the village of Ad-Dulyia. It was the day of the referendum for the new constitution. In the middle of the day we were engaged by insurgents and took fire. The skills and knowledge I got in the English language centre helped me in this situation. I called an American sergeant on the radio, explaining the situation to him and he called up air support. (PEP Newsletter 26 2007: 1)

The project's impact on the development of language training systems in participating countries includes the following areas:

- Teaching methodology. The principle of sustainability has meant using experienced teacher trainers, self-access centre managers and testers in other PEP contexts so as to ensure their expertise is fully exploited.
- Course design for specialized purposes. This involved international training events, and has also led to the writing of materials in book form, including by international teams.
- Materials design, relating to human rights, sexual exploitation and abuse and HIV/AIDS, as well as other specific needs of military, police and security forces. The *Peacekeeper* self-study CD-ROM was written by a team of PEP-trained teachers as materials writers, coordinated by managers, using the experience and knowledge of personnel who had served on peace support operations.
- Management of language centres, with a PEP management course run in Slovenia. The project also developed an Integrated Training for Peace Support and Security Management (ITPSSM) course, which continued beyond the closure of most projects and included participants from Germany, Finland and Russia.
- Test design and testing systems, as described above. Testing also involved several multi-national events, working in areas such as developing test specifications and piloting tests. One notable example was the South Caucasus Testing Group which brought the testing teams of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan together on a regular basis, an example of people from two countries still technically at war working together.
- Trainer training. A one-year part-time course developed by PEP involved trainer trainers from Latvia, Croatia, Slovakia and Macedonia working

with British trainers to develop, manage as well as train on the course. It trained forty personnel from eighteen countries in three years, many of whom have been used as trainers including in countries other than their own. Examples of this are the visit of a Latvian teacher trainer working in Afghanistan and a Ukrainian visiting Ethiopia.

- Teacher support networks, often developed out of local, regional and international conferences.
- The significance of the internal impact on the training system of PEP countries is illustrated by Siria Larmay, the self-access centre coordinator of the Comando Regional de Entrenamiento de Operaciones de Mantenimento de Paz, the regional peacekeeping training centre for Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua: 'Now I understand how to modify my classes to prepare students so they have an optimal outcome once they get into the field, and so improve their confidence once they arrive at the mission' (PEP Newsletter 33: 2009).

Conclusion

To a large extent, the PEP has helped countries' defence forces to accomplish their goals in terms of English language interoperability. Acknowledgement of the work done by the project came from the UK Ministry of Defence in a statement they released in 2009, when many projects were handed over to host institutions.

> The British Council-run Peacekeeping English Projects supported by the UK's Conflict Prevention Pool have delivered strong indigenous English language training capability across the world. English, as one of the two peacekeeping languages of the world, is vital to effective multi-national peace support operations. PEPs have been a central pillar in supporting potential troop and police contributing countries deploying on multi-national peace support operations. PEPs across the world have been praised for their delivery, effectiveness and effort. . . . The sustainability of PEPs has been a unique quality of PEPs, and one which provides value for money. (PEP Newsletter 35 2009: 7)

It is impossible to know whether a project of a similar nature will be established at some point in the future, but it can reasonably be predicted that the international and national political contexts around the world are likely to continue to require effective communication in a common language between the personnel who assist with recovery after major conflicts. Moreover, as more than one serving defence attaché has related to us, when they ask the ministries of countries what support English they require, more often than not English language training comes out as a priority.

Notes

1. Peter Hare and Nicholas Fletcher have worked for the British Council as managers of Peacekeeping English Projects in Afghanistan, Colombia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Mozambique, and they have been involved in training events in a number of other countries.
2. Interview for Ethiopian PEP with Dimka, Ethiopian peacekeeper, 2008.
3. Personal communication, 23 March 2011.

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14

Did Serbo-Croat Die with Yugoslavia? A Different View of Language and Identity in Bosnia-Herzegovina

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A language is said to be dead when it no longer has any speakers (Crystal 2000: 1). The process of a language's demise generally occurs over a long period of time as speakers of the dying language cease to speak their original language in favour of a second language that has greater social prestige or value. An immigrant community, for example, may experience language shift as second and third generations see more utility in speaking and having as a first language the more powerful language of the host community. This process of language shift is thought to occur over three generations (Coulmas 2005: 158). A language can also disappear if, over time, it transforms into one or more languages which bear no resemblance to the original language. An example of this is Latin, which over centuries has transformed into French, Spanish, Italian and Sardinian (Aitchison 1992: 197). In both these processes of language demise, a language's disappearance is a gradual one. In contrast to this, the death of Serbo-Croat seems to have been a rather swift affair. Since the early 1990s, the language of Serbo-Croat has completely disappeared from the social and political scene in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is no longer a language of instruction or a subject in the curriculum in the education system, and in public discourse there is no longer any mention of Serbo-Croat as a designation for the language of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Instead, the official languages of the post-war state are now Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian.

This chapter explores whether Serbo-Croat really is dead in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It maintains that, far from this being the case, the language of Serbo-Croat still has meaning for certain members of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In doing so, it draws on interviews that I conducted in 2008 with seventeen interpreters and translators working for international organizations[1] in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They were all natives of Bosnia-Herzegovina who on a daily basis work from and into English and the three

official languages of Bosnia-Herzegovina. These were people who thought about language matters in a very practical sense and therefore, I assumed, they would express considered and informed opinions on language issues, as well as on their own language attitudes.

In order to put these language attitudes in context, this chapter begins with a brief summary of the language situation in the former Yugoslavia up until the outbreak of the wars that led to its disintegration in the early 1990s. In the former Yugoslavia, there were three main official languages: Slovenian, Macedonian and Serbo-Croat or Croato-Serbian. Serbo-Croat or Croato-Serbian officially denoted the speech of four of the six constituent nations in the former Yugoslavia – the Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins and, after 1974, the Muslims.[2] In post-Second World War Yugoslavia, language was used as a key element in the Communist regime's efforts to regulate inter-ethnic relations; the creation of a unified language was seen by the authorities as a way of embedding the different constituent nations into the common state.

Ever since the awakening of ethnolinguistic consciousness in the region in the nineteenth century, there had been debate over whether the speech of the Serbs and Croats, as the two largest ethnic groups in the country, were one or different languages. If they were separate languages, there was no linguistic justification for the peoples to be united politically in one state. The Communist authorities therefore strove to maintain language unity. The speech of the four different constituent nations – the Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins and Muslims – was therefore considered to be a unified language but with variant ways of speaking. Broadly, the western variant denoted the speech of the Croats and the eastern variant that of the Serbs. This unity came under threat in the 1960s and 1970s when the Croats called for an end to the single language and the right to call its language Croatian. This in turn prompted similar calls from the Serbs. A compromise was reached in the Constitution of 1974 which confirmed the single standard language but allowed for a Croatian standard idiom and added two more variants or idioms to take account of the variant speech of the populations of Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina: the Montenegrin standard idiom and the Bosnia-Herzegovina standard idiom. Once the country began to break apart, these idioms became the basis for the separate languages of the successor states (Greenberg 2004: 57).

Despite the fact that these variants and idioms were based on the same dialect and were mutually intelligible, in modern-day Bosnia-Herzegovina each of the three main ethnic groups, which are now its constituent nations, use linguistic difference as a way to claim ethnic distinctiveness. The Serbs and Croats look to their kin states of Serbia and Croatia for their separate standard languages. The Croats in Croatia have been particularly active in language planning activities to create their own standard language and to distance it as much as possible from those of the other constituent nations

of the former Yugoslavia. Croatian language planners have concentrated on differences in morphology, phonology and syntax but most change has been in lexical items. There has been a purification of vocabulary which has meant the re-introduction of native Croatian words and the introduction of neologisms, as well as the rejection of foreign borrowings such as Russianisms and 'Turkisms' (old Turkish, Arab and Persian words). The Croats thereby distance themselves from both Serbian (with its Russian/Slavonic components) and Bosnian (with its emphasis on Turkisms) (Greenberg 2004: 124).

The Bosniaks, who do not have a kin state, have had to work harder to establish their own distinctive standard. Bosniak language planners have done this by highlighting two particular features of their speech: the presence of words based on old Turkish, Arabic and Persian words and the greater prevalence of the phoneme /x/ in the speech of the Bosniaks. These two features also exist in the other two languages but to a lesser extent. However, as Curtis Ford notes (2001: 85), these features are hardly sufficient to warrant a process of standardization.[3] They do, however, function as shibboleths to distinguish a member of the Bosniak nation. So, for example, using the word *kahva,* meaning coffee, immediately identifies the speaker as a Bosniak because neither a Croat nor a Serb would use this word.[4]

Given the various language planning activities of the three constituent nations, a question to be asked is whether they have had an impact on the way in which the population speaks. There has not yet been a comprehensive study of language use in Bosnia-Herzegovina since the end of the conflict, but certain scholars such as Ranko Bugarski (2005) and Svein Monnesland (2005) consider that there has been no great change in people's language habits. This was borne out in the interviews for this chapter. Most of the interviewees thought people's language habits had not changed to a great extent except for the use of certain lexical items. The example that was given most often during the interviews was the word for 'municipality'. In Sarajevo before the conflict the word *opština* was used, but now the Croatian version of *općina* is prevalent. This reflects a tendency for Bosnian to be influenced by Croatian features as a result of closer political ties to the Croats than to the Serbs.

Because of the close proximity and mutual intelligibility of the languages, their value and importance are in their symbolic function as a marker of ethnic identity. Since the end of the war in 1995, ethnic divisions have become only more entrenched in the post-conflict state; this means that ethnic identity and affiliation is of utmost importance in day-to-day life. The political process revolves around representation according to ethnicity, so it is important how an individual self-identifies ethnically. No census has been conducted throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1991 (the last one was held when the state was part of the former Yugoslavia) but in a 'social mapping exercise' that was carried out in the Muslim–Croat

Federation, which constitutes half of the state, in 2002 respondents were encouraged to self-identify according to four categories – Bosniak, Croat, Serb or Other (Markowitz 2010). This was in stark contrast to the 1991 census in which there were twenty-five possible categories which included all the nations and nationalities of the former Yugoslavia as well as those who self-identified as Yugoslavs. This last category was chosen by 5.6 per cent of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1991, yet there is no equivalent in present-day Bosnia. It is now no longer possible to self-identify as a citizen of the state rather than as a member of one of the constituent nations.

Given this emphasis on ethnic affiliation, language acquires particular significance as a marker of ethnic identity and as a way for an individual to self-identify ethnically. In a public opinion survey of 2500 respondents from throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina that was conducted by the PULS research institute in 2005, when asked which language each respondent spoke, 98 per cent of the Serbs stated Serbian, 93 per cent of Croats Croatian and 97 per cent of Bosniaks stated either Bosnian or Bosniak (Kostić 2007: 296).[5] This clear differentiation of the designations of the languages was not, however, reflected in the opinions of the respondents as to whether the languages were the same, similar or entirely different. In this regard, 76.8 per cent of respondents considered the languages to be the same or 'mainly the same with some small differences' (Kostić 2007: 296). A total of 18.2 per cent thought the languages were 'separate but similar' and just 4.5 per cent thought the languages were 'entirely different' (Kostić 2007: 296). This data indicate that, notwithstanding the respondents' views on the proximity of the languages, they had the ethnolinguistic awareness to label their mother tongue according to one of the official designations. This suggests that the ethnic designations of the languages have acquired the social prestige that is important for one language to prevail over another in the process of the weaker language's death.

The interviews

Bearing in mind the foregoing discussion and the saliency of ethnic identity in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina, it might be expected that the interviewees would be unequivocal in their answers to questions about language. It might be expected that, in answering a question about what language they spoke, each respondent would answer with one of the three official designations. This was, however, not the case. While some did describe their language according to one of the current official designations, others were more equivocal. Five of them hesitated to use one of the official language designations and instead employed different ways of describing their mother tongue, but in all five cases Serbo-Croat was a reference point for their descriptions. For example, interviewee KM immediately described their

language as Serbo-Croatian but then went on to justify this designation by explaining their language in terms of what it is not:

> LA: If someone were to ask you what language you spoke, what would you say?
>
> KM: Serbo-Croatian, still. Well, sometimes I say, like to foreigners, I say local language. To locals I say our language, *naš jezik*, or my language, sometimes Serbo-Croatian. I just don't feel comfortable saying I speak Serbian, I speak Bosnian. I definitely don't speak Croatian. My mother tongue should be Serbian but I live in Bosnia and it's kind of a mixture of Bosnian and Serbian, I don't know, maybe it's Serbo-Bosnian (laughs).

This interviewee seems to be saying that they do not recognize any of the official languages as their mother tongue and, although they are clear about their ethnicity (Serbian), they are ambivalent about identifying themselves linguistically with this constituent nation. This is also demonstrated in their mention of the two ways that are usually employed to avoid using one of the official designations of the language – 'the local language' or 'our language' – which avoids any mention of ethnicity. The dilemma in which this interviewee finds themselves is typified by their inventing a designation of their own.

Interviewee CA also eschews the three official ethnic designations, but in this case they think more locally and favour identification with the specific locality where they live, in this case Sarajevo. By doing this, they avoid not only using one of the ethnic language designations but also confirming their ethnic affiliation. Their response is given below:

> LA: If somebody asked you what language you spoke, what would you say?
>
> CA: Privately or professionally? Because there is a difference.
>
> LA: Yes, well, tell me both.
>
> CA: Privately, I speak Sarajevan. (laughs) No, yeh, the local dialect. It would be, well, heavily influenced by Serbo-Croat, definitely, because I simply don't want to spend my days and especially my time off putting in an effort. So I will speak in Serbo-Croat with a heavy, heavy influence of local, well, dialect, slang, I would say. Professionally, when I am addressing someone in local language it is always either Bosnian, Serb or Croat and I strive to be very correct. I do, I hope.

In talking about their language, it is Serbo-Croat that forms the basis of this interviewee's description. By mentioning their professional practice and

ability to differentiate between the three languages in the workplace, they are indicating that they are fully aware of the language differences and perhaps want to distance themselves from those who insist on this linguistic differentiation in their working life.

The ambivalence of CA towards categorically naming their mother tongue according to one of the official language designations is echoed in the response of interviewee IR who has a different way of describing their language, as can be seen in the exchange below:

> LA: So if somebody were to ask you which language you spoke, what would you say?
>
> IR: Oooph. I'd say I speak the same language I spoke in 1990 so it would be Serbo-Croat (laughs) I don't know, I guess it's the same language, it hasn't changed.
>
> LA: But if somebody, if a soldier, I don't know, a foreign soldier, an American you had never met and he came and asked you what language you speak what would you say?
>
> IR: Hmm. What would I say? The Constitution says I speak the language of Bosnian Serbs.

The expressive 'oooph' at the beginning of their response indicates the difficulty this interviewee has in answering the question and expresses their frustration in providing a satisfactory answer. They initially call their language Serbo-Croat, but on further questioning they resort to a legalistic definition and, like interviewee KM, they do not hesitate to give a definition which makes it clear what their ethnic background is (Serbian). This interviewee's mention of 1990 underlines that they see their language in terms of the pre-war language situation (hence also their reference to Serbo-Croat) and suggests that they do not consider their own language habits to have changed since then. In a similar vein, interviewee LB, who is in their fifties, took a longer view of language use, explaining that Serbo-Croat was the name of the language throughout their education and they were too old to change now:

> As you know, I am too old, and I was raised, I was born in something that is today in the Republika Srpska, Trebinje, but I was there until I was five. I was, I went to school in some areas where the majority are Croats and from my early first grade in primary school until I finished university it was Serbo-Croat. We usually say S-H, just the abbreviation. And I cannot say, I don't know how someone can say that when he is fifty or over now he speaks another language . . . I cannot just say today that I'm, my

> language is Bosnian, Serbian, Croat, if you divide them, or you can call it Esperanto. Anyone can name it how they would like but I am speaking Serbo-Croat.

Interviewee ZJ who is younger than interviewee LB, had a similar view and emphasized how they endeavour to use the language they were taught at school. Their response is given below:

> LA: If somebody were to ask you what language you spoke, what would you say?
>
> ZJ: I would say, ah well, that is very difficult. I try hard to speak . . . I am a Bosniak but I try hard to speak this language that I learned in school that's called Serbo-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian. It's very dangerous to admit it here because it is Serbian and Croatian, a mixture, a combination but Bosnian language is, in my opinion, it is something that is invented just to have a language of the Bosniaks, that Bosniak authorities invented here in order to have a language of their own just to be different from the Serbian and Croatian languages. Actually it is a mixture of Croatian and Serbian again apart from, I don't know, fifty to one hundred expressions that they just introduced which are really not very appropriate (laughs) they are slang and colloquial expressions that were used here some one hundred to two hundred years ago which are really not standard language expressions. And because of all these innovations and new words and expressions and terms whatever, constructions and syntax whatever in the Bosnian language it became very ugly and it is ridiculous so I try to speak the old version that I was taught in school. So that is in private but here at work when I am translating documents or interpreting at meetings I use, I try to be as politically correct as it is possible because I have to respect and follow the policy of the OSCE but privately I will say, I will not say that I use Serbo-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian, I would say I use this version, this language that I was taught in school before the war and that's it because it is a standard language and I think that it is a good language and it shouldn't be changed.

Although in this response ZJ self-identifies as a Bosniak, they still see their language in terms of Serbo-Croat which they consider to be a standard language and 'good'. In fact, they are highly critical of attempts to create a separate language of Bosnian, calling it 'very ugly' and 'ridiculous'. Despite their positive view of Serbo-Croat, however, they do not in the end name their language, and they categorically state that they would not call it Serbo-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian. The element of danger that they perceive in this designation may be because they believe that their disavowal of Bosnian as a 'proper' language may be interpreted by others as a denial of the Bosniak nation itself.

A striking feature of the responses of these last two interviewees is their length. The two interviewees take great pains to explain their feelings about their language. Although each could quite easily give their language as Serbian or Bosnian respectively and thereby confirm their ethnic affiliation, they obviously consider that their feelings about their mother tongue require a more complex explanation, and they are not yet ready to swap one designation for a completely different one. They are both attached to the language of Serbo-Croat because it is the language of their school days but also, at least for interviewee ZJ, it is what they consider to be a proper standard language rather than something that they see as having been invented, in contrast to, in their view, the Bosnian language. Interviewee LB also stresses the artificiality of the current language designations, as they consider it an artificial thing for a person to start calling their language by another name after a lifetime of using another designation. Their ambivalence towards using one of the official language designations may also be a reflection of an ambivalence to wholly self-identify politically as a member of one of the three constituent nations. Further, it may also be a reflection of nostalgia for the pre-war state of the former Yugoslavia.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of the 1990s, elites in Bosnia-Herzegovina have made a clear link between ethnic identity and language in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The rise and dominance of ethnic nationalism in the country mean that separate linguistic identities based on ethnicity have had to be created and consolidated. In the process, the pre-war solution to the national question, which necessarily contained a language element, was also swept aside. It appears that to all intents and purposes the language of Serbo-Croat is dead. And yet the interviews quoted above demonstrate that things are more complicated than that. Certain inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina do not automatically make the link between their ethnic affiliation and the language they speak. They may self-identify as a member of one of the official constituent nations, but they do not necessarily then name their language according to the corresponding designation. This may be because they consider the language planning activities of political and intellectual elites to be based on creating artificial linguistic constructs which they do not recognize as their mother tongue. This in turn may reflect a political preference for a language to unify the ethnically diverse population rather than divide it, in short, a language such as Serbo-Croat which had been meant to serve this purpose since the end of World War II. It should be borne in mind here that Bosnia-Herzegovina was the most ethnically mixed republic in the former Yugoslavia and its authorities were arguably most alarmed by the language debates of the 1960s and 1970s that sought to disrupt the unified language. In their view, undermining the unity of the language would have necessarily destabilized the republic.

The cited interviews demonstrate that Serbo-Croat still has meaning for certain members of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It might be argued that, as interpreters and translators, the interviewees have a heightened ethnolinguistic awareness and may therefore be more sensitive to language issues than the vast majority of the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The data from the PULS agency survey seem to bear this out, although the question to be asked about the survey data is whether the respondents would have given a different response if they had been given 'Serbo-Croat or Croato-Serbian' as an option in describing their language. There are nonetheless generations of people still living in Bosnia-Herzegovina who remember the language situation before the most recent conflict and who have memories of language use during their schooling. Because of this experience, they therefore have an attachment to Serbo-Croat, which gives it more meaning to them than any of the current three official languages.

Just as an attachment to Serbo-Croat was nurtured in the education system until the beginning of the 1990s, post-conflict generations will develop a loyalty to the language they are taught in schools. There is no common curriculum throughout the state; rather, since the end of the conflict each of the three constituent nations has developed its own curriculum suited to the educational needs of its particular ethnic group. Accordingly, the language of instruction in each of these curricula corresponds to one of the official languages. With the disappearance of Serbo-Croat from the education system it is the ethnically-based language of instruction, with its greater social prestige, which will have more meaning for the present and future generations of school children. Serbo-Croat will finally die once these generations have replaced the older ones and there is no one in the country who has the memory of learning a language called Serbo-Croat in their school days. Until that time, Serbo-Croat will still live on in the hearts and minds of at least some Bosnians.

Notes

1. These were the EU military force in Bosnia-Herzegovina, EUFOR, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
2. In the 1974 Constitution, the Muslims were considered to be an ethnic rather than a religious category.
3. There is ongoing debate as to whether the languages can be categorized as separate standards or variants of dialects. For more on this issue, see Greenberg (2004), Gröschel (2009) and Kordić (2010).
4. The Croatian word for coffee is *kava*, and the Serbian is *kafa*.
5. This confusion over the name may be a result of the initial dilemma among the Bosniaks over what to call their language. A wartime decree adopted by the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina called the language *bosanski* or Bosnian, and this designation was recognized in the Dayton Peace Agreement of

December 1995. The Serbs and Croats, however, challenge the Bosniaks' use of the designation 'Bosnian' because they claim that it denotes the speech of the whole of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina and not just that of the Bosniaks. According to them, therefore, this means that the Bosnians have unitaristic aspirations politically as regards the state.

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15

Exhibiting the 'Foreign' in a National Museum: Imperial War Museum London and *Languages at War*

James Taylor
Imperial War Museum

Languages at War sits squarely within the mission of the Imperial War Museum (IWM), which is to enable people to understand human behaviour through the lens of war and conflict. Yet the policy and practice of languages in war has previously been one of a raft of issues or themes which have been at best difficult, sometimes even 'unsayable', for museums, not least the IWM. Particular historical threads might be difficult to address for any number of reasons. We as museum professionals might fear that our audiences will not be interested in them. They might, say, prick the bubble of national myth and 'heritage' or be politically controversial. On a practical level, they might be difficult to render in a museum display because the evidence for them is unappetizing for museum audiences – not least a display of documents in an unfamiliar, foreign language. Some subjects might demand the use of disturbing imagery. Indeed, we might not even have *any* material in the collections to deliver certain challenging narratives. Our hugely successful partnership with the Universities of Reading and Southampton has naturally led us to think of how we deal with our own practice as regards foreign languages and cultures in an exhibition environment and how we might exploit further the richness and diversity of our collections. This has become an imperative as we embark upon a major redevelopment programme, *Regeneration: Imperial War Museum London*, the first phase of which will see a new World War I gallery for the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War in 2014. This chapter will show how the IWM's approach to dealing with languages and 'foreignness' has evolved in the course of its history and how *Languages at War* has opened up new ways of thinking for us as we strive both to engage and challenge future audiences.

The IWM was created during World War I as 'a lasting memorial of common effort and common sacrifice . . . and an inspiration for future generations' (IWM *Third Annual Report*: 3). Conceived in 1917 – when Allied victory was by no means certain – the Museum's terms of reference were not intended or expected to go beyond the 'Great War'. The new Museum was

to record the 'immeasurable sacrifices and supreme national effort which not only saved the Country from dire catastrophe, but, as we all hope, laid firm and deep foundations of a better world'(IWM *Third Annual Report*: 3). Less than twenty years later, with another world war looming, the Museum's *Twenty-First Annual Report* lamented that the institution created to make an historical record of the war 'that was to end war' was faced with covering 'a series of world wars, each more terrible than the last'. Indeed, the IWM has now grown to be Britain's national museum of conflict, and its terms of reference now cover all wars involving British and Commonwealth forces from World War I to date.

The IWM was always meant to show the familiar, not the 'foreign', so by extension foreign-language materials have been absent or at best only lightly interpreted. Instead, the IWM's displays have, in the past, relied upon audience recognition for their relevance and impact. The galleries at IWM London were built for veterans in the broadest sense. By 'veteran' here is understood anyone, soldier or civilian, who experienced World War I or subsequent conflicts on either the fighting fronts or the home front and who would bring with them their own memories. At the IWM's opening event in 1920, the Chairman, Sir Alfred Mond, stated: 'It is hoped to make it so complete that every individual, man or woman, sailor, soldier, airman or civilian who contributed, however obscurely . . . may be able to find in these galleries an example or illustration of the sacrifice he made or the work he did . . .' (IWM 1920: 2). The galleries underwent a major redevelopment in 1989, yet the philosophy of display outlined by Sir Alfred Mond continued to drive the IWM's interpretation. And with reason. Even twenty years ago, a significant constituency of IWM visitors still had, through direct experience or folk memory, a visual understanding of the material culture of twentieth-century conflict. The IWM could be confident, then, that they would come to the Museum equipped with at least some knowledge and would revisit their wartime experiences. They would select and interpret items for their families and friends which had meaning for them. They would give voice to the objects – 'this is the type of rifle *I* fired, you fired it like this . . .' or 'this was the type of ration card *our* family used, you tore off those coupons and gave them to the grocer'. This reliance upon the familiar (although even an item once so commonplace as a ration book has now become a curio) has, by extension, largely precluded engagement with 'the other', not least in how we deal with foreign languages and cultures in war.

Given the Museum's remit, it is scarcely surprising that the majority of the Museum's collections are of British and Commonwealth origin. Where an object's meaning relies upon language, that language is usually English. And English-language material can, of course, reveal much about linguistic and cultural encounters in war. Indeed, personal accounts of the experience of being the occupier, fighting in another country and interrogation reports have formed the basis of papers given at *Languages at War* workshops and

conferences. The *Languages at War* team not only explored the Museum's collections, it added to them, and we are now the custodian of interviews conducted by Dr Catherine Baker of the University of Southampton that investigate the policies and practice of language encounters in peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1995 (the end of the war) and 2000.[1]

The IWM's collections are what makes it unique. They are the engine of the museum, not only in their breadth and depth but in the way that they have come to us and what they can tell us about war and human behaviour. The IWM now holds some 170,000 three-dimensional exhibits, ranging from larger pieces such as tanks, aircraft and artillery pieces down to uniform items and children's toys and ephemera. It also holds over 15,000 sets of private papers, letters and diaries, approximately 270,000 printed items ranging from monographs to ration cards, more than ten million photographs, 11,000 hours of film and 56,000 hours of historical sound recordings. To many people's surprise, the IWM has the second largest collection of twentieth-century British art anywhere in the world, an exceptional collection of art and graphic design of 19,000 paintings, drawings and sculptures and 15,000 posters. By and large, the material in the collection is not the work of a select few great men and women, nor is it based upon the once-private collection of a wealthy individual. It is far more democratic than that. Large parts of it are made up of memories and possessions that ordinary people have given to the IWM so that their experience of war, or that of their family, can be passed on to future generations. So, in physical terms much of the IWM's collection is made up of the intensely personal, such as the diaries or letters, or small trinkets, items which were mass-produced but have held huge personal significance to previous owners. It is through these 'ordinary' objects that the IWM delivers its key messages and tells the story of ordinary people in exceptional times, the sacrifices they made and the dilemmas they faced. Their value lies not in their intrinsic beauty or monetary worth but in their historical value, what they tell us about our past. What marks out the IWM is that it is also a museum of narratives – rarely can an item stand on its own merit. Interpretation and context are crucial if these are not just to be dead relics. What matters about the objects are the stories behind each of them – how it was made, by whom and when, why and how it was used. The onus is upon the historians and curators at the IWM to explore each object's biography, to make what might otherwise seem at first sight dull, everyday items – a spoon, a faded photograph or a letter – come alive in our displays.

A significant proportion of the collections relies upon a foreign-language element for meaning. Such objects – chiefly documents, posters, proclamations, printed materials and film – usually have their origin in countries allied to Britain in time of war, in countries against which Britain has fought or in neutral states. They range from thousands of World War I posters and proclamations collected from across Europe by a far-sighted curator, through

Nazi propaganda material, to identity cards from the Krakow Ghetto. Some of the foreign-language material in the IWM's holdings was produced by the Allies for the consumption of foreign nationals, such as an extraordinary collection of black propaganda, aerial leaflets dropped over Japanese and Nazi-occupied territory and German-language newsreels produced by the British occupation administration in Germany after 1945.

So how do foreign languages and the 'foreign' culture find expression today in IWM London? One enters the museum to be met in the Atrium, with its extraordinary, powerful display of large objects. These are chiefly armoured fighting vehicles, aircraft and artillery, although we also show some surprising civilian pieces – a Dunkirk 'Little Ship', a World War I London bus and a small air-raid shelter for Civil Defence personnel. There is a fair sprinkling of 'foreign' objects in this display, among them a German *Jagdpanther* assault gun, a Heinkel 162 jet fighter and a one-man *Biber* submarine. With all objects in the Atrium, the extended captions focus upon their technological qualities and destructive power. Their human and cultural associations or 'foreignness' take second place, if interpreted at all. I often start tours for visitors with the French '75' field gun. The *Soixante Quinze* exerted an extraordinary hold on the French military and public imagination during World War I. It was elevated to cult status following the French victory on the Marne in 1914, so much so that it was celebrated on posters and in song and verse. So iconic did this weapon become, it could be seen as the 'French Spitfire' (conveniently for the gallery tours, a Spitfire hangs nearby to enable me to make precisely that link). This extraordinary piece of technology can also be seen as the catalyst for trench warfare. Its rate of fire took a devastating toll of troops in the open and forced the Germans to 'dig in', thereby setting the pattern on the Western Front for four years. Few of our visitors have any notion that France suffered many more casualties than Britain during World War I, and this is the first chance to begin gently to overturn prejudice and preconceptions of history. But while associations such as this can be highlighted on tours and on the optional multimedia guides, caption boards demand economy of words and preclude multi-stranded interpretations.

One exits the Atrium and descends into the labyrinthine First World War, Second World War and Conflicts Since 1945 exhibition spaces. It is here that the interpretive philosophy which relies upon memory is most apparent. To reach the broadest range of audience and thereby facilitate memory meant displaying as many objects as possible. This explains the large showcases crammed with exhibits – uniforms, equipment, small arms, letters, diaries and photographs. Few of the captions, which are largely typological, extend beyond 25 words: 'Stokes 3-inch (7.62mm) light trench mortar' or 'British artillery No. 7 dial sight'. Again, these short captions thereby preclude engagement with any multiple meaning, be it language or any other, for today's visitor. On a survey of the First World War space, I found documents

in nine languages other than English spread through the display. One confronts foreign languages in the very first showcase in the First World War display. Two mobilization posters show the captioning technique for foreign-language material. Either the language of the headline text is translated into English, as with a 'French army and Navy General Mobilization Order' ('Armée de Terre et Armée de Mer: Ordre de Mobilisation Générale') or the object is simply described, as in the case of the 'German poster lampooning the national characteristics of European countries in 1914', the actual title of which is 'Humoristische Karte von Europa im Jahre 1914'. For those whose language ability is confined to English, any body text for these and other foreign-language materials, together with any cultural associations, must remain a mystery. Some 'foreign' objects, such as Prussian eagles, Iron Crosses or *Biersteine,* confirm their origin not with words but through cultural identity or iconography and might resonate with visitors – the foreign as familiar. Yet the war as *experienced* by 'others' is largely lacking. All foreign-language documents in the displays are official or semi-official. None are personal letters and diaries, and our visitors are denied a comparative look at, say, the trench experience of British, French and German soldiers on the Western Front. Perhaps the greatest opportunity to look at language and cultural encounters would have been in the showcase on prisoners and the German occupation of areas of France and Belgium. That this apparent opportunity was not taken highlights a major issue which confronted my predecessors in a very different, analogue age of museum display where digital technology was not an option. We know that displays of row upon row of documents – even the most powerful, personal letters – are very off-putting for visitors. Add lengthy captions, be they translations or otherwise, and the burden becomes even greater. Do this with a collection of foreign-language documents which they cannot read and you have lost your audience. But, for our new galleries in 2014, digital technology will allow us to do two things. We can give visitors choices, any number of interpretational strands and layers around any given object or collection of objects which they are free to explore. It also means we can take foreign-language material and overlay translation and interpretation.

The IWM's continued and increasing popularity – in 2009–10, the IWM's five branches received more than two million visitors – has always relied upon the organization's ability and willingness to change. And the IWM has evolved to moving beyond what is familiar. Without doubt the greatest leap forward in the museum's thinking and approach came with the permanent Holocaust Exhibition, which opened in 2000. The Holocaust Exhibition took the IWM into challenging territory, tackling difficult and demanding history in a way that makes people think and even changes them. The very idea of creating an exhibition on the Nazi persecution and murder of Europe's Jews was a departure. It meant that the IWM had undertaken a commitment to address a subject which was controversial in itself and, crucially, that it

could not lean on public memory and nostalgia. The exhibition heralded the switch from the typological school of display to exhibitions led by clear narratives and fed by multiple perspectives. It placed human stories at the centre of the story, not at the periphery. The exhibition made a very strong feature of taking twelve Holocaust survivors, all of them now living in the UK, and weaving their experiences throughout the display. The introductory space shows these survivors – Polish, German, Austrian and Czech – talking in English about their childhood or young adulthood. One immediately knows that this is different to other galleries. The survivors' accents tell us that their early lives were not spent in the UK and that English is not their mother tongue. They will act as guides, helping the visitor navigate through an extraordinarily difficult episode of history.

The Holocaust Exhibition presented very practical challenges for the Museum. Firstly, almost all of the documentary evidence was in foreign languages. We had to invoke unfamiliar, sometimes unpronounceable places, such as Celldömölk (Hungary) or Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski (Poland), and words which also conveyed difficult and horrific concepts – *Einsatzgruppen* (SS 'action groups' or killing squads), or *Aufräumungskommando* (the prisoner detail at Auschwitz forced to help unload trains of deportees). Rather than crowding the showcases, as was previous practice, we gave the objects space to 'speak'. Visitors soon come to realize that each document, while in a language which might be foreign to them, tells an extraordinarily powerful story. The Museum's English-language text and captions, the authorial voice, helps them to draw meaning.

The main language of the display, in terms of exhibits, is German, both as the main language of the perpetrators and the language imposed upon Jews and other groups in ghettos and concentration camps. One is immediately met by an area on the rise of the Nazi Party. It contains election posters, a copy of *Mein Kampf* and the photograph album of an SA paramilitary to which he has added captions in German. The first German one hears is an audiovisual presentation at the beginning of the exhibition which features speeches by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels and SA men chanting antisemitic slogans during the 1 April 1933 boycott of Jewish businesses. These are translated. In a further audiovisual display, we see Goebbels vowing in a 1936 speech to remove Jews from German cultural life. One particularly powerful document is a small handbill, in which an inhabitant of the Lodz ghetto offers to 'write your letters, postcards, petitions in German, quickly and cheaply' ('Ich schreibe Ihre Briefe, Postkarten, Bittschriften in deutscher Sprache schnell und billig'). Any correspondence sent out of the ghettos had to be written in German for censorship purposes, although much of the post was never delivered. The Holocaust Exhibition was the first in which we explicitly addressed the issue of language, showing how it could be a matter of life and death. In an audio presentation, a number of survivors talk about how important it was to understand

German, the official language of the concentration camps, to avoid a beating or worse. And, as the survivors attest, the camps evolved their own prisoner slang – much of it derived from German and Austrian criminals in the pre-war camp system.[2] We give a listing of twenty-five words, with translation and provenance. At Mauthausen, *Hackfleisch* or minced meat was the word universally used for a badly-beaten prisoner. At the same camp, the clubs used to beat prisoners were called *Dolmetscher* or translators, because they were used by the guards to convey orders. And we show how the Nazis twisted German to create a perverse language of deception, using words such as *Umsiedlung* ('Resettlement') and *Endlösung* ('Final Solution') to refer to the deportation and ultimately the genocide of Europe's Jews. Within the limitations of exhibition technology as it stood ten years ago, the subject of language therefore became one of the many threads of the exhibition. It would open our eyes to the possibilities offered by collaboration on the *Languages at War* project.

Another project, *Their Past Your Future (*TPYF), would further open up the Museum's understanding of itself, its subject, its collections and the possibilities inherent in the study of languages, cultural confrontation and dialogue. Its director, Sam Heywood, would become the driving force in establishing our partnership with *Languages at War*. TPYF, which began in 2004, was an extraordinary learning project. It pioneered an entirely new approach to intergenerational, immersive learning which took young people out of their customary, familiar learning environment and offered them fresh, dynamic and 'foreign' approaches to history. One of TPYF's key elements was the commemorative visits on which we took school students to historic sites across the world, to France, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Germany and even as far as Thailand and Japan. Students would look at historical events and British involvement in those events through the prism of foreign cultures and sites of memory. Before and during each visit, the students would examine relevant areas of the Museum's collections and speak with those who had taken part in or witnessed the events we were to investigate. In the case of Japan, the students met, for example, a British former prisoner of the Japanese, a member of the Japanese 'Gestapo', the *Kempeitai*, and a man injured by the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. At each historic site, museum or memorial, we would together draw out its significance and meaning and look at wider questions of memory and identity, culture and language. We asked questions of the students which we could not always answer. One of the areas we explored on a visit to Hiroshima was whether or not the dropping of the atomic bombs might actually have saved lives, both Allied and Japanese, by preventing the potentially enormous casualties on both sides that an invasion of the Japanese home islands might have caused. This was not an easy subject to tackle when surrounded by highly emotive evidence of the destruction and suffering wrought by the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

Languages at War was, then, a natural progression for the IWM. The IWM's association with the project goes back to early 2007, when Sam Heywood and I gave, at the invitation of Professor Hilary Foottitt, short papers at the University of Reading for an informal workshop. That initial contact was the spark, and since then the project, formally established in May 2008, has gone from strength to strength under the stewardship of Hilary and Professor Mike Kelly of the University of Southampton. The real value of *Languages at War* has been to get us to ask questions of ourselves as museum professionals, to look afresh at what stories our collections can tells us and to interpret them for our audiences. We will use what we have learned to inform *Regeneration: IWM London*, the most important milestone in the history of the Museum since it first opened to the public in 1920. The first stage of *Regeneration* will involve the opening of new First World War galleries in 2014. This will be an opportunity to completely re-examine and redirect our historical approaches to a conflict which, for British people particularly, is subject to more mythology and misconception than any other. We will look beyond the standard, Anglocentric interpretation, which is confined to Britain's role on the Western Front, 'Lions Led by Donkeys', mud, poetry and poppies. We will create a new framework for understanding the First World War, looking at the conflict from different perspectives, something *Languages at War* has given us the confidence to do. The First World War was above all a clash of nations and the cultures through which they defined and expressed themselves. The burning of the university library at Louvain in August 1914 was a deliberate act of cultural destruction. We can explore surprising stories with our visitors and show what happened when hostile cultures met and entered a dialogue. The 1914 Christmas Truce will be well known to many visitors, but how many will be aware that certain sectors of the line on the Western Front were 'quiet' because an unofficial 'Live and Let Live' system was arranged and maintained through regular communication by the men in the trenches on both sides? What was the human experience of prisoners of war, of occupation? How did British troops mix with French civilians? What was the experience of Indian troops on the Western Front? Why did orders for the Austro-Hungarian army at the 1914–15 siege of Przemysl have to be issued in fifteen languages? *Languages at War* has affirmed for us that 'languages' do not just mean mere grammar and vocabulary – they mean dialogue, exchange, often confrontation, subjects which our visitors find fascinating and which our collections can support and deliver powerfully. And today we have mobile and digital technology which our predecessors at the Museum lacked. Our visitors come for a unique experience. We want them to leave with new perspectives.

Languages at War has placed firmly on the IWM's agenda new ways of exploring and thinking its collections from new perspectives. It has added to our collections, it has added new interpretations to our collections and it has made us think about how we work towards our gallery redevelopment.

The chapters in this book, as well as the papers given at *Languages at War* workshops, show just how rich and valuable a seam of research we have been engaged in. The *Languages at War* network will ensure that we continue to explore and exploit the IWM's collections and that partners will continue to share research and ideas. *Languages at War* has been groundbreaking for the Imperial War Museum. It has show that collaboration between the IWM and academic institutions can work in a highly effective manner. Each partner has shared knowledge, skills and experience which has benefited the others. And, ultimately, the IWM's public will benefit as well.

Notes

1. See Baker, this volume.
2. See Mac Giolla Chríost, this volume, on prisoners and language, and Kujamäki, this volume, on German POW camps in Finland.

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Conclusion: Communication, Identity and Representation Through Languages in War

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Traditionally, linguists and philosophers have seen the primary purpose of language as being representation and communication. Language is what enables people to articulate things, ideas and attitudes in an intelligible form and to transmit the results to other people. More recently, linguists have recognized the importance of language in identities. Language enables us to express who we think we are and how we are connected with other people. The three functions of representation, communication and identity are intimately interwoven, and in each case language is the main means by which human beings carry out the crucial tasks of developing their understanding of the world, communicating with each other and negotiating their own place within it (Joseph 2004). When these tasks are undertaken between members of different language communities, the balance between communication, representation and identity becomes both more complex and more critical to the outcomes of interaction.

In situations of conflict, the outcomes of language interactions can be a matter of life and death. Language differences subtend almost every aspect of the military experience. They must be taken into account in the organization of forces to engage in action, they play a key role in the encounter with combatants and non-combatants in the theatre of war, and they are important factors in negotiating the aftermath of conflict. No doubt this has been true since the wars of antiquity, but this volume confirms the truth of it in a variety of conflicts since the eighteenth century.

Very often, the difficulties arising from language differences have been ascribed to the 'fog of war'. As Clausewitz observed:

> War is the province of uncertainty: three fourths of those things upon which action in War must be calculated, are hidden more or less in the clouds of great uncertainty. (von Clausewitz 1968: 140)

Languages are a cloud of this sort, which can to a significant degree be attenuated by adequate preparation and effective measures on the ground.

But the complexity of language functions means that efforts to attenuate the problems that arise must take account not only of communication but also of representation and identity. The chapters in this volume have demonstrated the importance of that complexity in quite different military contexts, from Napoleon's Grande Armée to the conflicts of the early twenty-first century.

The volume deals with three main stages of conflict, each of which is dominated by a different function. The stage of preparing and organizing military forces is dominated by concerns for communication, enabling contingents to liaise with one another and equipping at least some personnel as specialist linguists. The stage of engagement, with combatants and civilian populations on the ground, is dominated by issues of identity, establishing working relationships within and between groups speaking different languages. And the post-conflict stage is dominated by representation, trying to remember and understand what has happened and to mediate understandings to others.

Communication within armies

It is by no means a new phenomenon that armies deployed in conflict are composed of different ethnic and linguistic groups. Christopher Tozzi points out the extraordinary linguistic diversity of the French armies of the eighteenth century. The French troops themselves spoke many local dialects and several foreign languages that had little in common with French, including German, Italian, Catalan, Flemish and Breton. Added to that were the large numbers of foreigners enlisted in the French army, whether in designated foreign regiments, which made up one-fifth of the army, or scattered through other regiments. The Jacobins' attempts to impose linguistic and ethnic homogeneity on the army proved largely fruitless in practice, and Napoleon subsequently took a more pragmatic approach to language, justified by the fact that his Grande Armée was only 52 per cent French by nationality. Sylvie Kleinman offers some key insights into how this worked out in practice in the case of the Irish contingents fighting with the French at this period.

Even where national armies are less diverse, it has been a common experience that they are deployed alongside other forces and required to communicate with them. Franziska Heimburger outlines the experience of Franco-British cooperation during the First World War, where dealing with this language pair was well within the capacity of the forces on both sides, at least at officer level. By contrast, Pekka Kujamäki's study of German–Finnish cooperation during the Second World War highlights the great difficulties in meeting the needs of communication between the two languages concerned. There are many other historical examples, including recent multinational actions from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Libya, in which coalitions of

forces from different countries have acted together. These cases confirm Justin Lewis's contention that 'each instance is unique'. Each conflict has its own specific requirements for language preparation and poses different issues for military planners.

The key asset in managing linguistically diverse forces is undoubtedly the availability of multilingual personnel, particularly at officer level. A limited knowledge of a foreign language may be a good start, but it will probably require hard work, as Wolfe Tone found out, to raise the individual's competence to the level needed to carry out the job. It may be easier to locate people with a basic knowledge of a language pair such as French and English, but in the contemporary period the range of language pairs required is more difficult to provide and may be entirely unpredictable. The approach of the UK's Defence Operational Language Support Unit recognizes the need to motivate and incentivize potential military linguists and to provide significant training opportunities, at least in those languages for which there is an identified current requirement.

The role of military linguists clearly diverges from the model of the professional civilian translator or interpreter, which carries duties of neutrality in managing communications between languages. On the contrary, the military linguist has a characteristically broad remit, in which language mediation may be an intermittent part. On the one hand, they have military obligations, which may often be more important than their language duties, and on the other hand, their linguistic obligations include a duty to further the aims of the military unit in which they are serving. At one end of this spectrum are the polyglot officers in Napoleon's Grande Armée, who needed their language skills to maintain discipline and to pass on orders in a way that was understood by their troops. At the other end of the spectrum are enterprising individuals such as Wolfe Tone and Joseph Stock, who carved out roles for themselves as fixers, facilitators and cultural consultants working between units of different languages.

In the middle of the spectrum of roles lie liaison officers and military interpreters. They include people like the Finnish officers working with German forces in Northern Finland to ensure adequate communications between two armies and at the same time working to protect the local populations from misunderstandings. They also include the military interpreters whom Lewis describes as the 'cousins' of civilian interpreters. In these cases, language mediation is a central part of their job, but it is integrated into a wider role of mediation and liaison, both between forces and with civilian populations.

It is a recurrent constraint that all but the most multilingual forces struggle to achieve sufficient capacity for adequate communication between forces of different nationalities. But just as constraining is the need for expertise in discovering what opposing forces are thinking and doing. Whether it is a matter of understanding documents and transmissions or

whether it involves engaging individuals in interviews and interrogations, language expertise is a fundamental requirement. As a result, armies cannot dispense with the services of civilians. They may be locally-recruited civilians such as Bishop Stock of Killalla, who gained 'full employment as an interpreter' with General Humbert during the Year of the French, 1798. They may be exiles like Nicholas Madgett, who served the French Minister for External Relations effectively. Or they could even be bilingual prisoners of war, such as were used in Finland. In more recent conflicts, the use of civilians has become a recognized necessity, systematized as Lewis describes into 'contractors', engaged from outside the conflict zone to provide language services for the military, and 'locally-employed civilians', recruited on the ground *ad hoc* to assist forces in the conflict zone.

Language capacity is therefore fundamental to ensuring adequate communication in conflict. It is crucial to liaison between the forces engaged in conflict and to intelligence about the conditions they face. In this sense, language is one of the sinews of war, a key communication service required to sustain armed forces in active engagement. Reflecting on the cases discussed in this volume, it is clear that the communicative role of language is inseparable from two other dimensions of language: identity and representation. The military and civilian linguists bring with them a portfolio of loyalties and attachments as well as distinct ways of seeing the world. Both of these dimensions inflect communication, adding further levels of meaning and reshaping meanings in the process of transmission. These dimensions will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

In the meantime, reflecting on the communicative roles that are carried out by linguists, it is clear that dispelling the linguistic fog of war requires many different solutions. Often enough, commanders seize at whatever resources they can find, which may include the skills of their military personnel or the expertise of local people, whether it be the bishop or prisoners of war. Where the solutions have been effectively addressed by military planners, commanders are better equipped but must still reckon with the impossibility of foreseeing all the eventualities.

Meeting 'the Other'

Philosophers have long known that language is the 'root of humanity', drawing isolated individuals out of themselves and linking them with other people (Peters 1997). The corollary of this is that language is the fundamental mode of encounter with 'the Other'. What is true of individuals within their home language community is all the more true of different groups coming into contact with one another. The lack of a shared language is often the first point of encounter, and language becomes the mark of the Other. In this way, the otherness of language is a fundamental dimension of encounters in conflict. Meetings with combatants or civilians in the theatre

of conflict are marked by a language difference which not only hampers communication but also highlights the different identities of the participants. Confronted by the mark of the Other, participants in a conflict may choose to accentuate the language difference or seek ways of attenuating it. In either case, their choices are an integral part of the relationships they establish, whether hostile, friendly or neutral.

At the hostile end of this spectrum, language can be used as a weapon. Petra Svoljšak, for example, shows how language was used as a tool by the Italian forces occupying Slovenia in 1915. As well as imposing Italian as the official language for administration and education, they gave Italian names to Slovenian people and places. This was the basis of a long term strategy of Italianization, much as Brian Friel showed the colonizing English troops renaming rural Ireland in his play *Translations* (Friel 1981). Conversely, Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost shows how Irish Republican prisoners used the Irish language as a tool for resistance against the British authorities from the early 1970s. Their unique form of Gaelic, dubbed 'Jailic', not only created a distinct sociolinguistic enclave but also had longer term implications for the development of the Irish language.

At the 'friendly' end of the spectrum of language contact, language can play a role in facilitating relationships and in making peace. Simona Tobia outlines the crucial importance of competent linguists in dealings with the large numbers of refugees and displaced persons during the Second World War, many of whom had valuable information to share. Catherine Baker points to the importance of local interpreters in creating productive relations between the NATO forces and the local population in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1990s.

However, even where the aim of language contact is mutually beneficial, there remains a constant ambiguity in the role of the linguist. María Manuela Fernández Sánchez shows this in the case of interpreters in the negotiations which brought an end to the Korean War, where contradictory demands and requirements were put on them. It is an intrinsic part of what Michael Cronin (2002: 52) calls the 'material history of interpreting' that those involved have multiple roles and hybrid identities and as a result may have conflicting personal feelings about their roles.

In many cases, the ambiguous position of interpreters may place them at personal risk. Linda Fitchett points out that in recent conflicts like Iraq and Afghanistan, locally-employed interpreters have been exposed to danger on a daily basis, and have no guaranteed personal or professional future at the end of the conflict. Often regarded as traitors by their own communities, they are dependent on the uncertain gratitude of their foreign employer, who in turn may regard them with a degree of suspicion. In calling for a neutral, professional status, Fitchett also recognizes that for the foreseeable future such interpreters and 'fixers' will need better protection by their employers.

The lesson to be drawn is that language is never just a neutral vector for communication but is always embodied, and it mobilizes identities, which are often complex. Some sense of this complexity may be gained by locating linguists within Roman Jakobson's classic model of the six functions of language (Jakobson 1960). According to Jakobson, every communication has a context, a sender, a receiver, a channel of contact, a common code and a message. At the simplest level, an interpreter or translator serves as a key point in the channel of communication, ensuring that the message is successfully transmitted. However, they are also an intermediary by whom the message is first received and then re-sent, placing them in the position of an implicit receiver and sender themselves. They are certainly a part of the context of communication, whether visible or not, and they are custodians of at least two distinct codes in the form of the pair of languages with which they are working. Finally, they control the message. If they are neutral, they will strive to achieve fidelity between the message sent and the message finally delivered, but in other cases they may reshape the message according to their own judgement. In summary, the linguist is present in every dimension of language activity, weaving her or his own identity into every aspect of communication.

Mediating and remembering

When conflicts have ended, languages continue to play a role in the area of representation, affecting the cognitive and emotional capability of people to mediate and remember events in the post-conflict world. Every language is a code, and every code brings with it a particular way of representing meaning. It is not necessary to be a radical advocate of the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis to agree that 'an intellectual system embodied in each language shapes the thought of its speakers' (Kay and Kempton 1984: 66). The fact that language contributes to structuring the way people understand the world means that language plays a large role in the way conflicts are subsequently represented and remembered. It also means that the role of language itself becomes an issue in the post-conflict world.

In this perspective, language learning may play an important part in rebuilding societies and relationships. A clear case in point is discussed by Peter Hare and Nicholas Fletcher, who outline the British Council's Peacekeeping English Project, which has been designed to support mediation and peace building in the aftermath of conflict situations. Using case studies from Mongolia, Ethiopia and Afghanistan, they show that language learning improves the ability of different forces to communicate and work together in peace support operations. They also argue that language projects of this type might help to defuse global conflict and tension.

Conflicts leave their mark on the way particular languages are regarded. Constadina Charalambous demonstrates this vividly through recent

initiatives in Cyprus to teach Turkish to Greek-speaking students. The conflicts on that island and their long-running aftermath make these initiatives potentially important in contributing to intercultural understanding and mediation. But teachers of Turkish are challenged by prevailing negative stereotypes, and their students have frequently been called traitors for choosing to learn Turkish. In a more encouraging perspective, Louise Askew reports on a post-war move away from the linguistic antagonisms of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is popularly supposed that the language of Serbo-Croat is now effectively dead, replaced by the three official languages of the post-war state: Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian. However, she finds evidence that, far from being dead in the post-conflict period, Serbo-Croat still continues to retain real meaning for many members of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

James Taylor suggests that traditionally the role of foreign languages in war has largely been invisible to the general public who visit museums and exhibitions concerned with conflict. Speaking on behalf of the Imperial War Museum, he examines the context in which the foreignness of war could be expressed and explores the development of the Museum's approach to this 'unsayable' of war through its more recent activities like the Holocaust exhibition and the 'Their Past Your Future' project. He suggests that the *Languages at War* project has brought to the Museum a stronger awareness of foreign languages, which may enable the previously 'unsayable' to be made both visible and audible.

Three dimensions of languages in conflict

All conflicts, like all other human activities, are fundamentally conducted in and through language. In most cases, conflict involves interactions between groups with different language backgrounds. This volume has examined a wide variety of cases where the contact between languages has had a significant impact on the way in which conflict and its aftermath have been conducted. The impact is felt in three key dimensions of language: its function of enabling or impeding communication, its function of conveying and negotiating social identities, and its function of shaping the way people represent the world to themselves and to each other, including the way they think about language itself.

Each of the three dimensions appears to dominate in different phases of conflict, although in reality they are interwoven in practical day-to-day experience. The preparation and organization of conflict requires particular attention to communication. However, it is evident that organization must also take account of the identities of different participants in a single army or coalition of forces and is structured by particular understandings that are integral to particular languages. The conduct of conflict on the ground requires close attention to the identities expressed in language. But it is

also clear that communication and shared cognitive frameworks are major requirements of operations. And, similarly, the aftermath of war is dominated by the need to represent conflicts through language and to reflect on how language structures an understanding of conflicts. However, the post-conflict world also requires effective communication and a grasp of the identities embedded in language.

As the essays in this volume suggest, a focus on languages is a relatively new way of looking at conflicts. No doubt the increasingly multilingual nature of society and therefore of military forces has served to exert a pressure on the military to address this issue. But it is clear from many cases studied that the issues are long-standing, and they are only now being brought to the attention of scholars. It may be hoped that the studies presented here will both provide insights into the role of languages in conflict and also encourage scholars to examine other conflicts in the perspective of the linguistic issues involved. The editors also hope that the insights provided by contributors to this volume will help military planners, civilian agencies, museums and the media to understand the complex linguistic dimensions of conflict and peace operations.

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