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Talk Up Front

The Influence of Language Matters
on International Military Missions with a Particular Focus on
the Cooperation between Soldiers and Interpreters

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Talk Up Front

*The Influence of Language Matters
on International Military Missions with a Particular Focus on
the Cooperation between Soldiers and Interpreters*

Proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan Tilburg University
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To those who bond by word and beyond.

Every Kinda People

Said the fight to make ends meet
Keeps a man upon his feet
Holding down his job
Trying to show he can't be bought

It takes every kinda people
To make what life's about
Every kind of people
To make the world go 'round

Someone's looking for a lead
In his duty to a King or to a creed
Protecting what he feels is right
Fights against wrong with his life

There is no profit in deceit
Honest men know that
Revenge does not taste sweet
Whether yellow, black or white
Each and every man's the same inside

It takes every kinda people
To make what life's about
It takes every kind of people
To make the world go 'round

You know that love's the only goal
That could bring a peace to any soul
Hey, and every man's the same
He wants the sunshine in his name

It takes every kinda people
To make what life's about
It takes every kind of people
To make the world go 'round

Lyrics: Andy Fraser

Artist: Robert Palmer

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Introduction

Introduction

Introduction: Language and the Military

Language is fundamental to all social interaction. Even more so in the case of military operations in which efficient communication could mean the difference between life and death. History is rife with examples that demonstrate the importance of language for effective military cooperation. From ancient times to this very day multilingual armies have been part of war. Especially before the rise of modern nation-states polyglot armies were a widespread phenomenon. Empires, city-states and other political entities relied upon soldiers from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds to protect their interests and fight their enemies. The armed forces of France's *Ancien* régime, for instance, consisted of, among others, Danish, Dutch, German, Hungarian, Italian, Irish, Polish, Swedish, and Swiss troops which all had their own customs and spoke their own language. Similarly, French recruits who originated from different parts of the country spoke dialects that often were unintelligible for those who were not familiar with these vernaculars. In this particular multilingual context military leaders not only continuously needed to find ways to communicate with their troops, they also needed to discuss the battle plan with commanders who were often foreigners as well. Consequently, the French army was always in search of '*ad hoc* strategies' to overcome the language barrier (Tozzi, 2012, 12-16).

With the emergence of national armies, soldiers became unified by their state's official mother tongue(s). Multilingual states tried to prevent miscommunication by categorizing their troops on grounds of shared language. The language barrier, therefore, no longer hampered communication between commanders and their troops to the extent it did in the past. Yet, new challenges arose as armed forces of various countries increasingly started to work together in multinational alliances and coalitions. Now, the language gap between partners needed to be addressed. This was, for instance, experienced by the French-British (and later also American) alliance in the First World War (Heimburger, 2012). After the Second World War – which of course was won by another coalition – more permanent structures for multinational military cooperation were established. The UN and NATO became the most prominent organizations for humanitarian intervention and collective security. Today, many countries no longer are capable of conducting large operations on their own (Soeters & Manigart, 2008, 1-3). It is, therefore, of crucial importance to deal with language matters in international military cooperation.

The internationalization of military operations also increased the amount of foreign missions. During such deployments, soldiers came to realize that it was unsustainable to 'ignore' the languages of the local population (Kujamäki & Footitt, 2012, 120 -121). Throughout history armed forces had to deal with the peoples living in their area of operations. In case of linguistic differences, militaries, therefore, have relied on individuals whose skills enabled

them to mediate between soldiers and local parties (including the enemy). Here is where the interpreter entered the theatre of war. Whereas interpreters since of old have assisted armies, military organizations nowadays deploy these agents on an unprecedented scale. In Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance, thousands of civilians were recruited to work as linguists for foreign forces (Fitchett, 2019, 194). As will be explained below, many of today's missions are simply impossible without interpreters who not only act as '(..) language experts in the communication process between the foreign military and their compatriots', but also '(...) as cultural, diplomatic and political mediators' (Bos & Soeters, 2006, 266). The interpreters's skills therefore are indispensable for '(...) working and talking with foreign military troops, police officers, government officials, and indigenous members of the population' (Hajjar, 2017, 93). The importance of these agents, in fact, most probably will only increase even further in the future. Despite rapid developments in machine translation, human interpretation remains vital to grasp the nuance in sensitive situations of (violent) contention (Fitchett, 2019, 201-202). It is more than likely that technology might provide 'ever more accurate translations' and deliver new tools to complement the military's linguistic capabilities (Kelly, 2019a, 484). These innovations, however, will never replace the interpreter as an intermediate between parties. Like war itself, interpreting is and will remain a human and social activity.

Language, undeniably, is crucial to the military. In addition to the need to overcome the language barrier within the own organization or international coalition, there is also the need to interact with local parties. Language management, therefore, should be an inherent part of governing the military organization. The formulation of language policy, however, is a time-consuming process which is further complicated by the fluidity of linguistic demands (Jones & Askew, 2014, 202-203). The need for language support, after all, heavily depends on the area of operations and consequently varies for each specific deployment. This explains why language policy does not primarily focus on operational practices, but rather concentrates on communication within national armies or between member states of international organizations (Kelly, 2019b, 92-94; Jones & Askew, 2014, 1-6). Since its establishment in 1949, NATO, for instance, has developed an extensive guidance to standardize English as its 'language of interoperability' in order to guarantee effective communication in various international headquarters. A similar formal policy with regard to operations, however, only emerged in 2011 when a first doctrine on *Linguistic Support For Operations* was promulgated (Jones & Askew, 2014, 201-203; NATO, 2011).

NATO's adoption of language policy for operational practice fits in a wider global trend that is brought forth by the nature of modern military operations. Traditionally, Western armies are trained and equipped to fight similarly organized militaries of opposing states (Kitzen, 2020, 2-3). In modern warfare, however, such direct conflicts between states are an exception. Even in this time of renewed global power competition, most fighting takes place against irregular armed groups that thrive in instable countries in which they seek to establish their authority. Moreover, such actors have become ever more capable of exerting influence on the regional or global level. Addressing this threat requires the enhancement of

stability in affected nations which typically is accomplished through military interventions by an international coalition. Current examples include UN missions in Mali and Congo and NATO missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. For that reason, peace (support) and stability operations fulfill a predominant role in the spectrum of modern military operations. Precisely because such endeavors mostly seek to stabilize war-torn countries, it is crucial for soldiers to establish ties with local parties (Bollen & Rietjens, 2008, 1-2; Bollen & Soeters, 2010, 174-176; Van der Meulen, Beeres, Soeters & Vogelaar, 2012, 11-12). As mentioned above, this confronts military organizations with a twofold challenge with regard to language management. First, the organization has to deal with language issues between the various national contingents of an international coalition. Secondly, the soldiers have to overcome the language barrier between themselves and local parties. This study therefore specifically focuses on peace (support) and stability as the most relevant forms of modern, international military operations. In the event of these operations, circumstances can be such that 'talking is more important than shooting' (Bos & Soeters, 2006, 261). Therefore, language today matters even more than in traditional warfare.

Research design

The developments in military interventions during the past two decades have demonstrated that soldiers who deployed to foreign mission areas '(...) came up against the kinds of issues traditionally raised by scholars in modern languages, cultural studies and translation/interpreting studies, questions relating to identity, agency, inter-cultural communication and transnationalism' (Kelly, Footitt & Salama-Carr, 2019, 4). Given that lived reality, language became an irrefutable factor or even force in modern warfare. Whereas studies in language and conflict traditionally was the field of humanities, the linguistic facets of war in recent years have drawn the attention of a wide array of scholars from different disciplines. This growing body of interdisciplinary research combines insights from humanities and social sciences and thereby 'provides a particularly helpful context for scholars to engage with issues of language and conflict as sites of inquiry (...) which will allow for synchronic and diachronic research on the role played by language and language mediators in situations of conflict and beyond' (Kelly, Footitt & Salama-Carr, 2019, 6). Therefore, while this study predominantly adopts a sociological perspective to investigate how language matters influence the military organization and stakeholders in conflict-infested mission areas, it also incorporates insights that have been yielded by this interdisciplinary approach.

Today's military missions are highly internationalized organizational efforts that often take place in non-Western countries. Soldiers, therefore, need to collaborate with various national contingents of a coalition as well as local partners. As mentioned before, the language barrier affects both these forms of international military cooperation. For instance, even NATO with its highly standardized use of English has found that non-native

speakers are not always able to meet the required level of the official military lingua franca which prevents them from collaborating with others and carrying out their duties properly (Jones & Askew, 2014, 35-36). Communication with local stakeholders, moreover, is even more complicated because this often requires knowledge of local vernaculars. A failure to effectively adapt to this reality seriously affects the military's ability to engage and cooperate with the local population. To provide insight into the impact of these issues, this study first adopts a macro/meso-sociological approach to analyze respectively the manifestation of language problems in military operations, the implications of language (in)competence on multinational military cooperation, and the influence of the language barrier between soldiers and the local population on modern missions.

Secondly, the study also applies a micro-sociological analysis to investigate the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters during the conduct of operations. This particular focus is a result of the nature of modern military operations as well as the complexity of this specific working relationship. These missions, after all, to a higher or lesser degree involve 'winning the hearts and minds' of the local population. Soldiers, therefore, depend on the socio-linguistic and cultural skills of the interpreter to get their message across. While interpreters are crucial to the success of the mission, they not always receive full recognition for their role and position (Bos & Soeters, 2006; Ruiz Rosendo & Persaud, 201; Fitchett, 2019; Gallai, 2019). As a consequence, interpreters remain relative outsiders to the military organization. This paradox renders the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters one of the most complicated factors in the daily conduct of military operations that '(...) until recently has been a 'missing dimension' of the study of conflict' (Kleinman, 2012, 26). The micro-sociological investigation therefore seeks to understand how soldiers perceive the interpersonal dynamics of working with interpreters and how the interpreters themselves perceive their role and position in a conflict situation. Furthermore, this part of the study aims to comprehend the mechanisms of this cooperation and how the involved parties deal with the inherent intricacies.

All together, these macro/meso-sociological and micro-sociological angles serve to enhance the research's main goal to understand the influence of language matters on international military cooperation. In order to address these objectives, the framework of this study consists of a central question which in turn is specified into six research questions as depicted in the figure below.

Research Questions

Central Question: How do language issues affect military operations, and how in particular do soldiers and interpreters cooperate in mission areas to overcome such issues?

macro/meso-sociological

Q1: How do language problems manifest themselves during military operations?
Q2: What are the implications of language (in)competence on communication between soldiers in multinational military organizations?
Q3: How does the language barrier between soldiers and local population influence the complexity of modern peace operations?

micro-sociological

Q4: How do soldiers perceive the interpersonal dynamics of working with local interpreters as linguistic and cultural mediators in mission areas?
Q5: How can the role and position of interpreters in military contexts be described by use of interpreters' working experiences in war-infested environments?
Q6: What are the dynamics of cooperation between soldiers and interpreters in military operations and how do involved parties deal with the intricacies of this cooperation?

The six research questions generate independent but interrelated studies which in their entirety answer the central question. The structure of this dissertation, therefore, consists of an introduction, six chapters and a conclusion. The latter not only presents an overview of the main findings, it also discusses broader implications by respectively reflecting upon the study itself, giving suggestions for avenues for further research, and formulating recommendations. This introduction describes the research problem and explains the research design. The six chapters subsequently each address a specific object by applying a tailored method to answer the respective research question (see the Research Design table below). This study, therefore contains a variation of research objects and methods which provides a framework to deepen the understanding of the influence of the language barrier on international military cooperation. Now that the overall research design is clarified, it is important to briefly expound on the course of each chapter.

The first chapter, *Language Matters in the Military*, adopts a macro/meso-sociological perspective in order to gain insight into the impact of language issues during military operations. The exploration, therefore, focuses on creating an overview of language-related problems and deficiencies in military cooperation and as such provides a further explanation of this dissertation's research subject. For a thorough analysis of these difficulties the chapter relies upon the study of a wide range of organizational, sociological and historical literature. This enables the investigation of relevant experiences as well as the establishment

of a theoretical review of the military setting and organization and the role of language management in this specific context.

The second chapter, *Tough Talk: Clear and Cluttered Communication during Peace Operations*, aims to understand the effect of language (in)competence on cooperation between international soldiers. For this purpose, a macro/meso-sociological analysis of organizational and sociological literature is complemented by participant observation during an exercise of staff officers of (1) GE-NL Corps. The resulting findings demonstrate how the language barrier, when not addressed appropriately, can separate and divide members of an international coalition. Even more important, the analysis also addresses how soldiers can anticipate language issues within military alliances.

The third chapter, *Language and Communication during Peace Support Operations in Timor-Leste*, explores the impact of the language barrier on the complexity of modern operations. Again, a macro/meso-sociological perspective is applied to grasp the experiences of the involved international and local parties in these operations. For this purpose the example of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East-Timor (UNTAET) is analyzed. This specific case not only offers an insight into the complexity of modern operations and the influence of language on organizational effectiveness, it also illustrates how such issues affect overall mission success. The case study makes use of the available body of literature on UNTAET as well as information from experts.

The fourth chapter, *Smooth Translation? Cooperation between Dutch Servicemen and Local Interpreters in Military Operations in Afghanistan*, investigates the cooperation between soldiers and local interpreters from the perspective of the servicemen. This chapter marks the shift from a macro/meso-sociological towards a micro-sociological approach that concentrates on the dynamics of interaction between individuals. The study first explores historical and sociological literature on this matter. These findings have contributed to the formulation of several specific items with regard to soldiers' experiences with local interpreters as part of a quantitative study conducted among Dutch soldiers deployed to the Afghan province of Uruzgan. This chapter not only provides an impression of the role of the interpreter as a language and cultural mediator within the military organization, it also elucidates the intricacies of interpersonal interaction that result from the in-between position of these agents.

The fifth chapter, *A Small Sociology of Interpreters: the Role and Position of Interpreters in Conflict Situations*, uses the perspective of the interpreters themselves to capture their working experiences in circumstances of violent contention. This exploration is conducted through an autoethnographic analysis of narratives from interpreters who operated in different conflict situations. Autoethnography is a qualitative research method which places the personal experiences (*auto*) of an individual within a social and cultural context (*ethno*) and as such offers reflective and critical interpretations (*graphy*) of everyday practices (Gregory, 2000, 326; Chang, 2008, 41; Mischenko, 2005, 206; Panourgia, 2000, 552). The aspects derived from the application of this particular method of analysis provide an accurate description of the role and position of interpreters in war zones. Together these aspects constitute a theoretical framework which enables a further investigation of similar experiences in the specific context of military operations.

The final chapter, *Communicating Vessels? The Trade and Traits of Soldiers and Interpreters during Stability Operations in the Province of Uruzgan*, aims to provide an insight into the dynamics of cooperation between soldiers and interpreters in military operations and how individuals deal with the inherent intricacies of this relationship. By use of the previously introduced theoretical framework, a qualitative case study of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan province (during 2006-2008) is conducted through semi-structured interviews with Dutch soldiers as well as national and local interpreters. Some of these interviews took place during field research in which the researcher resided as a participant observer among the troops in Afghanistan. The findings from this micro-sociological in-depth analysis not only contribute to the understanding of the dynamics and intricacies of this interaction, they also describe how different individuals dealt with the challenges they encountered. This case study moreover also identifies possible paths of solution for more effective cooperation between soldiers and interpreters in future missions.

Ultimately, the combined insights of these six chapters provide the answer to the central question of how language issues affect military operations, and how in particular soldiers and interpreters cooperate in mission areas to overcome such issues. As mentioned before, the conclusion of this dissertation discusses the wider implications of these findings and thereby it hopes to contribute to both the field's body of knowledge and the military organization's ability to effectively overcome the language barrier during operations.

Research Design

Chapter/ Question	Approach	Aim	Object	Methodology
1	Macro/meso-sociological	Insight into the impact of language issues during military operations	- Historical/contemporary experiences - Organizational/sociological literature	- Literature study
2	Macro/meso-sociological	Understanding the effect of language (in)competence on cooperation between international soldiers	- Organizational/ sociological literature - Staff officers of (1) GE-NL Corps	- Literature study - Participant observation
3	Macro/meso-sociological	Insight into how the language barrier influences the complexity of modern operations	- Literature on UNTAET - Experts on UNTAET	- Case study - Literature study
4	Micro-sociological	Understanding soldiers' perspective on cooperation with local interpreters	- Historical/ sociological literature - Dutch soldiers deployed to Uruzgan	- Literature study - Case study - Survey
5	Micro-sociological	Understanding interpreters' perception of working in a conflict environment	- Historical/ sociological literature - Experiences of interpreters in war-infested areas	- Autoethnography - Literature study
6	Micro-sociological	Insight into the dynamics of cooperation between soldiers and interpreters and the way individuals deal with the inherent intricacies	- Local and national interpreters deployed to Uruzgan - Dutch soldiers deployed to Uruzgan - Sociological and language studies literature	- Case study - Participant observation - Semi-structured interviews - Literature study

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Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Language Matters in the Military

Andrea van Dijk & Joseph L. Soeters
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1. Introduction

Words imply action. Communication becomes of exigent importance in the international military field where the results of life-threatening peace-support operations depend on messages that must be understood 'loud and clear' before action can be undertaken (Crossey, 2005, 35f). Precisely because of its importance, communication can be described as the military's aorta as it keeps the 'heart' of the military organization vital. And in line with this analogy, language can be categorized as the proverbial oxygen that makes communication possible. It is the key element with which all talk, whether small or big, trivial or profound, begins and ends. Yet, it is this natural commodity which is often overseen or neglected in situations where it is most needed. The words of Lydia Sicher, a psychiatrist and physician who volunteered for the Austrian army during World War I, reflect the tenor of this article when she stated that 'As long as we can talk with people, as long as we can keep the guns quiet, one has a chance.[1]'

Especially in today's peace support operations wherein talking is often more important than shooting, Sicher's adage strikes a chord with the contemporary need to address the linguistic challenges that are inherent to military operations which often cover linguistically diverse national continents. A telling history in this regard is the compelling memoirs of former UN leader General Roméo Dallaire (2004) *'Shake Hands with the Devil'*. This autobiography offers not only a gruesome inside perspective on the Rwandan tragedy, it also is illustrative of how language incompetence can debilitate and undermine the communication between various military and governmental parties. As more often is the case, the ethnic conflict which at the time was infesting the Francophone country had a linguistic component to it (Laitin, 2000, 531-533).

The Tutsi population in that country had many years before sought refuge in the neighboring Anglophone country of Uganda in 1962 after the Hutu's had installed a Hutu-dominated government. In 1991, when the first signs of the civil war were at hand, a constant stream of belligerent Tutsi men whom had organized themselves in the military movement of the Rwandese Patriotic Front, returned to their motherland 'to restore' their political power. Consequently, the political and military context of Dallaire's peacekeeping operation was characterized by warring parties who each adhered to their own distinct language of French, English or vernacular. This linguistic limbo was compounded by Dallaire's 'ad hoc, multi-ethnic, and multilingual force' of Belgian, French, Tunisian, Ghanaian and Bangladeshi contingents of which the latter did not command nor understood French, English or Kinyarwanda (Dallaire, 2004, 120-176). Being a bilingual himself and surrounded with multilingual coworkers, Dallaire, however, was able to circumvent the 'language barrier' many a time, but his report equally resonates his frustration in situations wherein a lack of linguistic proficiency threatened to thwart peace negotiations.

The memoirs of Dallaire's traumatic experiences in Rwanda is exemplary for the fact that a proficiency of the English language, the proclaimed international military lingua franca,

is insufficient for facing the socio-linguistic challenges of an environment dominated by a multitude of vernaculars. In line with this premise, this article seeks to explore the environments of both multinational and military organizations which through their quality of international cooperation are forced to confront the language barrier. As such this article intends to contribute to the general development of a scientific perspective on the effect of language on international military communication.

Through an illustration of historical military events, this article first describes the various ways in which language and the lack of linguistic proficiency can complicate the execution of instructions and commands as well as undermine peace negotiations. Secondly, it gives an explanation of the term language management by transposing the concept from the field of international management to the military context. Thirdly, this article will explore some of the specific environments in which the interventions of interpreters vis-à-vis military officers and the local population take place. Finally, the article will render a preview on the development of future research methods and instruments to investigate the influence of language management on today's military peace operations. But, first, we will begin with two illustrations of military history.

2. Two Historical Military Cases

European military history has taught that commands at times tend to fall on deaf ears because soldiers do not master the language in which the instructions are communicated. Linguistic problems also arise when soldiers are unfamiliar with the vernaculars belonging to the expeditionary environment and for that reason fail to understand both the gravity of what has been said as well as the meaning and implications of the situation at hand. Consequences of such confusing linguistic situations can be illustrated by the language conflict within the Belgian Army during the turn and second half of the twentieth century, and the linguistic jungle of the colonial East-Indies, the war zone of the Dutch Colonial Army during the period 1815-1949.

2.1 *En Garde:* A Flemish-French Military Linguistic Liaison under Fire

The origins of the Belgian language conflict can be situated around the year 1830, when the governmental bodies of the Belgian provinces separated themselves from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and its regents not short thereafter decided to promulgate the introduction of a monolingual, Francophone army (De Vos & Coenen, 1988a, 90). The motivation for the promulgation was manifold. Besides a strong aversion against the Dutch language, the language of the former Kingdom, the rationale was also based on the far more ancient and common public principle to install one language for the military administration

and national army. The thought behind this monolingual policy consisted of the strong conviction that two or more languages would tear up and weaken the sovereignty of the country. The ancient rule, however, suited the political times rather perfectly. The French language after all was the language most spoken by the elite. Consequently, the adage was shared by a minority and not the majority of the population. It was the French speaking elite, the moneyed class who supported if not embraced this new rule. The rest of the people, that is the Flemish, just seemed to acquiesce in what they had known to be true for donkey's years: laborers, whether a factory worker or a farm hand, communicated in their mother tongue while their superiors expressed themselves in French (De Vos & Coenen, 1988a, 91, 145).

Social stratification in other words not only categorized the Belgian society along the line of profession and descent, the higher rungs of the social ladder also demarcated an all telling 'language barrier' that explained people their social position by the utterance of just one word. Although the social structure of society thus clearly and conveniently organized society by the dividing line of linguistics, the language policy nevertheless stumbled upon an increasing resistance from the majority of the Flemish speaking population. The Zeitgeist had jolted the latter awake, all the more because Germany's display of power in Europe portended the eve of an international war. With the organization of the national army and the monolingual language policy in effect, the Belgian administration seemed to be in control of the impending danger. At this stage, the national government, however, could not foresee that Germany was not their only enemy and that along with the escalation of World War I yet another conflict of a totally different kind was about to burst within the ranks of the national army itself. This happened when Flemish soldiers demanded the formation of separate, linguistic regiments, thereby shifting the scene of action towards the political arena of language dominance (De Vos & Coenen, 1988c, 198-202).

Expecting an impending war, the Belgian government was pushed to form a strong army and started to recruit its men among the Flemish who soon formed more than half of the soldiers under the command of French speaking officers. And although the total number of Flemish soldiers in reality did not live up to the 'eighty percent myth', which believed to held true that eighty percent of the population of the Belgian army consisted of Flemish speaking soldiers, the Flemish nevertheless numerically formed the majority of the most dangerous military divisions (De Vos & Coenen, 1988b, 141-145). Their lack of educational and linguistic capacities destined the Flemish to end up fighting at the frontlines. This situation soon resulted in a disproportionate number of casualties among the Flemish infantrymen. Hidden behind a failing language policy and illiteracy and manifesting itself as an unrelenting and loyal 'comrade', the language barrier had thus conveniently lodged itself in the Belgian army. There, it could freely exploit the boundaries of language confusion and misunderstanding. When a French speaking colonel for instance discretely and rather carefully told his men to take personal hygiene and prudence in consideration when approaching girls of easy virtue,

his extensive plea for a responsible sexual moral was shortened by a bilingual speaking officer into the less subtle *'Stay clear of dirty lasses'* for the Flemish part of the troops.[2]

That orders and the accompanying translations in other less carefree circumstances could lead to grave consequences can be gathered from testimonies of soldiers who served in the trenches of World War I. In this particular combat situation miscommunication due to a lack of linguistic skills resulted in the complete decimation of platoons, a tragedy of which the only unmistakable translation, the rise in the number of casualties, at long last reached the echelons of a dawdling government (Boijen, 1992, 67). The deferment of the 1913 law which promised to address the grievances of the language struggle within the army had increased feelings of unease and frustration among the soldiers (De Vos & Coenen, 1988c, 199). Tired of fighting a war that left them out in the cold and incited by the fervent criticism of clergymen and intellectuals who accused the government of using the language issue as a national trump card, radical sentiments gradually took hold of the Flemish troops (De Vos & Coenen, 1998c, 216). Preceded by years of administrative scheming and on the eve of yet another world war, the Flemish slogan *'Na ons bloed, nu ons recht'* ('First our blood, now our right') was finally reflected in the hard-won and assailed law of 1938 which promulgated bilingual standards for the education of Belgian military officers (Boijen, 1992, 98, 287f).

2.2 *Kromoblanda*: The Multicolored and Multilingual Composition of the Dutch Colonial Army

Another evocative historical example of the complexities of language within a military environment can be found in the colonial era of the Dutch Indies. As a true colonial power the Netherlands sought to exploit the conquered regions and expand its dominion over the native population. Just like its fellow colonial superpowers Great-Britain, Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal, The Netherlands proceeded according to the principles of imperialism. Unlike the other colonial powers, however, the Dutch colonial authorities paid little heed to the chapter on language and how to implement guidelines for a national language policy (De Swaan ,2001, 86f; Groeneboer, 1997, 9).

Instead of constituting a national language from the very outset, as the other colonizers did, e.g., in central African countries and India, the Dutch colonial governmental bodies throughout the years got caught up in two opposite and alternate linguistic ideas (Groeneboer, 1997, 65f.). On the one hand, there was the school which advocated that one of the indigenous languages of the Archipelago the so called *bahasa pasar* or *bahasa dagang*, a popular and hybrid form of Malay, should become the lingua franca. The other linguistic movement, however, argued that no other language than the Dutch language could bring governmental solace and prosperity to the multifaceted colony (Maier, 1997, 18-45). Both 'parties' could not find a compromise to overcome the linguistic impasse. Despite or perhaps

even precisely because of these failing language concepts, the Archipelago remained to be the heterogeneous and multilingual conglomerate it traditionally was.

The consequences of this lingering language policy did not fail to have its effect on the contingents of the Dutch Colonial Army. Because the military service for the Indian colony was not mandatory, the Dutch Colonial Army depended on volunteers from other European countries and native men to meet the need of combatants (Teitler, 2006, 159-163).[3] This enactment caused the members of the contingents to experience the fatal mechanism of the 'language barrier' personally. Lanzing, relates the experiences of his grandfather who served as a commander in the Archipelago. A transcription of the journal which he kept during his deployment in the recruiting encampment of Malang 1907, recounts: "It was the intention to cram the freshmen in eight to twelve months for the field battalions, where their other military education would be taken care after. But their training was an uphill battle, recruits and instructors couldn't understand each other. Literally. And as a matter of fact that was true for the whole of the army. The official policy was that two languages would be applied within the perimeters of the Dutch Colonial Army: Dutch and Malay. This was a rather unfortunate choice. The officers spoke Dutch, whereas the European non-commissioned officers spoke Dutch or German. Only very few (non-commissioned) European officers could express themselves in Malay, despite the fact that this was an official requirement. The other national languages - Sudanese, Javanese, Timorese, Madurese, to name but a few – were complete unknown to them. The native soldiers communicated with each other in their own vernacular. Even for them Malay was a foreign language and they weren't forced or encouraged to learn Dutch. The Depot Battalions didn't take the composition of the troops in consideration. It could happen that a new detachment of Timorese recruits arrived at the depot and that in the whole of the barracks not even a single staff member could speak their language. The instruction of the recruits then took place through exemplary behaviour and a literal demonstration of actions." (Lanzing, 2005, 139f.)[4]

As a consequence, all sorts of sociolects originated during the colonial period. Dutch soldiers (*Blanda's*) developed their own 'thug-language' to distinguish themselves from the citizenry, and native soldiers (*Kromo's*) created their own brand of Malay with a specific idiom and vocabulary, the so called barrack Malay. This Babylonian confusion of tongues was skirted by the makeshift of the horn player who translated and signalled the military commands by the sound of his instrument. The person of the horn player who perhaps can be best described as the precursor of the present-day interpreter was of eminent importance for the survival of the brigades and therefore held in high regard by his fellow comrades (Lanzing, 2005, 141). But one can understand that despite the ingenuity of this mediation, music alone was not enough to overcome the language barrier. When it came down to establishing their administrative authority, the contingents above all relied on the communication and cooperation with local chiefs (Maier, 1997, 23). Reciprocity was a universal language all could understand; thus out of self-interest and in exchange for village protection, chiefs often not only informed the troops about the whereabouts of the rebellions but also assigned local

guides and interpreters to accompany the soldiers on their patrol. But when the conflict between the partisans and the military erupted, the villagers turned out to be a highly unreliable source of information. Trapped between parties who did not shun the practice of violence, the local citizens often seized the moment by assisting those whom they feared most.[5] The changing war climate moreover required the troops to develop a military strategy which would not only anticipate but also ward off the constant threat of guerrilla attacks. The Dutch contingents turned to irregular operations, a strategy which per definition called for the highly tested support of locals (Lanzing, 2005, 127-138; Anonymous, 1929, 43-51). The teamwork between the military and the locals was thus, to put it mildly, an ambivalent affair as distrust characterized their interdependency.

To add fuel to the flames, the handbook for counter-insurgency, *Voorschrift voor de Politiek-Politionele Taak van het Leger* ('Precepts for the Politico-Policing Task of the Army'), which described the regulations of the police tasks of the military in the Archipelago, warned future soldiers about the muffled and deceptive messages of the local population (De Moor, 2003, 227). In comic strip the soldier learned, in both Dutch and Malay, that one could better take the subtitle, *A Matter of Life and Death (Soal Hidoep Atau Mati)*, to heart if one wanted to return from the jungle alive and in one piece. In suggestive images the figures of the local interpreters and guides were portrayed as malicious and deceitful. The antidote for their serpentine behavior was disarmingly simple: familiarize yourself with the local vernaculars (Anonymous, 1947, 5-12). Despite its simplification and prejudice, the VPTL handbook nevertheless conveyed a lesson, namely an investment in language training, which the (Dutch) military until today has not yet fully grasped.

3. Language Management in the Military

Both of the described cases, which of course are but two out of the broader gamut of European history, show that language is an ambivalent tool because an inadequate use of language can thwart the efficacy of the military organization, while language capability conversely can engender opportunity and progression. These consequences of language (in-)competence on organizational processes have predominantly been examined from the perspective of socio-linguistic and organizational studies. The increasing process of globalization has forced these academic disciplines to focus more intensively on the intricate wheels of international management. While organization studies up until now have always invested in the aspects of cross-cultural communication, some authors have now come to acknowledge that linguistic capability is the carrier of international business communication and professional understanding (Adler, 2002, 74-77; Marschan-Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 1999, 422). Analyses of various case studies on communication dynamics in multinational corporations have gained an insight into the oftentimes strained relationship between parent and host national companies (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999, 425; Feely & Harzing, 2003, 38; Hoon,

Sun & Kline Harrison, 1996, 80). Characteristic for these studies is their unanimity in which they pinpoint language as the culprit of organizational misunderstanding. The studies furthermore discuss the consequences and implications of (fixed) official languages for both first and second language speakers. They look closely into the specific phenomena that accompany the language barrier such as for instance language nodes, gate-keeping, autistic hostility, and parallel information networks. Various field studies conducted during peace support operations in 2006 and 2007 rendered opportunities to find out whether we could arrive at similar results for contemporary military organizations (see also Van Dijk, 2008).

A report of a close observation of two commanding officers at Kabul International Airport by Resteigne and Soeters (2008) confirms the finding that the presence and proliferation of different languages within multinationals can confront its privies with problems that debilitate the managerial process. The field study illustrates the (im)practicality of linguistic (in)competence, and demonstrates the powerful position of language nodes within organizations (Feely & Harzing, 2003, 226). One of the observed officers was blessed with the 'gift of the gap'. He commanded the French, English, German and Dutch language. His language proficiency enabled him to receive, influence and transmit information. His linguistic scope in other words 'licensed' him to become the (in)formal advisor of soldiers from various countries. The other officer, however, was less linguistically talented. During the observation of his daily routine it became apparent that he, in comparison with the 'gifted' military commander, had not much contact with other personnel at the base. Instead of engaging in a proactive style which would keep him abreast, this particular officer awaited the moment for the information to reach him. The observation demonstrates that language incompetence restricts and perhaps even reduces the range of managerial power, whereas language proficiency on the other hand aggrandizes ones' hold on communicational and managerial processes (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999, 430; Hoon et al., 1996, 86-89). Language nodes, like the 'gifted' commander, often cover strategic positions within organizations. They are described as 'gate-keepers, for they can pass or block information between parties and as such support or subvert collaboration (Feely & Harzing, 2003, 46, 226). Their linguistic leverage thus almost implicitly heralds the onset of a parallel information network. Hence, it would be unwise to perceive the shadow structure as a convenient shortcut in the communication process for it might as well corrode the formal channels of communication and undermine the managerial positions of persons involved.

Another field study of an international military operation at Kabul International Airport illustrates the processes of professional incapacitation and isolation as detrimental effects of the language barrier (Feely & Harzing, 2003, 6-8). It recounts of the situation in which Spanish medics did not sufficiently command the English language and whom therefore were unable to provide medical care during an emergency. It didn't take very long for the news to go round the base. From there on, people sought medical support outside of the base at the German medical facilities at ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) headquarters (Soeters, Resteigne, Moelker & Manigart, 2008). The effect and consequences

of the linguistic ineptitude of the Spanish medics leaves little to the imagination. People had to leave the relative safety of the base and had to drive through high-risk territories to reach the medical facilities. They in other words had to risk their lives in order to save a life, all because of language problems.

The Spanish medics clearly experienced difficulties translating the medical argot of their native tongue into the English target language. In order to prevent awkward situations such as described above, specialists often call upon language assistants to translate the technical terminology for them. But even they at times are not guarded against the effects of the language barrier (Feely & Harzing, 2003, 6-8). A report of two medical examiners in this regard gives an account of the language problems and cultural barriers they themselves and their language assistants encountered in the assessment and treatment of enemy prisoners of war and foreign civilians during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (Griffeth & Bally, 2006, 258-259). It appeared that although the language assistants were brought up in Arabic speaking households, and were acquainted with Arabic customs, they too sometimes were in need of words. The assistants not only experienced problems understanding the Iraqi language and traditions, they moreover had difficulties with translating the medical and mental health vocabulary. Irrespective of these linguistic obstacles, the medical providers nonetheless opted for a broad approach of situations in which medical questions and their responses needed to be translated. This meant that language assistants were given some latitude to pose questions on the basis of their own conceptual understanding. Needless to say, this experimental approach was sometimes more of a hazard than a help to the health of the patient. But since the real world, however, not always provides the best fit for patients, read Iraq-born and Iraq-practiced psychiatrists, health providers and interpreters have to "fight with what they brought". And that, Griffeth and Bally argue, might as well, with some routine education of language assistants in medical terminology, be the reasonable and feasible change that would benefit the future assessment of non-English enemy prisoners of war or civilians (Griffeth & Bally, 2006, 581). All of the language problems encountered in the observations substantiate the findings on the negative effects of the language barrier on the information structure within international (military) organizations.

Just like technical language, informal language can also complicate the process of understanding. Second language speakers who are for instance unfamiliar with the precise work of (war) slang might not recognize situations in which it is used (Dickson, 1994, ix-xi; Andersson & Trudgill, 1990, 71-81). As a consequence, non-native speakers could unintentionally bring across a different message than which was originally phrased. Misunderstanding and miscommunication are therefore but an expression away when slang is literally (mis)interpreted.

Language can become even more of a problem when it comes to dialects and accents. In the past, the Dutch Colonial Army deliberately used Dutch dialects as 'code language' to ascertain that confidential information would not be overheard by interpreters and guides who could understand Dutch[6]. Today, however, the use of dialects unintentionally creates

a confusion of tongues in situations wherein international military organizations need to collaborate. An example of an international military operation in which the language barrier hampered the cooperation is the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In the framework of this particular mission Irish and Swedish troops needed to form a Quick Reaction Force (QRF). Despite the fact that the two troops were integrated into one unit and located on one compound, the cooperation between the Swedish and Irish soldiers was close to nil. One of the reasons for this low level of (communicational) interaction was the presence of a language problem between the troops. The Swedes, whom are renowned for their outstanding English verbal skills, experienced difficulties understanding their Irish colleagues. Used to their own high English standards and pronunciation, the Swedes often could not decipher the dialect and diction of the Irish troops.[7]

Of course, dialects and accents are not restricted to the communication between international military contingents. They are of even greater importance to the communication with the local population. In order to prevent miscommunication between international military organizations and the local population, military officers in the operational field often work together with interpreters. Because of their knowledge of local vernaculars and cultural affinity, interpreters are able to close gaps, fill in blanks, support where needed, and save situations when necessary. While interpreters thus perform activities far beyond the scope of their linguistic task, they, however, are seldom judged on their merits. The following paragraph will look more closely into the ways and woes of the interpreter during peace support operations.

4. Interpreters: The Tightrope Walkers of War

Military organizations operating in the context of peace and relief missions depend for their field negotiations on the assistance of interpreters. The use of local language in peace support operations is recommendable for several reasons. Knowledge of local vernacular contributes to the general security of the mission. One of the obvious examples of even the most basic command of the local language for instance is the ability to express that one is unarmed and that there is no need to shoot. Lessons learned from former peace support operations in Bosnia and Haiti moreover have demonstrated that language in the military is a matter of credibility for it is a gesture of good will and a sign of respect towards the reality of a country (Edwards, 2004). The manual of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti for instance describes that linguistic proficiency of military troops not only increases the quality of the mission but that language above all is the human right of each person “to express, communicate, blossom, develop, and be respected in ones own culture” (Edwards, 2004). Even the most rudimentary understanding of the local language and customs equips the peacekeeper with a social compass to evaluate the situation. If anything else, it will gain the peacekeeper some time and respect. Perhaps even enough to assuage the situation and safe it (at least momentarily) from violent escalation. The fact that linguistic knowledge is an effective tool in the operational field, however, is not self-evident as can be gathered from the following illustration.

A Belgian commander reported of his experience in Kabul when an American company was assigned to his multinational battalion. It appeared that the Americans were not used to call upon the services of interpreters during searches and patrols. After a two-week training instruction, the American company confirmed that they knew how to team up with interpreters. When the company left the battalion after two months, it, however, turned out that they hardly had utilized their linguistic resources (Bos & Soeters, 2005, 364).[8] Through their (in part failing) operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a critical evaluation of their military doctrine, the US Department of Defense recently has learned that the traditional methods of warfighting are not suitable for “low-intensity counterinsurgency operations where civilians mingle freely with combatants in complex urban terrain” (McFate, 2005, 24). Language learning and cultural awareness have since become qualified as priority matters that need to be taken up in future policies of military effectiveness (Moskos, 2007, 3-13; McFate & Jackson, 2006, 14).

4.1. Military Setting and Organization

In military missions language interpreters generally are subdivided into three categories, respectively embedded, local, and home-based interpreters. The latter forms the smallest category and consists of individuals who have enjoyed a higher (academic) education in the target language. The first two categories form the majority of the deployed interpreters. Most of the embedded interpreters are former asylum seekers who have lived in the region of the operation and who now under the circumstance of their new nationality and out of idealistic motives want to support and rebuild the country which they once had to leave as refugees. Locally engaged interpreters are, as the term suggests, locally hired individuals who pursue the position of interpreter predominantly out of financial considerations.

Besides the categorization of interpreters the interpreting activity moreover is classified along the line of linguistic complexity. This means that the least skilled interpreters, the so called ‘dusties’, assist daily reconnaissance and social patrols, and that the more competent interpreters are assigned to mediate in technical situations and confidential negotiations (Bos & Soeters, 2006, 263f). Irrespective of category or hierarchy, however, is the communal objective of all military interpreters to help peacekeepers to become informed about the linguistic and cultural aspects of the communicational process.

Because of their ‘multipurpose’ as a language mediator, cultural advisor, and intelligence gatherer, and not in the least because of the fact that peacekeeping involves intervening between warring parties and/or rival parties in a region, high standards in the identification and selection of (non-professional) interpreters must be kept up to guarantee the security,

expertise and ethics of the mission (Moskos, 2007, 7; Bos & Soeters, 2006, 265; Edwards, 2004). An incident which happened during a preparatory training for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), illustrates the importance of training and teamwork between military officers and interpreters:

> "Shortly before our UNTAC-3 deployment in Cambodia, and after the screening of the interpreters in Amsterdam, I was sent to an American military base in Germany for cultural and communicational training. My interpreter and I were asked to participate in a real-life situation that was put on for us. Everything went according plans. I was communicating with the local mayor through the mediation of my interpreter when suddenly out of nowhere eight to nine armed Cambodians appeared through the thick of the grass. Besieged by the enemy, I was ordered to give up my weapon. Right at the very moment when I was about to tell my interpreter that such was out of the question, my interpreter collapsed to the ground. He was having a nervous break-down, not a single word came out of his mouth. It so happened that my interpreter, before he fled Cambodia, had experienced the exact same situation that was put on for us. On stage, he relived the tragic and traumatic situation in which his uncle was killed."[9]

Interpreting remains a human 'resource' with unknown and unforeseen depths. Irrespective of this element of 'surprise', however, there are of course some general directives and key features to assess the quality of an interpreter. What makes a good interpreter? Two independent investigations of users' experiences of interpreters (Edwards, Temple & Alexander, 2005; Bos & Soeters, 2005) demonstrate that language matching and proficiency is but one half of the interpreter's quality indicator. The other half consists of the interpreter's attitude and character. Besides knowledge of systems and procedures, character and a proactive stance were highly appreciated as qualities that credit the professionalism of the interpreter. Both investigations moreover render an insight into the users' need of the interpreter. People call upon the services of the interpreters for more than just a passing on of words, they want their interpreter to proceed as their manager and advisor in situations wherein they themselves are unfamiliar and unfit (Edwards et al., 2005, 85; Bos & Soeters, 2005, 361). As has been said before, it is precisely this advisory role of the interpreter which proves to be of importance to soldiers in the operational field. Interpreters are experts in understanding the mores of the local culture and in this capacity they are often more perceptive of signals than soldiers. Being the middleman of two linguistically and culturally different worlds, interpreters are capable of 'fine-tuning' the low context approach of Western contingents to the need of the high context culture of (most of the) operational areas (Bos & Soeters, 2005, 360f.). Whereas in Western countries straightforwardness and openness are received as the prerequisites for efficient communication, non-Western countries on the other hand often prefer a more subtle and indirect communicational approach. Needless to say, these two cultures are bound to collide when military contingents decide to operate according to their own cultural references. They, on the other hand, are likely to coincide in circumstances wherein the interpreter is called upon to mediate between the two different worlds. The interpreter in other words holds a strong hand when it comes to conditions which require cultural knowledge and an inside perspective.

Because of the lack of linguistic proficiency of the deployed contingents, and the gravity of the situation at hand, the assistance and support of interpreters could be of eminent importance to peace support operations. A vivid and disconcerting account of the contribution of interpreters to peacekeeping operations is Kayla Williams' account of her experience as a soldier and interpreter for the American Army during her deployment in Iraq in 2003. The following text is part of a reflection described by her while being on patrol:

> "The past couple of days I'd heard horrible stories. About soldiers kicking in doors and dragging down civilians onto the streets. About soldiers buying a sheep, just to beat it to death. About soldiers shooting people running away or sieving down cars because they didn't stop in time when nearing, even when it had women and children in it. (...) We all knew that Iraqi women feared (American) soldiers, and because of that rather not came to a halt at a checkpoint. They were not used to associate with men, let alone American men. They panicked when seeing an American with a rifle. When an American sees a checkpoint with armed soldiers, she usually stops, doesn't she? But in Iraq things are a bit more complicated. And from what I heard, things got out of hand. (...) They messed up. And meanwhile there were no signs in Arabic that warned civilians that they were nearing a checkpoint. There was no respect for the customs of these people, for their rhythm of life, for the tribulations they had to face. Hardly any attempt was made to communicate with the local population. Too many soldiers had an attitude of 'just shoot them' (Williams, 2005, 121f)."

One could easily recognize a critical voice in Williams' pondering. She detests the heedless proceedings of her fellow American soldiers and thereby she indirectly touches upon the operational implications of the Powell-Weinberger doctrine which proclaims that "the use of force should always be overwhelming and disproportionate to the force used by the enemy" (McFate, 2005, 27). This conventional military thinking of large-scale wars and major combat operations, however, is an anachronism in a time wherein the nature of conflicts is defined by low-intensity counterinsurgency operations whose protagonists are difficult to discern from local civilians. Peacekeepers, e.g. in Iraq and Afghanistan, have to fight a complex war against an enemy whose organizational structure is not military but tribal, and whose weaponry consists not of tanks or fighter jets but of improvised explosive devices (McFate, 2005, 24). Contemporary warfare, that is unconventional warfare, thus calls for a new military doctrine wherein not "overwhelming force," but cultural understanding and linguistic knowledge should form the cornerstones of military management (McFate, 2005, 37; Moskos, 2007, 3-5). The intervention of interpreters could particularly be useful in this refined military approach because they can reconnoitre the local human terrain by

means of their linguistic and cultural profundity. In this capacity, interpreters could prevent grave misunderstandings from happening. As an intermediate, they are able to regulate international and intercultural communicational processes by carefully translating the information from the source language into the target language and vice versa. The interpreter could therefore very well be described as the linguistic and cultural bridge between two linguistically divergent parties. Translation in this regard is something different than a direct decoding of linguistically interchangeable signs as the term 'conduit' might wrongly imply. Although translation is about 'fine tuning', the interpreter is anything but a "language machine" (Bos & Soeters, 2006, 64). Interpreting involves a comprehension of the thought expressed in one language and the use of the resources of another language to explain the message of the foreign language. The craft of interpretation consists of "changing the words into meaning, and then change meaning back into words of a different language" (Edwards, 2004). Prerequisite in these circumstances, of course, is that the interpreter commands a solid and sound understanding of the subject matter of the military operation and/or negotiation.

4.2. Secrets and Suspicion

The fact that interpretation implies a profound knowledge of both the cultural context and extra-linguistic aspects of communication (Edwards, 2004), can be explicated by the very unique position of Druze military interpreters in the Israeli legal courts (Hajjar, 2000, 302). The Druze community forms an extraordinary niche in the border zones of the Hebrew-Arab conflict. The Israeli state policies distinguish the Druze from other Palestinian Arabs. As a separate category of non-Arab Arabs, the Druze are part of a select group of non-Jews who are subjected to mandatory conscription (Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 2007, 127, 135). Because of their bilingualism and lingering Arabness, the Druze are selected as an exclusive and efficient cultural tool within the national military organization (Hajjar, 2000, 314-319). And as such, the Druze have come to fulfil the role of military court-interpreter. Or as an army spokesman said: "'Some Jews do know the Arabic language, but translating involves more than just translating the words. It involves really understanding the people you are translating for." (quoted in Hajjar, 2000, 305).

As bilingual non-Arab Arabs, Druze military interpreters need to steer a middle course between the legal and military dimensions of the courtroom. Whereas their language mediation legitimizes the legal system on the one hand, their military identity on the other hand paradoxically causes them to regard themselves as soldiers whom are facing 'the enemy' in the context of a courtroom (Hajjar, 2000, 317). The Druze interpreter in other words needs to walk a tight rope. His cultural identity condemns him to be both an insider and outsider to the Israeli and Palestinian worlds. The Druze interpreter is thus the stranger who is both distant and near. As goes for interpreters in general, the Druze are familiar with "the beliefs, or standards, that control the situation in which they are called upon to operate", yet their commonness to both worlds often prevents their unconditional acceptance to either one of the worlds (Karakayali, 2006, 319f). Hence, the Druze interpreter, embodies the ancient 'us versus them dilemma': While his status as non-Arab Arab compels him to be loyal to the military service, his lingering Arabness at the same moment makes him susceptible to the suspicion of others (Hajjar, 2000, 319; Karakayali, 2006, 313).

The Druze military interpreters are not the only interpreters who are being looked at with Argus' eyes. It seems that distrust is part of the interpreter's professional (or)deal (Moskos, 2007, 7). The not so distant (military) history after all has learned that some interpreters knowingly pass on confidential and sensitive information to opposing parties. Recently, the Dutch government was startled when they found out that a Turkish interpreter had leaked crucial police-information to Turkey. The crime committed by the interpreter not only damaged the police investigations into an international drug cartel, it moreover caused serious harm to the collaboration between the Dutch and Turkish judicial authorities (NRC Handelsblad, March 3, 2007). A salient detail in this case consists of the fact that the very same interpreter already had been banished from the ranks of the national intelligence service for passing confidential information to the *Hofstad* group, an alleged terrorist organization. In context of the military field, the American cases of senior airman Ahmad al Halabi and former intelligence specialist Ahmad Mehalba are exemplary for the distrust held against interpreters (Pipes, 2004). Because of their ethnic descent and their Arabic linguistic skills, Halabi and Mehalba were recruited to serve as interpreters at the American detention and interrogation center at Guantanano Bay. Both men, however, were arrested on the accusation of taking part in a spy ring at the Naval Base in Cuba. In 2003, they were, after a highly criticized trial, convicted for the lesser counts of lying to the government agents and removing classified documents from the detention facility.

The above-mentioned cases were two out of in total four trials on similar accusations. All of the trials received major media coverage which in turn brought the ill fate of the detainees in Guantanamo Bay to light. Significant in this regard is that various statements of former Gitmo detainees singled out the language barrier as one of the major problems which compounded the inhumane treatment of prisoners. The story of two Afghan brothers who were arrested and flown into the detention facility in Cuba after having written a political satire on Clinton recounts:

> "As Badr and Dost fought their freedom, they had enormous advantages over Guantanamo's 500-plus other captives. The brothers are university-educated, and Badr who holds a master's degree in English literature, was one of few prisoners able to speak fluently to the interrogators in their own language. (...) The brothers escaped the worst abuse, partly because of Badr's fluent English. At times, prisoners 'who didn't speak English got kicked by the MP's because they didn't understand what the soldiers wanted,' he said. And both men said that while many prisoners clammed up under questioning, they were talkative and able to demonstrate

> cooperation. (...) Another problem was that 'Many of the interpreters were not good,' said Badr. He recalled an elderly man, arrested by U.S. forces for shooting his rifle at a helicopter, who explained that he had been trapping hawks and fired in anger at one that flew away. But the interpreter mistook the Persian word 'booz' (hawk) for 'baz' (goat). 'The interrogator became very angry,' Badr said. 'He thought the old man was making a fool of him by claiming to be shooting at goats flying in the air' (Clore, 2005)."

Once more, this example shows that language competence and efficient interpreting are imperative for a complete understanding of a situation. Language incompetence and misinterpretation can conversely trigger a whole array of misunderstanding and miscommunication. At the end of the line, it is the interpreter, the tightrope walker who often can make the difference between the two. As a cultural bridge and as a facilitator of the co-working language of the mission the interpreter undeniably contributes to the security and success of a peacekeeping operation. Military personnel should therefore acquire a more sophisticated conception of the role of the interpreter. A re-conceptualization of the position and profession of the interpreter within peacekeeping operations, in combination with language and cultural awareness training would benefit the military organization as a whole.

5. Conclusions and Avenues for Future Research

The language barrier is not a recent phenomenon. Language problems within the military have surfaced in different disguises throughout time. Whether as a linguistic conflict that rattled on in both the Belgian military trenches as well as in the political chambers, a Babylonian confusion among the mixed contingents of the Dutch Colonial Army in the deep of the jungle, or an offside position of military commanders during contemporary peace support operations in Afghanistan: language *matters* in the military. With the change of traditional military warfare to peace support operation tasks, the object, aim, ways and means of the military organization have changed correspondingly. In their effort to reconstruct society through a minimal use of force and cooperation with armed forces and civilians from all over the world, the military has gradually transformed into (what in theory should be) a 'soft' powered and diplomatic 'multinational'. As a consequence of this shift in perspective, military officers have come to think of themselves as manager of violence, soldier-diplomat, and soldier-communicator (Bleumink, Moelker & Vogelaar, 2003, 142-153). International scientific research of the Netherlands Defence Academy, however, has brought to light that the managerial position of this new 'flexible officer' was not exempt of problems. The outcome of this data-analysis moreover confirmed the premise of this article in as much that in the exploration of problems and deficiencies during peace support operations, all respondents ranked language as one of the leading factors complicating the proceedings of the mission. It would therefore be interesting when future research would look more closely into the effectiveness of language on peacekeeping operations. Surveys, field studies, before-and-after-designs with comparison groups who either have or have not participated in a language program, long-term evaluation of linguistic interventions by interpreters, and a cross-national comparison of communication strategies of military operations are but a couple of the research methods that could uncover the linguistic potential of this yet uncultivated military domain.

Notes

1 This quotation is taken from the Quotations Page on www.quotationspage.com.

2 This anecdote was told by Richard Boijen, author of *De Taalwetgeving in het Belgische Leger (1830-1940)*'during an interview at the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History in Bruxelles in November, 2006.

3 The flux of foreigners joining the troops, a hodgepodge of nationalities and classes, gave the Dutch troops more the appearance of a Foreign Legion than of a Dutch Colonial Army. And despite the shortage in men, the acquisition of natives was not always welcomed as a relief. Military commanders sometimes were hesitant to trust native soldiers out of fear for insurgencies and conspiracies that would bring down the colonial regime (De Moor, 2003, 206).

4 This quote was translated from Dutch to English by Andrea van Dijk.

5 McFate and Jackson (2006, 13, 16) in this regard write that in any (contemporary) struggle for political power, neither the insurgents or counterinsurgents have an explicit or immediate advantage in the battle, for the local population will support those whom make it in *their interest* to obey.

6 A crude example of war slang used by soldiers of the Dutch Colonial Army in the Dutch Indies concerning captives is the Dutch expression '*Ik laat hem effe pissen*' ('I'm letting him take a leak'). The expression might have let detainees believe that they were offered some privacy to relieve themselves, while in fact the saying was a euphemism for liquidating captives in times when the number of detainees was draining and slowing down the military expedition. This example was told by Stef Scagliola, researcher of the Dutch Institute for Veterans.

7 This observation was part of a field study in Liberia which was conducted by Erik Hedlund, Louise Weibull and Joseph Soeters in November 2006 (see Hedlund, Weibull & Soeters, 2008).

8 The fact that US troops in Iraq had an average of one interpreter to 75-150 soldiers as against one to 15-20 servicemen in Bosnia for the Dutch illustrates the difference in operational styles with regard to the employment of interpreters (Bos & Soeters, 2006: 268).

9 This quote was taken from an interview with Ltcol. Dick Bosch and translated from Dutch to English by Andrea van Dijk.

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Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Tough Talk: Clear and Cluttered Communication during Peace Operations

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1. Introduction

With the change of traditional warfare into peace operations, language has become an essential tool in the coordination and management of operational tasks in multinational military cooperation. The importance of English as the military lingua franca in this regard has increased proportionately to the expansion of the number of nationalities that participate in military missions (Crossey, 2005). In order to prevent a linguistic confusion in the theatre of operations, the English language policy has often been installed to 'command and control' the internal communication structures of the military organization. Depending on the degree of linguistic proficiency, language, however, has proved to be an ambivalent tool for it can both empower as well as disempower the voice and job performance of the military personnel.

The importance and implications of language (in-)competence moreover does not restrict itself to the perimeters of the military organization, they are also applicable to the environments in which peace operations take place. The experience of military officers and academics has taught that the military lingua franca will not suffice as an accepted and efficient means of communication in non-Western environments. In order to optimise the interaction and exchange of information between peacekeepers and the local population, the military organization should enact the channels of cross-cultural communication in the expeditionary environment by implementing a (basic) knowledge of the local vernaculars and interpreter interventions into its corporate language policy.

Although both subjects are equally important, this chapter will only elaborate on the influence of language on the communication structures of multinational military cooperation. Through a theoretical account of the origin and development of language management within multinational companies, and participatory observation during an international military exercise in Germany, this chapter seeks to investigate and analyse the implications of language (in-)competence on military communication in a multinational context.

2. Language management in multinational companies

Although scholars in international management have largely contributed to an understanding of cross-communication processes by analyzing the various cultures and nationalities within multinational corporations, they for a long time 'managed' to overlook the one aspect of communication that holds the fabric of international organizations together. Communication cannot exist without language, and yet it was this very aspect of human interaction that was structurally forgotten and neglected in cross-communication research (Feely & Harzing, 2003). Over the last five years organizational scholars, however, have come to acknowledge that language, and more specifically the language barrier, is the

carrier of international communication and professional understanding (Adler, 2002, 73-102; Marschan-Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 1999, 422). Studies on communication dynamics in multinational corporations have gained an insight into the oftentimes strained relationship between parent and host national companies (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999, 425; Feely & Harzing, 2003, 38; Hoon, Sun & Kline Harrison, 1996, 80; Vaara, Tienari, Piekkari & Santti 2005, 596). Characteristic for these studies is their unanimity in which they pinpoint language, and more precisely the language barrier, as the culprit of organizational misunderstanding. Whereas the studies of Feely and Harzing, and Hoon et al. emphasize the corrosive effect of the language barrier on both native and non-native speakers, the studies of Marschan-Piekkari et al., and Vaara et al. on the other hand focus more on power circuits that arise in the wake of corporate language policies.

In order to get a better understanding of language problems that impede efficient communication, it is necessary to discuss some of the findings of the abovementioned authors. Their longitudinal case studies have demonstrated that language problems of native speakers mainly consist of miscommunication, attribution and code-switching. The first two phenomena are somewhat intertwined as both allude to the alleged linguistic fluency of the non-native speaker. Miscommunication often arises in situations wherein native speakers wrongly assume that non-native speakers command full linguistic proficiency of the official business language. Needless to say inaccurate attributions create the perfect breeding ground for miscommunication between native and non-native speakers. The biased expectation of the native speaker, however, is bound to be contradicted by the restrictions of reality. And once the linguistic incompetence of the non-native speaker has been discovered, the 'disenchantment' of the native speaker cannot but disrupt the communication as feelings of distrust and dislike affect the business relation.

Moreover, it is very plausible that these negative experiences could grow into individual and even institutionalized prejudices against non-native speakers. Robertson and Kulik in this regard have described the prevalence of stereotype threat in (multinational) organizations. The psychological concept of stereotype threat arises when members of a particular identity group fear that they will be seen and judged according to a negative stereotype about their group. Their anxiety is heightened in situations where they have to perform a task on which members of their group have said to have done poorly. Stereotyped threatened participants often lack the confidence that they will perform well and therefore the stereotype (threat) often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Robertson & Kulik, 2007, 24-29). Although Robertson and Kulik have described the effect of stereotype threat on minority groups within the context of the American society such as African-Americans, the elderly and overweight people, they emphatically state that' (...) members of any group could experience stereotype threat when their identity group is negatively compared with another group' (Robertson & Kulik, 2007, 27). The phenomena of stereotype threat could therefore easily be applied to the condition and context of non-native speakers within multinational organizations because a lack of linguistic proficiency is very often put on a

par with professional ineptitude. This misconception can often assume a life of its own and discredit non-native speakers to a degree that they start to believe that the stereotype indeed reflects a truth about the quality of their job performance. As a result of this negative (self) perception, the stereotype threat seizes its opportunity. It disrupts the performance of non-native speakers and negatively affects their professional credibility.

Two quotes taken from a case study of Vaara et al. (2005) on the merger of a Finnish and Swedish bank, illustrate the (subjective) interdependence between language competence, self perception, and power when one language has been chosen to be the corporate language (in this case, Swedish):

> "In the beginning it was, of course, a terrible shock... It was really horrible. It felt like...half of our professional competence had been taken away when we had to use a language that was not our native tongue. You felt like an idiot...The main thing was to get over the feeling of inferiority (Vaara et al., 2005, 609)".

> "In Finland, we lost many potential future key figures because they realized that they would never be able to compete with their Swedish rivals in the organization (Vaara et al., 2005: 615)."

Other circumstances that give rise to misunderstanding and misconception consist of situations where delegations of non-native speakers discuss matters in their own language during negotiations. Another quote from the above mentioned case study illustrate this:

> "With Finnish as your native tongue...you are, in a debate or negotiation situation, in a weaker position... Whether or not this is the case, it feels like it when the other person speaks his/her native tongue... But, turning it the other way around, we have this secret language (i.e. Finnish) in which we can speak pretty freely to each other – in the middle of the negotiation. The majority of the Swedes don't understand one single bit of it (Vaara et al., 2005: 609)."

This switching of codes during times of negotiation and decision making, however, is often (unjustly) perceived as a manifestation of 'conspiring behaviour' which on its turn triggers a whole new gamut of sentiments of exclusion and hostility.

The case study of Hoon et al. (1996) on United States firms in South Korea zooms in on the problems and grievances affecting non-native speakers. Non-native speakers lose their rhetorical skills when they have to communicate in a language which is different from their own. Even if non-native speakers command the official lingua franca, they are still at a loss when the situation calls for other more decisive and interpersonal skills. Closely interrelated to the loss of rhetorical skills is the concept of face (Hoon et al., 1996, 81). The fear of making a fool out of oneself and/or being regarded as "dense", may 'force' non-native speakers to keep up appearances. By keeping a low profile and pretending to be in control of the situation,

non-native speakers hope to save their face. The context and implications of face-saving strategies will be further explicated through a discussion of experiences of non-native (non-) commissioned officers who participated in an international military exercise in paragraph four of this chapter.

All the above-mentioned detrimental effects of the language barrier are undoubtedly the results of the partiality of the language selection between two different linguistic parties. The choice of the official language is in almost all of the situations determined by two tacit but fixed norms: the vitality of the language and the mutual linguistic skills of the parties involved. Reasonably or not, English, to this day, is still respected as the most important language. It has even been stated that the English language becomes of greater importance when the number of nationalities in a company increases (De Swaan, 2001). Again, the case study of Vaara et al. (2005) on the power circuits in multinational organizations seems to be of value in substantiating this hypothesis. As soon as English was introduced as the new legitimate official corporate language, the tide seemed to turn for the Finnish employees. The Finns experienced the new language policy as a relief and did not waist any time to enact their 'new rights (...) by showing the Swedes their place.'(Vaara et al., 2005, 615). Whereas the English language re-established the equality for the Finns, the Swedish on the other hand were considerably less enthusiastic about the consequences of the new language policy:

> "I am a little bit afraid that we are losing some competent people who will become silent, who are not as good (as others) in this language... A lot of culture creation, cooperation and consensus, it is precisely participation in these joint meetings. And if one only sits there and does not understand every nuance or value... (Vaara et al., 2005, 615)."

The quotation is not only illustrative of the advance of English as the primary corporate language for most multinationals, a process which is described as linguistic imperialism; it also indicates that English is not yet common ground for everyone (Méndez García & Pérez Cañado, 2005, 89). In a meeting between English and non-English speakers for instance, this rule of thumb obviously downplays the non-English speaking party. Language then installs a distortion in the power/authority balance. Whereas language becomes a means of power for the English-speaking parties, it often becomes a shackle for those who do not sufficiently command the English language. A lack of linguistic competence can at worst literally lead to 'excommunication'; for silence is often the last resort for those who, to their own great annoyance, are unable to voice their opinion. Hoon et al. (1996, 87) have described the detrimental by-products of the language selection process as a sense of peripherality and autistic hostility which respectively mean a distancing from the communication network, and an avoidance of communication.

The following section seeks to transpose the findings of the multinational organization to the context of the international military organization. It sketches situations and observations in which language determines the outcome of international military communication.

3. Language and Communication in multinational military cooperation

Because military operations over time evolved into global affairs, the characteristics and hence problems of military organizations started to resemble those of multinationals (Van Dijk & Soeters, 2008). A participant observation of two commanding officers at Kabul International Airport in this regard confirms the finding that the presence and proliferation of different languages in a multinational operation confronts its members with problems that affect the managerial process (Resteigne & Soeters, 2008). The field study exemplifies the (im)practicality of linguistic (in)competence, and demonstrates the powerful position of language nodes within the organization (Feely & Harzing, 2003). One of the observed officers was a multilingual who spoke French, English, German, and Dutch fluently. His language proficiency enabled him to receive, influence and transmit information. Whereas the linguistic skills of this particular officer allowed him to become the (in)formal advisor of soldiers from various countries, the other, less linguistically talented, officer experienced great difficulties with the language barrier. His linguistic shortcomings prevented him from taking a proactive stance in communication processes and ultimately condemned him to passively wait for information to reach him (Resteigne & Soeters, 2008). In contrast to those who are greatly inconvenienced and impaired by the language barrier, language nodes, like the talented commander, thus often occupy powerful positions within organizations (Vaara et al., 2007). They are described as 'gate-keepers', because they can pass or block information between parties. As such language nodes can establish a parallel information network within the organization which either supports or subverts collaboration (Feely & Harzing, 2003, 46).

Another field study at Kabul International Airport (Soeters, Resteigne, Moelker & Manigart, 2008) illustrates the process of professional incapacitation and isolation as detrimental effects of the language barrier (Feely & Harzing, 2003). It relates a situation in which Spanish medics did not sufficiently command the English language and whom were therefore unable to provide medical care during an emergency. As a consequence of the poor linguistic skills of the Spanish medics, people had to drive through high risk territory in order to receive medical support at the German medical facilities at ISAF headquarters. The Spanish medics clearly had trouble translating the medical argot from their mother tongue into English. In order to prevent similar situations, (medical) staff personnel often rely on the service of interpreters (Bos & Soeters, 2006, 261-268). But even they at times are not immune to the effects of the language barrier. Two medical examiners, for instance, have written a report about language problems and cultural barriers they and their interpreters encountered in the assessment and treatment of enemy prisoners of war, hired local workers, and foreign civilians during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (Griffeth & Bally, 2006, 258-259). It appeared that although the interpreters were brought up in Arabic speaking households and were acquainted with Arabic customs, they too sometimes encountered difficulties. The interpreters not only had problems understanding the Iraqi language and traditions, they also had difficulties translating the medical and mental health vocabulary.

The abovementioned examples demonstrate that language proficiency or a lack thereof, either ease or block the wheels of internal and external communication. Through a discussion of a field study which was conducted during an international military exercise in Germany, the final section of this chapter attempts to discover ways in which language (in-)competence influences the job performance of key players within international military organizations.

4. Exercise Kindred Sword: a closer look at the implications of multinational military cooperation and communication

Exercise Kindred Sword took place in Lehnin, Germany between May 14 and May 25 2007. This Command Post Exercise was part of three closely linked Maritime, Land and Air Component training exercises whose aim was to test the combat readiness of the participating units. It was designed to train the command and control elements of the staff of the headquarters of the German-Netherlands multinational corps, (1) GE-NL Corps, in the context of its role as a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Response Force.[1] In their effort to sustain stability and peace in times of need, the multinational NRF components depend upon extensive and detailed cooperation within and between the units. It goes without saying that communication in this matter makes or breaks the operational effectiveness of both military exercices and real expeditionary missions. A field study at the (1) GE-NL Corps headquarters offered an exceptional opportunity to observe and analyse how language proficiency influenced the planning, co-ordination and team work skills of the military representatives of the participating nations.[2]

At the beginning of the field study it became apparent that language appealed to the imagination. The subject triggered people to speak about their own experience. Officers from various ranks and cells showed interest and offered their opinion on international and inter-organizational communication processes. Significant about the majority of these accounts was that although language was always introduced and labelled by the interviewees as a bothersome but bridgeable inconvenience, their experience ultimately tended to tell a more discriminating story. It was as if the recollections of these non-native speakers were intended to make public what the military mind and hence organization was not yet willing to accept or display. That is, that language, and more specifically a lack of linguistic proficiency, touches not only the heart but also the sore spots of military cooperation. It was therefore no coïncidence that a Dutch officer, who was part of the CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation) cell during the exercise in Lehnin, therefore mentioned that the heraldic motto of the (1) GE-NL Corps *'Communitate Valemus'* ('Together We are Strong') not always met its noble standard. He remembered a situation at the end of his deployment in Kabul 2002 which according to him was illustrative of the communication problems of Kindred Sword.

> "When our troops changed guards with 1GNC battalion we noticed that some of the soldiers had changed the caption of their insignias. The official slogan read 'Communitate Valemus' but they had altered it into 'Communicate Problemus'. Hilarious as it was, the joke also unnerved me. It gave me food for thought. It made me think about the motives for their self-mockery or even self-criticism."

The anecdote refers specifically to the language barrier that hampered the cooperation in the (1) GE-NL Corps. Although English was the military lingua franca, the English language proficiency of German soldiers was often so inadequate that Dutch soldiers, in order to communicate more easily, switched to the German language. According to another Dutch military commander working for the 'red force' during the exercise, Dutch soldiers did exactly what most of Dutch citizens naturally tend to do when they meet people who neither speak Dutch nor English: they tried to address their German colleagues in their own language. Similar linguistic strategies of situational code-switching between actors from different countries in a bilateral (business) cooperation have also been described in a case study of a Dutch parent company that runs a holiday centre in Germany (Loos, 2007, 37, 44, 50, 54). In anticipation of a prospective rise in German tourists, this particular Dutch organization implemented a German language policy for their (Dutch) personnel. Both situations prove that the readiness to address people in their own language does not solely arise from a demonstration of sympathy or a gesture of courtesy. The choice of language rather rests on the presence of common objectives and the willpower '(...) to make things work' (Loos, 2007, 46, 51; Moelker, Soeters & Vom Hagen, 2007). Efficacy and the corresponding interdependence of key players, apparently form an incentive to overcome cultural and linguistic differences by adapting a language strategy that serves shared interests. Applied to the (1) GE-NL Corps, this hypothesis signifies that Dutch soldiers, because of a lack of English proficiency of their German colleagues, needed to 'shift gears' in order to optimise the cooperation between Dutch and German units. Temporarily abandoning English in favour of German as the unofficial military lingua within the (1) GE-NE Corps, enabled Dutch and Germans to pursue their tasks and attain their goals as a true corps befits.

In the course of time the initial bilateral cooperation of 1(GE-NL) Corps, however, has been expanded and transformed into a worldwide affair that encompasses over more than twenty NATO member states. It goes without saying that the importance of language proficiency increased proportionately with the amount of participating countries. English could therefore no longer be passed over as the ruling military lingua franca (De Swaan, 2001). In multinational teams as the NRF it simply is no longer possible to get round the language barrier by 'switching codes'. In order to fully partake in the organization, members need to acquire a certain level of English proficiency (Crossey, 2005). It is then that the language barrier starts to take effect and gets tough on non-native-English speakers. Although the interviews and conversations with Dutch, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Polish, Norwegian, Finnish, and English (non-)commissioned officers displayed a variety of phenomena that accompanied the language barrier, the interviewees mentioned the loss of face as one of the most feared and poignant effects of linguistic incompetence (see also Hoon et al., 1996; Jones, 2005). Significant in this regard was the fact that whether or not people were speaking out of personal experience or had learned from observing the struggle of other non-native-English speakers, each identically linked the loss of face to the public domain and more specifically to meetings and conferences. The below-mentioned quotes come from interviews with respectively a Norwegian officer and a Spanish officer who participated in exercise Kindred Sword.

> "Non-native-language speakers are not so much as pushed out of the decision making process by the fluency of native speaking participants, it's more likely that they themselves feel so uncomfortable and awkward talking in the target language that they unwillingly refrain themselves from the communication process. (...) At the end of a meeting for instance, the chairman always asks if everyone agrees with what has been said. Well, this confronts non-native speakers with a problem. If they do not agree, they have to argue why they think otherwise – and this is not an option for those who feel uncomfortable speaking in a second language. But then again, if you agree with the rest while in fact you do not exactly understand what you have agreed, you might run the risk of having to answer questions before your superiors about matters you do not know of. It's a double trap. What you see is that people keep a low profile in the hope that other's don't address them and don't ask them any questions."

> "It's hard to express yourself in a new language. It's difficult to learn a new vocabulary, let alone the technical jargon of a particular mission such as during this exercise. (...) I feel ridiculous always needing the help of others. (...) When the telephone rings, I try to be at the other side of the office so that someone else answers the call. I am afraid that when I do pick up the phone, the person at the other end of the line commands even less English or that he speaks in abbreviations and technical argot. I would be at a loss, the conversation would be a disaster. In the beginning it was the same with attending meetings. I didn't feel comfortable with my language skills and therefore didn't dare to speak out in the presence of high ranked officers. My lack of language proficiency even kept me from joining informal meetings. Therefore I sometimes felt that I was missing out on information. But over time, when I became more familiar with my colleagues, I gained more confidence and learned to express myself more often."

The quotes illustrate that, in situations wherein participants considered their language skills to be insufficient, non-native-English speakers rather preferred to remain silent as an attempt to uphold a positive image of role fulfilment (see also Jones, 2005, 74). Silence in communication, however, does not always has to be the product of inarticulacy and hence a face-saving strategy. The silence of non-native-English speakers might in certain situations as well be perceived as contextually and culturally defined behaviour (Tatar, 2005, 285). In cultures where silence is related to careful thinking and planning, it can function

as a reaction to excessive talk and meaningless contributions of others during meetings. Moreover, silence can also be the product of modesty and respect for authority. In this particular instance people remain silent unless they are directly addressed (Tatar, 2005, 288-291).

The observations and interviews during Kindred Sword demonstrated that, whereas language incompetence restricts and perhaps even reduces one's voice in the decision-making process, language proficiency conversely increases one's hold on communication and information channels (Vaara et al. 2005; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999, 430; Hoon et al., 1996, 86-89). The assumption that native-English speakers in this regard would have a head start on their colleagues is, however, only partially true for the advantage of their fluency paradoxically also happens to be their flaw. Non-native-English speakers repeatedly referred to their British colleagues as examples of an inarticulate and incomprehensible use of language (see also King, 2008). A German non-commissioned officer was even strongly convinced that the British deliberately tried to manipulate the communication process by using complex words.

> "They tend to outplay the others by their use of English. Language than no longer is used as a tool but as a weapon. The power play doesn't include the Americans. They are more open and outgoing, more social."

Less hostile but as critical was the experience of a French officer. He told about the difficulty he experienced understanding his British colleague:

> "Speaking the official military language, the British are often harder to understand than non-native English speakers. You could understand single words, but at the end of the sentence I am always clueless about what he was talking about. (...) I would rather prefer to command a German/Dutch type of English than British English."

According to the French officer, the language barrier could be categorized into problems of *hearing* and *understanding*. While non-native-English speakers might cause problems related to hearing because of their bad pronunciation and accent, native speakers on the other hand could create problems of understanding due to the specific use of their grammar, syntax, sense of humour and – remarkably enough – sometimes their accent too (see also King, 2008; Hedlund, Weibull & Soeters, 2008). Remarkable in this regard was the fact that these conceptions, perceptions, and theories about native and non-native-English speakers were not communicated and therefore not known to the involved parties. Instead of addressing and giving voice to these language related sentiments and sensitivities, there was a strong (and implicit) tendency of the military staff personnel 'to beat about the bush' or hush the language matter whenever the subject came up for discussion (Van Dijk & Soeters, 2008). This evasive behaviour could perhaps best be interpreted as a sensible and tacit strategy to

alleviate the consequences of the language barrier. The fact of the matter, nevertheless, is that a cautious approach in this regard will only clutter the channels of clear communication. The language barrier, and not the military organization, as was so carefully intended, will benefit from prudence. Creating a taboo about language problems, after all, will only uphold and not tear down the pillars of miscommunication.

In conclusion, the interviews and the observations tend to reflect a rather ambivalent and even discordant image of the military stance on the influence of language on communication processes and cooperation. Language proficiency of the military lingua franca officially is considered an expected quality of the (1) GE-NL Corps staff personnel. According to the data gathered during the field study, this expectation, however, was not yet fully realized and could therefore, if not anticipated properly, contribute to an unfounded carelessness towards language policies. Negligence could cause the detrimental effects of the language barrier to be overlooked and trivialized. In order to effectuate an efficient communication between headquarters and the theatre of operations, the military therefore needs to be ready for some tough talk on a matter which will not restrict itself to the military exercises.

5. Epilogue

When all people share the same tongue, language can easily be described as an unrivalled unifier. The opposite, as this chapter hopes to have demonstrated, unfortunately is also true. Language is an unequalled divider as well. It is, par excellence, a factor which can separate and divide relations within and between members of multinational organizations when its 'barrier' is not timely detected and dismantled. In order to make language a potential military resource for effective communication and cooperation, staff personnel should first and foremost become aware of the detrimental effects of linguistic problems. Instead of treating linguistic proficiency as a matter of course, and downplaying the problems of the less linguistic proficient (non-)commissioned officers within the organization, the military should take up the responsibility to manage language matters properly. Communication after all consists of language, and the latter can only fortify the former when the interdependence between both is rightly understood and consequently addressed.

Notes

1 The information described in this section was based on the following web page: www.gnn.gov.uk/imagelibrary/downloadMedia.asp?MediaDetailsID=201621.htm

2 In the period of 12th of May – 17th of May a total of approximately 14 face-to-face interviews were carried out with international participants of the multinational military exercise Kindred Sword. The field study could not have been possible without the support of lieutenant-colonel Van Rijssen and lieutenant-colonel Sampanis.

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Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Language and Communication during Peace Support Operations in Timor-Leste

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1. Introduction

Because of the continuing globalization and the complexity of the cultural environment and political nature of military operations, the term peacekeeping does not refer to monolithic military processes. It rather forms the umbrella description of ad hoc strategies that transcend the mandate of 'keeping and maintaining' peace in conflict ridden territories. This article focuses on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East-Timor, UNTAET (1999-2002), the multidimensional peace support operation which intended to provide security to the territory of Timor-Leste through the installment of an interim UN administration. The UNTAET mission has been said to be the only peace support operation to have successfully accomplished the transition of a UN administrative body to democratically elected leaders (Bellamy, Williams & Griffin, 2004). That the latter, however, after 6 turbulent years of democracy still proves to be a hard won achievement is demonstrated by the recent uprising of rebel soldiers and the assaults of both president José Ramos-Horta and prime minister Xanana Gusmão of Timor-Leste in February 2008. The attacks, which are described by Gusmão as 'a failed coup attempt against the state', seem to be the remaining cinders of a military and political incident that took place in 2006 (Johnston, 2008). The men that attempted to assassinate the two-highest politicians of Timor-Leste are believed to be the remnants of a military police unit from the western districts of the country that in January 2006, under the direction of the Australian-trained mayor Alfredo Reinado, had signed a petition in which they alleged that they were being discriminated against in promotions and conditions within the army. Although the president of the republic acknowledged the allegations of 'the petitioners' the army nevertheless discharged 595 western soldiers in March of that year. Instead of addressing the grievances and keeping the conflict indoors, the dispute slipped out of the hands of the commission and onto the streets triggering a whole array of violent actions in its wake. Riots broke out, people got killed and more than one hundred thousand people were forced to leave their homes of which today still 30.000 live in refugee camps just outside of the capitol city of Dili (Trinidade & Castro, 2007; Johnston, 2008).

Although it has been said that the shooting of the political leaders in February 2008 has not been the result of a scheme, and that Reinado, who was killed during the attack himself, favored conversation over conflict, one might ponder the question what has caused the rebel military leader to claim that 'Gusmão was to blame for the crises in the country and that he should own up to it' (Johnston, 2008). Instead of trying to captivate the elusive motivations for an alleged *coupe d'etat* of a renegade soldier and his sympathizers, this article seeks to reflect on the inner demons of a country that almost ten years after the withdrawal of Indonesia still struggles to fulfill the promise of independence by describing the perspectives and experiences of representatives of the citizenry, the military, and non-governmental institutions.

2. Understanding the Socio-political and Linguistic Landscape of Timor-Leste

> "In December 1999, the departure of the last vestiges of the Indonesian military was met with cheers and jeers at the Dili port. But the elation was short-lived: On every front, in every district, the country was in a state of havoc. The establishment of security was just the first step towards not only recovering what was lost, but also forming the new nation that the people had overwhelmingly voted for. With little food or water, an absence of law and order, and widespread destruction, that dream must have seemed a long way off (Lee & Valerio, 2002, 56)."

On the 20th of May 2002, after three years of UN intervention and on the day that nationhood was declared, the UN handed over its administration to José Alexandre Gusmão, a former guerrilla leader and the first chosen president of Timor-Leste. Although both UNTAET as well as the International Force in East-Timor, INTERFRET, the mission prior to UNTAET, competently fulfilled their objectives, the label 'successful' was not acknowledged by a considerable amount of the East-Timorese population. The criticism concerned the fact that the involved military and non-governmental parties lacked sufficient cultural knowledge and trained linguists to support the population (Ballard, 2007). In order to grasp the depth and truth of this complaint, and before raising some of the positions and experiences of several insiders, one needs to know more about the linguistic, socio-political, and (post-) colonial landscape of Timor-Leste.

The island of Timor encompasses two language families: Austronesian and non-Austronesian. The indigenous vernaculars in the country can be reduced to either one of these families. Today, Timor-Leste alone knows sixteen indigenous vernaculars and three foreign languages namely, Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesia, and Mandarin (Van Engelenhoven, 2006). These numbers, however, are but a fraction of the local languages that have existed before the reign of colonial powers in Timor-Leste. When Portugal, which incorporated Timor-Leste in the 18th and 19th century, introduced Portuguese as the high variant of the lingua franca, the ritual speeches of the local vernaculars were shut out of the colonial society and pushed into the margins of the ethno-linguistic groups. When Indonesia subsequently annexed Timor-Leste in 1976, the Indonesian government on its turn tried to remove the Portuguese language from society by imposing their state philosophy, the five principles of the *Pancasila*, onto the East-Timorese population. The Pancasila originally was promulgated by President Sukarno in 1945 to unify the archipelago and to help solve the conflict between Muslims, Christians, and nationalists. The first of the five state principles concerns the belief in the all-oneness of God. This monotheistic pillar of the Republic of Indonesia therefore favored Roman-Catholicism at the cost of traditional beliefs (Van Engelenhoven, 2006). The percentage of people who converted themselves to Catholicism had almost tripled from a third of the population to about 80% or 90% after the Indonesian invasion.[1] The Pancasila moreover declared Bahasa Indonesia, the symbol of an Indonesian unitary identity, as the sole language of administration and instruction. The Indonesian government, however,

failed to understand that Portuguese, because of its catholic heritage, was deeply rooted in the East-Timorese society. The language policy therefore backfired on the Indonesian government as Portuguese became the primary language of the underground resistance (Van Engelenhoven, 2006; Mydans, 2007). Tetum, on the other hand became the aboveground language of resistance as Father Martinho da Costa Lopes, a strong defender of human rights and supporter of self-determination and justice, promoted Tetum, instead of Portuguese or Bahasa Indonesia, as the alternative language of liturgy. When the Indonesian government finally withdrew from the island in 2002, Bahasa Indonesia nevertheless had almost erased all of the ritual registers and oral traditions of the local languages (Van Engelenhoven, 2006).

Up and until independence was declared in 2002, the East-Timorese were characterized by their protest against the Indonesian occupier. With the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste this binding agent, however, lost its necessity. In search of a new national identity mark, the East-Timorese returned among other things to their linguistic roots by proclaiming language as their national token. The indigenous languages were acknowledged as national languages, whereas Tetum and Portuguese, the former rebel languages, were selected as the official linguae francae in the administration of the newly found republic. Because the vocabulary of Tetum, however, was deemed too thin Portuguese was appointed as the de facto official language in the courts, the schools, and the government. The language policy thus in retroact welcomed back the language barrier to the gamut of difficult challenges that confront East-Timor today for Portuguese had always been considered a dying language after Indonesia had incorporated East-Timor in 1975. Yet, over half a decade later this very language has marginalized Tetum and Indonesian, the most widely spoken languages of the country (Mydans, 2007). In order to have a voice in either one of the public realms, the East-Timorese are therefore forced to pick up their Portuguese language skills, a tongue that for a long time seemed to be reserved for the older generation in the country

Unfortunately, it was precisely this linguistic and (post-)colonial landscape that formed the neglected décor of the UN peace support operations in Timor-Leste. It turned out that most part of the UN forces was ill prepared for the complex linguistic and cultural dimensions of their operational environment (Jones, 2005). The following two quotes of two interpreters who joined the UN peace support operations in Timor-Leste in respectively 1999-2000 and 2006-2007, illustrate that the military personnel was not trained to engage in cross-cultural communication encounters:

> "There was no institute to acquire an understanding of the languages and cultures of Timor-Leste. It was your own, individual responsibility. (…) Even basic things such as cultural politeness were not imparted during the UN mission. There was lots of offence given that was avoidable."

> "Sometimes it wasn't the language you were translating but the cultural behavior. I often needed to step in to ask UN forces not to do some things because those actions would have been perceived as very offensive by the locals."[2]

Because the UN troops failed to integrate adequate cultural and linguistic knowledge in their strategic approach, they unwittingly, and often unconsciously, dissociated themselves from the population. As a consequence of the fact that the troops could not communicate with the locals in a language that the latter could understand, the Australian contingents for instance were not as positively perceived by the East Timorese population as the international community hitherto thinks. Instead of being perceived as peacekeepers, they were often looked at by the local population as though they were the enemy. The Australians had thus taken over the negative image and role of the Indonesians.[3] The Australian contribution has even been called a 'fiasco' by some of the East Timorese on account of the fact that they failed to understand that the distinction between the eastern and western part of Timor-Leste, respectively the low context cultures of the Firaku and the Kaladi, called for different linguistic and thus cultural approaches. One of the explanations of the origins of this popular distinction between the easterners and westerners have been said to stem from Portuguese colonial times. The generalization describes the Firaku as talkative and stubborn, and the Kaladi as taciturn and slow. The source of the conflict of the rivalry between the rival ethno-linguistic groups may possible be set after the Second World War when both groups began trading in a local market in Dili. Over time, this commercial rivalry has degenerated into a default cultural division which structurally affects and evokes struggles between the groups. An example of how this cultural divide is absorbed (and even politically instrumentalised) into a mutually excluding mindset of both westerners and easterners can be found in the actions of youth gangs close after the military incident in 2006:

> "Streets in Dili were not safe for either Lorosa'e (eastern) or Loromonu (western) people. Illegal check points were set up by youth gangs from both sides, looking for people who came from the 'other' region. Because it was difficult to identify which person is from which region, the youth gangs used tetum (…) to determine where people came from (Trinidade, Castro, 2007, 11)."

Language was thus used as an identity marker, it enabled the gangs to differentiate between the people and to single out those who belonged to the 'other' group. The gap between the groups has also been widened by the perceived role of the different groups during the resistance struggle against Indonesia. The Firaku claimed to have won the war through their belligerence in the east. They accuse(d) the Kaladi for their permissiveness towards the pro-Indonesian militias. Although the Kaladi have rejected these allegations, the competing claims over the relative sacrifice and suffering still fan the contrast between the two groups. As long as the East-Timorese feel the need to rekindle these stereotype and derogatory

images of each other, the divide will fast become an insurmountable obstacle on the road to recovery for East-Timor.

Because the Australians did not sufficiently realize the precarious nature of this feud, they inadvertently failed to understand that different linguistic and cultural regions demanded for interpreters who specifically belonged to the involved ethno-linguistic group. An interpreter of Firaku descent for example would not match very well with the culture of western regions. One of the interviewees even claimed that UN troops would probably not receive any information if the request for assistance was mediated by the 'wrong' kind of interpreter. This example illustrates that the service of interpreters comprehends more than just a passing of words. Interpreters often proceed as advisors in situations in which people, and in this regard more specifically peacekeepers, find themselves unfamiliar and unfit (Edwards, Temple & Alexander, 2005; Bos & Soeters, 2005; Van Dijk & Soeters, 2008). It is precisely the advisory role of the interpreter which proves to be of importance to peacekeepers in the operational field. Local interpreters are experts in understanding the customs and values of the (regional) culture and in this capacity they are often more perceptive of signals than peacekeepers. Being the middleman of two (or more) linguistically and culturally different worlds, interpreters are able of 'fine-tuning' the low context approach of Western contingents to the need of the high context culture of (most of the) operational areas (Bos & Soeters, 2006). Whereas in Western countries straightforwardness and openness are received as prerequisites for efficient communication, non-Western-countries on the other hand often prefer a more subtle and indirect communicational approach (Hall & Hall, 1990, 3-9). It needs no say, that these two cultures are bound to collide when military contingents decide to operate according to their own cultural references. They, on the other hand, however, are likely to coincide in circumstances wherein an apposite interpreter is called upon to mediate between the two different worlds. On grounds of their linguistic and cultural knowledge, the interpreter thus holds a strong hand when it comes to softening the military 'tough talk' into more appropriate means of communication.

3. Reconciliation in East-Timor: Plight or Right?

Even the well-intended attempts of the Australians to enforce reconciliation upon the East Timorese were received with mixed emotions by some of the local population. The latter feared that the (con)quest for truth of the Australian troops and the UN initiative that soon followed thereafter to install truth and reconciliation commissions would not purify but pollute the tacit and tentative interpersonal relations that existed between people. Opening up recent wounds would tear up the whole of the country while leaving them in peace might have kept the country together. A personal experience of linguist Aone van Engelenhoven in this matter recounts of the following:

> 'At one night I heard machine gun shots. At first I thought the sound came from a movie that probably was playing in one of the other rooms of the building. The following morning, however, I learned that the repetitive sounds indeed had come from machine guns. A local bystander explained to me that there had been a riot and that Malayan soldiers had opened fire from out of their jeeps. Their bullets grazed the heads of the civilians. People were face down instantly. Next thing, the Malay soldiers jumped out of their vehicles, unarmed the rioters, collected their weapons and drove off as soon as the job was done. The balance was restored and the streets were calm again. The bystander nodded approvingly and said 'That's how it should be done'.[4]

Van Engelenhoven later came to understand that these and other manifestations of (controlled) violence without respect of persons brought about the peace and order that the Australian forces failed to procure. Objectionable and incomprehensible as this might seem from a Western point of view, violence in some cultures, and more specifically in smaller communities, can indeed under certain circumstances function as a meaningful social and cultural act (Jones, 2005, 82-83). Unlike the Australian effort to prove the contrary, Van Engelenhoven learned through his encounters with the local population that they rather did not want to find out who were guilty of committing crimes during the upheavals over the course of time because people were sometimes forced to alternately belong to conflicting forces in order to save their lives. Moreover, a single family often contained members of opposing political stands. An example of such a perilous family situation can be illustrated by the experience of Mohammed Carlos Soares:

> "In September 1999, Baucau´s Muslim community had to flee the militias whilst also fighting off possible accusations that they were in fact collaborating with the enemy. Muslims like Nur Slam and Mohammed Carlos Soares remember the panic and the chaos, and the sounds of gunshots ringing out across town as they fled. Carlos was in the clandestine movement and wanted to remain in Baucau. But Indonesian troops soon found him and threatened to harm his family unless they left for West Timor. At the refugee camps at the border, Carlos found himself in a precarious situation. His brother-in-law was a mid-level commander for for the Indonesian army in Baucau. That meant that the soldiers in West/Timor paid more attention to Carlos and his family. The troops became enraged when they found out about his involvement in the resistance movement. Fearing for his safety, Carlos secretly visited UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) in Kupang, hoping to find a way to return to east Timor. He was able to secure passage for both himself and his sister. "I had to arrange this without my brother-in-law knowing," says Carlos. "I was afraid he would found out and interfere"(Lee & Valerio, 2002, 56)."

Western attempts to interfere in this matter were therefore considered pointless as the complexity of the society of Timor-Leste would not allow for mediation of outside, read Western valued, parties. Although the committee of the in 2003 established Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation (CAVR) acknowledged the above mentioned anxiety towards for instance the public hearings of both eyewitnesses and perpetrators of massacres in the period of … , they nevertheless were convinced that East-Timor should as many nations before them '(…) come to the consensus that in order to leave the evils of the past behind and move forward and in order to heal the wounds inflicted in the past, it is necessary to open them and cleanse them. Only then will the wounds heal naturally and only in this way can we avoid the dangers of stinking, festering wounds under a cloth of fear.' (Timor-Leste Massacres, National Public Hearing). Despite the fact that both of the described accounts advocate and represent different approaches on how sentiment and resentment with the East-Timorese society should be dealt with, an implication of Van Engelenhoven's findings would nevertheless be that Western military organizations, the United Nations (UN), and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) could be even more effective if they, rather than molding the operational environment to their own liking, acquire an inside perspective on the local perception of the environment by adapting strategies that are more true to the complex reality of their operations. An example of such a strategy in this regard was aptly applied in a situation in which the distribution of humanitarian aid for the local population needed to be organized during a period within the UNTAET. In this particular context, a co-worker of Austcare, Australia's second largest non-governmental organization, who served as an advisor of the East Timorese government was assigned to organize high meetings between representatives of respectively the government, the military, UN forces, NGOs, and the local population. While all of the other parties commanded (at least a certain degree of) Tetum, the UN forces on the other hand were (literally) not prepared to communicate in the local language. Out of convention, and/or perhaps convenience, English therefore subsequently became the official language of the meetings. This ad hoc language policy, however, 'overruled' the local people and caused them to regrettably abandon the meetings. The East-Timorese people who wanted to attend the meetings after all did not command enough English to properly represent themselves and the administration moreover did not provide for an interpreter who could translate for them. The injustice of the situation soon contributed to the employment of interpreters and although their presence considerably improved the position of the local population during the meetings, the 'solution' was only a small adjustment in relation to the whole of the transformation the governmental advisor ultimately managed to realize. Instead of 'all English meetings', the advisor prioritized Tetum as the official language for the high meetings. From that moment on a remarkable development occurred in the attendance of the 'international' participants. By the time the transformation was completed and the meetings were held in Tetum and translated in English, the attendance of the international participants dropped spectacularly. This reversed process not only clearly outlined the transition and corresponding attendance of the meetings, it moreover painstakingly uncovered not the inability, but the sheer unwillingness of the international participants to adjust themselves to their cultural and linguistic environment. The advisor in question explained the striking development in the Western attendance as follows:

> "What the internationals tend to forget or don't know is that Tetum is both a language as well as a culture. It's an oral tradition. It is of great importance to East-Timorese people that everybody gets the opportunity to have their say and speak their mind. It's what their culture is about. A lot of the internationals are not familiar with the cultural background of the Timorese population. They get fed up with the long negotiations. They want action."[5]

The tangle of misunderstandings between the local East-Timorese and Western value and belief systems that has unintentionally been brought forth as the byproduct of the effort of all the (international) involved parties has thus not so much as consoled but corroborated the problem of a country that is in search of itself.

4. Conclusion

Although the UNTAET has facilitated the transition of East-Timor, the government has nevertheless not been able to fortify the initial steps on the road to recovery and peace. Although the past and present situation in East-Timor does not permit pinpointing a culprit for the stagnation of the peace-building process, it seems rather fair to state that a lack of cultural and linguistic understanding has prevented the international peacekeepers from playing a decisive role in the consolidating phase of the newly founded nation. Despite good intentions, the attempts of the UN, the NGOs, and the government to resolve the internal conflict have all failed to address the core of the problem. Problems that are rooted deep in the core of the East-Timorese society should therefore perhaps best be kept out of the hands of sympathetic but foreign parties and restored to the people who know the hearts and minds of their communities the best. The road to recovery is a quest for self-understanding which should belong to the authority and the identity of the East-Timorese themselves and it should therefore be addressed by the customs of their society so that they can build up confidence and through that rebuild the nation.

Notes

1 The percentages of the East Timorese population professing to be Catholics are derived from a radio interview with Rowena Lennox . http://www.abc.net.au/rn/religionreport/stories/2000/169312.htm

2 Both quotes are taken from two separate interviews with Australian respondents who functioned respectively as an NGO co-worker and government advisor. The telephone interviews were held in June, 2007.

3 The negative image of Australians was confirmed by a greater part of the interviewees. The antipathy, however, becomes specifically clear in the following fragment of a letter written by Dr. Geoffrey Hull, director of the National Institute of Linguistics in Dili, Timor Leste. In reaction to several (linguistic) misconceptions about Timor-Leste conveyed in a public online letter written by yet another Australian author, Dr Hull replied: *'(...) Is it any wonder that the Timorese judge quoted by Mr Deakin quipped that "the only people we dislike more than Australians are Indonesians"?* I'd say we're fast becoming the favorites for first place.' The last mentioned remark of Dr. Hull refers to the tenacity with which so many Australians seem to embrace their ignorance about the socio-historical and linguistic landscape of Timor-Leste. http://www.asianlang.mq.edu.au/INL?onlineopinion.html

4 This quote is a fragment of an interview held with Aone van Engelenhoven at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics on the 22nd of May, 2007.

5 Interview with Australian respondent who functioned as government advisor (see also note 2).

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Chapter 4

Chapter 4

Smooth Translation? Cooperation between Dutch Servicemen and Local Interpreters in Military Operations in Afghanistan

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1. Introduction

In '*The Punishment of Virtue*', activist and journalist Sarah Chayes displays a critical view of the developments inside southern Afghanistan after the collapse of the Taliban (Chayes, 2002). Chayes touches upon a matter that is of infinite importance to the success of military operations in Afghanistan:

> "But to my mind, the very worst breach of U.S. security lay with the interpretation and translation services the troops relied upon for all their interactions with the Afghans around them. I can remember only one soldier who spoke Pasthu. Local interpreters were required for the army's every move. And those interpreters were provided, again, by Razziq Shirzai [a local powerbroker]. (...) Whether by inclination or - as was often the case - by force, with physical abuse driving home the facts, the interpreters were Razziq's men, under his orders. The result was a severely distorted picture of the situation in the Afghan south and nearly unintelligible interactions between Americans and Afghans. The information U.S. forces were receiving was frequently inaccurate or deliberately misrepresented. The messages U.S. officers were trying to communicate to locals were either not getting through at all, or were, time and again, twisted to suit the Shirzais' ends (Chayes, 2002, 56)."

This article explores the significance of Chayes' grim picture of a corrupt 'language agency' namely the importance of linguistic skills within military operations. Chayes' discovery that the army's language skills did not meet the demands of the mission environment is not limited to the U.S. military only. On the contrary, it is the fate of almost every allied soldier deployed to Afghanistan and overseas operations in general. Research on language matters in the military has confirmed that the task to win the 'hearts and minds' is severely obstructed by the fact that soldiers do not sufficiently command the language and cultural customs of the local population. In order to gain a firm foothold in the mission area, military organizations therefore often need to rely on the cultural and linguistic expertise of local interpreters (Van Dijk & Soeters, 2008; Pouligny, 2006; Rubinstein, 2003; Rubinstein 2008). The recruitment of local interpreters, however, is a delicate matter for more reasons than Chayes describes in her book. Malpractice among language agencies is only one of the factors why soldiers reflect upon the merits but also on the 'costs' of the service of interpreters (Bogers, Van Dijk & Heeren-Bogers, 2010). The balance between the pros and cons of working with local translators trouble the military, because dependence on the knowledge of interpreters may, as the citation has illustrated, imply vulnerabilities that threaten the safety and success of the operation (Bos & Soeters, 2006, 261-269). After all, the local interpreters' role is boundary-spanning, connecting the international military organization to the local communities but at the same time bringing in dangers that threaten the interpreters as well as others in those communities.[1] Particularly in a dangerous and turbulent mission area as Southern Afghanistan such reflections on vulnerability could strain the relationship between soldiers and interpreters. In this article we study how servicemen perceive their cooperation with interpreters. What are their experiences regarding their cooperation with interpreters in the mission environment? And more specifically, what factors define the smoothness or the strains in the interaction with interpreters? These two key questions will be discussed in relation to the experience of representatives of a battle group (BG) and a provincial reconstruction team (PRT) of the Netherlands armed forces that have been deployed to Uruzgan, one of the troubled provinces in southern Afghanistan.

We rely on survey-data collected among military people, who had just returned from their mission as well as interviews conducted with soldiers and officers in the area of operations and back home in the Netherlands. Elsewhere we have reported research on the experiences of local interpreters themselves; these are other projects though, implying that these data cannot be connected to the data reported in this article (Bos & Soeters, 2006; Hoedemakers & Soeters, 2009). First, we will put the issue of language matters in the military in a historical perspective. Then we continue with the presentation and analysis of the data. We conclude with a reflection of limitations, future research and possible recommendations for improving military practice in the missions overseas. Given the fact that the issue of language matters in the military is still under-researched[2], we think this article provides a much-needed contribution to our knowledge of military operations far away from home.

2. Historical examples of the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters

Although linguistic capability today cannot be left out of the core of warfare, its importance, however, has long been forgotten in military procedures. While military history is full of examples which illustrate the influence of language within the theatre of war and the sometimes fatal consequences of linguistic incompetence and miscommunication, the military organization has only recently (re)valued the lessons that could be learned from the past. Two different yet comparable examples of the language barrier within military history representative for counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan to date are the Dutch Colonial Army in the Indonesian Archipelago and the Kit Carson Scouts in Vietnam. The multinational, multilingual composition of these contingents induced serious communication problems, and sometimes this occurred in a fatal way.

Dutch Colonial Army

In the case of the Dutch Colonial Army soldiers, not only had difficulties understanding their Western and indigenous comrades, their lack of linguistic skills also made it impossible to interact with the population (Van Dijk & Soeters, 2008, 307-310). In order to circumvent the hindrance of the language barrier the army called upon the support of local leaders who,

in return for personal privileges and village protection, assigned trackers and interpreters to the troops. A military officer writes the following about the use of interpreters in the supplement of the precepts for the policing task of the army in 1929 (our translation):

> "A disadvantage of the gathering of intelligence is the, often inevitable, use of interpreters. Because of our repeated relocation and actions in completely different regions, it was not possible to always command the vernacular and at the beginning of the operation linguistic knowledge of course is nil. Nevertheless, it is very useful to learn some words in advance. Then one already has some control over the interpreter, the latter will less likely dare to tamper and every now and then one can detect that he does not translate a question correctly. Of course, it is difficult for underdeveloped people to understand the intention of our sentence, they are not accustomed to translation, so that the question sometimes is completely distorted (Anonymous, 1929, 139)."

It was precisely because of the unfamiliarity with the area of operations and the local languages that soldiers were potentially vulnerable to subversive actions of local people. Reports therefore repeatedly insisted on a close watch of the movements of both the interpreter and scout, for their loyalty, as experience had learned, was not always a foregone conclusion. The supplement consequently conveyed numerous examples of local co-workers who tried to manipulate information during patrols and interrogations in order to serve their own interest or that of the opponent. A lack of awareness of the real intentions behind the apparent goodwill of the interpreter and scout could thus contribute to the downfall of the unit. Another officer in this regard reports the following (our translation):

> "In 1903 various patrols in Blang Pidië, mainly in the area of south Lho Pawoh, were led by a scout, a young Teukoe, whom later proved to belong to the opposition party. Presumably he was tasked to observe the customs of the patrol and its commander and to lure them into an ambush when possible. The trustee, a so called 'sure shed' whom only performed interpreter services, must have known that the scout was untrustworthy. Two years later, a lieutenant patrol commander recognised his former scout as a mobster who was put down by a repeating rifle (Anonymous, 1929, 119)."

Following these experiences, the official Dutch handbook of counterinsurgency for the military in the Archipelago therefore prescribed their troops to learn the basic grammar of the local vernaculars in order to overcome the potential deceit by locals (De Moor, 2003). Despite its practical value, the advice, however, was not always feasible for some of the vernaculars in the Archipelago were almost impossible to master. Christian Snouck Hurgronje, a Dutch Islam expert and chief advisor for indigenous affairs to the Dutch colonial administration, for instance deemed it necessary to develop a linguistic manual for military officers in order to come to grips with the otherwise impracticable Achenese language (Goebée & Adriaanse,

1957, 22). An important lesson of the past, in short, has thus demonstrated that dependence on interpreters in the mission environment could be eased but not excised by language training.

Vietnam War: the Kit Carson scout program

Two decades after the decline of Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia, American soldiers experienced similar cultural and linguistic problems during the Vietnam War. Whereas the Dutch Colonial Army at the time sought to govern regions by incorporating the power and party of local leaders, the American army reconnoitred the mission area by using former Vietcong soldiers in combat operations in South Vietnam's battlefields (Tovy, 2006). The scout program was founded by chance in 1966 when Vietcong fighters turned themselves over to a unit of the U.S. marines. When the Vietcong shortly thereafter spread rumours among the local population about the brutal torture and murder of one of their missing colleagues, the commander of the Marines decided to refute the rumour by sending the 'murdered' deserter and two other former Vietcong combatants to nearby villages to inform the people about the good treatment they had received by the Americans (Tovy, 2006, 78). Their mission was an instant success and led to a significant rise in the number of Vietcong deserters. After a local trial-run program in which the deserters were used as rank-and-file soldiers, an official program for the employment of former Vietcong as scouts was established in the entire operational area.

The program for the deserters, *Hoi Chanh* in Vietnamese, was named after the legendary hero Christopher ('Kit') Carson whose quasi-pacification missions along the American frontier in the nineteenth century reflected the situation in Vietnam (Tovy, 2006, 82). As the ideal American patriot Carson knew how to handle both the velvet and iron glove by learning not only the language and cultural customs of the Indians but also by striking against their sources of income and infiltrating their meeting places. It was precisely in the realm of these two tactical spheres that the role and position of the scouts within the American units in Vietnam was envisioned. After a strict selection procedure, a basic training on American warfare and weaponry and recurring loyalty tests (some scouts deserted back to the Vietcong and others turned out to be spies), the scouts were attached to their new units in which they received additional training to improve their English language skills. The extra training was necessary because the language barrier between the scouts and the American soldiers proved to be one of the few serious problems that appeared throughout the implementation of the program. Reports state that soldiers complained about the extraordinarily poor language skills of the scouts '(…) which kept them from carrying out even the most minimal essentials of communication between themselves and the commanders of the units' (Tovy, 2006, 89).

The gravity of the language barrier cannot be underestimated, for the primary assignment of the scout was to lead army units on patrol and to prevent them from falling into ambushes.

This was a task, which the scout could only fulfil when he was able to use his ties with the population to the advantage of his unit. The position of the scout in other words strongly depended on his ability to translate and transfer the gathered intelligence information to his commander. Despite the language barrier and the possibility of hidden agendas among the recruited scouts, the project was unique in a sense that it granted the Vietnamese scout the same benefits as the American soldier. The Kit Carson Scout program moreover was the only project that was generally endorsed by the Civil Operation and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) and the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) during the Vietnam War (Tovy, 2006, 90).

Language management in the military

When comparing the two historical examples, the function of scouts in military operations of the past does not seem to differ much from the tasks of interpreters and translators in the military today. Leaving moral-political considerations, semantics and operational differences aside, both scouts as well as today's interpreters are recruited by the military for the operational value of their environmental, cultural and linguistic knowledge. The rhetorical question: *'Is he [the scout] just an extra rifle or is he a second set of eyes and ears for the unit leaders?'* which at the time was raised during a US army conference on the use of scouts therefore seems to be relevant when applied to the use of today's interpreters (Tovy, 2006, 87). Before exploring how soldiers indeed perceive their interaction with interpreters, the historical examples demonstrate that linguistic capability, whether commanded by soldiers or their local co-workers, engenders powerful advantages for those who command the languages of both the military organization and the mission environment. As such, the experience of the Dutch Colonial Army and the Kit Carson Scouts readdresses the language barrier within the contemporary military by pointing out that if demands for linguistic personnel cannot be met within the organization itself, the latter should not shy away from the risks of local recruitment but rather trust on the cultural and linguistic benefit these ´scouts´ bring to the fore (Kilcullen, 2009).

In accordance with current research conducted by management scholars on the often strained relationship between parent and host-national companies, the military has come to acknowledge that language is the carrier of international communication and professional understanding (Van Dijk, 2008). Featuring strong resemblance to multinational corporations, the military organization moreover has increasingly experienced the conclusions of management studies which emphasize the corrosive effect of the language barrier on both native and non-native speakers and the power circuits that consequently arise in the wake of 'asymmetric' communicational processes (Feely & Harzing, 2003; Adler, 2002; Marschan-Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 1999; Hoon, Sun & Kline Harrison, 1996; Vaara, Tienari, Piekkari & Santti 2005). Despite the similarities with multinationals, the military, however, is strongly restricted in its options to resolve the problems caused by the language barrier (Resteigne & Soeters, 2009, 323-324; Van Dijk, 2008).

Whereas language training of personnel ideally is the most efficient instrument to streamline communication in regular multinational corporations, the reality of the international military organization, however, does not allow the development and implementation of language training programmes for all of today's military operations.[3] Instead of depending on linguistic personnel that has been trained within the setting of the organization, the expeditionary unit is forced to recruit local language experts that have been brought forth by the mission environment itself. Embedded and local interpreters thus form an important, if not the most vital link in the communication between the military and the local population (Hoedemakers & Soeters, 2009). It, however, is precisely this situation that defines the precarious relationship between the soldier and interpreter because their interdependency paradoxically affects the communication they seek to establish. It is widely recognised that a common culture and language enhance trust as they help coordinate shared expectations. Whereas most situations provide some clues for a person to coordinate mutual expectations, the detection of such markers is more difficult when the interacting parties belong to different linguistic, social, religious or ethnic groups (Brouckaert & Dhaene, 2004). Differences in background, such as between the soldier and interpreter, in other words can significantly impede the level of smoothness occurring in the process of communication. In order to understand the soldiers' experiences with intercultural communication in international missions abroad, the following paragraphs will look more closely into the perceptions of soldiers regarding their cooperation with interpreters. We focus on the experienced strains or smoothness (problems or lack thereof) in their interaction with the interpreters as well as on demographics and variables pertaining to cultural skills that can possibly explain the perceived aspects of working with local translators.

3. General description of the study's set-up

In 2008 a survey was conducted among servicemen of the Dutch armed forces who belonged to the Battle Group Task Force Uruzgan 4 (BG TFU4) and the Provincial Reconstruction Team 4 (PRT4) who had been deployed to Uruzgan in respectively July 2007-January 2008 and September 2007-March 2008. The respondents of the Battle Group were approached when they returned to the barracks after deployment. Following the request of their commander, all servicemen available at that time participated in the study; this is roughly half of the total workforce of the Battle Group. The 52 members of the PRT were requested to fill out the questionnaire via an email message that was sent to their home addresses; 50% of them (26) responded. The total sample consisted of 278 members of the BG TFU4 and 26 members of the PRT4 (N=304). These differences in size of the subsamples are in line with the size of workforce of the BG and the PRT.

67% of the members of the BG TFU4 (187 out of 278) and all of the members of the PRT4 (26) did have (frequent) contact with the local population through interpreters. Since this study seeks to investigate the factors affecting the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters the following paragraphs will only be based on the data of the respondents that have called upon the assistance of interpreters (total numbers hence are 187 + 26 = 213). In table 1 the demographics of this sample are displayed.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents who have worked with interpreters

	BG TFU4	PRT4	Total
N=	187	26	213
average age	25,1 years	36,6 years	26,4 years
Enlisted Men/NCO/CO	75,1% / 16,4% / 8,5%	3,8% / 61,5% / 34,6%	66% / 22,2% / 11,8%
Educational level: Low/Middle/High	25,8% / 54,5% / 19,7%	0% / 52,2% / 47,8%	22,9% / 54,2% / 22,9%
Previous Deployment Experience	61,4%	71,4%	62,4%

Of the total number of 213 respondents roughly two third were soldiers and one third were (non-commissioned) officers. A predominant part of the respondents were male: only 2 members of the BG TFU4 and 2 members of the PRT4 were female. The average age of the respondents in the Battle Group was 25 years and almost 37 years in the PRT. More than 62% of the respondents had fulfilled at least one foreign assignment before they were deployed to Afghanistan. In terms of education 23% had a low level, 54% a middle level and 23% a higher degree of education.[4] Members of the BG were on average younger, had a lower rank – they were predominantly soldiers whereas the members of the PRT were predominantly NCOs and officers -, and they had a lower educational level than the members of the PRT4; this is all in accordance with the actual differences in composition of Battle Groups and PRTs in Afghanistan.

The tasks of the units were very distinct of one another. The infantry units of the battle group were tasked to conduct reconnaissance operations throughout the Afghan Development Zone, escort their colleagues from the PRT, and protect the local population and military troops. Hence, they were tasked to conduct classical, core-military jobs, the more so as they were – irregularly but not infrequently - engaged in violent, hostile interaction with Opposing Military Forces (OMF). The members of the provincial reconstruction team, on the other hand, sought to establish reconstruction operations through contact with local and regional governments and NGOs. They were involved in encouraging and enabling the development of social and policing instances, the inventory of local needs, and the recruitment of local contractors in the implementation of local projects. The PRT's job – at least to a degree – resembles the activities of aid and reconstruction workers (Rietjens, 2008). Because of the observed differences in background and mission assignments the data of the BG TFU4 and PRT4 have been analysed separately.

Given the under-researched nature of this topic, we had to formulate our own items with respect to the interaction between the servicemen and the local interpreters. We formulated statements about the cooperation with interpreters involving the importance of these contacts for the execution of the soldier's assignment (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the soldier's impression about the interpreter's service (1= very negative; 5= very positive), and possible problems related to the interaction with interpreters (frequency, seriousness, and personal involvement in problems). We also added 15 items to register the soldiers' evaluation of their interaction with the interpreters. In addition, we asked the respondents to fill out a list of cross-cultural competencies. We used 62 items from the so called FORCE-IT questionnaire, measuring cross-cultural competence grouped into scales tapping seven dimensions of cultural competence, i.e. *flexibility*, *openness*, *respect*, *cultural empathy* (sensitivity), *emotional stability*, and *social initiative*, *respect* and *trust*.[5] Each dimension consisted of eight or ten items.

Although the survey included items, which addressed the cooperation with embedded interpreters (Dutch citizens of Afghan descent) and local interpreters separately, members of the BG, apart from a few high ranked officers, did not use the service of embedded interpreters. The analysis therefore restricts itself to the cooperation with local interpreters. During the time of the study, the Dutch hired roughly 80 (embedded and local) interpreters for their activities in the Uruzgan province, which is about 1 for every 20-25 servicemen. Most of them were local translators, young adults (aged 21-23) mastering the English language and originating from urban regions such as Jalalabad, Kabul and Kandahar. The Dutch military has a general rule to have each and every patrol or action outside the compound being accompanied by at least one interpreter. Of course, translators are always present in conversations, meetings and negotiations of members of the PRT with representatives of the local population and authorities.

The intention of the following is to provide an indication – based on the survey data – of how soldiers and (non-commissioned) officers of two different units, in the same military operation within a relatively same time period, experienced their cooperation with local interpreters. In addition, we have conducted a large number of in-depth interviews among Dutch military personnel as to their experiences with interpreters. Passages from these in-depth interviews with members of the BG and the PRT have been used in the text in order to illustrate and complement the quantitative findings of the survey-study.[6]

4. Findings

4.1 Experiences of BG TFU4 in working with local interpreters.

Although cooperation with interpreters was not prominently present (positive or negative) in the respondents' spontaneous reactions about mission experiences, the wide majority of the 187 members of BG TFU4 found contact with local interpreters somewhat to very important (85%) and (very) positive (68%). 77% of the respondents indicated that they almost never experienced problems with local translators. Of the 23 % of the respondents who did encounter problems in their interaction with local interpreters, 44% rated these problems as (somewhat) serious. In other words, about 10% of the respondents of the Battle Group indicated that they had experienced somewhat serious problems with the local translators. A first stepwise regression analysis (using reported problems in terms of frequency, character and the involvement of soldiers as predictors) indicated that variance in the experience in contact with local interpreters (positive/negative) was partly, but significantly explained by the problems that the respondents had experienced ($R^2 = 0.09$; df 1.180; $p<.01$). Of course, this is not a very surprising result.

As mentioned before, respondents were asked to evaluate their relation with the interpreters on 15 items. A principal component factor analysis revealed a structure in the number of items that could be related to the soldier's experience with local interpreters. On grounds of the structure that was discovered (explaining 53,6% of the variance), three factors could be specified:

* *professional use of the service of the interpreter* (based on the following 5 items: my relation with the interpreter was part of my job; was strictly focused on a literal translation of the spoken message; was focused on the explanation of local customs and traditions; was necessary for my professional performance; was strictly professional of nature)

* *general satisfaction about the cooperation with the interpreter* (based on the following 6 items: my relationship with the interpreter was satisfactory because I could understand him well; was good because I was convinced that he reproduced the information correctly; was valuable because he explained how the received and translated information should be understood; was pleasant because of his personality; was optimal because I trusted him completely; was cordial of nature), and

* *troublesome aspects in working with the interpreter* (based on the following 4 items: my relation with the local interpreter was uncomfortable because he was an outsider to the military unit; was troublesome because of cultural differences; was risky because he was threatened by outside parties; was difficult because I suspected him of a hidden agenda).

A reliability analysis on the above-mentioned scales resulted respectively in Cronbach's alphas of 0.84, 0.71 and 0.64, which indicate acceptable degrees of reliability. The mean scores and standard deviations of the three scales - with a theoretical range of 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree) - are respectively: 3.4/ 0.72 (professional use), 3.1/ 0.59 (general satisfaction) and 2.7/ 0.56 (troublesome aspects). These results underline the impression we inferred from the previous findings namely that the soldiers in general value the contribution of the local interpreters in a professional and positive way. Despite this general impression of professionalism and general satisfaction, there are also problems in the interaction with the local interpreters; these, however, are less prominent than the professional use and general satisfaction with the interpreters.

Regarding the relation between these 3 'evaluation'-scales and the nature of the soldiers' experience in working with local interpreters (negative/positive), stepwise regression confirmed that there indeed is a correlation between the soldier's experience with local interpreters on the one hand and *the general satisfaction about the cooperation with the interpreter* and *troublesome aspects in working with the interpreter* on the other ($R^2=0,20$; df 1.67; $p<.01$). The beta weights for the predictors are respectively 0.36 and -0.28. The last correlation indicates - not surprisingly - that those servicemen who have reported troublesome aspects in working with the interpreter are less positive in their general experiencing of those contacts. Only the scale evaluating *the professional use of the service of the interpreter* did not produce a significant contribution in this analysis.

We see the same pattern emerging when we put these three variables in a series of three stepwise regression models explaining the soldiers' experience in working with local interpreters. We inserted respectively 1) age and education only, then 2) age, education and the four cross-cultural competencies that had shown satisfactory degrees of reliability (i.e. openness [alpha = 0.79], respect [alpha = 0.68]; cultural empathy (sensitiveness) [alpha = 0.80] and social initiative [alpha = 0.79][7], and 3) age and education, the four cross-cultural competencies and the three 'evaluation'-scales. There were no problems of multicollinearity, since the intercorrelations ranged from zero to .51, and were, hence, not very high. Table 2 shows the results of these analyses.

The analyses show that among the respondents from the Battle Group age nor educational level play a significant role in explaining the soldiers' experience with the local interpreters. We tend to think this is partly a result of the compressed composition of this sample: the majority is young and has a relatively low educational level; hence, the methodological problem of "restriction of range" comes to the fore, generally reducing the size of correlations (Sands, Alf & Abrahams, 1978, 747-750). We will turn to this later, when we will be studying the older and more educated PRT-respondents. Contrary to age and education, some of the cross-cultural competencies, however, do play a role in this analysis on the data from the Battle Group-respondents. It shows that the cross-cultural competence of 'openness' is important in experiencing the contact with local interpreters (model 2) as are the general satisfaction of working with local interpreters and – in a negative sense – troublesome aspects of working with them (model 3). We already saw the latter two effects in the previous analysis.

TABLE 2: Stepwise regression models explaining variance in the BG-respondents' experience of their contact with the local translators (N=187).

	MODEL 1 BETA	MODEL 2 BETA	MODEL 3 BETA
AGE	.09	.08	.14
EDUCATION	.04	.06	-.14
OPPENNESS	---	.29*	.24+
RESPECT	---	.04	.06
CULTURAL EMPATHY	---	-.07	-.15
SOCIAL INITIATIVE	---	-.20	-.14
PROFESSIONAL USE	---	---	.08
GENERAL SATISFACTION	---	---	.28*
TROUBLESOME ASPECTS	---	---	-.45**
ADJUSTED R- SQUARE	.01	.11	.34

+ $0.05 < p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Hence, the only cross-cultural competence that is significantly connected to the soldier's experience in working with interpreters appears to be the competence of 'openness'; this competence describes a person's open-mindedness towards out-group members and his or her susceptibility to cultural norms and values of others. There is one more cross-cultural competence that shows a remarkable even though not significant result in this analysis. The competence 'social initiative' shows negative betas with the experience of the contact with the interpreters (model 2 and 3). This result would imply that those servicemen, who show a certain aptitude to approach others and other situations in a lively way and to take initiative, experience their contact with local interpreters as more negative. This is a bit surprising. We tend to interpret this as an indication of a certain competition between the translators and those soldiers who are good at taking social initiatives, a competition between the two parties, we have seen before in other studies (Hoedemakers & Soeters, 2009).

The quantitative analysis would lead us to disregard the factors age and education, which would be unjustified because of the "restriction of range" problem we mentioned before. Indeed, in our qualitative study a diffuse image emerges, in which soldiers try to reflect in a more 'comprehensive approach' by connecting and complementing factors such as age, educational level and experience, in order to understand the soldiers' outlook on local interpreters. As such, the implementation of openness, as the following quote of a company commander illustrates, seems to be relevant when applied to members of the in-group as well.

> "Look, interpreters have their whims and fancies but so do we… so that doesn't surprise me anymore. But if you treat them like dirt or as something dangerous, interpreters will lose their surplus value. (…) So, you'll need to steer a middle course and that's the hardest thing to do for young adults. If you have no experience of life and no experience in general to handle these situations and you are confronted with such a guy [interpreter] of whom you have heard all kinds of wild stories than that's really hard to handle. People need time to get accustomed to that. Think about 3 to 4 weeks before people learn to do that. The most important reason is that people in their twenties haven't seen so much of the world yet. They see these long bearded men and women dressed in burkha's for the first time in their lives and then imagine an interpreter who's telling you about these things and what you're doing wrong. And when you're in your twenties and not so very self confident and get to deal with this on top of the excitement of being deployed to Afghanistan than it's really difficult to remain civil to the interpreter. They really have to learn that. Interpreters most often receive the short end of the soldier's patience. Do that once to an interpreter and next time he will have less trust in you. It's an interaction and before you'll know it you're in for it, because that's how problems between people arise. (…) From a cultural point of view you have absolutely nothing in common with interpreters so that's what you need to work on, but at the same time that's not what you came for as a twenty year old. You need to get your vehicles ready, instruct your men. There's just so much you need to do, but when you have experienced that once already you know that you will have a little chat with the interpreter ten minutes before you'll go on patrol and that things will work out fine (Anonymous BG company commander, 2008)."

When applied to members of the in-group, the competence of openness thus can be perceived as a form of social and cultural empathy, which enables soldiers to mentor comrades in their understanding of the local interpreter.

4.2 PRT4 experiences in working with (local) interpreters

Similar analyses of the data of the Battle Group were applied to the 26 members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team who participated in the research. All PRT-respondents had contact with local interpreters during their deployment, most of them (more than 84%) on a weekly or daily basis. Although the respondents generally judged their experiences with interpreters as positive, problems with local interpreters did occur according to slightly more than half of the PRT4 members (54%). The problems mostly concerned incidents, but according to 3 respondents (10%) problems happened more often. The nature of the (incidental) problems with local interpreters was serious and involved the soldier personally according to more than half of the PRT members. We have no specific information about the nature of the incidents referred to in these data, but based on other studies we can attribute these incidents to problems of trust ("does this guy really say everything?" "is his translation

correct?”), rivalry (“who is in charge here?”) and/or task ambiguity (“is the interpreter a translation machine or a language mediator?”) (Hoedemakers & Soeters, 2009; Bos & Soeters, 2006).

Through a simple correlation analysis, it was possible to determine that the soldiers’ experience with local interpreters was correlated with the occurrence of problems during their interaction. Frequency, seriousness, as well as the soldier’s involvement in problems correlated negatively with a positive experience of contact with local interpreters. Especially the gravity of problems was of importance: the more serious the nature of problems, the less positive the experience of contact with local interpreters was ($r=-.47$; df 1.19; $p<.05$). It moreover appears that personal involvement in problems was more prominent when soldiers had more frequent contact with local interpreters ($r=.55$; df 1.18; $p<.05$).

The PRT-respondents endorsed the hypothesis that a satisfactory cooperation as well as a professional attitude towards local interpreters is of importance for the establishment of a trusting relationship. General satisfaction about the cooperation in particular appeared to be somewhat connected with the PRT experience of contact with interpreters. Although this connection was – given the small sample size - not significant ($r=.32$; df 1.23; NS), interviews with PRT members in general tend to confirm the hypothesis that trust between soldiers and local interpreters often is positively influenced and reinforced by the satisfaction and professionalism experienced by *both* parties. A PRT commander in this regard told that:

> “If you know people longer like Tassal, then you can discuss that we have a shura with representatives of the region. (...) He knows with what kind of intent we want to go there and that’s what you see in the way he acts as an interpreter. But I didn’t do that with other interpreters. These young guys who arrived at the very last. Well, you’re not going to brief them intensively about what you’re planning to do, you just keep them a bit in the dark. You need to have built a trusting relationship with an interpreter before you can involve him in your assignment and he must also be capable to live up to the task. There were a couple of interpreters, well they just didn’t get the picture of what we were doing there. And they didn’t even master their English properly. I don’t think it’s wise to take a risk at that point. So, yes building a trusting relationship depends for a part on the quality of the interpreter. The guys who just barely make it, you’ll just keep your distance to them in comparison to those who are intellectually on a high level, who are driven, interested in your mission, and who command the English language. And if you have a satisfactory relationship with your interpreter you’ll naturally have contact outside of the mission assignment as well. You’ll drink a cup of coffee together and discuss things. Cause those men are very surprised about the ways of our society. (...) A world opens for them. We also watched DVD’s on a notebook for instance. Tassal really enjoyed that. We did that sometimes with the other interpreters and then you instantly saw the divide. Some of them then just pulled out and others showed interest and wanted to know something about you as well (Anonymous PRT mission team commander, 2008).”

Are there any other factors influencing the PRT soldiers’ experience with interpreters? Of the obvious factors age, education, and previous deployment experience only education correlated almost significantly ($r=.44$; df 1.20; $p<.06$). This suggests that particularly the higher educated members of the PRT have experienced the contact with local interpreters as more pleasant. A possible explanation for the significance of the factor education in contact with local interpreters may be the fact that individuals with a higher level of education tend to be more cross-culturally competent (Matsumoto, LeRoux, Robles & Campos, 2007). In this line of thought higher educated PRT members are, for instance, probably more susceptible to the cultural values of hierarchy and respect for the elderly within the Afghan society. Openness towards these cultural values may consequently result in a more pleasant working relationship between the parties (Torikai, 2009, 1-3). Consistent with this idea is the finding that especially the intercultural competencies of respect and cultural empathy correlate significantly with the experience PRT members have had with local interpreters (respective correlations are $r=.68$ and .49; df1.25; $p<.05$).

4.3 Comparing results between members of BG TFU4 and PRT4

The experience with local interpreters is significantly more positive for members of the PRT (mean 4.3) than BG soldiers (mean 3.7) who have cooperated with interpreters ($t= 3.90$; df 206; $p<.001$). Whereas possible explanations as age, education and rank between the members of the PRT and the BG seem obvious, none of the mentioned variables within the BG, however, seem to be directly linked with the soldier’s experience with local interpreters. Plausible explanations for the differences between the PRT and BG sample consist respectively of (1) a different working environment and relationship with local interpreters, including perhaps also differences in the skills of the interpreters allocated to either the BG or the PRT; (2) the readiness to invest in a trusting relationship with local interpreters; (3) an increased level of intercultural competence among PRT members and (4) a more adequate preparation prior to working with interpreters during the military mission.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Examples of operational experiences of soldiers who have been deployed to culturally and linguistic countries other than their own, have learned that a description of the interpreter as an invisible and neutral non-person is untenable. On the contrary, for contemporary counterinsurgency it is of key importance that the interpreter is a present and resourceful translator of the linguistic and cultural needs of both the military organization and the local population. The service of the interpreter, therefore, embodies the linguistic and cultural capabilities of the soldier as well as his or her communicational intentions. As such the

person and position of the interpreter strongly depend on the extent to which the interpreter is able to meet the serviceman's expectations.

In this study we have attempted to create some awareness of the importance of language issues in military operations overseas, particularly with respect to the interpersonal dynamics between international servicemen and host nation interpreters. We found that this is an under-researched area in military studies. Our study is a first quantitative attempt in this regard, with data limited to the experiences of the servicemen only. This necessitates future research that will include the perceptions of both the servicemen and translators at the same time. Only in such a research design, the real interpersonal dynamics between the two parties will be clarified. New studies would also need to address the vulnerable role of the interpreters, being *in-between* two opposing factions in the area of operations. Because of this precarious position, their fate after the international military mission has ended, but also the recruitment, security and staffing conditions during the missions should be taken into consideration, by both researchers and HR policy makers of the armed forces participating in the missions. Hence, there is still a lot to be done with respect to this particular aspect of military operations.

Our study – limited as it may be – has demonstrated that the soldiers' experiences in working with local interpreters are determined among other things by the nature of the work (core-military tasks versus reconstruction tasks) and the cross-cultural competencies of the military person. Military organizations – as well as their leadership – should, therefore, be aware of the desired cooperation between servicemen and interpreters across the various components of the military organization and pay attention to the inherent precarious dynamics between the two parties. Military organizations should also pay attention to the level of required cultural competencies of its individual members. They should take appropriate measures to achieve the required degree of cross-cultural sensitivity among their personnel, through selection if possible and specific pre-mission training for all.

Cultural empathy of the soldier defines the smoothness of the cooperation with the interpreter. Respect for the latter is indispensable for the military to gain access into the foreign, unfamiliar (Afghan) society. The soldiers' ability to feel comfortable about the translation process on the one hand, and the general conduct of the interpreters as well as support of their position on the other hand, could be the initial step in the process of local cooperation. Ultimately, the quality of the relation between the international military and the host nation population might very well define the course of success for the whole of the military campaign (Rietjens, Bollen, Khalil & Wahidi, 2009). After all, words - if well chosen - can silence guns.

Notes

1 For a more theoretical approach about the boundaries of organizations, including the boundary-setting and boundary-spanning mechanisms, see Scott (1992), especially chapter 8. To get an idea of the pressure and dangers local interpreters are exposed to, see Soeters and Johnson (2012).

2 For instance, in a recently published, highly interesting sociological portrait of the American soldiers in Iraq, we cannot find the words "language" or "interpreters" in the index; there is an occasional reference to cross-cultural interaction and the use of translators (Ender, 2009). In Rubinstein's work on peacekeeping we cannot find the words "language", "interpreters", or "translators" in the index either (Rubinstein, 2008). In the volumes of *Armed Forces and Society*, there is regularly mention of communication issues in multinational missions, but seldom one can find reference made to translators and interpreters in communication processes with the host nation people.

3 The U.S Department of Defense has created innovative venues to increase the linguistic proficiency of the workforce by bringing personnel into the organization who already possess language skills and regional expertise. The heritage-recruiting plans are revolutionary for the Department has developed comprehensive outreach programs with colleges, universities, and professional and heritage associations to recruit (civilian) key language-skilled individuals. One of the successes that these recruitment programs have brought forth is the 2006 (09L) Interpreter/Translator program in which individuals from heritage Arabic, Dari, and Pastho communities served in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

4 Completed highest education: Low=none to Lower Vocational Education; Middle=Lower General Education and Intermediate Vocational Education; High=Higher Vocational Education up to University.

5 The FORCE IT62 questionnaire is a combination of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) and two sub-scales pertaining to respect and trust developed by Richard de Ridder. The MPQ is described in (Van der Zee & and Van Oudenhoven, 2000; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2001).

6 Andrea van Dijk has conducted 70 interviews with Dutch servicemen, national, and local interpreters both in the Netherlands (after returning from deployment in Afghanistan) and in Uruzgan in Southern Afghanistan, the area of operations itself. Her main focus in these interviews is on the development of trust between both parties.

7 We had to delete the cross-cultural competencies "flexibility", "emotional stability" and "trust" because the alphas of those scales were less than .60.

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Chapter 5

Chapter 5

A Small Sociology of Interpreters: The Role and Position of Interpreters in Conflict Situations

Andrea van Dijk

1. Introduction

> "I was the tongue and ears of the military, but I received no recognition, commitment or whatsoever (Anonymous ISAF-6 interpreter, 2007)."

This statement, taken from an in-depth interview with an embedded interpreter who was deployed in Afghanistan, captures the central theme of this chapter: the tension between the formal position of both national and local interpreters within the military organization and the actual role they perform during military operations. In no uncertain terms the quote indicates that there is an apparent discrepancy between the interpreters' self-attribution and the manner in which his qualities are appreciated by the representatives of the military organization. The interpreter characterized himself as 'the tongue and ears' of the soldiers thereby implying that the interpreter is more than just a translator of words (Bos & Soeters, 2006; Baker, 2010). In a figurative yet accurate sense the quote seems to suggest that the interpreter catches and conveys contextual notions and insights that otherwise would have remained unobserved by a military which, in the eyes of the interpreter, is not equipped to detect such sensitivities.

The metaphor which the interpreter used to describe the significance of his cultural and linguistic potential and the subsequent complaint about the lack of acknowledgement he thereof received, are not confined to the experience of this particular individual alone. The autoethnographic narratives that will be explored throughout this chapter will demonstrate that this perception is commonly shared by interpreters who have worked in situations of violent contention. Historical evidence, moreover, also demonstrates that the problem of the 'invisibility' of the interpreter is pervasive throughout history (Delisle & Woodsworth, 1995; Mairs, 2011, 66, 80). Greek and Latin historical sources, for example, rarely mention the role and performance of interpreters because their linguistic knowledge was seldomly regarded as a professional accomplishment (Mairs, 2011, 66). Those interpreters who actually were mentioned in historical sources often performed roles that went beyond language mediation such as the role of messenger, guide, broker, diplomatic envoy or military adjutant (Peretz, 2006, 451). Besides language capability, these roles also required local and cultural knowledge and even negotiating and managerial skills. Instead of inspiring admiration, their behavior was often described as suspicious and treacherous (Mairs, 2011, 71-72). This portrayal of ancient interpreters was rather ironic since only highly trusted individuals were selected to act as interpreters in order to ensure confidentiality and cooperation between political factions (Mairs, 2011, 78; Peretz, 2006, 461-462). The trust that was placed in these intermediaries therefore was not completely free of ambivalence itself because it also made interpreters easy targets who could get attacked from all sides (Mairs, 2011, 67). Death, injury, capture, or being put up for ransom were some of the dangers that ancient interpreters could face as a result of their difficult position, and their implication in webs of conspiracy and missions into foreign territory (Mairs, 2011, 68, 75-76).

A later period in history learns that interpreters were crucial for the purpose of territorial expansion (Mairs, 2011, 78-79). Although interpreters yet again were seldomly mentioned in official documents, there nevertheless are some evocative examples that illustrate the versatility of the interpreter. During the discovery of America in the 16th century, the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortès for instance was well aware of '(...) the importance of having adequate interpreters to assist them in communicating with the radically different peoples they encountered' (Bowen, 1995, 255). The interpreters who accompanied Cortès' exploration of the New World undeniably occupied a powerful position by serving as his 'tongue and ears' (Bowen, 1995, 262). This can be illustrated by the following quote:

> "It immediately seemed to Cortès that Aguilar might become the interpreter whom he needed. Aguilar spoke Chontal Maya. His Spanish was rusty, as might expected, after eight years in the wilderness, and he never completely recovered it. But he was nevertheless immensely useful. Aguilar's stories about human sacrifice among the Mayas must have cast a shadow over many conquistadors' enthusiasm, as well as strengthening their sense of Christian mission (Hugh, 1993, 164)."

Apart from the fact that the knowledge of the interpreters was used to 'enable' the conquistador's imperialistic and Christian conviction to conquer and proselytize the Maya people, this historical example also seems to confirm that the interpreters' eyes and ears indeed were a powerful means that enhanced the efficacy of the people they served. Another example from this rather infamous era of history concerns the unenviable reputation of Cortes' female interpreter and mistress Doña Marina who is best known as 'La Malinche'. Malinche's career is illustrative for the vulnerabilities that interpreters face who don't belong to the formal military and bureaucratic hierarchies (Mairs, 2011, 79). This Nahuatl woman spoke various vernaculars because of the years she had spent in slavery among several indigenous Mexican people. She was baptized by her Spanish captors and learned their language. As a result of her proficiency she was employed as an intermediary between the conquistadores and the indigenous people (Mairs, 2011, 78-79). This was both a difficult and ambiguous position because as an interpreter she did not only had to pass on unwelcome and blatantly disrespectful messages that conflicted with local mores, she acted on her own initiative as Cortes' spy and informer as well. Especially when it concerned the enemies of her own people, she wasn't afraid to play it high or dirty. This stance contributed to her persisting reputation of a betrayer of the Mexican natives. Up until this day, the terms '*malinchismo*' and '*malinchista*' respectively mean 'foresaking one's own in order to embrace the new and foreign' and 'someone who has transgressed the boundaries of perceived group interest and values' (Mairs, 2011, 79). The ambivalence of La Malinche becomes even more significant when one realizes that this 'willing whore of the Spanish' in fact is the very ancestress of the Mestizo, a name still proudly carried by the majority of today's Mexicans, as she gave birth to Cortes' eldest son who thereby became the first of its people.

Just like the explorers of the past depended on the linguistic and cultural expertise of their interpreters when they encountered the unknown along their journey, the deployed soldiers of today often need the support of interpreters in order to establish contact with local people in foreign territories. Therefore, it is all the more striking to discern that it is precisely the role and position of the interpreter within the military organization which, according to the quoted interpreter himself, seems to be perceived as being of a secondary order.

This chapter seeks to examine the 'tongue and ears' experience through the written accounts of several authors who had once operated as interpreters themselves. But before taking up this narrative analysis, it is interesting to learn whether this grim assessment of the interpreter is a common outlook within the general history of the service of interpreters.

2. A short history of interpreting

In answering the above-mentioned question, we must once more address the phenomenon of invisibility in the history of interpreters. Although the role and the position of the interpreter has been a constant subject of social research within translation and interpretation studies, there are, as noticed before, not many written accounts about the life and works of interpreters who have operated in the past (Roland, 1999, 7-8). This is quite extraordinary once one is aware that we could not have had any access to or knowledge of our history without the intervention of interpreters. There are two main reasons that sum up why interpreters have been largely ignored in the recording of history. First, there is the fact that influential people of the past seldom thought it worthwhile to record the name and intervention of an interpreter. Secondly, it is understandable that historians in the composition of their books acquit themselves of the duty to '(…) include every intriguing tidbit they may uncover' (Roland, 1999, 8). In addition, there is also the given of the primacy of the written text over the spoken word and the social status of the ancient interpreters, who were often ethnic and cultural hybrids, women, slaves or members of a lower caste, that could explain why interpreters throughout history have been overlooked (Bowen, 1995, 246). Forgotten and neglected as the interpreters of the past might have been, they nevertheless have contributed considerably to our understanding of international affairs and diplomatic history. After all, without the mediation of interpreters there could have been no such thing as contact between linguistically diverse nationalities through time or across geographical boundaries.

Since of old, interpreters have escorted individuals and organized formations on their missions and enabled them to establish contact with the inhabitants of these faraway regions. Who were these individuals who performed the job of interpreter and how were they recruited? In the past the question of becoming an interpreter was more a case of chance than of choice. The most fortunate circumstance to become an interpreter was when one

was brought up in a bilingual environment by parents of different nationalities. A bilingual upbringing granted persons the opportunity to turn their linguistic capacity into economic advantage (Roland, 1999, 9). And if one did not make a profit out of one's linguistic talent himself, the powerful but often linguistic inept elite within ancient societies exactly knew how to do so by selecting and training young (wo)men for the job of interpreter (Roland, 1999, 11).

Circumstances such as the abovementioned, in which linguistic competence was a matter of upbringing or training, made out only a part of the other and often less pleasant conditions that determined the fate of individuals who were forced to become interpreters. Imagine for example enslaved people whom were ordered by their master to act as an interpreter and had to translate their own vernacular, or natives (like Doña Marina) whom after being taken captive were charged to learn the language of their captors so that they in time could serve as their interpreters (Roland, 1999, 11; Bowen, 1995, 259; Mairs, 2011, 78-79). Whenever coercion was the decisive determinant in the appointment of an interpreter, the servitude of the latter towards their 'master' was seldom one of unconditional loyalty. This category of interpreters was often only servile as long as their interests, or that of their people, were not subordinated to or sabotaged by the interests of their master. The kidnapping of two Indians in the 16th century by Francisco Cordoba illustrates the literally fleeting character of their imposed servitude. After they were baptized, trained, and given Spanish names, the captives were taken back to Cuba where one of them died. The remaining interpreter was assigned to the next expedition of Cortès but he made a run for it as soon as he saw an opportunity to escape:

> "Leaving the Spanish clothes he had been given by his captors hanging in a palm grove, Melchior ran off with the people of Tabasco and advised them to attack the Spaniards (Bowen, 1995, 258-259)."

Forcing persons to act as an interpreter clearly was not without risk. The brutality of the kidnapping and the conceit with which the docility of the interpreters was mistaken for loyalty could, as the above-mentioned example illustrates, backfire against the conquistador's intention to use the interpreters' knowledge for his expansionism. Instead of relying on force, other more sophisticated strategies were required to meet the need for interpreters. New recruits for the job were found in either small groups of people that were already integrated into the native culture of the expeditionary environment or individuals who were tactically placed there for that specific purpose. Bowen in this regard mentions the existence of Norman interpreters, called *truchements*, in the early 16th century in Brazil, and French resident interpreters in New France which is now known as Canada in the early 17th century. Being not only familiar with the language of the indigenous people but also with their customs and their way of thinking, the recruits of both groups functioned as cultural intermediaries who, unlike the colonizers, could win the sympathy and confidence of the

locals. Because of their longtime presence within the indigenous community, the *truchements* and resident interpreters were perfectly suited to intermediate between the settlers and the local population serving at once as guides, explorers, diplomats, liaison officers, and traders (Bowen, 1995, 257, 259). But again, the colonizers experienced that the interpreters could not be coerced into cooperation. The French missionary Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon in Brazil for instance learned that his effort to impose strict moral standards upon the interpreters resulted in the rebellion and desertion of the trailblazers. It turned out to be a costly miscalculation, for the missionary could not establish any authority or make any headway without the intervention of the interpreters. Without their support, the missionary lost his influence over the local population and this eventually led Villegagnon to abandon the evangelization and quicken his return to Europe (Bowen, 1995, 257).

The examples taken from the early history of interpreting show that the service of interpreters was seldom restricted to a strict verbal or written translation of words (Mairs, 2011, 71; Peretz, 2006, 452). The task of the interpreter often encompassed a tactful and tentative inquiry of the candor of the conversation partner as well as the sounding out of proper occasions to initiate topics of discussion. The interpreter, in other words, had a powerful and important hand in the proceeding of affairs. It is precisely this advantage of the interpreter in negotiations which paradoxically casts a shadow over the integrity of his actions (Mairs, 2011, 80). The suspicion that military principals in this regard can have towards the moral integrity and hence loyalty of their interpreter will be taken up in more detail further on in this chapter. For now, it perhaps suffices to say that, although every talent can be misused for evil business, '(...) it is quite possible for a linguist, particularly in wartime, to grossly abuse his powers, or, at least, to abet an unworthy cause' (Roland, 1999, 172).

By entering upon the question about the moral obligation of the interpreter during wartime, we run into another peculiarity within the history of interpreting which is that there is even less recorded about military interpreters. The reference books that are consulted for this particular paragraph only sparsely mention the role and position of the interpreter within the army. The descriptions of the recruitment and variety of tasks of military interpreters within these books, however, render significant similarities with the circumstances of the rather diplomatic interpreters in the ancient time. Just like the 'tongue and ears' of the conquistadors were employed to support the reconnaissance of new frontiers, military interpreters, within their specific contextual environment and mission assignment, were needed to '(...) making and keeping allies, determining the enemy's position and plans, overseeing conquered territories and negotiating with the enemy (...) and last but not least [they] were required for communication within the same, but multilingual army' (Bowen, 1995, 263). Similarly to the experience of ancient interpreters, becoming a military interpreter often also was a matter of chance. Soldiers who happened to know the language needed for communication, or (foreign) civilians who were recruited for that purpose, were, without much training, placed in the position of interpreter (Bowen, 1995, 252, 263).

Unfortunately, as was stated earlier, there are not many written accounts about the experiences of individuals who were thrown into the job of interpreter. A rarely examined and scarce source which taps into this niche and which might be of value for the subject of this research study, however, can be found in the self-narratives of the 'hands-on' experts themselves. Through a close reading of different yet comparable narrative accounts, the following paragraph will look more closely into the experience and observations of military interpreters during their involvement in various military operations throughout contemporary history.

3. Once Upon a Time: The Interpreter's Narrative as a Source for Social Research

In case of the theatre of war, four historical accounts of interpreters could provide information about the experiences of military linguists who were bestowed '(...) the intimacy that language allows with the peoples of cultures' (Bowen, 1995, 272). These narratives involve two prisoners of war in Japanese internment camps during World War II in respectively Burma (Lumière, 1981; Lumière, 1966) and Java (Rookmaker, 1987); a French civilian who assisted the American army during the Liberation of France at the end of World War II (Guilloux, 2003; Kaplan, 2005); and a Dutch student in Arabic who volunteered for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (Mulder, 2010).[1] All of the narratives are set against the background of international military missions but each story tells in its own particular voice the different and often difficult circumstances under which these men had to carry out the task of interpreter.

But before we go deeper into the stories of these interpreters, it might first be helpful to know a little bit more about the meaning of stories and storytelling in general. Stories have been told since the beginning of time to explain not only the origination of creation and the history of mankind but also to understand the fabric of society that people are a part of (Chang, 2008). The meaning of stories and the importance of storytelling in history becomes even more clear when we look at the origins of the words 'story' and 'history'. Both words stem from the same etymological root which includes the Greek terms *histos*, *histanai*, and *eidenai* which respectively mean 'web', 'to stand', and 'to know well'. Storytelling therefore can be perceived as an art that shapes, organizes and interprets experience and as such '(...) stories enact and construct the world as it is lived and understood by the storyteller' (Kostera, 2002; Ewick & Sibey, 2003; Baker, 2006).

The interest in the narrative approach in field research has increased significantly over the past decades. The popularity of contemporary self-narratives within the realm of humanities and social sciences in this regard '(...) rides on the back of postmodernism that values the voices of common people, defying the conventional authoritative elitism of autobiography' (Chang, 2008, 32). The attraction and asset of studying these 'ordinary' self-narratives lies in the assumption that autobiographical texts can evoke self-reflection and self-analysis.

Readers are invited to engage in a hermeneutic understanding of the author's writings in which the readers' empathy is deepened through the activity in which they '(...) compare and contrast themselves with others in the cultural texts they read and study, in turn discovering new dimensions of their own lives' (Chang, 2008, 33-34). In studying the self-culture of others, the reader thus discovers himself.

Although self-narratives cover a wide variety of writings which all uses the personal experience to focus on the self through memory-search, self-revelation, and self-reflection as is the case in for example autobiographies, memoirs, journals, diaries, letters and personal essays, this paragraph seeks to explore the experience of interpreters through autoethnography, a form of self-narrative that '(...) places the self within a social context' and which is applied within social sciences and in qualitative research in particular (Gregory, 2000, 326; Chang, 2008, 41). Autoethnography shares the storytelling perspective of other genres of self-narratives but distinguishes itself from its 'kin' through the implementation of cultural analysis and interpretation. This means that autoethnography as a research method interprets the micropractices of everyday life and critically questions power structures and privileged points of view (Mischenko, 2005, 206; Panourgia, 2000, 552). Although advocates in favor of autoethnography confidently align the practice with other critical research methods within social studies, the autoethnographic approach, however, is often criticized for lacking academic rigor and methodological validity (Chang, 2008, 54). As if these critiques are not enough to pull down the authority of autoethnography all together, the research method has also been accused of being vain, narcissistic, and self-indulgent (Mischenko, 2005). Notwithstanding the fact that autoethnography indeed places subjectivity to the fore, this doesn't imply that it cannot meet academic standards. On the contrary, the voice of self-narratives within the autoethnographic practice has been said to take '(...) a stance against the silent authorship ways to create so-called 'objectivity' by '(...) offering a model of 'polyphonic, interactive work, which calls on readers to see potential problems for themselves' (Boje & Tyler, 2009, 177; Gregory, 2000, 329). It is precisely this transformative strength of autoethnographic analysis and interpretation which enables readers to understand the influence that factors such as nationality, religion, gender, education, ethnicity, socioeconomic class and geography can have on their sense of self and that of others (Chang, 2008, 52-53). As such, '(...) autoethnographic vignettes enhance the representational and reflexivity richness of qualitative research' (Boje & Tyler, 2009, 177).

Having touched upon the pros and cons of the research method, there's yet another final obstacle which needs to be tackled before we can apply the autoethnographic approach to the selected narratives. Just as self-narratives cover a wide range of genres, there also exists a complex variety in autoethnography. These presentations differ from each other to the extent in which the personal dialogues balance out the triad of the self (auto), the culture (ethno) and the research process (graphy). In the application of autoethnography the term 'self' moreover has been used differently over time, referring to either the ethnographer himself, his informants or his own people (Chang, 2008, 46-48). Researchers who apply autoethnography therefore must identify the perspective through which the study is 'observed' by delineating the choice or rather 'voice' of their source. None of the consulted authors in this chapter, however, knowingly adopted the specific research method. The narrator himself is the examined research subject and their stories are used to analyze and interpret the conditions and circumstances under which they had to carry out the role of interpreter. Although all of the interpreters therefore do not consciously apply autoethnography, their accounts can be used as such since their written testimonies are a form of self-narrative in which the author situates his personal experience within a social, historical and cultural context (Boje & Tyler, 2009, 177; Bryman, 2016, 590).

Now that we have clarified the idea of the author as auto-ethnographer as the very lens through which the historical self-narratives of the interpreters are explored, we can delve more deeply into their accounts in the attempt to deduce 'variables' from their experience that transcend the individual personal narratives. These findings in turn might contribute to our general understanding of the position and role of the interpreter in contemporary military environments as well.

4. (Re)Constructing Meaning out of Memories

In my search for books on interpreters I probably stumbled upon what Edith Grossman has called a new great wall (Grossman, 2010, 89). It appears that the Anglophone publishing industry has a great resistance to translated material. Only a striking 2 to 3 percent of books published each year in the United States and Britain are translations. The most important consequence of this literary arbitrariness is the construction of some kind of iron curtain which threatens one of the central ideas of a democracy namely '(...) the free exchange of literary ideas, insights, and intuitions – a basic reciprocity of thought facilitated by the translation of works from other cultures' (Grossman, 2010, 90). The practical implication of the unavailability and inaccessibility of the writing of a predominant part of the world is that the already limited stock of available titles on this particular research subject is even further restricted by the reluctance of major publishing houses to translate the voices of non-Western authors. The absence of that particular source of information in this study, however, only partially explains the 'dearth' among books about military interpreters. The fact that the researcher herself is only proficient in two languages did not help either as it further limited the scope of the literary search to Dutch and English publications. This lack of language skills, once more and this time in a rather awkward way, brought home the importance of linguistic proficiency.

Just like becoming an interpreter, finding books on the very subject therefore turned out to be a matter of chance as well. Stacked away on dusty bookshelves in bookshops overseas or between endless piles of books on the national book fair, the discovered copies felt like a rare find. All in all, the literary search for books on military interpreters finally resulted

in a modest yield of six titles that were considered suitable for autoethnographic analysis (Lumière, 1981; Lumière, 1966; Rookmaker, 1987; Guilloux, 2003; Kaplan, 2005; Mulder, 2010). In this regard it is noteworthy to learn that all of the authors either titled their stories after the role they had performed or made a reference to their occupation in the subtitle of their books. The similarity between the titles of the individual authors, conveys something about the apparent significance of this experience in their lives. In that regard it is interesting to investigate how the role of interpreter, in its context and course of events, has affected the author's sense of self and others during that specific period in time.

Although the authors have already organized their experience into structured narratives, this paragraph has rearranged the autoethnographic material in corresponding segments in order to deduce meaning out of the interpreters' experience. A close reading and coding of the narratives has yielded five aspects within the data, respectively: allocation, motivation, position, intervention, and perception of the interpreter. Together, these aspects form the conceptual framework which also includes theories on strategic interaction, self-presentation and core social motives. These theoretical insights subsequently have been applied to the analysis, interpretation, and framing of the autoethnographic data (Chang, 2008, 131). Although the paucity of interpreter narratives might be seen as a limitation of this study, the correspondence between the autoethnographic samples provided enough substantiality to justify the development of the framework and the generalization of the role and position of the interpreter in environments influenced by (the threat of) violence such as described by the narrators.

4.1 Finding Truths in True Stories

Books in which interpreters describe their experiences in conflict situations are a rare find on itself. Reading these stories, however, made this even more rewarding as the narratives concurred with the preliminary findings of this research. The premise of this study was poignantly expressed in the words of the authors who once had operated as military interpreter themselves:

> "It was a difficult job to protect the interments against their [the Japanese commander and his staff] unfairness. In order to succeed in this, it was of the utmost importance that the camp commanders – precisely because of their weak position - were informed (...) about the capacities of the adversary, the ways of the Japanese, their motives, and if possible their plans. A special task in this matter was performed by the interpreters among the POWs [Prisoner of War], whom, because of their involvement in all of the encounters with the Japanese, had the experience, not only with the language, but with the psychology of the guards as well, to give advice about which approach could best be applied towards the enemy authorities (Rookmaker, 1987, 7)."

> "Endless hardships, hunger and fear, the insults and suffering of the Japanese slave camps are but the fuel to the inner force driving and guiding the interpreter. His is the mind that makes for the participant, rather than the spectator. (...) This man, another prisoner, sharing the victims' risk and the hatred the guards held for all prisoners, was brutalized and beaten like other prisoners. Over all he was ill-treated more frequently than others because he stood between the captor and some unfortunate fellow prisoner where and when he could. He stood there because he had selected to stand there from the days of early captivity, to stand up, to stand between, disregarding the risks, knowing there was no reward. (...) His energy and excessive imagination, and his lack of patience, sometimes were difficult to comprehend. Yet inside him beat a heart, eager for understanding and for recognition (Lumière, 1981, 11-12; Lumière, 1966, xiii, 256)."

> "I was a volunteer, I didn't have any military experience. I had to familiarize myself with three cultures: that of the Dutch army, the Arab rural society in the south of Lebanon and, more importantly, that of a country reigned by anarchy. (...) We did more than just translating. Because of the nature of our job we got a good insight into the thinking of the local Lebanese population. We had to mediate in all sorts of possible incidents. Also because of our Intel function we gained insight into the immense complexity and intricacy of the problems. In many ways we were the eyes and ears of the battalion (Mulder, 2010, 19)."

> "My role as interpreter made me feel important, of course, but equally embarrassed, worried, and distressed (Kaplan, 2005, prologue)."

Each of the above-mentioned accounts include a validation of what the essence of being a military interpreter is about. The descriptions convey a sphere of power and powerlessness and depict the role and position of the interpreter as both important and influential as well as unacknowledged and misunderstood. As such these narratives can also be perceived as accounts of flesh-witnesses of war who do not base the authority of their knowledge on the observation of facts but rather on a sensible observation of experiences they have undergone themselves. Sensibility in this regard refers to both the attentiveness of the narrators to sensations, feelings and emotions as well as the willingness to be influenced and changed by experience (Harari, 2009, 217-218; Kleinreesink, 2014, 68-69).

The first quote portrays the interpreter as a 'humanitarian' in service of the community who, in the context of the Japanese prison camps, becomes the voice of the oppressed (Bahadir, 2010, 125). The second quote in this regard illustrates that the mediation of the interpreter between the camp staff and prisoners didn't leave the authors unscathed. By taking up the role of interpreter, the authors inherently became participant observers (or more strongly put flesh-witnesses) of a repressive system whose representatives were, not only in their understanding but also in their instructions, judgment and treatment of the internments, dependent of the service and perhaps even more the servitude of the interpreter. It goes

without saying that this perilous condition, in which the interpreters were wedged between the stranglehold of the Japanese and the scrutiny of the internments, required an almost schizophrenic approach of situations in which they needed to intervene. The interpreters for instance were tasked to communicate the camp regulations, but in doing so, they, in their own interest and that of their fellow prisoners, also tried to pacify the oppressor. Precisely because of their coaxing, the interpreters, had to make sure that the other interments did not attribute any malice to them. Their 'partiality', after all, could all too easily be mistaken for something it was not. Suspected by the other interments of collaborating with the enemy, the attempted manipulation in fact often was the interpreter's only means to serve the survival of the prisoners. The quotes therefore demonstrate that by representing the voiceless, and attempting to reconcile the (conflicting) interests of the involved parties, the authors stepped into a realm in which the boundaries between interpreting and advocacy had faded (Bahadir, 2010, 125).

The first three quotes moreover provide insight into the fact that the interpreters, under the guise of their assignment, alternately acted as either a language broker, communication facilitator or cultural go-between (Bahadir, 2010, 125). As such one could say that the term of interpreter is used as a general denominator which encompasses various (sub-)roles that each in turn demand different, albeit sometimes unacknowledged, socio-linguistic and cultural competencies of the interpreter. The fourth and final quote in this regard formulates the interpreters' contradictory frame of mind during the execution of these transcending roles and interventions. By mentioning the simultaneous occurrence of feelings of importance and awkwardness, the author suggests that the outer (objective) translation of 'the eyes and ears' resonates in an inner (subjective) interpretation of what has been seen and heard. It is precisely this reflexivity of the interpreter that enables us to further analyze the aspects that have been identified in the autoethnographic material (Chang, 2008, 45). The number of quotes that for that purpose are taken up in the following paragraphs might come across as somewhat abundant, but they are considered complementary representations that contribute to the understanding of the interpreter's condition.

4.2 Allocation: The Accidental Interpreter

In most situations it is reasonable to argue that the pathway to a career is not left to chance but rather carefully planned and well prepared for. This type of ambition, defined as 'the desire to be successful or powerful in whatever position one wishes to achieve', however, was not part of the modus operandi of the authors. (Anonymous, 2006, 42). On the contrary, chance and not choice, as the following three quotes will demonstrate, still seemed to be the determinant factor in most cases of the assignment of interpreters. The first aspect therefore is called 'allocation' and this describes the often arbitrary circumstances under which the position of interpreter was allotted to the authors.

In case of Guilloux, a French civilian who assisted the American army in Brittany during the liberation, dearth and chance were the conditions that best describe the circumstances that contributed to his job appointment. Whereas the Liberation Army in Germany could rely on the language potential of American soldiers of German descent, the troops experienced great difficulty in finding interpreters in France. Instead of working with 'national interpreters', the American Army now had to rely on French civilians who knew enough English to help them communicate with the local population. The fact that the Army's rate of pay for the position was very low didn't help either because it made the job unattractive for soldiers with advanced training. In hindsight the Army Military Justice officials had to conclude that this situation had affected the investigations and the trials during the war deplorably (Kaplan, 2005, 23-24). Fortunately, however, the Army's VIII Corps found a perfect candidate for the job in the person of a French writer cum translator who at that time was working as an interpreter for the town mayor:

> "No one in the car was talking, not the two lieutenants in the back, nor the driver I was sitting next to. It must have been around three in the afternoon. We had just left the city hall, where the lieutenants had come looking for me. As soon as he entered my office, the older one asked me if I was really the mayor's interpreter. When I answered yes, the lieutenants introduced themselves. (...) "OK. According to Bill, it seems you don't have much to do at the city hall?" That was true. In fact, I had nothing to do. "In that case, you could do us a big favor." They were about to go on a case and they needed an interpreter. How about it? The jeep was out in front. (...) I said yes, of course. Why not? (...) The jeep was there, just outside the door, with a driver at the wheel. We got in. The lieutenants sat in the back and I sat next to the driver. "OK, Joe," said Lieutenant Stone. Joe shifted right into gear and no one said another word (Guilloux, 2003, 1-2)."

Also taking place during World War II but set against a completely different background are the narratives of two authors whom were held prisoner of war in Japanese internment camps. One of the authors, Rookmaker, who was interned in Java describes the call which determined his assignment as a camp interpreter as follows:

> "When a Japanese non-commissioned officer entered our battery to take over the weaponry, it soon became clear that he could not make himself intelligible so that our captain verified whether there was someone among the troops who could speak Japanese. Since no one took the call, I reported myself with the announcement that I took Japanese classes seven years before, but that I didn't had the time as a civil servant to continue the study. My knowledge of the language therefore was very poor but since there was no one else who could take up the job of the interpreter, I was willing to give it a try. At least I could count in Japanese and I had a dictionary (Rookmaker, 1987, 10)."

Another author, Lumière, who in a relatively similar context was imprisoned in Siam Burma, shares a similar experience as he writes about the abruptness of the 'decision' and the subsequent 'obviousness' of his job appointment:

> "A Jap officer had joined the sergeant (...) he approached a small group of prisoners who had just disembarked and, stick raised threateningly, shouted, "*Kura! Hayaku!*" One of the prisoners confronted the Jap lieutenant and, bowing slightly from the waist, asked "*Nan mei hodo iru no ka?*" Surprise registered on the Jap's face. He lowered his stick, looked the prisoner over and, sucking his teeth, said, "*Ah so ka? Nihongo wo hanasu ka? Korekara igo kimi wa tsūyaku wo yare! Chotto mate. Ju mei hodo iru.*" The prisoner answered, "*Wakarimashita,*" bowed again, and went over to the nearest Dutch officer to explain that ten men were wanted for a work party at once. (...) In a few moments a bow-legged dignitary returned with a white painted armband, on which some red hieroglyphics had been painted. He took it over to the Japanese speaking prisoner and tied it on his left arm. Ten men were lined up and waiting, and without any beating or shouting, they were taken away for the next job. A feeling of relief swept over the prisoners. This was the first time anyone had been put to work without the terrifying shouting and the rain of blows. The white armband appeared to be the first link between captors and captives. (...) On catching sight of his armband, various Japs who needed a working party called to him, shouting "*Tsūyaku, tsūyaku kochi koi.*" Erik knew they meant him. What the word *tsūyaku* meant he did not know until several days later; after he had reached Tavoy he learned its meaning: I-n-t-e-r-p-r-e-t-e-r. (...) And so on this day, this night, Erik Leeuwenburg, civilian, turned private second class in the N.E.I. army, became "*the tsūyaku*". Until the previous day he had carried only his personal load - the load every prisoner carried, the burden of hunger and hardship, disease and fear, the nearness of death. Now he must carry the burden of the entire group with him. Whatever their rank, nationality, their number, he, with his absurdly small vocabulary of Japanese words, had become their spokesman. Each day, each hour, he learned more words. With a beating for every mistake, he learned fast (Lumière, 1966, 2-4, 6-7)."

In case of the two POWs, the examples clearly demonstrate how a lack of linguistic proficiency on the side of the Japanese guards and even the smallest of language competence on the part of the prisoner, created opportunities for empowerment. In both instances the authors responded almost on impulse to the demand by literally bridging the language gap between the parties. By stepping forward, the authors seized the opportunity to take up not just a job but to fill in a 'vacancy' that addressed the needs of all of the involved. The examples, and more in particular the quote of Lumière, moreover illustrate that their intervention caused an immediate change in atmosphere. Imagine for instance the terror that the sight of the raised stick, the only language in which the Japanese could make themselves be understood, caused among the prisoners and then imagine the sweeping hand of the guard coming to a halt by a single sentence spoken by one of the prisoners. Through that performative act, the author transformed himself from a prisoner into an interpreter whose modest knowledge of the Japanese language, his most important instrument, could cease the weapons of the opponent.

Stripped of all humanity but with one trump card in hand, these authors turned their language capacity into a tool of survival that in its ambiguity served the interest of themselves, their allies as well as their adversaries. The narrative accounts of communal relief caused by the intervention of the interpreter therefore seems to contradict the notion that '(...) people held in detention camps, refugee camps, in custody, and in prisons cannot truly improve their status or become empowered by way of interpreting' (Bahadir, 2010, 129). According to Şebnem Bahadir interpreters can only carry out their role of interpreter, and hence create opportunity for empowerment, in the social dramas in which they participate if they can ensure the trust of both parties. Whereas the interpreter's trustworthiness and his ability to foster trust undeniably are crucial factors that influence the communication relationship, they are not exclusive preconditions for the empowerment of the individual or group. In anticipation of the aspects that will be discussed further on in this chapter, the stories of the authors seem to provide evidence that the interpreter in some situations can support the empowerment of the community through his service and more remarkably through the subversive acts that are concealed by ways of his interpretation. Although these (im)moral practices might not coincide with Bahadir's conception of the interpreters' ethical deliberation, these interventions nevertheless paradoxically contribute to what Bahadir claims as the highest principle of the interpreters' position namely enabling, establishing, supporting, and even preserving communication (Bahadir, 2010, 129). Therefore, the narratives of the authors learn that the linguistic capacity of the interpreter, sometimes symbolized in the shape of an armband or other vignette, was a powerful and potential tool that added to the visibility of their exceptional position. Yet, before further discussing this matter it is first important to look into the way the aspect of motivation determined the role and position of the interpreter.

4.3 Motivation

Although evolutionary social psychologists state that survival should be listed as the sole original motive that results from the interplay of person and situation, Fiske offers a framework of five unifying themes that enhance people's survival in social groups. These core motives consist respectively of belonging, understanding, controlling, enhancing self and trusting others (Fiske, 2004, 14-25). The first and most important motive that runs through all the other core motives is belonging and this concept has been described as the idea that people need strong, stable relationships with other people to constitute a sense of subjective well-being. Moreover, these ongoing, secure social bonds, help individuals to survive.

Taking the previous aspects of the autoethnographic analysis into consideration, we immediately stumble upon a remarkable phenomenon when applying the motive of belonging to the person of the interpreter. All of the discussed quotes in some way illustrate the rather isolated position of the interpreter in relation to other people and groups. The interpreter can be depicted as the man in the middle who is ostracized but who nevertheless through his position and service paradoxically contributes to what belonging essentially seems to motivate namely the formation and consolidation of close relationships, support and groups. This contradiction raises the question why the interpreter, given his difficult and lone position, even bothered to make the effort of adapting at all. In order to answer this query, it is important to keep in mind that the in-between position of the interpreter determines his role to such an extent that his human condition can be discerned as substantially different from other individuals who function within social groups. The interpreter, after all, did not belong to any group in particular. Therefore, it is interesting to learn how this 'sense of unbelonging' affects the relevance and implementation of the other core motives of understanding, controlling, self-enhancing and trusting others. In other words, how did the interpreter interpret and apply the other four core social motives without belonging to a certain group?

The core motive of understanding encourages people to understand their environment in order to predict and make sense of (un)predicted events. In the process of understanding their world, people usually share their ideas with others in an attempt to reach agreement. These socially shared meanings are called social representations or group meaning and refer to the fact that shared understanding emerges when groups gather and discuss already-shared information with each other (Fiske, 2004, 18). Group meaning thus enables people to function in groups and contributes to their survival as group members. The following fragment illustrates that the absence of a shared understanding between parties can cause for an awkward situation that is revealing in more than one way.

> "What's this, Joe? The prison?" "Sure, it's the prison. You can tell from the barbed wire and the MP's." Behind the barbed wire a few prisoners were playing ball. They were all wearing shoes without laces. None of them was wearing a jacket. Almost all were colored. "Say, Joe, is this a special prison for colored men?" "No. It's the prison." (...) He turned around and pointed at the two lieutenants, who were coming to meet me. "Hello!" "Hello!" "By the way," Lieutenant Stone said as he shook my hand, "my name is Robert. Call me Bob – everyone does." (...) "And what's your name?" "Louis" "OK, Louis." All very cordial, light-hearted, good-natured. "And this is where you have your prison for colored men?" My question startled Lieutenant Stone – I mean Bob. "Oh, Louis! What are you thinking!" This prison was for everyone. If there were mostly blacks there, it was because they deserved it (Guilloux, 2003 41-42)."

This seemingly trivial conversation illustrates that the interpreters' observation of the predominantly colored prisoners differs from the officer's opinion about the inmates. The question not only brings to light that the interpreter was unfamiliar with the presence of the penitentiary within the camp, but that he was unaware of the assumption that underlied the social representation of the imprisoned black servicemen as well. Rather than ascribing the unusual remark to the naivety of the interpreter, the anomaly refers to his curious yet critical outlook on what the military officers had come to understand as a commonly accepted phenomenon. Whereas shared meaning facilitates easy understanding and coordination with other group members, this particular quote paradoxically illustrates that the interpreter, in his very effort to make sense of his environment, unintentionally emphasized that he, instead of being a member of the group, continued to be an observant outsider. In this regard, the interpreter perfectly fits the role of 'the stranger' who Simmel characterizes as someone who's not quite part of the community and who therefore is able to observe it from a distance and with some independence (Soeters, 2018, 60). By questioning the unquestionable, and in this case also stating the unmentionable, the interpreter (consciously or not) indicated that he possessed over a special quality that enabled him to sense and both address '(...) the incoherence and inconsistency of the in-group's behavior, interaction and culture' (Soeters, 2018, 60).

A motive related to understanding is the third core motive of control that encourages people to feel competent and effective in dealing with their social environment and themselves (Fiske, 2004, 20). Personal control is described as the contingency between behavior and outcomes. When people experience a correlation between what they do in a group and what happens to them, that sense of control subsequently will contribute to their psychological, social and physical survival. In an environment such as for example an internment camp that lacks predictability and belonging, the interpreter, however, needs to find other ways of gaining control over himself and others.

> "There were some whose faces were not bruised, whose bones were not broken; there were some whose lives were not lost because between them and a murderous captor, at the time of extreme peril there stood a man. (...) He stood there because he had selected to stand there from the days of early captivity, to stand up, to stand between, disregarding the risks, knowing there was no reward (Lumière, 1966, 255-256)."

This fragment illustrates that even though the interpreter stayed in captivity, he still chose to exert some level of control through his mediation. Under stressful conditions and at his own expense, the interpreter used his ties in the hope to influence the outcome of interactions in his social environment. Although not in full control of his environment, the interpreter in this manner at least held some sort of leverage that gave him enough courage to try and manipulate the captor. Knowing that these dangerous actions would jeopardize his own chances of survival, the interpreters' selfless and bold attempt to protect his fellow prisoners

could also be labeled as heroic because he displayed exceptional courage in the face of danger (Blomberg, Hess & Raviv, 2009, 509-510; Wansink, Payne & Van Ittersum, 2008, 547-549). Contrary to what the fragment says about the absence of a reward for his altruistic behavior, there might be some merit in his actions in the long term after all. Precisely because of his risk-taking interventions and the willingness to sacrifice himself, the interpreter was able to create an alternative and pragmatic sense of belonging and as such his heroism could also be understood as a strategy that helped him survive as a 'sort of' member of the group.

The resourcefulness of the interpreter to tie the interests of his fellow prisoners to his own means of survival must be seen in light of the core motive of self-enhancement. In his effort to protect the group, the interpreter eventually generated an opportunity to (im)prove himself as a member by wholeheartedly performing the role of caretaker 'within' the group (Fiske, 2004, 22-23). The motive of self-enhancement can also be illustrated by the following quote in which the interpreter takes pride in fulfilling the hope of making himself useful for others.

> "Carrying out our imposed task distracted the monotony of camp life but it also caused for a lot of distress. Although there was seldom something cheerful to translate, we nevertheless enjoyed ourselves with each other's funny experiences. In the meantime, during the many years of internment, the position gave me the satisfaction to stay active in the hope of doing useful work. Moreover, I have learned a lot from it (Rookmaker, 1987, 8)."

The fifth and final core motive of trust, which is here understood as a state of favorable expectation regarding other people's actions and intentions, cannot be found explicitly in the narratives of the authors (Möllering, 2001, 404). This is perhaps not very surprising as this study concentrates on places dominated by a constant threat of violence. In such environments, in which the idea of the social world as a benevolent place is suspended, people are more inclined to distrust others (Fiske, 2004, 24). The autoethnographic analysis in this regard has demonstrated that in such situations (inaccurate) perceptions of others more often than not have caused the interpreter to become the target of suspicion. Not succumbing to the belief of people that he would take advantage of them if he got the chance, the interpreter remained focused on a trusting orientation to facilitate and constitute communication with others (Fiske, 2004, 23).

Apart from these core social motives there are of course other theories that help explain the motivation to take up the role of the interpreter. The following fragment in this regard illustrates that there are less profound and much more pragmatic motives for becoming an interpreter.

> "Before my deployment with UNIFIL I hardly knew more about Lebanon than that it was three times as small as the Netherlands. Attempts to visit the country during my study, failed twice due to the security situation. Reports about the civil war were so chaotic that I cut myself off from the news like you would turn off a television if the screen went static. (...) When I, finally managed to enter Lebanon in April 1980, in a Dutch military uniform with a blue beret would you believe, I was somewhat aware of the state of affairs in the neighboring countries. (...) In that chaos, in which even the Lebanese did not comprehend themselves, let alone others, a Dutch battalion needed to operate and that had prepared itself for a totally different situation: an apocalyptic war against the Warsaw pact. (...) The reality was that we very rarely and with the explicit permission of the UN headquarters in New York were allowed to use mortars. That permission virtually never happened. The battalion, therefore, was forced to solve problems by talking. Interpreters could then be of importance (Mulder, 2010, 51-52)."

While adventure, curiosity, and seizing one's opportunity in this quote might perhaps be the key words that best describe the author's motivation to become an interpreter, these initial motives soon gave way to core social motives when the complexity of the situation and mission became clear. After all, it was precisely in environments characterized by violence that the role and position of the interpreter was of vital importance as the abovementioned quote suggests and as other fragments in this chapter have demonstrated. When placed in these demanding and oftentimes dangerous situations in which interpreters needed to intervene, motivation eventually determined how interpreters assumed their role and position. Therefore, it is now important to delve into these aspects, starting with the latter.

4.4 Position: The Man in the Middle

The interpreter's role has been described by a variety of terms that convey certain characteristics of his position. Descriptions such as for example tongue and ears, language broker, go-between, facilitator therefore not only seem to illuminate something about his qualities but also about his expected behavior. The 'interpersonal self or social self' of the interpreter in this regard can be described as a set of expectations about how he should behave according to his socially defined position (Fiske, 2004, 171). As such, one could subsequently say that the action of the interpreter was bound by both his individual interpretation of his role as well as 'the rules' that governed how he as an occupant of such a particular role was expected to behave towards occupants of another role (Krackhardt, 1999, 186-187). An analysis of various quotes will demonstrate that these expectations about the role of the interpreter were not always as transparent as these 'rules' perhaps might presume because his actions were often determined by the rather arbitrary circumstances of the moment and the specific needs of the parties that called upon his service.

One key feature of the interpreter, however, which is common to all characterizations of the interpreter and strongly related to his cultural and linguistic competence, is that his presence transforms the communication dyad between interlocutors into a triad. Through his intervention, the interpreter becomes an intermediary expert who has '(...) the potential

to consolidate or weaken, or at any rate to influence and shape, the social form of the triad' (Bahadir, 2010, 127). Especially in areas of military conflict in which parties have different interests, values, beliefs and strategies, this standing in-between can be considered a general and possible powerful trait of the interpreter (Bahadir, 2010, 127). On the subject of the transformative powers of the interpreter, the question, however, remains what actually determines the range and influence of his position. Rather than being advantageous, Georg Simmel in this respect argued that the bridging role in triadic structures could be quite constraining when the ties between parties are strong. A '*Simmelian tie*' represents a social system in which two people are not only reciprocally and strongly tied to each other but to at least one third party they have in common as well (Krackhardt, 1999, 186). Once a third party is added to the dyad, a triad or clique is formed in which rules are developed to which each member must subject in order to stay a part of the group. The difference between a dyadic and triadic structure, therefore, is fundamental because the presence of a third party gives each party less autonomy, less power, and less independence in relation to the other members of the triad. *Simmelian ties* in other words consolidate bonds between members in return for compliance to group norms. In case of the interpreter, the constraints of the Simmelian ties are even felt more strongly because he is embedded in cliques and therefore his behavior is restricted even further because he has to comply with the norms of different and oftentimes opposing groups. The narratives of the authors in this regard narrate different perspectives on the position of the interpreter within triads and between groups. Compare for example the story of the Frenchman working for the military justice in the U.S. Army during the Liberation with the accounts of the POWs who were deployed in the Japanese internment camps.

Guilloux's personal experiences as an interpreter for the Judge Advocate Office of the VIII Corps, describe his conversations with the American soldiers and the differences in worldview that came to light during these talks (Kaplan, 2005, 23, 145). Guiding his superiors on their daily visits to civilian witnesses and being present at the subsequent trials of the accused, the author soon noticed that racial prejudice permeated the administration of justice. To his concern the verdict of the African-American soldiers, which covered almost all of the cases in which the author needed to interpret, ended almost without exception in capital punishment. With great sense of subtlety, the author's memoirs paint a picture of the inner moral conflict of an interpreter who witnesses the injustices of the racially segregated laws of the Jim Crow system (Kaplan, 2005, 145).[2] Contemplating about his position in the American judicial system, the author recounts:

> "I'd see another one of them opening the window to check the weather, and the first words I'd hear would be that the day was going to be as beautiful as the one before; (…) and yet there was that rope, and at the end of that rope a child of the shadows, his body gone limp. And tomorrow, another one. And soon there would be yet another trial; Lieutenant Colonel Marquez would raise his head but still look as though he were checking his fingernails, and he would ask Bob to ask the interpreter to raise his right hand and swear to translate according to the truth… "Do you swear…" "I do…" Raising my right hand. Neither then nor before had they asked me who I was. The oath I took could have been administered to anyone. The oath of an official interpreter (Kaplan, 2005, 63, 79)."

The quote hints at the contrast between the moral understanding of the author who in his role of interpreter felt himself to be either an accomplice or a spectator, and the total indifference with which his position was regarded in the courtroom (Kaplan, 2005, 79). Being reduced to an indispensable but anonymous language conduit in the court proceedings, the author was struck by the notion that he, apart from his linguistic service, was as insignificant as the accused African-American soldiers whose fate was sealed with the deafening clap of a hammer. As indiscriminate and impersonal as the oath of the official interpreter according to the author might have been, the ethical burden of his task, as the story seems to imply, however, most certainly was not.

In comparison to the rather subordinate position of Guilloux, the narratives of the POWs seem to display a different perspective on the position of the interpreter. The first quote explains the position of the interpreter among the internments from a rather unexpected point of view:

> "In informal conversations with guards who were friendly to us, every now and then Tenno Heika was mentioned. (…) A Japanese soldier once tried to explain to me how important exactly the position of camp-interpreters was. He told me that the names of all the brave Nippon soldiers as well as those of their interments, were registered in several books which were available to the emperor. The list, however, contains so many names that no ordinary soldier should make himself the illusion that the attention of the emperor would ever befall on him. The interpreters in the camp, on the other hand, despite the fact that they belong to the enemy troops, find themselves in a totally different position. Their names are written down in a tiny booklet, their number after all being very small, so that the emperor, if he should leaf through it, undoubtedly would say: "Look, here I have mister X and there's mister Y!" That is how prominent the '*tsūyaku*' are among the POWs and their guards (Rookmaker, 1987, 29)."

Regardless of the fact whether the small notebook of the Emperor existed or not, the soldiers' use of superlatives gives the impression that the interpreter occupied a privileged position. Knowing that in the Japanese culture the Emperor was held in the highest possible esteem, one would easily think that the sheer thought of the Emperor's interest in the interpreter would influence the appreciation of his position by his military subordinates (Rookmaker, 1987, 24, 28). Nothing of the sort, however, as both authors recount in their books of the numerous hardships they had to endure at the hands of the camp commanders and guards:

"Erik learned early that he was to expect no privileges, that he had no more rights than any other POW. At one time the brigadier wished to take up some urgent issue with Colonel Nagatomo. A Korean guard, Aoki (...), refused to transmit the brigadier's request. (...) The interpreter felt the Korean had no right to refuse transmittal of the brigadier's request. He told the guard so. That was his mistake. (...) The little Korean (...) within a split second turned into a screaming demon. By claiming that he did not have the right to stop POWs from seeing Nagatomo, the prisoner had made the guard lose face. Aoki let go a stream of invective, jumped up from his desk and hit the offending POW as hard as he could. (...) Many weeks later the interpreters' body still showed bruises and welts. (...) Thus, he learned relatively early that, to avoid losing his head, he had to avoid making an Oriental lose face. In a Jap's mind, doubting a guards' authority was tantamount to insulting the Emperor. To this, the only answer was: death! Aoki's beating taught Erik two things: never to over-rate his own value or importance, and never to under-rate a guard's power (Lumière, 1966, 124)."

"A few of the POWs with whom the Japs dealt daily, such as the Brigadier, Colonel Anderson, his Adjutant, Major Campbell, and the interpreter, and POW officers in charge of jungle camps, were often treated differently from other prisoners. To the Japs these few were identities rather than numbers. But it did not assure these outstanding few the different treatment would be better; in fact in many cases they were treated worse! (...) Erik received numerous beatings and twice, barely in time, was rescued from being bayoneted to death. To lose prisoners of war was a matter of total indifference to many Jap. In the minds of many it was probably a good thing. To lose one of the few through whom they conducted the POW administration was inconvenient. To lose, of these, one who spoke Japanese would not do at all. Though realizing, that he was walking an endless tightrope, Erik tried to make the most of his unique position to obtain all he could for III Branch of POWs and, needless to say, for his own survival. There was, of course, a limit beyond which he could not go. Sometimes he took a liberty, exceeding it (Lumière, 1966, 161-162)."

Under these grim and inhumane circumstances, the POWs were made to work to their maximum capacity. The latter being the only criteria that convinced the Japanese that the prisoners and therefore the interpreters were more valuable to their war effort alive than dead (MacKenzie, 1994, 519). In this respect the 'prominent' position of the interpreter indeed might have protected the authors somewhat from the assaults of their captors, but the broader hermeneutical horizon of the narratives tends to suggest that it was precisely the qualities of the interpreter which made him 'stand out' against the rest of the prisoners and that this 'outstanding' position, in both senses of the word, subsequently caused him to become more vulnerable to the whims and terror of the guards. Whereas the messenger's person of old was deemed sacred and inviolable, the narratives of the authors learn that instances of mistreatment in case of the camp interpreter were more rule than exception (Roland, 1999, 12):

"The worst of the Japanese and Korean guards took utter delight in trying to make me lose my self-control. Other prisoners in trouble might guess the gist of the harsh words that were coming their way. In my case, the captors delighted in going to any lengths to tell me their thoughts on white people: the British, the Australians, the Americans, and Dutch, and me as well - ad nauseam. I always had to steel myself, which sometimes became almost impossible. At the slightest sign of my disagreement or impatience, the guards (...) would become more infuriated, and frequently lend weight to their arguments by the use of a rifle butt or bamboo stick (Lumière, 1981, 146; Lumière, 1966 124-125)."

The ill-treatment of the POWs in general and that of the interpreter in particular can be explained through reference of the military ethics of the Bushido tradition which demanded absolute sacrifice and deemed surrender an unbearable dishonor (MacKenzie, 1994, 512). Conform their 'surrender is shameful' ideology, the Japanese captors perceived their prisoners not as fellow human beings but as hostile and despicable foes who could not be tolerated and therefore deserved to be treated badly (MacKenzie, 1994, 519). In light of this belief system, the precarious nature of the interpreters' position becomes even more clear. Being the spokesmen of the allied forces, the interpreter practically represented the embodiment of surrender and hence all that the Japanese soldiers held in contempt. It was after all the interpreters' imperative to relieve the burden of the prisoners by seeking ways to communicate and cooperate with the Japanese, but in this perilous endeavor the interpreter also often became the object of the ridicule and brutality of the camp staff (Lumière, 1981, 12). Not succumbing to the terror of their captors, but fighting for the community's needs, the interpreters dared to defy the camp staff and camp regulations by exploring and exceeding the limits of their position.

Although very distinct from each other, the experiences of the court interpreter and camp interpreters demonstrate that the interpreters' position most often was defined by the context and group in which the authors operated. Whereas the court interpreter was expected to adhere to a strict translation of the communicational process that left no liberty for the author, the performance of the camp interpreters, on the other hand, involved mediation which particularly required editing from the authors (Bowen, 1995, 248). A remarkable observation with regard to the contrast between the strictly defined and liberty taking interventions of these interpreters moreover is that, despite their Simmelian ties, each of the authors to a certain degree were perceived as non-participants during their assignment. This attribution, however, occurred in different domains of their actions as the next paragraph among other things will explain.

4.5 Intervention: The Interpreter in Disguise

Being the man in the middle, the interpreter most often had to use all possible means to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between interlocutors. Especially in critical circumstances as conflict situations in which interpreters needed to intervene between parties with different frames of reference, the authors had to perform a tightrope act that would please or at least appease the others. Therefore, standing between 'others of similarity', and 'others of difference', respectively those who came from the same or a different group as the author, the interpreters had to calculate, anticipate, and advocate the interests of the parties involved (Chang, 2008, 26-27). How delicate an affair this exactly was, illustrates the following quote:

> "In order to prevent sensitive incidents from happening it was wise to keep to the rules of the game. This meant that troublesome or even impossible assignments could not with so much words be refused by a POW and that an interpreter instead needed to intervene. The interpreter then quickly had to choose the proper moment to approach the principal to explain to him the existing problems and if possible to carefully suggest alternative options. As long as the Japanese did not suffer any loss of face in these circumstances, acceptable solutions could be reached for both parties (Rookmaker, 1987, 33)."

Standing not between others of difference but rather others of opposition, the go-between position of the camp interpreters was even more precarious because they had to communicate behavior, customs, and beliefs that often were irreconcilable and threatening to their own existence and that of the other internments. Keeping to the rules of the game in other words meant that the camp interpreters had to use their multicultural knowledge in order to respond to the contextual and symbolic cues of their environment and that they moreover needed to shift cultural frames whenever the situation required doing so (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martinez, 2000, 710). In that regard, the authors can be understood as (a-)typical bicultural individuals who, under the most crudest of circumstances, had acquired and internalized specific knowledge of two cultures to the extent that these skills guided their perception and behavior (Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2006, 313). Unlike typical biculturals, who derive their identity from a membership of two cultures and who switch frames to facilitate a sense of alignment and belonging, the authors did not identify themselves with the opponent. On the contrary, the camp interpreters switched frames to anticipate mutual cultural sensitivities and navigate between the conflicting parties. The quote in this respect illustrates that alongside their linguistic intervention, the camp interpreters' actions were also oriented towards the preservation and negotiation of the guards' face in the interaction with prisoners. The concept of face has been described by Erving Goffman as the presentation and preservation of a respectable front or line to others when managing different relationships (Merkin, 2005, 215; Hoedemakers & Soeters, 2009). By circumventing face threatening situations for the guards through ad hoc mediation, the camp interpreters were able to restore the public image of the Japanese commanders and Korean guards. Of more importance to the camp interpreters, however, was the fact that their intervention sustained the safety of their fellow prisoners. Keeping up the appearances of the opponent, in other words meant that the camp interpreters were able to prevent their captors from reverting to other and more violent means to maintain the power (im)balance.

When we continue the interpreters' 'game' analogy to analyze the nature of their participation in the communication process, and define the interpreters according to Goffman's game theoretical approach as players who are authorized to act on behalf of the parties' interest, the narratives learn that the authors were players of a most extraordinary sort. Apart from the player, Goffman's game perspective on interpersonal dealings discerns two other types of stakeholders namely a party and a coalition (Goffman, 1969, 86). In case of the narratives of the POWs, the party can be understood as the community of internments that has a unitary interest to promote, and the coalition as the conjunction of opposing parties which temporarily and in regard of a specific aim have joined forces to serve a single interest.

The previous quotes illustrate that the camp interpreter was attributed the position of spokesman for the party of prisoners and that the authors in that capacity served the self-preservation of the group. The following example, however, demonstrates that the camp interpreters were also forced to form a coalition with their captors. This second dyad illustrates the double 'loyalty' imposed on the interpreter as both parties expect him to serve their interests. The triad of Simmelian ties, therefore, consists of demanding and even opposing ties that keep the interpreter in a stranglehold (Krackhardt, 1999, 189-191). In those constraining circumstances the so-called single interest consequently was of a rather dubious nature because the author could not refuse his cooperation to the other party without risking capital punishment:

> "There was fear and a measure of shock in Erik's eyes and heart when he left the gate of Tamarkan camp, handcuffed, on the back of a Japanese Military police truck. Not a word had been said as to why he had been arrested by the Kempetai, the most dreaded organization in Jap-held Asia. (...) True, he had stolen from the Japs often; innumerable times he had lied or had distorted a prisoner's story to save an individual or an entire camp from ill-treatment. But he was positive he had not been discovered in this activity. In the Oriental mind, however, anything might be turned into an offence. (...) Erik approached and tried to fathom the enemy face to find what the dark, slant-eyed features of the Jap were hiding. His curiosity was satisfied in the most unbelievable manner. Nagoya warned, "Ima no hanashi wa dare nimo zettai ni hanasu na!"- What will be discussed here must never be told to anyone. He continued to say that he would kill his prisoner if the order was disobeyed. The Kempei officer picked up several sheets of paper and read in rapid Japanese, using many words unfamiliar to Erik, an accusation of misbehavior by Nagatomo. It soon became clear that this was courtroom material. The Japs apparently meant to deal with Nagatomo before the Allies would have a chance of trying

> him as a war criminal later. It took quite a while before Erik realized that (...) the Emperor's henchmen were not prepared to discipline Nagatomo for his base behavior, for the inhuman treatment III Branch prisoners had suffered. The accusation now being read was based on Nagatomo's ill-treatment of fellow officers and Japanese lower ranks, of fraternizing with the enemy, of insulting his Imperial Majesty by speaking the enemy's language; in short, it was obvious that somebody was out to get Nagatomo hung at any cost. Before Nagoya finished his long list of accusations, Erik remembered Naito's hatred of Nagatomo. From there on the picture became much clearer. Whilst Nagoya continued reading, the P.O.W. wondered what he had to do with all this. When the Kempei captain finished, he explained that he wanted a detailed statement concerning every occasion on which the interpreter had dealt with Nagatomo and the brigadier or other P.O.W. officers, at which he had been present. (...) It was clear in Erik's mind that no judgment against Nagatomo could ever even the score for the crimes the Jap colonel had committed against the prisoners of III Branch. But he had dealt with twisted Oriental minds sufficiently to realize that an accusation such as Nagoya now demanded would be his own death sentence, if this was a trap set for him by Nagatomo. Nagoya left no choice. (...) For three days the interrogation continued. (...) During these days Erik worried a lot. The Japanese were perverse enough to obtain all this material against Nagatomo to complete their own case and then dump a P.O.W.'s body down a sump hole to eliminate an enemy who had been given an insight into the Japanese army and Military Police methods against their own senior officers (Lumière, 1966, 143, 147-149)."

The above described situation illustrates that the author not only acted as both party and player, but that he served as a pawn and informant for the Japanese commander as well. In that circumstance and capacity, the interpreter, remarkably was not perceived as a participant but as a mere cog in the machinery of the commander. As can be read, the author quickly realized that his opponent wanted to drain him of all usable information that would discredit the other, absent party. Knowing that his inside knowledge had led to this perilous predicament, the camp interpreter subsequently had to accept that he could only propitiate his tormenter if he once again relied on the knowledge that got him into trouble in the first place. In the process of this diabolical 'double take', the camp interpreter in other words out of self-interest needed to reveal information that he theretofore had hidden in order to anticipate the moves of the Japanese commander and control and counteract a situation which otherwise, as the author wrote himself, undoubtedly would have been the end of him (Goffman, 1969, 36).

Apart from the fact that the interpreter's knowledge was necessary to disclose information that could incriminate the adversary of the Japanese commander, the quote reveals another aspect that is explanatory for the role, position and interventions of the camp interpreter. When we follow the actions of the Japanese commander, it becomes clear that the linguistic skills of the author were decisive in targeting the camp interpreter as a useful informant. Like no other person, the camp interpreter had access to different territories of the camp. His role and assignment enabled him to enter the back regions of the camp and gain information about the hidden practices of its inhabitants.

It was precisely the interpreter's knowledge of such incriminating information which caused representatives of both parties, the captors as well as the captives, to attribute to him the role of keeper of secrets. In case of the opponent, the camp interpreter of course had to put up a façade of loyalty and trustworthiness so that his opponent would believe that their secrets were safe with him (Goffman, 1969, 37). This act of professed sincerity in reality, however, often was the interpreter's intervention or rather ploy to meet the need for information of his fellow prisoners. The interpreter's masquerade therefore was a form of resistance which involved a manipulation of social roles in order to influence transactions to a more desirable outcome (Ewick & Sibey, 2003, 1350-1351).

Whereas the prospect of severe punishment in the aforementioned example forced the camp interpreter to become the informant of the Japanese commander, the general storyline of both of the narratives learns that a strong belief in justice convinced the authors to become the informer of the internments as well (Goffman, 1959, 144-145). It was this powerful combination of insight in the scope of their competencies and interventions and their deep-seated sense of duty towards the other interments that ultimately encouraged the authors to overcome their deeply rooted fear for the guards. While this double play brought down accusations of espionage and treachery on the camp interpreters during their captivity, their inside knowledge ironically designated them as valuable contributors and official witnesses of war crime investigations as soon as the camps were liberated (Rookmaker, 1987, 119-130). As such the stories of the authors explicate that the camp interpreter performed discrepant roles across time and space, in which each intervention required another challenging performance.

In contrast to the previous fragment in which the camp interpreter was pinpointed, marked and used for his inside knowledge, the following example demonstrates a sheer lack of acknowledgement on part of the American military forces for the often decisive nature of the interpreter's intervention during the interrogation of civilians.

> "I need that bullet!" Lieutenant Stone said again, with even more passion. (...) I let them look for the bullet and went out into the courtyard. A few neighboring farm people were out there, surrounding Joe, who had climbed out of the jeep and was offering them cigarettes. When he saw me, Joe came over to me, and the people followed him. One of them asked me if they had arrested the guy. I told them they had. They wanted to know who the officers were and what they were doing. "Investigating. Right now they're looking for the bullet." Joe knew it was about a murder, but who was the murderer? "A black man, Joe." "Dirty bastard!" "And the officers, who are they, Joe?" "Military justice. Lieutenant Stone is the prosecutor. Lieutenant Bradford's the defense lawyer." I explained all that to the villagers. "And who are you?"one of them asked me. "I'm an interpreter." "They're not bad guys, the two lieutenants, not bad guys at all," Joe said... A young man came up to me, looking embarrassed. He took an old wallet

> with a brass clasp out of his pocket and took the bullet out of it. "Here's the bullet. I wanted to keep it as a souvenir, but I don't want any trouble..." I took the bullet and went back into the house. I gave the bullet to Lieutenant Stone. He cried out, "I've found the bullet!" Holding the bullet between his thumb and index finger he held it up to look at it and show it off. He put the bullet into his pocket and said, "Excellent!" (Guilloux, 2003,7-8)."

The military interpreter in this fragment, the protagonist of the narratives 'Ok, Joe' and 'The Interpreter', comes across as a vague figure in the periphery of interaction who gradually gains more contour and weight when he is being addressed by the villagers. As if shedding his invisible cloak when mentioning his function to the young man, the interpreter suddenly comes into full view. In that very instance, when having stepped out of the anonymity of the background and into the centre of visibility, the interpreter promptly is seen by the young man as the only appropriate person among the military men who could be entrusted the evidence material. In ancient time, interpreters were sometimes used as a distancing device by those in power (Mairs, 2011, 71). Although the young man in the example hardly could be described as a powerful person, his discovery and possession of the bullet would definitively have made him a figure of interest. Not wanting to become the subject of the special attention of the American officers, the young man employed the interpreter as a go-between who could ensure the necessary (formal) distance that was needed to keep him out of sight and thereby out of the investigation.

The disappearing act of the interpreter which happens next, however, is as remarkable if not even more astonishing as the materialization of his persona the moment before. The magic of the interpreter seems to have evaporated as soon as he hands over the bullet to the lieutenant who, under much self-acclaim, slips the evidence into his pocket. The conceitedness of this gesture is revealing for the manner in which the lieutenant apparently dismissed the interpreter; the person whose very presence and intervention contributed to the finding of the evidence in the first place. While being designated as the mediator and confidant by the villager, the interpreter evidently was regarded by the military not as a player but as a pawn, or even a non-person.

The lack of social recognition for the military interpreter in the communication process as described above, can be understood as a misjudgment of the information control (em) powered by the interpreter (Goffman, 1963, 86-87). The following fragment from yet another narrative, 'Pratend Voorwaarts', exemplifies that it is precisely the acknowledgement of this key role of the military interpreter that can foster solutions in contentious situations:

> "I meet these guerillas right before my return to the Netherlands and shortly before their death. They have posted themselves on a main road in an attire of twentieth century knights, with Russian Kalashnikovs and RPG [Rocket Propelled Grenade]-grenades. They're waiting for a person with whom they have to settle an old score. The man forms a threat for UNIFIL as well, they say. And we could not object to their actions, they argue, because they are doing the same as we: maintaining order in the area. I am in the company of a Dutch major and captain. In theory I act as an interpreter in circumstances like these, but in reality I am given free rein to achieve the goal by talking. I am allowed to talk about the teacher of religion whom dismissed me from class because of a pro-Palestinian standpoint, or about the Dutch resistance against the Germans during World War II. For some reason the latter often works out well and that's why I take up the topic again. It's a bit painful, though, when colleagues ask me for a translation of this drivel. A New Zealand officer, who is also present, thinks it's all not very soldierly. 'Is this the right approach?' he growls. I tell the guerilla that this matter is so important that only a solution of the highest order is possible and that we therefore must contact their superiors immediately. 'Please, don't,' they beg startled. It appears that they have acted on their own. 'Rather have tea with us,' they ask invitingly and lift the blockade. The New Zealander is dumbfounded. 'So, that seems to work as well' he mumbles, while taking a sip of his tea, and he calls me 'peacemaker'. I feel like a magician who has made rain (Mulder, 2010, 128-129)."

Whereas the previous fragment described a situation in which the interpreter was regarded by his superiors as a negligible and almost invisible agent, this quote recounts of a situation in which the military interpreter not only functioned as a player who proactively sought to defend the interests of the party he was trying to represent, but in doing so also was given a carte blanche to intervene according to his own insight. The interpreter in this example, therefore, acted not so much as a middleman between parties but rather as a spokesman of one party in front of another. This distinction in attribution is significant for how the interpreter was perceived by the military as well as the guerrillas. Knowing that reputations and lives were at stake, the interpreter needed to deliver a 'message' that would convince both parties of his presumed authority. In order to pull this off, the interpreter was given the liberty to translate his role to the needs of the moment. This freedom of interpretation more or less implied that the interpreter was licensed to embellish his performance with some fabrication and bluff.

Far from being respected as immoral and unethical, lying and active misrepresentation such as described above, have been commonly applied in military operations as strategic devices to advance one's position in competitive and conflicting interactions (Crawford, 2003, 133-134). The question whether the interpreter lied to the guerillas by making false statements or that he misled them through more subtle forms of deception as framing or (mis)presenting information, in this particular example is perhaps of less significance than the fact that the interpreter deceived the guerillas to protect his fellow men. In that sense, the interpreter not so much lied as well as used his resourcefulness and communication skills on behalf of the collective good. It is probably because of these situational factors and pro-social purposes that the interpreters' untruthfulness or rather small talk and innuendo eventually received the approval and moral justification of his colleague (Genyue, Evans, Wang & Lee, 2008, 495).

There is, of course, a serious downside to the use of strategic ambiguity. Whereas the military interpreter in this particular situation told falsehoods to serve a communal objective, concealment and misrepresentation usually hold the risk of threatening the integrity of the individual and the reputation of the organization (Aquino & Becker, 2005, 662). Goffman in this regard notes that persons who are caught telling a lie do not only lose their face during the interaction but that they also have their face destroyed because people believe that if a person has lied once, he can never be fully trusted again in other occasions (Goffman, 1959, 62). Although this negative corollary effect does not apply to this particular fragment, (well-intended) misrepresentations (by the interpreter) and false impressions (of the interpreter) might affect the relationship between the military and the interpreter since '(...) a discreditable disclosure in one area of an individual's activity will throw doubt on the many areas of activity in which he may have nothing to conceal (Goffman, 1959, 64-65).

The intricacies inherent in the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters and the consequences these have for the reputation of both the involved parties and organization have already been discussed profoundly. To complete this chapter's analysis the following section will deal with the final aspect that determines the role and position of the interpreter.

4.6 Perception: The Interpreter of Maladies

So far, the autoethnographic analysis of the narratives has brought forth an image of the interpreter as a person characterized by duality. Whether the interpreter acted out of free will or by force, was revered or reviled, or was placed center stage or at the background, fact is that the interpreter needed to reconcile these dualities within himself. The person of the interpreter in other words incorporated extremes or rather personality traits at either end of the continuum that reflected the momentary needs of the perceiver. The following quote in this regard illustrate that these situational perceptions in turn determined the image of the interpreter.

> "While quite unwilling to give him any floor space amongst their number, while in fact accusing him of "fraternizing" with the enemy, the N.E.I. Aerodrome Camp Command was nevertheless quite happy to order the interpreter to protect them and all the other prisoners from the enemy whenever possible (Lumière, 1966, 9)."

Based on the description of the authors, one could roughly divide the population of the Japanese internment camp into two categories of respectively the camp staff and prisoners. These categories subsequently formed separate (sub)groups in which members identified with each other. The prisoners for example did not only have their social status in common, they also shared similar experiences, beliefs and loyalties. Remarkably enough, however, this relatedness or sense of belonging did not include the person of the interpreter. The fragment

demonstrates that the latter didn't receive the respect and loyalty that usually characterizes members of the ingroup. Instead, the interpreter was perceived with animosity and almost literally placed outside of the group of internments (Tajfel, 1982). While being part of the category of prisoners, the camp interpreter apparently did not seem to belong to the 'in-group' of allied prisoners. Moreover, the fragment explains that the interpreter was accused of bonding with the Japanese which practically caused him to be seen as the very enemy himself.

The accusations of collaboration against the camp interpreter can be understood more clearly when the bottom-up organization of camp life is taken into consideration. Cor Lammers in this regard defines organizations as top-down constructed relations to achieve specific purposes that, much to the distress of the founders, often generate various (counter) active bottom-up initiatives (Lammers, 2005, 177). In case of the Japanese prison camps, these informal organizations served among other things as a consolidation and amelioration of the top-down organization; a mitigation of the camp policy; a mediation between the staff and prisoners, and an opportunity for association (Lammers, 2005, 182-184). In theory, the camp interpreter would fit the profile of the bottom-up organization rather perfectly. The interpreter, after all, proved his dexterity in all of the above-mentioned functions. The autoethnographic narratives, however, point out that reality nevertheless was much more ambiguous.

Despite the fact that the interpreter, in accordance with the quid pro quo stance between the top-down and bottom-up organization, fulfilled the interests of both parties, the interpreter was not perceived as a member or loyal representative of either of these groups. Crudely stated, one could say that the interpreter was drummed up to show his tricks on behalf of the various organizations and that he was considered 'tainted goods' as soon as the job was done. The following fragment illustrates that the suspicion that was attached to the camp interpreter is an almost inescapable and inherent feature of his in between position.

> "The Japanese soldiers were always on guard for enemy espionage. Posters hung in clear view in their offices with the Japanese characters Bō Chō on it which meant 'Prevent Espionage!' In several occasions we, the interpreters, were therefore confronted with – an in our opinion unreasonable – suspicion of our guards which we nevertheless had to take in consideration in order to prevent misunderstandings or worse from happening. The Nippon soldiers were so indoctrinated with the necessity of secrecy of everything that had to do with the force that even the execution of normal administrative actions became immensely complicated (Rookmaker, 1987, 104-105)."

In forced relations such as internment camps, where prisoners are subjugated to the rule of their captors, cooperation must always be seen in light of potential subversiveness. The Japanese soldiers, therefore, always took the possibility of espionage into account, and even more so when it concerned the person of the interpreter who, because of his skills

and inside information, stayed close to fire. Therefore, it was not just the prisoners but also the representatives of the formal camp organization who perceived the interpreter with suspicion. As such, the interpreter remained an 'outsider with inside information' to whom both organizations, top-down and bottom-up, either turned to or turned away from as suited their convenience.

The abovementioned quotes demonstrated that all parties, despite their conflicting nature, shared a similar (prejudiced) perception of the interpreter. The following quote, however, shows that the interpreter himself also obtained a unique observation of people and circumstances as well.

> "What I have heard and read about kidnappings I try to put in practice. With each of the many passing guards, mostly boys about seventeen years old, I'll have a chat so that no one feels offended. (...) Because I am busy, I am able to control the fear. I'd rather not think of circumstances in which all communication is impossible. I can talk as much as I want, but the others also have to participate in the conversation in order to prevent annoyance. In this stage (...) the machinegun marksman, however, cannot bring himself to say a thing. The militia boys anger themselves about his behavior. 'He's mad at us,' they say aggrieved to me. Sounds need to come out of his mouth and that's why I prompt him something. 'In Alkmaar is een kaasmarkt,' he repeats after me and in the translation I let him pronounce his appreciation of the hospitality and excellent treatment (Mulder, 2010, 249)."

In this hostage situation the interpreter demonstrates his ability to accord the thoughts and actions of all of the involved parties. Although the interpreter was regarded a pawn in the interaction between those parties, he was clearly an independent actor capable of understanding and anticipating the perceptions of others. The interpreter used this knowledge to good effect as his intervention mitigated the tension between the parties. This illustrates the interpreter's skill to act as an *'edgewalker'* who uses his knowledge to bring about a dialogue that turns others of difference into others of similarity (Chang, 2008, 29). Stepping up to the plate, the military interpreter in this particular example therefore expanded his boundaries and engaged in others to neutralize an otherwise explosive atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has tried to explore the 'eyes and ears' experience of the interpreters through an autoethnographic analysis of the narratives written by authors who have once operated as interpreters in war-infested environments. These testimonies served as a form of self-narrative in which the authors acted as researchers who reflected on their 'working conditions' by situating their personal experience within a social, historical and cultural context. What immediately became apparent in the analysis was that all of the authors manifested a certain degree of versatility in their role of interpreter. Although the context of their actions differed, the authors each commanded a set of similar linguistic and cultural skills that they applied for different purposes and parties.

In order to infer meaning from their experience, the narratives have been closely read and categorized into corresponding segments. This encoding resulted in five aspects, respectively allocation, motivation, position, intervention, and perception. Through a selection of quotes taken from the narratives, the aspects have subsequently been analyzed, interpreted and framed with a variety of relevant social theories. The significance of these selected fragments for the role and position of the interpreter within the military field is manifold.

First, the accounts gave insight into the arbitrary yet transformative nature of the job appointment. While almost being thrust into the position of interpreter, the authors soon experienced the transforming powers of their service. The linguistic capacity of the interpreter enabled and consolidated not only the communication, it also created opportunities to address the needs of the involved parties. As such the allocation of the interpreter contributed to the empowerment of both the individual as well as the group.
Second, the narratives of the authors recount their motives for becoming an interpreter. Although the assignment of the interpreter was more a matter of chance than of deliberate intention, his interpretation of the circumstances motivated him to devote his cultural and linguistic capacities to improve his own condition as well of that of others.

Third, the narratives of the authors have demonstrated that the interpreters were literally positioned between (representatives of) groups. Being the third party, or the go-between, the interpreter was tied to different cliques and thus subjugated to oftentimes conflicting group norms and interests. Despite the physical, psychological and moral burden of these constraining circumstances, the interpreter nevertheless sought ways to explore or rather exploit the potential of their position by not only preserving the lifelines of communication but that of life itself as well.

Fourth, the narratives illustrated that the interpreter needed to steer a clear course in order to neutralize cultural sensitivities of groups. Whereas the interpreter seldomly received credit for his services and sometimes was even reduced to a mere pawn, he was undeniably an important player in the field because all of the involved parties depended on his interventions. These actions, after all, gave access to undisclosed territories, persons, and information. Knowing the potential of his role, the interpreter used his multicultural knowledge to influence the outcome of interactions even if this meant through subtle forms of manipulation and misrepresentation.

Finally, the experiences of the authors demonstrated that the in-between position and sometimes ambiguous interventions caused inaccurate perceptions of the person of the interpreter. Due to the duality of his position and role, the loyalty of the interpreter was always perceived with suspicion. As a consequence, the interpreter most often remained an

outsider to all of the parties. Notwithstanding the accusations of the others, the interpreter used his own outlook to engage in others and bridge differences.

The theoretical framework has demonstrated that the interpreters have been employed in ways that went beyond mere language mediation, and that contextual factors as environment and task assignment determined the actual position and role of the interpreter (Fiske, 2004, 171). Whereas the interpreter most often had to walk a fine line in order to serve the interests of the opposing groups, it is remarkable and even regrettable to conclude that the grim assessment of the ancient interpreter is confirmed in the autoethnographic narratives of the authors as well. This finding calls for a thorough investigation of the tongue and ears experience of interpreters in contemporary military missions. The following chapter will therefore examine the civil-military cooperation between Dutch soldiers and embedded and local interpreters in Afghanistan's war-torn Uruzgan province.

Notes

1 A total of six books have been explored to analyze four narratives. The difference in numbers is a result of the fact that the researcher used a Dutch and an English version of the book of Cornel Lumière. With regard tot he narrative of Louis Guilloux, two books books were used. Respectively, *OK Joe* by Louis Guilloux himself and *The Interpreter* by Alice Kaplan who recovers the history of the racial segration of the Jim Crow system during the American liberation of France through eye-witness accounts of Guilloux.

2 The American segregation politics of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century became historically known as the Jim Crow system. The term is derived from a song by comedian Thomas Dartmouth Rice (1806-1860) in 1832 and was used in an old American show. With his face polished black, white man Rice sung the words: *"Turn about and wheel about. And do jis so. And ebery time I wheel about. I jump Jim Crow."* The lyrics belonged to a song Rice had once learned from an elderly African-American in 1828. In his artist interpretation, the song, however, had become a mockery of African-Americans and an exploitation of their culture (Horton & Horton, 2001, 246; Leeflang, 2003, 50-53).

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Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Communicating Vessels? The Trade and Traits of Soldiers and Interpreters during Stability Operations in the Province of Uruzgan

Andrea van Dijk

1. Introduction

This chapter continues along the path of the five aspects that have been derived from the narratives of interpreters in high risk environments. The auto-ethnographic experiences of these narrators produced a framework to describe how respectively allocation, motivation, position, intervention, and perception defined and influenced the interpreter's behavior as well as that of the relevant stakeholders. Now, we fast-forward to a more contemporary context by applying these aspects to a case study which analyzes the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters during stability operations, more specifically Task Force Uruzgan (TFU 2006-2010), the Dutch contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in the Afghan province of Uruzgan.

Modern military missions such as ISAF (2001-2014) have become highly organized enterprises that encompass the cooperation of numerous countries. These missions, however, do not only involve the contribution of coalition partners. The operational efficiency of the intervening forces also often depends on the services of local partners. Camp Holland, the main military base of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan, for instance not only accommodated Dutch, American, Australian, British and German soldiers, it also encamped the Afghan National Army, the Afghan Security Guards, local interpreters, and several other local units who took care of the facilities that were present on the base. These local partners constituted an essential part of the organization without which a military mission such as ISAF could not have sustained.

Soldiers who are deployed to foreign mission areas, typically have to interact with unfamiliar social groups in order to achieve their mission goals. Their understanding of the environment often is the result of socio-cultural information which is gathered and processed during encounters with the local population and more specifically through the collaboration with local coworkers (Harris, 1994, 310-312). The impressions, ideas and attitudes of soldiers towards local partners, and vice versa, however, change according to positive or negative experiences in the cooperation. These shifting opinions about local partners and the accompanying alteration in the soldier's perception for instance can be illustrated by a personal observation that was made during field research (2008) at the above-mentioned military base:

> "Shortly after our arrival at the camp we were invited by the base commander to attend a safety briefing. He informed us about the regulations of the camp and urged us to take notice of the different alarm signals that sounded whenever the camp was endangered. The commander concluded his talk by impressing on our minds that we should respect the local workers on the base and that they should not be distrusted beforehand. The very next day, however, the camp was closed off and thoroughly searched after the alarm signaled that an intruder had tried to enter the base. Rumors about a former local interpreter on the warpath immediately swept the camp. Although the rumors about the intruder, who was referred to as 'Lucky', proved to be true, calm at the base was restored soon after. The incident, nevertheless, left an imprint on the military attitude towards local partners, which became clear when we once again joined the safety briefing at the end of our visit. This time, however, the base commander concluded his speech by warning the new units that they should carefully approach the local partners and that they should always be treated with reserve and suspicion."

The observation demonstrates that the incorporation of local partners into the military organization also confronts the military with a certain kind of ambivalence. Whereas the expertise and input of local partners can be considered pragmatic tools for attaining operational effect, dependence on local competence could also imply vulnerability for the military organization (Rietjens, 2008, 196-197). It is precisely the organization's lack of linguistic, cultural, and environmental knowledge of the mission area which makes it particularly difficult for the military to fully comprehend and control operations. The uncertainty of these circumstances could create feelings of insecurity towards the intentions of their 'foreign' co-workers. Particularly in a dangerous and turbulent mission environment like the province of Uruzgan, such feelings of vulnerability might ultimately constrain the relationship between the military and the local partners.

In unfamiliar and uncertain conflict zones, military leadership can make a difference between life and death. Military leaders therefore are trained to lead their units in dangerous situations. This type of leadership is called 'in extremis leadership' which means 'giving purpose, motivation, and direction to people when there is imminent physical danger, and where followers believe that leader behaviour will influence their physical well-being or survival' (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012, 97). Subordinates therefore need to trust their leaders' competence in making the right decisions as well as their commitment not to expose them to unnecessary danger (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012, 97). When trust in competence and loyalty are considered fundamental attributes of the on-scene commander, one could ponder whether this also should be true for local partners who perform key roles during military missions. Perhaps even more so for the person of the interpreter who often acts as a lifeline in the complicated operational environment that characterizes contemporary military interventions (Kummings, 2010, 8-9).

In order to investigate the dynamics between soldiers and interpreters, this chapter aims to interpret their cooperation through an explorative analysis of interviews that have been conducted among soldiers and national and local interpreters who have cooperated during ISAF. National interpreters are recruited among the Afghan-Dutch community and are embedded in the Dutch armed forces. Local interpreters on the other hand are contracted (via a placement agency) in the mission area itself. Following the framework of the five aspects that have been discussed in chapter 5, the analysis will moreover focus on the different strategies soldiers and interpreters have applied in dealing with the intricacies produced by their interdependent relationship.

2. Methodology

2.1 *Research Strategy*

A case study was applied to describe the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters in the mission environment. Although heavily criticized and stereotyped as a research strategy that lacks precision, objectivity and rigor, the case study nevertheless is a widely practiced method within social science research and renowned for its contribution to our knowledge of individuals, groups, organizations and social and political phenomena (Yin, 2018). In order to disqualify the stereotypes that surround this research strategy, Yin has given a definition of a case study that encompasses two features. First, he describes the case study as '(...) an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon ("the case") within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident'. Second, Yin continues by explaining that the case study inquiry copes with the '(...) distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide design, data collection, and analysis, and as another result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion' (Yin, 2018).

The investigative nature of the implicit research questions within the study, such as for example *'Why do soldiers (dis)trust their interpreter?'* and *'How do interpreters intervene in complex situations?'*, justified the implementation of a case study. These types of 'how' and 'why' questions, after all, covered conditions and phenomena that could only be examined within the contemporary context of the events itself (Yin, 2018). The five aspects that have been distinguished in the previous chapter and which are perceived to be elementary in the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters, moreover required the implementation of triangulation by tapping into various sources of evidence such as participant observation, documents and interviews (Yin, 2018). The case study comprised an all-encompassing research method that allowed the investigator to capture the characteristics of cooperation in high-risk environments as experienced by soldiers and interpreters who formed the primary unit of analysis of the case study (Yin, 2018).

2.2 *Data Collection*

Whereas a combination of multiple data collection techniques such as participant observation and a literary study has been applied, this case study concentrates mainly on the narratives that were gathered through the conduct of interviews. Narratives are understood as the story people live by which help them to understand the world (Ruiz Rosendo & Barea Muñoz, 2017, 187). More specifically this narrative approach enables us to comprehend the role of interpreters through how they are narrated by themselves as well as their military counterparts.

The participant observation took place from the 17th of January to the 1st of February, 2008. The researcher visited Camp Holland in Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan to conduct semi-structured interviews with servicemen (M), national interpreters (NI) and local interpreters (LI). The interviews with the interpreters were conducted with a co-interviewer who was involved in a separate study on cultural awareness. The topic lists (see Appendix V) addressed, among other things, the nature of the task assignment, type of cooperation between soldiers and interpreters, perceived problems in the cooperation, the performance and perception of the partner, (confidentiality of) information transfer and safety restrictions with regard to the cooperation. Other subjects that were discussed related to a more general inquiry into the respondents' memory of significant moments, individuals and circumstances that characterized the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters.

A total of 70 respondents have been interviewed individually and face to face over the period of January 2008 to December 2008 (see Appendices I, II, and III for an overview of the interviews conducted). During the field research at the central military base Camp Holland in Tarin Kowt, a number of 33 interviews were conducted among respectively 17 soldiers, 8 national interpreters and 8 local interpreters. It should be mentioned that all of these interpreters had a Pashtun background which coincided with Uruzgan as a Pashtun-dominated province. The collected data furthermore was complemented with a number of 37 interviews that were conducted in the Netherlands with soldiers who had been deployed as members of either the Battle Group, the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), or other units during different periods of TFU rotations (see Table I).

In qualitative research there often is quite some variation in the amount of time that interviews take (Bryman, 2016, 480). The interviews with the local interpreters at Tarin Kowt for example lasted approximately half an hour while the interviews with the soldiers in the Netherlands could take up to almost two hours. It would be wrong to assume, however, that shorter interviews are inferior to longer ones. When respondents agree to be interviewed, they are usually cooperative meaning that even short interviews can be of significance (Bryman, 2016, 480). The duration of the interviews, whether conducted in Afghanistan or in the Netherlands, mainly depended on the available time of the respondents involved. Two days prior before our leave, we had been granted permission by the quartermaster to meet with the local interpreters of the Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT). This last-minute authorization was the result of the sensitive circumstances that accompanied the Lucky incident. The initial plan of course was to conduct more interviews among the local interpreters since this would strengthen the integrity of the conclusions generated from the research (Bryman, 2016, 41, 697). Despite its small number, this specific group of local interpreters, however, produced relevant and unique data which only could have been gathered on scene. This data, moreover, proved valuable when compared to information provided by other types of respondents and sources. Eventually, we were granted exactly one half day during the interpreters' working hours to conduct the interviews which meant that

we had to maintain a tight schedule in order to let all of the voluntary candidates participate. The duration of these interviews ranged from 00.26 hours to 00.46 hours with an average time of 00.30 hours. We had considerably more time at our disposal with the national interpreters. Most of them reserved time for us during their leisure hours which enabled us to delve more deeply into certain issues that were addressed. These interviews ranged from 01.13 hours to 02.23 hours with an average time of 01.27 hours. The interviews with the soldiers were conducted by the researcher alone. Similar to the interpreters, I was granted permission to interview the soldiers at Camp Holland by either their superiors or the G1. These interviews also took place during their working hours and ranged from 00.24 hours to 01.45 hours with an average time of 00.53 hours. The extra number of additional interviews that were conducted with soldiers predominantly took place at the various barracks at which their unit was based. Not hampered by ongoing operations in the mission area, these interviews were the lengthiest of all ranging from 01.13 hours to 02.43 hours with an average time of 01.49 hours.

Table 1 Overview of Interviews

Main Category	Sub Group	Number	Total
Interpreters	National Interpeters	8	16
	Local Interpreters	8	
Military	Battle Group	27	54
	PRT	13	
	Other*	14	
Total			70

**This sub group consists of personnel from various military units including ISTAR, OMLT, TFU support and Regional Command South.*

The respondents, respectively servicemen, national interpreters and local interpreters, were predominantly approached through an informal network, followed by snowball sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 28). This meant that after the interview was completed, respondents were asked if they knew other individuals who met the requirements of the research population and who were willing to participate in the study. These potential candidates were either national interpreters or soldiers who had relied on their assistance during TFU rotations.

Although the interviews that were conducted during the field research in 2008 form the core of the data collection of this study, reasons of internal validity and reliability caused the researcher to broaden the horizon of the study and to complement the results with another set of interviews conducted with soldiers who had returned from their deployment. This resulted in a very heterogeneous group of respondents that covered almost the complete continuum of the 2006-2008 period of the mission. The replicating strategy of the multiple-case sampling in this regard strengthened the findings because they proved to hold true in comparable settings (TFU rotations) and thereby added confidence to the notion that the insights found could be considered generic for the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters during the TFU mission in the above-mentioned particular period of time (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 29-30). Moreover, it is important to notify the probability that the respondents have cooperated with the very same national interpreters that have participated in the field research. This overlap in deployment and hence cooperation is not inconceivable in view of the fact that national interpreters usually are contracted by the Defence Interpreters Service for the entire duration of the mission and as such are assigned to military bases for extensive periods of time. In fact, the researcher has conducted interviews with respondents in which such overlap was confirmed.

The unforeseen situation of the trespasser at the central military base at Tarin Kowt caused for a diversion of the original script of the field research. Although used as an informative anecdote to illustrate the sensitive nature of the cooperation between soldiers and local partners, the ‘Lucky incident’ which was described in the introduction of this chapter had a major impact on the course of the field study. Since the attempted attack involved a former local interpreter, the TFU staff had, out of safety precautions and investigative reasons, prohibited all contact with the group of local interpreters. Given that the primary source of information was closed off indeterminately, other venues of research within the military base needed to be explored to overcome the (methodological) impairment at hand.

Making the most of the situation, an alternative source of information was found in soldiers who had worked with local interpreters and who, after a short and informal introduction of the research subject, were keen to participate in the study. Completely in accordance with the nature of qualitative research in which adaptability to circumstances is pivotal, the change of perspective fortunately proved to be an unexpected opportunity that delivered an insightful and valuable contribution to the original intent of the field research (Yin, 2018). By including the perspective of the soldiers, the scope of the case study was not only broadened but also deepened by the fact that experiences in the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters could now be compared between the various groups of respondents.

In contrast to the relatively easy approachability and readiness of the soldiers, a certain amount of persuasion and persistence was needed to convince the national interpreters to partake in the study. A semi-official meeting was organized with the assistance of the staff’s personnel officer (G1) in order to coax the national interpreters into partaking in the research by informing them about the objective of the study and the outline of the interview. With the incident with the intruder still fresh in mind, however, there were some interpreters who were reluctant to participate while others had been given clear orders from their military

superiors not to get involved at all. This type of gatekeeping is a common limitation of research in conflict environments which often results in limited access to the research object (Müller-Wille, 2014, 41-42). The national interpreters who eventually did participate in the study, were very cautious with regard to their privacy and safety and therefore sometimes withheld information about their personal details and regional descent.

After fervent lobbying up unto the final days of the visit to the central base, the G1 as described before finally gave permission to interview a group of local interpreters who were assigned to the OMLT. The staff's approval allowed for the necessary access to a group of respondents which could only be observed and interviewed in the mission environment itself. Again, a meeting with the interpreters was arranged. Instead of informing the potential candidates in a neutral setting such as a meeting room, the assembly this time took place in the personal residence of the interpreters themselves. Seated on the ground in the center of a dimly lit tent and with a cup of some freshly poured chai in hand, the interpreters were informed about the purpose of the study and the topic list. Of course, this all took place according to the custom of the Pashtunwali, the traditional lifestyle and ethical code in Pashtun regions, which meant that the atmosphere was one of generosity and hospitality (Rzehak, 2011, 15). After a considerable amount of small talk and an exchange of polite gestures had taken place, the interpreters were invited to participate in the study to which they enthusiastically responded.

The interpreter database per camp was estimated by various military respondents at approximately 71 interpreters (consisting of both national and local interpreters) for Camp Holland in Tarin Kowt, and 13 local interpreters for the smaller Dutch base, Camp Hadrian, in Deh Rawod. These, however, were theoretical figures. In practice the number of active interpreters was often a fraction of the officially contracted interpreters. Circumstances of dismissal, leave, and even disappearance of (predominantly local) interpreters pressed heavily upon the already scant interpreter database. The participating local interpreters were (with some exception) mostly young urban adults between the age of 21 years and 23 years. Most of these local interpreters, often referred to as 'city boys' by the Dutch soldiers, came from urban regions such as Jalalabad, Kabul, and Kandahar.

2.3 Data analysis

The interview material has been analyzed using principles of narrative analysis. This approach takes stories, understood here as first-person accounts of the respondents' experience, as the object of investigation itself in order to explore how respondents '(...) impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives' (Kohler Riessman, 1993, 2). Especially in case of qualitative interviews like those conducted in this particular study, the answers given by respondents can be viewed as stories because the questions

were developed in such a way that they encouraged respondents to freely reflect upon their experiences (Bryman, 2016, 589).

By narrating their experiences, soldiers and interpreters enabled themselves to give meaning and value to the oftentimes complex situations they experienced during their cooperation in the mission environment. Precisely because narratives are sense-making structures in which the respondent not only tells about an experience but also creates a self through that very performance and hence in Goffman's terms renders a presentation of the self of how one wants (his role) to be perceived, it is of importance that the researcher preserves the story as told by the respondent so that their ways of constructing meaning are respected and narrative analysis can take place as an interpretive tool that examines '(...) phenomena, issues, and people's lives holistically' (Goffman, 1959, 17-20; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004, xi; Kohler Riessman, 1993, 4, 11, 20). With that precaution in mind, the researcher has taken great care to use the original wording of the respondent whenever their account of events was quoted.

Furthermore, the idea of "ideological dilemma" as developed by Billig is used to look at the narratives in the interviews. At the core of this idea is the contention that the "common sense" consists of contrary themes, revealing contrary ideological values (Stanley & Billig, 2004, 160-161). These values can be brought into argumentative conflict with each other. The theme of trust and distrust for example, which appears to be central to the analysis of the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters, is considered to constitute such an ideological dilemma. There are values that support the necessity of trust, just as there are values that support the opposite. The analysis will explicate how various respondents dealt with such ideological dilemmas. Important in this respect is the idea that a single narrative cannot transform every thinkable ambiguity and uncertainty into tightly organized certainties. Every form of representation therefore is potentially controversial because the researcher's attempt to capture the whole truth in their narration of the stories of others, essentially remains the creation of the researcher himself. Narratives, in other words, are seen as principally imperfect and selective ways of making sense of a dynamically complex environment (Kohler Riessman, 1993, 15-16).

Essential in the analysis of the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters was a twofold selective coding of the interview material which enabled the researcher to interpret the interaction between the soldiers and interpreters as expressed in the narratives of the respondents. First, the coding process was performed by a constant movement between the data and the five aspects of respectively allocation, position, intervention, perception and motivation that have been discussed in the previous chapter. This initial coding resulted in the development of five separate but complimentary meta-narratives which each were based upon the singular experiences or stories of the respondents. In this regard, it is important to reiterate that the meta-narratives are interpretations and reconstructions made by the researcher of how the respondents dealt with the interdependent relationship within the mission environment. The meta-narratives are therefore just as much the making of the

researcher as they are "narrated" by the interviewees, meaning that they ultimately are a way of "imperfect sensemaking" by the researcher of the sensemaking of respondents (Kohler Riessman, 1993, 23).

Second, the coding process consisted of a (re)construction of the more detailed character of the meta-narratives by finding examples and evidence for each of the five aspects. Quotes representing a selection of these examples and evidence are used to illustrate the meta-narrative of each aspect (see Appendix IV). With regard to the concept of representativeness, the researcher has tried to construct a sample that reflects the population accurately so that it can be viewed as a microcosm of the population (Bryman, 2016, 695). More specifically, the researcher has used a purposive sample by strategically selecting participants that were relevant to the research questions that were posed (Bryman, 2016, 408). Quotes representing this microcosm of the population therefore have also been chosen with due care. In practice, this meant that in case of the interpreters every respondent has been quoted at least once in this study. The group of interviewed soldiers, however, was too big for every respondent to be quoted. The researcher therefore has tried to the best of her knowledge and ability to create a balanced representation by selecting quotes that either reflected a more general experience shared by other respondents or a particular experience, observation or finding of a soldier that shed a different and or interesting light on matters described. Moreover, the researcher attempted to do justice to the contribution of the participants by representing the results as truthfully and authentically as possible. In relation to the quotes this meant for example that the quotes of the local interpreters were presented as phrased by the respondents without editing their English language. While this perhaps makes these quotes more difficult to read, it also gives an impression of their language proficiency as experienced by soldiers who cooperated with them during the mission.

2.4 Quality of Research

The Dutch contribution to the military operation of ISAF started in 2006 and ended in 2010. Given that descriptive studies are vulnerable to become outdated with the passing of time, one could wonder whether this research on the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters during the TFU mission is still relevant today. A decade later, it is safe to say that this is most certainly the case. After all, Western armed forces are still heavily engaged in interventions in fragile states in which they need to interact with the local population. Moreover, for some of these armies such operations are the main focus of their deployments. The Dutch military, in this regard, offers a case in point because its soldiers are still active in Afghanistan and countries like Iraq and Mali. The lessons of the TFU experience, however, have not yet fully been learned (Kitzen, 2019, 52-53). This critical observation can also be applied to the (mutual) experiences of soldiers and interpreters. This case study therefore provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of the role of the interpreter in conflict zones. Even more so, because of its focus on the understudied issue of the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters during military operations in Afghanistan (Ruiz Rosendo & Barea Muñoz, 2017,184).

In order to judge the quality of the research, several tactics with regard to data collection and data analysis have been taken into consideration to contribute to the reliability and validity of the case study. Construct validity has been established during the phase of data collection by applying source triangulation (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 266-267). By conducting interviews with respondents, the researcher was able to unearth facts, opinions and insights about events that took place within the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters. Through direct observation of relevant behaviors and contextual conditions on 'site' during for instance negotiations, meetings, and leisure time, the researcher moreover was able to provide new dimensions for understanding both the context and phenomenon of the cooperative relationship. The gathering of administrative documents in the form of operational protocols, evaluation reports, recommendation letters and newspaper clippings related to the subject matter furthermore provided specific details which granted the researcher the opportunity to corroborate information from other sources of evidence. Finally, by asking respondents about the physical artifacts they had collected during their deployment such as for example photographs, gifts, and memorabilia, the researcher was able to develop a more precise understanding of the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters beyond that which could be observed during the limited time of the visit to the central base alone. Together, these sources of evidence contributed to the construct validity of the case study by providing multiple measures of the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters during military operations. In addition, requirements for internal validity have been met during the phase of data analysis by developing a framework that was based on five aspects that were developed during prior autoethnographic research and which contributed to the organization of the analysis of the case study.

To increase the reliability of the information, two principles have been applied respectively the development of a case study database and the maintenance of a chain of evidence. With the exception of one respondent who refused to be taped, all of the interviews have been recorded with the permission of the respondents. These audio-recordings have been carefully stored and are accessible for examination. The interviews with the interpreters have been transcribed but due to the very time-consuming nature of this task, it was considered acceptable to forego the transcription of the remaining interviews since detailed notes were kept of each interview. The notes and audio-recordings provided the researcher ample opportunity to conduct a careful analysis of the data. A formal database of the interview material has been developed, so that an overview of the evidence can be reviewed directly (see Appendices I, II, and III).

Furthermore, full field notes regarding interviews, events, people and conversations have been written down in order to contribute to the conceptualization of observations (Bryman, 2016, 444). This information was chronologically organized in three separate notebooks in

such a way that both the researcher and outside parties can retrieve the raw material at any other time. With regard to the chain of evidence, the researcher has also strived to create transparency about the evidentiary process by explicating the circumstances under which the evidence was collected.

Although contributing to the quality of the research, these measures, however, cannot guarantee airtight evidence because qualitative research inherently involves some degree of subjectivity in both the respondents' experiences and opinions as well as the researcher's (theoretical) interpretation of these (re)presentations. A situation in which such a predisposition or even bias surfaced can be illustrated by the following 'clash of civilizations' which happened during a jointly conducted interview with a local interpreter:

> "A disturbing silence falls when Saber is asked if he has heard about the Dutch hearts and minds approach. After some moments, the co-interviewer reformulates the question by asking how Dutch soldiers could win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Again, Saber remains silent but ultimately he responds by stating that the Dutch, as well as the Americans, Canadians and all the other coalition forces that have come to Afghanistan, cannot win the hearts and minds of the local people. He can't, however, tell us why they cannot do so. When trying to verify whether he doesn't know the reason or doesn't want to share his opinion on this matter, the winter's cold within the tent suddenly threatens to turn into an icy chill. 'It's a secret only I know and that's why I don't want to tell you.' Saber says defiantly. Changing tactics, the co-interviewer introduces a new topic only to address the hearts and minds issue moments later. 'When the Dutch soldiers respect the local people', the co-interviewer suggests, 'they are winning the hearts and minds in a small way.' Saber responds wearily that such an attempt would amount to almost nothing because the Afghan people are Muslim and would therefore still perceive the 'guys as kafirs'."

Researchers within the field can be regarded as 'outsiders' who inadvertently could create social behavior in respondents that would not have occurred otherwise. In this particular case, the researcher for instance could be perceived by the respondent as a civilian and not a soldier, a Westerner and not an Afghani, a female and not a male. Aspects of status, ethnicity, religion and gender that each in itself, let alone all together, could influence the 'chemistry' with the respondent as is evident in the above-mentioned incident. This artificial effect of the researcher-respondent relationship could, when not detected in an early stage, lead to biased observations and inferences (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 265). Despite its potential negative influence, the researcher-respondent effect could, however, also refer to other issues that need to be addressed or more thoroughly investigated. The strong reaction of the respondent towards the insistent inquiry of the hearts and minds approach for instance could also be interpreted as a dislike of Western values. In that light, the incident also contained a significant paradox which makes clear that the military, in their effort to win the hearts and minds of the local population, has still a long way to go if they cannot understand the hearts and minds of their interpreters first. When that condition is taken for granted or overlooked, trying to get a foothold in the region will become a mission impossible. For Western soldiers intervening in non-Western mission areas, it is therefore important not only to notice, discuss and mitigate the effects of such opinions and sentiments present among interpreters in order to improve and (re)direct the cooperation but also to help prevent such biases from developing by contributing to a constructive work environment in which all members of the organization receive recognition for their contribution to (the goals of) the organization.

Another form of researcher effect occurs when the researcher threatens ongoing institutional relationships. In reaction to their insecurity about who the researcher is and what might be done with the collected data, respondents could adopt an on-stage role or special persona as a presentation of the self to the outsider (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 265). This bias seemed to be the case when the local interpreters were asked about the possible prevalence of social and work-related problems within the camp. With the exception of one respondent, all of the local interpreters expressed that there were no hardships and that they were very content with their job and the way things were going within the camp. The unanimity in responses, however, indicated that the respondents in this matter gave socially desirable answers because the interviews were conducted shortly after the incident with the former local interpreter had taken place. The occurrence of this very incident and the raid of their tents shortly thereafter already unmistakably hinted at the presence of tension within the TFU contingent of local interpreters. This impression was later confirmed during interviews with non-commissioned officers who told that competition among the interpreters and feelings of animosity towards the military supervisor were recurring events. The respondents most probably assumed the on-stage role of satisfied employees to prevent the researcher from exposing sensitivities such as for instance rivalries, weaknesses, compromises and contradictions to the outside world (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 265). Precisely because the researcher could have been interested in this type of information, the respondents might have felt it necessary to put on a masquerade in order to protect their interests. Although this kind of bias undoubtedly influenced the reliability of the data, the respondents' tendency to provide 'correct' answers also encouraged the researcher to carefully investigate the reasons that could underlie such reticence through other sources of evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 265). In this particular case, this meant that sensitive subjects such as for instance allegations of mistreatment mentioned by respondents were addressed and verified in interviews conducted with other types of respondents.

2.5 Research Ethics

Social researchers cannot permit themselves to focus solely on the quality of the knowledge they produce. They must also be aware of the ethical issues that are involved in doing social research in order to be able to make informed decisions about the implications

of the rightness or wrongness of their actions (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 288; Bryman, 2016, 123). Although some of the ethical issues already have been implicitly mentioned, it is nevertheless important to describe how the principles of honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence and responsibility have been accounted for in this particular study (Committee for the Revision of the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2018, 13-14).

With regard to the first principle of honesty, the researcher has always been open to the respondents about the true nature of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994, 292; Bryman, 2016, 133). It was clear to all stakeholders and participants that the researcher's interest involved the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters during military operations. The researcher always made her presence and intentions clear whenever she observed meetings and or conversations. Furthermore, the researcher made sure to inform respondents about the explorative and descriptive nature of the case study as well as the scope of the topic list. In order to illustrate the complexity of the theoretical framework, the researcher moreover tried to give voice to alternative or even contradictive opinions in the hope to achieve an honest and balanced report of the investigated aspects.

When it comes to the second principle of scrupulousness, the researcher has taken the utmost care to design, undertake and report the research according to the standards for good research practices. This means among other things that the researcher has conducted research with scholarly and societal relevance, has justified the research method of a case study and has taken the latest scholarly insights about the subject matter into account (Committee for the Revision of the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2018, 13, 16).

The third principle of transparency has been covered by the researcher through a clear description of how the data was gathered (purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews), documented (audio-archives, transcripts and handwritten notebooks) and processed (matrices, database and analysis). These sources of information are, with due regard for the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents, accessible for peer-examination. The researcher has also tried to elucidate the qualitative research process by referring to the applied theoretical framework and by explaining how results were achieved and analyzed through a stepwise coding process.

With regard to the fourth principle of independence, the researcher has made sure that the choice of research method and data analysis was not determined by non-scientific or non-scholarly interests and preferences (Committee for the Revision of the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2018, 17). For that purpose, the researcher regularly consulted with her supervisors and peers in order to see to it that the research was conducted honestly and accurately.

The final principle of responsibility was taken to heart because the researcher was very aware of the sensitivity of the military operations and the harm that could be done to the participants when the gathered information was not treated carefully. This was all the more true in case of the interpreters, who due to the nature of their work, already were prone to become the victim of violence. People were invited to participate voluntarily in the research and those respondents who actually did participate did so by giving their verbal consent. Prior to the start of each interview, the researcher assured that respondents were free to stop the interview at any given time and without any explanation. Furthermore, the researcher took measures to uphold the confidentiality and anonymity of participants by not mentioning their names or using fictitious names and by omitting or slightly altering details in the analysis to prevent identification (Bryman, 2016, 132-133; Miles & Huberman, 292-293).

Having discussed the methodological and ethical approach of this study, we can now proceed with the analysis of the first aspect of allocation.

3. Allocation

In the previous chapter the term allocation was used to describe the oftentimes unexpected and unconventional ways in which the job of interpreter was assigned to individuals. A similar pattern of allocation can also be discerned in the way most respondents of this study either became an interpreter or had to cooperate with one. The element of unexpectedness or rather unforeseen circumstances never being far away. Before delving further into this aspect, however, it is helpful to first explain something more about the historical background of Afghanistan to put some of the findings of this study in context and perspective.

For more than three decades and up until 2013 Afghanistan was the largest refugee-producing country in the world (Anonymous, 2013). During this period of time millions of Afghan people were forced to leave their homeland due to a history of ongoing war, violence and socio-political insecurity (Tober, 2007, 133). Currently, Afghans are the second largest refugee population after Syrian refugees. Most of the Afghan refugees have migrated to Iran and Pakistan but a considerate amount has also fled to Western countries. The term 'refugee' is defined by the United Nations international law as a person who is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion' (UNHCR, 2010, 14). The definition makes clear that refugees are driven by a fear that forces them 'to take tremendous risks to escape the discomfort of localized existence' (Bauman, 1998, 2). While refugees in that regard each have their own authentic and personal (his)story, the immense exile of Afghan refugees nevertheless can be understood as both the collective story of a displaced people as well as the testimony of a shattered country.

The forced migration of the Afghan people was caused by several historical conditions which took place in four different periods of time that started from the late 1970's and continued into the new millennium (Schmeidl, 2002, 10; Smith, 2009, 60). The first group of refugees left Afghanistan following the intervention of the Soviet

Army in 1979 to support the new secular regime that was installed after the Saur Revolution the year before. When Middle Eastern countries, the United States and China in reaction began to arm and support the Afghan resistance (*mujahedin*) in the early 1980's the flow of refugees increased into an unprecedented stream of nearly four million Afghan migrants. The second group of refugees left Afghanistan when the Soviet soldiers had withdrawn from the country. The Afghan war, however, wasn't over as from the early 1990's on various rival resistance factions engaged in a devastating power struggle that caused the internal security of the country to deteriorate further. The third group of refugees fled the country in 1996 when the Taliban gained control over the majority of Afghanistan. The civil war dragged on as resistance factions joined together in the United Front to fight the Taliban rule. The war intensified when UN sanctions failed to undermine the Taliban regime. Instead of breaking the Taliban rule, the UN peace efforts contributed to a continuation of the war and a further radicalisation of the Taliban. The fourth group of refugees left Afghanistan in 2001 after the 9/11 attacks on the United States and the subsequent US led invasion to eliminate the al-Qaida terrorist network. Although their number fluctuated over the years due to a recovering but still instable political climate, the stream of Afghan refugees hasn't ceased ever since (Jennissen, 2012; Hessels, 2004). Their amount, on the contrary, seems to have increased after the end of the ISAF campaign in 2014 which triggered a renewed surge of violence.

The constant flow of Afghan refugees denotes both the security dilemma of the country as well as the enormous number of Afghans who had to reconstruct their identity in host nations. The millions of people who fled war torn Afghanistan, after all, not only left behind their home, family and belongings in search of safety and a better life, the trauma of uprooting themselves also compelled the Afghan refugees to rebuild their lives in other and often more developed countries different from their homeland. The resettlement and adjustment process of refugees, therefore often is affected by the memories of the (traumatic) events that caused their migration as well as the social, cultural, political, religious, economic and linguistic challenges they faced in the new society (Smith, 2009, 61). In between worlds, the Afghan migrants therefore often have found themselves in a continuous and complex struggle to maintain their cultural identity on the one hand and the integration to the host country on the other hand (Tober, 2007, 134; Hessels, 2004, 51). As will be illustrated throughout this chapter, this particular struggle in a sense also manifested itself in the work of the interpreter because respondents had to 'navigate' between parties that belonged to different cultural backgrounds.

Most of the national interpreters who were involved in this study were part of the third stream of refugees which fled Afghanistan under the Taliban regime. They also belonged to the biggest group of Afghans that have migrated to the Netherlands in the mid-1990's (Hessels, 2004, 51). It was the so-called Afghan elite that was able to leave the country at an early stage of the conflict and it was because of their high profile that they were often granted refugee status in the host country (Van Houte & Davids, 2014, 78). Despite their level of education, this group of Afghan refugees nevertheless often had to wait for years in immigration reception centres before they finally received clarity about their official refugee status as an asylum seeker. This period of uncertainty and the experience of identity confusion determined the integration process of the Afghan refugees in general (Rostami-Povey, 2007, 246) and the background of the respondents among the group of national interpreters that have been interviewed for this research in particular. Conditions that undoubtedly, as this study will demonstrate, influenced their choice to become an interpreter. In a more or less similar situation, this also applies to the local interpreters who experienced the uncertainty of living in a conflict zone. These harsh conditions affected their livelihood which stimulated them to explore other and less familiar pathways to employment.

3.1 Employment: A Matter of Survival and Sustenance

Whereas various value systems today are competing with each other in Afghanistan, the values, norms, customs and habits of the ideal of the Pashtunwali, still presents an attractive guiding principle for the honourable behaviour of both individuals and social groups in everyday life as well as in exceptional situations (Rzehak, 2011, 1, 21). Individual honour, pride that comes from self-reliance, and the fulfilment of family obligations are some of the shared cultural values which are part of the 'Pashtun way of life' (Hatch Dupree, 2002, 978). Employment in that respect is considered to be an important virtue within Afghan culture and most Afghan refugees, more specific those of Pashtun descent, therefore strive to continue their profession in their host country. Despite their ambition such job prospects, however, were not always attainable for the Afghan refugees because the degrees and skills acquired in their home country often did not meet the standards and needs of the Western labour market. In most cases their credentials, therefore, were not recognized as formal degrees by employers (Hessels, 2004, 50; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008, 432). Research on the employment experience of refugees in the Netherlands, in this instance, showed that the time spent in reception centres furthermore impeded the refugees' opportunities of employment as this prevented them from gaining human capital such as post-migration education, work experience and language proficiency. Skills that could improve the chances of economic integration (De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010, 398).

Like most of the Afghan immigrants that belonged to the middle class, the respondents of this study therefore faced the loss of status as they often remained unemployed or occupied lower status positions (Rostami-Povey, 2007, 251). Disappointed but not defeated by these grim perspectives, the respondents sought other and more unexpected venues to pursue a career as the following quote of NI 1 illustrates:

> "I had some experience with interpreting. I acted as an interpreter at the immigration reception center and every now and then I accompanied people who needed to see a doctor. My friends told me that the Ministry of Defense was looking for interpreters. I was unemployed so I decided to apply for the job. I called and was invited for an interview. They took some tests and I was screened."

In search for a living another respondent NI 6 relates in an almost similar voice the following:

> "In the past I worked voluntarily as an interpreter at an immigration reception centre and for a law firm. It was at a meeting of the Federation of Afghan Refugee Organizations in the Netherlands (FAVON), however, that an acquaintance, who worked as an interpreter for the Ministry of Justice himself, told me that the Ministry of Defense was looking for interpreters. I applied because I was unemployed and in need of a job. Before I was taken on by the military organization, I was thoroughly screened. That procedure took about three to four months. It was understandable and logical that these precautions needed to take place. After all, it's a precarious job."

The resemblance between these quotes is significant. Both respondents, as did some of the other respondents, volunteered as interpreters in reception centers. The similarities in their stories become even more substantial when we look at how the respondents found their job as an interpreter. Except for one respondent who used a more formal means of application by responding to an advert in a newspaper, all of the respondents among the group of national interpreters acquired their jobs through their social network. Each of them was informed through resources in their network about the possibility to become an interpreter for the Dutch Military of Defense. The employment of the respondents, therefore, was a direct consequence of the information passed on by friends, family, acquaintances, or contacts within Afghan community groups.

The job seeking process of the respondents confirms that social capital (the mutual relations, interactions and networks that emerge among human groups) has a strong impact on economic outcome (Matthews, Pendakur & Young, 2009, 306). Sociologist Mark Granovetter has established that social structures and more specifically personal networks (social ties) are very important in job-finding. The strength of a social tie is characterized by a combination of the amount of time, intimacy and reciprocal services shared between persons (Granovetter, 1973, 1361). The stronger the ties between the members, the more likely the sharing and exchange of resources among insiders. A bonding social network, more in particular, is characterized by strong ties, solidarity and primary contacts between the members of the network (Kanas, Chiswick & Van der Lippe, 2012, 681). While close ties thus might be more motivated in helping with job information, Granovetter on the other hand also states that weak ties (infrequent connections) have access to different and new information which makes them better sources when it comes to finding a job (Granovetter, 1973, 1371). Precisely because these weak ties move in different circles, they are able to bridge different networks, sectors and labour markets (Matthews, Pendakur & Young, 2009, 325). Granovetter has called this phenomenon the 'strength of weak ties' (Granovetter, 2005, 34).

In light of this research, the data has demonstrated that social structures indeed positively contributed to the employment of the respondents. While the initial steps of the acquisition of interpreters were established through more formal and impersonal means, the Ministry of Defense also has been apt to exploit social structures as a source of recruitment to address the immediate need for national interpreters as the following quote by respondent NI 4 illustrates.

> "At some point I read something about interpreters in a brochure of FAVON and around the same time a friend showed me an advert in a newspaper. The Ministry of Defense was looking for national interpreters. I made a phone call and was invited for an interview."

Another example of the importance of, in this case, local networks is given by respondent NI 8 who travelled to Afghanistan and by chance got recruited by Dutch troops.

> "In 2005 I made a road trip from the Netherlands to Kabul. I come from the north of Baghlan and at the time there were Dutch soldiers in the area. There were a couple of schools, one school for girls and two for boys, that needed support. I asked the principals if they wanted me to interpret for them. I told them that I could make arrangements and that the rest was up to them. I made appointments with the soldiers and I brought the people, a female teacher and the other two principals, to the PRT house in Pol-e-Khomri. That´s how I met with the military organization. I had some brief conversations with the soldiers and they asked me to come and work for them. I spoke with major D. and he told me how and where I could apply."

Respondent NI 8 was connected to both the Dutch soldiers as well as the Afghan school principals. These connections gave him the opportunity to act as a broker and trade on gaps in social structures (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 141). He positioned himself as an intermediary between the two disconnected stakeholders and used his ties to broker the flow of information between these different parties (Obstfeld, 2005, 102-103). By bridging the structural hole between the Afghan principals and Dutch military, the respondent not only contributed to the establishment of interethnic contacts and hence an exchange of resources, these crosscutting ties in turn also enabled him to widen his own network and benefit from the resources this generated (Lancee, 2010, 207). His mediation, after all, resulted in a position as a national interpreter for the Dutch troops.

Social networks not only proved to be pivotal for respondents among the national interpreters, local interpreters also used the resources of their social capital to increase their chances of deployment. All of the respondents, apart from LI 4 who coincidentally met an interpreter in Kandahar who referred him to the International Management Services (IMS),

have found their job through the support of family and friends. Respondent LI 1 in this respect explains:

> "Well, there was my friend in Kandahar Airport. He was working with me in this organization and after that he was working for the Canadians. He called me and said 'If you want to work there's a name of a company in Kandahar Airport'. IMS is the interpreter's company. When I go there, he arranged an interview for me. I was passed in that interview. The second interview was in Kandahar Airport also and there was also a screening. So, I was passed in the screening and they already send me here to Tarin Kowt."

Respondent LI 8 subsequently demonstrates exactly how strong the ties of these bonding networks can be:

> "Respondent LI 2, you already had an interview with him, he's my cousin. He was an interpreter in KAF with the Dutch army. So, he asked me, I was jobless at the time, 'If you want to have a job especially as an interpreter, if you want to work, you can come with me'. So, he took me to KAF and I had an interview with the Dutch army, with a Dutch officer. So, fortunately I go on interview and I pass and I get this job."

At first it seems rather striking to notice that among the relatively small group of eight respondents of the Operating Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT), a total of four persons found their job through their friends. Two other respondents, moreover, relied on the resources of their family to obtain their position. This observation of social brokering, however, can easily be understood from the perspective of the structure of Afghan society in which kin-based solidarity groups (*qawms*) (re)distribute resources (Kitzen, 2016a, 344). This cultural phenomenon therefore is a local rendition of the theory of bonding social capital as described in the exploration of the job seeking experience of the national interpreters. The qawm, perhaps the strongest amongst ties within Afghan culture, as such proves to be the 'core bonding social capital' that even allows members in the periphery to count on the leverage of the shared values of trust and solidarity (Monsutti, 2004, 225). This is illustrated by the following quote of respondent LI 5:

> "My classmate who was with the American SF called me, he informed me: 'If you wanted to find a job for you to support your family, in Kandahar is a company its name is IMS'. After I come here I got an interview for the Dutch soldiers, they gave an interview and after I interviewed in 11 September I get the job."

The quotes demonstrate that the respondents, in line with Granovetter's theory, used both their strong and weak ties as resources for finding a new job.

Before concluding this subparagraph, we have yet to touch upon another resemblance between the interpreters. Both national and local interpreters experienced economic difficulty. That condition drew them to an unfamiliar profession which allowed them to earn a living and to support their families (Fitchett, 2012, 177). The difference in the circumstances of the local interpreters, however, is that their path to employment took place in a war-torn country which complicated the situation of local interpreters considerably. Motives for the interpreters' employment and the consequences these implicated, will be addressed later on in this chapter.

3.2 Interpreters: Scarce Resources, Tricky Business

Although the initial steps on the labour market were enabled through the support of their social network, the actual recruitment of the local interpreters by the Dutch army was organized by an agency called IMS. All of the respondents in this respect claimed to have followed the same route towards their new position, respectively a (mediated) visit to KAF, an interview at IMS, a job interview and screening conducted by the Dutch military and subsequent deployment to Tarin Kowt. Once at the camp, the local interpreters were allocated to certain units by the quartermaster, the military official in charge of the task assignment of the interpreters. The fact that the Dutch troops depended on IMS for the recruitment of linguists implied that the local interpreters were operating amidst the military organization while not being employed by them. This discrepancy caused the responsibility for the local interpreters to shift and become blurred (Fitchett, 2012, 178). Control over the policy and practice of IMS concerning the operational activity and well-being of interpreters was difficult to exercise as respondent M 17 rather vividly explains:

> "That agency was a nail in my coffin. I couldn't do business with them. (...) My interpreters told me in confidence that they only paid out half of their days off and that they were forced to work for other coalition partners while they were on leave. (...) The agency duped my people at the shop floor and did not once meet my requirements during my period of deployment. As a consequence, some of the local interpreters did not return to the base after their leave. (...) The Dutch military organization always felt obliged to keep their part of the agreement even though the other party didn't stick to theirs."

The example illustrates that the cooperation between the military and its local interpreters can be obstructed by the very agency that conducts the selection and hiring of linguistic personnel in the mission area and that partnerships established by contractual planning do not necessarily guarantee a satisfactory, stable and fair cooperation between the organizations (Bogers, Van Dijk en Heeren-Bogers, 2010, 168). Scarce resources of interpreters being the reality, however, the military organization had to deal with the vagrancies of the

IMS nonetheless. Some quartermasters understandably were able to cope with that more easily than others. Dependence on a recruitment agency with such monopoly did not exist at the beginning of the Dutch Mission. During the Deployment Task Force (DTF) and first rotation of the TFU, the Dutch military on the one hand called upon the assistance of interpreters working for the U.S. and Canadian coalition forces and on the other explored opportunities to enrol local persons who could fulfil the role of interpreter. These individuals were recruited amongst the population or were drawn from local staff that was already working on the camp for example as security guards. The necessity to make ends meet in order to address the need for interpreters, is illustrated respectively by respondents M 1 and M 12 who worked for the DTF and the first rotation:

> "During the pre-planning of the DTF we did not have our own interpreters. When we wanted to get in touch with local officials, we, out of sheer necessity, had to use the interpreters of our American and Canadian coalition partners. Without them communication simply was impossible because we did not possess sufficient language skills. They were of great assistance to us and were excellent advisors as well. They introduced us to local contractors and companies who could provide for the rental of building machines, the use of the concrete mixing plant, the purchase of market products and the hiring of workmen. They even helped us out with the recruitment of local interpreters."

> "There were situations in which our interpreters were so low in number that we had to call upon the Afghan Security Guard (ASG). A couple of them could speak a bit of English. So, we sometimes took them with us out of necessity. You really can't do anything without an interpreter. Well, except maybe when you are writing reports on the compound but as soon as you leave the gate interpreters are crucial. Most often civilians will try to approach you and then it's a real pity when you have to give them no for an answer because you cannot understand them. The interpreter was also important during the HOTO. Not only because I had to take my successor across the area of operations to show him important features of the terrain but more importantly because I had to handover the acquired contacts. The first, you could perhaps try and do without an interpreter because that's focused on getting to know the area but when you want to introduce your successor to key players, the importance of the interpreter is undebatable."

The experiences described by the officers correspond with the image of the DTF and first TFU rotation as a pioneering phase in which the Dutch soldiers not only had to adapt to the operational environment but also to the specific tasks as well as the scale of the mission. With approximately 1200 to 1400 troops, the Dutch mission was of an unprecedented size and by far the biggest deployment of the modern Dutch military (Kitzen, 2016b, 218). Along with the success of addressing these challenges, came the organization of the recruitment and deployment of interpreters. From a provisional activity, it gradually evolved into a more professional enterprise which was incorporated by IMS and transformed into a clever business model over time. The downside of this development, however, was as mentioned before the dependency of the supply of local interpreters by this monopolistic powerholder.

As soon as IMS had allocated the local interpreters to the task force, they came as mentioned earlier under the supervision of the quartermasters in Tarin Kowt or Deh Rawod. The quartermasters assigned the interpreters to specific units and tasks. Whereas almost all of the respondents among the soldiers indicated that they had preferences for certain local interpreters, the quartermaster did not always take such requests into consideration. Sometimes these refusals were a consequence of a lack of flexibility in the person of the quartermaster but most often it was caused by the scarcity of the local interpreters. Some of the interviewed soldiers, however, were not prepared to let go of their preferences so easily. They found ways to circumvent the policy of the distribution of resources in order to claim the interpreter who had proven his worth in the cooperation and who as such matched their interests best. Respondent M 29 says in this instance:

> "I have my preferences. They're based on the English language proficiency of the local interpreter and the number of instructions he needs to do his job. You don't want an interpreter who speaks poorly and is incomprehensible. You need to get hold of information fast. That's why it's important to work with the same interpreter. In that way, you know what his (in)capabilities are and he knows how you like things to be done. If we have a competent interpreter, we don't wait and see but pull him out of his tent directly by ourselves. That works the most efficient for us."

The quote illustrates that soldiers in this study valued the individual competence of the local interpreter most and that whenever they were in the position or had the chance to choose (or claim) an interpreter of preference, this was based on the language proficiency, knowledge and personality of the interpreters. These employable skills can be described as human capital that determined the standing of the interpreters in the eyes of the troops (De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010, 377). Some local interpreters were aware of this mechanism and tried to increase their market value by improving their English language proficiency in their spare time by reading English books and watching movies.

The reputation of competent interpreters did not remain unnoticed by the military organization and often resulted in a transfer to different units with more complicated tasks but also better working conditions. Such a 'promotion' for example could consist of a transfer from the BG or OMLT to the PRT which obviously diminished the risks of the job considerably. Interpreters, in other words were assigned different assignments according to their level of language skills. This process of allocation seems to be a recurring phenomenon within the Dutch military. In the Bosnian conflict for instance social patrols were reserved for interpreters with the least developed skills while the more advanced and experienced interpreters assisted liaison officers, civil military cooperation officers and the commanding

officers (Bos & Soeters, 2006, 263-264; Ruiz Rosendo & Barea Muñoz, 2017, 186). Apart from safety, the interpreters experienced other positive effects as a result of their specific human capital. This also included their status within the informal hierarchy of their peers which will be further addressed in this chapter when the position of interpreters within the military organization is discussed. Whereas the upward move was an all-round improvement of the interpreters' condition, the soldiers who had cooperated with these capable local interpreters, however, experienced their departure as a loss for the unit. They reluctantly accepted this 'brain drain' as a fait accompli since all of the local interpreters started at the bottom of the ladder. Respondent M 41 said the following about this matter:

> "The rookies start at the combat units and the consequence of that is that it takes ages before instructions are understood. The ANA unit doesn't do what they're told to do because of the bad translation of the interpreter. This can cost lives. There was a situation in an open field in which I told my men to 'deploy' so that they didn't form an easy target. Both the interpreter as well as the Afghan commander didn't know what that instruction meant. I couldn't even explain it to them with the use of hand gestures. The unit walked in a straight line through the field. It was very dangerous. (…) Another time I was angry with the interpreter because he didn't translate what I asked him to. The interpreter, however, didn't get that I was mad at him and started to yell, like I had just done, to the ANA soldiers. I had to stop him and explain to him that my frustration was directed at him and not the soldiers. (…) All the good interpreters eventually move on to the staff and the PRT. It should be the other way around. Rookies should start with the staff and should be transferred to the BG when they're experienced. In that way, you don't have to waste your time on the interpreter but instead you can invest your energy in the competence, or rather the incompetence, of the Afghan commander."

Ideally, the local interpreters employed by the military 'possess sufficient cross-cultural competence and language skills to facilitate effective communication and relationship building' between the soldiers and the Afghan counterparts (Hajjar, 2017, 94). Reality, however, demonstrates that newly hired interpreters were hardly equipped to cooperate efficiently with soldiers. Most interpreters were recruited because they knew the local language and the language of the foreign army and not because they had professional experience or received a formal training as interpreters in these languages. Assumably, interpreters therefore often might not have acquired the necessary skills to interpret adequately in conflict zones beforehand (Ruiz Rosendo & Barea Muñoz, 2017, 183). In that light, the quotes of respondents M29 and M41 not only demonstrate the vital need for competent interpreters who are able to assist the military in their effort to control operations, they also illustrate that the gap between demand and supply of 'competent interpreters' creates a grey area in which soldiers find inventive and sometimes even controversial ways to 'allocate' the (proven) linguistic resources to themselves.

To conclude this paragraph, one could state that the aspect of allocation is centered on scarcity. It involves both a lack of suitable jobs (for Afghan migrants and local Afghans) in which the importance of bonding social capital eventually provided in the need for employment as well as a lack of linguistic resources in which human capital proved to be the determinant factor for interpreters in making headway within the military organization. While the profession of interpreting in this study was in most cases a matter of chance, the job itself was one of purpose and necessity as the second aspect of motivation will demonstrate.

4. Motivation: When the Going Gets Rough, the Tough Get Going

After World War II three landmark studies by respectively Marshall, Stouffer, and Shils & Janowitz have explained that not moral reason but small-group psychology determines combat motivation. (Wessely, 2006, 275) Instead of the traditional motives as patriotism, religion, and ideology, they introduced the primary group as a key factor for motivation. 'Soldiers fight because they have been trained to fight and failure to do so endangers not only their own lives but also the people immediately around them with whom they have formed powerful bonds' (Wessely, 2006, 275-76). These doctrines continue to be relevant for Western professional militaries because in a non-ideological age military organization simply can't recruit, train and sustain a professional army on ideology alone. A recent study among the U.S. army in this light has shown that soldiers have plenty of reasons to join. Their choice to enlist is influenced by institutional factors such as for example family and duty and occupational factors such as professional development and job stability of which the latter also incorporates a rather simple motive namely money (Helmus, Zimmerman and Posard et al, 2018, 26-27). Yet, the study also shows that after some time in active service, soldiers report that 'peer bonds and camaraderie represent the best elements of their unit life' (Helmus, Zimmerman and Posard et al, 2018, 120).

A survey among Dutch soldiers during the Stabilization Force Iraq (SFIR) confirms the abovementioned findings that soldiers have various motives for participating in a mission. During the mission itself, however, combat readiness was determined as the most predominant motive (Van den Berg, Soeters and Dechesne, 2006, 315). It is precisely this preparedness to face crisis or engage in combat with the primary group, that characterized the deployment experience of the respondents of this particular study. The soldiers in this regard discovered that their readiness to operate in the murky operational environment of Uruzgan, was compromised by the fact that they didn't command the language and cultural customs of the local population. In order to explore the mission area and interact with the local population, the soldiers had to depend upon the linguistic and cultural intervention of national and local interpreters (Bogers, Van Dijk and Heeren-Bogers, 2010, 166). This explains the rather instrumental approach of soldiers towards the cooperation with interpreters as reflected in the quote of respondent M 10:

> "Interpreters are an essential part of your operation. We also considered it an 'abort criterion' if you didn't have an interpreter. I mean, if you don't have an interpreter with you, you're practically blind in the area. You could of course say: 'We are going to an area where we don't necessarily have to talk, so we don't need an interpreter' but if you happen to run into a situation on the way in which you simply have to make contact with the local people and you don't have one, well then you're blind. You will not only be unable to get information from the local people but you won't be able to get your own message across to them either. Especially when your new to an area that's of vital importance."

The quote, which is illustrative for the approach of a majority of the respondents, demonstrates that the soldiers had predominantly rational motives to cooperate with interpreters. They simply needed their assistance in order to work as an effective unit and to achieve their goals in the operational environment. This exploration and explanation of the soldier's motives for enlistment and deployment, also raises the question what motivates interpreters to work in the frontline of conflict. Contrary to the soldiers who have been thoroughly trained, the interpreters in war zones are rarely professionals (Fitchett, 2012, 177). What made them decide to take up this dangerous task and work for the military? One factor has already been addressed in the paragraph of allocation and consists of the need for employment. This occupational and more specifically economic motive is a factor that the national as well as local interpreters, according to the insights of the aforementioned survey, seem to have in common with the soldiers. The interviews, however, show that the interpreters have another motive that is equally (or even more) important for their decision to join the military as the following respondents NI 5 and NI 7 indicate:

> "Before I became an interpreter, I had jobs that did not suit my education. I was looking for something that fitted my profile and my experience as a former Russian army officer. I also wanted to do something good for the Netherlands as well as Afghanistan. I want to build a bridge between the countries. And not unimportantly, the job pays well."

> "I wanted to become an interpreter because I wanted to do something for my native country. I wanted to help but I also wanted to do something in return for the Netherlands because I am a Dutchman now."

The motives shared by the national interpreters don't differ much from the answers given by the local interpreters, as respondents LI 4 and LI 3 illustrate:

> "ISAF wants to rebuild this country for us and I want to satisfy this country. I am working with them jointly to rebuild this country and I want to get money too."

> "I know that ISAF is doing a lot for the population, for the Afghani people which is obviously me as well. So, I want to support ISAF as much as I can to help them rebuild my country. To make my population stand back on their feet. They are giving the security, support, everything and I want to join my part in the responsibility for it."

The quotes of the respondents refer to the process of reciprocity, a form of prosocial behavior that obligates persons to repay gifts, favors, and services that have been performed for them (Goldstein, Griskevicius and Cialdini, 2011, 441-442). Reciprocity, therefore, can be discerned as the other pivotal principle that legitimizes the respondents' decision to (co)operate along soldiers in hazardous areas. For over a century, reciprocity has been described by sociologists as a defining feature of social exchange and social life. Simmel in this respect has stated that social balance and social cohesion cannot exist without 'the reciprocity of service and return service' (Molm, 2010, 119). The norm of reciprocity, therefore, can be described as the evolutionary basis for cooperation in society in general and as a central catalyst for organizational cooperation in particular.

The critical factors that determine the extent to which people feel personally obligated to reciprocate are the relationship between the benefactor and the beneficiary and the belief of the latter in how much they have benefitted from the favor (Goldstein, Griskevicius and Cialdini, 2011, 442). In this case, almost all of the interviewed national interpreters wanted to do something in return for the Netherlands. Theoretically understood, this could be out of a sense of indebtedness that was created by the benefits (for example asylum and citizenship) that had been received in the past and that had directly contributed to their welfare (for example safety and housing) (Goldstein, Griskevicius and Cialdini, 2011, 442). By joining the mission, the respondents could reciprocate the host country through fulfilling the need for linguistic personnel as experienced by the MoD. The implication of this unique and perfect return service of the respondents is that they changed roles from beneficiary to benefactor. As interpreters, they now possessed resources desired by the military and that change of position (and power) in fact inherently created an obligation for others to reciprocate. This process is illustrated by the experience of respondent M 11:

> "There was a desperate shortage of competent interpreters and the PRT really relied on them. (...) I had two interpreters who worked in shifts for me. Each had their own specific qualities but I needed both of them otherwise I would have completely worn them out. It's such a demanding job for which they hardly receive the acknowledgement they deserve but I highly appreciated them. (...) I remember a situation at night in which combat took place. We had to ask the governor to send assistance and it was the interpreter who tried to build bridges between me and his people. That was admirable. These interpreters have left everything behind and are now prepared to return to the country they have fled. I am not making saints of them, they have their 'businesses on the side', but these people have fire in them. Their attitude is one of 'Get up and go!'."

The respondent's return for the service of the national interpreter consisted of appreciation and admiration. Competence (understood as acknowledgement) is, together with relatedness and autonomy, one of the basic psychological needs that is necessary for optimal human development and integrity (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 68). Satisfaction of those needs, for example in the form of recognition received for one's effort to help achieve organizational goals, as is the case in the abovementioned quote, therefore contributes to the enhancement of the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and hence self-determination of people (Gagné & Deci, 2005, 337). The effect and influence of reciprocity on the individual and organizational level is furthermore illustrated by the experience and vision of respondent M 40:

> "I already respected interpreters because they risk a lot for their profession. My local interpreter Harry continued to do his job under all circumstances. We've been knee-deep in shit. Harry was on duty during the TIC in which my unit was involved and which had cost the lives of both Dutch soldiers and ANA soldiers. That was a dramatic event. Harry then more or less stood up as a leader to guide my men in how they should approach the ANA staff. He told them how they should pay their condolences and what was expected of them. He did that in an outstanding way. (...) Harry trusts me because we look after him. We have to take good care of the interpreters. Make sure that their gear is in order, those sorts of things. We just need to pamper them a bit more. Only when you provide in the needs of the interpreter, you'll be able to ask something in return. Information is motivation. See, cooperation improves when you acknowledge and respect people. The ANA soldiers and interpreters will then put more trust in you and that's fundamental. That's why I gave Harry my weapon at the time. He was the last in line and otherwise had to enter the house without cover."

Organizational cooperation runs smooth when the norm of reciprocity is carefully kept in balance. It brings people together through affective regard, bonds of trust, and solidarity (Molm, 2010, 123; Fiske, 2004, 23-24). The latter also explains why some soldiers were willing to give a weapon (sometimes even their own) to their interpreter. Whereas national interpreters were militarized and therefore authorized to carry a gun, local interpreters were not allowed to bear arms. Feelings of unity and harmony experienced in the mutually beneficial partnership, however, made some respondents ignore the rules and decide for themselves what was in the best interest for the interpreter and the unit. This experienced kinship between soldiers and the local interpreters is reminiscent of the key factor of small group psychology that motivates soldiers to join the army and demonstrates that the 'buddy system' that usually is generated during basic military training and boot camp could overcome cultural boundaries and include 'others' like the interpreter as well (Qirko, 2013, 140-142). The development of bonds of trust and hence the feeling of being part of the smallest unit of action, seemed to be expedited and consolidated by the extreme duress and danger of the circumstances of the mission. Respondent LI 1 in this regard recalled of the following experience:

> "It's a dangerous job. In Kandahar Airport the guy already said to me in interview: 'Maybe you will lose your body member, maybe you die.' I said: 'No problem.' That's what he already told the first time to me. He wanted me to disturb, he said: 'We have this kind of job. And this is your choice. If you want yes you can join with us but if you don't...' But also I had a mission in Deh Rawod (DR), really bad there, because I lost my two friends in Dutch Army, also he already gave to me a watch. That's what he gave to me before we went into a qalah and absolute he said: 'LI 1 [first name], I want to give something to you.' I said yes. He gave it to me on the night I lost him. When he died he said: 'You are true to me, take this watch.' I said: 'I don't have a watch.' He said: 'Maybe you can now know what time it is.', and in the evening I lost him. I already miss them, so I don't want to see any more of this kind happen."

Although such (deeply) shared commitment and trust evidently stimulates the motivation for cooperation, data has also shown that the norm of reciprocity wasn't always followed by the military. Favors, in this matter could also be taken for granted by beneficiaries. Social arrangements that make great demands on one's individual time, loyalty and energy are known in sociology as greedy institutions (Soeters, 2018, 160). The social position of priests, soldiers and housewives are often mentioned as the classic examples of such institutions but the person of the interpreter might very well become a new epitome of this concept. Despite the importance of their presence for the mission, the anticipated return of their service often remained absent as the experiences of respectively respondents NI 2 and NI 7 illustrate:

> "I have been on several missions and sometimes they asked me if I could stay longer because I was familiar with the situation. I told them that I had run out of proper clothes and that the food had been bad. Sometimes there's pork and I am not allowed to eat that. How many days on end do I have to eat the same thing? During their deployment a lot of interpreters don't exactly know what to do. They don't have enough material because they simply just don't know. Like the time when I needed a cover for my sleeping bag. I have mine only since the last two months. I have slept in soaking wet sleeping bags just because I didn't have the right material. I wasn't prepared. That usually is the case with interpreters because they simply don't know. We've got most of the things but not everything. It usually takes a while before our gear is complete. I am waiting for safety glasses for about half a year now and I still haven't got them even though I do IED searches."

> "My boss said that I had a tough job but he doesn't write that in his assessment. When I was ill, the doctor advised me to stay in bed for four days. My boss told me that the guys had to go on patrol and that they didn't have an interpreter. I said: 'Okay, going on patrol is important, so I'll work'. I didn't give any comment of course; our people are outside and that is what matters. I don't know what the reason for the assessment is. I am not angry about it but the letter has disappointed me. I have done something positive over there, you know."

Reciprocity as a way to solicit cooperation, thus proved to be more the product of traits and insights of the individual soldier than that it was part of the institutional procedures of the military organization at the time of this study.

Having touched upon the direct relation between benefactor and beneficiary, some of the quotes also demonstrate a more indirect form of reciprocity. By assisting the military, the interpreters could also benefit the Afghan people through the interventions of the Dutch troops. Why, one could wonder, would they support the Afghan people when they don't receive personal benefits from their actions? The answer is that although people '(...) generally want to improve their own personal welfare, they also tend to be motivated to enhance the welfare of individuals, groups and issues that are tied to their identity, beliefs, or values. This motivation can be so strong that it inspires people to sacrifice their own resources to provide aid to those valued individuals, groups, and issues' (Goldstein et al, 2011, 443; Simpson & Willer, 2008, 38). This holds even more true for interpreters, who benefit others often at the cost of themselves even if this means endangering their lives. The core social motive of belonging, which has been discussed in the previous chapter, in other words seems of particular relevance here as people's need to belong motivates them to help others (Fiske, 2004, 17). Whereas showing support often involves the concrete act of sharing information, such help is not self-evident in fragile states like Afghanistan where good governance is absent and violent attacks against citizens are common (Soeters & Johnson, 2012, 168). Apart from the fact that not everyone has access to information, one also needs to take into consideration that not everyone will be brave enough to use it. People's fear of giving and using information on and against "evil others" out of genuine dread of becoming the next victim is called '*informerphobia*' (Soeters & Johnson, 2012, 169). Especially in situations where the lives of local people are constantly threatened by parties who are not afraid to use violence, most people will think twice about becoming an informer (Soeters & Johnson, 2012, 169). After all, people are violence-averse and will therefore not be cold-headed enough to act strategically when their lives are in danger (Soeters & Johnson, 201, 176). Given the omnipresence of the fear factor in this matter, it is therefore even more commendable that (local) people are willing to become an interpreter as this role might very well be seen as the epitome of the informer itself. At least the enemy does. Committed to the stabilization of the country, the interpreter can count on being viciously attacked as they are perceived as traitors and spies in service of ISAF.

While financial income, reciprocity and belonging seem to define the most prevalent reasons for becoming an interpreter, there are two other motives that draw attention in this study. The first is mentioned by respondent NI 2:

> "In their eyes soldiers are the enemy and therefore I am an enemy as well. The fact that I am an interpreter makes matters even worse. They'll see me as a traitor. But I am a Muslim and I don't care what people think of me. The only thing that matters is how I feel about myself. I know what I do is right. I am here for the reconstruction and safety of this country. I also want to support the Dutch government. That's my goal. What others might think of that is irrelevant."

This respondent defied the accusations and threats that go hand in hand with his choice of profession on grounds of moral conviction and social identification (Skitka & Morgan, 2014, 96; Fowler & Kam, 2007, 813). He took up the role of the interpreter as if it were a civic duty. A stance through which he could realize an act of counterpressure against the hegemony of the opponent (Soeters & Johnson, 2012, 182). He justifies his actions and his work on grounds of his Muslim identity, his core belief about right and wrong and his desire to improve the welfare and safety of the Afghans. The respondents' motivation to work as an interpreter might therefore also be considered a calling in which he serves 'a higher principle that entails discipline, sacrifice, but most of all a striving toward achievement that is linked to the individual's sense of self' (Hatch, 1989, 349-350). This process of adhering to oneself or rather to that which is greater than oneself alone, can be related to the core social motives of respectively understanding, controlling and self enhancing (Fiske, 2004, 14-23). People strive to understand their environment in order to anticipate uncertainty and to make sense of events that are perceived to be important. Preferably, people develop meanings that are shared with others. The interpreter's moral beliefs, faith and ideological conviction in that regard are all part of social representations or group meaning that enable the respondent to make sense of the world (Fiske, 2004, 17-18). The motive of control subsequently entails a contingency between behavior and outcome and encourages people 'to feel competent and effective at dealing with their social environment and themselves (Fiske, 2004, 20). Even in the face of violence, the respondent demonstrated a sense of confidence about his role and what that should amount to. This in turn is also closely linked with the motive of enhancing self as people like to feel good about themselves (Fiske, 2004, 22). The respondent had set several goals for himself that enabled him to (humbly) improve himself by putting the fate of others first (Fiske, 2004, 23). These core social motives, moreover, can also be associated with the Pathan identity of the respondent and more specifically with the value of what Pashtuns call *ghairat* which usually is translated as 'bravery' but which is more completely understood as 'zeal' expressed in the pursuit of one's own objectives. 'A man who possesses ghairat is a man who determines his own destiny, who follows his own compass despite the attempts of others to limit and circumscribe his activities' (Edwards, 1986, 315). In taking up the job of interpreter, the respondent as it were demonstrated an act of self-definition according to Pashtun custom by exerting a degree of independence and maintaining his personal autonomy of action (Edwards, 1986, 315).

Interestingly enough, both the respondent as well as the opponent used the same religious motive to justify the actions in which they engaged. The interpreter to validate his task and the Taliban to eradicate it. The latter, in that regard, not merely only issued the destruction of their task but also the person assigned with it. Pictures of brutally slaughtered interpreters and threatening messages in which 'traitors' are warned for their violent ending,

the so-called 'nightletters', proved that the opponent was merciless in their condemnation of interpreters. Despite the risk involved, respondent NI 2, however, used his faith and his sense of self-esteem as resources to deal with the threat and to motivate his support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan (Sorrentino & Yamaguchi, 2008, 451). This kind of self-determination to the benefit of others, can be seen in a more egoistic manner in the motivation of respondent LI 7:

> "I work for ISAF to earn some money and to help Afghan people. (...) I also like missions because I want to see fighting. I also want to fight and for that case I need to have a gun and go on mission. I like to fight the enemy, not everyone. That's the reason why I love to fight. I do not have a problem with the Taliban but it's just my duty. It's my job. I don't feel that I am a terp, I feel I am a soldier in the mission. For this case, I am fighting for my own country and not for the work. Before coming here, I said 'I will make money.' but when I came here I saw the ANA guys who have a salary about 150 dollars. I can also fight for 600 dollars by interpreting. So, I am fighting. I am not only the terp, I also feel I am a soldier."

While this respondent showed all of the aforementioned motives to become an interpreter, his approach displays a kind of opportunism that could cast doubt upon his integrity. By becoming an interpreter, the respondent was not only able to gain the most value out of a job, the job itself also enabled him to act upon his desire to fight like a soldier. Instead of avoiding violence, this respondent dealt with danger by seeking it out. As such the interpreter displayed an emotional energy that usually is the predicate of the 'violent few' who not only actively but competently engage in violence in order to dominate and defeat the enemy (Collins, 2008, 376, 380-81). Police forces and the armed forces are examples of social scenes in which the violent few seem to flourish. Although this respondent was attracted to the use of military force and not afraid of combat-like confrontation, he most certainly was not a trained soldier. Therefore, it remains questionable whether such 'warrior-interpreters', are suitable partners for the military organization. A problem, however, that didn't seem to bother this particular respondent because he just saw an opportunity not only to enter but also to capitalize on the interactional field of fighting. In highly fragmented societies and war-torn societies like Afghanistan, such forms of opportunism moreover are often considered a necessary 'strategy of survival' that seeks to address people's basic needs (Migdal, 1988, 27). Although opportunism, especially in contrast to the other factors, might not be considered as valuable a motive, it is a valid motivation for respondents to join the mission nonetheless.

To sum up this analysis of motivation as an aspect of the cooperation between interpreters and soldiers, it can be concluded that respondents from all categories displayed a variety of motives for joining the military and deploying to the mission area. While this result concurs with other studies in the field of military recruitment and motivation, there are two particularly protruding findings that draw attention. First, during the actual deployment soldiers were mainly motivated by the necessity to fulfill their tasks effectively, which resulted in a rather instrumental approach towards the cooperation with interpreters. Second, both national and local interpreters indicated that reciprocity was a pivotal incentive to join the mission. This, among other things, materialized in the desire to benefit both the Dutch military and the local population. How these expectations of soldiers and interpreters influenced their actual sense of work and consequently cooperation will be analyzed in next section that addresses the third aspect of position.

5. Position: How to Find One's Place and Make It Work for All?

While the respondents had their personal and sometimes corresponding and/or differing motives to join the mission, they all had one trait in common. With the exception of the odd former Afghan army officer, they all had to take a big leap into the unknown. Soldiers had to put their years of training and education to the test in a completely foreign territory and the interpreters had to provide translation and interpreting services in war zones with barely any experience in that capacity. Whereas the national interpreters in that regard were open about their professional background in for example engineering, agriculture, law, medical science or business administration, most of the local interpreters remained somewhat vague about their former occupation and education. This lack of 'compatibility' is hardly surprising, however, because in the context of armed conflicts language brokering always has been, despite any attempts of the army to professionalize language services, an unregulated occupation mainly pursued by untrained interpreters (Ruiz Rosendo & Persaud, 2019, 473). The *ad hoc* recruitment of interpreter provisions, and more specifically the recruitment of locally hired interpreters, in that regard seems to be the most common approach to hire contract interpreters and this certainly applies to the Dutch Army (Gallai, 2019, 208; 44BG, 2007, 1; BTD, 2009, 9).

Military organizations have structured their interpreters into various categorizations which circumvent the formal regulations as prescribed by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC). By describing the interpreters as linguists, they could include tasks as for instance reconnaissance and intelligence into the profile that otherwise would not have fit the conventional rules and agreements on interpreting (Gallai, 2018, 209). The US Counterinsurgency Field Manual *FM 3-24*, which acted as a blueprint for international operations in Afghanistan, for instance extensively deals with the linguistic aspect of missions in which the military finds itself deployed among the local population. The *FM 3-24* has such a prestige that it was also applied by NATO countries like The Netherlands (Kitzen, 2016a, 144). In case of linguistic resources, the manual states that linguists employed by the armed forces need to possess cross-cultural competence and efficient language skills to enable effective communication and cooperation between soldiers and locals (Hajjar, 2017, 94). In order to manage the military interpreters, the *FM 3-24* has classified them into

three categories that are also representative for the situation of the Dutch Armed Forces. The Dutch armed forces in this regard distinguish two categories of interpreters, respectively local and national interpreters (Bureau Tolkdiensten Defensie, 2009). The former concurs with US category I, while the latter overlaps with both US categories II and III:

> "Category I linguists usually are hired locally and require vetting. They do not have a security clearance. They are the most abundant resource pool; however, their skill level is limited. Category I linguists should be used for basic interpretation for activities such as patrols, base entrance coverage, open-source intelligence collection, and civil-military operations. Commanders should plan for 30 to 40 linguists from category I for an infantry battalion. Brigade headquarters should maintain roughly 15 category I linguists for surge operations.

Category II linguists are U.S. citizens with a secret clearance. Often, they possess good oral and written communication skills. They should be managed carefully due to limited availability. Category II linguists interpret for battalion and higher-level commanders or tactical human intelligence teams. Brigade commanders should plan for 10 to 15 linguists from category II. That breaks down to one linguist for the brigade commander, one for each infantry battalion commander, and approximately 10 linguists for the supporting military intelligence company. Of those 10, three translate for each tactical human intelligence team or operations management team, and two translate for each signals intelligence collection platform.

> Category III linguists are U.S. citizens with a top secret clearance. They are a scarce commodity and often retained at division and higher levels of command. They have excellent oral and written communications skills (U.S. Army, 2006, C-1)."

This categorization of interpreters gives a clear description of the interpreters' security clearance and skills, and as such hints at the way soldiers can cooperate with different kinds of linguists. Most of the interviewed soldiers, however, initially used interpreters in a predominantly instrumental manner (as mentioned in the previous paragraph) without taking the categorizations of different levels into consideration. This is reflected by the experience of respondent NI 8:

> "At the time of my appointment the position of interpreter also comprised the role of advisor. The position was categorized into level one, two and three. Level one [corresponding to category III from FM 3-24] is allowed to work with the staff and has authority to give advice. Just like our job profile actually. So, the part of giving advice is included in the position from the start but since most of the men only see you as an interpreter in the beginning, you'll hardly be asked for advice or anything other. This can change over time, however, once you are longer deployed."

This quote demonstrates that the professional categorization of linguists predominately is a theoretical attempt to define the tasks and position of the interpreter in the military organization. In this ideal image the interpreter is 'someone who can accurately and quickly translate nuanced meaning, be thoroughly versed in both countries' history, literature, culture, and politics, as well as in the technical subjects under discussion, and yet not allow his personality to shade the interpretation' (Metrinko, 2009, 36). The perfect interpreter, however, doesn't exist in reality and the position, therefore, is most often occupied by a person who is, as mentioned earlier, culturally and linguistically affiliated with the country but who is not trained to do so professionally (Baker, 2010, 216; Fitchett, 2012, 177).

Similarly, there's a paragon for the 'universal soldier' whose skills should be as diverse and complete as the tools of a 'Swiss Army knife' in order to perform in the full spectrum of combat and noncombat operations (Hajjar, 2017, 98). These competencies consist, besides the more conventional 'warrior' skills, of peacekeeper-diplomat tools, cultural self-awareness, agency and the creation of new tools on the job, skills to cross the civilian-military sphere, teaching tools, soft and harder leader skills (Hajjar, 2017, 98-102). The Swiss Army knife in this light almost seems to be like a magic box of tricks that soldiers can open up to effectively work with interpreters as well as to engage the local population. This study, however, seeks to demonstrate that there's hardly a soldier who would fit the metaphor of the knife perfectly and that the cooperation with interpreters, therefore, is not a case of handling a toolkit but more a matter of a tentative personal and mutual exploration of each other's role and part in achieving the goals of the mission. This interdependency comes to the fore in the (in)formal position of the interpreter in the military organization and the peer group, and the relation with the local population, or as respondent M 26 formulates:

> "They say: 'You'll never be able to trust an interpreter completely, yet you have to be able to work with him.' In practice this means that you have to be attentive of how the interpreter handles information and how you handle that information and the interpreter yourself'. So, you have to circulate the interpreters frequently in order to know how they perform and what kind of work relations result from that."

Respondent NI 5 describes how this exploration even made him question his professional identity as an interpreter and the implications this had for his position inside as well as outside the military organization:

> "It's not easy being an interpreter. I often struggle with the question 'Who am I?'. The answer can be explained in so many different and sometimes contradictory ways. I am an interpreter for ISAF but I am a soldier as well. In theory that seems to be incompatible or even inconceivable but everything that happens over here is military and as an interpreter you'll have to fight alongside your men. It's not that you have other options though because in the eyes of the population you're a traitor. Being an interpreter therefore means being in a lonely place. You'll

constantly have to fight an inner battle because you must consider the implications that each of your actions may have for your own standing."

In both quotes the respondents, albeit from different perspectives, touch upon essential issues that are closely linked to the position of the interpreter thereby demonstrating that identity can be considered an important factor behind work-related behavior. Subsequently, work identity can be defined as 'the collection of meanings attached to the self by the individual and others in a work domain. These meanings can be based on unique individual characteristics, group membership, or social roles' (Miscenko & Day, 2016, 216-217). Furthermore, identity can be understood as a cognitive schema that stores information and meaning to a particular role. Identity, therefore, creates a framework through which people make sense of their experiences. Consequently, the following paragraph, therefore, explores how soldiers and interpreters attempt to identify themselves with their working environment.

5.1 *Work Identity: I interpret therefore I am?*

Work identity can be understood by three different levels of inclusiveness, respectively the individual, interpersonal and collective. 'Work identity at the individual level focuses on the unique traits and characteristics that differentiates someone from others in a work domain. Interpersonal work identity is derived from relationships with significant others, such as one's boss or peers in the workgroup. Finally, collective work identity is based on self-perceived organizational and social category membership' (Miscenko & Day, 2016, 217). Translated to the position of the interpreter in the military organization, this would imply that the individual work identity for example relates to the linguistic and cultural competencies and personality (human capital) of the interpreter. Second, the interpersonal level can be understood not only as the relation between the interpreter and soldier but with the local interlocutor as well. This emphasizes the triadic nature of the relationship which has been previously described as a 'Simmelian Tie' and which will be further addressed in the following paragraphs. Third, the collective level concerns the group to which the interpreter finds himself belonging to. This can be a rather ambiguous affair since interpreters might identify themselves (simultaneously) with various specific groups such as the military, the national and/or local interpreters, and the local population.

These three levels of work identity provide a structure through which the position of the interpreter in the military organization can be further explored throughout this chapter. Before we delve more deeply into the individual level of work identity, however, it is important to address the concept of hierarchical differentiation first. The interpreter, after all, is positioned in a military organization which is known for its hierarchical structure. Hierarchy can be defined as a fundamental form of social organization which 'allows groups to achieve the high levels of coordination and cooperation necessary to ensure survival and success' (Halevy, Chou & Galinsky, 2011, 33-34). Weber, moreover, has defined hierarchy as a 'vertical *formal* integration of official positions within one explicit organizational structure whereby each position or office is under the control and supervision of a higher one'. As a result, official roles and positions of individuals are clearly defined and demarcated from each other while social relationships are institutionalized and legitimized exclusively as hierarchical relations (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011, 1517-1518). In the military organization this is visible in for instance the delineation of military ranking, the classification of interpreters, and the defined patterns of interaction (Weiss, 1986, 213).

Military hierarchy is a form, or even the archetypal example itself, of a closed bureaucratic organization in which 'all positions are placed along official lines of top-down command-and-control [and in which] formal authority is closely correlated with the ranking and prestige of positions and independent from the actual holder of the position' (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011, 1518). In this type of organization, the hierarchical differentiation is attributed to 'the quality of the social positions individuals occupy' (Gould, 2002, 1144). As a consequence of this organizational framework, rewards are linked to specific positions regardless of the individual human capital of the occupants. On the individual level of work-identity, this is experienced as an injustice by interpreters (44BG, 2007, 2). Respondent NI 6 in this respect narrates as follows:

"I have received the rank of captain. It's very important to me. It's a status symbol. You receive more acknowledgement when you wear a rank and this concerns the younger interpreters in particular. I don't wear a rank myself, however, the position of captain is beneath my age. I don't care about the rank but I do think that the working conditions and the ranks for interpreters need some reform because they're outdated. The job is very demanding in terms of workload, risks and responsibilities but nowadays almost everyone is captain irrespectively of their experience, age, background, or education. I think that a bonus payment therefore should be applied to improve the position of interpreters within the military organization. Some sort of arrangement that differentiates between the quality and age of interpreters. It's no secret that we would like to receive a higher salary because we all know that it's a dangerous job and besides that there are mayor differences in rewards as well as wages between interpreters working for Defense and those working for foreign affairs and other NATO countries."

The quote makes it obvious that the respondent was ambivalent about his own rank of captain. On the one hand, he appreciated his rank as a status symbol that confirmed his position within the organization. On the other hand, however, he stated that his rank was of no importance and value to him because others were also given the same rank irrespective of their qualities and traits. While the position of the national interpreters was formally demarcated by their rank, not all of them experienced the military's hierarchical

differentiation as 'fair' because it failed to sufficiently acknowledge (and thus appropriately reward) their individual competencies. Some of the local interpreters, whom are not given a rank at all, also expressed their dissatisfaction about this very same matter as respondent LI 3 illustrates:

> "In our job, you know, once we go for our contracts, they don't look at our education, they don't look at our experience, they don't look at anything. As long as you can speak a few sentences of English you're hired and you're getting the same amount of salary that a fully educated and experienced man gets. So, it shouldn't be like this, you know. The guys who are new, they get jobs local to their family, close to their houses, close to his village but the guy who has worked like for two years, three years they're still working far away, miles away from their families from their homes. So, it should not be like this. The easiest jobs or the close jobs, should be for the ones who are experienced or who have worked like two, three years. They should get the best jobs, not someone who comes now and tomorrow he's got the best job with more salary and less hours and he's more safe. (…) So, I am not happy because I don't feel like I am being treated fair. Not because he's my cousin, or my uncle so he should have the best job. No, someone who has got more education, experience he should have the best job."

Instead of attributing value to one's social position, both respondents opted for another kind of framework of hierarchical differentiation in which rewards are granted to some (and thus not all) people on grounds of the type and quality of contribution they make to the organization. This individualist or market framework suggests that 'valuable outcomes' are unequal because people vary in qualities. In line with the logic of this framework, an organization should therefore 'confer more authority (and compensation) upon some members than upon others because the former have devoted more energy to the organization's goals, invested more in developing valuable skills, revealed unusual talents, or have shown a flair for 'leading' rather than 'following' (Gould, 2002, 1144). Rewards, in this framework, moreover are not seen only as a compensation for such contributions but also as incentives that elicit them.

The definition of what the *'best jobs'* are, however, is not unequivocal and depends of course on the particular point of view and personal interests of the parties concerned. According to some soldiers who have worked with local interpreters, the best jobs (at the PRT) are allocated to those who have proven themselves to be capable and of value for the mission. Other soldiers, however, refute the promotion of competent local interpreters to higher positions since they are, as seen from the soldier's perspective, of more value in the field where the presence of a competent interpreter can make the difference between life and death. Local interpreters, in turn, will suggest that the more dangerous jobs should be occupied by the less qualified individuals and that competent interpreters should be working during staff meetings in the relative safety of the camp. Most national interpreters, finally, are of the opinion that not so much their position (while being of significant importance on the interpersonal level) as well as their individual performance should be the differentiating benchmark for the financial compensation of their occupation.

While respondents expressed their preference for a more individualist framework of hierarchical differentiation in terms of safety, risk and financial gratification, it is nevertheless unlikely that such a transformative approach would gain support. The top-down command-and-control structure of the military organization, after all, is designed to serve the needs and goals of the organization and not the aspirations of its members. Yet, it should be noted that whereas the market framework of hierarchical differentiation conflicted with the bureaucratic nature of the military, the MoD nevertheless had to follow this economic principle in order to compete with other coalition forces for the recruitment of local interpreters. This market process became manifest in the different wages the interpreters received from their employers. Respondents among the local interpreters compared their 'meager' pay of 600 dollars for example to the 'huge' salary of 1000 dollars that others in the same position earned working for the U.S. troops. Despite the importance and weight of other motives, this discrepancy in financial rewards inevitably influenced the willingness (and hence the quality) of interpreters joining the Dutch troops. Soldiers, who were already weary of the fact that good interpreters sooner or later would be taken away by other units within the organization, also learned the effect that a potential pay rise could have a on their men. Some soldiers in this instance discovered that their interpreters, after a sudden leave, were incorporated by the Americans. Linguistic resources, in other words, were a precious good that only lasted as long as the competition would allow it to do.

5.2 *Cooperation: One for All and All for One?*

Position is not the only aspect that is rigidly structured within the bureaucratic organization, social relations as mentioned earlier are hierarchically organized as well. Individuals are placed in unequal relations via an abstract order and are submitted to person-independent rules (Dieffenbach & Sillince, 2011, 1518). In the military organization, this order becomes clear on the interpersonal level of work identity. Identity, after all, is defined by the different social roles that an individual takes up and '(…) because each role and therefore each identity is associated with certain social expectations, these roles provide structure as well as meaning to human behavior' (Miscenko & Day, 2015, 216). Identity, and more in particular work identity, therefore functions as a framework to interpret experiences. When individuals assume a new role, they must interact with others to negotiate meaning to this role (Miscenko & Day, 2015, 222).

In case of the position of the interpreters within the military organization, this sense-making process proved to be challenging for both the interpreters who had to adjust to their new work role within the military as well as the soldiers who had to relate the task of the interpreter to their own ones. The involved parties, in other words, had to learn how to use

the 'software' of their surrounding social system (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). The cooperation between soldiers and interpreters, therefore, was shaped by the (conflicting) demands of the military organizational culture and the Dutch and Afghan culture. Sometimes this led to situations in which the position of the interpreter was misconceived, misattributed or even mistreated. Respondent M 36 relates the following about the personal insights he learned as a soldier during his cooperation with interpreters:

> "I used to think that interpreters would always be at your service but reality proved to be quite different. Especially, in case of the national interpreters. The rank of captain is strictly a pay grade but the interpreters nevertheless act like they really are a military officer. That caused for some confrontations between the rookies and the 'captains'. I had a clash once myself with an interpreter. I told him: 'You make tons of money. I'm your superior and now you're just going to do as you're told!' The interpreter went ballistic after that. He said that they were mainly here out of ideological motives. So, I've learned to tread carefully and that there are limits to what you can say to interpreters. Etiquette is very important to Afghans but their manners just aren't my style. An interpreter must realize that he's a specialist, you know. They have to be aware of the rights and duties that come with a rank but unfortunately, they don't always get that."

The situation between the soldier and the interpreter was characterized by a large power distance in which superiors and subordinates are considered to be existentially unequal. The hierarchical system of the military organization organizes power in as few hands as possible which consequently means that 'subordinates are expected to be told what to do' (Hofstede, 1991, 35). Adding insult to injury, the soldier also reproached the interpreter for the high payment he received thereby implicitly questioning the reciprocal intentions of the interpreter. An accusation which in military history was made against interpreters before when Croatian translators, working for the European Community Monitoring Mission, were denied their acts of volunteerism and patriotism by the Croatian minister of education because they were payed for their work (Stahuljak, 1999, p. 46). More than a decade on, the idea that interpreters only work for the money still seemed to strike a chord with some members of the military organization. Respondent M 36, in this light therefore, by default acted according to assumptions and norms of the military organization and these initially caused him to be unaware of the impact his behavior had on the interpreter and the different ideas they both could have about the construction of their cooperation. While the soldier viewed the relationship primarily as a business transaction from an individualistic societal perspective, the interpreter on the other hand most probably understood the relationship in moral and social terms from a collectivist societal perspective. In collectivist societies the workplace itself might become an in-group and this explains the heated reaction of the interpreter towards the perceived inadequate behavior of the soldier. From his point of view the military organization should resemble 'a family relationship with mutual obligations

of protection in exchange for loyalty' (Hofstede, 1991, 64). How important this need of belonging and safety for interpreters exactly is, is illustrated by respondent NI 4:

> "Although I am well prepared before I go somewhere, I nevertheless think that I am treated differently than the other soldiers. Last year I was at a bazar in Chora. The district governor and the commander came up to me. They knew I was an interpreter. At both sides were armed men. I thought that I would team up with a Dutch soldier and that he would take care of me. Nothing of the sort, however, happened. They just abandoned me. The first week we didn't even know who these other men were. They also argued with the district governor which I thought was very odd. The commander accused the governor of being a thief. I received a map from someone and I acted as a mediator. They just left me there. The soldiers probably must have thought by themselves: 'He's an Afghan, so he'll know what to do.' But I didn't have a weapon while the other guys were armed. It was strange. The second time when something similar happened was at the bazar in TK. They told me that we were going to have a talk with governor Munib so I wanted to get my helmet and vest out of the Bushmaster but the vehicle just drove away with my gear in it. The next day we received a visit from Foreign Affairs. I had to accompany them to interpret at the bazar. I asked where the Bushmaster was because I needed my helmet and vest. They said that it had already left. I was forced to work all day at the bazar without having the protection of my helmet and vest. They just don't pay attention. Most of the times we are told that the soldiers will take care of us, but I have seen for myself that they don't look after their interpreter. I find that strange. (...) I don't want to say that they refuse to take care of me but they simply can't look after me. All people have to fend for themselves because there simply is no time to do otherwise."

It is often expected that new organizational members will adopt the dominant cultural-value system and learn appropriate behavior (Bloor & Dawson, 1994, 278). The experience of respondent NI 4, however, makes clear that the interpreter was not properly initiated in the knowledge of the military culture. Another example which illustrates the lack of guidance into the mores of the military organization was given by respondent NI 7:

> "I didn't have any expectations about my deployment. You don't receive that much of information. They say that it can be dangerous but they don't actually tell you that. Like when you go out on patrol for a lot of days. They said that I didn't have to sleep outside and that we would only be on patrol for one day. They didn't inform me properly. When I arrived here, nobody knew that I was coming. Not the G1, not the other interpreters, nobody. At night I wandered around. I didn't know where to go. I didn't have any codes. I talked to the G1 and he said that the person who was in charge of my assignment was away. At that moment there was someone from electronic warfare (EW) present and he said: 'We could use him.' I didn't exactly know what EW meant but I told him that I wanted to work but that I didn't want to go outside without any experience. I wanted to acclimatize a little first. The ISTAR comman-

der, however, replied: 'You're a soldier now so you'll just have to go.' I answered: 'I am only a temporary soldier. You need at least an education of six months to become a soldier and I have only received a training of three weeks.' I didn't flatly refuse to go but I tried to explain that I didn't want to be deployed to Deh Rawod. He said: 'You'll get in trouble for this.' I told him: 'Listen, I left my country because of the Taliban. I came here voluntarily to support this country and the Dutch troops because I am Dutchman like you. If you tell me that I am getting in trouble I will withdraw myself from this job as of today to prevent any misunderstandings.' He then said: 'Alright, you can decide what you want to say for yourself.' I told him that I was willing to go to Deh Rawod only not for a period of six months and if it was therefore possible for me to rotate with other interpreters. When I arrived at camp Hadrian they told me that I had to stay there permanently. As if they were playing with a child. I didn't know anything about the equipment, I didn't know what EW was about, I just had to learn everything. Then they ordered me to join thirty men up in the mountains at camp Hadrian to fight the Taliban. I told them that I wasn't a real soldier. I have been through that before [prior to his migration to the Netherlands, the respondent was victim of a violent attack]. I have been wounded and have experienced six months of pure misery after that. I just have a real bad history with the Taliban. I told them that I really wanted to work inside the camp but that I couldn't cope going out on patrol for so many days."

Whereas soldiers from the very start of their career for example are drilled to look after their gear and to be on point, this responsibility is not taught to and therefore not internalized by interpreters. Yet, soldiers mistakenly presume this and other military knowledge to be present in others who have not, or only briefly during the pre-deployment training, received these instructions. Such presumptions could lead to above described situations in which the interpreter finds himself rather lost. The images of 'the bushmaster driving away and leaving the interpreter without any protection' and 'the distressed interpreter wandering the camp all alone' are metaphors for the interpreter who beliefs himself to be a member of the in-group while he in fact is, due to the actions of the soldiers (or more precisely the lack thereof), left to his own devices. Unsurprisingly, such situations could potentially harm the value, meaning or enactment of the interpreter's work identity on the interpersonal level. Although respondent NI 4 attempted to resolve this identity threat by mitigating the effects of the soldiers' actions by stressing that the circumstances were demanding for everyone in the operational theatre, such incidents could, when they are experienced often, evoke antisocial behavior toward coworkers (Miscenko & Day, 2016, 223). Precisely because team cooperation relies on personal bonds, the individual's identification with a work group is located at the relational level of work identity (Miscenko & Day, 2016, 226). The military organization should therefore be attentive to the vulnerable position of the interpreter and the importance of inclusiveness in the unit.

The quotes of NI 4 and NI 7 point out another phenomenon that seems to be inherent of the relationship between the interpreter and soldiers. The interpreter, as 'non-member' of the in-group, is attributed certain traits by the military that makes him the designated person to connect and interact with the local population and to understand and decipher the (code) language of the opponent. Here, the interpreter in other words is presumed to be endowed with the Swiss or perhaps more appropriately the Afghan Army knife which should enable him to anticipate and control the mission area. In this respect, and as exemplified by the respondent, the interpreter is almost seen and used as a one man forward operating base who, without the assistance of others, singlehandedly must probe and reconnoiter the environment in order to achieve the mission goals. This approach, however, is a misconception that doesn't do justice to the actual experience and needs of the interpreter. It doesn't take the preconditions as for instance military knowledge, trust, safety and a sense of belonging into account which lay the foundation for the interpreter to be able to effectively contribute to the goals of the unit. Conditions that matter of fact requires teamwork. The interpreter can only fully perform his task assignment when the members of the unit guarantee and acknowledge his position. In the following quote, however, the opposite is the case. The interpreter in this instance cannot carry out his assignment because the military officer holds a different opinion about the interpreters' task and position. Respondents NI 2 narrates as follows:

"When we are on a mission, the soldiers often address me politely and that's much appreciated by me. I tell them 'Guys, we're all colleagues. It's okay to call me on a first-name basis.' They like that. They know exactly what I do and what to expect of me and if I need something they're helpful and understanding. Of course, this has to come from both sides. Once I was with a marine corps captain, I was the interpreter of the chief of staff at the time. I have always tried to be civil and open towards the guys and the soldiers. The chief of staff had given me the assignment to ask the secretary of the provincial governor at what time we had to depart the following morning. It was outside the gate. There was a captain on guard and he asked me about my plans. I explained my task and he escorted me as my guard. I asked the secretary in English what the time of our depart was, so that the captain could understand it as well. The secretary told me that it was at eight but he laughed while saying this. I said 'You're laughing so that means that we'll probably depart at nine and not eight. I would like to hear a clear answer.' The captain suddenly got mad at me and said 'Who are you to ask any questions? You are nothing but an interpreter. I am the one who's asking the questions, not you'. This all happened in the presence of the secretary and because I didn't find it appropriate to argue in front of him I said to the guy 'Alright, I'll have a word with you later.' After the conversation I said to him 'First, I am not your interpreter. Second, I have an assignment given to me by the chief and third, you are not my conversation partner. So, why did you treat me like you just did?' The captain could only talk nonsense so I got angry with him. I told him 'You're one of the weirdest officers we have here at the camp. This is the last conversation I am having with you because I will never ever work with you again.' The discussion went on all night. The chief of staff finally told me that I was right and that the guy was wrong. The captain, however, insisted that I was

> the one who was at fault. I told him that I didn't receive any assignment from him and that he was there as my guard. He was there to protect me. That was his job. Simple as that'."

Task conflicts such as illustrated by the quote are described as 'disagreements among team members concerning the content of the tasks being performed, including differences in ideas, viewpoints and opinions' (Schaeffner, Huettermann, Gebert, Boerner, Kearney & Song, 2015, 468). The argument between the interpreter and the military officer demonstrates that a disagreement between team members over the content of tasks may lead to a relationship conflict. Relationship conflicts exist 'when there are incompatibilities between team members on a personal rather than a task-related level, including tensions and annoyances (Schaeffner et al., 2015, 468). Relationship conflicts can emerge either through a process of misattribution when objective criticism or divergent ideas about tasks are subjectively misinterpreted as personal attacks, or, as in this case, from harsh behaviors in the course of a task conflict. Theory on procedural justice has shown that the fairness of treatment that people experience has a powerful influence on their attitudes and behavior (Shaeffner et al., 2015, 471). Therefore, it is understandable that the interpreter reacted negatively to the disrespectful conduct of the captain and that their ongoing heated debate only fueled the fire of their animosity.

The incident between the interpreter and soldier becomes even more apparent when understood in light of the cultural context. The example illustrates '(...) what happens when high and low context systems meet in the same setting, when the unspoken, unformulated, inexplicit rules governing how information is handled and how people interact and relate are at opposite ends of the context scale' (Hall, 1976, 97). The fact that the interpreter was reprimanded in the presence of the Afghan secretary of the provincial governor, shows that the military officer was not aware of the precarious nature of their disagreement. Their 'situation' in other words was a clash of high and low context cultures (Hall, 1976, 98). The interpreter was tasked to find out the exact time of departure and therefore he resolved to a low communication style in a high context situation in order to clarify the answer given by the Afghan secretary. The soldier, in reaction to this approach, also communicated in a low context towards the interpreter by demonstrating his dissatisfaction. In no uncertain terms, the soldier made it clear what bothered him about the situation. The consequences of his dismissal, however, were more serious than the soldier at that moment might have foreseen. The interpreter, being familiar with the Afghan culture and the importance of the demeanor and standing of conversational partners, had to call upon the role of mediator to mitigate not only the negative effect of this low context information on his own status but that of the Afghan and Dutch soldier as well. By circumventing the conflict and reverting to the formal procedure of high context communication, the interpreter actually contained the situation and prevented the loss of face for all of the parties involved. This carefully performed balancing act of switching communicational and cultural codes (simultaneously engaging in high and low context communication while adhering to the cultural norms of both the

military and Afghan culture) at the time, however, was not registered and consequently not appreciated by the military officer. It was most probably this lack of acknowledgement that caused the argument to continue long after the incident had taken place. The respondent anticipated but not explicated (high context) the requirement of a respectful gesture of the soldier but when the other, not knowing what was expected of him, was anything but forthcoming (low context), the disagreement developed into a full-blown relational conflict in which both insisted on their positions and harsh accusations (low context) were made back and forth (Shaeffner et al., 2015, 475).

When incidents such as described in this subparagraph, which are just a few of the many examples of misconception, misattribution, miscommunication, and misunderstanding in this study, are detrimental to the work identity on the collective level and therefore to the commitment of members and the goal achievement of the military organization, then the question rises how task and relation conflicts can be resolved. Morton Deutsch, one of the founding fathers and pioneers of the field of conflict resolution, in this matter has theorized that 'the crux of the differences between cooperation and competition lies in the nature of the way in which goals of the participants in each of the situations are linked. In a cooperative situation the goals are so linked that everybody "sinks or swims" together, while in the competitive situation if one swims, the other must sink' (Deutsch, 1973, 20).

5.3 Moderators of Cooperation: Team Up or go Down.

Deutsch has summarized the differences between a cooperative and competitive process into four different aspects. First, is the aspect of communication which in a cooperative process is characterized by an open and honest sharing of communication and information. The competitive process, in contrast is characterized by either a lack of or misleading communication and information. Second, is the aspect of perception which in a cooperative process stimulates convergence and conformity of values and beliefs, whereas in a competitive process it stimulates the sense of complete oppositeness. Third, is the aspect of attitudes towards one another in which a cooperative process leads to trusting, friendly and helpful behavior, while a competitive process leads to suspicious, hostile and exploitative behavior. Finally, there is the aspect of task orientation which in a cooperative process stimulates the enhancement of mutual power and resources (by utilizing special talents), and in which conflicting interests are defined as a mutual problem to be solved by collective effort. A competitive process by contrast promotes the enhancement of one's own power and the minimization of the interests of the other, it also expands the scope of conflict to a general principle that is no longer tied to a particular issue at a certain time and place (Deutsch, 1973, 30-31).

How members of an organization view their goals to be related to other person's goals, in other words has important implications for the dynamics and consequences of their

commitment and interaction on the collective level of work identity. Research in line of thought with Deutsch' theory of conflict resolution has determined collective team identification and team member alignment as moderators that could prevent task conflicts from spilling over into relationship conflicts (Schaeffner et al, 468-470). Collective team identification can be described as the shared and intrinsic motivated feeling of attachment and belonging that members hold toward the whole (rather than the subgroup) of the team. Team member alignment, by contrast, describes team members' extrinsic motivation for cooperation on grounds of the instrumental value that effective team collaboration has for gaining individual rewards (Schaeffner et al, 2015, 472-473).

Collective team identification is high, when members do not primarily identify with subgroups in a team (for example based on functional background) but rather with the team as a whole (Schaeffner et al, 2015, 473). As a consequence, members will perceive a situation as cooperative rather than competitive because they believe that members are committed to common goals rather than the goals of their relative subgroups. Emotional attachment to the team and common goals in other words contribute to the development of a cooperative team spirit which will enable members to find constructive ways to resolve interpersonal animosities that emerge from task-related discussions (Shaeffner et al, 2015, 474). Respondent M 31 has come to understand this principle of collective team identification as follows:

> "I have learned how to deal with interpreters and how important it is to include them in the team. When interpreters become part of the group you'll notice a positive increase in effort. He has to earn his position, though. I'll always want to know first which way the wind blows. Only after I have experienced what the interpreter is capable of and how he handles his task and the group, I'll put some more confidence in him."

While the data demonstrates that this concept of collective team identification is implemented by some of the soldiers and interpreters on the individual and interpersonal level through gestures of reciprocity and (growing) mutual understanding or as Deutsch would call it 'helpful behavior', this is not yet the case on the collective level of work identity. The following quotes illustrate the point of view of respectively respondent LI 6 and LI 8 on this matter:

> "If I have some problems, especially with my mentor if he doesn't respect me or he doesn't have good behavior towards me I will tell him: 'Sorry, but it's not fair. We are human as you. We want to work together as a colleague and I accept that you are my boss but it is a better way to work with each other, to cooperate with each other'."

> "There are some things I don't like about the job. For example, when some Dutch advisors come blame us saying that some terp [short for interpreter] has worked with another advisor, they are blaming that you should go with me for example. Or for example they are saying do this work in order if you don't I will fire you and the place you are in I will give to some other interpreters. All of us in one unity go to the supervisor and after that our supervisor and we make an agreement with the base commander. So, if we'll face some more difficulties with Dutch soldiers and they blame us and they didn't respect some of the culture and they got some problem, maybe I will leave this job."

The above-mentioned quote shows that local interpreters were sometimes reproached and even blackmailed by soldiers if they didn't follow their orders. Consequently, the interpreters had developed their own mechanism to cope with task conflicts by forming a unified front. Respondent M 5 in this regard recalls of another and different kind of task conflict in which 'regrouping' and cultural identity also seemed to be the denominator:

> "Some local interpreters were completely unmanageable. There was a Dutch soldier of Iranian descent in our team who was proficient in Farsi and other dialects and who in that capacity was able to monitor interpreters. At one time, he was checking on a local interpreter who repeatedly insulted our Afghan interlocutor in what must have been an attempt to get away from the situation. When he confronted the local interpreter with his actions the other replied: 'Whatever, he was only a stupid farmer anyway'. In this particular case, however, there was a national interpreter who felt sorry for the local interpreter and who therefore informed him about the possibility of Dutch law in this matter. The local interpreter took this advice to heart and filed a complaint about the way Dutch soldiers treated him and the other interpreters. By doing so, the national interpreter incited the whole of the group of local interpreters. I had to confront the national interpreter with his behavior because he had jeopardized the order of the base. The national interpreter had positioned himself too much as an Afghan. Better to hand over your passport then, is what I think but eventually we transferred the national interpreter."

The approach of the interpreters confirms that people, due to a lack of acknowledgement, dissatisfaction or resentment will identify themselves with their subgroup rather than the whole of the team. A direction of movement which of course is completely opposite to what is desired by collective team identification. From a Western sociological perspective, such on working conditions inspired 'acts of rebellion' might be perceived as a (quasi) mutiny (Soeters, 2018, 144). According to the Pashtunwali, however, this fighting spirit can be understood as a just attempt to defend one's honour and rights through a non-violent method of resolution (Rzehak, 2011, 11). This tendency to unite in the face of conflict, moreover, is universal and certainly in Afghanistan, with its tumultuous history, it has become a common trait of society. Afghans, after all, '(...) may quarrel happily among themselves, but they stand together and assert their pride in being Afghan when outsiders threaten' (Zobrist Galád, 2012, 10). Paradoxically, the coping strategy of the local interpreters, namely the convergence

of communal values and the effort to solve the problem collectively, therefore also demonstrates that 'demands' made by members of the organization towards other members of the organization strengthens the aspects of perception and task orientation of the cooperative process among the subgroup as well (Deutsch, 1973, 30-31). A kind of teamwork and self-organization in other words that, when not addressed carefully and correctly, could undermine the goals of the military organization as the following experience of respondent M 52 illustrates:

> "I place a lot of value on a man being as good as his word. Therefore, I hate the expression 'Inshallah' because it's no use to me when it comes to making clear commitments. You know, some of the interpreters just did whatever they wanted. They had an attitude like 'I am the interpreter of the PRT. Who can touch me?' But you know what? The PRT is not in charge. I am! So, if you treat me good I'll be nice to you but if you don't do what you're paid for than I'll have a serious word with you. (...) I ruled with an iron fist whether you were a soldier or an interpreter. That's why I broke down the tribal culture of the interpreters. I need interpreters who can work together and who can fill in for each other. I don't need jealousy and obstruction in the group. The interpreters should all be equal. Although I have to admit that the more experienced interpreters had an edge over the others."

This probably well-intended but nevertheless ill-conceived attempt to take control and banish feelings of jealousy and competition among the local interpreters by breaking down their tribal structures and replacing these with a strict set of rules, proved to be counterproductive for the cooperative process on the organizational level. This strategy of negative contingent reinforcement did not take the cultural identity of the local interpreters into account and therefore missed out on the opportunity to create support (Felfe, Tartler & Liepmann, 2004, 266). Instead, the respondents' treatment of the local interpreters created a shared sense of indignation that only stimulated the emotional attachment among members of the subgroup. The ramifications were unforeseen and unprecedented. The local interpreters filed an official complaint against the respondent which instigated an investigation into his position.

The examples given by the respondents show that the moderator of collective team identification should be more firmly rooted in the military organization when it comes to the position of and interaction with interpreters. Now that the first moderator has been discussed we need to look more closely into the second moderator of team member alignment. This moderator is high, in turn, when there are short- and long-term goals at the team level and when members are rewarded on basis of team effort instead of individual performance. A combination of team goals and team-based reward structures has demonstrated to motivate a sense of team responsibility and team work among members because members want to avoid the risk of jeopardizing individual rewards that can only be achieved through joint efforts (Schaeffner et al, 2015, 474). The empirical evidence, however, demonstrates that

individual rewards as well as team-based rewards are given within the military organization as the following quotes of respectively respondents M 14 and M 53 make clear:

> "The Afghan interpreter and more specifically the Afghan in particular loves a piece of paper. Money is than of less importance to them. We gave them a 'Letter of Appreciation' in which we expressed our satisfaction with the effort shown by the interpreter. We put a big signature underneath it and even included a passport photo of the interpreter in the certificate so that illiterate people could also see that it really was about that specific person. The interpreters were very pleased with that. Even so that they almost begged for it. Some interpreters came to me asking: 'When do I get to receive such a 'Letter of Appreciation?' only to get the door slammed in their face because I would always say: 'If you deserve one, you'll probably get one and if not then not.'"

> "There were always some interpreters that were excellent at their job and then it's a pity that you have to go home. Going home obviously is a good thing but it's sad that you have to say goodbye after having spent such a short but very intense period of time together. Once we gave them a sheep as a present. It was Eid Al-Fitr and you could of course bet your life on it that we would all be invited for that very same night to come and help eat up the sheep. Let me tell you, they cut open its throat right on the spot but they were so grateful for it. We helped them to store what was left of the meat in the fridge so that they could come and get some of the sheep every week. And every time when they came by you were invited to come and join them. So, yes in that way you were very intensely involved with each other. With work but also in the evenings, with the calls, the meals and the small talk. Yes, it was pretty good."

Whereas the data of this case study demonstrates that there are rewards of various types and nature, there, however, was no such thing as an incorporated 'reward-structure' within the military. Handing out rewards in that respect depended too heavily on the personal views of the soldiers working with the interpreters. Despite the lack of institutionalization of such a reward structure, the positive effect of the rewards on all the levels of work identity was evident. It contributed to a climate of sharing and emotional attachment that enhanced the much-desired team work and effort within the military. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that the moderator of team member alignment, just like collective team identification, was not very well grounded in the culture of the military organization.

5.4 Transformational Leadership: The Interpreter as Smooth Operator

Ideally, both collective team identification (shared team goals) and team member alignment (team-based rewards) are expected to be effective when the task conflicts are of a medium level (Schaeffner et al, 2015, 475). After all, in situations where there is hardly any dispute about tasks, conflicts are not likely to occur and therefore the moderators are not expected to have a significant effect. This is also the case in heated task-related conflicts because members will then attribute the cause of the dispute to the person involved instead of the nature of the task. Once the conflict has escalated, the moderators will also be of little effect because they will not be able to outweigh the negative impact of the task-related conflict. The theoretical implication of these assumptions seems rather obvious. Task conflicts should be contained to a medium level in order to prevent them from spilling over in relationship conflicts. Although the aforementioned examples show that there have been task conflicts between soldiers and interpreters that had already escalated well beyond that point, certain members of the military organization have nevertheless attempted to prevent the development of such sensitive problems through a strategic approach that closely resembles the concept of 'transformational leadership'. This concept has been qualified by extant research as a most powerful and influential driver of collective team identification in organizations that experience high levels of task conflict (Schaeffner et al, 2015, 490).

Transformational leadership has been a popular research topic for the past several decades. It was developed at the end of the 1970's during a time in which the concept of charisma, which was originally introduced by Weber in 1922, was rediscovered in the field of leadership research. Although the concept of charisma initially centered on political leadership, the ideas were soon transported to an organizational context. The central idea of the theory is that 'organizations and employees are overmanaged but underled' (Felfe, Tartler & Liepmann, 2004, 263). Whereas 'managers' are functionally oriented and keen on maintaining the status quo, 'leaders' on the other hand '(…) offer value based and attractive visions of the future, communicate their aims and strategies in a convincing matter, offer trust and confidence, and consider the personal needs and values of their [personnel]' (Felfe, Tartler & Liepmann, 2004, 263).

Transformational leadership is characterized by four strategies. These consist first of 'idealized influence', the ability to exert influence by serving as a role model; second of 'inspirational motivation' which is the ability to develop and communicate a convincing an attractive future vision; third of 'intellectual stimulation', referring to the ability to include and participate others; and finally, of 'individualized consideration' which is the ability to coach and mentor team members (Felfe, Tartler & Liepmann, 2004, 267). Through these strategies, transformational leaders are able to align the team members' goals and values and encourage collective optimism and identification with the team (Gundersen, Hellesøy, Raeder, 2012, 47). Research has even suggested that these strategies of transformational leadership are more prevalent and effective in highly dynamic organizational contexts. While regular leaders in low dynamic work environments should easily be able to give clear and appropriate responses to the team, highly dynamic work environments, however, have very few cues let alone a script for expected responses and specific actions. Uncertain and unstable circumstances cause members to search for directions to guide their behavior. Precisely in these turbulent contexts, transformational leaders are believed to flourish and to be highly capable of influencing members through their charisma and behavior (Gundersen, Hellesøy, Raeder, 2012, 48). The mission theatre of Uruzgan fits the description of a highly dynamic work environment more than perfectly and therefore the phenomenon of transformational leadership was likely to manifest itself within the military organization (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012, 99-101, 104). With regard to the cooperation between on-scene commanders and subordinated this indeed was the case. Sometimes, however, in relation to the cooperation with interpreters transformational leadership manifested itself in rather unexpected ways as the experiences of respectively respondents NI 2, NI 3 and M 21 illustrate:

> "I hang out with the local interpreters quite a lot. They come to me to have a talk. Whenever there are problems, they turn to me. They trust me although I don't share any personal information with them. That simply isn't possible. They're young and want to discuss matters with me. About things they experience with the soldiers. Sometimes the soldiers address them in a disrespectful way or abuse their religion or their tribal descent. I'll then ask them who the soldiers involved are so that I can have a word with them. I'll tell the guys that the local interpreters are here to work and that it would be nice if they could treat them properly. The soldiers appreciate that, they're willing to listen to me. I find it important that things are solved immediately so that the problem doesn't escalate. I didn't expect the local interpreters to choose me but one time one of them came to me with a problem and I told him what I would do in such a given situation. Like the uniform. I told them they should look 'sharp' in it. I give them small advice. If there are serious problems, I'll get someone else involved to handle the matter. Sometimes a local interpreter joins us on a mission. That's pretty difficult for them because they don't understand Dutch. That's why they come and sit with me to have a talk and drink tea. You know, nobody is perfect and that goes for local interpreters as well. (…) I talked with the OMLT and asked them if I could teach the ANA interpreters for a couple of hours. The OMLT was very pleased with that and I organised the lesson for the boys."

Respondent NI 2 exerted (idealized) influence by functioning as a role model for the local interpreters and soldiers. While the local interpreters confided their trust in him, the soldiers were willing to listen to him. In both situations the respondent demonstrated high performance and moral standards (Felfe, Tartler & Liepmann, 2004, 267). He followed through on his actions and decisions by teaching the group of local interpreters the essentials of interpretation and advising the soldiers on how to treat their fellow interpreters. It is precisely this kind of integrity and competence that earned the respondent NI 2 the respect and admiration of others. In a similar vein, the following quote demonstrates not so much

the admiration but rather the sense of revelation that overcame the local interpreters when respondent NI 3 shared his sobering message with them:

> "I accidentally happened to be at the meeting that the colonel had organised for the local interpreters after their camp had been searched. The interpreters were very emotional and embittered about the way the quartermaster had treated them after the Lucky incident. I asked the interpreters who the person in question was and if his behaviour represented that of the other soldiers. When it turned out that they only harboured resentment against their quartermaster, I asked them about the number of local interpreters that were present on the base. They answered that their group consisted of 70 to 80 interpreters in total. 'Now, tell me', I asked them, 'do all of these men behave correctly towards Dutch female soldiers?' The interpreters were taken aback by my question and looked down in embarrassment. 'Well then', I explained, 'there are clearly idiots among you guys as well but this doesn't necessarily have to count for the rest of you now does it?'"

In this example, respondent NI 3, had a heart-to-heart talk with the local interpreters about their critical assessment of others while turning a blind eye to their own misbehaviour. By being straightforward and drawing a parallel between the soldier(s) and themselves, the respondent encouraged the local interpreters to question their own assumptions and to perceive the delicate situation from a more reasonable perspective (Felfe, Tartler & Liepmann, 2004, 267). There is more depth to this act of 'levelling' than the ability to associate with others alone, it is the capacity to connect and engage others that fosters responsibility for one's individual behaviour as well as that of the (sub)group to which one belongs. Whereas respondent NI 3 was a relative outsider to the group, strategies of idealized influence and intellectual stimulation can also be discerned among the members within the subgroup as well as the following quote of respondent M 21 illustrates:

> "The internal hierarchy among the local interpreters was based on age, charisma and skills. We had a couple of charismatic interpreters. There was 'Grandpa' who actually was more about my age of 35 years old. A very mild-mannered man. He didn't speak perfect English but he really, really knew how to convey the feeling behind things. He also knew how things worked and got people to trust us. He got along with everybody also on patrols. Then there was Aziz [fictional name]. A category one interpreter. Perfect English and medically very qualified. Just a really, really smart guy. And with charisma. Of course, they had their own strife among each other about who was the leader of the pack. From the first till the last day they always asked me: 'Who's the leader?' and I would answer: 'I am not going to say that. There are a couple of things I want all of you to do but it's up to you how to get it done.' With some directions from me of course. But when the interpreters wanted something to discuss with me, the others always let Grandpa or Aziz do the talking. Or Hans for that matter. He was also a category one interpreter. Perfect English but very mischievous. Whenever things needed to be asked or said which others didn't dare, he would step forward. So, there were in fact three natural leaders of the group."

The quote makes clear that the strategies of transformational leadership are not represented by one and the same person but that different strategies are performed by different (but certain) members of the group depending on the different needs of the moment. The local interpreters in that light complemented each other's traits and assets to the benefit of the whole of the group. Of course, the example also shows that local interpreters competed with each other for the top position in the informal hierarchy. A phenomenon that is not uncommon to the bureaucratic organization.

Another observation which can be made from the data and to which the quotes already implicitly yet carefully point, is the notion that the role of transformational leader with regard to the interpreters most often was not taken up by soldiers. Although the quartermaster and G1 of course bear responsibility for the interpreters, these assignments are part of a formal position and are therefore of a different nature than the strategies employed by the transformational leader who acts independent and irrespective of position. An explanation for this might be that transformational leadership seems to require some kind of bond with the group one seeks to address and that soldiers, despite their comradery for interpreters, as a consequence of the behavioral codes of the hierarchy do not feel obliged nor comfortable to perform these strategies across different strata of the military organization.

Whereas bureaucratic organizations are known for their rigidity, there nevertheless always seems to be some leeway to play with the rules. The skills that members of the organization use to carry out their tasks also enables them to circumvent the official channels. This can be clearly seen in the actions of for example local interpreter Harry whose mild manners were not only valuable for gaining the trust of local Afghans and soldiers but also for getting things done for the group. Such ingenuity oftentimes constitutes an informal hierarchy in which person-dependent relationships of dominance and subordination become persistent over time through repeated social processes (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011, 1517, 1521). Albeit that informal hierarchy can emerge within the superimposed strata of the bureaucratic organization, the vertical barriers between strata, however, are so strict that informal hierarchy cannot cross strata. Consequently, informal hierarchy manifests itself at the same formal level of hierarchy (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011, 1522). Persons of the same official status and position therefore tend to develop an unofficial ranking among their immediate work colleagues or peers based on the accustomed idea of bureaucratic superiority and subordination. In bureaucratic organizations like the military, in other words, the principle of formal hierarchical ordering is almost completely replicated in the informal realm.

While formal and informal relationships are bound to the delineated strata of the military organization, the data of this study demonstrates that the concept of transformational leadership, despite the earlier described observation about soldiers, is not necessarily confined to these perimeters. Some national interpreters were prepared to cross

organizational ‘boundaries’ in order to be able to influence the local interpreters through their behavior and charisma. Others, however, distanced themselves from the locals as NI 1 explains:

> “I don’t have any contact with the local interpreters. I have my reasons for that. I am here for business. I keep my private life to myself.”

The national interpreters were not the only ones who had their reservations. While some of the local interpreters showed a careful interest, a significant part of them, however, kept a rather indifferent attitude towards the national interpreters as the viewpoints of respectively respondents LI 3, LI 2, LI 4, and LI 7 illustrate:

> “We talk to them, yes of course. We sit with them, we just say hello hi to everyone, you know. But from their side we don’t get that much of a warm welcome, you know. They just stay in their own groups, you know and I don’t know but yeah we like to talk to them. Of course, we like to know how their life is in Dutch, you know and everything else.”

> “We have no contact with national interpreters because we don’t need them. We are working. We can work here and they are working in their section and we work here. We don’t speak with them, yes normally like hi, hello something like that, nothing else. We don’t want to keep contact with other people. Just we like to work here, go to the dining hall and back. We don’t need the contact with them. If it is necessary, then we should make contact with them.”

> “We don’t have a relationship with them because they live and stay separately with us. Just when we are face to face we just say hello to one another and we don’t have any other relationship with each other.”

> “We don’t know them and also we didn’t talk with them. We didn’t meet. We didn’t know each other so how can we talk with each other? (as if he’s offended only by the thought of it)”

This seemingly contradictory positioning of engagement and disengagement between the national and international interpreters might also be explained by the strata of bureaucratic organizations. From that point of view, it would be logical to assume that members of a different status (with the exception of transformational leaders) do not communicate much with each other. Another explanation for the lack of interaction, however, might consist of the theory that a person’s status is inherently tied to the status of his associates and that status as a consequence can leak through relations. ‘In the eyes of third parties, high status actors affiliating with low-status actors would experience a drop in status whereas the opposite would be true for low-status actors (Sauder, Lynn & Podolny, 2012, 274).’ While this might hold true in case of the national interpreters whose relations with lower status actors might

imply a loss of status, this approach, however, is not supported by the local interpreters. Instead of affiliating with the national interpreters, the local interpreters chose to refrain from interaction with them. This attitude in turn might be explained by the assumption that actors are influenced by how their peers have formed attachments (Sauder, Lynn & Podolny, 2012, 275). Since most of the interviewed local interpreters did not interact with the national interpreters, others probably followed suit in order to comply with the norms of the informal hierarchy.

In sum, these findings demonstrate the complicated nature of the position of the interpreter within the military organization as well as the adjoining intricate dynamics of interaction between interpreters (among each other) and soldiers. How this all relates to the tasks and performance of the interpreter will be addressed in the fourth aspect of intervention.

6. Intervention: The Interpreter as Primus or Minimus Inter Pares?

Now that we have come to an understanding of the intricacies concerning the position and cooperation of the soldier and interpreter in the military organization, we should explore how interpreters actually perform their tasks since the activity of interpreting is inherently influenced by the situation in which it occurs (Inghilleri, 2003). A more thorough insight into these actions, however, first requires a clarification of the exact mission of the military organization in the specific context of stability operations.

Western military organizations are typically designed for conventional battle against similarly organized opponents representing opposing states. Stabilizing conflict-torn societies, however, is a completely different task that requires intervening armies to adapt to this specific mission (Kitzen, 2012). Instead of fighting another state’s army, soldiers have to deal with elusive enemies hiding among an often highly fragmented local population. It is almost impossible to defeat such opponents by direct use of force as it is very difficult to distinguish them from civilians. Consequently, conducting stability operations requires a more indirect approach in which the military organization minimizes the use of force and adopts a so-called population-centric approach in order to secure the cooperation of the population. This strategy ideally denies the opponent the ability to seek ‘refuge’ among the population and in the long run even might make him irrelevant. In practice this implies the embracement of a broad spectrum of socio-economic, political, and security-oriented measures in order to enhance stability in a fragile local society. Adopting such an approach implies not only a departure from the narrow classical interpretation of the military as a means to deliver force, it also requires an adaptation to the specifics of the societal dynamics that dictate the conflict environment. The mission of the military organization in the context of stability operations in other words encompasses both the adoption of a population-centric approach, as well as the adjustment of this approach to local circumstances. What

exactly demanded this twofold challenge of the intervening forces and more particularly the Dutch military who were deployed to Afghanistan? Before delving into this matter on the tactical level of the military organization, it is important, however, to first briefly describe the context of the Western intervention in Afghanistan.

The war in Afghanistan started on 7 October 2001 when US forces reacted to the 9-11 attacks. Backed up by a tremendous amount of air power, special forces set out to hunt for the terrorists responsible for these attacks and those that had facilitated them. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), as the war on terror was labeled, therefore not only aimed at wiping out Al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization, but also at toppling the Taliban regime. The former proved rather difficult because Al-Qaeda is, despite Osama Bin Laden's death in 2011, still active today. Ousting the Taliban from power, however, turned out be a more concrete aim which was quickly realized by December 6 when the senior leadership of this extremist organization opted to flee (Jones, 2009, 93-94).

In the wake of the resulting power vacuum, the international community installed an interim government in Kabul protected by ISAF, the International Security Assistance Force. While this improved the situation in the capital, the situation in Afghanistan as a whole remained fragile. The international intervention in 2003, therefore, adopted a wider agenda for stabilizing the country. Under command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), foreign presence rapidly expanded throughout the country while adopting a comprehensive approach in which defense, diplomatic, and development efforts were combined in order to build and bolster the new Afghan state (Suhrke, 2011, 10). By 2006 this expansion process had been completed, and intervening forces were active in all of Afghanistan. This increased presence of the coalition forces coincided with the re-emergence of the Taliban as an insurgency (Giustozzi, 2008, 1-6). Consequently, soldiers found themselves entangled in a complex stability operation in which they were required to simultaneously protect civilians, reconcile war-torn local communities, promote good governance, foster development, and target insurgent networks (Kilcullen, 2013, 142-143). The Dutch TFU mission was no exception to this (Kitzen, Rietjens, Osinga, 2013, 183-186). Daily business in Uruzgan province encompassed various tasks ranging from dealing with local leaders and providing assistance to grass roots communities to fighting the Taliban – and all of this could occur within a couple of hours during a single patrol. The operational background against which the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters took place, therefore, was highly demanding as tasks were almost continuously shifting for all of the involved.

6.1 The Letter or Spirit of Interpreting? The Identity Crises of Interpretation

The actions of the interpreter during the mission could take place in various situations ranging for example from establishing agreements with contractors in and outside of the base, assisting the Dutch military and ANA soldiers, accompanying patrols into the green,

reconnoitering the environment, translating the ICOM chat, and supporting staff meetings. In all of these scenario's the interpreters were required to interpret on the spot in both directions, cover different topics and texts while simultaneously switching between the role of cultural, political and diplomatic intermediary (Ruiz Rosendo & Persaud, 2019, 474). Respondent NI 2 in this regard describes the range of his interpreting skills and actions as follows:

> "The job of interpreting varies depending on the situation and the mission. At the PRT it's strictly translation but at the BG, when going outside on a mission, it's something completely different. (…) We give advice and keep a watchful eye. When there's a conversation going on and someone makes a phone call, we'll have to register that as well. We observe those who look ill-natured or unhappy and try to detect those who only are in it for the money. We have made some signs among each other for that. We'll select a certain word which we'll use once we notice that an individual is useless and wasting our time. We'll then end the conversation. Sometimes when we're out on patrol I just take up the role of force protection and let the local or embedded interpreter handle the conversation. I'll then step back and watch what happens: what are the movements and gestures, what are the signals, do people agree or not or do they just say yes when they mean something else completely. When the interpreter misses out on something, I'll step in and tell him: 'You forgot to ask about that part'. After a couple of minutes, I'll then ask the question myself and hear something more. That's how we coordinate and achieve our goals. We won't leave until then. I can tell by somebody's face or accent, the words he uses, the way he speaks or the signals he receives, the movements he makes and the way he glances around whether there is someone who is watching him. We'll then say: 'Ok, thanks, we know enough.' If possible, we'll ask the man if he could find the time to come by half an hour later. Usually, they'll say yes or suggest another time. We'll make an appointment so that we can talk more freely. (…) There are also situations in which the interpreter can act as a mediator. When something happens, I'll try to mediate and remain impartial. I'll do my best to please both parties but what's most important is to solve the problem with the best solution possible. They know exactly what I do. I am screened. I work with them under the same flag. I'll do whatever is expected of me in such a situation but I will of course always tell them about my game plan. I'll ask them if they will let me handle the situation and usually they give me permission to do so. I'll inform them later about how I solved the case."

The experience of respondent NI 2 immediately makes clear that a conventional definition of interpreting does not fit the complex task assignment of interpreters in conflict zones. Different documents and notes have been disseminated throughout the Dutch military organization containing guidelines about the employment of interpreters in conflict zones. These documents, however, are rather ambiguous in their description of military interpreting. Their understanding of interpreter activities in conflict zones not always coincides and sometimes even contradicts each other. Whereas a publication of the Army

Commander (Commandant-Landstrijdkrachten, C-LAS) for example acknowledged the interpreter as a valuable source for gathering intelligence, the Office of Interpreter Services (BTD) explicitly advised against such practices (C-LAS, 2012, 1; Bureau Tolkdiensten Defensie, 2009, 7). Irrespective of the varying interpretations represented in these official documents, the reality on the ground was that soldiers and interpreters had to pull all the stops to face the military and civilian challenges of the stability operation.

The notion that the activity of interpreting calls for a more unconventional approach seems to gain more support over the last two decades as scholars have begun 'to question the traditional dogma of interpreting as a passive, impartial, 'black box' event' (Katan, 2011, 33). In this academic debate interpreters are described as 'social' and interpretation as 'mediation', 'interaction' and 'intervention'. The question, for scholars as well as interpreters, remains, however, what these labels mean and this in turn lies at the heart of the interpreter's dilemma (Katan, 34). While the debate about what interpreters can and should account for is still ongoing, there is consensus about the fact that interpretation and translation inherently implies intervention (Baker, 2008, 16; Katan, 2011, 34). It is therefore not a matter of whether or not interpreters intervene but how and when they do so.

Typically, interpreter behaviour is the result of a set of enacted strategies in a particular environment supported by accepted professional and social norms about what is right and appropriate and this again logically depends on the role, status and identity of the interpreter (Katan, 2011, 35). These aspects have already been addressed in the previous paragraph but their influence will be noticeable once more when we continue to further explore the cooperation of soldiers and interpreters in order to shed light on how interpreters actually intervene in the context of military missions.

6.2 Interpreting: To the Heart of the Military Matter

The coverage of the war in Afghanistan in both conflict and translation studies and the media has not only contributed to the acknowledgement of the complexity of the population-centric approach adopted by ISAF, it has also emphasized how crucial the presence of language mediation in such operations is. All of the respondents unanimously confirmed the importance of having an interpreter with the team. Both the military as well as the interpreters were straightforward in their understanding that the mission could not succeed without the intervention of interpreters. There was, however, less mutual agreement about what the tasks of the interpreter should comprise of. This is hardly any surprise, since a lack of definition has characterized the interpreter's working environment throughout history (Gallai, 2019, 207). Whereas the national interpreters in this regard received some instruction in interpreting skills during their pre-deployment training, the local interpreters did not receive such instructions and had to learn how to approach their task assignment on the job (Fitchett, 2019, 195). Combined with the highly demanding operational theatre, this lack

of definition and training could easily result in too high an expectation on the side of the military and sometimes insecurity at the side of the interpreters. Respondent NI 7 explains the strain this put on the mutual cooperation as follows:

> "You listen to the ICOM [radio/transceiver] but it is very difficult to hear everything they're saying. I explained to them that I couldn't follow all that was being said. I meant of course that I couldn't hear everything but they subsequently interpreted my remark as if I couldn't understand the conversations on the ICOM. You have to write and listen at the same time. I wasn't thinking about nice or important words. I just wrote the words down. They told me that my level of writing skills was very poor but the Taliban aren't stupid. They use simple words. They don't say 'put that IED over there' or have elaborate conversations about their plans. They talk about 'things' so I'll write down 'things'. They said: 'He only knows the word things'. I was really sad about that. That person hadn't said anything to me and now he writes such an evaluation about me. I just write down what I hear. They might mean something else by that but I don't interpret the information. I could get in trouble when I get it all wrong. Sometimes they use the word 'camel' while they actually mean bomb or something like that."

The quote illustrates that the intervention of the national interpreter in this situation did not meet the standard of what his military colleagues expected of him when listening to the ICOM chat. While the respondent, out of fear for misinterpreting, chose to literally translate what he was hearing, the soldiers on the other hand expected the interpreter to convey the meaning of what was said on the intercom. The task-conflict that arose from this discrepancy was caused by the anxiety which the interpreter experienced when dealing with what might be sensitive and crucial information and the frustration the soldiers experienced for missing out on information that could possibly and potentially endanger the safety and success of the mission. Both in other words were intent on a careful handling of information, but their expectations about how to secure this created a miscommunication which eventually also negatively affected their cooperation.

This specific task-conflict took place on the slippery slope between the technical and strategic level of intervention. The interpreter in this example restricted himself to the task of bringing 'the terms and concepts in the source text abroad with a minimum loss'. He in other words tried to make the *sense* of the message clear, which is composed of an explicit written or spoken part and an implicit part which is unsaid but meant by the other and understood by the listener (Katan, 2011, 37). Unfortunately, the interpreter failed to do so because he could not grasp all of what was said on the ICOM. The soldiers, however, not only expected the interpreter to disclose the implicit part of the message, they also wanted him to interpret on a strategic level. The interpreter had to clarify sentences in the message in which information regarding the subject was missing. The difficulty with ill-formed sentence structures, however, is that these cannot be translated literally because that would result in incomplete interpretation or mis-interpretation (Katan, 2011, 37). Therefore, the

soldiers needed the interpreter to fill in the gaps of the ill-formed word ‘things’ because they otherwise would not be able to meet the challenges of the ‘Who, what, where or how’ demands of the mission. Their focus on the strategic level, unfortunately made them rather insensitive to the difficulties this type of intervention implied for the interpreter. Respondent NI 4 describes the challenges of his task assignment as follows:

> “The task of the interpreter depends on the people. Some soldiers want to know everything immediately and others want a literal translation, word by word. And some only want to know what´s important. But some soldiers trust you and give you the time to talk to people. You can then tell them afterwards what the intention of the conversation was. It all depends on the soldier or officer. The PRT sometimes expects you to translate literally while others tell you only to convey the meaning of the conversation. Sometimes you just can´t make any sense out of the words and then I’ll have to explain to them what they mean. One time, I translated literally but they couldn´t make anything of it. When you translate words for example, the meaning is completely different. They talk about one thing while they mean something different all the same. You have received instructions to translate in short sentences but sometimes someone tells you a whole story. You might think he´s forgotten all about what the conversation was about but at the end he´ll eventually comes back to the original topic. Sometimes I tell them to give the other some space to talk because at that moment I don´t know what he´s saying myself but eventually I see where he’s getting at. He goes this way, but means that way. They turn and turn. That´s tough enough already but where I come from it´s even more difficult.”

While the intervention of the respondent listening to the ICOM might apparently seem to resemble the transactional approach of conference interpreting, in which language signs have a transparent referential function, the task of the interpreter in this case was complicated by the concealed nature of the messages. Interpreting on a strategic level in electronic warfare therefore implies not only the capability of the interpreter to clarify any indistinctness in the communication, it also asks for a solid knowledge of the strategies and (code) language of the opponent. A task that preferably requires training into the matter or at least some insight gleaned from evidence-based experience. The example of the respondent working for the PRT illustrates yet another element which increases the difficulty of interpreting in stability operations and which has been recognized by most of the respondents. The interpreter had to be able to adapt his level of intervention to the personal approach of the military. Some of the soldiers were very directive (instrumental) in their orders while others moved along with the knowledge and skills of their interpreters on how to proceed with the conversation, the interlocutor or the situation.

The population-centric approach of the stability operation already presupposes interactional communication with the local people. In contrast to transactional communication, this type of communication for example also involves connotation,

pragmatic meaning and face (Katan, 2011, 39). This makes it sometimes difficult for the interpreter to comply with the (formal) instructions he has been given. The interpreter, after all, has to tie his intervention to the needs of the military, the interlocutor and the circumstances and these obviously are not always compatible with the professional norms of the job description. When it comes to military interpreting, being a professional, in other words means that the interpreter of all things needs to be a strategist himself who can deal with the uncertainties that inevitably seem part of the job. The interpreters who were able to pull this off, were highly appreciated and wanted by the soldiers as respondents M 5 illustrate:

> “We don’t command the language and the local people don’t speak English, so it is crucial to have an interpreter when we go outside of the gate. We had this one local interpreter who was of incredible value to us. He was intelligent, spoke English fluently and had the uncanny capacity to sense the hidden agendas of our interlocutors. He was just a really good interpreter who always joined us on patrol. He was also present during the many combat situations we encountered. We didn’t know at the time, though, that he was secretly planning his way out because he didn’t return from his leave. The impact of the TIC’s probably got the better of him.”

Besides the importance of cultural and linguistic knowledge and experience that have been mentioned earlier, this last quote also demonstrates that it takes courage to interpret in the operational theatre. While most of the local interpreters according to a ‘private think piece’ of the 44 Battle Group (2007) were *‘young and enthusiastic and seemed to like ‘action’ just like the soldiers’*, they were, however, not military trained. Typically, interpreters were ordinary citizens who had directly witnessed the atrocity of the conflict. Joining the troops, however, meant that interpreters emotionally had to cope with the constant threats of opponents who perceived them as traitors as well as the probability that they could be involved in combat situations. This exposure to violence consequently could cause interpreters to develop adverse experiences, psychological distress and post-traumatic reactions (Soeters, 2018, 157-158; Ruiz Rosendo & Persaud, 2019, 476). The anxiety which could built up in interpreters therefore should not be overlooked nor underestimated, because such experiences, when going unnoticed by the military, could give rise to negative emotions toward the out-group such as fear and hatred. An example of how such feelings of resentment can affect the cooperation between the interpreter and soldiers, will be more closely examined in the paragraph about the final aspect of perception.

All in all, one can conclude that interpreting in conflict zones means more than just a transmission of messages from one language to another (Gallai, 2019, 215). It calls for a deeper strategic understanding (Katan, 2011) The intervention of the military interpreter, after all, takes place at the heart of the operational theatre in which different parties each have a stake in the course of events. Precisely these dynamic working conditions designate

the interpreter to become ‘the man in the middle’ who must bring into balance all of the responsibilities and expectations this unique position holds.

6.3. Interpreting: A Case of Concealing or Showing True Colours?

Academia has long believed that interpreters should be invisible and neutral by placing themselves outside of the interaction of the interlocutors in order to prevent their personal views and attitudes from influencing the course of interaction (Jones & Askew, 2014, 172). Now scholars of translation and interpretation studies, however, have gradually come to acknowledge that this idea no longer is tenable because it does not take into account the complex nature of the communicative process in which each person subconsciously installs their own beliefs, knowledge, cultural conditioning and attitudes (Jones & Askew, 2014, 172-173). The interpreter is no exception to that rule and his own style of language, influenced by his personal narrative, will therefore inevitably affect the way he communicates and translates. Even to his best intentions, the interpreter in other words cannot be neutral or invisible. On the contrary, as has been illustrated throughout this study, he is an active participant in a language-mediated encounter which takes place in a territory that is neutral neither (Jones & Askew, 2014, 173). The military interpreter, after all, is a facilitator who must actively pursue his commander’s objective (Fitchett, 2019, 196). Therefore, the interpreter simply cannot place himself outside or in between narratives because the military requires him to be loyal towards the mission and this obviously makes it difficult for him to be considered impartial (Baker, 2005, 12; Fitchett, 2019, 197; Gallai, 2019, 217).

Although his ‘allegiance’ to the military already renders the question of whether or not the interpreter is neutral as irrelevant, some of the respondents nevertheless tried to uphold the idea of invisibility in their interventions. Respondent NI 1 describes this as follows:

> “I have to translate the questions that are asked. I try to do that to the best of my ability. I can’t tell anyone how they should answer because they need to do that themselves. I only translate in that moment. I have to translate the answers as given to me by the commander. I can’t influence the commander nor the conversation because that affects the military operation and that precisely is the responsibility of the commander.”

The interpreter pursues neutrality by trying not to interfere with the business of the commander. Unaware of his own ambivalence towards the matter, however, respondent NI 1 almost in the same breath demonstrates how futile such an attempt to remain invisible is:

> “An interpreter must be honest at all times and should not beat about the bush. He can improve the communication by telling soldiers how certain questions should be rephrased for better effect. In that respect, the interpreter is not a mere parrot who repeats after the soldier but an agent who ameliorates military strategies by smoothening the communication between interlocutors. I bring the cooperation between ISAF and the local village to a higher and more efficient level.”

The quote provides an example of an interpreter who tries to be as impartial as possible while his interventions inherently demonstrate the opposite. In doing so, the respondent displayed the over-romanticized role of the interpreter as a peace-giving enabler of communication who might have a blindspot for the nature and consequences of his interventions (Baker, 2005, 11). Rather than trying to be invisible, interpreters should acknowledge that they intervene ‘at the heart of interaction and that these narratives shape their lives as well as the lives of those for whom and between whom they interpret’ (Baker, 2005, 12). While some of the interpreters had yet come to terms with their visibility and hence partiality, others, who were less weary of showing their colors, took their task of interpreting to the other side of the spectrum. Respondent NI 8 in this regard did not hesitate to actively intervene in the military approach:

> “Almost immediately after my arrival I intervened with the mission team. I told them how they should approach the local population. At a certain time, they trusted me and from that moment on they began to ask me for advice themselves. But in the beginning I just stepped in because I saw that things didn´t go well, that they made mistakes actually. Without being asked to, I intervened and told them what my opinion was. The influence of my position, however, has grown gradually over time. In the beginning my cultural, regional and tribal knowledge was limited but I have developed myself into becoming an expert with regard to knowledge, contacts and so on.”

The quote demonstrates that any newness to the job did not keep respondent NI 8 from criticizing and advising the soldiers. His influence, however, was only truly established when he managed to increase his expertise and connections over time. The quality of his reputation and ties, therefore, eventually earned him the trust of the soldiers and locals. The quote also demonstrates that ‘the interpreters’ relationship to war is up close and personal and in demand of ethical decisions at all stages of the conflict’ (Gallai, 2019, 217). Another example of such personally driven intervention, is given by respondent NI 2 who stepped forward to advocate and represent the Dutch troops in a situation in which local villagers we’re against their presence:

> “The job of interpreting varies depending on the situation and the mission. At the PRT it’s strictly translation but at the BG, when going outside on a mission, it’s something completely different. I have joined many missions and have experienced successful operations. I had a lot of contact with the local population at the time and it happened that their behaviour could change within fifteen minutes of time. They really could change from angry people into happy

people who were pleased with the soldiers. In Deh Rawod, for example, lives a spiritual leader who was afraid of the OMF. Just one or two weeks before, they had hanged a person on a tree nearby. The people were afraid and against the placement of a Dutch mission within their village. I asked if I could have a talk with that man. I knew prayer time was over and that it therefore couldn't be used as an excuse to deny the request because there was plenty of time until next prayer. At the beginning the villagers were reserved and unwilling. The mission commander asked me if the people were angry and what else he could ask them. I said to him: 'Give me five minutes. I will translate everything afterwards, but let me handle the conversation.' So, I talked to the spiritual leader and broke the ice by sharing small talk and by making formal and light-hearted jokes. I then said to him: 'Listen, we know you are afraid of the OMF'. You have to realize that I was talking to a spiritual leader and that I had to address him on his own level. I said to the man: 'OK, you are a very spiritual man and people come to see you from Kandahar and other places far and away. Muslims are never afraid, except for the wrath of God. So, why then be afraid of the Taliban?' The man answered and said: 'You are right.' I then said to him: 'We are not here to occupy your country. We are here temporarily for just a couple of years. We are here for safety and reconstruction, nothing else. If you want to go to mosque for prayer ten or twenty times, feel free. That's your own business, we don't mind. We only want to make the area safer and help people out who are very poor and have no drinking water. We see children with no shoes on their feet and women who need help.' I then started talking about my own women and said: 'If anything happened to my mother or sister I would bring them to a doctor or a hospital to prevent things from getting worse. It is not forbidden to see a doctor, so what would you think of the idea of having such facilities present here in the region?' The man answered by saying: 'Yes, you're right. It would be a good thing.' 'Well', I said, 'That's our intention. That's why we are here. The only thing we ask from you is to send someone to inform us when the Taliban is around in this region. Don't go yourself but let a child come to us. We'll know what to do then. You can leave the rest up to us. Don't worry about that.' And so, within fifteen minutes of time the people were ever so happy. They started to smile and make jokes. The commander asked me what I had said to the people and I explained to the villagers that I had to translate our conversation to him. He was pleased, very pleased indeed. Right away, after two weeks we started building our mission and that mission has been there ever since. When other colleagues visit that man, he will still ask: 'How is he doing? When does he come round here again? Please, invite him to come for tea when you see him'."

This example clearly demonstrates that the interpreter intervened as a broker by spanning the gap between the Dutch soldiers and the villagers. As described earlier in this chapter brokerage can be understood as 'the process of connecting actors in systems of social, economic, or political relations in order to facilitate access to valued resources' (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 141). Situations in which brokerage occur can be characterized by the dimensions of bias and cohesion. Bias in this regard refers to the extent to which the broker is relationally, socially or informationally closer to one party than the other, while cohesion refers to the level of internal solidarity among sets of actors linked by the broker (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 142). Both dimensions affect the process of brokerage. Bias on the one hand affects the process of brokerage because brokers who are tied more to one party than another may be less neutral than brokers who are truly in the middle (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 143). This of course is clearly the case with interpreters who are contracted by the military and who therefore are expected to act both on and in behalf of the troops. Cohesion on the other hand, emphasizes the relations, varying from highly to weakly connected, among the actors in a setting. We have already ascertained that networks with strong ties have a strong sense of shared fate and solidarity. These feelings of cohesion, however, could also cause members of a strong community to belief that the broker, or more in particular the interpreter who acts as one, is not part of the group and that his motives therefore should be received with skepticism.

The level of cohesion in a community might explain why brokers are so often perceived as corrupt (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 144). If members from a cohesive group suspect that the broker does not conform to their value system, either because he acts out of self-interest or because he seems to be part of another value system, they might doubt his allegiance to the community and therefore his morality. Brokers, therefore, may very well be viewed as untrustworthy because they are not really part of the moral community. Because of their position as outsiders, brokers might not feel themselves restricted by moral conventions and this could lead them to act idiosyncratically or in their own self-interest (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 144). Both the behavior of the broker as well as how his actions are perceived by others, therefore, are important in whether or not the broker is viewed as an outsider who does not belong to the group and who therefore cannot be trusted. This aspect of perception will be further analyzed in the next paragraph.

In anthropological and political science, cultural brokers are described as persons who can bridge the gap between traditional or local communities and regional or national governments. The capacity of the cultural broker to connect disparate parties stems from his joint acceptance by the stakeholders (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 150). Whereas the spiritual leader most probably accepted the interpreter's brokerage as a result of their shared language, kinship and cultural background, the commander accepted his intervention most probably on grounds of his knowledge of the military mission. In a masterly and emphatic way, the interpreter was able to make a deal by 'bringing persons with different interests together and showing them how, in some setting or context, their interests coincide' (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 149). In accordance with Simmel's analysis, the interpreter, therefore, mediated as a true *'tertius iungens'* ('the third who joins') (Soeters, 2018, 97). He aligned the military need for a mission post with the villagers' need for safety and facilities and as such he realized a shared ground that both parties otherwise could not have established for and/or by themselves. Having indirectly contributed to the basic living conditions of the villagers, the interpreter's reputation was now one of admiration instead of suspicion. In that light, both the examples of respondents NI 8 and NI 2 illustrate

another result of successful brokerage. Brokers often become powerful as a result of their ability to facilitate resources and opportunities or by gaining access to an increasing number of valuable people or information (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 146; 149). Although clearly not the case in the given examples, the broker, however, might also become the *'tertius gaudens'* ('the 'laughing third one') who profits from both sides and is able to manipulate them (Soeters, 2018, 97). This type of self-indulged and malicious brokerage, of course only fuels the suspicion and mistrust that others already might have towards brokers and more specific interpreters.

Whereas the benefits for brokers could exist for example of status, gratitude, access to opportunities and resources or even bribes, there is also a potential downside to brokerage. When attempts to brokerage fail, the reputation and the status of the intermediary suffers great damage (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 148). The risk of how easily brokerage can break down, might therefore explain why people feel reluctant to act as a broker. While brokers in those situations bear most of the brunt, stakeholders are also negatively affected because failed brokerage results in fewer opportunities and resources (Stovel & Shaw, 2012, 153). Despite the caution which needed to be taken into consideration, most interpreters and soldiers were nevertheless prepared to take the risk that was involved in this type of intervention. After all, in complex conflict operations such like ISAF, knowledge of the local language, customs, people and mission environment is pivotal and the insight and expertise of the interpreter for that matter indispensable. The linguistic and cultural knowledge of interpreters did not only allow them to take up the role of a broker, it also enabled them to act as an informant. It is precisely this aspect of their job which made the phrase *'We are the eyes and ears of ISAF'* popular among interpreters. Respondent M 32 in this instance gives an example of the alertness of his interpreter:

> "My [local] interpreters were active on the job. If they noticed something strange in the conversation they would always tell me that. Just like they would always inform me when something had caught their eye. During a negotiation, my interpreter once whispered that I should watch a particular person in the company more closely. He suspected that the guy wasn't an Afghan but a Pakistani and that I should pay attention to him when he was asked a question because he probably would not be able to answer it. It turned out that my interpreter was right about that."

The example demonstrates that the interpreter was a sharp and careful observer. He used his knowledge to assess the situation and then discreetly passed that information on to the commander. Without this piece of intel, the military probably would not have been aware of the existence of the Pakistani let alone thought about what his presence in that particular situation could have meant. By sharing his information, the interpreter, not only contributed to a more complete comprehension of the environment but also to the military's decision-making process how to adequately respond towards such a situation. Interpreters therefore

could be perceived as a potential and valuable source of situational awareness. This concept is of great importance for the military organization because soldiers need to be able to comprehend what is going on in their surrounding environment in relation to the task they need to accomplish (Rietjens, 2019, 4).

In accordance with the three levels of Endsley's situational awareness theory, interpreters could be of value when it comes respectively to the perception of the elements in the environment, comprehension of the situation, and projection of future status (Rietjens, 2019, 8-13). The interpreter can assist the military in perceiving the characteristics and dynamics of the environment. Especially in situations in which the troops need to operate in unfamiliar territory, interpreters could, because of their broad palate of knowledge, assist supervisors in obtaining relevant information. Secondly, the interpreter can help comprehend this environmental information by assessing its value and integrating this into the mission strategy. The interpreter can provide a unique perspective on the conflict because he is able to interpret the situation from both a Western as well as a local perspective. As such, the interpreter can make sense of a situation that otherwise could have caused for misunderstanding as the following example of NI 4 illustrates:

> "I went outside on patrol and there was an imam and some people. I had to talk with them and the imam grabbed my sunglasses. My military colleague said to me: 'I think you just lost your glasses'. I told him that I knew what was going on and that it was alright that the imam had took them from me. I would tell him all about it later. The imam thoroughly inspected the sunglasses and I said to him: 'Look what a nice pair of glasses this is to protect your eyes from the sun.' The imam peered through the glasses and said in agreement: 'Well, yes these are nice indeed.' My colleague asked me what just had happened and I explained to him that rumour got around that you could see people naked with these kinds of glasses. By trying them on, the imam for himself could experience that it was just a pair of ordinary sunglasses. So, we solved the matter rather easily. I think that the people had heard about it and rumours tend to spread fast. That's why I let the local people experiment with the sunglasses so that they know they're harmless."

The above-mentioned situation might seem innocent, but it could have had far-reaching consequences if the interpreter had not intervened. One could easily imagine that the locals would keep the Dutch troops at a distance if they believed the rumors to be true. The presence of the troops in that instance might have been experienced by the locals as a face threatening act which logically would have damaged the reputation of the Dutch military forces in the region. Who, after all, wants to do business with or be protected by foreign soldiers who have seen your private parts? Through his empathetic assessment, the interpreter, however, helped to defuse the potentially harmful situation. This brings us to the third level of situational awareness in which the outcome of the knowledge of the first two levels and learned experience lead to a certain type of action (Rietjens, 2019, 13). By taking

action soldiers gain an increased understanding of their operational environment which consequently enables them to adapt more efficiently to situations. This approach, however, requires a constant reflection on actions undertaken rather than accepting the environment as a static given (Rietjens, 2019, 13). In the following example, respondent M 49 explains why he reserves time to reflect with his interpreter on the interaction with the local population:

> "Interpreters are of value when it comes to understanding culture. You can ask them about the meaning of the headgear of our interlocutors, etiquette and appropriate behavior. After meetings, I always talk to my interpreter. We reflect on the conversation and the interlocutor. The interpreter explains how I should interpret non-verbal communication like for instance facial expression. Some interpreters, however, take their initiative too far by wanting to point out which individuals are Taliban. I have my reservations about that because I want to remain objective. I want to make my own judgement irrespective of what the interpreter thinks. I have to keep an open mind and need to figure out for myself what the interlocutor wants. I want to gather my own information even if necessary by 'the hang yourself' method."

The example, however, demonstrates a certain ambiguity in the respondent's appreciation of the skills of the interpreter. The commander acknowledges the interpreter as a valuable source when it comes to cultural and communicational awareness. This is probably the reason why he includes the advice of the interpreter into the reflective process. Reflection is viewed as a method that helps professionals to develop a better understanding of practice through questioning and investigating ones' actions and their consequences. Reflection on practice has furthermore been recognized to be important for sustaining one's professional health and competence and more specifically the ability to exercise professional judgment (Loughran, 2002, 34). With regard to the latter, however, it is interesting to notice that when it comes to 'targeting' the opponent, the respondent relies on his own judgement rather than that of the interpreter. The example of course is quite extreme but it nevertheless demonstrates that the interpreter's opinion or expertise on situational awareness is not always taken into consideration by soldiers. Explanations for such a display of 'reluctance' towards the interpreter's influence might be found in (a combination of) factors such as strategy, procedures and organizational, cultural and personal norms. Whereas this kind of dismissal doesn't stop some of the interpreters from forging ahead, it brings others, who are less assertive, to a mere standstill. This perhaps is even more true for local interpreters who as a consequence of their cultural background are not expected to give unsolicited advice as is illustrated by respectively respondents LI 1 and LI 8:

> "I would like to give advice about my culture. I want to import to him to explain to him our rule, our culture, our religion. If he want ask for me, if he do not want to ask for me. For example, the teacher did not ask for me the question. You gave answer to that question? No, you should not give the answer. If the teacher asks the question, you should answer to him. But there's different kind of advice. There's also like ICOM, there's enemy talking. I should explain to him this, that and that because there's real danger but if there's two bottles of water and he wants to get one bottle and one to leave there. No, I don't want to ask for him why he not also wants to get the other bottle. This is not my job. But there's also advice, if there's anything and I suspect for the guy when we are on a mission I also tell him: 'Sir, can you accept my question?' and he says yes, I say: 'I am suspectful of that guy, we should search him'. There is many kind of advice. If we are suspectful, we should do it then."

> "I didn't advice anyone. No one asked me about it, so how can I advise them? No one asked me about this. I would like to give advice. You people, you are here to cooperate with Afghan people and the most important is for you to know about the Afghan culture. The Afghan culture that's the most important for you. If you want to speak with anyone, you must know how can you speak with Afghan people. For example, someone, the Dutch army for example, they will move formation and they want to search the house. The area where they are, they have to knock the door, then someone will answer it and they are allowed to go the inside of the house. It's also respect, honour you can call it. And if you do it this way, it is the better way and you will win in Afghanistan. But it's not our task to give advice. Our task is only translation. If someone asks us 'How can we do this?' we will advise him otherwise we want to keep to our task."

Although there are plenty of examples of interpreter interventions that would justify a more profound involvement of interpreters in the decision-making process, soldiers tend to follow the conventions of the military organization. These regulations, however, most often don't correspond with the wide variety of task assignments that interpreters actually fulfill during the mission. Two proposals for a new and specific code for interpreters have attempted to address this issue, respectively the *Conflict Zone Field Guide for Civilian Translators/Interpreters and Users of Their Services* developed by Red T (a non-profit organization that advocates the protection of translators and interpreters in high-risk settings), the International Federation of Translators (FIT) and the International Association of Conference Interpreters, and an ethical code developed by Moreno Bello (Fitchett, 2019, 196; Gallai, 2019, 215-217). Both documents are intended as guidelines for the basic rights, responsibilities and linguistic challenges of interpreters and their users. The main point of criticism about these publications, however, is that they emphasize the neutrality and impartiality of the interpreter. Thereby these codes fail to acknowledge the complexities of interpreting in the daily reality of conflict zones. Considering the absence of any real(istic) guidelines and the fact that interpreters are agents by the nature of their very profession, interpreters typically have to rely on self-legislation in order to decide what is the right course of action (Gallai, 2019, 218). These conditions of course are far from ideal and confront interpreters as well as soldiers with ethical challenges. Interpreters, after all, have to 'calibrate' their actions according to their own moral compass, whereas soldiers have to decide whether or how and

to what extent following the interpreter's compass is sensible and feasible with regard to the military mission and organization.

This tension between freedom and responsibility ultimately revolves around control. Individuals, according to Goffman's analysis, tend to manage interactions by trying to control the responses made by others. All participants in interaction, therefore, play their own game and all players have their own particular interests (Soeters, 2018, 95). In pursuit of their interests, people and in this case more in particular soldiers and interpreters (as well locals), have to deal with individuals and parties who appear to either help or hinder. These dealings in turn compel people to assess and calculate the capacities and intentions of others (Goffman, 1969, 3). How these assumptions come about and how they influence the interaction during the mission will be further discussed in the following paragraph about perception.

7. Perception

Stability operations in foreign countries like ISAF are exemplary for the soldier's dependency on the linguistic, cultural, social and environmental knowledge of interpreters who for their part most often are not familiar with the skills and drills of the military. This paragraph seeks to understand how soldiers and interpreters perceived their collaboration and how this experience influenced their interaction. Goffman in this regard describes interactions as an 'information game' in which participants try to control the perceived significance of their own actions as well as attempt to uncover the real meanings behind the actions of other participants. Participants, for that matter, do not just act in interactions, that is managing the impressions that are given and given off, they also observe and interrogate. During this process, participants are aware of the fact that others are doing the same and therefore all of the involved will wonder whether the other is providing an accurate image of themselves (McCoy, 2017, 261).

Although Goffman often applies the game metaphor in his analyses of social interaction, he nevertheless points out that it is a very strong simplification of reality which doesn't take into consideration salient issues like for instance the existence of norms (Swedberg, 2001, 312). Especially, in complicated intercultural interactions such as the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters, different values influence how one perceives the behavior and intentions of others. A local interpreter who prefers saving face to giving a direct 'no' for an answer, for example, might be seen as sly or evasive by soldiers who are not familiar with the Afghan culture while in fact the interpreter was demonstrating perfectly normal behavior according to his cultural frame of reference. The same goes for the commander who for example out of habit approaches the interpreter in the same blunt and unforgiving way as his soldiers. Whereas from a foreign perspective, the commanders' behavior might likely be perceived as disrespectful and rude, his assertiveness would be accepted as perfectly

normal according to the military culture (Wong & Gerras, 2019, 22). The consequences of such negative attributions for the interaction and more specifically the cooperation between the involved parties will be addressed throughout this paragraph.

Goffman, moreover, explains that 'persons often do not know what game they are in or whom they are playing for until they have already played. Even when they know about their own position, they may be unclear as to whom, if anybody, they are playing against, and, if anyone, what his game is, let alone his framework of possible moves' (Goffman, 1969, 119). Logically, these difficulties will be even more poignant in conflict zones like Afghanistan where nothing is as it seems. For instance, local villagers who support the troops might only do so because they are compelled by the opponent as not to arouse suspicion. Another example of uncertainty that can be experienced during the mission is one that affects the interaction between soldiers and interpreters. The previous sections have already showed that military troops depend on the intervention of the interpreter. This dependency, however, is often perceived with ambivalence because the qualities of the interpreter might also be considered a threat itself (Bogers, Van Dijk en Heeren-Bogers, 2010, 162). Who, after all, knows whether the interpreter is a fair player or that the gathered information is complete or safe with him? It is under these critical and uncertain conditions that soldiers, interpreters and local civilians have to interact with each other. Respondent M 16 in this respect points out a number of fundamental issues that complicate the cooperation between soldiers and the interpreters:

> "The interpreter will always in some way remain an outsider because of his descent. Just like we will always be outsiders in their country. He belongs more to the country than we do. And that of course puts a certain strain to what extent the interpreter is part of the unit. I do think we should involve the interpreter more in what we do but as long as there is no efficient research on OPSEC, the position of interpreters therein, and apparent leaks of information or circulation of intelligence – we will always fall back on it and will always look at interpreters suspiciously. If we don't know where we are with interpreters it will always hum around. It's a sort of conventional wisdom on which we fall back. And sometimes I think that we are letting ourselves getting a bit too carried away about security. See, that's the problem with trust. Like I said, the soldiers' trust is compartmentalized but real trust is unconditional. You either trust someone or you don't. And as long as there's no absolute trust, interpreters will not be a part of the military unit and remain outsiders. Our soldiers of course do not receive all of the information as well because our security policy holds that we share our information with as few people as possible. It's not that we don't trust our soldiers to keep the information to themselves but we just know that soldiers unintentionally do mention information in telephone calls, letters, weblogs and so on. It's this knowledge that keeps us from sharing information with our soldiers. But it's different when it comes to interpreters. We don't trust them or we do not trust them enough because we think that they will leak information. I think you need to have a big heart to trust someone unconditionally. Let me refer to the Americans once more. A

U.S. officer spoke about one of his Afghan colleagues, not an interpreter but a commander of the Afghan security guards, and he said: 'If I had to walk from Deh Rawod to another camp and I had to carry him on my back than I would have done that.' He said this to express his feelings of solidarity but he also said that he could not share everything with him. So, as a person he would have gone every length for his Afghan colleague, they even had fought together, but at the same time he felt that he had to keep his distance. And that will always leave a mark on the relationship. You can ask yourselves whether it is truly possible to build a trusting relationship in a period of four months. I do not think that you can hand over your trust to another soldier with regard to a certain person. So, that will always be a problem and that's why interpreters will never be a part of the unit. Even when it is necessary for an efficient cooperation."

In the above-mentioned quote respondent M 16 brings several factors and conditions such as the in- and out-group, emotions, operational security, and duration of deployment to the attention which in his opinion influence and hamper the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters. Similar aspects have been mentioned by other respondents as well and all, in one way or another, seem to involve the issue of trust. This conclusion seems logical given the assumption that the greater the degree of interdependence between parties or partners, the greater the need for trust will be (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006, 23).

7.1 Trust as the 'Super Glue' of Cooperation: Better Stick to It?

Trust is key in military organizations and it has gained even more importance with the increasing amount of international military operations in which both internal and external partners are dependent of each other (Bogers, Van Dijk, Heeren-Bogers, 2010, 162). Although military organizations acknowledge the need for these kinds of missions, such multinational alliances have proved to be difficult to manage (Rietjens, 2019, 14). Different perceptions on the ownership, contribution and sharing of resources oftentimes result in a strained relationship between partners and give rise to a high potential for conflict (Madhok, 2006, 30-31). A way to overcome these difficulties is to focus more closely on the social dimension within which the relationship is embedded. This trust-centered approach, which brings the moderators of collective team identification and team member alignment back to mind, revolves primarily on the notion that trust creates opportunities that, when met with reciprocity, commitment and mutual tolerance, result in cooperation (Madhok, 2006, 31; Carlin & Love, 2011, 44). Trust is defined as people's positive expectations in the face of vulnerability and uncertainty towards other people's intentions (Möllering & Sydow, 2019, 142; Carlin & Love, 2011, 44). Trust in other words is the perceived likelihood that the other will not behave in a self-interested manner (Madhok, 2006, 32). Trust consists of a structural and social component that reinforce each other. The structural component refers to the complementarity of the resources that are contributed by both partners. If there is

a fair balance in given and received resources, complementarity will not only add value to the relationship, it will also trigger partners to contribute to the cooperation. One simple example of such complementarity of resources between soldiers and interpreters can be found in the protective measures that soldiers take in order to accommodate the tasks of the interpreter, or vice versa the knowledge and flexibility interpreters bring into play to benefit the efficiency of the mission. The social component of trust refers to the quality of the relationship and the impact this has on the nature and value of the exchange within it. For example, the interpreter who pushes his reserves to take the extra shift because of his social bond with his platoon leader; or the soldier who shares his gear out of solidarity with his interpreter with whom he has been through hell and back.

While the structural component of trust is essential for the creation of the relationship, the social component is necessary for its continuation. The relationship, after all, can only be stable if both parties benefit from it and when temporary periods of inequity can be overcome. Trust building, therefore, requires a long-term investment in the equity of the relationship. The reciprocal obligations that result from that intent, will ultimately 'create a stock of goodwill from which an actor can draw when the need arises' (Madhok, 2006, 32). In light of respondent's M 16 observation and the corresponding views of other respondents, the question, however, arises whether this two-component superglue also works in the specific context of the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters in the mission theater.

The first 'obstacle' that could prevent the development of trust in the collaboration is the perceived social identity of partners. Respondent M 16 mentioned that local interpreters will always remain outsiders to the military organization because of their descent, just like soldiers will always be perceived as foreigners by the Afghan population. In a similar vein respondent LI 2 formulates the impact of perception and the subsequent behavior on the Afghan people and more specifically the local interpreters as follows:

"When we have respect for the Dutch people, they should have respect for us also because when we do respect to you, you should respect to me. It can be done but not from the one side. When you do something wrong he [the Afghan citizen] will be angry because he'll always be thinking 'You enter in my country and you always push us. It is our country. It is our right to live here, not for you. When you cannot help us, it is just not allowed for you to push us. (...) I told you before that I didn't go on patrol. Never, never on mission but I hear from my colleagues that the behavior of the Dutch people is not good. Sometimes with the interpreters also. Sometimes they react not as a human with interpreters. They are thinking that Afghan people are not humans, that's a problem. Some of the people are like that. Some of the Dutch people, not all. But Dutch people are good people. My colleagues did a lot of jobs with the Americans also and with the British, but they like the Dutch people. Yeah, but some of the people are bad people, really. Their behavior is not good and that is a problem. Even with the interpreters. Just they are thinking the Afghan people are not human."

How people perceive themselves, and consequently others, is often determined by the groups to which they belong (Schafer, 1999, 830). Social identity can be described as a person's sense of self derived from perceived membership in social groups. According to social identity theory, social identity consists of three components respectively categorization, identification, and comparison (Chen & Xin Li, 2009, 431-432). The first component of categorization refers to the process of putting people into categories. Labelling someone as for example a soldier or an interpreter, is a way to define people. Secondly, the component of identification refers to the process by which people associate themselves with certain groups on grounds of a shared sense of sameness (Schafer, 1999, 832). The ingroups are the social groups people identify with. The out-groups, conversely, are the social groups people don't identify with. Because people tend to gravitate towards those similar to themselves, they also tend to become more cohesive with people they interact with more often (Wong & Gerras, 2019, 18). For example, while all coalition and Afghan troops are military, soldiers first and foremost will identify themselves as members of their respective national contingent, and more specifically their unit such as PRT, ISTAR, BG or Kandak (ANA battalion). The third component of comparison refers to the process by which people compare (the nature of) their groups with other groups, and the bias they develop in favor of the group to which they belong. The existence of in- and out-groups therefore is based on the idea that 'we' possess certain qualities that 'others' lack. Whereas members tend to show loyalty and respect towards the ingroup, members of the out-group are often met with competition and resistance (Macionis, Peper, Van der Leun, 2010, 143). Negative intergroup attitudes may be based on a combination of factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, political ideology, level of development (Schafer, 1999, 831). The coalition forces, for example position themselves against the OMF and legitimize their presence with the belief that they, armed with a set of democratic values and the intention to secure and develop the region, fight a good cause. Another example can be found in the 'classic' comparison between the Pashtun and Hazara people, in which the former perceive themselves to be of higher standing than the other. This of course is but an oversimplified representation of the influence of tribal heritage within the Afghan population which in reality is far more diversified and complex.

Assumptions or stereotypes connected to membership of a certain social category, influence how much trust is placed in a partner who is a member of that category. National categories in this regard are particularly strong categorizations in the context of international cooperation (Ertug, Cuypers, Noorderhaven & Bensaou, 2013, 266). The fact that soldiers as well as interpreters describe each other as outsiders, therefore illustrates the impact that social categorization can have on the perceived trustworthiness of partners. Studies on military operations in former Yugoslavia in this regard explain that interpreters, and more specifically local interpreters who ethnically belong to the 'enemy' group, generally are not seen by the military as trustworthy and reliable interlocutors. From a soldier's point of view, the issue of trust, therefore predominantly depends on ethnicity and this is one of the mayor reasons why interpreters, according to this particular interpretation, are perceived to belong to the out-group (Baker, 2010, 210-211). Notwithstanding the fact that there might be a correlation between ethnicity and trust, evidence from the field in Uruzgan demonstrates that the ethnicity of the interpreter also can be used as a strategic instrument to (paradoxically) soften the boundaries between parties who perceive each other as outsiders. In this light, the earlier described acts of brokerage and mediation can be perceived as examples in which the ethnicity of the interpreter cleverly but carefully is framed to serve the goals of the military organization.

Another reason why soldier's perceive interpreters as outsiders can be found in the pervasive opinion among respondents in which interpreters are described and dismissed as untrained military professionals who have not learned the niceties of soldierly life. The Afghan population, on the other hand, most probably perceived the military troops as outsider because of their different identity. Collectivist societies, such as in Afghanistan, moreover, are believed to exhibit a bias against out-groups, resulting in low levels of trust of outsiders (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006, 24). Remarkably enough, however, military organizations also have characteristics in common with collectivist societies. Ingroup collectivism for example refers to the level of loyalty and solidarity that members express in their organization. In the military this is often manifested as unit cohesion, esprit, or pride (Wong & Gerras, 2019, 23-24). This phenomenon might also explain why soldiers might be wary of 'outsiders' or even start a conflict with them.

7.2 Identity and Conflict: A Matter of Interpretation

There are two theories that each have a different outlook on the effect of heightened ingroup identity on conflict. Social identity theory claims that a stronger identity with the ingroup leads to a more negative evaluation of the out-group and as such to more conflict. Another theory on identity, predominantly the work on identity by Erik Erikson, on the other hand, suggests that a strong sense of social identity is necessary and healthy for the development of secure individuals (Schafer, 1999, 830-831). If this is true, then conflict and instability may correlate not with a strong sense of social identity but with a poorly developed sense of social identity. If one feels better about ones' own identification with the ingroup and the position of ones' ingroup, then intergroup conflict should not be necessary. Both seemingly competing theories shed an interesting light on the following conflict situation as experienced by respondent NI 4:

> "I didn't have any problems up until now. [The respondent was put under investigation and taken off duty at the time of the field research.] Last year there was a problem with the ranks. They refused some of the interpreters because they thought they were local interpreters. They have their own showers. In Deh Rawod the local interpreters were not allowed to eat with the Dutch soldiers. They had to eat separately and they didn't get the same thing to eat as

the soldiers. We got all sorts of fruit and the like and they didn't get anything. I have discussed my concern about that. If local interpreters don't get to eat well, they are not able to deliver good work either. The local interpreters are as important as we are. They usually have to go out on patrol with the soldiers. Last year in Chora I noticed that a local interpreter was having a problem with a soldier. The interpreter had asked for water. It was really hot. He didn't get any. The local interpreter told me himself that he, in a fit of anger, had said to the Dutch soldiers: 'Too bad I haven't got a weapon otherwise I would have killed you all. Why would I have to work with you, if you don't even give me some water to drink?' With these words they came to the district building. I happened to be there at the moment. The boy told me that he was infuriated because he didn't get any water. He also told me what he had said to the soldiers. Later, I heard that he was dismissed and sent home. He was said to have had contact with the Taliban. They had searched his belongings and had found a camera. I have tried to explain that the local interpreter was denied water. That was what had caused the conflict. I didn't know if he had contact with the Taliban but the problem was about water. The Afghans don't think with their mind when they're angry, they just rant. They say more than is good for them. That's a problem."

The quote shows that different rules and rations were applied to the local interpreters. This makes it reasonable to assume that the interpreter did not really belong to the ingroup and was perceived as an outsider. Whether the derogatory treatment of the local interpreter was done by the soldiers knowingly or not, the impact of this devaluation was unmistakably self-evident. Deeply hurt by the injustice of the situation, the local interpreter crossed all borders of appropriate behavior by threatening to kill the soldiers if he had been given the opportunity. This violation of conduct on the side of the local interpreter was used by the military as evidence to doubt his loyalty and to suspect him of having connections with the Taliban. Without exactly knowing what preceded the interpreters' outburst over this fundamental basic need, the conflict indeed exacerbated intergroup tensions as social identity theory would have predicted.

Another reason which could explain why the military perceived the interpreter as a traitor or even the enemy, might be found in the self-image threat that the conflict most presumably posed for the involved soldiers. Conditions of uncertainty generally tend to trigger members of the ingroup to activate negative stereotypes and judgements about members of the out-group because these mechanisms restore feelings of self-worth (Fein, Von Hippel & Spencer, 1999, 50). The fight in this regard could be seen as symptomatic for the anxiety soldiers might experience when they are not familiar with the local language and customs of their mission environment and the debilitating impact this could have on their military performance. A group's conflictual behavior, therefore, could also, according to the theory of self-identity, be indicated by the level of internal insecurity (Schafer, 1999, 839). Both explanations, therefore, show that the two theories are not so much competing with but rather complementary to each other.

In line with the above mentioned, the 'bottle of water incident', moreover, seems to support the idea that ingroup members are less likely to be punished for misbehavior than members of the out-group (Chen & Xin Li, 2009, 452), Rather than reflecting on their own part in the conflict, the military was quick to respond with sanctions that consequently resulted in the dishonorable dismissal of the local interpreter. There is yet another view that suggests precisely the opposite about inappropriate behavior of ingroup members and out-group members and which could be interesting with regard to international cooperation. This view claims that members of the ingroup are punished harder for deviant behavior than members of the out-group (Cooper, Doucet & Pratt, 2007, 309-310). The explanation for these different reactions to inappropriateness is based on the idea that while good behavior of an ingroup member might reflect well on the entire group and reinforce the group's collective sense of identity, this is not the case with individuals who are perceived to belong to the out-group. Their behavior is not seen as reflective of the collective identity of the ingroup and therefore their influence on the functioning of the collective is perceived to be less than that of ingroup members. Whereas inappropriate behavior of ingroup members in this line of thought can damage the positive identity of the ingroup, inappropriate behavior of out-group members, simply by implication of their 'otherness', cannot pose such a threat. On the contrary, misconduct by outsiders could even bolster the positive identity of the ingroup as it serves to further support their superiority and hence the individual self-enhancement motive. Apart from the effect of ingroup bias on the self enhancement of social identity, this theory, however, could only work with regard to this case study when interpreters are not perceived as outsiders and/or if their qualities (which could be perceived a threat) did not have the capacity to also seriously harm the mission. This, however, precisely is the matter. Much of the data brings to light that most of the military respondents were careful and even hesitant in their consideration to accept interpreters as members of the ingroup even though they acknowledged their own vulnerability due to their reliance upon them.

With the exception of one situation, which has been addressed in the paragraph about position and that involved the conflict between respondent M 52 and the group of local interpreters, there are only few examples within the collected data that moreover seem to mention the punishment of misconduct by soldiers. For instance, the situations in which soldiers refused national interpreters to enter the bathing facilities or the incident in which soldiers vandalized Koran books. The inappropriate behavior of the soldiers in these instances, however, did not lead the organization to condemn and/or reject them as a way to reinforce the normative system of the ingroup (Cooper, Doucet & Pratt, 2007, 310). Yet, there are plenty of examples, of which some have been explored in this chapter, that show a completely different picture when it comes to the perceived 'inappropriateness' of interpreters. The first sentence of respondent NI 4 in which the interpreter alludes to the fact that he finds himself in trouble already bears testimony to that.

7.3 Cooperation and Conflict: An Emotional Affair

The quote of respondent NI 4 alludes to another important aspect that is closely related to (the development of) trust in multinational cooperation and this consists of how emotions are perceived and managed in organizations. Emotion has been of interest to scholars for centuries because emotions significantly influence the attitudes, motivations and behaviors of people across cultures, situations and all domains of life (Halperin & Pliskin, 2015, 119). Emotions can be described as 'flexible response sequences that are called forth whenever an individual evaluates a situation as offering important challenges or opportunities' (Halperin & Pliskin, 2015, 121). Emotions, therefore, have the power to produce a certain type of behavior as a response to a particular situation or circumstance. This of course is exactly what happened in the 'bottle of water incident' in which the injustice of the soldier's refusal to share water infuriated the interpreter to such an extent that he lashed out at the soldiers.

The implication of emotional experience does not only manifest itself in the intra- and interpersonal context, but in social contexts as well. As such, emotions themselves influence the nature of intra- and intergroup relations. In line with the concept of social identity, group-based emotions refer to emotions that are felt by individuals as a result of their membership to a certain group or society. Individuals, therefore, might experience emotions not only in response to personally relevant situations, but also in response to situations that affect members of their ingroup. One such example of a powerful and prevalent group-based emotion is anger. The emotion that was so strongly expressed by the local interpreter. Anger is expressed when the actions of the out-group are perceived as unjust and deviating from acceptable norms. People who experience anger, therefore, belief that they immediately need to undertake action in order to correct the wrongdoing. The emotion is accompanied by the belief that the ingroup is capable of carrying out such corrective action through confrontation or violence (Halperin & Pliskin, 2015, 123). In order to understand what triggered the anger of the local interpreter, we have to look more closely at something which respondent LI 2 mentioned earlier about the negative behavior of some of the Dutch soldiers towards the Afghan people and local interpreters. The notion that they were not always and by everyone perceived as humans, even though they were putting their lives and limbs on the line every time they went out on patrol with the troops, most probably roused the emotions in their own group and set off negative perceptions about soldiers in return as well. When people feel socially excluded and rejected by others, they in general also feel bad and tend to engage in socially destructive and self-destructive behaviors (Fiske, 2004, 22). Research in this regard, moreover, has indicated that the perceived inequity in the social and economic exchange could indeed significantly affect people's perception of the value of their relationship (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998, 556). This makes it very reasonable to assume that the soldier's refusal to give him water reinforced the local interpreter's opinion about the soldiers and that particular reevaluation of their relationship might have consequently pushed him over the edge. In order to end the injustice and the humiliation, the local interpreter lashed out in anger by threating to kill the soldiers who, in that instance, had most likely become the proverbial enemy. Although perhaps understandable from the local interpreters' point of view, such uncontrolled behavior could not be tolerated by the military. The violation of the internal safety of the organisation in fact caused the military to accuse the local interpreter of betrayal and to condemn him as such. Respondent NI 4 concludes his narration of the incident with an afterthought in which he gives a short character description of the emotional nature of Afghan people by explaining that they tend to go overboard when emotions run high. And although this might very well be considered a stereotype itself, this generalization effectively addresses the problem of such 'cultural emotional behaviour' in the professional setting of the military organization in which most emotions are managed and even scripted.

According to Hochschild's understanding, the task of soldiers can be described as 'emotional work' in the sense that 'it relates the worker's personal feelings and their expression to the impact this is intended to have on the other(s)' (Soeters, 2018, 158). The focal point of the violence-related emotional work of the military organization is to keep the action away from direct experience by keeping it quick and clean (Soeters, 2018, 160). One of the most important ways to contain the negative impact of violence, is to prepare, train and guide soldiers in their ability to keep a balance between justified and controlled use of violence on the one hand and violence getting out of control on the other (Soeters, 2018, 162). To that effect, soldiers, have been thoroughly disciplined to internalize and comply with the rules, procedures, skills and drills of the organization in order to act according to the intentions of the military in an emotionally controlled manner (Soeters, 2018, 107). Being untrained military professionals, interpreters of course have not been the subject of such form of 'dressage'. Although interpreters cannot be blamed for this 'lack of discipline', this nevertheless could have caused frustration among some of the soldiers who as a consequence might have felt the need to show interpreters the ropes. Whereas the military manages to increasingly control the implications of violence during their operations, the organization should also be attentive to control the subtler acts of violence that could, as have been illustrated, be present in the interaction between soldiers and interpreters. The development of a trusting relationship, the fundamental precondition for international cooperation, after all depends on shared expectations (and thus perceptions) that are shaped by the institutional environment in which the partners are embedded (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006, 230).

Another emotion that is prevalent within the military organization and which is closely related to trust pertains to the feeling of suspicion. Respondent M 16 already mentioned the soldiers' fear that interpreters will leak information. Respondent M 13 delves more deeply into this delicate and complicated matter by saying the following:

> "As a person I trusted the interpreters. I really had a good and close relationship with those people. As a person I trusted them, all of them, even Farukh, everybody. I just could get along

with them very well. I knew that they at least knew as much about Deh Rawod as we did. So, on the one hand I thought something like: 'Well guys, let's not pull each other's leg. They already know a lot.' And they do know a lot. Okay, it was a rule, and even though I didn't agree with it, I knew that we could be very cautious about certain pieces of information. But they already knew almost all of it. So, we didn't exactly need to be panicky about it either. I complied with the rule anyhow by telling them as little as possible. Only the things they really needed to know. On the other hand, however, I realized that their primary loyalty is never towards ISAF. Even if they are here with the best intentions of the world. If a person for example comes from Kandahar and his parents are being extorted, well that person will tell them everything they want to know. Easy. And I would probably do the same. I would put the interest of my family above that of ISAF too. Simple as that. You can extort everyone like that. So, I have always assumed that everything the interpreter knows will indeed eventually end up known outside of the gate. Even though I trusted them but those are really two different things. And in some cases, it was more obvious and direct than others, like with Farukh. And at the same time, I thought: 'Well, interpreters who come from Kabul might perhaps not be very interested in everything that happens in Deh Rawod and what the connections are over there. But then again, the ties in Afghanistan oftentimes unexpectedly run across a lot of areas. So…' Sometimes it is very clear how the information is channeled over there. See, as with Farukh. That's how it is. If he hears something interesting that might be of interest to the Popalzai warlords, then he will hop on his motorbike the very same day to tell 'em that. But there are also interpreters who came from Kabul and who didn't have such a direct relationship with all kinds of warlords in our area. And then I thought to myself: 'Yes, but in Afghanistan there might be connections between Kabul and Deh Rawod as well which you might not have expected.' So, the information will end up there anyhow."

Alongside the increasing awareness that trust is central to the development and constitution of cooperation, there is also a growing concern among researchers about distrust and the violation of trust in organizations. They belief that the greatest danger to modern organizations does not longer come from the outside but rather from the inside. It is the betrayal of 'ambitious, selfish, deceitful people who care more for their own advancement than the mission of the organization' (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998, 547). This observation is based on the notion that the very conditions that necessitate the development of trust, that is the inability to completely monitor and evaluate the performance of the trusted party, also offers opportunities to violate that trust. Betrayal in other words seems to go side by side with trust and loyalty.

Betrayal can be defined as 'a voluntarily violation of mutually known pivotal expectations of the trustor by the trustee, which has the potential to threaten the well-being of the trustor [and hence the organization the trustor represents]' (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998, 548). As no other, military organizations realize, and this is the suspicion or in their own words 'the conventional wisdom' to which respondents M 16 and M 13 seem to refer, that a single individual can compromise information that must be kept secret. This is the reason why military intelligence relies on formal, mechanical, and procedural controls to ensure no one knows too much. This need-to-know mentality stems from the organizational practice of information and secrecy compartmentalization. This process involves the separation and parting of secrets into pieces in order to prevent individuals from putting the secrets together and seeing the 'bigger picture' (Dufresne & Offstein, 2008, 103). Respondent M 13, however, has no illusions about the latter. On the contrary, he gives a rather sober analysis of the issue. First, he acknowledges that most interpreters already seem to be privy of information that is perceived to be of high value. This notion is commonly accepted among other respondents and matches the description of the interpreter as 'the institutional memory of the organization' which soldiers use to describe the interpreters' knowledge of the organization and mission. Respondent M 49 in this regard explains as follows:

"Interpreters are like cultural advisors for us at the PRT. They also fulfill a memory function. Although we stayed at the PRT for 6 months, there always came a time when you had to handover your task to someone else. Your interpreter then basically provided for continuity. My interpreter for example informed me that the PRT already had spoken with a person before or that a person came from a certain place. So, those were also things we let our interpreters do. There was for example this situation at the gate in which an Afghan told me that my predecessor had promised him certain things. My interpreter informed me that he had been present at that particular conversation and that nothing of the sort had been discussed at the time. We consulted our reports on the matter and it turned out that our interpreter was right. They simply have been present for a longer period of time and I think that's just a good thing."

While soldiers recognized that such inside-knowledge increased the human capital of the interpreter, they also fully understood that this particular asset made them vulnerable to blackmail. At the extreme, compartmentalization therefore not only is devised to benefit the secrecy-holding capabilities of the organization but also to protect the individual secret holder. The rationale is that if one does not have the full picture, one should become a less desirable target for those who want to know the full picture (Dufresne & Offstein, 2008, 104). How dangerous the task of the interpreter exactly is, and how deeply aware they are of their vulnerability, illustrates the following quote of respondent LI 5:

"It's a dangerous job. Only my father knows. Not my cousin, not my relatives, nobody in general because I have a tribe in my village that distributes a lot of nightletters in the mosque near to my home. 'Your son works as a spy for the Americans' but exactly they don't know who distributes this nightletter. And exactly the people also know where you work. My father right now is away from home. Right now, he lives in the city and also my brother has leave home. He's leaving for city right now. But it is a big problem when they find out if he's interpreter.

> When everybody is indicating he's interpreter they must kill him because insurgents don't like interpreters."

The earlier mentioned description that the interpreters' relationship to war is 'up close and personal' (Gallai, 2019, 217) takes on a whole new meaning when one considers that the exposure to physical threat seems to be inextricably related to the fate of interpreters. These acts of violence are not restricted to the person of the interpreter alone but are aimed at their close relatives as well. Intimidation in the form of 'nightletters' or the notion that (relatives of) others in similar situations have been killed simply because they were interpreters, prompted interpreters to withhold information about their job or even to lie about it. Respondents NI 3 and LI 4 in this respect explain:

> "Although I feel relatively safe, being an interpreter in Afghanistan is dangerous. Not only for myself but for my family as well. Interpreters are the bridge between the civilians and ISAF. Without this bridge communication would be impossible. In that sense you could state that the interpreters are the ears of ISAF. So, when the Taliban gets hold of us, we're doomed. Whereas commanders or captains of the military are valuable for ransom, interpreters are seen as traitors who must be tortured and killed in the most horrific way. My family, therefore, doesn't know that I am an interpreter. They think that I am here as an agronomist for some NGO. The risks attached to the job are also reason that I am escorted everywhere I need to go. I also make sure that I hide my military uniform under robes and scarfs and only when I have reached my destination I am prepared to let go of my disguise. (...) The military organization continuously tries to improve its policy to guarantee the safety of interpreters and others but I take my own precautions nevertheless. I am alert even on the compound itself. I will never eat at the same table in the mess hall. In that way I make sure that my food cannot be poisoned. Then again, that's my approach. Everybody has a different view on safety and therefore deals with it differently."

> "Interpreting is dangerous because it's a dangerous area. The Taliban wants to get an ambush and the soldiers they want to make security and therefore they make rampage in the same area and yes that's dangerous for us and also for the Dutch soldiers too. They protect me because I am working for them and they want to protect us as soon as they can but it's a dangerous job. It's dangerous for me and my family and I never want to tell about it to others, the neighbours and villagers, that I am working as an interpreter. If they know that I am working as an interpreter here, they want to kill me. And yes, it is more dangerous for me and my family. Just as they are asking me where I am working, I am telling them that I am working for a foreign project and I never want to know them or tell them about my job that I am working as an interpreter. If they get information about me, they want to kill me and they want to trouble my family and therefore I never want to tell them. It is dangerous for me and my family."

Lying is defined as "intentionally trying to mislead someone" (Argo, J. & Shiv, B., 2012, 1094). Lies can be categorized into self-benefiting deception in which people lie to protect their public or private self; and other-benefiting deception wherein people lie among other things to ensure that social interaction runs smoothly. White lies are a specific type of other-benefiting deception that are told to prevent harm to others that would otherwise have occurred if the deceiver would have told the truth. Strictly taken the interpreters' lies about their profession can be perceived as both self-benefiting as other-benefiting deception. Interpreters lie in order to protect themselves as well as their relatives from harm. Their intention to mislead, therefore, does not stem from immoral behavior. On the contrary, it arises out of fear for the opponent and concern for others. Interpreters are forced to tell white lies in the hope to find refuge in subterfuge. Interpreters, like soldiers, in other words also try to prevent their relatives from 'seeing the bigger picture' because in their situation knowing too much could be just as dangerous as well.

Apart from the soldiers' concern that interpreters could disclose information under threat of having themselves or their relatives killed, respondent M 13 voices the soldiers' suspicion that interpreters might voluntarily leak information out of motives of self-interest. Respondents M 30 and M 7 respectively say the following about this matter:

> "An interpreter is aware of what he's allowed to know and what not. So, he knows very well not to ask about operational information. He shouldn't ask too many questions because that's none of his importance. The only thing he has to do is translate. After all, he is a local. You don't really know if you can trust him or not but a little common sense can go a long way for that matter."

> "Well, if you are going to try and build a certain intelligence image of a region and more particularly an image of your opponents in that region, I have considered it desirable, without commenting on whether or not this truly is desirable, to use as much as possible the same interpreter because it takes a lot of conversations before you receive valuable intel from the involved parties. The fact is that the interpreter is your vital link. Not only because you could not understand each other otherwise but also because he has the conversations in his head. Okay, chances are that the interpreter then might know a lot. That's the downside but then again that's also what enables you to follow up on what you have discussed previously. It would even be better if we could appoint a special interpreter for that task but that was simply impossible at the time because of the shortage of interpreters. Anyhow, it is absolutely true to say that interpreters function as the memory of the organization. And that, by the way, is as I have said before, not necessarily desirable because it could also be dangerous. The upside, however, is that the guy who comes after me can work with the same interpreter. If we're talking about building up a relationship with our conversational partners then the interpreter is very fundamental to that. After all, he's the one who already knows about the conversations but like I said before that's also the downside of it because he has all the information in his

head. Should it ever come that way that the interpreter has been given the choice to work for the opponent for whatever reason, then that of course would be a very serious situation. That risk, however, would be more present among local interpreters than national interpreters. Then again, the same could happen to national interpreters. Especially, an interpreter who for example has decided to give up interpreting after three missions and who has been off the radar since."

In cases like the above mentioned, betrayal can either be understood as the result of a lack of motivation of the trustee to conform to the expectations of the trustor, or the motivation to violate these expectations (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998, 550). Incidents of such treachery in the history of military organizations are the reason why military intelligence models today still apply a closed system in the management of their secrets. This means that access into the information chain at any level is guarded and not pluralistic (Dufresne & Offstein, 2008, 105). The coded entry to some parts of the compound, prohibition of cell phones in certain facilities and the need-to-know policy are examples of ways in which the military try to guard their information. Despite these attempts, however, no amount of energy, controls, procedures, or regulations can prevent information from leaking (Dufresne & Offstein, 2008, 105). If not for the rise in technology which makes information not only more readily available but also more at risk, then for the labyrinth of connections between the local communities in the mission area.

Whereas normally information sharing would lead to the development of a trusting relationship between members of inter-organizational cooperation, the military has learned by trial and error that trust is not always desirable. Too much trust could lead to carelessness, complacency or inefficiency (Möllering & Sydow, 2019, 144). In order to build and maintain trust in organizational and institutional contexts, the institutionalization of distrust and doubt (by control) has been widely acknowledged as a remedy for too much trust. Although this mechanism seems reasonable, it might not always create the intended effect because distrust and doubt could ultimately drive out trust altogether (Möllering & Sydow, 2019, 153). The military organization, therefore, must steer a clear course between trust and distrust. Something, which is easier said than done because extensive research has proven that trust, and more specifically experience based trust, has the ability to mitigate the hampering effect of social categorization on trustworthiness (Ertug, Cuypers, Noorderhaven & Bensaou, 2013, 266-268). This type of trust which is based on the specific experiences with the trustee, however, can only grow stronger when parties get to know each other better over time. Whereas trust based on social categorization results from cognitive shortcuts that involve stereotypes such as nationality, experience will allow parties to directly observe each other's contributions and to draw inferences from that information with regard to one's trustworthiness.

When applied to international military intervention, this would mean that it is imperative for soldiers and interpreters to trust one another and to invest in the relationship in order to

make the cooperation work. A notion that has already been acknowledged by a predominant part of the respondents but which is difficult to put to practice. Not in the first place because of the above-mentioned obstacles but also because of impediments raised by various practical factors of which the relative short duration of the rotation probably is the most poignant. The fact that soldiers do not have the luxury to invest in long-term relationships with interpreters during their rotations, however, does not imply that the military organization should not pursue such trusting relationships as a cumulative and cyclical process over the course of multiple rotations. Although trust, as respondent M 16 has rightly stated before, cannot be transferred from one person to another, it should nevertheless be 'harvested' and perceived as an organizational resource across rotations. While counter-intuitive to the idea of operational security, interpreters should get the benefit of the doubt. Organizational trust in the interpreter, in other words should serve as the axiom for developing and maintaining an effective cooperative relationship. Trust, in that sense, is a form of 'social intelligence' as it facilitates group cohesion by being both rewarding and efficient. After all, if people, and in this case more in particular soldiers and interpreters, can basically trust each other then group life works better (Fiske, 2004, 24). This will positively influence the mutual perception of the involved parties and as such enhance the willingness to contribute to a communal effort which ultimately plays a decisive role in the success of military operations in foreign mission areas.

Implementing this concept, however, demands flexibility and adaptability of the military as a learning organization and that's where another difficulty lies. Various studies have indicated that lessons learned on the tactical level are often not acknowledged by senior leadership and therefore not institutionalized within the organization (Noll & Rietjens, 2016, 235, 237; Hasselbladh & Ydèn, 2019, 3, 12, 14-15; Kitzen, 2019, 52). The cooperation with interpreters in this regard is no exception as the same challenges not only remain existent in Afghanistan but also continue to appear during new stability operations in the Middle East and the wider Sahel region (Righton, 2015; Broere, 2015). If organizational experience can be understood as retrospective sensemaking (Hasselbladh & Ydèn, 2019, 6), then it would only be right for the military to incorporate the knowledge which can be derived from the vast collection of the respondents' experiences, insights and beliefs about the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters. These 'lessons', after all, will only and truly be understood and acted upon when they have been authorized by the organization itself. A first and very basic step into this learning process might be discerned in the decision of most Western nations to grant asylum to Afghan interpreters whose lives are threatened because they have worked for the coalition forces (Read, 2019). As a consequence of pressure from, among others, military unions who acknowledged the vital support interpreters provided, the Dutch government eventually was one of the last Western countries to adopt this policy (Koenis, 2019). Hopefully, this act of reciprocity will be used as the steppingstone to further the perception of interpreters as full partners in military cooperation.

8. Conclusion

Military stability operations in foreign societies cannot be conducted without the assistance of interpreters. The interdependency of this cooperation, however, confronts the involved parties with all sorts of challenges. This chapter examined the international cooperation between soldiers and interpreters during the Dutch stability operation in the Afghan province of Uruzgan in order to provide a more detailed insight into this particular interaction. For that purpose, a case study was conducted following the analytical framework of respectively the aspects of allocation, motivation, position, intervention and perception. The analysis contributed to the understanding of the dynamics of each aspect and how respondents dealt with the intricacies of their cooperation. In order to draw a conclusion, it is necessary to briefly touch upon the key findings of every aspect.

First, the aspect of allocation described how interpreters became involved in the Dutch military mission and how they were allocated within the military organization. The strong ties of Afghan communities turned out to be a powerful resource that provided in the need for a sustainable livelihood for the interpreters as well the military's need for linguistic personnel. Whereas social capital was the determinant factor for recruitment, the human capital of the interpreters determined their assignment to specific units. Skilled and experienced interpreters were often soon promoted to higher positions, which meant that soldiers at the 'lower' levels, to their regret, were drained of much-needed expertise. Ultimately, the aspect of allocation was defined by scarcity and interpreters therefore remained in great demand throughout the mission.

Second, the aspect of motivation described the reasons why soldiers cooperated with interpreters and vice versa. While all three different categories of respondents displayed various motives to join the military and to participate in the mission, two main characteristics could be observed. First, soldiers typically approached the cooperation with interpreters rather instrumentally as they considered linguistical and cultural assistance essential for engaging the local population. In other words, working with interpreters was crucial to their mission. Next, both local and national interpreters emphasized that reciprocity was among their main reasons for joining the mission. Most respondents indicated a strong desire to contribute to the international effort, and more specific the Dutch mission, while simultaneously doing something for their country (of origin). It was concluded, therefore, that whereas soldiers interact with interpreters for predominantly instrumental reasons, interpreters seemingly are more ideologically motivated. The concept of reciprocity, moreover, was acknowledged by some members of the organization as a crucial incentive to motivate effective cooperation among each other.

Third, the aspect of position described how interpreters as untrained (military and linguistic) professionals tried to make sense of their working experience within the military organization. This proved to be problematic as the lack of a clear description of their position could easily lead to task-conflicts which in turn could spill over, into even more difficult to manage, relational conflicts. These hampering effects on the cooperation could be mitigated by implementing the moderators of collective team identification and team member alignment. While soldiers actively acknowledged the fundamental value of a sense of belonging and shared communal goals for effective cooperation, the military organization did not recognize the importance of addressing this matter in a more structural way. Moreover, some interpreters proved to be capable to critically assess the needs of both the individual and the group. These 'transformational leaders' were able to transcend organizational boundaries and the nature of this particular trait could explain why such leadership was mostly (but not exclusively) exerted by interpreters, who, contrary to soldiers, were less confined by military hierarchy. In the absence of clarity, the position of the interpreter eventually seemed to be more a matter of personal insight than organizational prowess.

Fourth, the aspect of intervention by interpreters was determined by the situation in which it occurred. In case of the mission in Uruzgan this implied on the spot interpreting in both directions, covering different topics and texts while simultaneously switching between the role of cultural, political and diplomatic intermediary. The reality on the ground, therefore, required interpreters to adopt an unconventional approach that went beyond the traditional notion of interpreting as a rather passive and impartial 'black box' event. Furthermore, the data demonstrated that military interpreting called for interpreters who themselves could act strategically and deal with the job's inevitable uncertainties. This kind of dexterity allowed interpreters to also act as informants and assume the much-needed role of broker through which they could enhance the military's ability to gather sufficient situational awareness and influence the local environment. Deep-seated organizational, cultural or personal norms within the military, however, meant that soldiers oftentimes preferred the conventional approach and therefore did not always take the advice of interpreters to heart. This conduct was further exacerbated by the lack of realistic guidelines that acknowledged the full complexity of interpreting in war zones. As a result, daily operations were dominated by personal dilemmas as interpreters had to decide upon the right course of action by themselves, while soldiers needed to decide whether following the interpreter was sensible and feasible. Once again, these conditions demonstrated that the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters was surrounded by uncertainty and therefore often depended on individual character and zeal.

Fifth, the final aspect of perception described how soldiers and interpreters perceived their cooperation. Trust, in this regard, is key in military organizations, but it has become even more important with the increasing amount of international stability operations in which internal and external partners are highly dependent of each other. Whereas researchers in organization studies, almost invariably have proclaimed a trust-based approach as a successful and efficient way to enhance the cooperation between international partners, this concept, however, is difficult to reconcile with the military organization which usually has incorporated a significant amount of distrust to level out too much trust in others. In

addition, the case study demonstrated that a combination of factors such as in- and out-group effects, operational security and the relatively short duration of deployments also hampered the development of a trusting relationship. Notwithstanding these obstacles, the only way to bridge a trust-gap paradoxically is to invest in long-term trusting relationships as experience will allow partners the opportunity to observe each other's trustworthiness. Therefore, experience-based trust should be accepted as an axiom for developing and maintaining effective cooperation. This requires the military organization to initiate a learning process capable of harvesting individual experiences and institutionalizing them as a cumulative body of knowledge. In this regard, initiatives resulting from recent experiences in stability operations might offer a stepping stone for initiating this learning process in which interpreters are accepted as full partners in military operations.

To conclude, what can be derived from these key findings on the interaction between soldiers and interpreters during the daily conduct of the stability operation in Uruzgan? To begin, the exploration of the five aspects of allocation, motivation, position, intervention and perception has once again demonstrated that this specific collaboration is highly dynamic, complicated and challenging. Whereas this case study has shed a light on the way mutual differences could create obstacles in the development of proper working relationships (and, thus, effective cooperation), it has also explained that this heavily depends on how the involved parties deal with the challenges at hand. Although some soldiers and interpreters behaved in such a way that this could potentially undermine the communal goals, others showed the daring and dexterity to act in the interest of the mission even when this implied having a different outlook and approach towards 'procedures and protocols'. This enabled them to build relationships to effectively operate in Uruzgan's highly demanding environment. The next and final insight of this case study, therefore, consequently concerns the need for the military organization to empower and stimulate such cooperative behavior. For that purpose, the lessons observed at the tactical level should be captured and institutionalized at the organizational level. In doing so, soldiers and interpreters in future missions will be better able to overcome the many challenges with regard to allocation, motivation, position, intervention, and perception, and build effective cooperative relationships from the very start of their deployment. If there ever was a metaphor to describe this kind of vital cooperation, it should be that of a 'diamant'. A resource that took years in the making, is made of the hardest of materials, multi-facetted and razor-sharp, but above all, when appreciated, the most valuable of gifts to behold.

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Conclusions, Reflections and Recommendations

Conclusions, Reflections and Recommendations

Introduction

Modern military operations are highly internationalized efforts that require cooperation between coalition partners as well as local parties. Inherently, such endeavors confront stakeholders with the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the various involved parties. The military organization tries to overcome the language barrier within international coalitions by implementing English as the military lingua franca. This measure, however, is not sufficient when troops have to communicate with people in non-Western areas of operations. In those circumstances the military depends on the intervention of interpreters. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance, have extensively illustrated how soldiers needed to cooperate with these agents in order to conduct their daily tasks. Aiming to enhance the understanding of the influence of linguistic matters on international military cooperation, this dissertation addressed the following central question: How do language issues affect military operations, and how in particular do soldiers and interpreters cooperate in mission areas to overcome such issues?

This explorative study applied mixed methods research in order to investigate the impact of language on military cooperation in the mission environment. More specifically, data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with Dutch servicemen as well as national and local interpreters and through a survey among deployed soldiers. These interviews were complemented with participant observation during an international military exercise in Germany and the ISAF mission in Uruzgan, Afghanistan. This concluding chapter briefly summarizes the main findings and furthermore describes reflections, avenues for further research, and recommendations.

Main findings

The research problem was approached from an organizational, macro/meso-sociological as well as an interpersonal, micro-sociological perspective. In order to answer the central question, the following six research questions were formulated:

Research Questions

Central Question: How do language issues affect military operations, and how in particular do soldiers and interpreters cooperate in mission areas to overcome such issues?

macro/meso-sociological

Q1: How do language problems manifest themselves during military operations?
Q2: What are the implications of language (in)competence on communication between soldiers in multinational military organizations?
Q3: How does the language barrier between soldiers and local population influence the complexity of modern peace operations?

micro-sociological

Q4: How do soldiers perceive the interpersonal dynamics of working with local interpreters as linguistic and cultural mediators in mission areas?
Q5: How can the role and position of interpreters in military contexts be described by use of interpreters' working experiences in war-infested environments?
Q6: What are the dynamics of cooperation between soldiers and interpreters in military operations and how do involved parties deal with the intricacies of this cooperation?

These research questions define the focus of this study and were each addressed in different chapters of this dissertation.

Military Organization and Language

Chapter 1 *'Language Matters in the Military'* points out that the language barrier is a commonly encountered obstacle in international cooperation. Two historical examples, the language conflict in the Belgian Army during World War I and the multilingual composition of the Dutch Colonial Army, show that a poorly chosen or non-existent language policy severely complicated the execution of instructions and commands. In these military environments, miscommunication often led to grave situations and unnecessary casualties. Furthermore, the case of the colonial army also stressed the need to establish contact with the population. Although the Dutch army recruited local interpreters for this purpose, they considered these agents to be untrustworthy and therefore encouraged soldiers to familiarize themselves with the local vernaculars.

The influence of language (in)competence on organizational processes has predominantly been investigated by socio-linguistic and organizational studies who unanimously have pinpointed language as the culprit of organizational misunderstanding. This critical observation was confirmed by the findings of several cases in the context of the military organization. Close observations of military personnel at Kabul International Airport for instance have indicated that language is an ambivalent tool that, depending on how adequately the subject is addressed, can either undermine the efficacy of professionals or work as a force multiplier. In comparison and contrast to less skilled servicemen, proficient officers were able to increase their leverage on communicational and managerial processes. Whereas proficiency in the language(s) of coalition partners thus enabled individuals to cope with socio-linguistic challenges within the organization, this capability, however, was not sufficient to conduct negotiations with local parties in foreign mission areas. In these circumstances, the military organization depended on the assistance of interpreters. This dependency has become even more prominent as linguistic knowledge and cultural understanding today are perceived to be essential for the management of modern military operations. After all, besides their language skills, interpreters are also well-equipped to see through the intricacies of the local operational environment and to provide the military with the much-needed situational awareness. Precisely because interpreters are able to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between parties, they can also be described as the tightrope walkers of war. A metaphor that aptly captures the precarious and perilous nature of their intermediary position.

Chapter 2 *'Tough Talk: Clear and Cluttered Communication during Peace Operations'* demonstrates that the corrosive effect of the language barrier in multinational corporations affects both native and non-native speakers. Studies on communication dynamics in multinational corporations show that the language problems of non-native speakers consist of miscommunication, attribution, loss of rhetorical skills and code-switching. Native speakers, or those who are proficient in the primary corporate language, often wrongly assume that (other) non-native speakers can communicate fluently as well. Of course, these biased-expectations fall flat as soon as the linguistic incompetence of the non-native speaker becomes evident. This 'disclosure' disrupts the communication and could even lead to feelings of distrust in the cooperation. During negotiations, for instance, non-native speakers tend to discuss matters in their own language. This switching of codes, however, most often is perceived by others as conspiring behaviour and as a consequence is met with acts of exclusion and hostility.

Moreover, negative experiences with language problems can produce individual and even institutionalized prejudices against non-native speakers. The effects of this stereotype threat weigh heavily on non-native speakers because a lack of linguistic proficiency often is equated with professional ineptitude. In order to avoid these by-effects of the language barrier, less proficient professionals often resort to face-saving strategies that result in a distancing from the communication network and an avoidance of communication in general. Mechanisms, that ultimately will only further undermine the position of non-native speakers. These findings have been confirmed by the job performance of key players within the international military organization as well. Participant observation and interviews conducted during a multinational military exercise in this regard demonstrated that the respondents also experienced the loss of face as one of most significant and feared effects of linguistic incompetence. The field study furthermore shows that language incompetence could reduce or even silence one's voice in the decision-making process. Although the opposite is also true

for linguistic proficiency, it cannot necessarily be assumed, however, that native speakers and more specifically British servicemen always profit from this situation. Their fluency, as was discovered by this study, also happened to be their flaw as non-native speakers found it difficult to comprehend their language use.

Finally, this chapter demonstrates that the military takes a rather ambivalent stance towards the influence of language on communication and cooperation. Whereas the English language is considered an expected quality of the personnel, this study has concluded that proficiency in today's military lingua is not self-evident. To neglect this realization is to trivialize the detrimental effects of the language barrier on the communicational process in military operations. The military organization, therefore, needs to consider how to adequately implement its corporate language and how to actively support those who have not yet been able to fully command and embrace it.

Chapter 3 *'Language and Communication during Peace Support Operations in Timor-Leste'* has provided an insight into how language and cultural sensitivities can contribute to the complexity of peace operations. The case study of UNTAET demonstrates that it is important for troops to have an understanding of the socio-political and linguistic (post)colonial) landscape of the mission environment. Precisely, because the Australian peacekeepers omitted to integrate adequate cultural and linguistic knowledge into their strategic approach, the troops unintentionally alienated themselves from the population. The language barrier, in this regard, caused the Australian contingent to suffer from a bad reputation which they attempted to repair with the assistance of locally recruited interpreters that enabled them to communicate with local parties. Once again, however, the Australians experienced that this required caution as the various communities could only be approached by interpreters who were one of their own. Although these interpreters considerably strengthened the hand of the Australian soldiers, it was too little too late to get a firm hold of the situation. The lack of linguistic and cultural awareness in the earlier stages of the intervention had spoiled the peacekeepers' ability to truly reach out and gain the support of the population. In retrospect, it therefore can be concluded that the self-proclaimed success of the mission in fact was a remarkable piece of self-deception as UNTAET failed to fulfil a substantial role in the state-building process in Timor-Leste.

Military Operations and Interpreters

Chapter 4 *'Smooth Translation? Cooperation between Dutch Servicemen and Local Interpreters in Military Operations in Afghanistan'* explored the interpersonal dynamics between soldiers and local interpreters through a discussion of historical examples and a mixed methods research of this cooperation during the Dutch ISAF mission. The cases of the Dutch Colonial Army and the Kit Carson Scouts in Vietnam demonstrated once again that it was essential to incorporate local guides and interpreters into the ranks. Although soldiers were advised to learn the foreign language themselves, reality showed that this ideal was not feasible. Nevertheless, most servicemen managed to command some basic words of the local vernacular but this was not enough to overcome the language barrier and therefore the military had to recruit interpreters in order to connect with parties in the area of operations. These historical cases showed that interpreters are more than just linguistic agents as they proved crucial for the gathering of intelligence and canvassing the surroundings. Despite their important role, the intermediary position cast a shadow upon their motives and servicemen therefore often treated interpreters with suspicion.

In order to understand how today's soldiers perceive the cooperation with local interpreters, a mixed methods study was applied to investigate the experiences of Dutch soldiers of the BG and PRT units. Although (serious) problems in the interaction between soldiers and local interpreters did occur, the analysis showed that servicemen in general appreciated their assistance in a positive and professional way. With regard to the BG respondents, the cross-cultural competence of openness (a person's open-mindedness towards out-group members and his or her susceptibility to cultural norms and values of others) proved to be determinant for the appreciation of the cooperation. The PRT respondents, on the other hand, emphasized that a professional attitude, which more specifically includes the intercultural competencies of respect and empathy, was important to establish a trusting relationship with local interpreters. Differences in the experiences between the BG and PRT can be explained by the different working situations (core-military tasks versus reconstruction tasks), readiness to invest in a trusting relationship, the level of intercultural competence, and pre-deployment training in working with interpreters. The more aware soldiers are of how these factors influence their cooperation, the better they will be able to perceive local interpreters as resourceful agents capable of addressing the linguistic and cultural needs of both the military organization and the local population.

Chapter 5 *'Small Sociology of Interpreters: The Role and Position of Interpreters in Conflict Situations'* applied a literature study as well as an autoethnographic analysis to explore the experiences of interpreters in war-infested environments in order to gain an understanding of their role and position in military operations. Since ancient times the interpreter's reputation has been one of duplicity. Since ancient times the interpreter's reputation has been one of extremes. The interpreter was either the paragon of invisibility or duplicity. Whereas they seldom received acknowledgement for their skills and therefore often were left unmentioned in historical reports, interpreters were easy targets of suspicion who could be blamed for scheming and plotting against their employers. This pattern has been observed throughout history and therefore this chapter investigated whether this ambiguous image of the interpreter still persists. More specifically, this study explored the experiences of interpreters through their own account of events. This approach has brought forth five seperate but interdependent aspects that can be used to describe the role and position of the interpreter within the military field.

First, the aspect of allocation often proved to be a matter of chance. The role of interpreter was given to those individuals who could speak (a few words of) the relevant language and/or who could rise to the occasion. While their assignment therefore was mostly arbitrary, the impact of their job was transformative as their linguistic and mediation skills not only enabled communication, but also created opportunities for the involved parties. Second, the aspect of motivation centres on the core motivation of belonging. The interpreter devoted his cultural and linguistic capacities to ameliorate his own fate as well of that of others in the hope to contribute to the formation and consolidation of close relationships, support and groups. Third, the aspect of position described how interpreters were literally positioned between groups. As a go-between they were confronted with different conflicting group norms and interests. While this often was experienced as a burden, the interpreters nevertheless used their position, even at their own peril, to safeguard and preserve the communicational process between the parties. Fourth, the interpreters' interventions proved crucial for all involved parties as their actions enabled them to approach difficult to access territories, persons, and information. Although rarely credited for such services, interpreters used their cultural knowledge to influence the outcome of interactions, even if this involved subtle manipulation or misrepresentation that could only further complicate their reputation. Finally, the aspect of perception was found to be heavily influenced by the in-between position and the sometimes 'ambiguous' interventions of interpreters. Due to this duality, the loyalty of individual interpreters often was perceived with suspicion. Interpreters, therefore, often remained outsiders to all of the involved parties. Despite these allegations, interpreters used their own independent view to cope with this stigma and to engage in others and bridge differences. Together these five aspects enable an accurate description of the role and position of interpreters in a conflict environment and thereby they constitute a theoretical framework that can be applied to further investigate and understand this matter in the context of military missions.

Chapter 6 *'Communicating Vessels: The Trade and Traits of Soldiers and Interpreters during Stability Operations in the Province of Uruzgan'* provided an insight into the dynamics of cooperation between interpreters and soldiers in modern military operations. For this purpose, experiences from soldiers and both national and local interpreters who participated in the Dutch stabilization mission in Uruzgan province were scrutinized by use of the framework presented in chapter five. In addition to understanding how the respondents dealt with the intricacies of their interdependency, the analysis also contributed to the comprehension of the (mutual) dynamics of each aspect of the framework.

First, the social ties of Afghan communities proved instrumental in the allocation of interpreters. Social capital, therefore, was an important source of recruitment. Human capital such as personal skills, on the other hand, determined the assignment of interpreters to specific units. Competent individuals often received promotion to higher positions, which meant that soldiers at lower levels were deprived from the necessary knowledge and expertise. Since interpreters were a scare resource, this paucity further added to the difficulty of meeting the high demand for interpreters throughout the mission. Second, the aspect of motivation demonstrated that whereas soldiers approached the cooperation with interpreters rather instrumentally, the interpreters themselves had more ideological reasons for joining the military. The concept of reciprocity (prosocial behavior that inclines persons to return a given service), moreover, positively reinforced the process of cooperation between soldiers and interpreters. Third, the aspect of position demonstrated that despite the formal classification of interpreters into different categories, the position of interpreters was predominantly determined by the rigidity of both the hierarchical structure and social relations within the military organization. Although this problematized the cooperation considerably, these negative effects could be mitigated through the moderators of collective team identification and team member alignment. The military organization, however, did not recognize the importance of implementing these concepts in an effective way. Instead, individual soldiers and interpreters acted as 'transformational leaders' who were able to create a sense of belonging and communal goals. All in all, the position of the interpreter seemed more a matter of personal insight than organizational zeal. Fourth, the aspect of intervention in practice consisted of on the spot interpreting and cultural, political, and diplomatic mediation. These tasks go far beyond the traditional idea of the interpreter as a neutral 'black box'. Moreover, it was found that interpreters who showed initiative and could act strategically were better suited to face the uncertainties that are inherent to interpreting in a military environment. Therefore, interpreters were as much linguistic advisors as they were brokers who enabled the military to interact with the local population. The military organization, that is the system as well as the individual soldiers, however, often failed to recognize the potential of the utility and deployability of the interpreter. This explains the lack of vision and absence of realistic guidelines with regard to the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters. Intervention in everyday operations, therefore, often became a dilemma for both soldiers and interpreters who had to decide for themselves how to proceed in a specific situation. Once again, individual characters determined the outcome of the uncertainty surrounding this cooperation. The fifth and final aspect of perception demonstrated that while trust is key in international cooperation, this is difficult (but not impossible) to establish in the military organization. Operational security, in- and out-group effects and short deployments were all experienced as obstacles that hampered the development of mutual trust between soldiers and interpreters. All together this demonstrated that the interaction between soldiers and interpreters during the Dutch mission in Uruzgan was a highly dynamic, intricate, and challenging matter (of the heart) which heavily relied upon how the involved individuals dealt with the situation at hand. These personal experiences at the tactical level, therefore, constitute the basis upon which the military can strengthen the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters in future missions.

To conclude

How do language issues affect military operations, and how in particular do soldiers and interpreters cooperate in mission areas to overcome such issues? This study has extensively demonstrated that language highly influences both the communication and cooperation between international military personnel as well as local parties. With regard to the latter, interpreters proved to be vital in obtaining the mission's goals as their linguistic and cultural skills enabled the troops to interact and engage with the local population. Establishing constructive and trusting cooperation between soldiers and interpreters, and for that matter local actors, however, was not self-evident. Efficient working relationships were often more the merit of individual traits than standard procedure. The success of the mission, after all, greatly depends on a mutually reinforcing and inversely related set of requirements that is tiered along the lines of the deployment of the interpreter, a jointly supported cooperation and an investment in a trusting relationship. Language management, in the broadest sense, therefore, requires a steady top down and bottom up approach of which the learning process should result in a body of knowledge that is based upon the accumulated experiences and insights of both soldiers and interpreters.

Reflection and Future Research

The outcome of this explorative study first and foremost provides an insight in the far-reaching consequences of language matters in international military operations. As a result of the practical nature of this scope, the research predominantly relies upon historical and empirical evidence in order to present an extensive oversight of challenges and problems with regard to linguistic issues in the military context. More specifically, it adopts a predominantly sociological perspective to investigate how language matters influence the military organization and stakeholders in conflict-infested mission areas. This approach also includes theoretical ideas and propositions from, among others, the fields of sociology, organization studies as well as cultural and language studies that have been used to analyse the data and answer the research questions. As such, the study contributes to the emerging body of interdisciplinary research that combines insights from the humanities and social sciences in order to obtain a better understanding of issues of language and conflict (Kelly, Footitt & Salama-Carr, 2019, 6). In this regard, the merit of the research lies in both its practical scope and predominantly sociological perspective since the effects of language issues on international military cooperation in modern missions have been relatively understudied. The most important contribution of this study therefore consists of its unique insight into previously less explored consequences of the language barrier in conflict areas.

Further research should expand on the results of this study to gain much-needed additional insights that allow for the development of a broader perspective on the organizational and individual dimensions of language problems in the military context. This is even more important since the topic remains relatively unexplored within the field of military studies. The insights and limitations of this dissertation, in this regard, offer a starting point for future studies. Whereas this study has demonstrated the effects of the language barrier on modern military operations and provided a profound insight in the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters, it has been limited in its approach. Inherent to the nature of a doctoral dissertation, only a select number of examples of international military cooperation have been analysed. In-depth case studies were limited to experiences in an operational NATO headquarters, the UNTAET mission in Timor-Leste, and the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Additionally, the analysis of the interaction between servicemen and interpreters in the latter mission focussed exclusively on the Dutch mission in Uruzgan. Consequently, a broader approach is necessary to incorporate a wider range of data from different missions and different nations that can be used to further the understanding of the language barrier in military operations and the role and position of interpreters within the organization of the armed forces. Therefore, this study identifies two specific avenues for future research that address some of the most prominent issues at hand.

First, the effectiveness of language on modern military (stability) operations needs to be understood more closely. This not only pertains to communication within coalitions of international military cooperation, but also to communication with local parties either through interpreters or specially trained soldiers. The insights from this dissertation urge for an international comparative study that aims to disclose the full extent of how soldiers are confronted with linguistic and (related) cultural gaps and how they subsequently address these challenges. The military domain is rich in evidence, which should be harvested by use of, among others, field studies, before-and-after-designs with comparison groups who either have or have not participated in a language program, long-term evaluation of linguistic interventions by interpreters, and cross-national comparison of communication strategies of military operations. While ambitious, the increased dialogue between (international) academics and practitioners provides fertile soil for such research (Jones & Askew, 2014, 6). Exploring this area, therefore, will not only further enhance the understanding of the effectiveness of language on military operations, but also identify successful and less successful practices and point at ways to uncover and use linguistic potential within the military organization.

Second, this study found that interpreters are very vulnerable due to their in-between role and position. More research is necessary to explore the full consequences of the interpreter's precarious intermediary position and to identify methods that equip the military organization to better accommodate and protect these agents. This can be achieved by investigating how servicemen of other national militaries and interpreters experience the cooperation in conflict areas. Moreover, in addition to research into international missions, recent Dutch deployments in among others Mali, Iraq, and (again) Afghanistan offer new opportunities for case studies as well. These new venues might benefit from the theoretical framework

that was introduced in Chapter 5 and applied to the analysis of Chapter 6, since it offers a tool to further comprehend this intricate relationship of interdependency. Additionally, this also enables the optimization of this framework as it will provide an enhanced insight into the various aspects and how they (inter)relate to each other. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that future research on the precarious role and position of interpreters should adopt a comprehensive approach towards this particular aspect of military operations. In order to fully understand the dynamics at hand the scope must be broadened beyond the actual operation itself. Instead, the full range of experiences should be studied, including, among others, recruitment and pre-deployment training, security and staffing conditions during the operation, as well as the interpreters' safety and well-being after the international military mission has ended. This is even more important as the insights obtained from such a holistic approach will also enable the military organization to adjust both its policy and practice. In doing so, future research can contribute to improve the guidelines and training for both servicemen and interpreters (Ruiz Rosendo & Persaud, 2019, 486). These reflections and suggestions for future research illustrate once more that there remains much to be learned to effectively employ interpreters and to actively anticipate language issues in modern military operations.

Recommendations for Military Policy and Practice

International military cooperation simply is impossible without adequate communication. Since this study has investigated how language issues affect military operations, its insights not only contribute to the understanding of this matter, they also provide a basis to smoothen the communication and cooperation within this specific context. Therefore, this section discusses recommendations for both the practice and policy of the military organization.

First, awareness is key. Military personnel should realize the detrimental effects of language problems and not take linguistic proficiency for granted. While seemingly obvious, reality shows that not all soldiers within a coalition might possess sufficient knowledge of the official language. Moreover, competent non-native speakers might struggle to understand native speakers, especially when they speak with an accent. Even NATO, with its highly standardized use of English has been structurally confronted with such problems (Jones & Askew, 2014, 36-38). Logically, this language problem becomes even more complicated in situations in which other actors do not speak the military lingua franca at all (such as for instance the local population) are involved. The first step, therefore, is to acknowledge that 'the relative absence of language awareness is an indicator of shortcomings in current policy' (Kelly, 2019, 106). Whereas this certainly also needs to be addressed at an organizational level, individuals at the grass roots level should be trained to realize that language issues might exist and that they subsequently should take this into account during the conduct of operations. Doing so will smoothen the cooperation between various parties, including those less linguistically competent.

Second, this study has demonstrated that smooth cooperation between soldiers and interpreters often involved individuals who through their (transformational) behavior facilitated effective working relationships. Such initiatives proved crucial in overcoming the deep-seated culture, norms, and standards of the military organization that (unwittingly) causes obstacles in the cooperation with interpreters. Therefore, military personnel, and more specifically commanders, should stimulate and empower individuals capable of forging cooperative bonds. Setting shared goals and creating a sense of belonging might produce the conditions in which all of the involved acknowledge their mutual interdependency and thereby seek to realize the full potential of their cooperation. This of course should also encompass the notion that an interpreter is as much a linguistic as a cultural adviser. The recognition that interpreting is more than just translation enables the military to optimally deploy these agents in their effort to connect with the local society. Since these insights have been derived from personal experiences in mission areas, the organization should strive to gather more of this kind of knowledge through systematic reflection on the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters. Such reflective learning will contribute to the development of normative professional skills that will equip servicemen and interpreters to make better use of their discretionary powers. This in turn will positively affect the cooperation as this approach creates leeway to implement the expertise of the involved individuals.

Third, this dissertation has more than once demonstrated that the military organization did not fully recognize and acknowledge the importance to address language matters in a more structural way. In the fog of war language implications of deployments are often addressed in an implicit or unstructured manner (Kujamäki & Footitt, 2019, 129). Therefore, organizational policy should be formulated in order to mitigate the various detrimental effects of the language barrier. In this regard, it is crucial to implement a policy for developing, maintaining, and augmenting linguistic skills among military personnel. Due to the complexity of military operations, these measures should focus on both linguistic competence and cultural sensitivity. This will boost soldiers' confidence and their ability to communicate through and with others in the mission area.

A fourth recommendation pertains to interpreters specifically. As a consequence of their intermediary role and position in the mission environment, interpreters are particularly vulnerable. Therefore, the organization should develop a comprehensive human resources policy that provides directions with regard to their recruitment, deployment, and aftercare. Questions about the intricacies of (local) acquisition, the accommodation and assignment of interpreters to specific units within the organization, as well the responsibilities of the military towards interpreters after the end of their service, need to be addressed at the organizational level. This should include matters like, for instance, insurance, medical care and protective visas (Fitchett, 2019, 199-200). Furthermore, since interpreters proved to be a scarce resource for which coalition partners were even willing to compete (in terms of salary),

it is recommended that the organization secures additional international agreements. This might be realized at an ad hoc basis among coalition partners participating in a specific mission, but should also be addressed in a more permanent manner as part of international military cooperation under the flag of NATO and UN.

A fifth and last recommendation concerns organizational learning. While militaries traditionally emphasize the importance of so-called lessons learned, they have a poor track record in actually learning and implementing lessons, especially in case of peace support or stabilization operations. Most Western militaries, for instance, have learned substantially in the field in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they nevertheless failed to institutionalize the insights resulting from these experiences (Kitzen, 2020, 18). This also seems to be the case with respect to the military's ability to mitigate the effects of the language barrier. Despite an abundance of experiences, there was a lack of broadly supported vision, leadership and realistic guidelines to efficiently manage language matters and more specifically the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters. Military organizations, therefore, should start to learn how language has affected their operations. While such a learning policy might be an integral part of the afore recommended language and interpreter policies, institutional learning is of such vital importance that it should be mentioned separately. Talking up front and learning to learn from hard-gained experiences are the crucial first steps towards a more efficient policy and practice in dealing with the language barrier in military operations. Finally, this dissertation should conclude by paying tribute to all of the soldiers and interpreters who have tried to bridge the language gap despite facing violent conflict and organizational restraints. They have shown the way forward.

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Acronyms

Acronyms

AIIC	International Association of Conference Interpreters
ASG	Afghan Security Guard
BG	Battle Group
CAVR	Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
DR	Deh Rawod
DTF	Deployment Task Force
EW	Electronic Warfare
FAVON	*Federatie van Afghaanse Vluchtelingen Organisaties Nederland*
FIT	International Federation of Translators
G1	Staff Personnel Officer
HOTO	Hand-Over-Take-Over
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMS	International Management Services
INTERFRET	International Force in East-Timor
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KAF	Kandahar Airfield
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MT	(PRT) Mission Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
OMF	Opposing Military Forces
OMLT	Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team
POW	Prisoner of War
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
QRF	Quick Reaction Force
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
SFIR	Stabilisation Force Iraq
TFU	Task Force Uruzgan
TK	Tarin Kowt
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East-Timor

Appendices

Appendix I

Oversight of Interviewed Local Interpreters

	Allocation	Motivation	Position	Intervention	Perception
LI 1	Network (friend who worked as an interpreter for Canada)	Economical (in search of employment, making money for his family and girlfriend) Ideological (future of country, support foreign army, expelling terrorists from country)	OMLT	Working with the computer Patrol Cultural advice	Self: positive ('Without the interpreter the foreign army could not support the country') Military: positive (cooperation Dutch soldiers) NI: no contact Local: -
LI 2	Network (friend who worked as an interpreter for IMS)	Economical (in search of employment, earning salary to support family) Likes to work with the military	OMLT staff	Logistics (supply) Interpretation (meetings)	Self: positive (soldiers can't succeed without the interpreter) Military: both positive (The Dutch are good people) and negative (treatment: 'Some soldiers think Afghan people and interpreters are not human') NI: no contact Local: 'When you pay respect, the Afghan people will give their soul for you'
LI 3	Network (family members are interpreters and referred him to KAF)	Ideological (moral responsibility for support ISAF and reconstruction)	OMLT	Translation (Dari to English) Interpretation (meetings) Cultural advice	Self: not mentioned Military: predominantly positive ('Doing their job perfectly but we don't get that much of a warm welcome') NI: not mentioned. Local: negative ('People believe that the interpreter is no better than the Dutch army or coalition forces)
LI 4	Chance (encountered an interpreter in Kandahar)	Economical (in search of employment, earning money) Ideological (wants to support and be part of ISAF in rebuilding the country and creating a safe environment, wants to solve the problem between the ANA soldiers and Dutch soldiers)	OMLT staff	Translation (Dari/Pasthu to English) Interpretation (meetings) Patrol	Self: positive ('The interpreter is a solace for the country') Military: positive (They have good behavior and treat the interpreters well) NI: not mentioned Local: depends on behavior ('The local people are uneducated so we must behave good (according to Islam) for them to behave good as well because if we behave bad they'll hate us')

LI 5	Network (former classmate who worked as an interpreter for American SF)	Economical (financial support family) Ideological (the importance of the job for the reconstruction and development of the country)	OMLT staff	Translation Interpretation (meetings) Cultural advice	Self: positive ('Being an interpreter is the hardest job in Afghanistan. I think that the interpreter's job is the I in ISAF because without us ISAF can't do anything because they don't know about the languages in Afghanistan.') Military: positive ('They respect us and we respect them. We don't have any problems right now. The Dutch soldiers have good behavior with the Afghan civilians.') NI: not mentioned Local: not mentioned
LI 6	Network (friends who worked as interpreters for IMS)	Ideological (wants to work for his country and contribute to its progress; wants to support ISAF)		Translation Interpretation (conversations at meetings) 'Interpreters know about our culture, our language, our village and things. That's all the work of the interpreter. If the interpreter looks at somebody they know who he is.'	Self: positive ('Our job is the best job and the most difficult job than other soldiers.') Military: both positive ('When they are going on a mission they're doing their job. They're doing their job carefully.') and negative (Advisors and supervisor who blame interpreters and threaten to fire them if they don't follow their orders. 'We face some difficulties with Dutch soldiers and they blame us and they didn't respect some of the culture and they got some problem, maybe I will leave this job.')
					NI: not mentioned Local: not mentioned
LI 7	Network (friend who worked as an interpreter for IMS)	Economical (earn some money) 'I fight for my country not for work. Before coming here I said I will make money but in here when I came here so I see the ANA guys who have a salary about 150$ not more than that. So, I said they are fighting for their own country just for 150$ so I can also fight by 600$. So, I am fighting. I am not only the terp also I feel I am a soldier. Not for the ANA's, not for the Dutch but for my country. ') Ideological (help Afghan people)	OMLT	Mission (conversations with local people) Interpretation (meetings ANA camp) Translation (papers) Cultural advice	Self: positive ('I feel appreciated. … They say 'Know that you are a part of our team. We need you for this case just stay behind me.') Military: positive (I feel respected and that's more important to me than my salary.' 'The Dutch army respect the local people very much.')) NI: ('We don't know them.') Local: ('The Taliban can point out with their teeth that he's the terp.')
LI 8	Network (his cousin LI 2 introduced him to the job)	Not mentioned	OMLT staff	Translation	Self: positive ('The interpreter is the most important guy in the group because he's the guide for all the unit.') Military: positive ('They have respect for us. I am really happy with them. We work together as a colleague. They don't think you are an interpreter, especially my advisor.') NI: not mentioned Local: not mentioned.

Appendix II

Oversight of Interviewed National Interpreters

	Allocation	Motivation	Position	Intervention	Perception
NI 1	Network (friends)	Ideological (improvement cooperation)	Category 1 PRT	Interpretation Cultural education Mediation	Self: positive (interpreter is important) Military: positive (cooperation) LI: undetermined Local: negative (distrust)
NI 2	Network (acquaintance)	Ideological (reconstruction, safety nation, reciprocity)	Category 1 EW (before PRT, BG, TFU)	Interpretation Mediation Intelligence Cultural advice Observation Force protection Mediation LI and military	Self: positive (interpreter is eyes and ears of ISAF) Military: positive (cooperation) and negative (treatment) LI: positive (mediation and social interaction) Local: predominantly negative (traitor) and sometimes positive (support)
NI 3	Application MFA	Ideological (support ISAF and native country)	Category 1 MFA , PRT	Interpretation Translation Observation Patrol Cultural education (wish/ future need) Mediation LI and military	Self: positive (interpreter is the bridge between ISAF and civilians, ears of ISAF) Military: positive (briefing) and negative (treatment LI) LI: positive (mediation) Local: undetermined
NI 4	Brochure Advert	Ideological (support of local population in Uruzgan)	Category 1 EW (before EW, PRT) (both camp TK and DR)	Interpretation Translation Mediation Patrol (DR) Cultural education (dependent of unit)	Self: positive (interpreter is bridge builder) Military: mostly dependent of commander; both positive (cooperation higher ranks) and negative (treatment lower ranks, incident) LI: positive (social talk) Local: predominantly negative (traitor; lack of or bad image troops) and sometimes positive (support)

NI 5	News article	Conform edu- cation Reciprocity Support native country Financial (salary)	Category 1 EW	Interpretation Translation Cultural advice Force protection	Self: positive (interpreter is the bridge between sol- diers and population; part of the group who'll fight to the last bullet, image builder Dutch troops) Military: positive (coope- ration commander) and negative (incidents, the other/Afghan, treatment) LI: Local: negative (traitor)
NI 6	Network (friend who works as an interpreter for the Dep. of Justice)	In search of employment Support native country Fulfilling the need for NI	Category 1 PRT	Administration Liaison Translation Interpretation Cultural advice Guide	Self: positive (without the interpreter there would be no mission; interpreter is the only lifeline between military and population) Military: positive (incidents are part of every job) LI: Local: positive (support for local admin- stration)
NI 7	Network (acquaintance)	Support native country Reciprocity	Category 2: Role 2 (before EW)	Interpretation	Self: Military: both negative (incident, treatment, lack of appreciation EW) and positive (cooperation Role 2) LI: Local: positive (gratitude)
NI 8		Break from uni- versity, opportu- nity to return to Afghanistan	Category 1 PRT, MFA (2006) Tribal advisor 2008	Interpretation (conver- sation/ negotiation) Cultural advisor	Self: positive Military: LI: Local: positive (being respectful is enough; needs to keep a careful balance, however, to avoid tension between parties)

Appendix III

Oversight of Interviewed Military Personnel

	Allocation	Motivation	Position	Intervention	Perception
M 1[1] DTF	Interpreters 'borrowed' from US and Canadian coalition forces LI recruited by two NIs and through allies (minimal screening, personal screening focused on relationships with local parties) Increase of interpreters during the deployment	Instrumental (interaction with local government and local contractors)	Lack of screening led to caution with regard to sharing of information (compartmentalization) Transactional relationship with LIs NIs held more privileges and relationships were of a different nature (compared with LIs) Interpreter is never part of the team ('and that is a pity')	Interpretation, translation, and cultural advice Establishing contacts with local contractors Acquiring construction material through the local market	Self: positive (good advices)
M 2 DTF	Scarcity, in DR 1 LI 'borrowed' from US coalition forces, in TK NIs and additionally some LIs 'borrowed' from US forces Preference for the same interpreter when available (personal relationship, language skills)	Instrumental (interaction with local contractors and local markets)	Transactional relationships When relationships develop, trust follows No restricted information involved, information was freely shared with interpreters No physical restrictions at base Mixed interest potential risk The interpreter is part of the team	Interpretation including context, Literal translation of processes and procedures	Self: positive (LIs were good at their job and could be trusted when relationship developed; locally hired sometimes less skilled, but willing to learn) Negative (LIs that were spoilt by working for coalition forces)

[1] The respondents are listed in order of rotation. Since the different units of the TFU had different rotation schemes, the rotation of the TFU staff has been used here. The listed rotation concurs with the TFU staff with which the respective unit has shared most time in Uruzgan.

M 3 PRT/ TFU 1	Scarcity, initially 2 NIs, later 3 for staff PRT Only 4 LIs for BG, MTs and other units Local interlocutors demonstrated preference for certain interpreters	Instrumental ('all discussions and conversations [with locals] require interpreters')	Only NIs due to restricted nature of work Informal hierarchy based on preference from military NIs treated like other military personnel when sharing information (need-to-know/nice-to-know) NIs not always perceived as benevolent by locals, sometimes threatened as traitors Some offices out-of-bounds for NIs; NIs were allowed to bear arms and a cell phone Despite military training and rank, NIs were not considered true soldiers	Interpretation, including context and analysis Cultural advice, knowledge	Self: positive (fully trusted 2 NIs, good relationship and respect) Negative (1 NI fired because of corruption; intensity of job and scarcity exhausted NIs; when working with LIs no sensitive information could be discussed)
M 4 BG/ TFU 1	Initially 2-3 LIs 'inherited' from US forces, ultimately 3-8 LIs when IMS succeeded in stepping up recruitment (young adults) Additional screening by Dutch staff Later also 1 NI	Instrumental	LIs who did not function appropriately were sent back to IMS Need-to-know policy LIs cannot be fully trusted Restricted freedom of movement at base, and except locally recruited Bari Gul no weapons were allowed Problems with position of interpreters caused by insufficient language skills, lack of dedication, young age	Better language skills needed on patrol, than for base duties (more time available) Cultural advice ('cultural interpretation')	LIs: negative ('don't we have a right for better conditions?', conditions at the camp were very rudimentary during the first rotation)
M 5 BG/ TFU 1	Initially 3 LI, then 4 and at the end of rotation 6 as the Dutch mission was picking up momentum; incidentally a NI Difference in contracts (one LI had arranged that he would only work at the base) Due to shortage hiring of locals as interpreters: Bari Gul (who previously worked for US) and Taza Gul	Instrumental (necessary for communication with locals)	The interpreters had their own formal leader who was well respected within the unit; more respect, however, for informal leader (Bari Gul), who was effectively running the LIs and established their position with the company Position of hired locals ultimately undermined due to local disputes which saw Bari Gul leaving to work with US troops and Taza Gul harassed and ultimately fired (role US, dispute NLD-US) NI undermined authority of the military by instigating LIs Platoon leaders established good contacts with individual LIs (which also led to a preference from the side of the LIs) 'The more normal you treat your interpreter, the more effective the cooperation. Moreover, you're responsible for his security.' 'Treat your interpreter the way you want to be treated yourself'	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (ICOM chatter) Cultural advice (including atmospherics) 'An interpreter functions well when he translates and interprets in the right way which incorporates emotions, provides relevant information..., and possesses the right personality' N.B.: Due to scarcity patrols without interpreters	Self: undetermined (complicated; good and bad interpreters) Negative (duplicity NI, lack of military attitude and language skills of LIs) NI: negative (more connected to Afghans than member of Dutch military mission) LIs: positive (difference NLD-US; language training) Negative (military culture)

M 6 BG/ TFU 1	In pioneering phase no interpreters, LIs (amongst whom Bari Gul) acquired and rudimentary screened by US; later formalized through IMS; scarcity lowered quality standards 9 LIs at max, but enormous rate of replacement and mostly 6 available (demand for 13) Incidentally two NIs Platoon commanders were looking for persistence and no-whining mentality in LIs	Instru-mental (LIs as a 'tool')	When in DR NIs were accommodated with LIs in order to detect security issues and other problems LIs were allowed to take part in Ramadan celebra-tions LIs were not part of the military organization, but a 'tool' for accomplishing the mission and trusted on need-to-know basis Informal interpreter com-munity hierarchy: NIs, LIs from Kandahar, 'local' LIs. Bari Gul exception because he had been in the area for a long time and was well-connected Within the group LIs from Kandahar senior members tried to claim privileges (countered by interviewee) Restricted access to base facilities for LIs who were also not allowed to bear arms (except Bari Gul) During firefights LIs are a liability	NIs as cultural advi-sors when possible and when military staff was open to such advice Interpreting during talks and translation of written documents NIs dedicated for intelligence work, but when unavailable LIs were also allowed to overhear ICOM chatter LIs joined patrols, stood at the gate of the base, were active with the base security details, etc.	Self: positive (daily informal contact and regular meals to-gether with LIs; good working relationship and easy to manage difficulties when you adapt to their culture; 'father figure' to younger LIs) Negative (you can never fully trust LIs because you don't have insight in all different agendas; poor training of LIs for task as interpreter and military environ-ment) NIs: positive (opted to step up as cultural advisors and act as intermediators and check towards LIs) LIs: positive (NIs as representative and balance against military staff) Negative (mainly security related, one LI experienced too many enemy fire dur-ing patrols and did not return from leave; sometimes platoon commanders were perceived too direct)

M 7 BG/ TFU 1	Scarcity, initially 1 LI via IMS, later supplemented to 4/5 Half of the period 1 NI Allocation of specific mis-sion by base commander dependent on location and interlocutor Additional screening for LIs in DR 'Best of the worst'	Instru-mental, conver-sations with locals ('al-most a neces-sary evil')	Position of the interpreter ideal for spying (Pakistan) LIs are always at risk Good LI: sufficient English skills, insight in context, appropriate ethnic back-ground Informal hierarchy deter-mined by period deployed as LI NI stayed with LIs and acted as informal leader in order to control LIs Information sharing de-liberately on short notice/ need-to-know policy Impossible to fully trust LIs, trust is a matter of experi-ence with an individual LI Restricted access to some base areas and facilities Some problems due to Ra-madan, scarcity of rooms, intensity of roster	Listening in on elec-tronic devices (NI) LIs as institutional memory Base duties/external duties Interpreter interprets and gives cultural explanation	Self: positive (dur-ing the mission cooperation with LIs smoothened, yet a lot depends on the individual) Negative (risk) LIs: negative (under-estimated level of violence in DR)

M 8 BG/ TFU 1	Pioneering phase in which locals (Bari Gul, Taza Gul) were hired as interpreters, often through US mediation; gradual influx of LI (IMS); one NI; at peak 7 interpreters (shortage) Also competition between US and NLD for interpreters 'Local interpreters are all but an elegant solution, in times of scarcity, however, one has to arrange something while waiting for NIs'	Instrumental	Locals and LI caught between society, Taliban and work (Taza Gul requested weapon to protect his family; LI Waffa disappeared for some time), and therefore might be coerced or persuaded to switch sides. Since LIs have to think about the security of themselves and their families you cannot trust them completely. Interpreters within unit treated with respect and according with Maslow (example of air conditioning which was allocated to LIs as soon as available) Hierarchy of interpreters; formal chief interpreter (Waffa) who earned 1200$, this caused envy with other LIs (600$), also informal hierarchy HOTO of ISAF units might trigger different behavior oof LIs as they are treated differently by newcomers LIs gave Dutch soldiers farewell presents, but they did not receive gifts in return. The soldiers deemed the relationship of a transactional nature; LIs had already been rewarded for their work.	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (EW, ICOM chatter) Cultural advice 'An interpreter has to be able to interpret the intention (verbal as well as non-verbal) of a message'	Self: undetermined (in the pioneering phase one has to work by trial and error which caused positive and negative experiences; a good interpreters is trustworthy, language skills and the ability to learn on the job LI: positive (it's all about the money) NI: negative (about Dutc, felt connected with LIs and even decided to relocate himself to their quarters)

M 9 BG/ TFU 1 DR	Scarcity, at worst 2 interpreters for the whole base Later 5-6 LIs (through KAF as well as locally hired) 1 NI available when an electronic warfare detachment was deployed Preference for locally hired LI Not only soldier have their preference, also local interlocutors Experiences during duties were used for additional screening (language skills, attitude)	Instrumental (for dealing with local population)	During TFU I interpreters were the only Afghans with whom we were working directly (no Afghan army presence) Interpreter is intermediator in conversations; good interpreter is pro-active and lies the right emphasis in the conversation For the local interlocutor the interpreter is not a soldier, but a fellow Afghan Some LIs disguise themselves by wearing sun glasses or bandana's Position of locally hired LIs vulnerable Informal hierarchy among LIs Information position depends on personal relationship with LI, but generally as little and late as possible (need-t-know policy, operational security) Restricted freedom of movement at base, only locally hired LI Bari Gul was allowed to bear arms (because of his background as security guard) Interpreter is not only a resource, but also an individual	Listening to ICOM chatter Interpreting Cultural advice	Self: negative (did not trust all LIs due to either poor quality, lack of personal bond, poor attitude) Positive (mutual respect, good working relationship with preferred LI, personality is pivotal (and not functionality or procedures))

M 10 BG/ TFU 1	NI, around 5 LIs Preference for allocation of LIs for a specific mission based on language skills and knowledge of the area, positive personality and good advices Rudimentary screening, lot of quality differences	Instrumental (essential, 'without interpreter you are blind in the area')	Interpreter as extension of the soldier LI Bari Gul, member of platoon (also carried weapon) Interpreters who spoke Dutch were higher in hierarchy, NI informal leader of LIs Interpreter is a source of information with whom a trust relationship should be developed, yet at the same time one should keep a certain distance Trust is complicated as there are so many different agenda's and interests at stake, and therefore LIs can never be fully trusted An interpreter is not a soldier Information shared on short notice Restricted access to some camp areas Cultural differences between LIs with an urban origin and local population Effectiveness of interpreter is enhanced by good treatment	Interpretation and cultural advice Interpreter used to validate own observations	Self: positive (Experience with LI embedded in platoon, much learned from LIs and I found a personal way to deal with interpreters, yet it all remains a matter of personalities) Negative (NI as well as LIs developed an attitude, complaining LIs, bad language skills, cultural differences)

M 11 PRT/ TFU 1	2 NIs allocated to PRT commander/staff Scarcity In allocation for specific jobs, the preferences of local interlocutors were also considered	Instrumental (PRT interface of TFU with local authorities and population)	The interpreter moves between two worlds, but his loyalty has to be with ISAF A PRT interpreter is a sparring partner for the soldiers, therefor the interpreter needs to be intelligent and skilled and the soldier should provide him with information about the context of conversations Triangular interposition of interpreter, soldier, and interlocutor Very intensive job which is not always appreciated appropriately Within the PRT NIs were well-respected, fully trusted and informed No weapons during meetings in order to foster impartiality	Interpreting during personal meetings (multiple times/week) with provincial governor in order to build a trust relationship Interpretation, translation Cultural advice	Self: positive (capable NIs, good advice and interpretation, deep respect for interpreters and good relationship) Negative (1 NI accepted money from the local population, despite the lack of bad intentions this person was fired)

M 12 PRT/ TFU 1	The first rotation suffered from a huge shortage of interpreters; when no interpreters were available, Afghan security guards were employed as interpreters Available LIs were divided between US and Dutch No NI in DR Development of LI pool; one DTF engineers, 2 KAF, 1 Afghan security guard (Bari Gul) and later four added	Instrumental ('without interpreter you cannot even go outside the gate')	Enemy-centric focus of US soldiers contrasted with population-centric focus of Dutch, this gave LIs working for US better position and determined the informal hierarchy Informal hierarchy also influenced by income which triggered some LIs to extort local contractors LIs (especially with ties to the region) were always treated with suspicion out of fear of treason as a consequence of personal interest; need-to-know policy/short notice Trust relationship dependent on quality of interpreter (intellect, diligence with regard to the mission, and language skills); good relationship also led to informal contact LIs were strictly limited to their own quarters within the camp and thus were restricted in their movement and physically separated from Dutch soldiers Most LIs were not allowed to bear arms and have cell phones (except two persons from local origin/ with a security guard background)	Interpreting during meetings (sometimes LI asked and were allowed to take over the initiative in order to straighten the discussion) Base duties, contact person for local contractors Translation of written texts including Taliban night letters Patrol duties, maintaining contact with local population The 'personal horizon' of an interpreter determines the ability to act as a cultural advisor	Self: positive (allocated LI was a member of our team, good formal as well as informal relationship; most other LIs were young easily approachable, open and interested in working together; LIs prepared a meal for interviewee) Negative (LIs sometimes susceptible to blackmail, opportunistic, poor quality, sloppy) LI: negative (sometimes felt unaccepted by military staff; threat of enemy fire)

M 13 PRT/ TFU 2	12/13 LIs (shortage, 15 needed) randomly appointed from TK (IMS), 1 NI Shortage: '100,000s of euros are spent just to be here and then it fails because of a lack of interpreters' 'Battle for interpreters between coalition forces'	Instrumental (for interaction with local population)	Interpreter and respondent formed the nucleus of each patrol As mission endured LIs became very close to respondent, they were no longer outsiders 'he was my walking encyclopedia, I cooperated closely with him and he was always in my physical proximity' Working relation with other ISAF soldiers could be troublesome No official hierarchy, informal hierarchy (age, language skills etc.) Position of interpreter is seriously hampered when originating from area of operations LIs felt threatened by Taliban; did not inform family about their work and used disguise during conversations	Interpretation Translation (literally) Intelligence (EW) Cultural advice (including atmospherics/ database of local information)	Self: positive (trust, good working experiences, 'some LIs smarter than average Dutch soldiers', example LI Hemat, good interpreters command English, understand the contents and intention of a discussion and are representative; LIs possessed more knowledge than we did, no need to treat them with suspicion) Negative (bad interpreters make it difficult to get the point of a meeting; example Sharif, language skills insufficient, 'half of our intel is lost in translation') LI: positive (felt part of PRT, loyalty) Negative (mistreatment and disrespect as a consequence of lack of trust; incident explosives)

M 14 BG/ TFU 2	3-10 LIs randomly appointed from TK (structural short-age); in early days locally recruited interpreters when the sole LI was killed 1 NI at DR camp	Instru-mental	Base commander respon-sible for position of inter-preters within unit (Maslow, sorting out command-ers who treat LIs badly, $600monthly salary for LI) 'Certificate of appreciation' gives status	Tasks with differ-ent units: BG, PRT, PSYOPS, Base Com-mand; shortage of interpreters mainly felt at the base, because 'without interpreters you cannot go outside the gate'	Self: positive (gen-erally respondent seems to have good experiences manag-ing the interpreters) Negative ('I don't trust interpreters'; NIs lack of language skills and lack of adaptation to military culture NI: undetermined LI: Feel mistreated by IMS and seemingly even afraid for this company)
M 15 TFU 2/ RC-S	LIs from Kandahar or else-where 'Unlimited' availability through interpreter office at KAF (also screening), the nature of the operation dic-tated the number of inter-preters (2-3 on average) One permanent LIs, prefer-ence for LIs with military experience	Instru-mental, no com-muni-cation with locals without inter-preter	During operation LI is assets and liability (respon-sible for security) Need-to-know-policy	'Translation machine', no emotions and no own contribution Listening to ICOM chatter	Self: positive (ex-perience with per-manently allocated LI, LIs with military background) Negative (old LI who held a power-ful status, but did not perform on a satisfactory level; LIs insufficient command of English) NI: undetermined LI: undetermined

M 16 BG/ TFU 2	1NI, 7 LI On a daily basis 2 inter-preters on the camp, 2 on forward post, 2 on patrol, and 2 rest Young LIs, c. 20 years Permission to recruit LIs in DR as a consequence of scarcity and poor quality of interpreters; candidates screened for tribal back-ground, English skills, general attitude, position towards ISAF, local customs, and motivation	Instru-mental	Young age and origin of LI influence attitude towards local population Informal hierarchy: lo-cally hired LI Bari Gul 'more equal than others' and enjoyed privileges which triggered envy of others, informal hierarchy also based on age Need-to-know policy, brief-ing on extrem short notice ('during walk towards vehicle') Physical movement re-strictions on base (which LIs typically try to ignore during HOTO period) On forward post no physi-cal separation between LIs and Dutch military person-nel, which triggered friction Interpreters insiders as well as outsiders of which the latter determines the fact that they are never fully trusted	Understand and translate what inter-locutors say, including non-verbal commu-nication, context, and nuances NI was tasked for intelligence gathering (listening in on elec-tronic devices) Cultural advice Database and in-stitutional memory with regard to local affairs over the span of multiple rotations	Self: positive (in general the military is too negative, LIs wrongfully perceived as threat; by dealing pragmatically with operational security demands and LIs you can achieve a lot and enhance the role and effectivity of the LIs) Negative (compart-mental trust for rea-sons of self-defence, based on previous experiences in Bos-nia, negative attitude and poor quality of some LIs) LI: negative (physical separation, lack of trust)

M 17 BG/ TFU 2	Shortage of interpreters (between 6 and 12, while 15 needed); relative small camp at DR no priority for NIs; LIs allocated through IMS Kandahar; 2 locally hired LIs (among who Bari Gul, who carried a weapon) Some LIs indicated they were recruited 'from the street' and only checked in TK; in general screening was insufficient Shortage of interpreters mainly due to IMS ('the nail to my coffin', not delivering upon promises, bad payments, obliging LIs to work during entitled leave, blackmail, etc.); as a result LIs would not return from leave Jobs with units would be allocated on the evening before in conjunction with the company commander	Motives of LIs; 'Quick money', saving for wedding, sensation; Ideological ('I want to assist in rebuilding the country'); yet interviewee doubts sincereness of this statement	The position of bunks in the sleeping room changed as relationships between LIs developed One of the NIs was an acquaintance of the interviewee as this NI used to work as a bouncer at a night club One LI used informal group hierarchy to claim a position as 'base interpreter' Non-functioning LIs were lowest in informal hierarchy Group unified when they encountered problems at base (fitness times, etc.) LIs responsible for their own quarters and mess Bari Gul's status and allowance to carry a gun were the results of his position in earlier rotations	Tasks with different units: BG, PRT, PSYOPS, Base Command, Hospital, Engineers; Interpretation Translation Cultural advice Sometimes LIs would use physical violence to correct interlocuters (example beating) LIs would indicate how negotiations could be conducted safely and effectively	Self: negative (distrust of LIs: duplicity, 'you never know what the interpreter's exact intentions are; 'they are all buddies, also sexually, the Kite Runner hits the mark pretty close ('Boys Night')'; not all held sufficient language skills; cultural differences; I did not possess adequate means for controlling the LIs; much more difficult than similar experience when managing interpreters in Bosnia; yet on a personal level good working relationship) NI: undetermined LI: undetermined
M 18 BG/ TFU 2	10 LIs (shortage, 12 needed) randomly appointed from TK (IMS), 1 locally hired interpreter (carried his own weapon), 1 NI Locals regularly offered their services as interpreters at the gate, yet command of English was insufficient	Instrumental (dealing with locals)	LI tribal background, motives for working with ISAF LIs remain outsiders, among other, trust on need to know basis and culture (example LIs suspected of stealing explosives, LIs almost started a strike; never tell an LI that you don't trust him) Reference to LI accommodation on the camp: 'Outside at the interpreters'' Threat for LI families NI: part of the Dutch military	Interpretation Translation 'Interpreter has only one job: to translate' Activities in which interpreters participated: patrols, guard duty, base, medical care for locals, night shifts, PRT, training of local police	Self: undetermined (trust on need to know basis; treat LIs respectful; much the same as earlier deployments in Bosnia and Afghanistan, trust based on need to know basis, security first, and control the interpreter) Negative: Interpreters trying to instigate other interpreters LI: negative (distrust, preparedness to strike and discontent)
M 19 PRT/ TFU 2	5/6 LIs at best, including hired locals (who were bearing arms)	Instrumental (necessary for communication with locals)	Age seniority (junior LIs less status) Openness (more open LIs lower in status) 'Certificate of appreciation' gives status for LIs themselves Hired locals were susceptible to local influences, one local reportedly switched sides to the Taliban	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (EW) Cultural advice (including atmospherics) N.B.: Due to shortage of interpreters respondent's PRT MT spent weeks confined to the base	Self: positive (during pre-deployment training 'the interpreter is no interlocutor', but in Afghanistan interpreters proved highly valued interlocutors who completed statements, took the initiative and asked the right questions) Negative (locals susceptible to local influences 'we call this distrustful, yet for them it's a matter of life and death' LI: undetermined
M 20 PRT/ TFU 2	5 LIs at best (scarcity), including hired locals (Bari Gul, weapon)	Instrumental (necessary for communication with locals)	Informal hierarchy amongst LIs. Senior interpreter Sharif and Bari Gul 'Tolk of the town' leading Bari Gul returned home to his village whenever possible; local population approached him for cutting deals with ISAF (broker) Gender issue: as a female officer respondent kept distance from LIs and emphasizes professional relationship ('Interpreter remains a resource')	Interpretation Translation Intelligence ('night letters' Cultural advice	Self: negative (although generally positive about her experience respondent stresses complicated nature of working with LIs in an alien cultural environment) LI: undetermined

M 21 BG/ TFU 3	LIs (max 11, allocated through IMS) appointed on a daily basis to different units by respondent, preferences and traits of both soldiers and LIs were taken in consideration 1 hired local (Bari Gul) Temporarily 1 NI (EW, shortage)	Instrumental	Respondent noted that Bari Gul could move freely when on leave, which caused suspicion and ultimately triggered his discharge (see interview) Formal categories 1,2,3 on basis of experience and age Informal hierarchy age, charisma, experience (examples) QM responsible for managing the interpreters on a daily basis	Undetermined	Self: positive (LIs could be trusted and were respected for their work, good working relationship, received farewell gifts; more positive image of working with interpreters than before mission) LIs: positive (status, money, felt treated well and respected by respondent; in tears when respondent redeployed) Negative (initial lack of respect from soldiers, feared for their families, relatives received threatening letters)
M 22 PRT/ TFU 3	Interviewee was responsible for the allocation of LIs and NIs within the PRT Varying number of 8-13 LIs General allocation: Police training 1, MTs 3, leave, PRT home duties >1 Formally for security reasons only NI within PRT compound, yet due to scarcity also LI; on patrols mostly LIs NIs allocated to jobs concerning provincial matters, LIs district matters US often bought away LIs Letters to C-TFU asking for more interpreters: never answered IMS recruited LIs; interviewee regularly reported back on LIs NIs were evaluated at end of tour	Instrumental (all contact with Afghans through interpreters)	NIs better educated and language skills; LIs not always adequate English level. Informal hierarchy NIs; opinion of most educated/ knowledgeable NI prevailed; this often contrasted formal ranks, yet higher rank meant more payment and thus more esteem LIs deliberately not informed on all details in order not to bring them in a position vulnerable to extortion NIs were trusted and fully accepted and performed duties a high level; yet there was a lack of information on their position/presence to military personnel which sometimes triggered distrust, discrimination, and cultural clashes; this improved after a rapport was filed on this problem and measures were taken as it was feared that the already scarce NIs would further decline in number.	Manning the phone 24h/day as first responder for locals in need of PRT assistance Formulating letters and documents Cultural advisor: especially NIs proved essential for dealing with cultural differences	Self: positive (I have always trusted my interpreters and they have never disappointed me; even F. who I have confronted with his emotional involvement has never raised any suspicion; while interpreters could be aggressive, they always were open and candid) Negative: (in comparison with interpreters in Bosnia and Iraq, Afghan interpreters were fiery and quickly angry citing unjust security concerns) NIs: negative (discrimination, often felt second-rank personnel and mistreated by military staff as a consequence of lack of information on their duties)

M 23 BG/ TFU 3	Only 6 to 8 of 15 allocated interpreters; NIs, LIs from Kandahar and Kabul (preference for ethnic groups not present in DR), LI Bari Gul IMS is to blame for scarcity; Dutch military contractors ('buying interpreters as products from the shelf') have not concluded solid deals with this company and therefore contracts allow the LIs to be redeployed with other ISAF contingents 2 LIs were fired as they could not cope with increased tension in the area Screened for language skills and background (problematic due to lack of registration); within the military nobody is aware of the exact amount of screening an interpreter has been subjected to Preference in allocation based on an interpreter's personal ability to help a military commander to have a nuanced conversation Interpreters allocated to tasks according to the criteria: predictability of moves, power and memory (increase with experience, beware of personal interest; Bari Gul for instance is not appointed to talks with local power-holders), interchangeability (developing skills in order to become more broader employable and preventing monopoly position with certain interlocutors) US pays more, therefore 'the best interpreters will ultimately end at the US base'	Instrumental (talks with local representatives)	The interpreters compensate the military's lack of an institutional memory in the area of operations; this, however, provided both an advantage as well as a danger. Interpreter as colleague: 'The last thing you want to have is a personal relationship with an interpreter, the relationship should be strictly professional'; this prevents prejudice and deals with possible security risks caused by interpreters; accepted by interpreters when communicated clearly Hampered screening fosters distrust and urges for regular checks to assess consistency of interpreter's behavior Interpreters allow to 'put an Afghan face to everything' as well as to 'put a Dutch face to everything'; yet, 'interpreters should never be placed in the intermediator position' Informal hierarchy based on intellect, salary, duration of stay in DR, origin Interpreters informed on 'need to know' basis, which expands as trust increases For infantry platoons LI Bari Gul's local origin made him an excellent interpreter, the PRT mission team, however, considered him too meddlesome	First: interpretation& translation Second: assistance & cultural advice in dealing with locals (example 'how to deal with approaching kids')	Self: positive (When treated correctly interpreters are an asset, when treated badly they are of no value or even a liability, this is difficult for young soldiers. Use of interpreters to introduce Afghan background to military staff. After negative experiences with interpreters during a previous deployment to Iraq, this was a first return to positive experiences; LIs are sincere and clear in personal communication. Negative ('Interpreters are your most important security risk'; you should ignore your intuition (Bosnia experience with interpreter)) NI: undetermined LI: undetermined
M 24 BG/ TFU 3	LIs randomly appointed, personal preference to work with a single LI	Instrumental (necessary for communication with locals)	The position of the LI during patrols is literally 'close to me and therefore the boys keep him secure'. The LI he has regularly worked with is absolutely part of the platoon	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (example of how LI takes initiative to screen ICOM chatter) Cultural advice	Self: positive (especially with regard to LI he has regularly worked with; mutual trust, good language skills) LI: positive (security and LI he has regularly worked with felt part of the team)
M 25 BG/ TFU 3	LIs randomly appointed, personal preference to work with a more senior LI Also mentions that some LIs have been working in the area for as much as 2 years (contrasts to military rotation)	Instrumental (necessary for communication with locals)	Never part of team, yet LI should be treated respectfully and feel at ease (most close when based at outpost) at the same time 'you should be clear that you're not allowed to trust LIs for sake of security' Physical position LI mostly close to platoon leader, but not always in order not to disclose the unit's leader	Interpretation Translation Cultural advice (including atmospherics; 'I always watch how my LI drinks his tea during a meeting') 'I have always considered myself a guest of the local population… and the interpreter has helped me with this' Concrete list of task: -host at gate -base duties -patrol duties - outpost duties	Self: negative (prevailing perception despite some good working experiences; 'it's impossible to speak of a trustful tie with an interpreter'; 'the moment I trust my interpreter I am endangering my unit'; 'I'll never trust an interpreter!'; additionally some negative experiences with junior LIs who are trying to show off and are not obeying orders) Positive: senior LI how fully behaves and acts in accordance with respondent's intents Senior junior LI: undeterminded (clearly aware of situation and emphasizing mutual relationship; 'if you're good to me, I'll be good to you all') Negative: complaining about situation and duties

M 26 BG/ TFU 3	LIs randomly appointed to DR by IMS. LIs appointed by base command, each week/day respondent submitted a request for the required number (7/8 on average, at peak 15 LIs available) of interpreters Hired locals (Bari Gul) One NI at the base for one month during deployment	Instru-mental (neces-sary for com-muni-cation with locals and local author-ities)	LIs from urban background considered the local popu-lation primitive 'You'll never be able to trust an interpreter completely, yet you have to be able to work with him'; importance of work relationships; rotating the LIs throughout the unit in order to estab-lish an image of each one of them Hierarchy of interpreters determined by local origine, command of English, expe-rience, and contact with US Taliban labels LIs traitors and has put a $10,000 reward on their head	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (EW) Cultural advice	Self: positive (LIs always prepared to assist – even when off duty – when respon-dent was busy; 'I have never experienced problems, they've been good interpret-ers'; interpreter as force multiplier, 'If you are able to have a good conversation with your interlocu-tor, you have won a battle') LI: negative (mistreat-ment by IMS)
M 27 Staff/ TFU 3	Additional screening of LIs based on IMS screening				
M 28 BG/ TFU 3	Appointment of LIs within BG is arranged by interpreter manager (former inter-preter, chosen by LIs). LIs are embedded with the same platoon whenever possible	Instru-mental	BG is starting position for LIs. Good LIs are promoted to PRT, which rises their status.	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (ICOM chatter)	Self: positive (based on feedback of platoon commanders and own experiences with LIs) Negative (arrestment of interpreter manag-er, some individuals might violate trust) LI: undetermined (although some LIs complain a lot) Local: undetermined

M 29 BG/ TFU 3	LIs randomly appointed, personal preference to work with a single LI who holds sufficient command of English language and needs few directions	Instru-mental (neces-sary for com-muni-cation with locals)	During a mission (patrol) the interpreter is part of the team as he needs protec-tion and as a consequence of social interaction but when we are on location they have a certain 'cor-ner' and ten they're not included. The better an interpreter, the better his position as a member of the team.	Interpretation Translation Cultural advice (includ-ing atmospherics) LIs repeatedly ask for a weapon in order to fight along the ISAF soldiers (requests denied)	Self: positive (highly useful for situational awareness amongst the population) Negative (operational security risk, not all interpreters have suf-ficient language skills) LI: positive (feel part of the BG, status)
M 30 BG/ TFU 3	15-20 predominantly LIs randomly appointed within the BG Respondent has worked with 2 different LIs	Instru-mental (neces-sary for com-muni-cation with locals)	LI is accepted by team, yet remains outsider due to short duration of mutual work	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (at-mospherics, ICOM chatter) Cultural advice	Self: positive (mu-tual respect and basic level of trust) LI: undetermined Local: undetermined

M 31 BG/ TFU 3	LIs randomly appointed for operations, personal preference to work with a single LI (which is supported by BG)	Instrumental (necessary for communication with locals)	LI is 'one of the boys'. BG is starting position for LIs (all junior and unexperienced interpreters) Good LIs are quickly promoted to PRT	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (atmospherics, ICOM chatter) Cultural advice (LI intervention in dealing with local casualties)	Self: Positive: interpreter allows communication and interaction with population, as well as the gathering of intelligence; LIs can be trusted with regard to their task of translation Negative: LI can't be trusted with operational information and what they'll do with that in their own time, arrogant attitude towards ISAF soldiers, unprepared for unexpected situations (dependent on personal traits) LI: positive (part of the team, feel protected by ISAF soldiers) Local: undetermined (respondent thinks that there is some cultural distance between LIs and the locals)

M 32 BG/ TFU 3	Shortage of interpreters, initially only 1/patrol, later 2 Preference for working with IMS LIs as NIs often demonstrate an arrogant attitude towards the local population ('Uruzgan is a backward province') Also preference to work with LI Bari Gul, yet aware of the risk that his personal interest might cause a lose of neutrality LIs from Kabul and Kandahar hold best language skills, this also influenced preference Tasks allocated on the evening before	Instrumental ('As soon as you go outside the gate you need an interpreter')	Interpreter receives regular 'personnel care' in the form of an evaluation once a week Own initiative of interpreter is stimulated to deal with cultural sensitive situations Informal hierarchy of interpreters based on age and skills; loyal to each other 'Interpreters occupy a special position within the unit, they are not in for the full 100% as they are not part of the original group. This might change when a single LI is appointed to a unit' Informal bonding with LIs by watching Bollywood movies and discussing their personal interests and motives (mostly financial)	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (atmospherics; example mullah) Cultural advice Involvement in combat strictly forbidden	Self: Positive (valuable source of information; perception of interpreters changed positively in Afghanistan; LIs proved easy going and capable of improvising and adapting to military conditions; it's important to keep an open mind toward the interpreter and treat him fair and in accordance with the situation) neutral: 'trust the interpreter in all that relates to the conversation, in all other matters I didn't trust the interpreter' NI: undetermined LI: positive (learning on the job from soldiers and officers)
M 33 BG/ TFU 3	LIs randomly appointed, personal preference to work with a single LI	Instrumental (necessary for communication with locals)	Good LIs are quickly promoted to PRT or TFU staff, which is very frustrating for BG personnel.	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (ICOM chatter)	Self: negative, lack of trust (due to random allocation no possibility to forge a tie, also example in which a LI possibly betrayed the position of the unit) LI: undetermined Local: undetermined

M 34 BG/ TFU 3	LIs randomly appointed, personal preference to work with a single LI	Instru-mental (neces-sary for com-muni-cation with locals)	BG is starting position for LIs (all junior and unexperi-enced interpreters). Good LIs are quickly pro-moted to PRT, which in-creases their status among peers (respondent received gifts from a LI who was pro-moted to the PRT thanks to his recommendations) Interpreter is part of the unit (need to take care of him)	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (at-mospherics, ICOM chatter) Cultural advice	Self: positive (in-terpreter allows communication and interaction with population, as well as the gathering of intel-ligence; LIs can be trusted with regard to their task if treated properly) Negative: sometimes indifferent attitude towards job, unpre-pared for unexpected situations (dependent on personal traits) LI: positive (part of the team, feel protected by ISAF soldiers) Local: undetermined, yet there seems to be a gap between LIs and locals.
M 35 ISTAR/ TFU 3	Small group of selected NIs who are screened for sensi-tive intelligence work	Instru-mental (neces-sary for intel-ligence work and talks with local inform-ers)	Rank attributed on basis of language skills and knowledge 'NI is a colleague'.	'Supporting humint talks encompasses more than mere trans-lation' Interpretation Translation Cultural advice (yet sometimes deliberate-ly ignored to provoke informers)	Self: positive (Trust is absolute basis of working relationship, still good relationship with NI Rudy from previous deployment) NI: undetermined (Sometimes awkward situation due to nature of intelligence work) Local: undetermined

M 36 ISTAR/ TFU 3	Small group of selected NIs who are screened by MIVD for sensitive intelligence work Additionally, in consultation with the interpreter man-ager selected LIs might be screened for less sensitive intelligence work (only when necessary, preference NI)	Instru-mental (neces-sary to under-stand chang-ing picture of threats and local society)	NIs: rank attributed on basis of language skills and knowledge (mostly captains) NIs use rank to confront junior officers or question their task at hand When given orders by supe-riors some NIs turn anger LIs: in general humble attitude towards intelli-gence operators, only small selection of high quality LIs that is allowed to work with ISTAR.	Emphasis on transla-tion of intercepted messages. Iterpreta-tion. Cultural advice; inter-preters can hear from which area a voice stems	Self: positive (Mutual trust and respect as basis for cooperation intelligence work; emphasizes good working relationship). Clear preference for NIs because of screening and military training. However, LIs are closer connected to local society and therefore bring addi-tional understanding Negative (some NIs don't behave profes-sionally and only point at their military status when it's in their interest There-fore some ISTAR personnel prefers LIs) NI: positive (money, rank, status, and trust) negative (when or-ders collide with their ideologic views) LI: positive (status, respect and trust)
M 37 LSD/ TFU 3	NI and LI randomly appoint-ed for duty with role 1, when no interpreter available the GP might call for the TFU commander's interpreter	Instru-mental (neces-sary for com-muni-cation with pa-tients)	No hierarchical differentia-tion, all interpreters might potentially assist in role 1	Interpretation Translation Cultural Awareness (bridging gap between local patients and Western medical practice) Strictly clear that interpreters are not entitled to participate in medical treatment	Self: positive (Both NIs and LIs are crucial in medical treat-ment). Yet, wants to learn more about background of inter-preters. LI/NI: undetermined. Sometimes awkward situations as a con-sequence of cultural gap between patient and GP. Local: undetermined

M 38 OMLT/ TFU 3	36 LI for OMLT (80 for TFU in total) hired though IMS in Kandahar and randomly embedded within ANA units, personal preference to deal with LI of the specific unit he is working with or the HQ LI who specializes in personnel management (knowledge based preference)	Instrumental (necessary for communication with ANA)	Knowledge and expertise leading in position of LI, more skilled interpreters at HQ level (example LI who used to live in New York)	Interpretation Translation (operational orders and staff documents for ANA)	Self: positive (skilled LI at ANA HQ level, trust based on personal intuition, yet transactional relationship should prevail) Negative (High risk of breaching opsec, 'Lucky' incident, distrust ('Weapons are strictly forbidden for LIs!'. LI: positive (course to enhance interpreter skills) Negative (Lack of mutual trust, enhanced by 'Lucky' incident) Local: undetermined
M 39 OMLT/ TFU 3	LI randomly appointed, personal preference when possible	Instrumental (necessary for communication with ANA) Ideological (personal education, goodwill, reciprocity)	No hierarchical differentiation Embedded in ANA unit	Interpretation Translation (operational orders for ANA) Cultural advice	Self: positive ('mutual trust is essential'; trust depends on personality and openness LI) LI: undetermined Local: undetermined

M 40 OMLT/ TFU 3	LI randomly appointed via interpreter pool, personal preference when possible	Instrumental (necessary for communication with ANA)	No hierarchical differentiation Embedded in ANA unit (one of the soldiers) Good LI might be 'promoted' to PRT and TFU staff	Interpretation Translation (operational orders for ANA) Social interaction Cultural advice Leading role LI towards ISAF soldiers when dealing with ANA casualties	Self: positive ('I keep my interpreter close to me', trust as much as possible/'need to know' basis, gives his personal weapon to interpreter) Negative (how effective is screening?) LI: positive (mutual trust, support from ISAF soldiers) Local: undetermined (positive reaction expected, but yet to be seen)
M 41 OMLT/ TFU 3	LI randomly appointed via interpreter pool (respondent suspects that allocation is partly based on personal traits, origin, and possession of arms) during multiple-day operations the same LI), personal preference when possible	Instrumental (necessary for communication with ANA)	No formal hierarchical differentiation, embedded in ANA unit. Good LI might be 'promoted' to PRT and TFU staff. LI from Hazara background is seen as scapegoat by ANA.	'Translation Machine' Interpretation Translation (operational orders for ANA) Cultural awareness ('probe', sensor and anticipator of atmosphere, impartial third party during social patrol) LI takes over leading role when ANA commander breaks down during combat (undesired intervention).	Self: positive (interpreters highly motivated and with good intentions) Negative (young age and lack of military and language skills, undesired interventions, lack of screening, and lack of trust. LI: negative (lack of trust and security, discussion about use of arms by LIs) Local: undetermined
M 42 PRT/ TFU 3	PRT operations officer (S3) and interpreter allocate interpreters to Mission Teams depending the task their up to Both NIs and LIs are deployed (12 in total?), but mostly LIs at Mission Teams	Instrumental (communication with locals essential for PRT)	While trust grows as a consequence of good cooperation, interpreters remain relative outsiders Intense mutual experiences like a TIC, however, might forge a special tie that establishes the interpreter as one of the boys	Interpretation Translation Cultural advice	Self: positive (good interpreters) Negative (interpreters with insufficient skills) NI: undetermined LI: undetermined

M 43 PRT/ TFU 3	6-15 LIs; planned for missions by S3 (with some influence from the LIs themselves); daily briefing at 18:00 with details about next day's assignments 0-4 NIs; tasked to maintain relationships with local leaders by phone The best available interpreters from the TFU pool were assigned to the PRT as a consequence of the nature of its work; in order to test LIs they were first assigned to the BG for a week The PRTs interpreter manager personally went to Kandahar to select the best LIs from the IMS pool Scarcity a consequence of limited popularity of job among young Afghans and the lack of English language skills 'Begging' US contingent for LIs mostly successful (police courses) Due to scarcity jobs for NIs were later appointed to LIs who had proven themselves thrustworthy and skillful Screening of LIs problematic	Instrumental ('without interpreters you cannot communicate with the local population and that is the main task of the PRT'; 'without interpreters no mission')	Local interpreters were informed on a need to know basis, yet as complete as possible because they were part of the mission (but lacked appropriate screening) NIs were trusted with sensitive information (appropriate screened in The Netherlands) Interviewee observed much distrust with regard to LIs among PRT personnel – a consequence of operational security culture Interpreters make no distinction between personal relationships and organizational hierarchy The PRT organized a TFU meeting in order to stress the importance of the position of the interpreter and his cultural knowledge LIs would receive an official certificate as a recognition for good performance Personnel care in the form of a weekly LI briefing and individual after action debriefings in order to discuss successful or bad practices Interpreters would always try to enhance their position NIs part of the unit, LIs depending of individual LIs were physically separated from quarters and PRT offices, but welcome in mess hall and bar Informal hierarchy of interpreters reflects Afghan society	Interpretation Translation Intelligence (NIs) Cultural advice Patrols with MTs (main effort) Manning the PRT house Intervention by telephone (went wrong when a police post was attacked and TFU reacted by incidentally striking civilian vehicles)	Self: positive (good relationship and cooperation, distrust is professional) NI: undetermined LI: positive (for security reasons LIs prefer to work for the PRT, money, appreciated good treatment by PRT staff) neutral (initially difficulties with need to know policy, direct feedback)

M 44 BG/ TFU 3	4-6 NIs including locally hired (Bari Gul) Screening though IMS and DR quartermaster Most 'popular' LIs were often requested for patrol duties	Instrumental	Locally hired NI risk factor due to position in local society Locally hired Bari Gul dominated and bullied other LIs Informal hierarchy also influenced by Dutch soldiers; the more often a LI went on patrol, the more status he got LIs that were often picked for patrol duties by Dutch soldiers were considered members of their team Need-to-know policy Physical separation within the camp Distrust as a consequence of insecurity about how to deal with LIs among many Dutch soldiers	Dealing with locals at base gate Talking with local contacts by telephone Overhearing ICOM chatter Priority: dealing with important information Interpreting during meetings including cultural and local context	Self: negative (never trusted LIs, which led to clashes with colleagues; admits that he was not good in dealing with interpreters and kept relationships strictly professional; 'if I was the opponent I would infiltrate an agent as close as possible: the position of the interpreter') LI: negative (one incident of wrongful accusation of treason by Dutch soldiers)

M 45 PRT/ TFU 3	Most skilled LIs from BG transferred to PRT. At staff level NI interpreters (preferred for the unit as a whole, but interpreters remain 'scarce resources')	Instru-mental (inter-preter essen-tials for com-muni-cation with locals)	NIs part of Dutch army structure. LIs working with PRT are promoted from BG and therefore enjoy higher status (which sometimes might trigger arrogance)	Interpretation Translation Cultural advice (includ-ing atmospherics)	Self: positive (while the pre-deployment training led to an paranoid attitude towards interpreters, the practice is that there are good work-ing ties) Negative (sometimes the behavior of the interpreter causes embarrassment for ISAF troops) NI: positive (profes-sional, highly skilled, part of the military organization) LI: positive (status) negative (no own living quarters, target for the Taliban)
M 46 BG/ TFU 3					

M 47 PRT/ TFU 3	Mix of NIs and LIs; mostly LIs at MT	Instru-mental ('inter-preter is the inter-face be-tween the local popula-tion and myself')	Undetermined	'Cultural sensitive translation' Interpretation	Self: negative ('in-terpreter is a human translation machine, he's the interface between me and the local population', easier to work with Western orientated LI's but the LI who are traditional are probably better in appropriating the conversation and in-terpreting (they don't give their own spin to the conversation) lack of trust in LIs and NIs, NI's only come for economic reasons) NI: undetermined LI: undetermined Local: Not the in-terpreters but the interlocutors are rats. They pretend to know nothing and stall the conversation so they can make up answers.

M 48 TFU 4/ KAF	5 interpreters and 1 supervisor allocated to KAF base command 9 additional interpreters for dealing with weekly bazar Interpreters divided in two groups aligned with two competing local strongmen	Instrumental (interpreters essential for managing locally hired personnel as well as dealing with the salesmen taking part in the weekly bazar)	The rivalry between competing factions sometimes necessitated to validate/ falsify facts translated by the interpreters	Interpretation, translation	Self: negative (local competition rendered local interpreters unreliable when dealing with local staff and bazar salesmen)
M 49 PRT/ TFU 4	8-10 LIs from Kandahar, Kabul, and Jalalabad Preference for LIs due to bad attitude of NIs, their tendency to take over the initiative, English as mission language, good experiences with LIs Quartermaster allocated taskings on a daily basis, best LIs tasked with most complicated missions Locally recruited LI Bari Gul was fired in this period, apparently because he held too much interest in much of the PRT affairs (family ties with key leaders, etc.), he was, however, quickly hired by US forces	Instrumental ('main task of PRT is to talk with the population, we conduct some 10 conversation a day in which we need an interpreter')	Need-to-know/nice-to-know policy, briefings on short notice, typically the team would discuss the information further with the LI in patrol vehicle when on road 'No control without trust' Actively fostering a good relationship between military staff and LIs, the small pool of LIs made it possible to learn more about each specific individual Informal hierarchy among LIs based on age, length of period one has been working as a LI, command of English An NI tried to claim authority over all LIs, which led to his demise Not all military personnel was sufficiently aware of the value and workload of the interpreters Restrictions on freedom of movement within camp and not allowed to bear arms Relationship with and position of LIs was part of HOTO with predecessors as well succesors	'I want to make my assessment independent of the opinion of the interpreter' 'clear instruction with regard to interpreting/ translating: correct the interpreter when necessary, and let him translate when asked and if necessary' Political meetings required 3 LIs (1 for the commander, 1 for the development projects, 1 for the security detail) 'The interpreter is more than a translation machine, especially when he has been in the area for a longer period' Cultural advisor, informer (yet deal with care with this information as it might be biased) Patrols, gate duties, PRT house meetings, translation of paperwork Institutional memory, the LIs transfer knowledge from previous rotations Depending on the interlocutor, LIs would disguise themselves	Self: positive (almost no problems with LIs, 'you can always count on them', good experiences contrary to pre-deployment training in which interviewee was warned to 'take care what you do with interpreters, they are translation machines', respect for LIs) LI: positive (respect from PRT team members) Negative (frustration over need-to-know policy)

M 50 BG/ TFU 4	25 LIs allocated to BG Preference for LI who was prepared to take initiative, held sufficient language skills and who had a good character LIs who received good evaluations were promoted to PRT/staff TFU BG allocated least experienced LIs Additional informal screening by platoon leaders	Instrumental	During patrols the interpreter was always positioned close to the (sub-) commander at the front LIs were on short notice briefed about the commander's intent and purpose of the mission in order to enable them to operate as independent as possible During pre-deployment training it was urged to inform LIs as little as possible When trusted, LIs are willing to take the initiative An allocated LI was trusted until he demonstrated that he did not deserve to be trusted LIs were treated in the same strict way as soldiers when they made a mistake during patrols The platoon as whole is responsible for the LIs safety, LIs were perceived as members of the unit Restrictions: no arms, no access to restricted staff areas at base	Conveying the commander's message to local interlocuters Cultural advice	Self: positive (good experience working with LI of preference who he trusted despite awareness that LIs might have multiple interests at stake, the negative image presented during pre-deployment training did not reflect the practice of working with LIs in Uruzgan) Negative (problems due to insufficient English language skills or questionable loyalty) LIs: negative (threat during patrols)

M 51 PRT/ TFU 4	PRT commander and staff were allocated 2/3 NIs, additionally the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated 2 non-military interpreters MTs LIs	Instrumental; the interpreter is the connection to external contacts	NIs part of the team (proper screening, military rank, received same aftercare as military personnel) NIs informal intermediators with LIs (information flow, social control); interviewee considered this tie a crucial investment for cohesion among PRT interpreters LIs respected team members (received letters of recommendations) LIs were no sparring partners with regard to content of the mission and therefore were informed on a need-to-know basis (and they agreed with their position as there was no interest in taking over the position of the interlocutor, respect for authority) LIs trusted, yet considered vulnerable to local influences Informal LI hierarchy based on age seniority Trust relationship influenced by daily relationship, experiences of predecessors, the number of occasions in which an interpreter prevents you from making a mistake, screening. NIs allowed within PRT staff offices and also allowed to bear arms, LIs not	Conveying the message, including emotions from both interlocutors Bridging cultural differences, including cultural advice Providing feedback on the course of the conversation, including intelligence gathering on interlocutors	Self: positive ('as commander of the PRT I was continuously accompanied by an interpreter'; received good advice, good relationship with interpreters) Negative (some LIs held insufficient command of English and were sometimes corrected by local interlocutors) LIs: positive (letters of recommendation, rapprochement on status and salary issues) Negative (Lucky incident and subsequent strike of BG LIs caused by overreaction from Dutch staff)

M 52 TFU 4/ OMLT	Interviewee held responsibility over all 88 interpreters of the Dutch contingent (71 TK, 13 DR, 4 KAF); this job encompassed planning and allocation ('the right interpreter in the right place') as well as dealing with problems and leave. Ad hoc: more wounded, more interpreters allocated to field hospital NIs: scarcest OMLT only LIs LIs recruited and hired through IMS in Kandahar, which was run as a 'criminal organization' by American Afghans who intimidate LIs; this management was replaced twice due to security concerns; screening was rudimentary only therefore additional screening by Afghan intelligence in TK	Instrumental	Hierarchy: one LI acting as local manager overseeing LIs for IMS, later abolished because this manager had developed an attitude towards other LIs, this also meant there was no longer any buffer for smoothening conflicts between interviewee and LIs Interviewee enforced his position as 'supreme boss' over all interpreters in order to control positions and attitudes 'Custom law' among LIs: newcomers start with the OMLT, highest positions are with PRT 'Tribal culture' among LIs Discrimination, LIs were no longer allowed in cantina (Echo's) because of their smell Culture clash between Dutch soldiers and interpreters	Daily work for various elements of the TFU (BG, OMLT, PRT, etc.) 24h reachability for intake of detainees	Self: negative (most of my job consisted of solving problems either among interpreters self or as a result of interaction with military 'users', therefore 'I ruled with an iron fist' towards both interpreters ('the Afghan understands the language of the stick best') and colleagues, 'interpereters were only allocated through me'; 'every good-for-nothing who could say yes/no was accepted as an ISAF LI'; poor standard of LIs urged me to enforce strict behaviour ('a man a man, a word a word') and to English learning; 'Breaking down tribal culture among LIs' because position should be based on skills; 'Never trust Afghans', for instance LI manager, Lucky incident, LIs briefed as late as possible to prevent security risks; interpreters will only improve through tight control) LI: negative (reactions after Lucky incident concerning the attitude and management styles of interviewee; fear of threats from IMS and Taliban)
M 53 BG/ TFU 4	15 LIs (young adults from Kandahar/Kabul) hired via IMS for $1,200/month; after arrival at DR the QM accommodates and manages LIs, including daily appointments Incidentally 2 NIs	Instrumental	QM entitled to send back LIs (to IMS) when not functioning or security risk Importance of independent LIs without local ties LIs would sometimes disguise themselves when interacting with locals QM demonstrates 'fatherly involvement which pays back' Informal hierarchy based on seniority of age and employment Operational security and limited information towards LIs In general LIs were trusted, when doubts about trustworthiness an investigation would be conducted LIs were allowed 20 minutes of satellite phone/week Restriction with regard to freedom of movement on base and ban on arms for LIs When a group of soldiers excluded their LI, which triggered intervention of QM; in general Dutch soldiers demonstrated too less interest in their allocated LI LIs were presented a sheep for end of Ramadan celebrations, which led to invitations for Dutch staff	LIs perform duty as hosts for local guest at gate PRT/BG patrol duty Forward post duty Ad hoc duties, including NIs for electronic listening Interpretation, translation, cultural advice	Self: positive ('they are my boys, I treat them just like I treated my Dutch soldiers', initially some problems with language skills etc., but soon improvements as LIs and Dutch soldiers got used to work together; 'a pity you have to say goodbye') Negative: (NIs should not be given a military rank, cause they behaved like they were commanders of LIs) LIs: negative (threat of elimination)

M 54 Staff/ TFU 6	LIs hired through IMS	Profes-sional (LIs subject of investi-gation)	Uprising of LIs as a conse-quence of rumors about disgrace of a Koran during a house search Reporting incident on behalf of Afghan soldier LIs form front against Dutch and threaten to strike Detaining LIs considered undesirable (only when relation with Taliban is proved)	Investigating incidents in which LIs were involved	Self: negative (1 LI ushered dead threats against a Dutch sol-dier and subsequently he himself or another LI instigated an upris-ing among LIs and threaten to report this to the press, all based on rumors of an incident)

Appendix IV

Oversight of Respondents Quoted in Chapter 6

Category / Aspect	Local Interpreters	National Interpreters	Military Personnel
Allocation	LI 1, LI 5, LI 8	NI 1, NI 4, NI 6, NI 8	M 1, M 12, M 17, M 29, M 41
Motivation	LI 1, LI 3, LI 4, LI 7	NI 2, NI 5, NI 7	M 10, M 11, M 40
Position	LI 2, LI 3, LI 4, LI 6, LI 7, LI 8	NI 1, NI 2, NI 3, NI 4, NI 5, NI 6, NI 7, NI 8	M 5, M 14, M 21, M 26, M 31, M 36, M 52, M 53
Intervention	LI 1, LI 8	NI 1, NI 2, NI 4, NI 7, NI 8	M 5, M 32, M 49
Perception	LI 2, LI 4, LI 5	NI 4	M 7, M 13, M 16, M 30, M 49

Appendix V

Topic Lists Used for Interviews with Local Interpreters (I), National Interpreters (II) and Military Personnel (III)

I. Topic List Local Interpreters:

Function

1. Have you worked as an interpreter before?
2. How did you get this job?
3. Why do you want to work as an interpreter for ISAF?
4. What is your native language? What languages do you speak? What language(s) do you use here?
5. Have you been screened?
6. Do you have a rank? Why (not)?
7. What do you do as an interpreter? Can you give examples of your daily job?
8. Where and with whom do you stay on the base?
9. Are there any restrictions for local interpreters on the base?
10. What do you think of your job? What do(n't) you like about it?
11. Do you consider your work as an interpreter to be dangerous? In what respect?
12. How would you describe your cooperation with the Dutch soldiers? Are there any problems?

Religion

14. Are you religious? How important is that to you?

Social contacts

15. Do you hang out with Dutch soldiers? Can you give examples?
16. How is your relation with the national interpreters?
17. If you experience problems, would you then talk about it? With whom?
18. Do you keep in touch with your family? How?

Communication and culture

19. Do you think there are differences between your style of communicating and the way Dutch soldiers communicate? Can you give examples?
20. Are you familiar with the "hearts and minds" approach? What, do you think, is the best way to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people?
21. What is typical for the Afghan culture? Can you give examples?
22. Could you tell me something about the position of women and children? How to approach women?

Values

23. How important is honour to you in your professional and personal life? Can you give examples?

Extra

24. If there was something that you could change about your job, what would that be?

II. Topic List National Interpreters

Functie

1. Welke ervaring heeft u als tolk? (Is dit uw eerste optreden of heeft u al meer ervaring?) Zoja, i.g.v. Defensie, aan welke missies en/of rotaties heeft u deelgenomen?
2. U werkt nu als tolk voor Defensie, hoe bent u op deze positie terechtgekomen? (afkomst, taal, cultuurkennis, contacten).
3. Waarom wilde u voor Defensie tolken?
4. Bent u gescreend? Welke screening heeft u ondergaan (B/A)? Hoe heeft u dat ervaren?
5. Heeft u enige voorbereiding genoten om als tolk te kunnen functioneren? Waaruit bestond die training? Waar vond de training plaats?
6. Op welke termijn heeft u die voorbereiding genoten? (kort voor vertrek of ruim voorafgaand aan de uitzending)
7. Heeft u een rang toegekend gekregen? Zoja, welke? Wat vindt u daarvan?/Hoe heeft u dat ervaren?
8. Heeft u een duidelijk overzicht van de militaire organisatie op de basis? Indeling van eenheden, *Small Units of Action*? Is het duidelijk waar de functie van tolk onder geplaatst is? Behoort u tot een bepaalde eenheid? Welke? Zoniet, hoe functioneert u dan?
9. Waaruit bestaan uw taken als tolk? Word u ingezet voor specifieke taken en situaties?
10. Hoe ervaart u persoonlijk uw rol? Ervaart u een verschil met wat u tijdens de opleiding heeft geleerd en wat u in de praktijk doet?
11. Is er een rotatiesysteem voor de tolken? (Hoeveel maanden werkt u, werktijden per dag, hoeveel vrije tijd heeft u ter beschikking? Draait u wisseldiensten en welke?)
12. Had u (voorafgaand) een bepaalde verwachting van de missie en uw optreden/ werkzaamheden daarin? Licht toe. Komt de praktijk overeen met uw verwachting? Licht toe.
13. Hoe ervaart u de samenwerking tussen u en de militairen? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven?
14. Ervaart u verschil in de manier waarop u benaderd wordt door militairen met een hoge rang en militairen met een lagere rang? Heeft u een idee waar dat verschil in gedrag uit voort zou kunnen komen?
15. Op welke wijze wordt u geïnformeerd over de situatie waarin u als tolk gaat optreden? (Neemt u deel aan *briefing*s en *debriefing*s? Wordt u apart op de hoogte gesteld?)
16. Hoe denkt u dat anderen (NL militairen) uw positie als tolk ervaren? Heeft u wel eens het idee dat u op een andere manier behandeld wordt? Waarom denkt u dat? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven?
17. Hoe denkt u dat de Afghaanse bevolking uw rol als tolk binnen het NL leger ervaart? Waarom denkt u dat? Kunt u voorbeelden geven waaruit dat blijkt?
18. Hoe zou u de rol van de tolk omschrijven?
19. Ervaart u als tolk bepaalde voorrechten en/of beperkingen t.a.v. het uitoefenen van uw werkzaamheden? Licht toe.
20. Zijn er veiligheidsvoorschriften die specifiek voor tolken gelden?

Communicatie en cultuur

21. Hoe zou u de Afghaanse manier van communiceren willen omschrijven?
22. Welke verschillen zijn er tussen de westerse en Afghaanse manier van communiceren? Kunt u daar wat over vertellen? Hoe gaat u daar mee om?
23. Zijn er wel eens situaties voorgevallen waarin u hebt geweigerd om iets te vertalen omdat het cultureel gezien niet gepast was? Zoja, wat?
24. Zijn er situaties waarin u het idee heeft dat u de situatie moet uitleggen omdat de NL militairen de Afghaanse cultuur niet begrijpen? Hoe handelt u in een dergelijke situatie? Hoeveel vrijheid heeft u daartoe?
25. Wordt er in de Afghaanse cultuur gebruik gemaakt van invloedrijke (tussen)personen om bepaalde belangen te realiseren? Wanneer?
26. Wie zijn deze personen en hoe worden zij benaderd? Speelt uw kennis daar een rol in?
27. Heeft u zelf wel eens opgetreden als bemiddelaar? Kunt u daar iets over vertellen?
28. Hoe denkt u de *hearts and minds* van de lokale bevolking te kunnen winnen? Kunt u daar voorbeelden van geven?
29. Is er wel eens sprake van non-verbale uitingen door NL militairen die door Afghanen als beledigend of zelfs kwetsend worden ervaren? Hoe handelt u vervolgens als u dat ziet?
30. Welke onderwerpen zijn absoluut niet bespreekbaar?
31. Geeft u als tolk wel eens uitleg over situaties, gebieden, historie, religie, gebruiken, wijze van communiceren? Zo ja, kunt u daar een voorbeeld van geven? In hoeverre denkt u dat het geven van cultureel advies deel uitmaakt van de taken van de tolk? Zou u willen dat er meer gebruik van uw kennis wordt gemaakt?
32. Welke sociale factoren spelen een rol bij de communicatie? (leeftijd, sekse, respect, rijkdom/klasse, tribale afkomst)

Ontspanning/vrije tijd

33. Wat doet u in uw vrije tijd op de basis? Met wie?
34. Op welke manier en hoe vaak houdt u contact met familie in Nederland? En wat betreft uw familie in Afghanistan?

Religieuze beleving

35. Hoe belangrijk is geloof in uw leven en wat betekent het geloof voor u persoonlijk? Is er op de basis gelegenheid om uw geloof te beoefenen? Hoe ervaart u dat? Hoe wordt daar vanuit de militaire omgeving op gereageerd?

Waarden

36. Welke persoonlijke en professionele waarden zijn voor u belangrijk? Heeft u het idee dat deze waarden door uw omgeving worden gerespecteerd? Waaruit blijkt dat? (respect, eer)
37. Kunt u uw ervaring, problemen, etc. bespreekbaar maken? Zoja, met wie? (een maatschappelijk werker, aalmoezenier, commandant, collega's of helemaal niet).

Communicatie en religie

38. In hoeverre speelt religie een rol in het dagelijkse leven van de gemiddelde Afghaan?
39. Zijn er wel eens situaties waarin u het idee heeft dat u vragen niet kunt stellen omdat de vraag in religieus opzicht niet gepast is? Wat doet u dan?

Communicatie en gender

40. Kunt u onderscheid maken tussen man-vrouw verhoudingen in de Afghaanse communicatie/ cultuur?

Afrondingsvragen

41. Hoe ervaart u uw optreden als tolk tot nu toe?
42. Op welke manier denkt u dat de positie van de tolk binnen de organisatie geoptimaliseerd kan worden?

III. Topic List Military Personnel

Functie

1. Kunt u omschrijven waaruit de taak van uw eenheid binnen de TFU bestaat?
2. Wat is uw functie binnen de eenheid? Waaruit bestaan uw werkzaamheden?
3. Op welke manier hebt u in uw werk met tolken te maken?
4. Met welke lokale en/of nationale tolk(en) werkt u het meest samen? Waarom?
5. Met welk type tolk werkt de eenheid (voornamelijk) samen?
6. Hoeveel tolken heeft de eenheid in dienst op dit moment en hoe worden zij geworven?
7. Op welke wijze worden de tolken gescreend? Vindt u deze screening toereikend? Uit welke aspecten zou de screening volgens u idealiter moeten bestaan?
8. Waaruit bestaan de werkzaamheden van de lokale tolken binnen uw eenheid? In welke situaties worden de lokale tolken ingezet?

9. Is er sprake van een bepaalde categorie en/of rangorde t.a.v. tolken wat betreft hun werkzaamheden?
10. Hoe vindt de informatieoverdracht met tolken plaats? In welke mate worden zij betrokken bij *briefings* en *debriefings*?
11. In welke mate speelt vertrouwen een rol in de informatieoverdracht met tolken? Vertrouwt u de tolken met wie u samenwerkt? Licht toe.
12. Gelden er bepaalde veiligheidsrestricties ten aanzien van tolken? Zijn er bepaalde handelingen en/of (deel-)gebieden binnen het kamp voor hen verboden? Waarom?
13. Hoe ervaart u de omgang met tolken? Zijn er problemen waar u tegenaan loopt?
14. Is uw beeldvorming van de lokale tolk en uw samenwerking met hen gedurende uw uitzendperiode veranderd? Op welke wijze? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven?
15. Als u terugblikt, welke situatie waarin u hebt samenwerkt met een tolk staat u dan het meest helder voor de geest? En welke situatie heeft u het meest aangegrepen?

Afsluitend

16. Hoe zou volgens u de samenwerking tussen tolken en militair binnen uw eenheid verbeterd kunnen worden?

Summary

Summary

How do language issues affect military operations, and how in particular do soldiers and interpreters cooperate in mission areas to overcome such issues? By answering this central question, this explorative study aims to enhance the understanding of the effects of the language barrier on international military cooperation. For that purpose, a predominantly sociological approach is adopted to investigate the dynamics at both the macro/meso-, and the micro-level of this specific form of interaction. The first three research questions apply a macro/meso perspective. Respectively these questions explore how language problems manifest themselves during military operations; what the implications are of language (in) competence on communication between soldiers in multinational military organizations; and how the language barrier between soldiers and the local population influences the complexity of modern military operations. The next three research questions apply a micro-level perspective to investigate the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters. These questions address how soldiers perceive the interpersonal dynamics of working with local interpreters as linguistic and cultural mediators in mission areas; how the role and position of interpreters in military contexts can be described by use of interpreters' working experiences in war-infested environments; ad what the dynamics of cooperation are between soldiers and interpreters in military operations and how involved parties deal with the intricacies of this cooperation.

The findings demonstrate that language highly matters in the military organization. Throughout history linguistic issues have complicated operations as they either hampered the cooperation between soldiers or impeded the interaction between the military and the local population. As today's operations typically are international endeavors in foreign societies, armed forces simultaneously encounter both of these issues. Whereas the former is addressed by proclaiming English as an international military lingua franca, the latter is dealt with by recruiting interpreters who command the vernacular(s) of the mission area. These agents are well suited to meet the socio-linguistic challenges that are inherent to the interaction with local partners as interpreters possess linguistic skills as well as cultural knowledge that are necessary to respond situations in the conflict zone.

Despite these measures, linguistic issues continue to have a detrimental effect on international military operations. First, command of the official military language among all members of an international coalition is not self-evident as is illustrated by, among others, participant observation during an exercise of (1) GE-NL Corps. A lack of linguistic proficiency as well as the negative by-effects of the language barrier can divide soldiers. This is harmful because servicemen need to work together in order to obtain the goals of the mission. Moreover, in the stressful and demanding military environment, even the most skilled non-native speakers might not live up to the linguistic expectations of the organization. It is therefore essential to take language matters seriously during the planning and conduct

of operations. Second, the availability of interpreters alone does not guarantee success in engaging local partners as demonstrated by a case study on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East-Timor (UNTAET). Military organizations should not only appoint interpreters, but also employ them to develop sufficient linguistic and cultural awareness and mediate between the different parties. Effective cooperation between soldiers and interpreters therefore is essential for mission success.

In order to investigate the interpersonal dynamics between interpreters and soldiers, this study analyzes experiences from both sides. First, a survey among Dutch soldiers deployed to the Afghan province of Uruzgan, shows that, among others, the nature of the work and individual cross-cultural competencies are key determinants for efficient cooperation. Openness, cultural empathy and respect for the interpreter are crucial for accessing foreign societies. Furthermore, comfortability with the translation process, the general behaviour of interpreters and support for their in-between position create appropriate conditions for interaction with the local population. Due to the relatively understudied nature of the cooperation between soldiers and interpreters, this study subsequently focuses on the experiences of interpreters to introduce a theoretical framework that describes the role and position of these agents in conflict situations. An autoethnographic analysis of narratives from individuals who served as interpreters in circumstances of violent contention reveals that their experiences are defined by the aspects of allocation, motivation, position, intervention, and perception.

Next, the framework is implemented to gather insight into the dynamics of cooperation between soldiers and interpreters in modern military missions. For this purpose, an extensive qualitative case study is applied which includes semi-structured interviews with national and local interpreters as well as Dutch soldiers deployed to Uruzgan province in Afghanistan. In addition to enhancing the understanding of how individuals respond to the complicated nature of this specific working relationship, the analysis also furthers the insight into the dynamics of each particular aspect of the theoretical framework. First, with regard to the aspect of allocation, social capital is instrumental in the recruitment of interpreters. Human capital, on the other hand, determines their allocation within the organization. The promotion of these agents to other units, paradoxically, often results in a shortage of competent interpreters at the lower level that executes the bulk of operations. Second, the aspect of motivation is approached rather instrumentally from the military side, while interpreters might join the military for more ideological reasons. Third, the aspect of the position makes clear that, despite the presence of protocols and guidelines, the position of the interpreter within the military organization remains ill-defined. In order to more strongly embed their position, the moderators of collective team identification and team member alignment should be structurally implemented by the organization. Individual soldiers and interpreters could act as transformational leaders in this process as they can cross bureaucratic strata and boundaries to the communal benefit of all stakeholders. The military, however, does not acknowledge the necessity to take up these measures in a structural way. The position of the interpreter, therefore, strongly depends on the personal insights of the involved individuals. Fourth, the aspect of intervention clarifies that the role of the interpreter involves more than just interpreting. Precisely because of the unpredictability of the military environment, the interpreter also acts as a cultural and political advisor as well as a diplomatic intermediary. Individuals who are able to act strategically are well suited to take up such roles. Yet again, however, the military organization fails to sufficiently recognize this as it does not provide realistic guidelines that adhere to the multi-faceted nature of the interpreters' interventions. Fifth, the aspect of perception demonstrates that trust is difficult to establish within the military setting. Operational security as well as other factors such as in- and out-group effects and short deployments all hinder the development of trust between the involved parties. In sum, the case of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan shows that cooperation between soldiers and interpreters is a highly dynamic, complicated, and even challenging matter that heavily depends on how the involved persons deal with the situation. Successful individual experiences, therefore, should form the basis for learning and institutionalizing lessons.

To conclude, this study extensively demonstrates that language issues influence cooperation between international military personnel as well as collaboration with the local population. With regard to the latter, the linguistic and cultural skills of interpreters are crucial as they enable these agents to act as intermediaries between soldiers and local actors. Despite their vital role and position, smooth cooperation between soldiers and interpreters is not a matter of course. Efficient cooperative relationships typically do not emerge as a consequence of the military organization's standard procedures, but have shown to strongly depend on individual traits. Particularly those soldiers and interpreters who can bridge the language gap and establish a constructive cooperation are instrumental to achieve mission success. It is time for military organizations to acknowledge these insights and start learning for future operations.

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