Languages at war: policies and practices of language contacts in conflict

Book

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LANGUAGES AT WAR

Languages at War: Policies and Practices of Language Contacts in Conflict

Palgrave Studies in Languages at War Series

Edited by Hilary Footitt and Michael Kelly

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Preface

We started examining languages at war with some trepidation, conscious that little had been written on the subject. We were, however, relieved and greatly encouraged to discover that our work found support in many quarters and has resonated with colleagues from different disciplines. The whole *Languages at War* project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and we gratefully acknowledge their support and that of the partner institutions in the project: the University of Reading, the University of Southampton and the Imperial War Museum, London.

Our colleagues in the Imperial War Museum have been a pleasure to work with, and we express our particular thanks to Samantha Heywood and James Taylor for their generous and vital contributions and to the Director of the Churchill War Rooms. Our lively Advisory Group of academics and practitioners patiently provided guidance and support throughout, and we are grateful to Christine Adamson, Dr Robin Aizlewood, Professor Mark Cornwall, Professor Anne Curry, Professor Christopher Duggan, Professor Debra Kelly, Dr Charles Kirke, Professor Andrew Knapp, Lt Col Justin Lewis, Lt Col Andrew Parrott and Dr Frank Tallett. Those who read papers, chaired sessions and contributed to the discussions in the workshops we held in the Imperial War Museum in 2009 and 2010, and in the *Languages at War* conference in 2011, played a key role in developing the themes in this book.

Above all, we are grateful to the many men and women who shared with us their own experiences of languages at war, who offered their insights and whose voices and words echo throughout this volume. Without their contribution it would have been

impossible to begin to appreciate the language experiences 'on the ground' of those involved in war.

Languages at War has been a collaborative enterprise in which themes and chapters have been discussed and developed by all participants, with individual members of the group leading on particular chapters. Hilary Footitt wrote Chapter 1, Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 and co-wrote the Introduction and Chapter 8. Michael Kelly wrote Chapter 5 and the Conclusion and co-wrote the Introduction. Simona Tobia wrote Chapter 3 and Chapter 9 and co-wrote Chapter 11. Catherine Baker wrote Chapter 2 and Chapter 10 and co-wrote Chapter 8 and Chapter 11. Louise Askew wrote Chapter 6. Catherine Baker copy-edited the text.

We hope that this first book in the *Languages at War* series will contribute to a re-mapping of conflict in which foreign languages are seen to be central to our future understanding of war.

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Michael Kelly

Acknowledgements

Louise Askew has been a professional translator, interpreter and reviser working between English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian for, amongst others, the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague and the NATO Stabilization Force HQ in Sarajevo, where she set up and headed the translation and interpretation service from 2000 to 2004. She has a PhD in international language policy in post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Catherine Baker is a Research and Teaching Fellow at the University of Southampton and Teaching Fellow in Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict at University College London. Her research interests are in the socio-cultural impact of international intervention and in the politics of popular culture and entertainment, drawing on research in former Yugoslavia. She is the author of *Sounds of the Borderland: Popular Music, War and Nationalism in Croatia since 1991* (Ashgate, 2010). Her articles have appeared in journals such as *War and Society*, *Europe–Asia Studies*, *Nationalities Papers* and *Ethnopolitics*.

Hilary Footitt is Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Modern Languages and European Studies in the University of Reading and was Principal Investigator for the AHRC project *Languages at War*. She has three areas of research activity. Firstly, she has written on the role and discourse of women in politics (*Women, Europe and the New Languages of Politics*, 2002), and was a participant in the nine-country 'Media Representation of Women in European Elections' project. Secondly, she has worked extensively on Allied–French relations in the Second World War (*War and Liberation*

in France: Living with the Liberators, 2004) and is a member of the EURO-HISMEDIA European network, 'Médias, guerre et imaginaires en Europe'. Her articles have appeared in *Intelligence and National Security*, *Journal of War and Culture Studies* and *Cold War History*. She is on the editorial board of *Journal of War and Culture Studies* and is currently an investigator in the Leverhulme 'Liberal Way of War' programme. Over the past ten years, she has been active within fora that promote foreign language study in the UK and was chair of the University Council of Modern Languages and a trustee of the Association for Language Learning. She wrote the government report *HE and the National Languages Strategy* (2005) and is currently co-convenor of the Language Alliance.

Michael Kelly is Professor of French at the University of Southampton. He is a specialist in French cultural history, particularly intellectual history, and in language policy. He has written extensively on the experience of war in France and his most recent monograph is on the intellectual and cultural reconstruction of France after the Second World War. He is editor of the Francophone journal *Synergies Royaume-Uni & Irlande* and the *European Journal of Language Policy / Revue européenne de politique linguistique*. Over the last ten years, he has worked on contemporary issues of language policy in Europe and published books on language teacher education and intercultural communication. He is actively involved in bringing about change in language teaching practice and theory and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in the UK and across Europe. He leads a national support centre for language teachers in the UK (LLAS Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies), which runs a programme of professional development for teachers in schools and universities. He is

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Simona Tobia currently teaches Modern European History at the University of Bristol and the University of Reading, where she has also contributed to the major project *Languages at War*. Her main interests are focused on war and culture in the twentieth century. She is the author of *Advertising America: The United States Information Service in Italy, 1945–1956* (Milan: LED, 2008), and of several academic articles.

Introduction

[A] Languages at War

Traditional historical scholarship on war has been markedly ethnocentric. Military historians, in what is still predominantly an Anglophone discipline, tend to adopt a nation-state ontology of conflict, eschewing what Tarak Barkawi calls the 'cultural mixing and hybridity of war' (2006: x), in favour of a state-against-state, them-against-us framework in which 'foreignness' is positioned as an unproblematic given whose qualities are largely irrelevant to the themes that are being considered. In general, when languages appear in these narratives, they do so at the end of the story, represented as elements which are essentially benign, ancillary parts of those diplomatic relations which bring a conclusion to war (Roland 1999), or as sources of useful pedagogic lessons for the post-war period, like those which could be drawn from the US Forces' communicative language teaching techniques in the 1940s (Goodman 1947; Parry 1967). To date, the only detailed historical examination of a language policy within war itself is Elliott and Shukman's work on the secret classrooms of the Cold War (2002), and this is a study which concerns itself not with languages themselves but rather with the social and cultural impacts that a programme of national language training might have on the servicemen concerned. More recently, however, historians engaged with pre-twentieth-century conflicts have begun to question the traditionally accepted linguistic nationalism of the armies that were fighting in Europe in the medieval and early modern periods. Thus Kleinman (2009) traces the presence of Irish participants in the French armies of the late eighteenth century and Butterfield (2009) challenges the monolithic 'Anglophoneness' of British identity taken for granted by the majority of historians of the Hundred Years War.

Such instances of the historical inclusion of languages are, however, rare. On the whole, the historiography of war continues to be a largely foreign language-free enterprise. In the Western historical academy, the business of military action conducted with or against national and ethnic groups is typically understood as a monolingual operation, achieved through the language of the dominant force, or at least that of the observing historian or war studies commentator.

If war historians are largely uninterested in languages, however, linguists and translation scholars have shown themselves to be increasingly curious about war and conflict, and in particular about the role that language intermediaries, interpreters and translators, might play in military situations (Apter 2006; M. Baker 2006; Dragovic-Drouet 2007; Inghilleri 2008, 2009; Rafael 2007; Salama-Carr 2007; Simon (ed.) 2005; Stahuljak 2000, 2010). Often informed by a legacy of thought from cultural studies and literary theory (Bermann and Wood 2005), such researchers have sought to enlarge contemporary concepts of translation in ways which might be appropriate to 'translating culture in an age of political violence' (Tymoczko 2009: 179). Stahuljak (2000), for example, has called on frameworks of testimony and witness in order to understand the voices of interpreters in conflict, whilst Mona Baker has drawn on narrative theory to position translators as participants in the construction of war narratives (M. Baker 2006, 2010a), and Inghilleri's Bourdieusian approach positions interpreters within the social and professional contexts of war (2005, 2009). The result of this not inconsiderable body of research has been to emphasize the complex and multifaceted role of translators in conflict situations, thereby making important contributions to broader debates in translation studies concerning, for example, translator agency and the ethics of translation itself. For these translation specialists, languages, far from being absent from military activity, are in effect part

of the very institution of war, 'essential for circulating and resisting the narratives that create the intellectual and moral environment for violent conflict' (M. Baker 2006: 2).

It would be true to say, however, that there is still a wide gap between these two distinct parts of the academy – between the perception of translation studies scholars that language intermediaries are vital to war, and the total absence of languages, their occlusion, in the narratives which most historians construct of conflict and peace support. To some extent, this failure to connect the two approaches has a great deal to do with the very different methodological traditions of the two disciplines – translation studies and history. In translation studies, much of the most innovative work on languages and war has been stimulated by recent Western deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan: '"You don't make war without knowing why": the decision to interpret in Iraq' (Inghilleri 2010); 'The ethical task of the translator in the geo-political arena from Iraq to Guantánamo Bay' (Inghilleri 2008); 'Relationships of learning between military personnel and interpreters in situations of violent conflict' (Tipton 2011); 'Translation, American English, and the national insecurities of empire' (Rafael 2009). In this research, conclusions about the place of languages in war are generally made on the basis of data relating to these contemporary deployments, with an implicit assumption that the position of the interpreter in such conflicts is likely to be somewhat similar to that in other wars; that war, and therefore the interpreter's role within it, will not necessarily change a great deal from one conflict to another. Historians, on the other hand, whilst accepting that there are clearly constants in war – killing, the victimization of the innocent, the inequality of army/civilian relationships – generally view the activities associated with conflict as being radically context-dependent, as being framed by the particular historical and geopolitical circumstances which have produced the war in the first

place. This book aims in some measure to bring the two sides of the debate into dialogue: to show how integral foreign languages should be to our accounts of war, and to illuminate the place of languages, and therefore that of language intermediaries, within the contexts of different sorts of conflict situations.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council project on which the book is based, *Languages at War: Policies and Practices of Language Contacts in Conflict* (http://www.reading.ac.uk/languages-at-war/), takes as its starting point the need to contextualize the role of languages in war, to see languages as integral to the constitution and development of each particular conflict. Any war, the authors assumed at the outset of the project, has its own peculiar context, bringing together a range of variables: the purpose and focus of the mission, the constitution of the military forces, the modes of encounter with civilians and the composition and attitudes of local people. These variables frame the conflict itself and the potential role of languages within it. What tasks, for example, have the military been given in any particular conflict? Are they to occupy a country, liberate an area, pacify a region, make peace between warring groups or build a long-term and stable peace? Is their deployment expected to be short-term or extensive? Are the armies drawn from one nationality or several? Have they been deployed as a national group or are they organized with others, either in a loose coalition of foreign partners, or in a tighter treaty organization? On the ground, do they seek to have direct relations with foreign civilians through their own personnel, or do they delegate most of these encounters to third party nationals, recruited on the ground or brought in by a civilian agency? How do local attitudes towards the military differ according to the particular groups involved, and how do such attitudes change over time, perhaps mirroring the behaviour of the armies concerned and/or the evolution of the conflict itself?

To examine languages in this context-specific way, the *Languages at War* project selected two case studies which seemed likely to provide different settings for the role of languages in war: the liberation and occupation of Western Europe (1944–7) and peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995–2000). In the Second World War, the mission given to Allied armies was to liberate enemy-occupied territories and then to set up an occupation administration in Germany. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the military were positioned first as peacekeepers between hostile ethnic groups and finally as peace-builders, seeking to contribute to new relationships for the future. In the 1940s struggle, Allied troops, although brought together in a coalition from a range of nations, largely fought on the ground as separate entities in different theatres of war. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Western armies were deployed as part of a wider peace operations force under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), operating under national orders but within a loose supra-national framework. In the Second World War, the huge armies of the Allied military were largely conscript soldiers and overwhelmingly male. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the forces came from smaller professional armies into which women had been at least partially integrated. In the Second World War, local attitudes towards incoming troops varied from initial welcome to irritation and growing hostility in liberated territories. In occupied Germany, civilians found themselves living in a country dominated by foreign armies and burgeoning foreign bureaucracies, with little personal freedom of manoeuvre. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, different ethnic groups, both before and after the Dayton Peace Agreement, developed a range of relationships with these foreign contingents who were peacekeepers and then peace-builders.

The role of interpreters/translators in both case studies was of key importance, but the *Languages at War* project sought to contextualize their position within the specifics of each conflict – linguists working for a section of the British administration in Germany, for example, were likely to operate in a very different situation from those engaged by NATO in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Rather than concentrating solely on the work of interpreters/translators, the project aimed to investigate those military perspectives on languages which had created the operational environments in which language intermediaries worked. Understanding the attitude which the military took towards languages – their policies – seemed to be as important as understanding the language experiences of those on the ground of war – the practices of military, civilians, and translators/interpreters.

[A] Policy and practice

The project therefore began with the aim of testing the frameworks set by language policies for war against the experiences of those at the sharp end of conflict and examining how the results of experience have in turn inflected policy. Testing policies through their practical outcomes appeared likely to provide a deeper understanding of the realities of language practice by exploring how they diverged from the premises on which policy was based. It appeared likely to lead to a clearer understanding of the ways in which policies were modified in the light of practical experience. And it seemed likely to yield insights that could inform the future development of language policy in conflict situations, and perhaps more broadly in other contexts. The early stages of the research brought these assumptions into question and suggested a more productive approach, which took practice rather than policy as its starting point, and focused on the lessons that could be learned.

An approach based on language policy was a promising point of departure, since it is a well-established field of study, which continues to develop. However, the issues of languages in conflict have rarely been studied, and it became clear that the available frameworks of analysis needed to be significantly extended in order to address them. Language policy emerged from the work of Joshua Fishman, Joan Rubin and others on the sociology of language (Fishman 1972, 1974; Rubin *et al.* (ed.) 1977). It developed principally as an academic basis for understanding and developing language planning at the level of states, an emphasis which still predominates (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997). As a result, language policy has often been regarded as synonymous with language planning, and has referred to the efforts of states or political movements to manage language use within a country in response to, or in pursuit of, social change (Cooper 1989; Schiffman 1996). This is a particular focus for journals such as *Language Policy* and *Current Issues in Language Planning*, which have developed an extensive research community (Kaplan *et al.* 2000). Work in this area has provided detailed descriptions of a wide range of contexts and has been taken in a number of different directions, exploring, for example, the policy implications of European integration (Coulmas (ed.) 1991), issues of linguistic rights (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (ed.) 1994), and the emergence of globalization (Wright 2004). At the same time, the field has been marked by growing diversity in approaches (Ricento (ed.) 2006). As a result, as Bernard Spolsky noted, 'no consensus has emerged about the scope and nature of the field, its theories or its terminology' (Spolsky 2004: ix).

The field of language policy has remained firmly focused at the level of states and international bodies. In this context, Spolsky's work has been influential in defining the scope of language policy, using a three-part division into 'language

practices, language beliefs and ideology, and the explicit policies and plans resulting from language management or planning activities' (Spolsky 2005: 2154). In principle, it was the relationship between the first and third of these elements, practice and policy, which formed the initial framework for the *Languages at War* project. It was a framework well adapted to the analysis of language planning at the level of the state. However, neither the Allied forces in occupied Europe nor the UN/NATO forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina were explicitly concerned with language planning, and as a result the framework did not prove helpful for analysing their experience.

More recently, some attention has been devoted to the 'micropolitics' of language policy within particular institutions. Anthony Liddicoat has directed attention towards language planning at local level (Liddicoat and Baldauf (ed.) 2008), Charles Alderson and others have looked at the micropolitics of language education (Alderson (ed.) 2009) and Spolsky's most recent work has addressed the areas of the family, religion, the workplace, the media, schools, legal and health institutions and the military (Spolsky 2009). Their work has been concerned to identify the complexity of issues involved in the management of language at an institutional level and opens up the area of language policy in social activities below the level of the state. In a similar spirit, Georges Lüdi has explored institutional issues of language policy at the level of individual business enterprises (Lüdi and Heiniger 2007; Lüdi *et al.* 2009).

From the experience of addressing issues at the level of military institutions, it has become clear that there is a need for other concepts than those designed to help understand the actions of states. This point has been usefully developed by Michael Hill, in relation to the different levels at which public policy is formed and carried out (Hill 2009). He suggests that a broad concept of 'discretion' may be required to

account for the importance of delegated decision-making (Hill 2009: 225). He also endorses Michael Lipsky's notion of 'street-level bureaucracy', a concept used to explore the delivery of state services by teachers, social workers, police officers and others who embody authority at a local level (Lipsky 1983). Lipsky's analysis of the critical role of these agents is particularly helpful in understanding processes within stable bureaucratic structures, but may well be applicable to more dynamic contexts, such as those encountered in military operations. It intersects with the military concept of the 'strategic corporal', under which greater responsibilities are devolved to more junior leaders in contexts of more complex military tasks and greater media attention (Krulak 1999; Szepesy 2005; Liddy 2005).

The specific purposes which policy serves at institutional level may be better expressed in terms of functional needs rather than in terms of political or ideological aims. Claude Truchot and Dominique Huck's work on enterprises adopts this approach to analyse the real or supposed needs of business (Truchot and Huck 2009). A needs-based approach brings with it a focus on problem-solving and strategies for action. Sharon Millar and Astrid Jensen emphasize the role in this of common sense expression, which is essential for effective knowledge production and transfer, and gives the key agents in an enterprise the means to make sense of their own needs and strategies (Millar and Jensen 2009).

These approaches that seek to understand language policy below the level of the state share the common feature of beginning with practice and working towards policy implications, rather than beginning with policy. Their concern is with operational needs and with the people who carry out the operations. Their approach converges with the preliminary findings that emerged from research into languages in the two fields of conflict that the project addresses. The concepts of delegated

decision-making, the critical role of agents, needs analysis and problem-solving

provide valuable tools for understanding policy development at the level of

institutions in general and military institutions in particular.

At the same time, the armed services have an integral relationship with the

state. They are coercive state agencies, and military operations are conducted on

behalf of a state, embodying the state's political and legal authority. In that sense,

even though the armed forces may behave as institutions, they are also subject to the

broader language policies prevailing within their state. Similarly, by their actions and

example they also represent their state and function as an 'ideological state apparatus',

which aims to embed the aims and aspirations of the state in the hearts and minds of

those with whom they engage, in war or peace (Althusser 1984). Consequently, an

analysis of the language practices of the military must take account of both state and

institutional dimensions. On the one hand, the military have operational requirements,

to which they respond, and a specific ethos that has developed historically. On the

other hand, the armed forces are instrumental in implementing the broader social,

cultural and policy framework of the state they serve. There is often a tension between

these two dimensions, and militaries may be the vanguard or the rear-guard of

changes in civil society as well as embodying or representing them.

Examining the situation of the Allied forces in 1945 and the NATO forces in

1995, it rapidly became clear that there were both too few and too many different

policies to provide a coherent framework within which to evaluate the interaction

between policy and practice. There were too few policies in the sense that the overall

language policy of the Allies and NATO was at an extremely general level. Their first

concern was to ensure that the forces could communicate effectively with one another.

To a large extent, this was taken for granted in the case of the Allies, who were

largely drawn from English-speaking countries, with only small contingents from non-Anglophone Allies. The issue of linguistic 'interoperability' was a more serious issue for the NATO forces (Crossey 2005). NATO policy is officially that English and French are the two working languages. However, since France placed itself outside NATO military command between 1966 and 2009, the use of French has largely been abandoned in practice for communication between contingents. The policy directions in this area are therefore primarily concerned to enhance the ability of different NATO forces to achieve an adequate level of competence in English. NATO also maintains a framework for language testing, based on a Standardization Agreement (STANAG), which defines language proficiency levels in a scale entitled STANAG 6001. The policy directions in this area are primarily concerned with the dissemination and implementation of good practice. This relative dearth of policy has been reinforced in most recent times by the view held by military personnel that 'policy' is a civilian activity and therefore mainly the responsibility of the appropriate government bodies.

In other respects, conversely, there are too many language policies. In particular, each participating country has its own policies relating to language use and language education. This is as true for 1995 as it was for 1945, though the number of contributing countries differs significantly. Each country had its own distinctive approach, which was often in itself quite complex, particularly where countries had more than one official language. Most of the larger contingents in both conflicts used their own national language or languages for internal communications, and English or (more rarely) French for their communications with other contingents. Each country had its own approach to issues of interaction with other units, such as when internal documents would be translated, when officers would use an interpreter to converse

with each other, which ranks of military personnel would be required to have language proficiency, at what level, and with access to what training. Each country also had a different approach to communications with the local populations, and frequently different approaches for different linguistic, national or ethnic communities. Different policies also applied to different operational functions. This was a significant problem in the situation after 1945, where the Allied military were tasked with a wide range of activities, including many which were later transferred to civilian agencies or contractors, such as government and administration, judicial systems, humanitarian aid, reconstruction and conference interpreting.

Both of the interventions were transnational operations, and contingents from different countries were frequently required to cooperate on the same operation. In some cases, a single contingent might be formed of brigades from several countries. On the other hand, looking in detail at some of the individual countries, it rapidly becomes clear that the relationship of a contingent to national policy frameworks is extremely variable. In this context, the concept of delegation is particularly helpful, since national frameworks range from highly centralized procedures in which authority is focused at the most senior levels to highly devolved procedures in which a wide discretion is allocated to forces on the ground at lower levels.

The diversity of what might potentially be included in the policy domain is so great as to render it impossible to draw up a coherent statement of policy relevant to language, against which to measure the experience of practice. Yet this diversity is in fact an indication of how deeply language is embedded in the experience of conflict in its multiple dimensions. Language practice exceeds language policy to such an extent that an analysis beginning with policy cannot hope to grasp the complexity of practice. Much better, then, to begin with practice in all of its diversity and work

towards a sense of what lessons may be learned to inform future practice and even future policy.

[A] Recovering languages in war

There are, however, methodological problems in investigating the practices of languages in war and uncovering their presence in conflict. Even in the case of wars for which archival material abounds, the 'architecture' of many of the archives involved – the ways in which the material was originally collected and is now organized – initially presented challenges. How do you, for example, locate the 'foreign' within archives of war which have been created and catalogued in order to represent a particular national story? In the first case study, the Second World War, the catalogue of the British National Archives in Kew detailed thousands of files relating to the period. The search terms 'translator' and 'interpreter', however, revealed fewer than 170 references. Of these, 26 related to operational requirements for translators/interpreters and systems of recruitment for particular sectors – interpreters for hospitals, interpreters for war crimes trials, and so on. By far and away the largest group of interpreter/translator files consisted of captured enemy documents which concentrated not on language intermediaries who had been working for the Allies but rather on those employed by the enemy – indeed, 60 per cent of this collection consisted of memoranda of debriefings with Hitler's chief interpreter, Paul-Otto Schmidt. This weighty archival positioning of translating/interpreting as being connected with an axiomatically suspect 'foreignness', that of the enemy, was replicated in one of the next largest sections in the catalogue for interpreters/translators, the Security Service holdings, which had personal files on captured enemy interpreters. The picture that emerged from this group of catalogue

entries was one of interpreters as marginal figures, unreliable and prone to changing allegiances:

> Jakob Gamper, alias Georges Vernier: Swiss. A petty criminal, Gamper was recruited in Dijon in 1944 as a translator/interpreter for SD. His contribution was not great and, as might be expected, he was unreliable, is said to have double-crossed his masters, stolen their money, and finally deserted (catalogue entry KV2/555).

> Arthur Gordon William Perry, alias William Gordon-Perry, British. Before 1939 he held Fascist sympathies and had connections with the German Intelligence Service. He later claimed to have worked for British Intelligence in 1939 in Bucharest. He was interned by the Germans in 1940 and released in 1942 when he worked as a translator for the German Foreign Office and was connected with the publication of the German propaganda newspaper, 'The Camp', which was circulated amongst British prisoners of war (catalogue entry KV 2/619).

Those formally designated as 'translators/interpreters' in the National Archives were thus framed as outsiders, as marginal figures who provoked intense suspicion. This archival eccentricity was reinforced incidentally when the larger number of catalogue entries (359) for 'languages' were examined. In this case, 'languages' generally connoted material actually written in a foreign language: decrypts of German cypher messages; the foreign language press in the USA; foreign language journals of exile groups in London; pamphlets written in French to be dropped by the RAF. In the

architecture of the archives, the ways in which material was organized and catalogued, language intermediaries were positioned as marginal, their foreignness a cause for suspicion, and foreign language material was insulated away in a separate category of the foreign, 'languages'.

Despite this, however, foreign languages are indeed present in the archives of war, in those inevitable connections with the 'foreign' which conflict forces upon us when we seek to conceptualize war not as nation-state against others but rather as a process of potential interconnection, what Barkawi calls 'making together' in world politics (Barkawi 2006: 17). In the archives of war, instead of looking for a specific category associated with languages, 'translator/interpreter'/'languages', a more productive approach was found to be following the development of the conflict, the stages of war, and investigating those points at which such connections existed, where languages were actually embedded within military strategy and operational concerns. Military operations, whether invasion or peace support, tend to be organized in broad phases: pre-deployment, deployment (itself understood in discrete operational stages), and post deployment. Foreign Office committees, War Office reports, situation analyses, all followed this trajectory. Connections with the 'foreign' were made either explicitly or implicitly within these stages, through information provided, through intermediaries chosen and through the physical presence of the armies deployed. Thus, for example, the archives showed that preparing 3.5 million troops to land in continental Europe in 12 different countries in 1944 was an exercise in which foreign languages were firmly embedded. A special Foreign Office sub-committee had been tasked with producing a suite of guides to be issued to all soldiers. These guides, information on the countries concerned, were to have a vocabulary list, drawn up by the Foreign Office Vocabulary Sub-Committee, with linguistic suggestions on how to

deal courteously and thoughtfully with the liberated civilians whom the soldiers would be meeting. Language intermediaries were present in the archives at almost every stage of the conflict. Far from being marginal, as in the case of the catalogued 'interpreters', these figures were often so tightly integrated into the processes of war that their functions as linguists appeared to 'bleed into' what were considered to be the primary objectives of war. One classic case of this phenomenon, of the processes of war archivally subsuming language intermediaries, was the previously unremarked presence of translators at the heart of the British Intelligence operation at Bletchley Park (the Government Code and Cypher School, GCCS): 18,000 translations per month being processed in the spring of 1944 alone. In this instance, the distinction between intelligence analysis and translation had become essentially notional. Doing one necessarily implied doing the other, so that the job, and the personnel engaged to do it, became indistinguishable. On the ground of war, too, the archives revealed a clear linguistic dimension to the physical presence of the military. Thus, for example, setting up a British zone of occupation in Germany involved the establishment of a huge British bureaucracy with an English-only policy, creating what became in effect a hermetically-sealed space for an English-speaking community, deliberately distanced from the locals. Despite their catalogued marginality, then, foreign languages could indeed be found in the national archives of war. Whether recognized explicitly or implicitly, languages were embedded within the preparations and operations of conflict, providing connections which could be read in the documents of war: connections of information, connections of communication and connections of physical presence.

But, of course, not all wars and conflicts can be approached through a large corpus of archived resources. Documents relating to the second case study in Bosnia-

Herzegovina, for example, are still classified and hence currently closed to researchers. In this situation, recovering languages in war had to involve developing a largely interview-based study, one which resulted in more than 50 oral history interviews with participants: locally-recruited interpreters, military linguists, other military personnel and people working with NGOs and peace support organizations. As suggested by the experience of our partner in the project, the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London, these extended interviews – the shortest one lasted 50 minutes and most were an hour and a half to two hours – followed a broadly biographical trajectory. By stimulating such biographical testimony the project sought to embed languages within the trajectory of the individuals concerned, with the interviewer asking participants in a non-intrusive way about their earlier language learning experiences and bringing to light the diverse biographies of mobility that had served to constitute notions of the local and the foreign within the Bosnia-Herzegovina experience. The NATO-led peace enforcement force, for example, was continually visiting the three main Bosnian armed groups which had taken part in the war, carrying out weapons inspections and holding military liaison meetings. The interviews showed that, whilst some officers in charge of these units refused to use interpreters of a different ethnicity from the armed force they were going to see, others were prepared to do so. For some of the locally-recruited interviewees, at least, military policy dictated that they would be visiting territory under the control of a different ethno-national army from the one which currently held power over the place in which they lived.

Rather than observing the role of languages in documents which had been selected for archiving, this case study listened to the personal testimony of those who had a story to tell about languages in peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and

who were still endeavouring to understand their experiences over time. Interviews of this sort did not produce precise data of the type that might be available in contemporary archives (the exact nature of language preparation given to soldiers, the precise number of language intermediaries engaged at any point in the conflict, and so on), but the voice of the language experience itself was a key part of what this project sought to recover, believing that what participants had to say about foreign languages was an integral and valid part of the whole narrative of war. In the Second World War case study, we were able to listen to participants' oral testimonies which had been recorded by the IWM before 2000 and then re-interview them ourselves, listening more specifically for the languages element in the personal stories they told. Interviewees who had barely mentioned languages in the original recordings became voluble about their language experiences and the role which languages had played in their war activity when someone was actually asking them how languages were involved in the jobs they had been given to do. The voices of those actually talking about their experiences of languages in war – whether at the time through archival quotations, in material recorded after, or in interviews specifically undertaken for the *Languages at War* project – are key elements in the recovery of languages for our historical and contemporary understanding of war.

[A] The *Languages at War* project

This volume, *Languages at War: Policies and Practices of Language Contacts in Conflict*, brings together the results of the AHRC-funded project also known as *Languages at War*. The project was a joint one, involving a core group of six researchers, drawn from two UK universities and from the IWM, with additional expertise offered by an Advisory Group of academics and practitioners, including representatives of the Ministry of Defence. Whilst separate chapters are written by

different members of the core team (see Preface for details of authorship), the book is very much a product of those lively discussions and reflections which have taken place amongst us as the project has developed.

The book is structured around four themes which broadly mirror the chronological stages of military activity. **Part I (Intelligence)** investigates the place of languages in what is usually a pre-deployment period. What role do foreign languages play in an intelligence community? How do we approach understanding the other? What place does the 'human' have in human intelligence? **Part II (Preparation and Support)** examines the role that languages play in military preparations for warfighting and peace operations. How do armies prepare their forces linguistically to liberate territories and to deploy in peace support operations? How does the language infrastructure of the countries concerned affect and modify the preparations they make? **Parts III** and **IV** tackle issues relating to the on-the-ground language experiences of war and conflict. **Part III (Soldier/Civilian Meetings)** looks at the role which an armed force's perception of its own language may have in conditioning the terms of exchange between incoming military and local inhabitants. What is the linguistic context in which 'fraternization' operates, and are such relationships determined by the type of mission in which forces are engaged? **Part IV (Communication through Intermediaries)** examines the lived experiences of language intermediaries, both military and civilian, allowing the voices of those who play the role of translators/interpreters to tell us about the jobs they do and the lives they lead in conflict. The **Conclusions** bring together some of the key themes which have emerged from the case studies and set them in the context of lessons which might usefully be learned by government, the military and linguists themselves when they consider future armed conflicts.

Depending on the particular characteristics of the case studies concerned, the four themes are developed through chapters which deal specifically with one or other of the conflict situations. For example, with Intelligence, there is more documentation on the earlier Second World War conflict (**Chapters 1 and 3**) than on the later case study, whilst the case study on Bosnia-Herzegovina is arguably a more challenging example of the difficulties Western forces face when seeking to 'understand the other'(**Chapter 2**). In looking at pre-deployment language preparation, the Second World War case study showed what happened when a centralized organization, with a relatively long lead-in time, was preparing for a large continental deployment (**Chapter 4**), whilst the Bosnia-Herzegovina case study illustrated preparations for an unexpected small-scale deployment which had particularly complex ethno-national realities (**Chapters 5 and 6**). **Chapters 7 and 9** examine occupation and military interpreters in war from the 1940s perspective and **Chapter 10** explores the role of civilian interpreters in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Two of the chapters (**Chapter 8, Fraternization; Chapter 11, Being an Interpreter**) adopt a comparative framework between the two situations in order to see the extent to which the actual practice of languages on the ground in soldier/civilian relations may have changed in the intervening years. Are there clear differences between 1945 and 1995, or is there some consistency of experience for the military, the civilians and the language intermediaries?

As we discovered in this project, war and conflict engage the interest of many different disciplines: history, International Relations, translation studies, peace studies, cultural studies. Above all, they are of major importance to governments and military which prepare for action, and they are of life-threatening danger to those soldiers, civilians and interpreters who become physically involved in what happens

on the ground. For all these groups, directly affected by war and conflict, or studying the history and consequences of armed struggle, this volume seeks to present a new map of war, one which is framed by the 'foreignness' of armed conflict and which for the first time places foreign languages at the core and centre of war.

Part I: Intelligence

Gathering and analysing intelligence is vital to national security. Failures of intelligence – when states are taken by surprise by events or misinterpret what is happening to them – are sometimes systemic, caused by lacunae in the intelligence-gathering processes, or failures to share relevant information between the diverse agencies involved. However, other causes of intelligence failures relate not to these organisational issues but rather to the frameworks of analysis, interpretation and reception which have been applied to information once it has been gathered.

This Part addresses one aspect of these frameworks of understanding: the 'foreignness' of the intelligence material and the processes by which this 'foreignness' becomes domesticated enough for the users of intelligence to be able to make strategic intelligence assessments. Typically, intelligence is drawn from an eclectic range of sources: directly available open material, covert operations and signals and human intelligence. In the majority of cases, this information arrives from foreign sources, and appears in its raw form, written or spoken, in a language which is normally not our own. The process of mediation, of rendering the foreign intelligible and therefore assessable, is an integral part of the way in which our understanding of 'the other', and hence our intelligence, is formed and constructed.

The following chapters in this Part explore the 'foreignness' of intelligence in war and peace support operations. Chapter 1, 'Languages in the Intelligence Community', investigates the ways in which institutional language policies are developed for intelligence work and explores the working practices of linguists in intelligence. Chapter 2, ' Understanding the Other', examines how perceptions of a foreign country are closely related to the existing corpus of knowledge about it, with

popular constructions of the 'usefulness' or 'relevance' of the foreign language combining with historical myths and recent political experience to create particular representations of the country which are crucial starting points for intelligence analysis. Chapter 3, 'The Human in Human Intelligence', shifts attention towards the experiences of those who act as language intermediaries in particularly tense intelligence situations: interrogations and investigations. The physical placing of the foreign language speaker between the interrogator, who wants to obtain information, and the person interrogated, reluctant to provide this information, is potentially one of the most personally fraught situations for any linguist in war.

Languages, these chapters argue, are key to effective intelligence work. Their presence in intelligence necessarily raises questions about the process of translation itself. Explaining the foreign 'other' places a particular burden upon the language intermediary, a responsibility which can shape responses and events or serve to subvert and challenge those national orthodoxies which intelligence communities develop.