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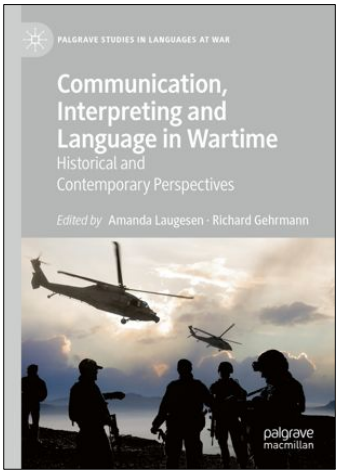
Amanda Laugesen, and Richard Gehrmann (Eds.), **Communication, Interpreting and Language in Wartime: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives**, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 269 pp., $139.99 (hardcover).



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In recent years, there has been a growing scholarly interest in the role of language intermediaries, interpreters, and translators played in war (C. Baker, 2019; M. Baker, 2010). Wars inevitably bring together speakers of different languages, and successful communication can be vital to the effective prosecution of war. The crucial role of language in war is reflected in the different aspects of intelligence gathering and evaluation, predeployment preparations, operations on the ground, and so on. Language exerts a great influence on the setting frameworks and expectations in terms of a public policy dimension. Yet the linguistic and communicative dimensions of war remain understudied, especially with respect to particular wars and particular national narratives of war. Thus, ***Communication, Interpreting and Language in Wartime: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*** seeks to broaden the knowledge and understanding of the importance of translation and communication in the wars around the world. It also aims to throw light on the story of interpreting in wartime and increase our knowledge of the work and experiences of translators, as well as the policy and issues surrounding translation. And finally, this volume attempts to explore the complex nature of cross-cultural communication in war zones, as language and communication provide a useful prism for considering the nature of cross-cultural communication and encounters in the context of war.

This book is thematically divided into five sections and edited by Amanda Laugesen and Richard Gehrmann. It brings together chapters from different wars, with an aim to juxtapose chapters based on different methodologies, disciplinary perspectives, and approaches. Section 1 begins with a brief introduction of this volume. The next section is focused on the experiences of cross-cultural communication in wartime. Section 3 deals with strategies of communication and language teaching. Section 4 examines different experiences of interpreters in wartime and after. The last section concludes the volume with reflections and future research directions. Section 1 is an introduction that provides some background on understanding communication, interpreting, and language in wartime. The introduction sets the scene for the different contributions in this volume and provides historical and contemporary perspectives on interpreting and communication in war.

Section 2 (essays 2 and 3) brings together essays on the concept of cross-cultural communication, demonstrating how issues of language and cross-cultural communication can be seen as critical aspects of

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most conflicts. And cross-cultural differences can significantly shape the relationship between different national forces. The first essay, by Amanda Laugesen, approaches the question of how Australian soldiers experienced cross-cultural communication in the First World War and also investigates how their depictions of such communication reflected their own sense of identity and cultural understandings. It attempts to contribute to the reconstruction of the languages landscape of the First World War and examine how soldiers experienced and made sense of that landscape. Furthermore, it aims to engage with work currently being done around experiential cosmopolitanism work that looks at cosmopolitanism as lived reality, and explores encounters between people, including in conflict zones. The next essay in the section, by Richard Gehrmann, explores the social history of Australian military communication with allies in Afghanistan and Iraq, and demonstrates that the tradition of borrowing language during war continues. In addition, it shows that the global supremacy of English, in combination with the status of the United States as a major ally, has meant that the United States has been the dominant linguistic source for Australian borrowing of foreign military terminology in the current era. Finally, it demonstrates that despite apparent cultural similarities, cross-cultural differences can bring about some unexpected communication problems between allies.

Section 3 (essays 4–6) follows the preceding discussion of the challenges of cross-cultural communication and proceeds to deal with strategies of communication and language teaching, pointing out some of the issues played out in both language teaching and communication strategies. Such teaching is a critical part of preparing for war. The first essay in this section, by Jennifer Joan Baldwin, charts the history of Japanese language teaching in Australia through the period from the First World War through the Second World War. Then, it investigates the factors that led to the establishment of Japanese tertiary teaching in Australia as part of broader cultural and military policy, uncovers the stories and experiences of Japanese-language teachers in Australia, and examines the negative effects of the Second World War on that teaching and its teachers. In the next essay, Yavar Dehghani, who is himself a teacher of languages to the Australian Defense Force, demonstrates some of the ways in which language skills are currently taught for deployment, including a consideration of some of the cultural preparation that is necessary for such deployment. His case study offers an overview of the range of Australian Defense Force School of Languages intensive language courses, with a specific focus on the year-long general language course. Familiarity with the language and culture helps with communication and prevents misunderstandings and clashes because of communication breakdown, which can save thousands of lives. The real-world experience of operational deployments in war zones has corroborated the efficacy of these learning methods. Jasmin Gabel's essay starts with a look at the concept of political discourse and the relationships between the media, political actors, and the public in order to identify the legitimizing power behind political opinions and how such opinions can be influenced. Next, the base narratives of the United States and Germany are explored, based on the methodology of frame analysis provides an insight into how such a methodology can illuminate the difficulties of developing a consensual narrative around going to war.

The fourth section (essays 7–11) is focused on the experience of interpreters in war and after war. It combines personal experiences with the archival record, covers a broad range of modern conflicts, demonstrates the importance of studying the experiences and treatment of language mediators, and tracks some of the challenges of cross-cultural communication through five stories. The essay by Oleg Beyda investigates the complicated situation that émigré Russians who worked as interpreters for the Germans in the Second World War experienced. He examines, through the accounts they left of their experiences, their

motivations for doing such work and considers the way they performed those roles in very difficult circumstances. The chapter brings an important new perspective to the complicated history of the Eastern front. The following two essays take up the issue of interpreting in the context of war-crimes trials. Georgina Fitzpatrick explores the stories of those Australians who served as interpreters during the Japanese war-crimes trials at the end of the Second World War. Linguists in many guises—as interrogators, translators, witnesses, perpetrators, and, finally, as interpreters at the actual trials—are littered through this chapter. Drawing on oral history interviews, as well as the extensive archives created by the trials, she demonstrates how necessity led to a wide variety of people being drawn into interpreting work, and points out some of the challenges they faced. Ludmila Stern approaches the various issues faced by interpreters—drawing in part from her own experiences—and by the legal system in dealing with communication difficulties during war-crimes trials since the Second World War. Her chapter conveys the extreme complexity of interpreting in such trials, where multiple languages might be spoken and where cultural understanding, especially translation that conveys cultural and linguistic nuances, can play a critical role. Stern's chapter offers important lessons that can be used to address these issues in future trials.

In his contribution, Matt Grant presents personal reflections on his Australian Defense Force experience of working with interpreters in two very different deployments (Timor, 1999 and Aceh, 2005). He demonstrated how the Australian Defense Force worked with interpreters on two atypical military operations overseas and observed how increased experience and the capacity to adapt led to increased rates of effectiveness. His personal experience provides examples of how the Australian military quickly adapted to the requirement to rapidly deploy troops into crisis zones with language support, how adaptation to local conditions occurs, and how practice and familiarity was to enhance the experience for end users of interpreter services. Ali Albakaa's essay examines the nature of the risks faced by Iraq Linguistic Mediators for the Australian Defense Force (ADF) during the Iraq War. It assesses the lessons learned from the experience of those Iraq Linguistic Mediators, with an aim to promote effective risk-management action for future ADF military operations. It highlights key issues for both translation and interpreting scholars and military historians to take into account in future research, and makes some suggestions on further research questions.

Section 5 concludes this volume with an essay by Richard Gehrman and Amanda Laugesen. These two authors attempt to bring together some of the overarching themes of this volume relating to language and war, focusing on cross-cultural communication, strategies of communication and language teaching, and the experiences of interpreters. They argue that a study of language in the context of war is central to a fuller understanding of the experience of war, military history, and military policy. They also outline some future directions for research in this area and consider some of the challenges in researching language and war in contemporary and, potentially, future conflicts.

Although the book investigates policy issues in communication and interpreting historical and examines contemporary experiences of interpreters in war and war-crimes trials, more attention remains to be paid to researching languages in war. First, further research is needed on specific interpreters and on the provision made for other languages required at trials. Just as Footitt and Kelly (2012, p. 2) point out, there is a wide gap between those who study translation and thus highlight the role of languages in war and the vast majority of historical work on warfare that suggests the total absence of languages. Next, there is

more scope to undertake in research that considers cross-cultural communication differences and differences in the underlying cultural structures that encompass the national style of a given military. And finally, more attention needs to be paid to the research on the adoption of contemporary technologies and their adaptation in research on language and war, as technologies provide these greater opportunities.

On the whole, *Communication, Interpreting and Language in Wartime* provides a multidisciplinary approach to the subject of translation and cross-cultural communication in times of war and conflict. Language and translation are considered integral to the policies, practices, and experiences of war. Based on personal experiences in war, the essays in this book offer valuable primary source accounts of these conflicts on the one hand and critically examine various aspects of language and communication in the context of war and conflict on the other. Furthermore, it also highlights the importance of cross-cultural communication and examines communication difficulties in war-related contexts. This will offer readers a deep insight into the experience of those who have used language in war, and meanwhile broaden the perspectives of understanding the history of war and contemporary military policy and their impact on the role of the interpreters in a variety of conflicts (Liu, 2018).

In conclusion, this book examines the role of communication, interpreting, and language and provides insight into cultural differences and communication challenges from a perspective of war and conflicts. Thus, it makes great contribution to the current research on languages in war. It is a valuable and practical reference book for researchers, language teachers, translators, and interpreters who are interested in the role of language and cross-cultural communication in the situations of war and military conflict, and meanwhile can serves as an excellent reference for master and doctoral students.

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