

**FINNISH NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY**

**LANGUAGE POLICY, TRANSLATION CULTURE, AND  
INTERPRETER TACTICS IN THE FINNISH DEFENCE FORCES**

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<b>TIIVISTELMÄ</b>  <p>Tutkimuksen aihe on kriisinhallintaoperaatioiden sotilastulkit osana Puolustusvoimien kielipalveluita. Aihetta tarkastellaan kielipolitiikan, käännöskulttuurin ja tulkkitaktiikan näkökulmista. Kielipalvelut ovat välttämättömiä kriisinhallintaoperaatioille ja sotilastulkeilla on niissä tärkeä rooli. Sotilastulkkeja käsittelevää aikaisempaa tutkimusta on hyvin vähän.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen päämääränä on selvittää Puolustusvoimien kielipolitiikan ja käännöskulttuurin keskeiset piirteet sekä määritellä mitä tulkkitaktiikka on Puolustusvoimissa. Tutkimus pyrkii ymmärtämään kielipalveluiden taustalla vaikuttavia tekijöitä ja antamaan konkreettisia esityksiä Puolustusvoimien kielipalveluiden kehittämiseksi.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys on sotatieteessä ja käännöstieteessä. Teoriassa korostuvat tutkimusaiheen käytännönläheisyys ja sovellettavuus sekä kielellisen tuen sosiaalinen luonne. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu neljän upseerin ja yhden kieliasiantuntijan teemahaastatteluista, kyselyaineistosta sekä asiakirjalähteistä. Aineisto analysoidaan fenomenografisin ja tilastollisin menetelmin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että vaikka kielillä on vahva asema ja arvostus Puolustusvoimissa, kansainvälisen toiminnan kasvu ja toisaalta lisääntynyt maahanmuutto haastavat Puolustusvoimien nykyisen kielipolitiikan. Puolustusvoimissa on runsaasti kielikoulutusta ja kielellistä osaamista, mutta varusmiesten tai reservin kielellistä potentiaalia ei hyödynnetä monipuolisesti.</p> <p>Upseerit ymmärtävät kielipalveluiden merkityksen ja ovat pääsääntöisesti tyytyväisiä kriisinhallintaoperaatioiden kielipalveluihin. Puolustusvoimien käännöskulttuurissa kielipalveluiden kehittämistä ammattimaisiksi ei kuitenkaan aseteta etusijalle. Tulokset osoittavat, että Puolustusvoimien kielitietoisuutta ja kriisinhallintaoperaatioiden kielellistä tukea tulisi kehittää pitkäjänteisesti sotilaiden ja kieliasiantuntijoiden välisenä yhteistyönä ja samanaikaisesti sekä taktisella, institutionaalisella että poliittisella tasolla.</p>	
<b>AVAINSANAT</b> tulkkkaus, tulkkipalvelut, kielipolitiikka, kääntäminen, sotilastulkki, taktiikka, kielipalvelut	

# FINNISH NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

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<b>ABSTRACT</b> <p>Linguistic support is indispensable for military crisis management operations. This study examines military interpreters in the context of linguistic support in the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF) and in the larger frameworks of language policy, translation culture, and interpreter tactics. Previous research focusing on military interpreters is very scarce.</p> <p>The study examines the central characteristics of the language policy and the translation culture of the FDF, as well as defines its interpreter tactics in the FDF. The study aims at providing recommendations for improving the linguistic support in the FDF. The theoretical frameworks of the study are military science and translation studies, which emphasise the practical applicability as well as the social context of the subject matter. The research data consists of interviews with four officers and one language expert, survey data, as well as official documents. The data is analysed using phenomenographical and statistical methods.</p> <p>The results suggest that although languages are valued in the FDF, the internationalisation of many FDF tasks as well as increased immigration to Finland provide new challenges to the FDF's current language policy. The FDF has ample language training and available language skills, but fails to fully utilise the linguistic potential during the conscript service and in the reserve.</p> <p>Finnish officers understand the importance of linguistic support and are generally satisfied with the language services in Finnish military crisis management operations. However, the translation culture of the FDF does not prioritise the professionalisation of linguistic support. The results propose that the FDF should develop its language awareness as well as its linguistic support in the long term through cooperation between language experts and soldiers, and that this development should occur simultaneously on the tactical, institutional, and political levels.</p>	
<b>KEYWORDS</b> interpreting, linguistic support, language policy, translation, military interpreter, tactics	

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## REFERENCES

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## GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Glossary and Abbreviations – sanasto ja lyhenteet:

English – Englanti	Acronym	Finnish – Suomi	Lyhenne
Afghanistan operation	ISAF/RS	Afganistanin operaatio	ISAF/RS
Applied Consecutive Interpretation Techniques	ACIT		
Bureau for International Language Coordination	BILC		
Civil-Military Cooperation	CIMIC		
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	CEFR	eurooppalainen viitekehys	
Crisis Management Centre Finland	CMC	Kriisinhallintakeskus	
Defence Centre for Languages and Culture (UK)	DCLC		
Defence Language Centre (FIN)	DLC	Puolustusvoimien kielikeskus	
Defence Operational Language Support Unit (UK)	DOLSU		
Finnish Defence Forces	FDF	Puolustusvoimat	PV
Finnish Defence Forces International Centre	FINCENT	Puolustusvoimien kansainvälinen keskus	PVKVK
Finnish National Defence University	FNDU	Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu	MPKK
General Staff Officer Course	GSOC	yleisesikuntaupseerikurssi	YEK
Hand-Over/Take-Over	HOTO	tehtävien luovutus / vastaanotto	
Human Intelligence	HUMINT	henkilötiedustelu	HUMINT
International Association of Conference Interpreters	AIIC		
International English Language Testing System	IELTS		
International Federation of Translators	FIT		
Key leader engagement	KLE		
Lebanon operation	UNIFIL	Libanonin operaatio	UNIFIL
Lessons identified and lessons learnt	LI/LL		
Ministry of Defence	DEFMIN, MoD (UK)	Puolustusministeriö	PLM
Ministry of the Interior	INTERMIN	Sisäministeriö	SM
National Certificate of Language Proficiency (FIN)	NCLP	yleinen kielitutkinto	YKI
National Support Element	NSE	kansallinen tukiyksikkö	
NATO Command Structure	NCS	Naton komentorakenne	
NATO Training Group	NTG		
Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support	NORDCAPS		
Open Source Intelligence	OSINT	avomien lähteiden tiedustelu	OSINT
Organisation for Nordic Defence Cooperation	NORDEFCO		
Partner Language Training Center Europe	PLTCE		
Peace Support Operations	PSO		
Standard Operating Procedure	SOP	ohjesääntö	
Standardised Language Profile	SLP	standardisoitu kieliprofiili	SLP
Standardization Agreement	STANAG	Nato-standardi	STANAG
Tactics, techniques, and procedures	TTP's		
Test of English as a Foreign Language	TOEFL		
The Institute for the Languages of Finland		Kotimaisten kielten keskus	Kotus
Voluntary military exercise		vapaaehtoinen harjoitus	VEH

# LANGUAGE POLICY, TRANSLATION CULTURE AND THE TRAINING OF MILITARY INTERPRETERS IN THE FINNISH DEFENCE FORCES

*“The military, I’m afraid, don’t yet really see the need to think carefully about how to provide linguistic support.”*

(Ian P. Jones, Head of the Linguistic Service at SHAPE 1989–2011)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

On 1 July 2017, the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF) was assigned a new task: the FDF may receive international assistance or and provide it to another state, the European Union, or an international organisation. This reception or provision of international assistance does not exclude the use of military force (Finlex 2017/551). The introduction of this new task emphasises the importance of international cooperation and the international interoperability of the FDF. While the FDF does not intend to build new capabilities to accommodate its new task (Ruuskanen 2018), it is likely to be reflected in the military training provided by the FDF in the future. Although international cooperation and military crisis management have traditionally been among the cornerstones of Finland’s security policy (cf. PLM 2017a), this strengthening of the international dimension in the tasks of the FDF can be understood to acknowledge officially that the military defence of Finland is no longer a purely national matter.

The FDF has a strong background in international military crisis management. Notwithstanding the recent addition, participation in military crisis management operations continues to be one of the FDF’s statutory tasks and this crisis management both supports Finland’s security policy and develops its national defence capabilities (Finlex 2017/551; PLM 2017a, 17). These crisis management operations are often currently undertaken by

transnational coalitions, be they in the framework of the United Nations, NATO, the European Union, or another multinational grouping. Finland has also entered bilateral defence agreements with a number of countries, such as Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, to name only a few. In many sectors of Finnish society, international cooperation also continues to increase, and the military is no exception in this regard.

As a consequence of these new defence agreements, international interoperability has increased in importance for the FDF. By definition, interoperability involves a strong communicational and linguistic interest because the troops, which different nations contribute to forming multinational forces and operations, must be able to understand each other and transcend linguistic and cultural borders (see Footitt & Kelly 2018, 162). For these reasons, multilingual communications skills as well as linguistic support are vital to crisis management operations and recently to the Finnish national defence as well. Thus, it would be fair to say that the FDF has a growing interest in languages and linguistic support.

This study examines how language-related issues and linguistic support are handled in the FDF. My aim is to identify and describe the different factors and actors that influence the FDF's language policy and practices, in addition to their mutual relationships. Drawing from official documents, interviews and statistics, my objective is to provide an inclusive description of what actually occurs in the FDF as far as languages are concerned.

A purely descriptive approach would not provide a sufficient understanding of why the FDF deals with language issues in a certain manner. I therefore discuss the underlying reasoning and motivation for the decision-makers in language-related issues in the FDF, as policy, culture, and practices are all affected by individuals' conceptions. However, one objective of this paper is to raise language awareness<sup>1</sup> within the FDF; to improve how the FDF perceives and understands the role of languages as well as how linguistic matters influence the way the FDF functions.

The importance of languages and cross-cultural competences is widely acknowledged in many militaries around the world, and the information domain has been regarded as increasingly important in future conflicts (cf. Footitt & Kelly 2018, 166; 171–173). It could be argued that the higher the level of transnational military cooperation and decision-making, the more decisive becomes the impact of communication, language, and mutual

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<sup>1</sup> For additional information on the concept of *language awareness* and research developments in the many aspects of language awareness, see Lilja et. al. 2017, 13–15.



understanding. Unlike the conflicts in an all-out war, for lower intensity conflicts, language-centred activities such as diplomacy, argumentation, and negotiations play a greater role. Thus, linguistic support is a critical capability and interpreters are key players on the playing field of high-level military crisis management.

## 1.2 Personal Motivation

I served in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010 as the commanding officer of the Provincial Office in Samangan province and it was there that I had the opportunity to work directly in the field with both local and military interpreters. I also experienced some of the problems first-hand that were related to linguistic support. This insight, combined with my earlier background in translation studies, led me to reflect on the causes and underlying reasons for these problems, which at the time seemed intrinsic to linguistic support. I wanted to know more of the relationship between languages and the military, the language policies that govern linguistic matters in the military, as well as the relationship between military culture and translation culture. In short, when I witnessed that the field of linguistic support needed significant improvement, I became interested in developing this specialised military capability.

After serving in Afghanistan, I have analysed the subject matter of military interpreters and interpreting in the context of the FDF in two articles (Snellman 2011; 2014). In addition, during the research process for the current paper, I wrote two academic, peer-reviewed articles (Snellman 2016; 2018b) as well as a short paper (Snellman 2018a), which further elaborated on the theme of linguistic support and the military. Thus far, I have determined that issues concerning languages, linguistic support, and the military are complex and enduring, and that linguistic support receives insufficient attention in military organisations, especially with respect to its widely acknowledged importance. However, my position is that the concerns surrounding linguistic support can be solved, should the responsible military organisations allocate sufficient time, resources and interest to the matter. The current study will demonstrate that this allocation has not always been the case in the FDF, as well as in many other military organisations around the world.

Owing to my background, I was strongly motivated to select this research topic. Based on my experiences, my intent is to raise the readers' awareness of matters related to linguistic support in the military. I would specifically want military officers and other decision-makers

be more conscious of the importance and potential benefits of a well-developed translation culture and well-managed interpreter tactics in the armed forces. I expect this paper to clarify what underlies the policies and practices of the FDF in terms of linguistic support. I maintain that in order to suggest solutions for some of the linguistic support problems in the FDF, I must first identify which factors motivated the choices.

### 1.3 Previous Research

Few studies on military conflict or military operations have either mentioned or analysed aspects of language, translation, and interpreting (NATO 2015; Footitt & Kelly 2018, 166). However, military organisations are gradually integrating language and translations into their plans, particularly when cultural understanding is required, which eventually leads to the development of specialised doctrines for linguistic support (Kujamäki & Footitt 2016, 55–58). Academic research on the use of interpreters in military organisations remains scarce, and has mainly been conducted by linguist practitioners who work for the military, and relatively recently, by military practitioners as well (Footitt & Kelly 2018, 169–170).

Language policy has been widely researched (cf. Spolsky 2012), and the narrower topics of institutional language policy and translation policy have received academic attention (cf. Koskinen 2014; González Núñez 2016). Even the more applied topics of linguistics, such as interpreter and translator training, constitute their own academic fields. However, research focusing selectively on the military aspects of national or institutional language policies was more difficult to find, with the exception of the contribution by Brecht and Rivers (2012). A rich source of reference was Palgrave's publication series titled 'Languages at War', in particular the analyses by Jones and Askew (2014) on the language policy of NATO, as well as the ground-breaking work by Footitt and Kelly (2012a; 2012b), and by Kelly and Baker (2013).

Research on the subject of linguistic support in military operations has become increasingly common in the wake of the large and long-term multinational operations in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. While their approach has varied, the themes of these articles have typically focused on locally recruited interpreters (cf. M. Baker 2010, 201–204). Nonetheless, when the topic is restricted to concern only military interpreters, even fewer academic studies are available. This lack of research on military linguists could arguably be partially related to the restricted access to information in military structures. Besides my own work, I have

encountered only a number of academic articles that are specifically on military interpreters (see C. Baker 2010; Lewis 2012; Kelly & Baker 2013; see also Rosado 2014). As a consequence, I therefore consider the topic of this paper and its approach to be distinctive and well-founded. This is the first study to analyse the field of language policy and linguistic support specifically in the FDF<sup>2</sup>.

Two recent articles, one by Footitt and Kelly (2018) and one by Bandia (2018), provide a concise yet comprehensive outlook on history and on the most current developments in the academic research of the linguistic dimension of warfare. Bandia approaches research from a thematic perspective on translation and interpreting in situations of conflict and war, analysing the ideologies that form the context for the linguistic support. Footitt and Kelly (2018) arrive at especially interesting conclusions on the future of translation in war. For example, they observe that digital speech and language technologies are increasingly integrated into military systems. The increase in cyber operations and remote warfare has in fact served to make language more prominent in warfare, extending it away from kinetic, physical confrontation into the soft domains of information and culture.

The present research could also be considered as a follow-up to my Master's Thesis (Snellman 2014), as it addresses some of the unanswered questions in my previous work. Essentially, the present study also examines one aspect of Finnish military interpreters' agency. However, in contrast to my earlier article, which was based on interviews with Finnish military interpreters that inquired about their agency, the sources of data consulted in this article are external: the policies, practices, and circumstances under which military interpreters operate. Thus, the approach of the current paper is likewise different. Whereas in my earlier paper I investigated the inner factors of Finnish military interpreters' agency, such as competence, motivation, and values, the focus of this analysis is on the external conditions and requirements that enable military interpreters.

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<sup>2</sup> My previous analyses have examined the agency of Finnish military interpreters (Snellman 2014), and Finnish officers' views on interpreters (Snellman 2018b).

## 1.4 Reading Notes

### 1.4.1 Structure

This chapter introduces and presents my justification for the subject matter, reviews previous research, and identifies a niche for this study as a part of its rationalisation. I also explicitly state my personal motivation for conducting this study. The second chapter presents an outline the problems that this study addresses, its intended outcomes, as well as the main concepts and their mutual relationships. Furthermore, I define the research design and the theoretical framework of this research, including its scope and limitations.

Chapter 3 introduces the research data and methodology. The origins of the research data consulted in this study are described in detail, as well as the different methods that were adopted to process and analyse the data. In addition, the reliability and validity of the data and methods are assessed. The three following chapters (4, 5, and 6) present the results of this analysis. The results are structured in terms of the three main concepts of this study: language policy, translation culture, and interpreter tactics. All three of these chapters on results can be read and understood separately. They also contribute to and elaborate on the conceptualisation, which is outlined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 7 presents the results of the three previous chapters and draws conclusions from them. The combined results are presented in the form of a SWOT-analysis, which denotes the outcome space of the phenomenographic analytical process. The concluding Chapter 8 offers a summary of the most important results of this study, as well as suggestions for further research.

The text is divided into relatively small and detailed sub-chapters. This is partly due to the phenomenographic analysis process that is used, where information emerging from the research data was divided into a large number of groups, categories, and sub-categories. In order to improve readability and expedite the reader's accessibility to information, I chose to retain many of these categories, and to include them in the final paper. While this decision is unconventional, I believe that the detailed structure will make the information in this paper more available to the reader and underline the complexity of the subject.

### 1.4.2 Language

It is a factual state of affairs, albeit regrettable, that the overwhelming majority of the different actors referred to in this paper, such as military interpreters, and officers, are male. As a solution to simplifying pronoun reference to render the text more simple and readable, I intentionally refer to the different actors only with the male pronoun ‘he’ instead of using any of the gender-neutral expressions, such as ‘he or she’. This choice is based on readability, and it is important that it should not be interpreted as a political statement.

In everyday use, the term ‘interpretation’ most commonly refers to the oral mediation between languages, whereas ‘translation’ refers to both written and oral transfer. This analysis uses the terms ‘interpretation’ and ‘translation’ in parallel: both terms denote interpretation and translation, when applicable. In other words, a ‘military interpreter’ is invariably a ‘military translator’ as well, although the latter term is seldom used. In a military context, both are often performed by the same individual (Footitt & Kelly 2018). Furthermore, I explicate all abbreviations and acronyms when they are first mentioned. For reference, a list of the most important abbreviations is provided after the index.

## 2. RESEARCH STATEMENT

The previous chapter introduced the background and my personal motivation for this study. The next step is to examine the theoretical framework and its main concepts. I justify the theoretical approach I adopted by determining what constitutes knowledge in this study, as well as by describing what questions were raised at its onset. Lastly, I describe the answers I expect to receive for the articulated problems as well as what is beyond the scope of this study.

### 2.1 Motivation

The purpose of all research is to increase knowledge and to search for answers to previously unanswered questions. Although research conducted merely for the sake of knowledge is valuable in itself, the impact of an analysis depends on the urgency and applicability of its findings. For this reason, it is important to clarify the motivation for the current study. This study aims to improve interpreter tactics in the FDF. Another objective is to provide an incentive towards the FDF to improve those areas of interpreter tactics that are currently undeveloped<sup>3</sup>. The desired end-state or final product of this research therefore consists of tangible suggestions to improve the linguistic support of future Finnish crisis management operations. These improvements might also be applied to support the Finnish national defence.

The aim of improving the FDF interpreter tactics implies a number of secondary motivations. In the introductory chapter, I mentioned the motivation to increase language awareness in the FDF. Another motivating factor is to improve the mutual trust between members of Finnish crisis management forces and Finnish military interpreters. More specifically, the FDF's possible mistrust of Finns with dual citizenship has recently been a topic of discussion (PLM 2017b). This lack of trust means automatically losing some of the surplus value, which interpreters as 'force multipliers' have to offer (cf. Snellman 2014).

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<sup>3</sup> My previous study (Snellman 2014, 93–95) identified the translation culture of the FDF as undeveloped and I argued for a need to improve it.

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework

This sub-chapter introduces the main concepts of the study, their mutual relationships and defines them concisely. The concepts of language policy, translation culture, and interpreter tactics are further elaborated on and developed in the results chapters that discusses each topic (Chapters 3, 4, and 5).

### 2.2.1 Language Policy

The concept of *language policy*<sup>4</sup> has been traditionally considered to be “an officially mandated set of rules for language use and form within a nation-state” (Spolsky 2012, 3). As a concept, language policy may include diverse elements, such as language planning, education, management, and legislation concerning the status of different languages. Language policy has been characterised as being deliberate, institutional, and future-oriented (cf. Jernudd & Nekvapil 2012; Koskinen 2014). This concept has also been understood to cover pragmatic language use, such as standard language, vocabulary, and spelling (see Spolsky 2012; Jernudd & Nekvapil 2012).

More recently, language policy has expanded beyond the level of the nation-state, as other actors and ideologies have come into play. Beside the traditional, nationalist notion of language policy, language minorities have their own agendas alongside the majority, and ideologies such as human rights, ethnic identity, and language diversity have become increasingly important. As globalisation, disasters, and wars have led to language deaths, language diversity has become as highly regarded as bio-diversity (Spolsky 2012, 6–7).

Within language policy, Spolsky (2012, 5–7) identifies three interrelated components that are independent: 1) language practices, such as the use of different languages and variants, spelling, and grammar; 2) language values, which refers to the beliefs and ideologies underlying language policy; and 3) language management or planning, which constitutes the ideas, decisions, and measures adopted to implement language policy (see Figure 1 below). Language policy also includes state-level measures, such as legislation or international agreements regarding translation and interpreting, language training, or language competence requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> The terms ‘language planning’ and ‘language management’ have also been used to refer to the same concept (cf. Spolsky 2012; Sajavaara et. al. 2007).

Officially Mandated by a Nation-State		
Language Practices	Language Management	Language Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usage</li> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Grammar</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas</li> <li>• Decisions</li> <li>• Implementation</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beliefs</li> <li>• Ideologies</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>

**Figure 1:** Language policy denotes the officially mandated practices, values, and management of language use and form within a nation-state (Spolsky 2012).

### 2.2.2 Translation Culture

The concept of translation culture was first proposed by Prunč (1997), who defines it as a “subsystem, grown over time within a culture, that concerns the field of translation and that consists of a set of shared professionally established, controlled and controllable norms, conventions, expectations and values of all actual and potential parties of translation processes” (translation by author in Snellman 2014). Prunč (1997, 107–109) explains that as a concept, the aim of translation culture is to raise public awareness of translatory topics, and that the focus of translation culture should be on actively shaping the institutional regulations that concern it. This means that translation culture intrinsically involves conflicts of interest.

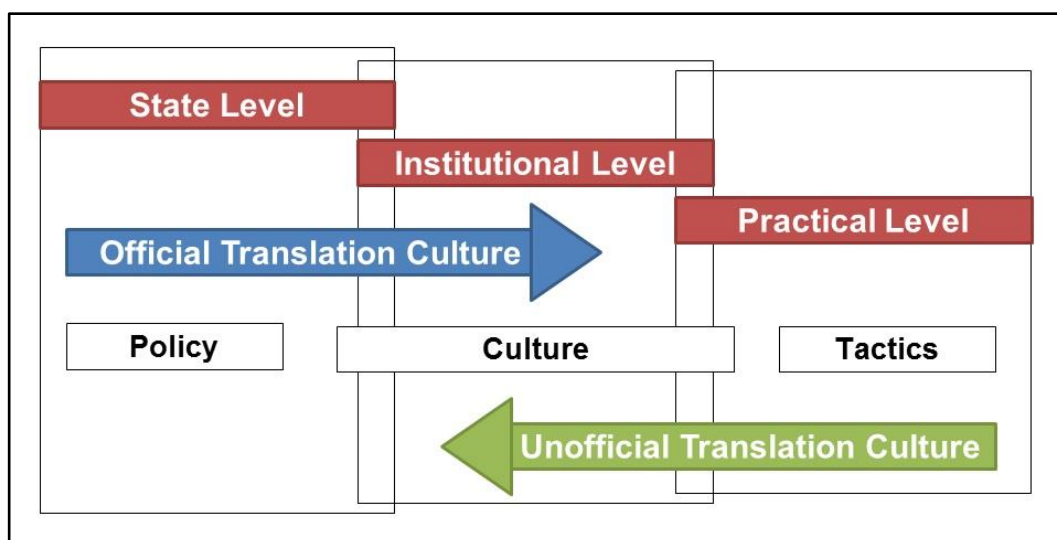
In general terms, translation culture consists of issues related to how translation and interpretation are organised and implemented within a certain community or institution. Examples of these issues include whether interpretation is considered to be important, where and in what types of situations interpreters must be available, who is recruited or approved to be a translator or an interpreter, how interpreters are trained and how much they are paid (Kujamäki 2013, 33). Kujamäki (*ibid.*, 34–36) also distinguishes between ‘official translation cultures’, which are defined in official documents, and ‘unofficial translation cultures’, which are the practical adaptations of the official norms.

Official policies, norms, or doctrines regarding the translation culture of the FDF are scarce. The actual translation culture of the FDF must therefore be approached by analysing its linguistic and translational practices. This also means that the translation culture of the FDF could be characterised as ‘unofficial’. When an ‘official’ translation culture is regulated by



official institutions, it could be referred to as a ‘translation policy’<sup>5</sup> (See Figure 2 below) (cf. Koskinen 2014).

It is debatable whether the FDF actually applies a translation policy; the term ‘translation culture’ would perhaps be better suited to denote the institutional language practices in the FDF. When applied to the FDF, the concept of translation culture would therefore have the following parameters: all activity that is linguistic, language-related, or translatory within the FDF, including the methods and practices adopted, the relevant norms and ideologies, as well as the social relations, positions of power, and statuses of the people involved. However, the division between an official culture and a policy is indistinct. Ultimately, any definition of a culture stems from how the actors within that culture interpret the activities of that culture, and this includes the researcher, who likewise analyses cultural activities.



**Figure 2:** An ‘official’ or ‘unofficial’ translation culture denotes whether a translation culture on an institutional level is directed by state-level policies or by practices from the field (cf. Kujamäki 2013, 34–36).

### 2.2.3 Interpreter Tactics

The term ‘tactic’ or ‘tactics’ is commonly used in the military sciences, but this term has likewise been used in translation studies. I conducted a search for ‘tactic(s)’ in the archives of six scientific journals of translation studies (*The Journal of Specialised Translation*; *Target*; *Babel*; *Translation & Interpreting*; *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*; and *Interpreting*) and detected a number of occurrences. As a concept in translation studies, *tactic(s)* has been

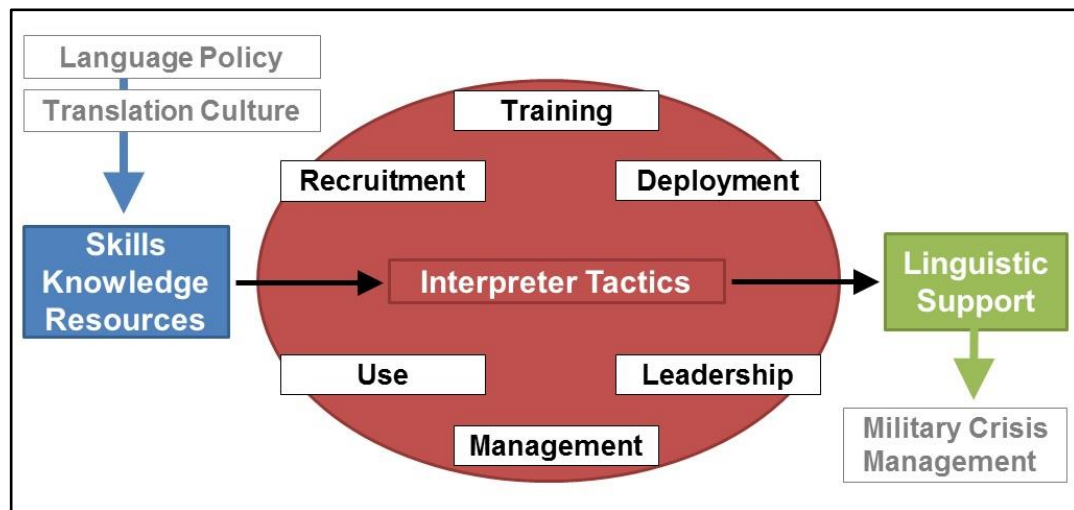
<sup>5</sup> González Núñez (2016) elaborates on the problems in conceptualising ‘translation policy’, as well as its relationship with concepts such as ‘language policy’ and ‘linguistic culture’.

most frequently used to refer to the deliberate actions, approaches, or methods that have been adopted by the translator or interpreter, or alternatively, the practical application of translation theory. Occurrences of this term appeared in expressions such as ‘coping tactics’, ‘principles and tactics’, ‘tactical principles’, and ‘tactical devices’. Gile (1995) refers to ‘interpreting tactics’ as the “deliberate decisions and actions” adopted when interpreting. These expressions exemplify the usage of the term in translation studies. Furthermore, in terms of tactics, translation studies often focuses on what the interpreter does (the interpreting) instead of the person who acts (the interpreter).

The concept of *tactics* in military science has been widely discussed, and the usages of this concept vary, as does the extension of it. Central to the concept of tactics in the military is skill, and the use of military means (troops, weapons, and equipment) on the battlefield to achieve a specific task (Huttunen 2005, 73–78). Thus, military tactics may be understood as “a combination of the skills and knowledge needed for applying the allocated means in order to achieve the desired ends” (ibid., 80–81, translation by author).

In a military context, ‘interpreting tactics’ refers to the deployment, use, management, and leadership of military interpreters in the field. I first used and defined the term ‘interpreting tactics’ in reference to military interpreters in my earlier article (Snellman 2014, 78–80). That analysis adopted the term ‘interpreting tactics’ to denote the same concept. However, as the military’s interest in interpreters and interpreting is almost exclusively extra-textual, focusing instead on the provision of language services, the form ‘interpreter tactics’ would appear more suitable (cf. Chesterman 2009).

Based on the above definition of military tactics, it is evident that as a concept, *interpreter tactics* is closely related to the concept of *military tactics*. In a broader sense, interpreter tactics also covers the recruitment and training of military interpreters, and therefore extends to personnel management as well as to military pedagogy. Supported by Huttunen’s (2005) definition of *military tactics*, a comprehensive definition of *interpreter tactics* could be summarised as follows: Interpreter tactics refers to the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to organise and implement the linguistic support for military operations. Interpreter tactics consists of the recruitment, training, deployment, use, management, and leadership of military interpreters in the field (See Figure 3 below).



**Figure 3:** Interpreter tactics denotes the ways and means, which are applied to reach the ends of organising and implementing linguistic support for a military operation.

#### 2.2.4 Linguistic Support

According to the definition provided by NATO (2011), ‘linguistic support’<sup>6</sup> denotes “the provision of services, including translation and interpretation, enabling persons who do not understand each others’ [sic] languages to communicate with one other [sic]”. Thus, *interpreter tactics* could be considered a hypernym of linguistic support, as it not only includes its hyponym *linguistic support*, but also covers the ways and means needed to achieve the ends of linguistic support (see Figure 3 above).

### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

The subject matter of this study encompasses three wide-ranging and complex notions: *language policy*, *translation culture*, and *interpreter tactics*. As such, the topic could be considered from different theoretical backgrounds and it would fit equally well in a number of academic frameworks, with translation studies and military science being the most obvious. In addition, any research that simultaneously addresses three separate domains – *policy*, *culture*, and *tactics* – which themselves can be rather broadly defined, is by definition cross-

<sup>6</sup> In the absence of an established or official Finnish term for ‘linguistic support’, I propose (*kansainvälisten operaatioiden*) *kielipalvelut* [language services (for international operations)] as a Finnish translation of the term. To me, other possible translations, such as *kielituki* [language support] or *käännös- ja tulkkaustoiminnan järjestelyt* [the arrangements of translation and interpreting activities] are inadequate and are not idiomatic.

disciplinary, and can be viewed in terms of different theoretical backgrounds. Hence a multidisciplinary approach is necessary<sup>7</sup>.

### 2.3.1 Military Science

The topic of this paper could be argued to represent primarily the military sciences, although there is no consensus on the definition of military science (cf. Mäkinen 2015). For example, the topic concerns the military directly, and the study is written by a military person as a thesis for the General Staff Officer Course (GSOC) of the Finnish National Defence University. From the vantage point of military science, however, the central issue is how this study analyses the professional and practical matters at the core of all military activity, and how the study manages to provide scientific research results that are also practically applicable for soldiers and civilians alike (Mäkinen 2015, 27–28).

As mentioned earlier in this paper, one of my aims for this analysis is that its results be practically applicable in the FDF. It can be argued that this stance mirrors the prevailing position on results-oriented action in the military sciences, and my approach could thus be interpreted as having been influenced by my professional background. However, my opinion is that my experience has also allowed me to evaluate the research data from a military perspective and to highlight items that are relevant to military activity, which is linguistic support in this case.

### 2.3.2 Translation Studies

By observing the subject matter from the perspective of translation studies, I am offered a somewhat different perspective on what is central to this study. The present focus is on military interpreters, which places this study in the tradition of translation sociology. A relatively recent approach in translation studies, translation sociology, situates the translator in the centre, instead of the translation process or product. That approach emphasises that translation always occurs in a social context. In other words, it is performed for social institutions by individuals who belong to social systems. Thus, topics on military interpreters should be analysed with regard to all the social agents that participate in their use, including the cultural power relations that are involved (cf. Wolf & Fukari 2007).

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<sup>7</sup> For more on the interdisciplinarity of translation studies and the connections of translation, the military, and the military sciences, for example, see Kujamäki & Footitt 2016.

Chesterman (2009) proposes a shift in focus from translation to the translators, and introduces “translator studies” as a sub-field of translation studies. In his tentative “agent model”, Chesterman focuses on the translator and other agents, and distinguishes between the cultural, cognitive and sociological dimensions of translator studies. For example, the cultural dimension is concerned with the ideologies, values, and traditions as agents in translation. The cognitive dimension, by comparison, constitutes the impact of factors such as emotions, attitudes, and personality on translation. Finally, the sociological dimension involves the agency of aspects such as institutions, status, workplace processes, and translators’/interpreters relations with other groups as agents (ibid., 19–20).

I was intrigued by the sociological approach to translation studies, and the agent model proposed by Chesterman provided a suitable outline to analyse my research data (see sub-chapter 3.2). Thus, the theoretical framework of translation studies directed me to analyse and include the conceptions that the officers interviewed had of interpreter tactics from a sociological perspective. This includes the officers’ understanding of what role an interpreter assumes in a crisis management force, as well as their relationships with the other soldiers, including the officers themselves. However, as my experience in the social sciences is very limited, my choices in this regard are subject to criticism.

### 2.3.3 Philosophy of Science

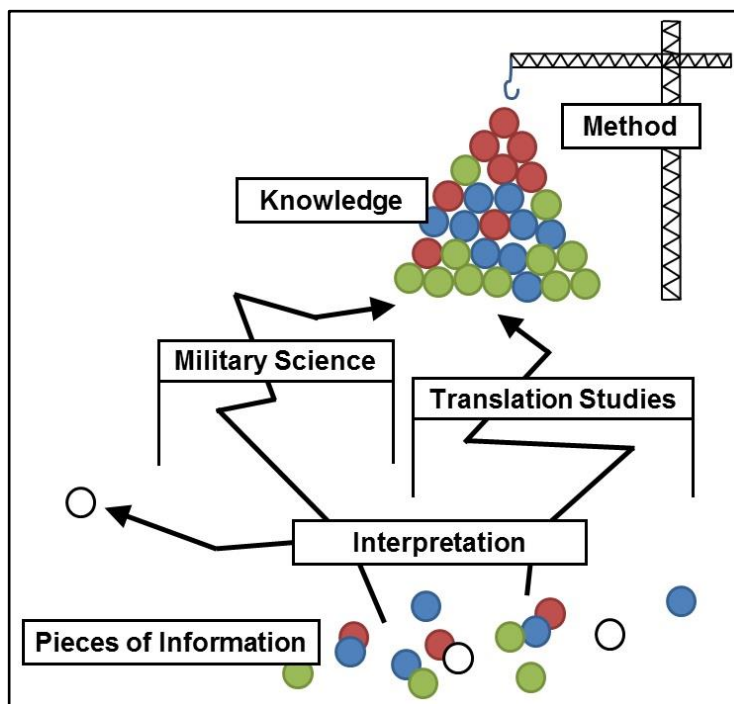
This study examines a phenomenon that broadly defined is linguistic support, with a special focus on military interpreters and the FDF. Let us consider what we may know of this phenomenon and what constitutes knowledge in this study. I approach this phenomenon using research data, which consists of interviews, statistics, official documents, research literature, as well as my previous knowledge on the topic. By using this research data, I presume that the phenomenon can be empirically studied.

Some information in the data may be considered as facts or interpretations of facts, such as scientific research results, whereas other pieces of information can be interpreted as opinions, conceptions, or the expressions of the inner values of individuals or institutions. Some of the information in the data is clear and understandable, other information is less well-founded and validated. Thus, it is necessary for me to interpret the information to be able to assess and use it. Furthermore, I must compare the available information, process it, and perhaps discard

some of it as irrelevant. All of this is undertaken by me, the researcher. Epistemologically, this places me in a relativist – interpretivist tradition.

In my analysis of the data, I remain open to the personal experiences of my interviewees. I am aware that due to my background and personal experience, I cannot approach the data without presumptions. Nonetheless, I attempt consciously to diminish the influence of my pre-knowledge of the subject matter in my analysis (see also sub-chapter 3.3). The analytical method I have selected, which is phenomenology, is based on a repetitive interpretation of phenomena. In the analytical process, I associate phenomena, most often consisting of human action, with meaning. By doing so, I presume to construct scientific knowledge and truth – together with the human contributors to my research data.

In epistemological terms, it is likely that no unchangeable truth or a priori knowledge exists on the phenomenon under study. Any conclusions drawn from this study may therefore be considered cultural and social constructs. These constructs are constantly evolving and renewed in a continuous, hermeneutic process, during which their context and meaning is reassessed (Lähdesmäki et. al. 2010). In conclusion, what I present as knowledge is constructed in an analytical process from pieces of information that I have interpreted (See Figure 4 below).



**Figure 4:** In terms of philosophy of science, the new knowledge presented in this study is a construct, consisting of interpreted pieces of information assembled according to a method.

## 2.4 Outline and Research Questions

The subject matter of this analysis, the interpreter tactics of the FDF, does not exist autonomously. It can be assumed that the current state of affairs of interpreter tactics in the FDF is based on the underlying policies and cultures related to linguistic support issues. Footitt and Kelly (2012b, 5) note that to understand the work of interpreters in military structures, it is necessary to investigate the military's perspective on languages, because they create the operational environments in which interpreters work. My viewpoint is that the military's position on language is manifested not only in the interpreter tactics and linguistic support, but also in the underlying structures, actors, practices, and policies that enable them. This means that to address questions concerning the interpreter tactics of the FDF, I could not neglect describing the state-level and institutional frameworks in which interpreter tactics is manifested, specifically the language policy and the translation culture of the FDF (cf. Kelly & Baker 2013, 197–201).

The aim of this study can be formulated into the following two research questions:

1. What are the central characteristics of the language policy and the translation culture of the Finnish Defence Forces?
2. What is interpreter tactics in the Finnish Defence Forces?

As argued above, the two research questions are interrelated, partially overlapping, and sequential. Language policy and translation culture play a crucial role in shaping interpreter tactics, but conversely, interpreter tactics affects language policy and translation culture. Therefore, this study should also examine the mutual relationships, connections, and conflicts between these main concepts (cf. Prunč 1997, 108–111). An analysis of these relationships raises the following additional questions:

- Has the interpreter tactics of the FDF developed independently of the language policy of the FDF or even in contradiction to it?
- How, if at all, has the language policy or translation culture of the FDF been influenced by interpreter tactics or lessons learnt from the field?

The above considerations raise a number of more detailed questions as follows: has the increasing importance of linguistic issues in terms of interoperability or linguistic support, influenced the FDF's institutional language policy and practices, such as language training and testing? Do these recent developments propose a need to rethink the FDF's approach to linguistic support in the field? Furthermore, linguistic issues often touch upon many sectors of society, such as education, immigration, social support, and so forth. What is the FDF's

stance on Finnish language policy at large? Should the FDF's position on linguistic matters be articulated more clearly, perhaps in the form of a doctrine document or a field manual?

## 2.5 Expected results, Scope, and Limitations

Both of the two main research questions presented above are descriptive in nature, and their answers do not specifically deliver suggestions for improvement. However, if the answers to the research questions are sufficiently comprehensive and detailed, as well as scrutinised from a predetermined and clearly defined perspective, positive and negative elements within the answers may emerge. A close examination of these elements would allow a more prescriptive or normative approach to the research results, with the intention of suggesting changes and improvements instead of merely describing the existing situation. Thus, a summary of the positive and negative elements identified in the research results could be characterised as the expected results of the study. Formulated into questions, expected results of the first research question would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- What is the state of affairs of linguistic support in the FDF?
- Why should the FDF train and deploy its own military interpreters for crisis management operations?
- How should the organisation and training of Finnish crisis management forces be improved from the standpoint of linguistic support (such as functional language skill, cultural competence, interpreter tactics, trust, etc.)?

Examples of the expected results for the second research question would be answers to the following questions:

- How should Finnish military interpreters be recruited, trained, employed, led, and managed in the field?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of military interpreters in comparison with locally recruited, civilian interpreters?
- How important are military training and knowledge of military culture, as well as interpreting and language training for military interpreters?

Within the scope of this analysis, it would be difficult to answer all the above questions. This is because neither the research data nor other available resources support such an endeavour. Consequently, at best, the results of this study are likely to be pointers or suggestions, rather than inclusive and solid conclusions. I also limit the generalisability of the results along the following lines:

- This study concerns only the FDF. Application of the results to the militaries of other nations should be done with discretion (cf. Draper 2015).
- The research data draws only from ongoing or recent military crisis management operations. For this reason, historical deliberations are excluded.



- This study neither provides an analysis or recommendations that are specific to a crisis management operation or mission nor addresses a specific language or culture.

The validity and reliability of the research results are discussed further in sub-chapter 7.4.

### **3. DATA, METHODOLOGY, AND RESEARCH PROCESS**

The previous chapter introduced the central concepts of this study and positioned its subject matter in relation to the established theoretical paradigms of translation studies and military science. This chapter introduces the research data and the methods that were used to process it. This chapter also establishes the ethical foundations for the analysis by assessing the reliability, validity, and credibility of the research data, the analysis methods, as well as the research process leading to the subsequent research results.

#### **3.1 Research Data**

##### **3.1.1 Interviews with Officers and a Linguist**

The data consulted in this paper consists of interviews with four Finnish officers as well as one language expert of the FDF. To find potential interviewees, I accessed the personnel lists of the FDF's recent crisis management operations (for example, see MAAVE 2013a; 2014), and compiled a shortlist of officers who were likely to have experience in working with military and locally recruited interpreters. The contact information of FDF language experts was available in the FDF personnel database.

Potential interviewees were first contacted by email. That email described the outlines of my prospective study, and expressed my request to conduct an interview with Finnish officers who would like to share their views and opinions on the topic. Four officers with ranks of service from Lieutenant to Colonel volunteered to be interviewed. All five interviews were conducted in Helsinki in July and August 2016. Although the sample of four plus one interviewees may appear to be small, I assessed the group to be adequately experienced as well as varied for the purposes of this study (cf. Yates et. al. 2012, 103). In retrospect, the interviewees' comprehensive experience on the topic allowed me to collect ample information from the interviews.

Prior to the actual interviews, to test my interview questions and my stance on the topic, I conducted a preliminary interview with one officer. This interview was neither transcribed nor used. In addition to the preliminary interview, I conducted another interview with a second language expert in the FDF. That interview was excluded from the study because I was not permitted to record the interview, which would have made it exceedingly difficult to conduct

a phenomenographic analysis of that interview. The duration of the interviews in total, including the four officers and one language expert, was seven hours and six minutes. The recordings were transcribed by an external service provider (Tutkimustie Oy). The transcribed interviews consisted of approximately 60 text pages.

### 3.1.2 Statistics and Official Documents

To provide context for the interview data as well as to substantiate the interviewees' conceptions, I searched for statistics and official documents on the subject matter. The statistical data on Finnish conscripts' nationality, mother tongue, and language skills were obtained from the Finnish Military Service Register (*asevelvollisuusrekisteri*) through the Defence Command (PE 2016c). Another source of statistical data was the Finnish public authority for statistics, Statistics Finland, where data was provided on the numbers of foreign language speakers and foreign nationals living permanently in Finland (Rapo 2016).

Another important source was the Finnish legislation related to language policy, as it provided a solid starting point. I used the unofficial English translations of the acts, when available. In addition, I searched for official documents regarding linguistic support and military interpreters in the Finnish military crisis management operations in the FDF's electronic archives. As a result, I was able to find a number of decisions with different versions of the personnel structures of Finnish crisis management forces. However, I was not able to determine sources that documented the argumentation and reasoning behind the specific decisions, such as the decisions to add or remove a military interpreter position from the personnel roster of an operation. Lastly, I consulted official documents of the FDF, NATO, as well as the German and British armed forces. A number of the above military documents are classified 'Restricted', which means that they are not available for public scrutiny. In the references section of this study, I list the sources with unrestricted access ('published') and those that cannot be accessed freely ('unpublished') separately.

## 3.2 Analysis Methods

### 3.2.1 Phenomenographic Analysis

Firstly, it is important to clarify and substantiate how I arrived at the three different levels on which I conduct the analysis. The levels of analysis arose from my research data. The

phenomenon this study analyses is linguistic support, narrowed down to concern primarily military interpreters and the Finnish Defence Forces. In my approach to this phenomenon, linguistic support occurred in three distinct, larger frameworks: the practical/tactical context, the cultural/institutional context, and the political/legislative context. These three frameworks provided me with the three levels to analyse the research data. At the same time, I recognised that some of the problems with linguistic support are enduring and that they apparently are common problems for the armed forces of many countries (cf. Snellman 2014).

Consequently, I began to deliberate on how it would be possible to access the underlying root causes of these problems. By deconstructing the different elements and conditions needed to implement linguistic support, I arrived at the conclusion that the groundwork for linguistic support is constructed on three levels:

1. The ideological level, which concerns overarching issues such as legislation, values, policy, etc.,
2. The institutional level, which includes norms, processes, culture, etc., and finally,
3. The practical level, which concerns what actually occurs in the field when linguistic support is applied at the tactical level in military structures.

Drawing on my own experiences and previous studies, I realised that for a comprehensive overview of what constitutes the foundations for linguistic support, I must examine all three dimensions. I refer to these as language policy, translation culture, and interpreter tactics, respectively.

Based on the three contextual levels of linguistic support and Chesterman's tentative model of translator studies (see sub-chapter 2.3.2), I developed a model to identify and classify items of interest in the research data. This model consists of a matrix, which combines the three levels of linguistic support with the dimensions of translator studies proposed by Chesterman. This model allowed me to identify sources of data, to locate elements of relevant information in the sources, and to make initial classifications for later analysis. The model is presented below in Table 1.

<b>Translator Studies Dimensions</b>	<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>Sociological</b>
<i>General description and coverage</i>	<i>ideologies, values, ethics, traditions, history, etc.</i>	<i>mental processes, emotions, attitudes, personality, and the impact of these on decision-making, norms, etc.</i>	<i>networks, groups, institutions, status, workplace processes, relations, and interpreters' observable behaviour as individuals or groups or institutions, etc.</i>
<b>Elements of Language Policy in data</b>	Legislation and policies on the state level (Finland, EU, NATO)	Officers' values and attitudes	Legislative and political restraints and constraints, National statistics
<b>Elements of Translation Culture in data</b>	Norms, doctrines. and field manuals on the FDF level	Officers' conceptions and opinions	FDF practices, policies, and priorities; FDF statistics
<b>Elements of Interpreter Tactics in data</b>	Orders and instructions on the branch or unit level	Officers' practical experiences	Practices and incidents from the field, Lessons Learnt

**Table 1:** Model for identifying elements of data and for classifying them for analysis (adapted from Chesterman 2009).

From a phenomenographical approach to research, the object (the phenomenon being studied) and the research subjects (the people who experience the phenomenon) are not viewed or analysed separately. Instead, phenomenography focuses on the relations between the subjects and the object, which are referred to as experiences or conceptions. When combined, these represent the entire phenomenon (Yates et. al. 2012, 97–98). Furthermore, phenomenography postulates that subjects collectively experience and understand phenomena in a number of qualitatively different, but interrelated ways. A phenomenographical approach therefore seeks to understand the variations in people's experiences of different phenomena (ibid., 96–97; 103).

Phenomenography does not prescribe a method or a structured research process for the researcher to follow. However, a number of methods for data analysis in the context of phenomenography have been proposed over the years (Yates et. al. 2012, 103–105). Descriptions of data analysis in phenomenographic studies underline the role of the researcher: “[...] in phenomenography, the process of analysis and the outcomes the process produces are constituted through the relationship between the researcher and the data.” (ibid., 103). Thus, the researcher's personal and subjective understanding or interpretation of the data determines the results of the study.

The aim of my analysis of the transcribed interviews was to identify those structural differences in the data that describe the relationships between the studied phenomenon and the officers' conceptions (cf. Huusko & Paloniemi 2006). In practice, this means that I first organised the officers' conceptions in groups, and then examined them in their respective contexts, attempting to understand what the similarities and differences were between the conceptions in one group. For example, differences in the officers' conceptions concerning the importance of interpreters may reflect many diverse reasons, depending on context and perspective. The officers' conceptions also do not exist autonomously: conceptions derive from interaction with meanings in their surroundings. The surrounding context, in turn, can be found in military culture, the settings in military crisis management operations, and the officers' role in the crisis management force. In short, the unit of analysis is a conception that the researcher interprets in a context and thus assigns meaning to it.

### 3.2.2 Analysis Process

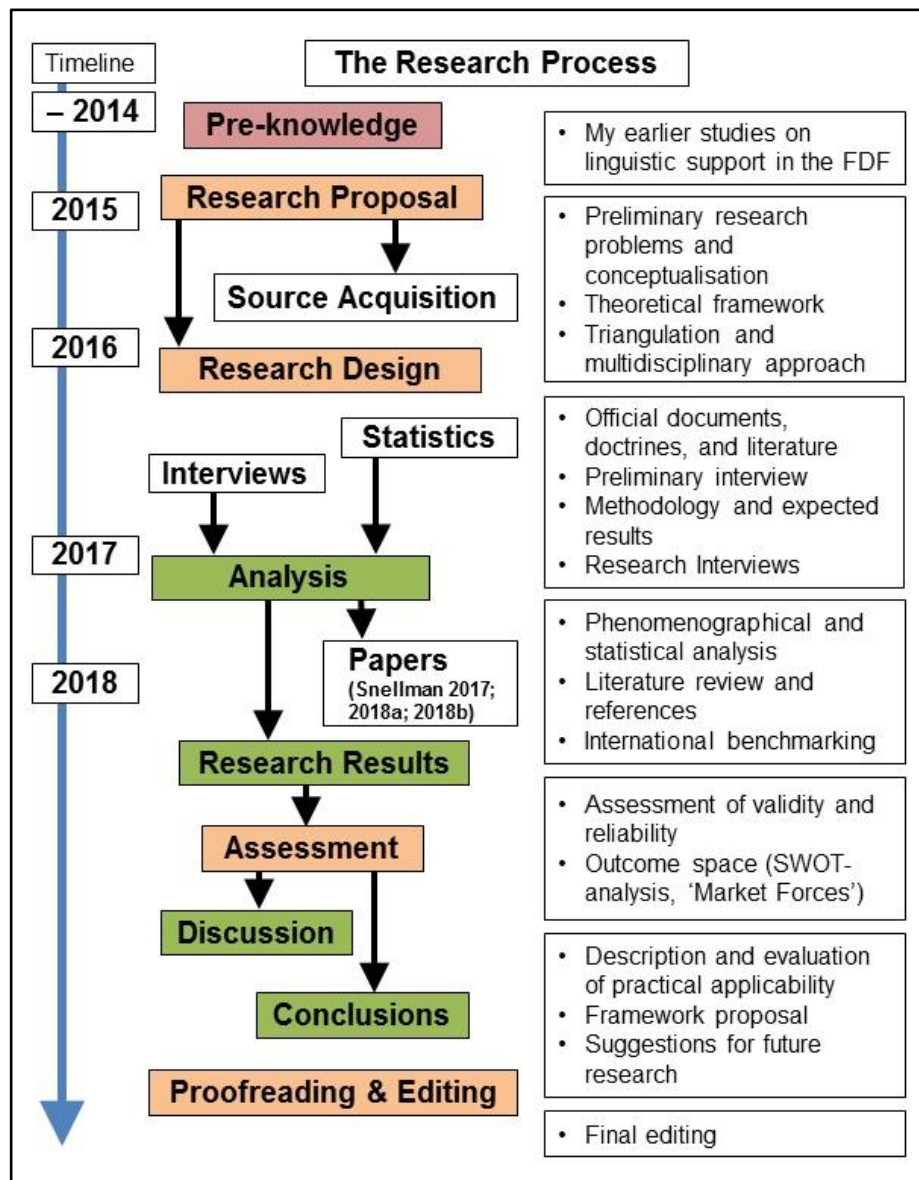
During the first phase of analysis, I marked and grouped all those text parts in the interview transcripts that contained relevant or prominent expressions or thoughts with regard to the research questions. The groups that I used in the classification are described in Table 1. This first classification into groups was based on the meaning that the conceptions conveyed – represented by text excerpts from the interview transcripts. Thus, I examined the conceptions in their context, while attempting from the onset of this analysis to take into account factors such as the interviewees' background, experience, and intention.

The next phase of analysis involved my comparing the groups of text excerpts to each other as well as to preliminary results from other data sources, such as statistics, official documents, literature, etc. Based on these comparisons, I organised the groups into larger clusters, or categories of description (cf. Huusko & Paloniemi 2006, 166–169; Yates et. al. 2012, 105–106). In practice, the categories of description were based on the conceptions in the data that occurred most frequently and that were expressed in the strongest terms. These categories constitute the framework of reference for the interpretation of the research results. Many of these categories of description are also used as sub-headings in the three results chapters.

In the third and final phase of analysis, I closely examined the categories of description in terms my own experiences as well as earlier studies and literature on the topic of linguistic support in the military. My main objective was to summarise the results of my analysis in

segments that are accessible and understandable in their own context (cf. Rissanen 2006). To conclude the analysis, I represented the categories of description in an outcome space, which functions as a map of the different facets of the researched phenomenon (cf. Yates et. al. 2012, 106–107). That outcome space is presented in sub-chapter 7.1.

Above, I have provided a cursory outline of the analysis process. In practice, the analysis occurs on multiple levels simultaneously, and is in constant interaction with the entire research data. The data must be analysed as one entity, as the meaning of the individual conceptions that it consists of depend on their relationship with the complete data (cf. Huusko & Paloniemi 2006). It is important to note that the research process for my GSOC thesis was a journey that spanned more than three years and two countries. While this provided me with many opportunities to collect and review literature and supplementary sources, it also fragmented the research process and prompted me to modify the original research proposal a number of times. In particular, the other articles that I wrote during the time I spent preparing the current study presented additional insights and opportunities during the analysis process, and a more concise and focused analysis may have yielded different results. An outline of the research process is depicted below in Figure 5.



**Figure 5:** The research process.

### 3.3 Assessment of Research Data and Methodology

My own observations on linguistic support issues were collected during my deployment in Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010. During that deployment, I was a participant observer within the phenomenon. However, at that time, my observations were not collected consciously and methodologically. As a consequence, observation does not qualify as a research method in this study nor do my own observations as such constitute a body of research data (cf. Lähdesmäki et. al. 2010). Nevertheless, the influence of my personal experience on the interpretation of the research data is substantial and cannot be overlooked. People have also told me on several occasions that the combination of my military background and my linguistic education provides me with insight into both a military and a linguistic way of



thinking, and that I should not hesitate to use this uncommon combination of perceptions to my advantage.

My analytical methodology originates from phenomenography and it prescribes that the topic cannot be approached entirely without a-priori assumptions (cf. Huusko & Paloniemi 2006). This means that my pre-knowledge of the subject matter (see sub-chapter 1.2) may potentially influence the results of this study. Nonetheless, I have made every effort to collect and analyse the research data as unbiasedly as possible.

The above approach suggests that I have deliberately decided not to systematically analyse my own experiences as data. As a method of analysis, ethnography takes into account personal experience in understanding culture (Ellis et. al. 2011; Draper 2015). Thus, from an ethnographical approach, the comments I make on my research results are based on my own experiences, and these comments would not constitute a problem for validity or objectivity but offer an alternative method of analysing data and producing knowledge. As a member or an ‘insider’ of the culture that I am analysing, I am also better equipped to enrich the research process. However, a considerable challenge for me as an ‘insider’ would be to distance myself from the topic and to explicate adequately to outsiders those cultural practices ‘insiders’ tend to take for granted (cf. Draper 2015). Even so, I would hesitate to categorise this study as ethnographic because to me, neither the data nor the methods used in this study exhibit the typical features of ethnography.

The current study analyses conceptions, which cannot in themselves be considered as facts, or serve as evidence either for or against a specific state of affairs. For this reason, I do not appraise individual observations and deductions drawn from the data, even when they were to be contradictory or ‘false’. I instead consider all conceptions valuable and ‘correct’ in their own right, and let the data speak freely. This means that I aim neither to agree with the individual officers’ conceptions of linguistic support nor to contradict them, but to obtain an understanding of the phenomenon at hand. To achieve that, I must be able to connect the conceptions with the context and life-worlds that they are derived from (cf. Rissanen 2006). For example, officers’ ability to judge the accuracy or reliability of interpretation may be limited, as they normally do not understand both languages used (Jones & Askew 2014, 24). Furthermore, non-linguists are often influenced in their judgements by secondary aspects such as manner, accent, even appearance and dress (ibid., 51).

Finally, a more thorough analysis of the officers' interviews would require answering a number of fundamental questions. These pertain to what Finnish officers actually know about interpreters and interpreting, and working with interpreters and what the officers base their notions on. Although the data does suggest some answers to these issues, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the backgrounds or departure points of the officers' conceptions further.

## 4. RESULTS: LANGUAGE POLICY

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the language policies of the state-level actors that I consider to have the most significant impact on linguistic support in the FDF. My intention is not to provide an all-inclusive perspective on what language policy encompasses. Likewise, I am not attempting to describe in detail how language policy influences language-related issues in society or in the military. Instead, the appraisal of state-level language policy issues in this chapter establishes the groundwork for my analysis of the institutional and practical levels, which is presented in chapters 5 and 6.

### 4.1 What is Language Policy?

The concept of *language policy* in this study was outlined earlier in sub-chapter 2.2.1. In accordance with that definition, language policy consists of the framework and the different settings on the level of the nation-state with various actors who make decisions regarding language, language use and the development of language skills. Thus, language policy encompasses all the different themes and actions that relate to language (Interview A). In general, language policy is placed in the field of socio-linguistics and focuses on how policies influence the social and societal factors of language. These factors can be thought to also include issues that concern translation and interpretation (Jones & Askew 2014, 3).

In terms of war studies, language policy would best correspond to the strategic level of warfare. This is because it is primarily the responsibility of the political leadership and it addresses the major, overarching means, ways, and ends of language use at a national and international level (cf. Gjelsten & Rekkedal 2013, 14–19). Language policy therefore concerns broad themes, such as ideologies, values, and legislation, and it is implemented on the level of nation-states and international organisations.

Language policy also covers those ideologies and values that can be ascribed to what occurs in practice in language-related matters. This is true even if the underlying ideologies and values are undefined, or unnoticed by those that endorse them (cf. Mäntynen et. al. 2012, 333). In many cases, the language policy of countries or institutions must be construed by studying their language practices and beliefs, as there are no formal or written language policies available (Jones & Askew 2014, 3). Thus, the actual language practices of a country or institution convey a symbolic message of its underlying language policies. Footitt and

Kelly (2012b, 7–8) suggest that particularly military institutions are strongly connected to the prevailing language policies of the state that they serve, because military operations represent that state's authority and ideology:

[...] 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 that 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. (Footitt & Kelly 2012b, 8).

Language ideologies can entail the promotion of one national language (to support efficiency of communication) as opposed to the ideology of multilingualism (to support the autonomy and dignity of language minority groups). Examples of the practical application of different language ideologies are not difficult to find. Multinational and multilingual organisations, such as the United Nations or the European Union, have pursued a balance between common working languages and linguistic rights out of necessity. Multilingual nation states such as Belgium or Switzerland have found solutions in terms of an ideological compromise. (cf. Spolsky 2012). With regard to language ideology, in modern times, Finland has decided to promote language autonomy and language rights.

Another important area of language policy is the right to access and the availability of interpreting services. A shortage of interpreting services in a multilingual society often leads to the use of bystanders and amateurs as substitutes (Spolsky 2012, 9). A typical prioritisation of interpreting services would be in healthcare, in the police force, and in legal institutions. The most common reasons cited for shortages in interpreting services are the high costs and a lack of concern for minority speakers within a society. These shortages can be overcome through the education, qualification and professionalisation of interpreters (ibid., 9–10). Koskinen (2014, 484) makes the interesting observation that most language policies do not explicitly discuss translation, but all language policy involves practices related to translation.

## 4.2 Language Policy of Finland

The Finnish state authorities actively shape Finland's language policy through legislation. The most important legislation is the Constitution of Finland (Finlex 1999/731). This establishes the fundamental principles of Finnish language policy as a bilingual country with the official

languages, Finnish and Swedish. The principles stipulated in the constitution are specified in the Language Act (Finlex 2003/423). As concerns the FDF, the Language Act states that the FDF's language of command and "[t]he language of Defence Force units is Finnish. However, there shall be at least one Swedish-speaking unit". A conscript has the right "to be assigned to a unit where the language of training is his or her mother language, Finnish or Swedish" (ibid.). The Language Act also underlines "the constitutional right of every person to use his or her own language, either Finnish or Swedish, before courts and other authorities" (ibid.).

The Finnish language policy is therefore committed ideologically to promoting linguistic rights and equality. What this means concretely is that by law, Finnish public servants, including professional military personnel, must have a satisfactory command of both domestic languages, Finnish and Swedish (Finlex 2003/424). The personnel who serve in a unilingual state authority are required to have an "excellent ability to speak and write the language of the authority and a satisfactory ability to understand the other language" (ibid.). In addition, a Government Decree contains provisions on the knowledge of Finnish and Swedish required for the office of military officer (Finlex 2004/9). The language skill requirements for soldiers in the Finnish crisis management forces are made explicit in the Ministry of Defence decree (Finlex 2006/254). The provisions of this decree are discussed in closer detail in sub-chapter 6.2.1.

The Language Act also stipulates provisions on the availability of translations and interpreting services for Finnish and Swedish but refers to other pieces of legislation that relate to other languages. Nevertheless, the training and availability of translators, such as community interpreters and court interpreters, can be regarded as a part of Finnish language policy (cf. Finlex 2015/1590).

The actual making of language policy in Finland is fragmented, as many, if not most, sectors of society are stakeholders in language issues. Besides the public health services and legal institutions mentioned earlier, other influential actors in language policy are specifically the immigration and citizenship services as well as the educational sector. Finnish language policy has also been described as being idealistic and fluctuating (cf. Helsingin Sanomat 2017). Nonetheless, the Finnish Ministry of Justice has a special administrative body that assumes the responsibilities of supervising the implementation of the Language Act and protecting the linguistic rights of Finnish citizens (OM 2018).

The Institute for the Languages of Finland (Kotus) assumes the role of a coordinating body in Finnish language policy. In 2009, Kotus drafted a national language policy programme to endorse the position of Finnish (KOTUS 2009). Kotus also led a cross-sectoral campaign to improve the quality of the language in all of Finland's public offices in 2014. (KOTUS 2018). More recently, increased immigration to Finland has underscored the role of linguistic plurality and the education of immigrants' mother tongues in Finnish language policy (cf. Latomaa 2007).

In conclusion, the language policy of Finland consists of the intentional measures adopted by Finnish society to regulate the use of language or languages by its members (Sajavaara et. al. 2007, 15–16). Presumably, the national language policy of Finland also provides the foundations for the language policies and practices of the FDF. However, Finnish language policy is not only a national matter: many international institutions, organisations, and treaties regulate or influence Finland's stance on languages. Let us now turn to review the language policies of three such actors: the EU, the UN, and NATO.

### 4.3 Language Policy of the European Union

The European Union (EU) is committed to promoting language skills in its member states. The agreed upon goal for all EU citizens is to be able to communicate in two (2) languages other than a mother tongue (European Council 2002). The co-existence of many languages in Europe is one of the cornerstones of the European project and a symbol of the EU's aspiration to be “united in diversity”. Through a successful application of its multilingual language policy, the EU hopes to provide its citizens with improved possibilities as well as to enhance intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. In 2014, the EU countries reaffirmed their strong commitment to improving the efficiency of language teaching in schools (Council of the European Union 2014).

As an institution with 24 official languages, the EU is committed to multilingualism. To manage its vast and continuously growing translation needs, the EU has its own linguistic agency, the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union, which was founded in 1994 (EU 2018). Like the United Nations, the EU is committed to protecting the rights of language minorities and historic regional languages (Council of Europe 1992).

To improve and standardise language training and testing in its member states, the EU implemented the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in 2001 (Council of Europe 2001). The CEFR project can be considered a success, and the framework has been widely implemented in Finland. An illustration of this is the examination for the Finnish National Certificates of Language Proficiency (NCLP).

#### 4.4 Language Policy of the United Nations

The UN has six official languages and all UN documents are published in them. When a UN delegate speaks in any official UN language, that speech is subsequently interpreted into the other official languages. An example of the deep commitment by the UN to promote multilingualism and to protect linguistic rights is the number of resolutions it has passed to lessen the disproportion between English and the other five official languages, as well as to promote impartial treatment for all the official languages. The UN is also one of the largest employers of language professionals in the world (UN 2018).

For the peacekeeping operations led by the UN, the UN recruits and employs local interpreters and they have the status of official UN employees. The UN also tests the linguists it recruits and provides them with security clearances. The regional lead nation of the operation then requests linguistic support from the UN on behalf of the national contingents serving in the region, such as the Finnish crisis management force. The national contingents may recommend recruiting specific local persons for the UN language section. Nevertheless, the UN applies its own criteria for recruitment. As it is in the UN's interest to maintain a balanced composition within its personnel, when recruiting language assistants, the UN typically considers many factors other than language and interpreting proficiency, such as the person's gender, ethnicity, religion, family background, as well as political and security concerns. These decisions by the UN regarding their personnel are usually not influenced by the regional lead nation or the national contingents' commanders (Interview C).

#### 4.5 Language Policy of NATO

##### 4.5.1 Common Working Language and Terminology

According to its institutional language policy, NATO prioritises linguistic interoperability. In practice, NATO's efforts focus on two aspects: 1) having a common working language, and

2) standardising the use of terminology across the organisation (Jones & Askew 2014, 28; 38). The position of French in NATO has particularly declined with the ascension of new member states after the end of the Cold War, and English has become the language of interoperability for NATO<sup>8</sup>. The position of English as a common working language of NATO's multinational operations as well as those led by the EU, UN, or OSCE was further strengthened by NATO's increased cooperation with non-member states in peace support operations. No official document endorses the position of English as the official working language of NATO. Instead, English has become the language of interoperability in response to the pragmatic need for a common language (*ibid.*, 31–32; 38).

NATO published its first glossary of military terms and definitions in 1956, and this document has been subsequently expanded and updated. Today, the database of NATO terminology is maintained by the NATO Standardization Agency. NATO terminology is officially maintained only in English and French. This means that new member states of the alliance must translate the relevant NATO terminology into their own languages, which in some cases means inventing new terminology (Jones & Askew 2014, 33–34). It can be argued that the demands for interoperability with NATO have led to similar developments in the FDF.

In addition to terminology standardisation, another NATO objective is to standardise the language training in the militaries of its member states. To attain this objective, NATO launched a Standardization Agreement (STANAG) on language proficiency in 1976. This document, known as STANAG 6001, lists four areas of language skill and six proficiency levels. However, the language tests do not comprehensively test the skills that are needed for the duties of professional linguists. For example, the test does not assess translation and interpretation skills (Jones & Askew 2014, 34–36). All NATO professional linguists are tested and selected by the SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) Linguistic Service, and must meet a set of required minimum standards (*ibid.*, 15–16).

For NATO, the end of the Cold War also meant a change in its language policy related to linguistic support. NATO's linguistic services needed to adapt to the circumstances posed by the new peace support operations it undertook (Jones & Askew 2014, 27). Until rather recently, NATO did not have formalised criteria or policy on how to deal with language challenges in its operations. In practice, solutions to immediate language problems were

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<sup>8</sup> The decline of French in NATO was reinforced by France's withdrawal from the NATO command structure in 1967 and the removal of SHAPE from Paris (Footitt & Kelly 2018, 165).



decided upon on the ground without a long-term approach (ibid., 2). For example, during the early phases of the NATO operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, many of its linguists were not tested and they were not provided with training (NATO 2015). At present, many of the earlier shortcomings have been rectified with the introduction of a STANAG for linguistic support, which I shall examine closer in sub-chapter 5.5.1.

Crossey (2005) argues for the continuing of the standardisation of language training and testing practices as well as for maintaining the language requirements for specific positions in NATO. Crossey also calls for alliance-wide guidance in what constitutes ‘military English’, that is, the language style and variant that soldiers actually need to learn to perform in their duties. In my own experience, similar developments in the English language training have occurred in the FDF.

#### 4.5.2 Bureau for International Language Coordination

NATO’s Bureau for International Language Coordination (BILC) is an advisory body on language training and testing issues, which operates under the NATO Training Group (NTG). The mission of the BILC is “[t]o promote and foster interoperability among NATO and PfP [Partnership for Peace] nations by furthering standardization of language training and testing, and harmonizing language policy” (NATO 2017). Thus, standardised language skills are recognised as vital to the interoperability of the alliance. Indeed, the largest obstacle for interoperability in the alliance has been assessed to be the absence of these language skills. In NATO, language training and testing are considered national matters (Interview A). Thus, besides standardising language testing within the alliance, the BILC also provides a forum for cooperation and benchmarking in other language-related areas, such as language training. The BILC also aims to help non-member states who cooperate with NATO (Jones & Askew 2014, 34–36).

An archive of the minutes from the meetings of the BILC Steering Committee indicates that beginning in 2002 to the present, Finland has regularly attended the meetings of BILC Steering Committee as an observer (NATO 2017). The Finnish representatives at the yearly BILC conferences have been civilian language experts who work in the Defence Language Centre (DLC) of the Finnish National Defence University (FNDU). When attending BILC conferences, Finland has reported on its language training and testing structures. Finland’s national reports deliver a concise but comprehensive overview of the FDF’s linguistic

activities, including possibilities for international cooperation. The most recent national report on the BILC website dates back to 2012 (BILC 2012). Apart from the BILC, the FDF's first point of contact with the language policy of NATO is the FDF's liaison officer to SHAPE (Interview A).

By sending only civilian language experts to the BILC conferences, some of BILC's message on promoting and fostering interoperability through languages may not have been conveyed to the military structures. To increase the awareness of language issues in the military, it might be beneficial to send more military personnel and officers to language-related conferences. However, these conferences are mainly aimed at language experts and linguists. Another opportunity for the FDF to benefit from cooperation with the BILC would be to identify best practices in linguistic support and language policy, and if these practices were to suit the needs of the FDF, then implement them eventually in Finland. Yet the linguistic needs and resources of the FDF may not be compatible with those of other participating nations, as their practices may differ.

#### 4.6 Language Policy and the FDF

The language policy of the FDF, and the context in which it is formulated, has until recently been distinctly in the framework of international military crisis management operations. Currently, new contexts to language policy are slowly being introduced, such as capability development and the related international activities (Interview A).

When comparing the language policy of the FDF to that of the armed forces of other nations, it must be noted that linguistic support for operations is allocated considerably more resources elsewhere. Many larger nations have had somewhat permanent interest in ensuring that they have military interpreters available at short notice<sup>9</sup>. This is due in part to their colonial history, but also to the global interest of many nations, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. Yet their colonial connections also act as an enabler for linguistic support in the form of available personnel – with the related problems that accompany it (Interview A).

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<sup>9</sup> In 2010, the US Congress' Committee on Armed Services noted that the US Armed Forces had identified language skills and regional expertise as "critical warfighting skills" or "critical competencies", and that "the services policies should recognize language skills, cultural awareness, and regional expertise as core competencies on the same level as traditional combat skills" (US Congress 2010, 7; 37).

#### 4.6.1 Language Potential in the FDF

Due to increasing migratory movements, Finnish society has become gradually more multilingual, and the FDF has had to adapt to this new situation. On impact of this change is that foreign languages and multilingualism have also become part of daily life in the FDF. As male Finnish citizens between 18 and 60 years of age are subject to conscription (Finlex 2007/1438), the Conscription Act also applies to immigrants, specifically to persons who were not born in Finland, but have acquired Finnish citizenship. However, the Finnish compulsory military service and the voluntary service for women usually only applies to those persons who were not older than 18 years of age at the time of their naturalisation. Persons who are citizens of another country as well as Finland (referred to as dual citizens) may be exempt from compulsory military service in some cases. Nonetheless, dual citizens are also always subject to conscription.<sup>10</sup>

With the increase in migratory movements to Finland, the number of multilingual conscripts is increasing. According to the 2015 census, thousands of young men whose mother tongue is what is referred to as a ‘foreign language’ (other than the official languages of Finnish or Swedish, or Sámi, which has the status of an official minority language) will reach the age of 18, and thus become subject to conscription in the next ten years (Rapo 2016). The cumulative number of foreign language native speakers is approximately 900 per year, with the largest language groups being Russian and Somali (see Table A1 in Appendix A). Due to continuing immigration and naturalisation, the actual number of native foreign-language conscripts in the coming years will probably be slightly higher than the current statistics indicate.

Other than the multilingual conscripts of upcoming years, a significant number of multilingual soldiers have already accumulated in the reserve of the FDF (see Table A2 in Appendix A). By far the largest language group consists of Russian speaking reservists, whose numbers vary between approximately 150 and 200 per year. Thus, in the six years (2010 to 2015) represented in Table A2, 1,054 persons who have reported Russian as their mother tongue have entered the reserve of the FDF.

Language statistics within the FDF are based on information provided by the conscripted persons themselves. The Military Service Register allows a conscript to enter one language as

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<sup>10</sup> Some of the results and figures presented in this sub-chapter as well as the tables in Appendix A have been published previously in a magazine article in Finnish (Snellman 2017).

his or her mother tongue, as bilingualism or multilingualism cannot be entered into the database. This actually means that the number of multilingual conscripts may be larger than the statistics reveal, as some may have stated their mother tongue to be a domestic language, although in reality they are multilingual<sup>11</sup>. Language skills are entered into the Military Service Register using a two-character code ( fi = Finnish, sv = Swedish, de = German, etc.). The list of available language codes is updated as Finnish citizens with skills in new languages enter their conscript service. The current number of language codes is 187, and there is no upper limit for the number of possible entries (PE 2016c). However, in the Tables A1 and A2 in Appendix A, 2,206 persons are listed with ‘another language’ as their mother tongue (listed as “Other”). This would suggest that the Military Service Register does indeed limit the number of possible entries, or that the language registration process has other deficiencies.

Information on the conscripts’ nationality is entered into the Military Service Register automatically from the database of the Population Register Centre (*Väestörekisterikeskus*). Citizenship data is registered according to a three-character country code. The current number of country codes is 251, and there is no upper limit for the number of codes (PE 2016c). The information content stored in the Military Service Register is regulated by the Conscription Act (Finlex 2007/1438).

The FDF’s Personnel Strategy (PE 2014a) recognises that multicultural and multilingual personnel are a challenge for the FDF, but envisions them as an opportunity at the same time (PE 2014a, 6; 8). There are thousands of conscripts and reservists in the FDF with a multicultural and multilingual background, and as the tables in Appendix A indicate, their numbers are increasing (cf. Rapo 2011; Pyysalo 2016).

#### 4.6.2 Challenges of Multilingualism in the FDF

The FDF aims to make the best possible use of the conscripts’ special skills during their compulsory national service. There are special positions available for those who are studying or have completed studies in journalism, graphic design, technology, IT, environmental studies, theology, medicine, and law, just to mention a few (MAAVE 2017, 53–65). To the best of my knowledge, however, there are no special positions for linguists, or tasks where conscripts’ language competences could be applied.

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<sup>11</sup> The same problems with recording language statistics have also been identified by Statistics Finland, the Finnish public authority for statistics (Saukkonen 2016).

Questions related to the use of the language skills of Finnish reservists with an immigrant background obviously do not only concern the FDF. Retaining immigrants' language skills hinges ultimately on Finnish language policy and Finland's entire education system. If the language skills in the mother tongue or domestic language of multilingual schoolchildren and students are not purposefully sustained and supported, they may weaken, and the linguistic potential of future conscripts could be lost.

Language and culture are inseparable (MoD 2009, 1-5–1-6). Therefore, military units with multilingual personnel can at the same time be considered multicultural. The ethnicity of multilingual persons is often also something other than Finnish<sup>12</sup>. Recent developments in Finnish society are also likely to result in the FDF eventually becoming increasingly multilingual, multicultural, and multi-ethnic. The FDF is indeed committed to equality, justice, and fairness (cf. PE 2014a). All forms of discrimination, including those based on gender, language, or ethnicity, are prohibited in the FDF (cf. Finlex 1999/731). Perhaps Finland as a nation also has a more egalitarian tradition than many other societies (Interview A).

This leads us to the question of trust. Can multilingual reservists be trusted to the same extent as those who speak the domestic languages of Finnish, Swedish, or Sami? Furthermore, is the multilingual reservists' ethnicity or cultural background a factor when determining whether or not they can be trusted? One problem that has been identified in Finland is dual citizenship, and a project to specify the legislation on dual citizenship is underway (PLM 2017b). The question remains whether Finnish reservists with dual citizenship who participate in military crisis management operations can be issued the same security clearances as reservists with only Finnish citizenship. Can they be appointed to key positions, or should dual citizens perhaps be excluded completely from serving in the Finnish crisis management forces? It is important to note that dual citizenship and multilingualism habitually coincide.

#### 4.6.3 The Case for Linguistic Support in the FDF

If the FDF is to participate in military crisis management operations in the future, it will need linguistic support. For most of Finland's military crisis management operations, the mission is

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<sup>12</sup> According to the Finnish Nationality Act (Finlex 2003/359), persons who are born in Finland or whose mother or father is Finnish are considered ethnic Finns.

not warfighting per se, but the focus is rather on communicating with the local population. The key to success is to enable the local society to assume responsibility for its own security over time. Winning the hearts and minds of the local population is a vital part of the mission of military crisis management, and something that cannot be achieved only by rudimentary English. In these settings, interpreters are the window and the channel through which the crisis management force is able to reach out to the local population, and for which there is no substitute. In practice, conducting day-to-day operations and maintaining situational awareness would be exceedingly difficult without interpreters (Interview C; E; D).

The crisis management force considers it a major priority to interact with the local security authorities on the highest level. When the crisis management is able to communicate in the local language, it shows respect and encourages the local population to take initiative. The FDF's task is to support the local population in assuming responsibility after a crisis has passed, and this can be achieved in various ways, such as providing security. It is here that interpreters are key players, providing that they understand the mission: if they do, they may contribute to the mission by communicating actively in the best interests of the FDF in their contacts with the locals (Interview C; E). Interpreters facilitate communication in both directions: they are often the only avenue for the local population and authorities to contact the crisis management force directly.

Why then does linguistic support continue to receive so little attention in the FDF? One possible explanation could be that the priority or status of the task of international military crisis management is assumed to be inferior by the FDF. In the Act on The Defence Forces (Finlex 2017/551), the FDF has four main tasks. Of these four, the fourth is participation in international military crisis management. However, the numbering of the tasks in the Act should in my understanding not be regarded as an order of priority nor are the tasks prioritised in law. Nonetheless, the notion of prioritisation has existed among Finnish officers (cf. Niemelä 2016). The soldiers in the FDF who are most interested in military crisis management are those who are currently deployed, and it is not a priority topic for the others (Interview D). In addition, in a situation where resources are scarce, remarks from superior officers that depreciate the importance of military crisis management may sometimes be interpreted as guidance (Interview C). It is likely that everyone wearing a uniform understands how important language skills and competences are. When prioritising tasks and resources, however, language-related issues are not necessarily at the top. It is a matter of how to use the available resources to obtain the best possible results for the future (Interview A).

The linguistic support demands of the FDF are met on a satisfactory level, and the FDF might not possess the resources or the ability to provide more or better linguistic support. In reality, military crisis management operations comprise approximately only two percent of all activity of the FDF. Moreover, the FDF's focus in languages and linguistic support is on Russian, which seems sensible from the perspective of national defence. On the other hand, the demand for linguistic support also depends on what type of crisis management operations the FDF decides to participate in. Once the decision to contribute forces to a certain operation is made, it should be followed up with the decision and necessary effort to provide linguistic support for that operation. However, linguistic military personnel do not appear out of thin air: if a language is not taught in Finland and no one speaks it here, there is little chance of recruiting military interpreters for that language (Interview D).

The effort invested in military crisis management may create internal competition for resources in the FDF, and thus hamper progress in other tasks. However, if the FDF considers military crisis management to be important, then linguistic support must be considered as equally important, because linguistic support is an essential requirement for the former. The language policy of the FDF should also focus more on providing incentives for soldiers to maintain and improve their language skills, which would be valuable in the long term (Interview C). The stance of the FDF's Personnel strategy and the FDF's incentives for improving its personnel's language competences are discussed in closer detail in the following chapter.

To utilise the linguistic potential inherent in its reserve, the FDF would need to have an official language policy programme. This programme should be based on research, as the FDF is a learning organisation (cf. Halonen 2007), which respects expert knowledge and verified scientific research results as grounds for decision-making. Moreover, the policy programme should be able to prove that its benefits outweigh the costs and that the costs have been minimised. The FDF already has the resources and the expertise needed to implement a language policy programme, they would only need to be allocated in a better way. Once the policy is signed, the necessary steps to implement it could be delegated to the responsible parties (Interview A).

A language policy programme aimed at utilising the linguistic potential of Finnish conscripts with an immigrant background could have the additional benefit of motivating these

conscripts to serve better. They must be told that they have a special background and skillset, which can be utilised to serve Finland. In practice, information on the possibility to become a military interpreter should be included in the information material on the conscript service and the call-ups. The prospect of becoming a military interpreter could motivate these young men and women to maintain and even develop their mother tongue skills (Interview A). Indeed, the FDF has plans to improve the integration of immigrants into the Finnish conscription system as a part of the development plan for the FDF for the years 2021 to 2024 (PE 2015b).

#### 4.7 Language Policy: Summary of Results

The results suggest that Finnish language policy substantiates the firm foundation and prominent status of languages and linguistic matters in Finland. In terms of language values, Finnish language policy conforms to the principles and values established by the UN and the EU, such as the protection of linguistic rights and language plurality. The influence of NATO's language policy, to which standardisation and interoperability are central goals, can also be observed in the FDF. An increase in immigration has caused a shift in the linguistic landscape of Finland as well as the FDF. Consequently, there is an increasing influx of multilinguals into the conscript service as well as the reserve of the FDF. However, this linguistic potential remains largely untapped by the FDF.



## 5. RESULTS: TRANSLATION CULTURE

In the previous chapter, I delineated language policy on the level of nation states and international organisations. In this chapter, I examine language policy on the institutional level, specifically in the institution of the FDF. To separate institutional level policy from state-level policy-making, I refer to the combination of policies and practices within an organisation as a *culture*. In addition, to underline the presence of a translatory frame of mind, as well as to point in the direction towards my third category of analysis, interpreter tactics, I label the institutional level of language policies and practices as *translation culture*.

Footitt and Kelly (2012b, 6–7) designate the study of language policy within certain institutions as the “micropolitics” of language policy, and highlight the complexity of issues involved in the management of languages at an institutional level. Language policy on the institutional level seems to be constructed upon practical solutions, which in turn give rise to policy implications. Institutions typically focus on the operational needs and the people who execute the operations: “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.” (ibid., 7). It should also be emphasised that the institutional level must always take into consideration the social, political, and cultural environment surrounding it (Jones & Askew 2014, 3).

Therefore, in order to understand the institutional translation culture of the FDF, I investigate how the FDF handles its internal language-related issues, with a special emphasis on linguistic support. I intend to identify the relevant actors, their roles, and mutual relations. I also describe the FDF’s most important internal documents on the topic, and how they interconnect with Finnish and international language policy, which were described in the previous chapter. For example, I examine how the statuses of the second official language and minority languages, as well as the linguistic potential among Finnish reservists, are handled in the FDF. I pay particular attention to the FDF documents and policies that administrate linguistic support in military crisis management operations and that regard military interpreters specifically.

## 5.1 Translation Culture in the Armed Forces

Once the ideas and strategies conceived on the language policy level are implemented, they become, in effect, translation culture. In war studies, the concept of translation culture would correspond to the concept of *operational art*: it defines the time, place, and objectives connected to individual operations, which are part of a larger chain of events. Operational art integrates strategy and tactics by fulfilling the strategic goals and at the same time setting intermediate objectives and tasks for the tactical level (cf. Gjelsten & Rekkedal 2013, 14–19). Similarly, translation culture bridges and integrates language policy and interpreter tactics. Translation culture denotes the planning, preparation, and implementation of something devised by language policy into something that actually takes place, that is, interpreter tactics. The translation culture of an armed force becomes visible on the level of institutions, commands, staffs, and planning groups. They determine the time and place, as well as the shape and the circumstances in which linguistic support actually operates.

One important symbol of any culture is the language system attached to it. In the FDF, language use is controlled to a degree: the FDF's norms, such as field manuals, instruct language users to use specific, fixed expressions in specific situations. Many features of language use in the military are common to all military cultures, transcending the borders of national cultures (Halonen 2007, 138). If the broader concept of 'language use in the military' refers to the translation culture of an armed force, then the FDF's translation culture should share mutual features with the translation cultures of the armed forces of other nations. Therefore, in describing the translation culture of the FDF, it is worthwhile to examine the translation cultures of the armed forces of other countries. In sub-chapter 5.5, I scrutinise the translation culture of NATO and the armed forces of the United Kingdom from the perspective of linguistic support.

### 5.1.1 Internationalisation, Interoperability, and Translation Culture

Recurring themes in FDF policy and strategy papers since the end of the Cold War are internationalisation and international cooperation, and the trend towards deepening cooperation between the FDF and its international partners has increased in recent years. Practical examples of this development are the Finnish participation in international exercises, the establishment of the Finnish Rapid Deployment Force, as well as the NATO evaluation of a number of FDF units. The FDF has also initiated and developed a number of bilateral

cooperation relationships in recent years, such as those with Sweden, the United States, Great Britain, and Germany.

The personnel strategy of the FDF clearly states that the training of capable units requires that the FDF participate in international exercises and military crisis management operations (PE 2014a, 10). Furthermore, the personnel strategy states that the FDF will make use of experience collected in international duties in the training for military crisis management operations (PE 2014a, 23). It is apparent that an increase in demands towards international interoperability also involves a linguistic dimension. Yet it is disputable whether these demands have been reflected in Finnish national language policy, or indeed in the FDF's translation culture.

The personnel strategy of the FDF also states that FDF personnel must possess the individual competencies required for international duties (PE 2014a, 3). In practise, this refers to good language skills and an understanding of international cooperation, in addition to proficiency in the own field of specialisation (PE 2014a, 5; 37). Good language skills do not only denote foreign language skills, but linguistic action competence<sup>13</sup> in general, such as communication, negotiation, and argumentation, as well as other skills that enable persons to operate and function linguistically in the best manner possible in all situations (Interview A).

In the near future, the international tasks of the FDF will undoubtedly become more varied, and they will be distributed more evenly within the FDF. Moreover, it is highly probable that within certain exercises the command language or the common language of the unit will no longer be what it has been when the FDF operated on its own. These are all strong indications that it would be advisable to write down an institutional language policy for the FDF in anticipation of its ongoing development. In the context of how internationality and the international dimension now penetrate everything the FDF does, the topic of translation culture should be made more prominent and transparent (Interview A).

## 5.2 Linguistic Structures in the Finnish Defence Forces

Firstly, I approach the translation culture of the FDF by examining its linguistic organisation as well as its institutional policies and practices.

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<sup>13</sup> For a description of the concept *linguistic action competence* (in Finnish “*kielellinen toimintakyky*”), see Snellman (2014, 17–20).

### 5.2.1 The Defence Language Centre

The Defence Language Centre (DLC) of the FDF assumes overall responsibility for linguistic support in the FDF and, arguably, it plays a key role in shaping the FDF's translation culture. The DLC integrates the linguistic expertise of the FDF into one independent element, and, according to the Rules of Procedure of the Finnish National Defence University (FNDU) (MPKK 2015), provides the necessary language services and linguistic support for the entire FDF. In practice, the DLC is often overlooked in matters that concern interpreting, in particular when the Russian language is not involved. For example, the DLC has not contributed to the Finnish crisis management forces in the Pori Brigade. Yet the DLC organises a wide range of linguistic services for the FDF, such as linguistic research, translations, interpreting, proofreading, and guidance in military terminology. In addition, the DLC serves as the expert organisation in the FDF on matters regarding language training and linguistic support (PE 2011b, 11–13; MPKK 2015, 64–67). From an organisational perspective, the Language Centre is a part of the FNDU, which in turn falls under the authority of the Defence Command.

The DLC is responsible for providing the translation, interpretation, and proofreading services required by the FDF, the Ministry of Defence, as well as the national government as regards the military (MPKK 2015, 64–67). In addition, the DLC is tasked with providing professional expertise regarding the country-specific operational environment in foreign countries. Whether this expertise is expected to address the linguistic situation only, or to also include the cultural and social dimensions, is not specified (*ibid.*).

The organisation of the DLC consists of a Director, a Deputy Director, a specialist language expert, a language planner, a language service section, and a language training section (MPKK 2015, 65). Earlier, the senior section head acted as Deputy Director of the DLC, but the position of Deputy Director is now independent of the two sections. Currently, the DLC has 14 employees, which comprise the majority of the professional linguists in the FDF. In addition, the Centre's role as the coordinating body of the FDF language services concerns approximately 30 additional FDF employees, who serve in linguistic expert positions or work with duties related to languages and terminology. An organisational overview of the DLC and its employees is in Figure C1 in Appendix C.

The DLC provides language examinations and language testing, such as when recruiting personnel, but also when assessing the language requirements and language competences of

FDF personnel. When the FDF personnel have language examinations from other organisations, the DLC also assesses their equivalence with the existing FDF norms. Whenever language training and language courses are purchased from an outside provider, the DLC assists in evaluating the standard of the services acquired (PE 2011b).

### 5.2.2 The Director of the Defence Language Centre

The FNDU's administrative order "Rules of Procedure of the Finnish National Defence University 2015" lists the tasks of the Director of the DLC. These include a number of significant duties from the perspective of translation culture and linguistic support in the FDF. The Director of the DLC heads the research and practical application of language use situations, language-training methods as well as translation methods and technologies for the purposes of the FDF (MPKK 2015, 64–67). The Director of the DLC also heads the planning and implementation of the language examinations and language tests required by the FDF. These tests are conducted to adhere to the provisions of the NCLP, the CEFR, the NATO STANAG 6001, as well as the Language Act (Finlex 2003/423) (MPKK 2015, 64–67).

The Director thus heads the linguistic expertise services provided by the DLC, such as the assessment and testing of the professional competence of the linguists working with the FDF in recruiting personnel, as well as personnel recruited for positions where specific language competences are required. The Director also decides on the personnel who are selected to continue their professional language training (MPKK 2015, 64–67). The Director also controls the appropriate use and work distribution of the language training personnel, translators, interpreters, as well as officers and other FDF personnel who work in positions that require specific language competences, including their continuing professional development. To conclude, the Director of the DLC directs the translation and interpreting services and other linguistic support needed by the FDF and the Ministry of Defence in crisis situations, including the recruitment and use of linguistic support personnel (*ibid.*).

### 5.2.3 Languages in the FDF Personnel Strategy

The FDF's personnel strategy (PE 2014a) states that FDF employees must possess the individual competences to serve in international duties. The increasing international military cooperation requires good language skills and an understanding of international teamwork

from FDF personnel (ibid., 5). The personnel strategy also addresses the development of knowledge and skills in Finnish society in general, and determines that foreign language skills and the understanding of multiple cultures are improving. On the other hand, it also states that the individuals' language skills in Finnish and Swedish are weakening (ibid., 8).

Although the personnel strategy underscores the importance of the individual employees' competences for international duties, the knowledge of foreign languages is not mentioned explicitly. In the selection procedure for the Bachelor of Military Science degree at the FNDU, which is the required entry-level course for career officers<sup>14</sup>, points for language competences can be achieved for both compulsory, domestic languages, that is Finnish and Swedish, as well as one additional foreign language. The points are determined based on the applicants' matriculation examination or secondary level vocational examination (MPKK 2017a). Thus, language skills are considered an important criterion in the selection process of future career officers. Nevertheless, English language skills are required officially only for international military crisis management operations, which are voluntary for FDF military personnel. That said, many domestic tasks also require English skills.

Furthermore, in the FDF a language skill bonus can be paid to persons who have passed NCLP tests: bonus class I on levels 5 and 6, bonus class II on level 4, and bonus class III on class levels 2 and 3 (MPKK 2009b). Russian makes an exception in this regard, as Russian skills are assessed through the FDF tests that use a different grading scale, and the language bonus classifications also differ for Russian. The DLC decides on the criteria for language bonuses (PE 2011b). In my experience, the FDF's policy for paying language bonuses varies, and the administrative units of the FDF may decide independently whether language skill bonuses are granted to persons who have passed the required tests.

#### 5.2.4 The FDF's Language Training Strategy

The DLC was instigated as an administrative unit of the FNDU in 2008, and after this, it was necessary to renew the documentation regarding language training in the FDF. The underlying idea of this work was to recapitulate the existing language training practices in one document, as well as to outline recommendations for the future (Interview A). The proposed draft titled *The Language Strategy of the FDF (Puolustusvoimien kielistrategia)* was subject to a round of comments and preparatory meetings (MPKK 2009a; 2009b). The most recent mentions of

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<sup>14</sup> With some exceptions, such as specialist officers (In Finnish *erikoisupseeri*).

the language training strategy of the FDF date back to 2009, and it seems that the proposal was never officially approved.

However, the Defence Command Training Division's administrative order 'Language Training in the Finnish Defence Forces' (PE 2011b) was published shortly afterwards. When comparing the contents of the draft for a language strategy and the later published administrative order, it seems evident that the previous document was used as the basis for the latter. In addition, in the administrative order, the tasks of directing the language requirements for FDF personnel as well as the planning of language training in the FDF are appointed to the DLC (MPKK 2015, 64–67). Both of these topics were central in the language strategy draft.

The administrative order includes references to a number of other orders, decrees, and laws. As a consequence, the hierarchy of documents that govern the language practices of the FDF appears to be unambiguous and traceable: the chain of references reaches from the administrative order on language training in the FDF (PE 2011b) all the way up to the Finnish legislation regarding language policy. The DLC has the responsibility of keeping the administrative order up to date.

The administrative order lists the FDF's principles and structures related to language. For example, the order establishes the roles and priorities of a number of foreign languages, the objectives and arrangements of language training, the language skill requirements and examinations used, as well as in what languages and on what skill levels language bonuses and grants for language studies are paid in the FDF (PE 2011b). It could be argued that the administrative order is the single most important document concerning the institutional language policy of the FDF<sup>15</sup>.

As a practical example of the FDF's institutional language policy, the FNDU decided not to offer German tuition for its students beginning in 2010. This judgement was based upon the small number of potential students of German (Interview A). This decline in numbers, in turn, can be attributed to the fall of the popularity of foreign language studies in Finnish schools in the 1990s (see Helsingin Sanomat 2017). In other words, the probability of a sufficient number of new officer cadets with basic German skills fell below what was deemed necessary

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<sup>15</sup> The Defence Command is preparing a new administrative order "Language Skill and Language Training in the FDF" (*Kielitaito ja kielikoulutus puolustusvoimissa* HO92), which will be signed in September 2018, and will implement changes to the currently valid order (PE 2011b). At the time of writing, I had no access to the draft of the revised order.

to arrange German tuition at the FNDU. Arguably, a contributing factor to the FNDU's decision was the FDF's official stance on German: here, German is regarded as "a language of bilateral cooperation with German-speaking countries" (PE 2011b). However, only after a few years of absence, German tuition was reinstituted into the FNDU curriculum.

The above example underlines how language policy and decisions on language-related activities such as language training need to be made from a long-term perspective. Syrjänen (2016) notes that during the Second World War, those who had language skills were offered many opportunities in the Finnish military, and asks how the language choices of today's youth will affect the situation in the future. This question is relevant: ideally, the language awareness and language ideologies prevalent in the FDF would support a long-term language planning, and prevent sharp turns or facile wins for administrative or budgetary reasons.

In addition to German, the administrative order stipulates the roles and functions of a number of foreign languages for the FDF. These are English, Russian, French, and Swedish, as well as "other languages" (PE 2011b, 5–7). The role of Swedish is not only established by Finnish legislation (see sub-chapter 4.2) but also underlined by the increasing bilateral military cooperation between Finland and Sweden. The importance of English is undisputable, as English is the common working language of practically all multinational military activity. English is also used internally in certain FDF activities and documentation. In practice, English has an established position as a first foreign language in Finland<sup>16</sup>, and proficiency in English is expected of everyone. (Interview A). That Finland has a special interest in Russian is also obvious, and is discussed in closer detail in sub-chapter 5.2.6. The roles of French and German remain important for the FDF, and the document mentions the lack of personnel with French or German skills as a challenge for the FDF. This can be understood as an expression of concern for the narrowing of the language skill base of FDF personnel (Interview A).

### 5.2.5 Language Training in the FDF

Language training is a part of the system of skills development (*osaamisen kehittäminen*) for FDF employees. The FDF's language training system consists of language training, a language skills register, and a training material bank. Language training is offered in combination with training leading to examinations and continuing vocational training. The language register collects information on the language competence levels of FDF employees.

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<sup>16</sup> The English language is sometimes humorously referred to in Finland as the "third national language", which means that English skills are taken for granted (cf. Leppänen et. al. 2008).



The training material bank, in turn, contains tailored material on professional communication for self-study as well as study packages to support self-learning (PE 2011a, 5). For example, the FDF's web-based learning portal PVMOODLE<sup>17</sup> offers self-study packages for language learners.

The DLC plans and directs language training in the FDF under the supervision of the Defence Command (PE 2011a, 10; MPKK 2015, 64–67). The branch staffs (Army Command, Navy Command, and Air Force Command) compile their specific language training needs, and supervise their own language training, which is conducted in the Branch Academies and Specialist Schools in cooperation with the Defence Command and the DLC (PE 2011a, 13; 19). The Branch Academies and Specialist Schools offer some of their training in English. These include courses in language for special purposes, such as aviation and navigation English, some of which are mandatory by international conventions (Interview A). The lower-level administrative units of the FDF may also organise language training. However, this is to be achieved with the support of the DLC and according to directions provided by it (PE 2011a, 20). It should be noted that the highest authority in all FDF training is the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Training Division of the Defence Command (*koulutuspäällikkö*) (Interview A).

The DLC organises the foreign language training requested by the FDF. This training also includes planning the language tests and examinations of FDF personnel (MPKK 2015, 64–67). Typically, language training in the FDF consists of courses in professional communication on FNDU courses leading to an examination for degrees such as the Bachelor of Military Sciences Degree, Master of Military Sciences Degree, and General Staff Officer's Degree. The languages taught are English, Russian, French, and German. Training and examinations are also offered in the second official language of Finland, which is Swedish. Furthermore, studies in so-called 'rare languages' as well as the languages of foreseeable operation areas are supported by covering the costs of independent studies undertaken outside the FDF. Language training services are purchased from outside the FDF selectively (PE 2011a, 16–17). For example, the DLC has organised intensive courses in Arabic for FDF personnel (MPKK 2017b).

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.pvmoodle.fi/login/index.php>

### 5.2.6 Special Courses in Russian

The FDF offers special courses in Russian biannually as a part of FDF's internal supplementary training courses. An entrance examination is used to select students for the special courses, and this exam is preceded by a period of preparatory studies. The objective of these courses, which are organised by the DLC, is giving the students a basic proficiency to work in positions within the FDF, which require Russian language skills. Moreover, the courses are a way of ensuring that sufficient personnel with Russian skills are available for the FDF (MPKK 2017b).

The special Russian courses' preparatory phase aims to ascertain that the applicants to the course are able pass the FDF's own Russian examinations, which are taken after the special course itself. The minimum requirement is to pass the FDF's own Russian test on level 2, or on the intermediate level. The special courses can be regarded as a major investment by the FDF: typically, the study groups are small, they study Russian full time with pay, and the courses include travels to the language area. The most successful students have typically begun their studies as young soldiers and advanced through the system of special courses (Interview A).

In comparison to other languages, Russian constitutes a special priority for the FDF. The FDF's prolonged focus on Russian and interest in it can perhaps be best understood in terms of Finland's geostrategic position and exceptional security policy challenges. In particular, it would seem to be in the FDF's interest that its Russian language specialists are recruited internally amongst professional soldiers or civilian FDF employees with established career paths. It could be argued that the special courses are aimed more at prospective duties in the field of military intelligence rather than in linguistic support. Typically, approximately 20 to 30% of the course participants can be recruited for translation and interpretation tasks later in their career, that is, if they maintain their language skills. The DLC also provides refresher training for those who have completed the Special Course. Nonetheless, working as a linguist has often not been a recognised career or even desirable for military personnel in many armed forces (Jones & Askew 2014, 14). The same is true for military linguists at large: military organisations generally do not often offer appealing career opportunities for military linguists (cf. C. Baker 2010; Jones & Askew 2014; NATO 2015).

### 5.2.7 Language Testing in the FDF

The National Certificate of Language Proficiency (NCLP) (*yleinen kielitutkinto*) was used as the official certificate of language competence in the FDF until 2017. The FDF has considered the NCLP to be a sufficient platform for language testing of its personnel's language skills in non-specialised language (PE 2011a, 16–17). One reason for this could be that both the NCLP and the Finnish Matriculation Examination (*ylioppilastutkinto*) conform to the CEFR and thus provide a comparable scale (Interview A). International English proficiency exams, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are also recognised, especially when a person is applying for a course abroad. The DLC is responsible for the FDF's Russian examination, as well as for the internal testing of the operational language skills of officers who have no possibility to attend the established language tests because they are to be sent to high international positions on short notice (PE 2011a, 16–17).

In November 2017, the FDF introduced language tests that conformed to the NATO STANAG 6001 standard. The STANAG 6001 tests have been developed further and benchmarked with the CEFR in recent years. The introduction of the STANAG 6001 conformant tests serves two purposes. Firstly, it provides FDF personnel with the possibility of acquiring a Standardised Language Profile (SLP), thus eliminating the need to compare language certificates from different systems in international duties, particularly in NATO structures. Secondly, the aim is to encourage FDF personnel to improve their language skills throughout their career. This goal has been further facilitated by making self-study material available online. By implementing language tests that conform to STANAG 6001, the FDF sends a message and provides an incentive to FDF personnel to continually maintain and improve their language skills (Interview A).

The language tests for the NCLP will preserve their status alongside the SLP tests. Previously, the validity and official approval of SLP language tests or other language examinations were subject to the DLC's decisions (MPKK 2009b). The NCLP tests are also offered in a number of languages other than English. It is important to note that both the NCLP and SLP tests measure standard language, as opposed to language for special purposes, such as military professional language (Interview A). The reason for not specialising in military language in the FDF's tests is that they are offered to FDF personnel from all branches of service as well as the Finnish Border Guard. This means that an exam that focuses solely on language for special purposes would be unduly discriminating.

The research data did not mention tests or the testing of FDF personnel's language proficiency in what is referred to as the 'rare languages', such as the languages of foreseeable operation areas. Deductively, the organisation of these tests would be the responsibility of the DLC, as one of its tasks was to plan the language testing of FDF personnel (cf. MPKK 2015, 64–67). As the training of these languages is outsourced (see sub-chapter 5.2.5), the same would probably also apply to the language testing.

As a rule, for FDF personnel, the minimum required language skill level in English, French, and German for international duties is level 4 in the NCLP<sup>18</sup>. For reservists, non-commissioned officers, as well as rank-and-file personnel in international deployments, the lower skill levels (1 to 3) are also accepted, depending on their specific task. Should a person not have passed a NCLP test at level 4 in English when being deployed in international duties, the NCLP test can be replaced through a test of Operational English skills. This test is conducted by the DLC, typically upon request by the Army Command (MPKK 2009b; Interview A). The DLC has conducted English language tests for those in pre-deployment training for crisis management operations at the Pori Brigade, when necessary (Interview A). The National Certificate of Language Proficiency tests are valid for 10 years at level 4 and open-endedly at levels 5 and 6 (MPKK 2009b)

#### 5.2.8 The Swedish and Sami Languages in the FDF

As I mentioned earlier in sub-chapter 4.2, the status of Swedish as the other official language of Finland also concerns the FDF. The FDF thus maintains at least one Swedish-speaking unit. Currently, that unit is the Nyland Brigade, which, while Swedish speaking, uses Finnish as its language of command (cf. Finlex 2003/423). Officers in the FDF are also required have a specific competence in both Finnish and Swedish by Government Decree (Finlex 2004/9). This means that as a state institution, the FDF is bilingual. Whether this requirement is carried out in practice, is a matter of debate and opinion, and outside the scope of the current paper.

The Sámi Language Act (Finlex 2003/1086) specifies the provisions concerning the Sámi language in Finland. Finns speaking any one of the three variants of Sámi as their mother tongue have the legal right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. This right

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<sup>18</sup> For more information on the proficiency levels of the Finnish National Certificate of Language Proficiency, see <https://www.oph.fi/english/services/yki> (OPH 2018; see also Finlex 1994/668).

also extends to using their own language in dealings with public authorities. The Finnish national authorities are therefore obliged to enforce and promote the linguistic rights of the Sámi people (ibid.). According to the Sámi Language Act, all official documents by state authorities, including announcements, notices, promulgations, information releases, and forms with instructions, must be prepared and issued in the Sámi language. Moreover, when dealing with the authorities in the Sámi homeland, “a Sámi has the right to use the Sámi or the Finnish language, as he or she may choose” (ibid.).

Ten years after the Sámi Language Act entered into force, the Ministry of Defence requested the Defence Command to report on the practical experiences and observations from implementing the Act in the FDF (PLM 2015). The reply (PE 2015a) of the Defence Command briefly described the practical manner in which the linguistic rights provided for in the Sámi Language Act are implemented by the FDF in the northernmost municipalities of Finland. The local military authorities had provided the local conscripts with the necessary documents in Finnish as well as the three variants of Sámi. The local military authority has also been prepared to interpret into Sámi, but this has usually not been necessary (ibid.).

### 5.3 Linguistic Support in the FDF

The majority of Finland’s military crisis management operations have been conducted by the Army (see also sub-chapter 6.2.3). The Army Command guideline “International Activities and Military Crisis Management in the Army” (MAAVE 2008) briefly addresses language training and linguistic support in the Army. While the guideline recognises that linguistic support is a part of the Army’s international activities, it states that the Army Command does not maintain linguistic support in its own organisation. Also, the Army’s translation tasks are either outsourced, or they are performed by the Defence Command. Outsourced translations are to be proofread by the Defence Command. The interpreting services required by the Commander of the Army are usually arranged by the Defence Command (ibid.). As such, the guideline does not provide any information on how the Army implements linguistic support for its crisis management operations.

In 2016, the FDF Defence Command assessed Finland’s anticipated the annual need of military interpreters to be from six to eight Arabic-speaking military interpreters, and from two to four French-speaking military interpreters (PE 2016a). This corresponded to Finland’s ongoing military crisis management operations at that time. In practice, however, the

language requirements for military interpreters also include English and Finnish as working languages (Interview E).

The most important factor in how the FDF organises its linguistic support for a military crisis management operation is the mandate of the operation. In other words, the question is whether the operation is led by NATO, the EU, the OSCE, or the UN. For example, in UN operations, the UN mission organisation is responsible for recruiting the local interpreters, including their security vetting. These interpreters have the status of locally recruited civilians and they are UN employees. During the recruitment process, the troop contributing nations cannot influence process, nor can they determine which interpreters are assigned to them (Interview D).

The responsibility for linguistic support in operations led by EU or NATO lies typically with the lead nation. Operations usually have one lead nation that is responsible for the whole operation, with additional regional or even local lead nations that lead in a specific geographical area. In some operations, the lead nation changes periodically when the troops are rotated. For many recent operations, the regional lead nation has been responsible for the practical implementation of linguistic support, such as the recruitment and administration of local interpreters. It has also become a common practice in recent years for the lead nations to outsource the linguistic support to external contractors. By not employing the local interpreters directly, the lead nations are able to save on personnel costs and to circumvent regulations regarding immigration and asylum for government employees (Interview D).

The role of the lead nation in linguistic support issues is a contractual matter. A common principle in military crisis management operations is that ‘costs lie where they fall’, which means that the nation that uses the linguistic services usually covers the costs of that linguistic support. The mechanisms involved in sharing the responsibilities and the financial burden can always be negotiated between the troop contributing nations (Interview D).

The most simple and cost-effective solution for Finland has usually been to rely on the linguistic support provided by the lead nation and to pay the share owed by Finland, especially during the early stages of an operation. After all, Finland is often a relatively minor contributor to international military crisis management operations. During the Balkans operation, however, the major Finnish troop contribution and Finland’s role as a regional lead nation substantiated the hiring of local interpreters directly by the Finnish contingent. The

employment contracts for some of the local interpreters in the Finnish battalion continued over a decade (Interview D).

The national linguistic resources of the troop-contributing nations – their military interpreters – are unquestionably a national matter. Even so, the mandate of the operation also partly determines how the national linguistic support is structured. For example, NATO has certain common capability requirements for deployed units. These may include requirements on what personnel the unit should include. When a nation is committed to contributing a specific unit to a NATO mission, the unit should fulfil these requirements and this needs to be accomplished nationally (Interview D).

As I mentioned earlier, the FDF must adhere to many norms and regulations regarding the types of capabilities and personnel that can be available in military crisis management missions. The result is that some tasks are combined into one position. Some of the tasks cannot be combined without risk, and the required capabilities must therefore be carefully considered. For instance, each new capability or equipment requires its own support and logistic chain, which means deploying additional personnel. Given the maximum number of personnel, it is necessary to find a balance by determining what is mission-essential and what can be considered superfluous. When reduction in personnel is necessary, military interpreter positions are often the easiest to remove from the personnel roster (Interview D).

The FDF plans its military crisis management missions based on the available resources. When a political decision is made concerning the size of the Finnish contingent for a specific mission, the FDF provides its military recommendations, but the final decision is made on the political level. As an example, a political decision might limit the size of the Finnish troop contribution to 25 people. The task of the military is then to plan the personnel composition that suits the mission without exceeding that limit. Once the mission-essential positions are filled, several factors still need to be considered. For instance, is it more sensible to deploy mechanics or to rely on the maintenance that is available locally? Another question is whether the FDF should plan two positions for military interpreters when they are most likely able to recruit only one. Overall, the prioritisation of personnel is a complicated matter, and needs to be carefully evaluated (Interview D).

## 5.4 Officers Values and Attitudes towards Linguistic Issues

In my analysis, I categorised the interviewed officers' conceptions on linguistic topics as elements of the translation culture in the FDF. Based partly on the same interviews and partly on survey data (Tiilikka 2014b) originally collected for another study (Tiilikka 2014a), I wrote an article on the perceptions of Finnish officers who had worked with military interpreters and locally recruited interpreters in military crisis management operations (Snellman 2018b). This sub-chapter presents a summary of the most pertinent results from that previously published article, and I comment on them in the context of translation culture in the FDF. This means that this sub-chapter draws from that earlier article (*ibid.*) unless indicated otherwise.

### 5.4.1 Interpreters' Professional Competences

The results of my earlier article provide some insight into Finnish officers' opinions and deliberations when they work with interpreters, as well as their views on linguistic support at large. Finnish officers considered military interpreters' interpretation to be more reliable than interpreting by a locally recruited interpreter. The difference in the reliability in favour of military interpreters was considerable, and slightly higher for those respondents who had experience of working with both local interpreters and military interpreters.

When assessing the quality of the interpretation of military and locally recruited interpreters, the officers' conceptions differed slightly less than when assessing reliability. In this regard, for all respondent groups, the difference was to the advantage of military interpreters, and was slightly higher for those respondents who had experience in working with both local interpreters and military interpreters.

The survey also requested that the Finnish officers assess whether they had, in their opinion, received instructions and guidance in the local culture from the interpreters that they had worked with. The survey results displayed no difference between military interpreters and locally recruited interpreters in this respect. The respondents were satisfied overall with the cultural guidance that they had received.

When assessing the adequacy of the interpreters' language skills, the difference was considerable and again this was in favour of military interpreters over local interpreters. The



only the answers that differed were by respondents who had experience in working with both local interpreters and military interpreters. The survey did not, however, specify the language(s) being assessed, which is why it is possible that the military interpreters' better results can be attributed to their superior Finnish and English skills, and not necessarily to their competence in the local language.

If they are provided training, interpreters are generally able to develop their professional competencies significantly during a crisis management operation. For instance, military terminology might typically be one field where this improvement occurs, although their development depends on the interpreter's background and work ethic (Interview D).

The survey results indicate that overall, Finnish officers are highly satisfied with the interpreters whom they worked with. The respondents routinely considered military interpreters far more reliable and more proficient in languages than locally recruited interpreters. Hence, Finnish officers considered the interpreting by military interpreters who were recruited in Finland to be of higher quality than the interpreting by local interpreters. The difference in favour of military interpreters was slightly smaller for those respondents who only had experience in working with either local interpreters or military interpreters than among those who had experience in working with both.

The officers' assessment is reflected in their conceptions of whether military interpreters are necessary: Finnish officers are strongly in favour of deploying one or more military interpreters as a part of a Finnish crisis management force. The minimum requirement in this respect was considered to be one military interpreter per company level unit. Correspondingly, the respondents generally disagreed with the claim that linguistic support could be achieved solely by recruiting interpreters locally. Having personal experience of working with local interpreters appeared to slightly strengthen the officers' support for deploying military interpreters.

Perhaps the most common conception that the officers harboured on interpreters in crisis management operations was the varying standard and competence of interpreters. Both the interviewees and the survey results mentioned that crisis managements operations have interpreters who are highly proficient, but also others who are inadequately qualified. The officers often found it frustrating that they were not aware in advance whether or not an unfamiliar interpreter was proficient, because the professional competence of the interpreter is

pivotal for the task. This result suggests that it would be preferable to conduct some type of testing, classification, or standardisation of interpreters based on their competence level.

#### 5.4.2 Working with Interpreters

The previous chapter discussed the survey results that focused on the professional and linguistic aspects of interpreter work. My position is that these results become more informative when they are supplemented by officers' conceptions concerning the role of linguistic support within the larger framework of military crisis management. Let us now turn our attention to examining the values and attitudes of the interviewed officers' on a wider scale by reviewing their conceptions on expectations, risks, leadership, as well as on the neutrality and autonomy of interpreters.

The interviewees described the possibility of having an interpreter as a part of their unit almost exclusively in very positive terms. Interpreters provide significant advantages to a military unit, military interpreters in particular, because they are a part of the unit and always available. Another benefit of military interpreters over locally recruited interpreters is that the latter might refuse to enter certain contexts or situations. One interviewee referred to interpreters as having "a key role" and being an "absolutely vital asset". The interviewees also praised interpreters for coping with a heavy workload and difficult circumstances (Interview B; C; D; E).

While the officers praised interpreters, they had great expectations and were highly demanding of them. As an illustration of this, the officers frequently expected interpreters to act as experts or advisors on matters such as cultural knowledge or by assessing the conversation parties afterwards. An interesting assumption by the officers also emerged from their interviews: they often expected interpreters to convey messages in a manner that supported the military and its objectives, or even to actively support the military mission instead of acting merely as a mediator, or trying to assume a neutral stance between parties. This applied equally to locally recruited interpreters as to military interpreters. In the case of Finnish military interpreters, the officers presumed that these interpreters would be loyal to the crisis management force and actively support its mission (Interview C; E). Indeed, Footitt and Kelly (2018, 171) note, that "ethical neutrality in war [...] sits uncomfortably with the linguist's uniform and official status". In contrast, the question of the reliability and loyalty of the locally recruited interpreters was repeatedly raised by the interviewees: the crisis

management force must always consider the possibility that the local interpreters are loyal to local actors (Interview C; D; E).

Baker (2005, 9) notes that in contemporary translation studies, a narrative prevails that portrays the translator as an honest intermediary, enabler, and bridge builder. This master narrative also depicts translation as a force for good. Towards this end, interpreters enable dialogue between different cultures and therefore improve their ability to understand one another. Dialogue and understanding are therefore assumed to be ‘good’ in a moral sense, and are believed to lead to progress. In this respect, the Finnish officers’ demand that their interpreter be loyal towards the Finnish crisis management force presupposes that the mission of the Finnish crisis management force is justified, and that its actions steer the situation in the appropriate direction.

The validity of this master narrative in times of conflict and war has been questioned and researched (see Syrjänen 2014; Rafael 2007). Translation is not only a means for inclusion and care, but also for alienation, containing threats, and planning for interventions. While translation enables new connections and networks, it also promotes linguistic hierarchies, misunderstandings, and even conflict (Rafael 2007, 240–242). The circumstances of conflict and war ultimately underscore the limits of what is achievable by translation, as well as the limits of trust (*ibid.*, 245–246).

Military interpreters are usually integrated reasonably quickly into their unit, although perhaps not as frictionless as the ethnically Finnish soldiers integrate. It is interesting that one interviewee mentioned that when multiple military interpreters were deployed to the same crisis management force, tensions mounted among the military interpreters. These disagreements were caused by their different ethnic backgrounds, political affiliations, or by their statuses within the structure of the crisis management force (Interview D). The military interpreters were also considered to be equal to their peers. For example, few ethnic jokes were told, and discrimination was non-existent (Interview C; E).

The interviewed officers predominantly regarded military interpreters to be soldiers with the special ability of knowing the local language. In other words, Finnish military interpreters were primarily Finnish soldiers with their respective rights and obligations, and they were regarded as an inseparable part of the crisis management force. When they were not interpreting, they were considered soldiers as the others, and could be assigned all types of

military responsibilities (cf. Footitt & Kelly 2018, 162). It is understandable that for military interpreters, interpreting tasks had priority over other military duties. The officers also generally presumed that the military skills of military interpreters were, or that they at least should be, on the same level as those of other soldiers serving in an equivalent rank, and that they should be able to perform military tasks correspondingly well. In practice, however, the military interpreters' military competence and mental toughness were often considered not to be on the same level as those of other soldiers in the crisis management force (Interview B; C). The officers considered locally recruited interpreters to be civilians, and did not expect them to have military training or an understanding of military issues (Interview B).

The officers also expressed the importance of the right persons being recruited as military interpreters, specifically that the military interpreters possessed the personal qualities required for the task. From the perspective of the officers, the military interpreters' status as soldiers also presupposed that their physical and psychical fitness, as well as their ethical and social skills<sup>19</sup> were on a par with the other members of the crisis management force. The officers also demanded or even presumed that military interpreters would be familiar with military culture and adapted to it, perhaps exceeding what the military interpreters' training and experience would provide the basis for (Interview C; E).

This raises another open question that concerns the required level of military skills for a military interpreter. The interviewees underscored the importance of a military interpreter's willingness to learn and adapt: if a military interpreter assumes that he is there only to interpret, his attitude is likely to cause problems. However, if he has the right attitude and is willing to practice and to learn as well as have special languages skills, he will be an asset to his unit and eventually redeem his position among his peers. Interpreter training begins in Finland before deployment, but that does not necessarily mean that interpreters are by any means well prepared. The military interpreters' learning and personal growth continues throughout their deployment (Interview C; D).

The interviewed officers expected that the military interpreters would understand what it means to serve in a military and what being deployed in a military operation involves. A military setting inherently has rules and regulations that are more stringent than in a civilian setting. It takes more than a uniform to make a soldier: in order for a soldier to gain his fellow

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<sup>19</sup> The interviewees were alluding to the concept of *action competence* (in Finnish "toimintakyky"), which has reached a prominent status in the Finnish military. This refers to the individual soldier's capability to act, and is usually examined in its physical, psychical, ethical, and social dimensions (for example, see Toiskallio & Mäkinen 2009).

soldiers' trust in him and his abilities, he must know how to act and how to behave in a military context, as well as how to react in difficult situations (Interview B; C). In short, the officers presupposed that military interpreters would adapt to military culture and to the circumstances surrounding them. For military interpreters, acquiring an understanding of military culture and sufficient competences in military skills are fundamental for gaining the trust of their fellow soldiers and the military organisation (cf. Snellman 2014).

#### 5.4.3 Risks and Security

For assignments that have a higher threat level and for militarily more demanding situations, the officers preferred to work with military interpreters rather than locally recruited interpreters (Interview B). The officers considered it self-evident that military interpreters were to be trusted, as they were Finnish soldiers. However, one interviewee pointed out that the trustworthiness of individuals corresponds to their assigned task and their level of subject matter expertise. Thus, for example, officers may be more trustworthy than rank-and-file soldiers, and military interpreters may be more trustworthy on linguistic issues than officers. In this regard, personal relations are not involved in this regard (Interview C).

The interviewees stated that the most noticeable risks related to military interpreters concerned information security, such as how security clearances and access to information affects the military interpreters' role in the military structure. Military interpreters were also viewed as potential targets for hostile influence, especially if they had personal or family-related connections to the operation area (Interview B; C). However, the trustworthiness of military interpreters is supported by their duties and responsibilities as Finnish soldiers. In contrast, while the locally recruited interpreters are also employed to support the mission with their expertise, they have no legal obligations or constrictions in terms of the crisis management force, which might be a potential security concern (Interview E).

The most experienced locally recruited interpreters were, nonetheless, able to choose a suitable role and allegiance depending on the situation. An example is the language assistants who were recruited by the UN and who predominantly remained in their role of UN employees, but could adapt to the situation when necessary. Conversely, in Bosnia, the locally recruited interpreters often continued their alignment with the local ethnic groups to which they belonged, and these interpreters sometimes even adopted a contradictory stance to the crisis management force (Interview C; B).

Regardless of the circumstances, a skilled interpreter needs to be able to create a positive atmosphere for meetings and negotiations. At the same time, the interpreter should not direct or influence matters but focus on that the main messages are conveyed correctly and that the goals set for the meeting are met. More specifically, this applies to the goals set by the interpreter's own unit. In addition, after a meeting the interpreter should, if possible, be able to understand and to explicate the cultural dimension behind what was being expressed in that meeting (Interview E).

Interpreters significantly influence the creation and establishment of an interactive relationship and cooperation between the crisis management force and the local authorities. For more difficult and sensitive issues in particular, interpreters have the unique ability to apply language skilfully and subtly. While this can be achieved in a multitude of ways, some examples are through their use of euphemisms and metaphors, which is necessary to bring the issue forward in that specific cultural environment (Interview D). Hence the interpreters' cultural skills should be on the level to ensure that they are able to determine the meaning of local customs. They should also be able to give advice on various matters. These include advising on the appropriate manner of speech, the correct protocol and on the sequence of a group when they enter a room, greetings, seating order, and food and drink at meetings. In contrast, should the interpreter behave disrespectfully towards the military or the locals – especially from the locals' point of view – the interpreter has the ability to jeopardise the entire meeting. The interpreter also needs to be able to rectify possible cultural mistakes made by the soldiers (Interview C).

As I mentioned previously, as a rule, Finnish officers expressed that locally recruited interpreters potentially posed a security risk. The officers' conceptions of the local employees' potential disloyalty towards the crisis management force could also be observed in how the officers described matters that involved money, such as procurements or development projects. If a locally recruited interpreter was employed in an operation for a longer time, the risk of corruption increased. This needs to be considered when assigning interpreters to tasks that involve financial transactions (Interview C). Local interpreters also occasionally want to attend specific meetings due to their personal business interests, such as an attempt to improve their standing in the local community or with influential individuals. In one case, when preparing a Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) project, the local interpreter

would point out flaws in all other tenders for the project, except for the tender of his brother-in-law's firm (Interview D).

The interviewed officers displayed understanding – but not necessarily acceptance – of the locally recruited interpreters' lack of loyalty towards the crisis management force and their tendency towards corruption. The overall security and economic situation in an area may leave corruption as one of the few options available to cope financially. The locals also live permanently in the area, whereas the soldiers rotate periodically. In order to understand the motives of the local interpreters and perhaps even to pre-empt their actions, it is necessary to know more detailed aspects of their lives, such as their family ties, ethnic background, and political affiliations. It is also important to understand that the local interpreters must constantly balance their allegiances according to what is most beneficial to them, as favouring any specific party could immediately result in terminating their employment (Interview D; cf. Footitt & Kelly 2018, 170).

#### 5.4.4 Personal Relations, Loyalty, and Trust

Jones & Askew (2014, 176–180) elaborate on the issue of trust between military personnel and interpreters, and highlight its complexity. Fundamentally, trusting an interpreter depends on the clients' confidence in his linguistic abilities. In a military crisis management setting, however, trust is manifested in multiple dimensions, such as power, ethnicity, security, and external appearance.

The officers therefore build their trust in military interpreters in relation to multiple factors. For instance, one of the interviewed officers considered a military interpreter to be neutral when he understood his role and did what was expected of him (Interview B). In contrast, another interviewee considered it impossible for a military interpreter to act neutrally, or to uphold the ethical guidelines for interpreters such as impartiality and confidentiality (Interview C). A third interviewee emphasised that military interpreters are bound by the same military regulations as all other soldiers, and that any ethical guidelines for military interpreters must not be contradictory to military regulations or the general judiciary principles for employees in the Finnish government (Interview D).

The interviewees' varying views illustrate the intricacy of the issue of neutrality and loyalty for military interpreters. The interview context reveals that the interviewed officers usually

expected military interpreters to support the military's position. I have discussed the dimensions and limitations of military interpreter neutrality in a previous article, and the interviews appear to corroborate my observations that a military culture does not easily accommodate neutrality (Snellman 2016, 270–272). Indeed, when asked to specify the qualities of a good military interpreter, the interviewees highlighted trustworthiness as a particularly important characteristic. It is interesting to note that a trustworthy military interpreter was described in terms such as competent and hard-working, but also as loyal (Interview B).

The officers' demand for loyalty far surpassed the linguistic dimension, and one interviewee stated that Finnish military interpreters were representatives of Finland. This means that a military interpreter should never arrive at a situation where they must reflect on whether their role in the operation is to support the Finnish crisis management force and its commanding officer, or whether their role is to support the locals and their concerns. In other words, there should be no doubt that a Finnish soldier always serves his own unit and the Finnish organisation. In some instances, the younger military interpreters had to be reminded of this. An interpreter should of course convey the message correctly, but a Finnish military interpreter can never serve any other party than Finland. A Finnish military interpreter also represents his unit as well as Finland, which is why it is imperative that his personal qualities and demeanour be that of a suitable representative for the Finnish crisis management force (Interview E).

As the survey results indicate, the officers were generally satisfied with the language skills, cultural knowledge, and performance of the Finnish military interpreters. Even so, a number of interviewed officers had encountered problems with the military interpreters they had worked with. These officers described the cases in terms of attitude problems and arrogance by the military interpreter and that this had caused friction and mistrust. However, the officers also acknowledged that these problems might primarily be due to misunderstandings caused by cultural differences, such as what the status and role of the interpreter should be (Interview B; C). According to one interviewee, in one incident, the military interpreter had expected higher prestige and a greater degree of autonomy<sup>20</sup> than what the military organisation was able to provide and this had caused frustration for both parties (Interview B).

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<sup>20</sup> An illustration of the cultural differences is that the military interpreter had demanded his own office or a desk at the base, and that he had presented himself as a Lieutenant to the locals when his rank of service was in fact Lance Corporal.



My own, tentative analysis is that the situation described above was due to the gap between the positions of the local culture, represented by the military interpreter, and the military culture and organisation, and their mutual unwillingness to adapt. An officer's perception of an individual military interpreter and his personal relations with him are usually not formed deliberately or consciously. They begin to develop in the pre-deployment training and evolve further in the operation area. How the personal relations progress depend on both the interpreter as well as on the soldiers in the unit. Nevertheless, if the military interpreter's reputation precedes him, it can be very difficult to change (Interview C). Indeed, results drawn from both the interviews as well as the survey propose that cases of lacking trust were rather due to the military interpreters' individual qualities than the group of military interpreters as a whole.

The interviewed officers cited the external appearance of military interpreters as a factor that contributed to their reliability. This may be due to military interpreters wearing uniforms, which may be understood as a statement of their allegiance. For example, if two soldiers in uniform are talking to a local person, and one of these two soldiers is a military interpreter, this may suggest that they are on a mission, or that there is a hidden agenda with the discussion. In contrast, when a soldier works with a locally recruited interpreter, the situation may be perceived by an outsider as a discussion between a soldier and two local persons, which in effect is the case. Thus, a situation could be more neutral and relaxed than when working with a military interpreter. This difference is perhaps more significant for the locals than from a soldier's perspective (Interview B).

In a similar vein, the tenser the situation, the more military interpreters need to side with the crisis management force. This is because their appearance is that of a soldier, and the crisis management force is one unit with one code of conduct. In a peaceful setting, military interpreters could perhaps step outside their role of a soldier in the crisis management force and act more as an interpreter. However, if they were to act purely in the role of an interpreter, they should wear civilian clothing and they should not be used as a part of the unit. It could be possible to use military interpreters in this manner, but then they would assume the role of an interpreter only (Interview C). It is interesting to note that the significance of wearing a uniform is a recurring theme in studies on military linguists (cf. Jones & Askew, 2014, 17; Kelly & Baker 2013, 158; Snellman, 2014, 64).

## 5.5 Translation Culture: International Comparison

Let us now turn to examine the translation culture in NATO as well as the armed forces of another European country. By analysing language policies and practices on the institutional level in NATO and in the United Kingdom and by comparing those to the policies and practices present within the FDF, I hope to be able to add depth to my understanding of the translation culture the FDF. In particular, it is my aim to establish which doctrinal solutions applied in NATO and in the UK would be applicable for the FDF and whether or not the FDF should create its own policy or doctrine for linguistic support. At the same time, it is important to take into account the differences in the interests, missions, and resources of the armed forces of Finland and the UK, not to mention NATO.

### 5.5.1 NATO STANAG: Linguistic Support to Operations

In 2011, NATO published a Standardisation Agreement (STANAG) on linguistic support for operations (NATO 2011). The publication of that document “marked the end of the language policy formulation process” for NATO (Jones & Askew 2014, 9), and was the result of many years of practical experiences from operations such as KFOR, SFOR and ISAF. The STANAG, titled *Linguistic Support for Operations (ALingP-1)*, has been characterised as a “hybrid policy/doctrine document” (MoD 2013a), in the sense that it contains both guidelines and recommendations regarding NATO’s language policy. The STANAG also provides practical advice on how to organise linguistic support in military operations.

As an example of language policy alignment, the STANAG determines that

The provision of linguistic support needs to be properly organized and planned before operations take place. The appropriate command authorities in the nations and the NATO command structure (NCS) shall therefore issue a policy to enable appropriate preparations for such support to be made before an operation, thus enabling its provision during an operation. National policies, which should be compatible with ALingP-1(A), shall guide the provision of linguistic support within national elements and force structures (NATO 2011).

According to the STANAG, a national language policy for an operation should include a statement of requirements detailing:

1. The languages to be supported,
2. The linguistic support organisation,
3. The language requirements for specific posts or organisations,
4. The language requirements specific to a given operation, and,
5. The workload and manning in linguistic support positions.

A national policy should also specify the national authorities who are responsible for the provisions of linguistic support, how the nation will meet its linguistic support requirements efficiently, and describe the organisational structure concerned. In addition, the national policy should address the management of linguistic personnel, including their recruitment, record-keeping, testing, and training of linguists, as well as the training of the personnel who use linguistic services (NATO 2011).

NATO doctrines are based on NATO policies, which are approved by consensus by all member nations. The development of these doctrines is based on policies. The armed forces are guided by doctrines, as they are authoritative but allow judgement as to their implementation (Jones & Askew 2014, 183). In terms of doctrine, the STANAG is designed for staff officers and troops on the ground. It provides guidelines for the planning, preparation, and implementation of the linguistic support for an operation (which are a part of what in this study designated by the term *interpreter tactics*) on both the professional level of headquarters and commands, as well as on the tactical level. For example, the STANAG proposes a generic structure of a linguistic service for a NATO headquarters as well as for a deployed national contingent. It also makes recommendations on standards for the work performance of linguists, the minimum number of linguistic support personnel needed in certain situations, as well as the workload of individual interpreters. NATO member states are allowed to determine how they implement linguistic support, even if they have ratified the STANAG. In the NATO command structure, similar regulations regarding linguistic support are specified in the Allied Command Operations Directive on Linguistic Services (Jones & Askew 2014, 52–53).

### 5.5.2 British Armed Forces Joint Doctrine Note: Linguistic Support to Operations

In a previously published article, I examined the interpreter tactics of the British Armed Forces to determine salient characteristics (Snellman 2014, 88–89). Consistent with the topic

of that paper, my focus then was on the tactical level, specifically the recruitment, testing, training, terms of service, as well as the lessons learnt system for military interpreters. For the purposes of this analysis, however, the underlying policies, values, and ideologies on which linguistic support in the British Armed Forces is founded are of more interest to me. As I mentioned earlier, the official policies, norms, or doctrines regarding the translation culture of the FDF are scarce. Therefore, by scrutinising the British doctrine on the topic in closer detail, I hope to be able to identify criteria for benchmarking with the FDF.

The UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) Doctrine Note *Linguistic Support to Operations* (MoD 2013a) describes the current linguistic governance and practices in the UK Armed Forces. This doctrine is also a “first step to evolving [the UK’s] capability and doctrine so they are consistent with future Defence needs” (ibid.). The doctrine is aimed at a large audience and it addresses a wide range of issues related to linguistic support, extending from the importance of language capability and governance to the recruitment, training, and use of linguists.

In contrast to the NATO STANAG, the MoD doctrine highlights the importance of culture and cultural competence for linguistic support. This doctrine is closely linked to two UK doctrine publications on culture and the military, *The Significance of Culture to the Military* (MoD 2009), and *Culture and Human Terrain* (MoD 2013b). The existence of these two doctrines indicate that the UK Armed Forces have acquired an appreciation and commitment to what the latter describes as “a broad understanding of the significance of culture to the military and practical guidance for cultural specialists on operations, [...] aimed at strengthening cultural capability, and [...] inspir[ing] cultural thinking in everything we do” (MoD 2013b).

The linguistic support issues that have been raised historically by military crisis management operations were not sufficient to promote a change in the language policy of the British Armed Forces. Only three years after the war in Iraq, the Defence Operational Language Support Unit (DOLSU) was established from 2006 to 2007 (Footitt & Kelly 2012b, 103). The DOLSU was later replaced by the Defence Centre for Languages and Culture (DCLC), “to deliver greater synergy [and to] reinforce the links between culture and language” (MoD 2013a). Nonetheless, the close relationship between the cultural and language capabilities of the UK military was already proposed in a doctrine from 2009:

Cultural and language capability are inextricably linked. An appreciation of a culture facilitates the use of language, whilst linguistic skills facilitate the gaining and

exploitation of cultural knowledge. [...] Whilst all personnel can benefit from enhanced cultural capability, language capability will remain a specialisation. It is possible for a relatively high level of cultural capability to be achieved with limited language ability. However, to be an effective linguist, a reasonable level of cultural capability is required in order to maximise the opportunities presented through direct engagement. (MoD 2009)

Similar arguments for unifying the concept of language and culture into one capability have been raised in the US Military (see Outzen 2012).

Lewis (2012) provides a glimpse into the linguistic support of the British Armed Forces from the perspective of the MoD. In his article, Lewis reviews how languages are governed in the UK MoD, the expectations of the British Armed Forces for military linguist, and the production of language capability. In other words, Lewis describes language policy at the institutional level, specifically translation culture, but also examines some aspects of interpreter tactics, predominantly the recruitment and testing of military linguists in the UK Armed Forces. Owing to the apparent similarities between Lewis' article and the official MoD doctrine (MoD 2013a) and their adjacent publication years, I consider it to be likely that Lewis was involved in formulating the MoD doctrine.

In the British Armed Forces, military personnel with sufficient linguistic potential can pursue a career in military interpreting. This involves signing a contract, usually for three years of service. The first six months of service contains an intensive course in language training, after which the military interpreters are deployed abroad. This deployment is followed by additional training in the target language before the next deployment (Interview A). The FDF has a comparable system for professional soldiers with the capability and motivation to learn Russian (see sub-chapter 5.2.6). Furthermore, a language policy debate is currently ongoing concerning the need for more foreign language speakers in the British Armed Forces (cf. House of Lords 2016), as the UK considers language skills in the military as playing an important role in strengthening its alliances (Tunstall, in press).

## 5.6 Translation Culture: Summary of Results

The FDF applies the values of Finnish language policy by implementing the linguistic rights of Finland's minorities who speak Swedish and Sámi. Of particular interest for the FDF is the Russian language, which is manifested in the specialised language courses and career paths for military linguists with Russian as a working language. The FDF also has significant

linguistic resources and competences to develop the language skills of its personnel. Hence the translation culture of the FDF gives a positive impression. However, it should be noted that a culture is a dynamic system of socially accepted values and behavioural norms. There are no absolute or objective positions of right or wrong, or good or bad in culture (Prunč 1997, 123).

An objective outlook on the FDF translation culture reveals a discrepancy between the official and unofficial translation cultures (see Figure 2 in sub-chapter 2.2.2). Unofficially, the FDF appears to have a deep appreciation of languages. However, a glance at the official translation culture of the FDF provides a different picture: the FDF's linguistic structures, responsibilities, strategies, and values, in particular regarding linguistic support, are not clearly specified. This becomes especially clear when comparing the existing FDF documentation on linguistic support with the doctrines of NATO and the UK. That is not to say the FDF's approach to matters such as linguistic support should mirror that of NATO because national approaches are influenced by national cultures (cf. Jones & Askew 2014, 182). Nevertheless, the current trends of internationalisation and interoperability as well as immigration in the FDF propose that the FDF should develop its translation culture by verbalising its own institutional language policy.

## 6. RESULTS: INTERPRETER TACTICS

The previous two chapters examined the state-level language policies as well as those at the institutional level, and these establish the groundwork for the tactical considerations of linguistic support. Let us now turn our attention to the application of these policies, which I refer to as *interpreter tactics*.

### 6.1 What is Interpreter Tactics?

Interpreter tactics constitutes the practical implementation of translation culture, and, ultimately, language policy, in the armed forces. Interpreter tactics is realised in the hands-on work of military linguists and soldiers. In comparison to the traditional levels of war, interpreter tactics corresponds to the tactical level, as the term suggests. Military tactics is the lowest level of warfare (cf. Gjelsten & Rekkedal 2013, 14–19). Similarly, interpreter tactics is what actually transpires on the ground in military crisis management operations due to state-level strategy papers and laws (language policy) as well as institutional orders and plans (translation culture).

To reiterate the definition of interpreter tactics from Chapter 2, it refers to the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to organise and implement the linguistic support for a military operation. Interpreter tactics consists of the recruitment, training, deployment, use, management, and leadership of military interpreters in the field. In other words, interpreter tactics is the combination of the means and ways to achieve the ends of linguistic support, including linguistic support itself. Also, as mentioned earlier, interpreter tactics takes part in shaping translation culture as well as language policy: experiences from the field may eventually be merged into a doctrine or even legislation.

### 6.2 Recruitment of Military Interpreters

#### 6.2.1 Criteria for Recruitment

The personnel strategy of the FDF clearly states that conscripts with an immigrant background have special skills, such as language and cultural competences, and that these may be applied in military crisis management tasks. The personnel strategy also notes that

compulsory military services works well to integrate conscripts with immigrant backgrounds into Finnish society and values (PE 2014a, 6).

Opinions differ as to whether sufficient numbers of potential applicants exist for the military interpreter duties in Finland (cf. Snellman 2014, 74). One interviewed officer reported that there are sufficient numbers of applicants for open military interpreter positions, but his practical experiences from the operations spoke against it (Interview B). In assessing the numbers, one must consider the basic requirements for recruitment into Finnish crisis management forces. The following requirements are listed in the Ministry of Defence decree on the competence requirements and terms of service for military crisis management personnel (Finlex 2006/254):

1. Good health and physical fitness
2. Good evaluations in national compulsory military service or voluntary military service for women
3. No criminal record
4. Sufficient language skills<sup>21</sup>
5. Suitability for the task.

The criteria that apply to all reservist military personnel in crisis management operations are that they must have Finnish citizenship, they must have completed their conscript service in the FDF, and they must volunteer for their service in the crisis management force (Finlex 2006/254). Nonetheless, some specialist positions, such as medical doctors and interpreters, are exempt from the requirement of having completed their compulsory military service in the FDF (Puolustusvoimat 2018b).

Personnel recruitment for military crisis management operations is based on voluntariness (cf. Finlex 2006/211) and this has been a source of unpredictability for personnel planning. For example, in certain situations, reservists who have the linguistic qualifications to serve as a military interpreter may feel tempted to use the system of voluntariness to their personal advantage. This, in turn, has caused dissent among other soldiers. It would be in the FDF's best interest to establish fixed standards for the specific type of military training and language competences each military interpreter position requires, and to specify the terms for deviations from these standards (Interview C).

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<sup>21</sup> The Finnish term used to denote sufficient language skills is *riittävä kielitaito*, which can also be understood as 'applicable', that is, suitable for the task at hand (cf. PE 2016a). Thus, for military interpreters, this would include sufficient skills in all working languages.



Yet the FDF has no long-term plan or specialised process of recruiting or training military interpreters (see sub-chapters 6.2.3 and 6.4). The results from my earlier articles also indicate that the acquisition of trained and tested linguists is not a priority task for the FDF (cf. Snellman 2011; 2014). In comparison, the armed forces of a number of other countries have structures and organisation in place for the systematic recruitment, testing, and training of linguistic personnel (see sub-chapter 6.8.2; also Snellman 2014). However, in my opinion this does not automatically mean that linguistic support has a higher priority in those countries, or that linguistic support in those organisations is of a superior quality.

As a majority of the potential applicants for military interpreter positions have an immigrant background, their ethnicity as well as their family background should also be considered as factors in their eligibility for recruitment. For instance, for members of a certain family, it might be impossible to be deployed in a certain area (Interview C). For this reason, the Danish Armed Forces have a policy of not deploying military interpreters with close family ties to the area of operations (Snellman 2014, 84). In order to be transparent and credible, this type of policy should be made official and public. However, an explicit, written policy of excluding family ties to the area might further complicate the recruitment process and limit the number of potential applicants (Interview C). The values and inner motivation of persons who apply for military interpreter positions should also be closely examined. Their primary motivation to serve should not be financial, and the recruited persons should also be prepared to improve their skills and develop as persons (Interview B).

### 6.2.2 Gender Issues

A crisis management force ideally consists of at least 20% female personnel. One reason for this is that the local population in the operation areas consists predominately of women and children, and they often find it easier to approach another woman or female soldier. This naturally depends on the local culture (Interview C; E). Indeed, the FDF aims at increasing the number of female personnel in its military crisis management operations. According to the Defence Command, a guiding principle should be the equal selection of women to gender-sensitive positions, such as interpreters, in the recruitment of locally employed personnel in operations (PE 2014b).

According to the interviewed officers, whenever female interpreters were available, they were preferred over male interpreters for tasks that involved meetings with local women. Indeed,

having a female soldier in the patrol, as well as a female interpreter, was usually an important asset. In fact, for some operation areas it was practically impossible to approach local women without a female interpreter (Interview B; C; D). Even though having access to a female interpreter was considered to be an advantage, some situations can arise where it could have a negative influence. In certain cultures, if the situation is tense and a more resolute posture is preferred, a female interpreter may not be the best alternative because some cultures impose limitations on how a woman may behave and communicate. If a meeting with disputes is expected, a stoutly built male interpreter with a deep voice would probably achieve the best results (Interview C).

In military crisis management operations, some female interpreters and soldiers of the crisis management force have become couples. To avoid accusations of misconduct on behalf of the crisis management force, these relationships have typically led to disciplinary consequences for the soldier, or alternatively, marriage. Soldiers should be aware of that local women might be motivated to marry a member of the crisis management force, which would enable her to emigrate from the crisis area (Interview C).

Moreover, having women in a male-dominated camp always involves the potential for difficulties. A crisis management force of several hundred individuals might have someone who is not be able to adapt their conduct to what the local culture requires, despite clear-cut instructions and orders. Military interpreters who understand Finnish culture might perhaps be able convey this aspect of cultural competence to the soldiers in the crisis management force: how to relate to women in different cultures (Interview C). In addition, managing a locally recruited female interpreter may differ significantly from how Finnish female employees are managed. These differences may emerge when providing feedback or assessing a female local employee and these issues may be culturally sensitive (Interview D).

### 6.2.3 Recruitment in Practice

Military crisis management operations of the FDF are implemented by the branch commands, more specifically, the Army, Navy, and Air Force commands. The tactical command in charge of the operation is also responsible for the recruitment and training of its personnel. In practice, however, throughout the history of Finnish peacekeeping or military crisis management, all but one operation have been Army operations. The only operation conducted by the Navy was ATALANTA, for which the Navy recruited and trained the military

interpreters it deployed (cf. Snellman 2014). Consequently, the recruitment of military interpreters for Finnish military crisis management operations is predominantly the responsibility of the Army, and the Army has a knowledgeable organisation for the task of recruiting and training personnel for crisis management forces (cf. Interview E).

Within the organisational structure of the Finnish Army, the Pori Brigade has the overall responsibility to recruit and train personnel for military crisis management operations. Military interpreters are recruited from amongst reservist personnel as well as civilians, as there is no recruitment basis with sufficient language skills among professional military personnel. Vacant military interpreter positions are advertised on the FDF webpages, along with instructions for applying. In addition, potential applicants for military interpreter positions who serve as conscripts in Pori Brigade are informed on the possibility to serve as military interpreters prior to mustering out (MAAVE 2016a; PE 2016a)<sup>22</sup>. The available sources give no evidence as to what extent conscripts in other brigades or FDF units than Pori Brigade are informed of the possibility to serve as a military interpreter. In my understanding, the targeted recruitment towards conscripts with a potential to serve as military interpreters is not structured in the FDF, and it is likely to depend on the initiative of the professional military personnel in the conscripts' unit.

The Army Command indeed envisions expanding targeted recruitment as an opportunity for improvement (MAAVE 2016a). The Army Command also proposes that Finnish military interpreters could be sent on an international course for military interpreters. As a substitute for international courses, a national training course for military interpreters could be developed. However, this would require that the recruitment of military interpreters is better planned in advance (ibid.).

To fully utilise the linguistic potential of conscripts with an immigrant background, the FDF would need to inform these conscripts directly and individually on the possibility to serve as a military interpreter, as well as the procedure on how to apply for these positions. Of course, a security clearance would have to be acquired as well. The prospect of serving as a military linguist could even boost their motivation to serve to the best of their ability. The Finnish International Readiness Force is usually advertised as the principal channel to recruit personnel to the military crisis management operations. However, there are more possibilities

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<sup>22</sup> Judging by the time of their appearance and their information content, it is likely that the document from Defence Command (PE 2016a) is at least partly based on the document from Army Command (MAAVE 2016a). However, this does not undermine their reliability in my view, but rather has the opposite effect.

and tasks available than offered by the Readiness Force. Furthermore, if two applicants for a position in the crisis management forces fulfil the selection criteria otherwise equally, the applicant with broader language skills receives additional recruitment points. The FDF needs to ascertain that the information on the different special tasks in the crisis management forces for conscripts and reservists with special language skills reaches the people with the potential and proficiencies required for those tasks (Interview B; C; D). Indeed, the FDF has acknowledged the challenges inherent in identifying talent in the ranks of conscripts (YLE 2016).

In the planning of military crisis management operations, the FDF may identify the need to deploy multiple military interpreters simultaneously in the same operation. When the size of the Finnish contingent is limited, however, there may only be room for one position on the personnel roster. In that case, the position would be ‘double-hatted’, assigning a position for an ‘interpreter-driver’. In reality, the possibilities of finding and recruiting Finnish reservists with the required skillset for these combined tasks are miniscule (Interview D).

The availability of interpreters to the military, especially in Arabic, was reduced due to the sudden increase in the number refugees at Finland’s borders from 2014 onwards (MAAVE 2016a; PE 2016a). Whether the increased demand of Arabic interpreter services and the competition for Arabic interpreters that followed it are permanent or temporary phenomena remains to be seen. It could be argued that the terms of employment for Arabic interpreters working in Finland are currently better than what the FDF is able to offer (Interview C).

Other factors that hamper the recruitment of military interpreters are the potential applicants’ unwillingness to return to their family’s country of origin owing to security concerns. Finnish military interpreters who are currently deployed in military crisis management operations are practically all reservists with an immigrant background. Immigrants also form the population group from which most military interpreters can be recruited in the future (Interview D). Furthermore, it is not uncommon for applicants to military interpreter positions to have a criminal record, which typically has an adverse effect on their recruitment. Another problem is that the applicants may not have resided in Finland sufficiently long to have their backgrounds thoroughly inspected, which prevents them from obtaining a personal security clearance. In addition, as already mentioned, a lack of Finnish citizenship excludes recruitment altogether (MAAVE 2016a; PE 2016a).

The FDF already offers a number of attracting factors in its recruitment of military interpreters. The remuneration for military interpreters is better than for the rank-and-file soldiers in the crisis management force. On the other hand, Finnish military interpreters do not regard salary as a decisive factor for their motivation (Snellman 2014, 45). Additionally, military interpreters may be able to apply the skills obtained during their service in their later working life. Finally, one successful deployment as a military interpreter increases the probability to be hired for another tour of duty (Interview E).

The military rank of service for military interpreters varies. During the recruitment process, to keep the recruitment base as broad as possible, there are usually no requirements on the military rank of the applicants, and they could be anything from civilians to officers. The service rank of military interpreters is determined based on their rank in the reserve or their civilian education, should they have a university degree. In the latter case, military interpreters typically serve in the rank of a military official (*sotilasvirkamies*) (Interview D).

From a judicial perspective, the difference between military interpreters and locally recruited interpreters is distinct. A military interpreter is a soldier who is directly employed by the FDF. As soldiers, military interpreters have all the same rights and obligations as other military personnel of the Finnish crisis management force. Locally recruited civilian interpreters, by contrast, also serve the Finnish crisis management force, but their actual employer is typically an external actor, such as a personnel contractor, or in UN operations, the UN. For these cases, the Finnish crisis management force and the FDF have a reduced, managerial role. For example, the crisis management force might not be able influence which interpreters are assigned to which unit. The personnel contractor could have a pool of interpreters, and from this pool they designate personnel to their customers and rotate them periodically. Changing the local interpreters' assignments periodically is a practice preferred by the FDF, as it prevents potential security problems. Nevertheless, owing to the limited number of military interpreters available, locally recruited interpreters are definitely needed (Interview D).

In the long term, it would be valuable for the FDF to create a pool of competent military interpreters. The people in the pool would ideally have had the opportunity to practice in multiple operations or deployments in gradually more difficult positions. Currently, however, such a personnel pool would be rather small. Unfortunately, this has led to the same persons being deployed with unsuitably short intervals (Interview E). As a result, many Finnish military interpreters have served multiple tours of duty in crisis management operations

(Snellman 2014, 41). The interviewed officers suggested that this might be due to the lack of suitable personnel for the military interpreter positions. In some cases, military interpreters have been allowed to serve multiple tours of duty despite having received a poor personal assessment at the end of their previous tour (Interview B). On the other hand, serving multiple tours of duty has allowed some military interpreters to develop personal contacts with local key persons in the operation area (Interview E). The practice of military interpreters serving for a prolonged period in one location has, nonetheless, been considered a risk factor for military interpreters in terms of corruption (Snellman 2011, 15).

### 6.3 Testing of Military Interpreters

As I mentioned previously in sub-chapter 6.2.1, military interpreters who are recruited to military crisis management operations are subject to the same qualification requirements as all other military personnel. These requirements include good health and physical fitness, which are thoroughly examined and tested by subject-matter experts. Other requirements mentioned were the ‘sufficient language skills’ required. Nonetheless, the language proficiency of military interpreters as a rule is neither tested during the recruitment process (cf. Snellman 2014, 40–41; MAAVE 2016a; PE 2016a) nor is it standardised through other means, such as by requiring language studies or examinations of a certain level. This practice by the FDF is in contrast with other militaries, such as the German Bundessprachenamt, which will be discussed in sub-chapter 6.8.

The Defence Language Centre has no clearly defined role in the recruitment, testing, or training of military interpreters for Finnish military crisis management forces (Interview A; cf. MAAVE 2016a; PE 2016a; MPKK 2015). It would seem practical and justifiable that testing the language proficiency of persons who have been recruited for linguistic duties would be conducted by the FDF’s language experts. Furthermore, testing the interpreting competences of candidates for military interpreter positions is particularly important, as academic education does not necessarily correlate with practical skills. In fact, candidates who have the best qualifications do not always produce the best test results. Interviews are also not dependable in determining a person’s interpretation or translation skills (Jones & Askew 2014, 55).

One possible means of securing the time necessary to conduct language tests would be to organise a voluntary military exercise (*vapaaehtoinen harjoitus*, *VEH*) for potential military

interpreters. An obstacle to organising this type of military exercise is that Finnish legislation differentiates between military training for the purposes of national defence and training for military crisis management missions, and voluntary exercises cannot be conducted to support military crisis management, but only for the purposes of national defence. Thus, in order to conduct a voluntary military exercise to test military interpreters' language skills, the FDF would need to rationalise why and how testing the skills of reservists in languages such as Arabic, Kurdish, or Dari serves the interests of Finland's national defence. It might be challenging to devise a justification for this type of exercise (Interview D).

Another possible alternative would be to label the language tests as training for military crisis management missions and this means that they could not exceed the limit of 45 days per year<sup>23</sup>. One way of circumventing that problem would be to conduct the testing and training for military interpreters in shorter periods that are organised in different years. Thus, the limit of 45 days per year would be reset at the turn of the year, and a maximum of 90 days over two years would become possible (Interview D).

The FDF needs to carefully consider and formulate the reasons for offering a refresher exercise or a voluntary military exercise to be conducted for the purposes of military crisis management. The possible justifications for conducting a refresher exercise are prescribed by law, and they are not intended for training in military crisis management (Interview D, Finlex 2007/1438). An ideal solution would be that Finnish military interpreters would be employed as professional soldiers, which would effectively eliminate all of the above considerations (Interview D).

The selection process of military personnel continues during the pre-deployment training. Should a soldier fail to pass the required fitness tests or prove to be unsuitable for his intended task in other respects, he may face dismissal from service (MAAVE 2016b; PE 2016a). This also applies to all military interpreters.

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<sup>23</sup> The idea behind limiting the time allocated for the training for military crisis management (*sotilaallinen kriisinhallintakoulutus*) to 45 days per year is to reduce the impact of the reservists' absences from work on the their employers, as well as on civilian society at large (Interview D). According to the Act on Military Crisis Management, employers must grant employees 45 days leave for military crisis management training without terminating their employment contract (Finlex 2006/211).

## 6.4 Training of Military Interpreters

Finnish military interpreters receive no separate language training because the military interpreters' eligibility for the task is based on their existing language skills (MAAVE 2016a; PE 2016a). In other words, as the military interpreters' language skills are not tested, we can deduce that the FDF presumes the language and interpreting proficiency of the recruited reservists to be sufficient for the upcoming mission. In theory, the FDF could train military interpreters from personnel without any prior knowledge of a language. However, acquiring the level of proficiency required of an interpreter would take a long time, and the resources of the DLC are limited (Interview D).

The pre-deployment training for Finnish crisis management forces is mission-specific and therefore varies according on the upcoming mission. The training also evolves and changes with each deployment, even on short notice. The FDF has no existing model or plan for how to conduct special training for military interpreters. The military interpreters typically receive approximately the same training as the staff elements of the crisis management force. The pre-deployment training for the staff elements involves various topics related to working with interpreters, such as:

- basic training in working with an interpreter,
- basic training in liaising with the locals,
- basic cultural awareness and cultural competence training, and
- key leader engagement (KLE) training.

The KLE training consists of a number of exercises and role-playing scenarios for the military interpreters to interpret between the language of the operation area and Finnish. The role-players in these scenarios have been military interpreters from previous deployments who know the local people and conditions in the operation area. The inclusion and contribution of seasoned military interpreters in the KLE training and the cultural awareness training have received positive feedback (MAAVE 2016b; PE 2016a; Interview D).

The FDF's lack of a specialised training programme for military interpreters is in contrast with many other military specialist positions. Military specialists who are machine gunners have a clearly structured training programme with corresponding norms, tests, and licences, but there is no such programme offered to military interpreters. Instead, they train as a part of their unit, and also participate in one week of task-specific training that is required of all staff personnel (Interview D).



Familiarising interpreters with military terminology and military structures from early on in their training may be very important for them. Jones and Askew (2014, 38) note that learning military language and organisations may be more difficult for a linguist than the foreign languages themselves, and the authors envision experience in working with the military as the solution. Moreover, Jones and Askew (2014, 52) point out that detailed job descriptions of military interpreter positions are necessary to determine the qualifications needed to perform the task. A well-written job description will assist in planning the training needs for that position, as well as in evaluating people's performance in their duties.

The major advantage of the FDF is that all of the potential military interpreters who have completed their compulsory national military service already have a basic military training, and are already familiar with Finnish military culture. By completing their national service, the reservists have demonstrated that they have a will to contribute to the national defence of Finland, and that they are in that sense integrated into Finnish society (Interview A). An understanding of Finnish culture or a certain degree of 'Finnishness' can also be important for Finnish military interpreters (cf. Snellman 2014, 97)

As for the interpreter training of military interpreters, it would be a major improvement if the persons selected for military interpreter positions could be given one or two weeks of specialist, professional linguistic training. Of course, this brief training would provide them with only the basic skills of interpreting. The military interpreters would ideally have their own, specific training period with instructions in valuable information, such as Finnish military terminology, as well as exercises in translating and interpreting concepts and phenomena specific to their upcoming deployment. Military interpreters currently need to learn all of this on the job during their deployment. Yet, one might question whether a specific training programme for military interpreters benefits the operation, and whether it is worth the extra costs and arrangements that it would require. The FDF must consider and balance the advantages of such a programme against the inherent disadvantages (Interview D).

Additional training of military interpreters in cultural competences might also be required. Earlier, many of the refugees from Afghanistan to Finland were well-educated people from the cities. Today, many of them come from the rural areas, and have little education. Thus, even if their language skills would be perfectly suitable for the operation area, including the

local language variants, their cultural competences might be lacking due to their background. For example, they might be less familiar with negotiation skills or gender-related topics. These obvious shortcomings should be considered when creating a training programme for military interpreters. The topics should not be over-emphasised, but included in the training nonetheless (Interview A).

The FDF's current annual demand for military interpreters amounts to approximately four people. The FDF must consider whether the input of establishing a training programme and recruitment process for four persons per year is worth the output that it creates. Should the output be that the FDF tests the language competences of the applicants for military interpreter positions, it also involves setting the language standards that the FDF requires. However, if these standards are set, this will lead to some applicants failing the tests. If the number of applicants is small, which is usually the case, the FDF will hire the persons anyway, because they have no alternative. On the other hand, if the applicants pass the test in one working language, their Finnish skills might be lacking. Again, it is a matter of balancing priorities (Interview D).

#### 6.4.1 NORDEFECO as a Framework for Military Interpreter Training

In January 2016, the Defence Command sent a request to the Army Command for information on the recruitment and training of military interpreters in Finland as well as the challenges and possibilities identified with regard to military interpreter training. The Army Command's reply to the Defence Command was a memorandum drafted by the Crisis Management Centre and the Staff of the Pori Brigade (Interview D). As already mentioned, Pori Brigade is responsible for the recruitment, selection, and training of the personnel for the Army's crisis management missions.

The Army Command's reply was discussed in a meeting of the Defence Command's International Affairs Planning Group (PE 2016b). This meeting concluded that they needed additional information from the Army Command on the possibilities of international cooperation in the field of linguistic support. This request for supplementary information was sent by the Defence Command's Plans and Policy Division, which in turn, had been assigned the task concerning military interpreters from the Nordic Defence Cooperation

(NORDEFECO).<sup>24</sup> This organisation requested to be briefed on the current national arrangements of military interpreter services in Finland, the lessons identified and lessons learnt (LI/LL) in Finland, the future assessed needs of the country, as well as the possible areas for cooperation and the synergy that Finland has identified within the field of military interpreter services (PE 2016a).

In its reply to NORDEFECO, the Defence Command identified possibilities for cooperation and synergy in the following areas:

- A generic (Nordic – Baltic) course focusing on military interpreter skills
- An Arabic language course
- A cultural awareness course, focusing on Arabic culture and Islam (PE 2016a).

According to one interviewee, there is an ongoing Nordic initiative to improve the recruitment and training of military interpreters through multinational cooperation in the NORDEFECO framework. This initiative was discussed in the NORDEFECO Training and Exercises working group as well as the Human Resources working group. During the discussions, a national representative from one of the four member countries assessed that the national training systems for military interpreters have many differences, which makes cooperation between countries difficult. The issue is not, however, off the table, as it may be possible to find synergies in the training of cultural competence, or by including the linguistic resources of the Baltic countries by cooperating with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (Interview E). It would be interesting to learn of possible further development in the identified opportunities for Nordic cooperation since 2016. However, this topic is beyond the scope of this study.

The Army Command memorandum suggests sending Finnish military interpreters to take courses in other countries. Some schools for military interpreters that the FDF might consider are those run by the Danish and Swedish militaries. Of course, the persons who are sent on courses in foreign militaries would need to be proficient in English, or the local language of the organising nation, or proficient in both. Some of the other Nordic countries recruit and train their military interpreters for permanent employment, whereas the FDF employs voluntary reservists for 6 to 12 months. This means that Finnish military interpreters must acquire their language proficiency before their recruitment, and that their employment is discontinued after their repatriation. To plan recruitment in advance, the FDF would need to predict the need for military interpreters two to three years in advance so that the interpreters

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<sup>24</sup> The term “Nordic” refers in this context to Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. For more information, see the NORDEFECO webpages: <http://www.nordefco.org/default.aspx>.

would to be able to attend the required courses abroad. However, this is impossible, as the decisions concerning the establishment of new military crisis management operations or continuing the ongoing operations are made on much shorter notice. The FDF would be likely to recruit linguistic personnel who are never deployed, or who speak the wrong language (Interview D).

#### 6.4.2 FDF International Centre and the Crisis Management Centre Finland

A recent report by the Ministry of the Interior (SM 2017) identifies the need to improve the coordination and cooperation between the Finnish organisations that are specialised in civilian and military crisis management. That report proposes that the synergies be improved between civilian and military crisis management as well as other sectors. The report also concludes that the current establishment for civilian crisis management training, the Crisis Management Centre Finland (CMC), should be reorganised and relocated. The suggestion is that CMC should be moved from its current location in Kuopio to Helsinki where the CMC and the FDF's expert organisation on military crisis management, the FDF International Centre (FINCENT) would form a new centre for comprehensive crisis management. This new development could be understood as an opportunity to alleviate the negative effects of the competition for proficient interpreters between different crisis management organisations.

FINCENT and the CMC have cooperated in the framework of the Finnish Centre of Expertise in Comprehensive Crisis Management since 2008. The Centre of Expertise aims to “develop common and shared training in crisis management as well as to promote an overall understanding of comprehensive crisis management” (FINCENT 2018). Indeed, the Commander of the FDF, General Lindberg (2018) has emphasised that a comprehensive approach is crucial to future Finnish crisis management operations. Previously, the FDF's expert organisation on military crisis management, FINCENT, has expressed its interest to participate in the training of military interpreters if the military interpreters' tasks would be expanded to include the role of cultural experts (PE 2016b).

The Army Command has also identified a number of items in which closer cooperation between the actors in crisis management would benefit from the training and use of military interpreters. For instance, FINCENT and the Army should share information on the personnel that they employ as instructors and interpreters on their training courses. This would not only expand the possibilities of organising the training but perhaps also the recruitment for crisis

management operations. Another area for improvement could be that the FINCENT and CMC share the contact information of their interpreters with the Army. Based on the FDF's history in military crisis management, there are undoubtedly a significant number of veteran military interpreters in Finland. As a final point, the Army sees specialised military interpreter training conducted by the FNDU and FINCENT as an opportunity to widen the recruitment basis of military interpreters and to create a pool of military interpreters (MAAVE 2016a).

## 6.5 Deployment, Management, and Use of Military Interpreters

### 6.5.1 Number of Deployed Military Interpreters

Military interpreters in the Finnish military crisis management operations are usually embedded in the force structures. Each company-sized unit usually has one military interpreter (PE 2016a). The electronic archives<sup>25</sup> of the FDF contain many official documents on the linguistic support in crisis management operations. The vast majority of these documents are orders and reports that concern personnel management issues in the different Finnish military crisis management operations, such as changes to the organisation or to the personnel roster, and the deployment of units or of individual soldiers. These official documents provide a reliable source of information on the operations that deployed military interpreters or on those positions for a military interpreter that were listed on the roster, but the position had not been filled.

How many military interpreters has the FDF deployed, and in which organisational structures? A summary of the findings from documents related to four Finnish military crisis management operations, which span a period of approximately nine years, is found in Table B1 in Appendix B. It is important to note that these referred documents do not form a complete record of the personnel rosters of the operations and the timespan that they cover. It is also possible that the FDF has deployed military interpreters in other operations that are not covered in the documents found in the FDF's electronic archives. At any rate, the summary in Table B1 indicates that the number of military interpreters deployed on crisis management operations in recent years has ranged between zero and three.

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<sup>25</sup> The FDF's Information Management System (*Puolustusvoimien asianhallintajärjestelmä, PVAH*) and its predecessor, the Staff System's archive (*Esikuntajärjestelmän arkisto, EJ-arkisto*).

The personnel roster of the Afghanistan operation (ISAF, RS) has included a military interpreter position with the option of filling that position with another task. The documents provide no information on the reasons why that position was not filled (such as the limited availability of military interpreters). The Finnish military interpreters in Afghanistan were normally attached to the staff or in the direct command of a smaller team (MAAVE 2012; PE 2013). The Finnish military crisis management operation in Lebanon (UNIFIL) did initially not include positions for military interpreters. When Finland assumed the responsibilities of the lead nation from Ireland for the Finnish-Irish Battalion during the second half of 2013, one position for a military interpreter was added to the personnel roster of Infantry Company A. The underlying reasons for this addition are not explicitly stated (MAAVE 2013a; 2013b). A year later, another position for a military interpreter was added to the personnel roster of the crisis management force in Lebanon. This addition was made to the Reconnaissance Platoon, but again, the available documents provide no explanation or motivating argument for this change (MAAVE 2014). That said, the addition of a second position for a military interpreter in the Lebanon operation in a relatively rapid succession may indicate that having a military interpreter in the unit was a positive experience.

At present, the FDF contributes forces to 12 military crisis management operations (Puolustusvoimat 2018a). These operations are conducted in markedly different conditions, and the demands on the personnel structure of the crisis management force vary. Furthermore, the political mandate for each operation sometimes limits the amount of personnel that can be deployed. This means that the planners of the force composition often need to find a balance and compromise between different personnel elements to ensure that the crisis management force has all the required competences but nothing redundant. Whatever the composition of the force, these military interpreters are an extremely important asset (Interview E).

### 6.5.2 Military Interpreters' Organisation and Administration

The practical implementation, organisation, and administration of the linguistic support in Finnish military crisis management operations have varied with each mission. Linguistic support is influenced by many factors. These include the mandate of the operation and the language policy that it involves (UN, NATO, and EU), the lead nation of the operation, the regional lead nation, Finland's partners and their national policies and arrangements, as well as the availability and competition for qualified language assistants in the operation area (Interview C).

As I mentioned earlier, the FDF aims to deploy at least one military interpreter for each operative unit (such as a company). The advantage of having a military interpreter in the unit is that linguistic support is available at all times. For smaller deployment – units below company size – the FDF usually does not have the resources to deploy military interpreters. The military interpreters' closest military superior in the chain of command is determined by the organisational structure. For example, the military interpreters in a company are usually part of a company's command element. In this case, the military interpreter's closest superior is the company commander. Alternatively, military interpreters have been assigned to work directly with the contingent commander, which means that they report to the personnel department of the crisis management force.

In addition to Finland, other troop contributing nations also deploy their own military interpreters to a specific operation. Yet the officers who were interviewed observed, and this concurs with my own experiences, that Finnish crisis management forces rarely work together with military interpreters from the armed forces of other countries, although this has occurred in special circumstances, such as when meetings or patrols are combined.

The mission structure and the personnel rosters of Finnish crisis management forces are usually reviewed every six months. As an illustration, when the crisis management force identifies the need for an additional military interpreter position, they propose a change in their personnel roster to higher command, which in most cases is the Army Command. The Army Command would then propose a change to the personnel roster to the Personnel Division of the Defence Command. This proposal has to be considered and supported by the Operations Division prior to approval. The personnel structures of the Finnish crisis management forces are drafted by the Plans Division of the Defence Command and approved by the Personnel Division (Interview D).

The personnel rosters of crisis management operations are typically left with empty positions as a precaution. This leaves an option, as one or more of these empty positions could be activated to accommodate additional military interpreters. When the operation has a mandate from the UN, the maximum number of personnel is stipulated by the memorandum of understanding between the UN and Finland. Thus, Finland could only add a military interpreter to the personnel roster if they removed some other position. The military interpreter could also be added by virtue of receiving special permission, or by deploying him

with some other status. For example, if the FDF deployed a military interpreter to the National Support Element (NSE), he could not be used for operative tasks due to UN regulations. This is merely one example of the regulatory and administrative limitations that can differ between different operations (Interview D). Jones and Askew (2014, 59) note that the military personnel in charge of managing linguistic services often have a limited knowledge of linguistic functions and working practices. This means that a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) enables supervisors to be familiarised with linguistic procedures more quickly, and thus promotes more efficient ways of working with interpreters.

Jones and Askew (2014, 58–60) make the following observations and recommendations regarding the organisation and the tasks of linguistic support in operations. All positions on the personnel roster that require knowledge of the local language, despite not being linguist positions, should be designated by another label, such as ‘Bilingual Buyer’, or ‘Bilingual Legal Assistant’. Jones and Askew also recommend that all linguistic services in a crisis management force should be concentrated under one organisational structure and under the authority of a single person. The linguistic services in most international organisations adopt this organisational model.

### 6.5.3 Locally Recruited Interpreters and Other Linguistic Support

In addition to military interpreters, Finnish military crisis management operations usually have locally recruited civilian interpreters at their disposal. They are similar to military interpreters in that their number and availability can also vary, depending on a multitude of factors (see the previous sub-chapter). The locally recruited interpreters have usually been considered a part the personnel or intelligence<sup>26</sup> branches of the staff (S1 or S2), where they form an interpreter pool. The staff has also managed their use (Snellman 2011; Interview B; C; D; E). This arrangement differs from the Finnish military interpreters, who are usually attached to a command or to a unit, such as a company, platoon, or team. The number and proficiency of the locally recruited interpreters available for the Finnish forces have usually been sufficient to meet the demands of the operation (Interview B). The problems that typically arise concerning locally recruited interpreters are most frequent in the early stages of an operation, and are usually resolved when a support organisation is established.

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<sup>26</sup> Historically, the United Nations has been hesitant to provide its military crisis management operations with an intelligence collection mandate. Hence intelligence activities and the corresponding staff branch in UN operations are sometimes referred to as ‘information management’ (Dorn 2010; Interview C).



It is important to note that interpreter management has two dimensions. The first is administrative management, which includes the personnel administration (salary, working hours, assessment, reporting, etc.) as well as support (accommodation, meals, protective clothing, etc.). The second is operative management, which can also be understood as the delegation of interpreting assignments. The administrative duties are usually handled by the personnel section of the staff, whereas the operative duties are managed by the intelligence and operations sections (Interview D).

The language skills of an individual Finnish soldier who is not deployed as a military interpreter are occasionally sufficient to communicate with the local population. In these rare but fortunate situations, the Finnish crisis management forces have not overlooked the opportunity to use this person as an interpreter (Interview B).

In the peacekeeping operations led by the United Nations, linguistic services are, as a rule, provided by the UN. Participating nations may deploy additional linguistic support assets at their discretion, or decide to rely on other arrangements such as bilateral cooperation or contractor services. In many cases, larger contributing nations with more resources reserve the best linguistic assets in the operation area, whereas the smaller and poorer nations have to settle for what is left. In addition, the national contingents may recruit extra interpreters locally for their own use. (Interview C).

The Finnish-Irish battalion of the UNIFIL operation in Lebanon provides an example of this. This battalion requested six interpreters from the UN. The Finnish contingent also deployed two military interpreters. In addition to these interpreters, both the Irish and Finnish contingents had a number of civilian contractors, whose main task was not interpreting but who could be used as interpreters when necessary. These contractors were predominantly used as interpreters in unofficial roles, as in administrative matters with the locally recruited employees of the crisis management force (Interview B, C).

The nations that have deployed forces in an area over longer periods of time often develop good contacts and local knowledge in that area. For this reason, it may be advantageous for the crisis management force to recruit a certain number of interpreters of particular ethnicities or from particular families. Another point is that decade-long deployments create special relationships with local employees, who may then act as interpreters, although they are not actually linguists. In some cases, local families have formed companies to provide language

services for the crisis management force with which they have had long-enduring business relations. These local entrepreneurs usually displayed very good language competences. However, their support was often lacking in other respects (Interview C).

## 6.6 The Training of the Crisis Management Forces in Interpreter Tactics

### 6.6.1 Training and International Cooperation

The Personnel Strategy of the FDF (PE 2014a) states that the FDF shall increase its international training and training-related international cooperation. The objective of this strategy is to supplement the national training institutions in those sectors where competence is not available, or where it is not practical to organise the training in Finland. Furthermore, the purpose of international training cooperation is to establish a high level of competence, to save available resources, and to increase international interoperability (PE 2014a, 37). As a practical example of this, the FINCENT is being developed as an internationally recognised centre of excellence in military crisis management training (ibid.; FINCENT 2018).

The FDF conducts specialised preparatory training for international military crisis management operations as a part of compulsory military service. Conscripts who apply to the Finnish International Readiness Force (*Suomen kansainvälinen valmiusjoukko*) must have ‘sufficient skills in English and Finnish’, with proficiency in other languages considered to be a merit. Over 50% of the conscripts of the Readiness Force continue to serve in international military crisis management operations eighteen months after mustering out (Puolustusvoimat 2018c). The international competences gained in this specialised unit have benefitted the FDF’s military crisis management operations (Interview A; C).

### 6.6.2 Pori Brigade Training Programmes

The Pori Brigade’s order, *Training Arrangements of the Finnish Crisis Management Forces* (PORPR 2008), describes the general principles, arrangements, and responsibilities of training a crisis management force. The annexes of this document contain training plans for three specific Finnish military crisis management operations that were ongoing at the time. These are the operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, and Kosovo. The Pori Brigade’s order was one of the few available documents that directly address the training of crisis management forces and that mentions linguistic support and interpreters.

The training plan for the Kosovo crisis management force includes a training module of 2.5 hours titled ‘Using an interpreter’ (*Tulkin käyttö*), with one hour allocated for a lecture and one and a half hours for exercises in the subject. It is interesting that the training plan for the crisis management force in Bosnia-Herzegovina has no time allocated for interpreting training, or for the use of interpreters. This might be because the overall duration of the training is shorter (138 hours compared to 202 hours for Kosovo). That said, the training plan for the Afghanistan crisis management force has no time allocated for training related to working with interpreters, even though the overall duration of the Afghanistan training plan is 378 hours (PORPR 2008).

Practical exercises in working with interpreters have been included in the pre-deployment training of Finnish crisis management forces. These exercises have included classroom situations with interpreters and simulated meetings between a military patrol and a group of people whose language was unfamiliar to the soldiers. These meetings were recorded and detailed feedback was subsequently given to each participant. The training programme for the staff elements included additional exercises in meeting local leaders, which are also called key leader engagements. All of these exercises have been perceived as highly rewarding, and additional exercises could have been included in the training programme. In particular, the members of the crisis management force being trained considered it important that the military interpreters who were being deployed at the same time were integrated into these exercises in their actual task (cf. Snellman 2014, 38). The time available for pre-deployment training is of course limited, but from the perspective of linguistic support, these types of exercises could be prioritised more (Interview B; E).

The practical exercises were especially useful because they were designed to be very challenging. These exercises revealed all the flaws and weaknesses of those who used interpreters, as well as the weaknesses of the interpreter himself, which is why they could have lasted longer. These types of practical, scenario-based exercises could be developed even further. One aspect that should be emphasised in the exercises is the importance of maintaining information security when working with interpreters (Interview C; E). It would also be beneficial if all soldiers in the crisis management force learned a few basic expressions in the local language of the operation area (Interview B).

I was personally involved in the training of the Finnish crisis management forces that were deployed to Lebanon and Afghanistan in 2012 and 2013 and I had the opportunity to contribute to the training in working with interpreters, including practical interpreting role-playing exercises. According to one interviewee (Interview B) as well as to the best of my knowledge, this type of training has been continued. However, there have also been instances when the recruitment of military interpreters has not followed the normal deployment schedule, and they have not participated in pre-deployment training (Interview B).

The Crisis Management Centre of the Pori Brigade has acknowledged working with interpreters as an important part of training the Finnish crisis management forces. Even so, the resources and time allocated to training are limited. As already mentioned, by law Finnish reservists can participate in training for military crisis management missions for a maximum for 45 days per year. The training would arguably last twice as long if it were done properly. Due to the limited time, the FDF must focus on certain aspects of training and make compromises in others. After the pre-deployment training provides the rudimentary skills for peacekeepers, the deployed crisis management force creates its own training plans and continues its training throughout the operation (Interview D). Typically, approximately one-third of the Finnish crisis management force continues their deployment into a second rotation, and integrates into the personnel of the new rotation to form a new force. This can be considered a major advantage, as the newest experiences from the operation area are transferred from the old deployment into the new one (Interview E).

To conclude, there seems to be a lack of consistency in the training programmes for Finnish military crisis management forces with regard to linguistic support. The topic of working with interpreters is included in a number of training programmes but is omitted in most. The available documents provide no information as to why this topic is included in some training programmes but not in others. There also appears to be no connection between the training hours allocated to linguistic support and the deployment of military interpreters by the crisis management force. In my opinion, whether the crisis management force deploys military interpreters should not influence the matter because they must be able to work with locally recruited interpreters regardless of whether or not it deploys its own military interpreters.

Based on the available documents as well as on my own experiences, I am nevertheless inclined to conclude that topics related to interpreter tactics have often been a lower priority than other topics. When the limited hours available for training have been allocated, the topic

has been deliberately omitted, or at times, simply forgotten. Therefore, to promote continuity and development in the field of linguistic support in the FDF, I would consider it important to have interpreter tactics included as a permanent element in the plans and orders regarding the training of Finnish crisis management forces.

### 6.6.3 NORDCAPS Tactical Manual

The Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Military Peace Support (NORDCAPS) *Tactical Manual for Peace Support Operations* (PSO), a book of two volumes, has since its publication been used as a textbook in many training courses in military crisis management, particularly in the Nordic countries (cf. Vanonen 2009; SWEDINT 2015). Thus, the manual is likely to have influenced the interpreter tactics in Finnish crisis management operations over a longer period, and therefore merits closer examination.

The Tactical Manual presents itself as a “tool-box” for the “tactical doers” of crisis management operations, “from which they may pick practical tools for various situations” (NORDCAPS 2007 Vol 1, 8). The authors state that the aim of the *NORDCAPS PSO Tactical Manual 2007* is to “improve and standardise basic tactics and techniques for PSO’s”, as well as to “provide a handbook for tactical level staffs and personnel [...] involved in PSO’s for training as well as operations.” (ibid., 8).

The first volume of the NORDCAPS Tactical Manual mentions interpreters merely as a requirement and an asset when organising negotiations. The second volume, however, contains a chapter on the use of interpreters, in which both military and locally recruited interpreters are referred to as “a necessary force multiplier and an effective FP [Force Protection] aid when used efficiently” (NORDCAPS 2007 Vol 2, 87). As a whole, the chapter deems military interpreters significantly more trustworthy than locally recruited interpreters. The potential security risks involving working with locally recruited interpreters are frequently highlighted in the second volume (NORDCAPS 2007 Vol 2, 50; 72; 86–88). These notions are apparently reflected in Finnish officers’ views on interpreters (see sub-chapter 5.4).

#### 6.6.4 Other FDF Documents

Finland has been an active contributor to military crisis management over the years, and there are many FDF orders, guidelines, and plans concerning the recruitment, training, and deployment of Finnish crisis management forces. It is thus remarkable that linguistic support is not mentioned in the vast majority of these documents. Linguistic support is, after all, an indispensable element of any military crisis management operation, as already argued in the introductory chapter. As examples of this dearth of information on linguistic support, the following FDF documents have no referrals to linguistic support, military interpreters, or locally recruited interpreters:

- Standard Operating Procedure for Army Crisis Management Organisations (MAAVE 2015b).
- The Finnish Navy's Procedure for Implementing Crisis Management Operations (MERIVE 2015).
- Training Arrangements of the Finnish Crisis Management Forces (PORPR 2008).
- Training Arrangements of the Finnish Crisis Management Forces (PORPR 2009)
- Training Plan for the Finnish Crisis Management Force in Lebanon (PORPR 2012).
- Personnel Recruitment for the UNIFIL Operation (PE 2012).
- The Army's Detailed Plan for the Mission of Battalion Lead Nation of the UNIFIL Operation (MAAVE 2013b).

Some of the documents listed above address specialist personnel and specialised training areas in detail, but overlook linguistic support. When I highlight the absence of mentions of linguistic support, my aim is not to criticise or to discredit the work of the planners and executors of Finnish military crisis management operations. Instead, my intention is to demonstrate that linguistic support receives little attention in the FDF, and to understand why this is the case.

### 6.7 Experiences from the Field and Lessons Learnt

In my selected analysis method, I have decided to consider the practical experiences of the officers as elements of interpreter tactics (see sub-chapter 3.2). My position is that conceptions based on personal experiences can be valuable for the topic of this paper, especially in terms of the use, management, and leadership of interpreters in the field. I do not, however, intend to generalise from a single instance or occurrence to create a rule (see also sub-chapter 2.5). During the interviews, the officers expressed their opinions on what differentiates military and locally recruited interpreters, what is to be considered when leading

interpreters in the field, as well as discussing a number of miscellaneous topics, all of which are mentioned next.

#### 6.7.1 Military Interpreters versus Locally Recruited Interpreters

The interviewed officers indicated that when both military interpreters and locally recruited interpreters were available, the locals were used primarily when it was especially crucial to access their understanding of the local culture and when their existing personal contacts with the local population, such as with local authorities, were of particular importance. However, locally recruited interpreters were not used in discussions with the local security authorities on classified topics and information that must remain confidential within the government authorities. Military interpreters, on the other hand, were used to be absolutely certain that the message was relayed exactly as intended, when discussing military topics, or when the security classification of the information or the general security situation required the use of military personnel (Interview B; C; E). In conclusion, a crisis management force needs both military interpreters and locally recruited interpreters (cf. Lewis 2012).

Military interpreters were occasionally used to monitor the interpreting by locally recruited interpreters. Alternatively, if other soldiers with a sufficient command of the local language were present, they could also be used to monitor the local interpreters, focusing in particular on what was not being interpreted. In those situations, the military interpreters were not interpreters but rather intelligence gatherers. Of course, the locals quickly learnt to know that a specific soldier could understand also what is being said extraneous to the conversation. Yet the military interpreter's presence was a signal to the locals that the military knows what has been agreed upon in that meeting, as well as what was not interpreted by the local interpreter (Interview C; D; E).

Military interpreters have a distinct advantage over locally recruited interpreters: they are a permanent part of the team. While the local interpreters are usually always available for the crisis management force according to their planned working hours, they are less integrated into the military organisation than military interpreters are. When patrolling, a competent and trusted military interpreter may also enable the other soldiers to actively approach the local population by providing advice and cultural expertise. Thus, having a military interpreter

enhances the horizontal cohesion<sup>27</sup> of a unit. In contrast, sometimes the locally recruited interpreters would sometimes leave, or be absent from work when the threat level was high or if something unexpected happened. The local interpreters were typically well informed about the situation and they could often anticipate potential difficulties (Interview C).

The interviewees usually preferred military interpreters to locally recruited ones in high-level meetings and when discussing classified information because of their higher trustworthiness, and because military interpreters have a lower risk of becoming targets of intelligence gathering. The dissemination of information should however be decided on a case-specific basis, because limiting the interpreters' access to information serves to protect the interpreters themselves (Interview D). The research data does not specify whether the security clearances of military interpreters actually differed from those of the locally recruited interpreters in different operations, or if the officers' preference was an additional precaution. Nonetheless, the officers' perceived difference in the trustworthiness of military and locally recruited interpreters manifests itself in many practices. For example, when the locally recruited interpreters were on patrols, they were usually not seated in a car that had the command and control equipment and this was to prevent their access to sensitive information, such as troop positions and movements. The soldiers were also reminded of other security measures, such as closing laptops and not talking freely whenever a locally recruited interpreter was present. Military interpreters did not have restrictions in this regard (Interview B; D).

The presence of a military interpreter usually did not affect the functioning of the unit or team. The locally recruited interpreters' impact on the teams' tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP's) was greater: the local interpreters were separate from the team, at least until the initial reservation subsided and everyone learnt to know each other better. Once the unit became accustomed to having a local interpreter with them, the interpreter did significantly affect the internal routines of the patrols. However, the crisis management force should not trust the locally recruited personnel naively or excessively, because they can act facilitators for intermediaries in both directions (Interview B; C; D).

Rafael (2007, 245) makes the interesting observation that the soldiers lack of knowledge of the local language and culture results in them relying on interpreters, and that this dependence is indeed the cause of their soldiers' distrust towards interpreters. Having to depend on

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<sup>27</sup> Horizontal cohesion or peer bonding involves building a sense of trust between soldiers. Stewart (1991, 27–30) identifies attributes such as technical and tactical proficiency, lack of personnel turbulence, as well as trust, respect, and friendship as elements of horizontal cohesion in military units.



someone for access to communication with potentially hostile consequences triggers suspicions among the soldiers. For this reason, Rafael argues that the interpreters' indispensability is the source of their duplicity, and their linguistic proficiency masks their true intentions.

Working with locally recruited interpreters also created a different atmosphere in comparison to military interpreters. The local interpreters were regarded as representatives of the local population but also as employees of the military, which allowed them to assume a more neutral stance. Ideally, conversations would be between three parties: the military, the local person, and the interpreter, and in a relaxed atmosphere, which in certain situations could be a tactical advantage in certain situations. In contrast, when the commanding officer uses his military interpreter, he is speaking with one voice. Military personnel in uniform could sometimes be perceived as intimidating by the locals, and this would lead to a corresponding reaction (Interview C). As mentioned earlier, Finnish military interpreters' ethnicity and external appearance usually differed from those of the majority of Finns. The local population of the operation area noticed these apparent differences, which in some cases worked in favour of the crisis management force. When the locals noticed that the military interpreter knew the language and the local culture and that his ethnicity had connections to the area, their attitude towards the military interpreter improved (Interview E).

#### 6.7.2 Leading Interpreters in the Field

Military interpreters often encountered difficulties at the beginning of their deployment. However, mutual trust was developed over time. The military interpreters were therefore allowed to interpret in more demanding meetings, they were briefed beforehand, and they could prepare themselves for those meetings. By the end of their deployment, their hard work had been rewarded and they had become much more proficient (Interview C). A military interpreter is probably one of the hardest-working soldiers in his unit, because he participates in almost every patrol. For this reason, it would be preferable to have more than one interpreter per unit. Occasionally, the pressure and fatigue on the interpreters' faces were visible, especially for the younger and inexperienced interpreters (Interview B; C).

Ideally, a military interpreter should be actively involved in the mission of his military unit. For example, if the unit is tasked with gaining answers to specific questions, the military interpreter should connect with the task and gain ownership of the intelligence requirements at

hand. Thus, being familiar with the mission would enable the military interpreter to contribute to that discussion to ensure that it proceeds in the preferred direction. On the other hand, should the interpreter not wish to get involved in the intelligence questions, for whatever reason, he can always return to being an interpreter and a more mechanistic intermediary. Involving the military interpreter is especially important, owing to their power to influence matters. Should an interpreter want to depict a situation differently from what the military intends, it would be possible for him to alter the message. Even if the communication were correct to the letter, the spirit of it may be modified through word choices, tone of voice, and other prosodic features. Should the interpreter wish to do harm, there would be ample opportunity for him to do so (Interview B).

Military interpreters were occasionally used to convey a message or to assume a certain posture (Interview B; C). When operating in the units' own area of responsibility, a military interpreter often deliberately accompanied the commanding officer of that unit. This practice aimed at elevating the military interpreters' role and standing with the local population. Each operation could be regarded as a type of game and each new deployment of the crisis management force as new players on the field. The new players need time before they settle into their roles. The military interpreters participate in many patrols and their faces become familiar to the locals. For these reasons, it would be important for military interpreters to uphold a certain level of credibility and status from the perspective of the locals. The advantage of this is that when patrols are caught in tense situation, the familiarity and high standing of the military interpreter might be an asset and support in alleviating the tension. On the other hand, it might also be a drawback, depending on the situation (Interview C).

When possible, the selection of local interpreters for a specific mission was based on their professional competence as well as their strengths and weaknesses. When an interpreter had performed exceptionally well or had experienced problems in a specific type of situation, these experiences would influence his use in future assignments (Interview E). The patrols could therefore request a specific interpreter from the staff for a certain assignment. In practice, however, they worked with whoever was available (Interview B). The interpreter's background can nevertheless be a decisive factor when assigning interpreters to sensitive tasks. For assignments with a high threat level or that require a security clearance, factors such as experience, political affiliation, place of residence, and the ethnicity of the interpreter should be considered beforehand, and a suitable interpreter for that particular mission should be selected. However, the military officer in charge of the selection has a great responsibility

and must be well informed. In the worst case, this selection may compromise the interpreters' security (Interview C).

The interpreters were frequently briefed in preparation of their assignments, especially before the more important meetings. The main purpose of the preparatory briefings was to give the interpreter a broad outline of the topics and information that were of interest, as well as to ascertain that the interpreter had understood the main points of the message that the crisis management force wanted to convey to the locals. The interpreters also practiced language related in that particular subject. However, the brief given prior to each interpreting task should not unnecessarily constrict the interpreters' freedom of action. In addition, debriefing the interpreter afterwards was emphasized. In the post-patrol debriefing, secondary information and non-verbal signals are of particular importance. For example, it was important to detect factors such as which topics were avoided in the discussion and how the locals' mood changed when discussing certain issues (Interview B; D).

Occasionally certain critical or classified information was not shared with the interpreters. It was standard practice to withhold specific information from the locally recruited interpreters, but in isolated cases, this was also the practice with the military interpreters, as was mentioned earlier in sub-chapter 5.4.4. According to the interviewees, the interpreters' exclusion from information was due to security reasons. However, the officers considered this practice to be normal and that it had little negative effect on the cooperation with the interpreters (Interview B). Nevertheless, occasionally the locally recruited interpreters' were interpreting topics that were above their security clearance. This was normally avoided, but sometimes it was necessary. In these situations, the locally recruited interpreters were not briefed on the context or background of the information. The military interpreters also received contextual information when necessary (Interview C).

It is particularly challenging when the interpreter changes, because not all interpreters are equally competent, and some are better suited for certain assignments than are others. If an interpreter is assigned to a specific unit for a longer time, the soldiers of that unit may instruct and train the interpreter in the way that the unit operates, in which way messages are to be translated and formulated, and so forth. Moreover, an interpreter who stays longer with one unit has the opportunity to specialise in the special field of that unit. Having one specific interpreter assigned to a unit for a longer time helps in developing good working routines and facilitates communication. In practice, however, rotating interpreters periodically from one

unit or location to another for security reasons was a common practice. Therefore, it is important to come to terms with the basic principles of working with an interpreter quickly, because the ways of working may vary from one interpreter to another. This also means that some of their local expertise and contacts could not be fully utilised. Nevertheless, eventually the officers adapted to working with whoever was available (Interview C; D).

The officers used the interpreters' expertise and experience from the operation area to their advantage in many ways. Most importantly, the locally recruited interpreters were able to provide valuable information for the newly arrived officers. Even if the officers would reject the interpreters' advice at first, they soon learnt to appreciate it. In particular, the local interpreters should be monitored for nonverbal signs of stress and fear. For example, if they say that they would rather not go a certain place, it might be worth investigating, simply to build mutual trust, if for no other reason (Interview B; C).

According to the interviewed officers, the interpreters received feedback from the military personnel. This feedback covered various topics, such as how autonomously the military interpreters should act on patrols, how much the locals should be allowed to interrupt, as well as negotiation tactics. This feedback was not systematic or structured, nor did the military interpreters receive any training specific to their task during their deployment. The feedback was more collegial in nature; it encompassed the previous meeting, honing the team tactics, and considering what succeeded and what needed improvement in the future. The interpreters usually responded well to feedback. Indeed, one interviewee remarked that should a military interpreter be unable to process feedback in constructive manner, then he would be better off serving in a different position than that of an interpreter (Interview C; E).

The military interpreters always participated in the normal military training with the other soldiers of the crisis management force, and the locally employed personnel in their specific training events. Before the assignments, the interpreters would be briefed on the upcoming meeting and its expected results, talking points, and so forth. However, there was no training specifically aimed at neither the locally recruited nor the military interpreters during the crisis management operation (Interview B; C).

The interviewed officers also mentioned that working with an interpreter forced them to adapt their language in many ways. At the beginning of a deployment, the officers usually spoke for too long before pausing for interpretation. They also used language that was too complicated,

which created difficulties for the interpreter. In fact, the interpreters' English skills were sometimes poorer than theirs were. When the topic or the setting of the conversation were particularly difficult, the limitations in the interpreter's language skills soon became evident, which sometimes led to frustration. Yet pausing for the interpreter in consecutive interpreting allowed more time to think (Interview D).

The crisis management force should avoid giving locally recruited interpreters positions of power where the crisis management force becomes dependent on them. Eventually, the local authorities will try to determine what the interpreter knows, and this might force him to take sides. One would naturally prefer to trust the local interpreters, but at the same time, the realities of the situation cannot be disregarded. If a locally recruited interpreter has family in the area, he may become pressured to reveal information or to do things against his will. Should that happen, it would have been better if they never had access to that information. Thus, in order to protect the crisis management force as well as the interpreters themselves, the information available to them should be limited and controlled (Interview C; D). On the other hand, there is also a similar need for caution with military interpreters. The locals will want to know who the military interpreter is, and whether he has family ties in the area. If the military interpreter has a connection to the area, the locals are likely to find it and try to use it to their advantage. In addition, ethnic affiliation may be a sensitive issue for both military and locally recruited interpreters, and it must be taken into consideration (Interview D).

It is very important to build a good relationship with the interpreter. Sometimes this develops automatically, as when the interpreter joins the unit on long patrols. The interpreters should be given the same attention and respect as any other member of the unit. If the interpreter feels that his expertise is not valued or that he is neglected as a person, he will not be able to concentrate on his assignment and work to his full potential. If the working relationship with the interpreter is good, he might actively share his knowledge of the local society and culture. For example, he might intervene in a friendly manner if the soldiers are behaving inappropriately or doing something that is culturally insensitive. In short, interpreters are not machines, they are people, and must be treated accordingly. By cooperating with an interpreter and by becoming acquainted with him as a person, rapport improves considerably. If a working relationship with an interpreter is good, then it is easier and quicker to shift from small-talk to important, crucial topics (Interview D).

Helmus (2015, 21) emphasizes the importance of building a good relationship with military interpreters. This includes integrating the interpreters into part of the team, training them, collecting feedback from them, as well as briefing them on upcoming key issues and their larger context. These findings by Helmus confirm the interviewed officers' conceptions of how military interpreters should be led. Notwithstanding, the interviewed officers mentioned a number of examples of misunderstandings that occurred between military interpreters and officers and these seemed to originate from cultural misunderstandings. Apart from the aforementioned differences of opinion on what type of conduct is acceptable in a military context and the circumstances of a military crisis management operation (for example, see sub-chapter 5.4.4), these involved the formal position and status of a military interpreter, as well as the preparedness to take orders and direct feedback (Interview B). It can be argued the latter cultural discrepancy is connected to the sociological concept of saving face, which can be fundamentally different in different cultures (Merkin 2018, 1–9).

In conclusion, leading military interpreters in the field can differ from leading ordinary soldiers. As noted earlier, Finnish military interpreters typically have an immigrant background. In a military crisis management operation, a military unit is immersed in a foreign culture. Under these circumstances, a military interpreter may be one of the few people in the unit who has the ability and competence to switch from one language and culture to another. Yet, in conflict situations, there is insufficient or no neutral space between cultures to occupy, and the ability of military interpreters to manoeuvre in the opponent's cultural sphere may not always be appreciated by their fellow soldiers (cf. Snellman 2016, 266; 272). What is required from leaders of military interpreters is a profound cultural understanding, which enables them to identify and retain the most valuable cultural competences of their military interpreters and to determine which modes of conduct are unacceptable in a military context (Interview B).

### 6.7.3 Other Aspects

When working with a military interpreter, Finnish crisis management forces have the option of using Finnish or English as the working language. English was typically used as a sign of openness and transparency: most of the locals could understand some English, or at least they could recognise the topic being discussed. Thus, using Finnish instead of English as the working language could deliberately be used as a sign of a certain posture. If the crisis management force chose to speak Finnish with its military interpreter, it distanced them from

the locals, and gave a harsher impression. The Finnish language could also be used to convey messages to the military interpreter that were not meant for the other party. The locals also occasionally addressed the local interpreter directly and specified what he was not supposed to interpret to the soldiers (Interview C; E; D).

Age is also a factor when working with interpreters. Locally recruited interpreters are often older, and they are more focused on the interpreting task. The older local interpreters in particular could provide detailed information on how to behave in a specific situation or environment. Military interpreters sometimes have a more spontaneous approach towards the tasks, as they are often young men from immigrant backgrounds, who have lived most of their lives in Finland (Interview C). This means that although they know the language, they may have lost touch with how local, older men communicate with younger men. For example, the locals' seemingly disrespectful manner in speaking with a younger man may put the military interpreter under considerable pressure (Interview D).

The commander's interpreter should be somewhat older. It may be unfitting if the force commander is meeting local leaders and has a military interpreter who is in his twenties. Preferably, the interpreter should be able to discuss the meeting with the commander on the same level, and perhaps even know the commander personally. In an environment with a high threat level, the military interpreter needs to be physically up to the task, but in more peaceful settings, military interpreters in their fifties may be the best choice, depending on the clients (Interview C; D).

The interviewees expressed that a military interpreter should be able to perform in all the same military tasks as other soldiers on his level. Therefore, the military interpreter should be approximately the same age as the other soldiers. The military interpreters have usually taken part in the same training as the other soldiers in the crisis management force and have a similar level of competence as soldiers (Interview C; D). A military interpreter should also be proficient in the FDF's military culture, and be able to explain the FDF's codes of conduct and manners to the locals. However, the younger military interpreters may not have sufficient background knowledge of Finnish military culture to be able to explain to the locals why the FDF proceeds in a certain way (Interview C).

As examples of the many tasks that interpreters were assigned to, they were sometimes assigned to follow the local media and to prepare summaries of the news headlines. A

particular challenge for military interpreters was to gain insight into the local society and to understand the background and reality behind the news reports. An interpreter should ideally be able to assess media reports in their local historical and political context. Locally recruited interpreters are typically more adept in this regard (Interview B; D). However, local interpreters were not used for intelligence gathering. Instead, they had an assisting role, for example by providing the crisis management force with advice on where to find more information (Interview C). Interpreters were also assigned teaching the local language(s) to the soldiers of the Finnish crisis management force. This tuition amounted only to the fundamentals, such as useful phrases. The quality of the training also varied depending on who was teaching (Interview B).

One interviewee mentioned that SOPs demanded that interpreters write their own reports after each meeting. In practice, however, the interpreters often joined in when the patrol commanders wrote their reports, summarising the most important points in the discussions. This eliminated the double work of writing a separate interpreter's report. The interpreter could also provide the officer writing the report with valuable background information from the meeting, such as the overall atmosphere of the meeting, what had been discussed outside the agenda, or culturally specific non-verbal signs. Meetings were occasionally recorded for later reference. Yet interpreters were often sensitive about having their discussions recorded and scrutinised afterwards (Interview B; D).

Issues that are related to information security can be mitigated by adhering to the existing regulations. This should not be regarded as distrust in interpreters. The soldiers need to understand that from an interpreters' perspective, information security is a serious issue. On the one hand, interpreters must have access to information for their work. On the other hand, having access to information above their security clearance would constitute an additional burden for them. This means that adhering to information security regulations also serves the interpreters' security interests (Interview C).

In Afghanistan, NATO issued rules that the clothing and protective equipment distributed to civilians should have a different colour than their military equivalents, to prevent civilians from being mistaken for military personnel (Jones & Askew 2014, 58–59). Obviously, these regulations do not apply to military interpreters, for whom indiscernibility from other soldiers may be a tactical advantage (cf. Snellman 2014, 64–65).



In larger units and staffs, linguistic support sometimes involves more bureaucracy. Organisations try to optimise the use of the limited linguistic support resources, which means that you needed to anticipate your need for an interpreter well in advance. Consequently, there were many ad hoc situations where you were left without an interpreter. It is not only the organisations fault but also poor planning on the users' behalf (Interview C).

#### 6.7.4 Military Interpreter Autonomy

When working with a military interpreter, a military leader must decide how much autonomy he is willing to grant to the interpreter. A military leader usually has devised a plan or at least an idea of how that assignment is to be conducted. As a military leader is highly dependent on the military interpreter's ability to mediate in an unfamiliar linguistic and cultural environment, the leader should have a clear policy on the liberties that the military interpreter is allowed to take, depending on the overall situation. At one extreme, the military interpreter may in effect be leading the patrol or unit by virtue of his or her superior communicative and social skills, or acting completely independently. At the other extreme, the military leader retains full control, ordering the interpreter strictly to remain by his side and to interpret solely what he says as a 'talking head' or an 'interpreting machine'. In practice, the best solution would be to determine the golden mean between these two extremes (Interview B; C).

Both the survey results and the interviews indicate that officers understand the importance of interpreters for military crisis management operations. The interpreters' competence and experience were valued, and the cooperation with the interpreters was generally considered to work well. Nonetheless, the results suggest that if cooperation with the interpreter was fluent and the personal relations on good terms, the officers were willing to grant the interpreters a larger role and increase autonomy. At the same time, the officers expected interpreters to use their autonomy to act independently and dynamically in the best interests of the crisis management force. Alternatively, if their cooperation with the interpreters had worked poorly in the past, the officers were more prone to wish to control the interpreters' activities in a strict manner.

The research data generally suggests that in a demanding operational environment with its inherent threats and uncertainties, the officers were more likely to exercise stringent supervision of their interpreters (cf. Snellman 2018b). To their credit, some competent interpreters have acted independently to help avert difficulties in meetings even at the very

highest level (cf. Helsingin Sanomat 2015). Similarly, Finnish officers have described situations where interpreters' independent actions, which sometimes contradicted the established ethical guidelines for interpreters<sup>28</sup>, may have even saved lives (Snellman 2018b, 248–252).

One of the interviewed officers noted that almost all the locally recruited interpreters that he had worked with were sociable and adaptable team players. The military interpreters, however, were in his experience somewhat different. There had been occasions when the military interpreters had proactively communicated with locals and in doing so, inadvertently refuted the unit commander's message, undermining the patrols task and putting the crisis management unit in a difficult situation (Interview C). In my understanding, these types of situations are rare and mainly due to cultural misinterpretations as well as to personal relations. There are times when the soldier has to intervene in what the interpreter is doing. The interpreter knows the local language and culture, but metalinguistic signals, such as the tone of voice, might indicate a reason for the soldier to interrupt the interpreter. The more experienced soldier might be able to read the situation better overall and if necessary, become involved (Interview A).

#### 6.7.5 Lessons Learnt

Based on their case studies of language issues in the context of armed conflict, Footitt and Kelly (2012b, 242–243) conclude that the ability to learn from experience is pivotal: the organisation of linguistic support has usually improved significantly, as each crisis has progressed. Although each conflict and circumstance is different, according to my assessment, there are lessons to be learnt that are common to many crisis management operations. Let us now turn to review a number of findings from the lessons learnt -process of the FDF.

The Finnish Navy ship *Pohjanmaa* participated in the anti-piracy operation ATALANTA in the Indian Ocean from January to April 2011. Two military interpreters were deployed aboard during the operation. The military interpreters working languages were Somali and Finnish, and they had basic skills in Arabic. Initially the interpreters stood 6-hour watches, but that was later changed to one 14-hour watch from 07 to 21 hours. The interpreters' worked in the Combat Information Centre and their duties included operating the ship radio (SKJI 2011).

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<sup>28</sup> For example, the Ethical Guidelines for Community Interpreters by the Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters (SKTL 2013).

The Finnish Navy collected experiences from the operation through a Lessons Identified/Lessons Learnt (LI/LL) process<sup>29</sup>. The report proposes the following action items and measures to improve the military interpreters' performance:

- The interpreters' training should include more live role-play exercises with the actual languages used in realistic settings.
- The interpreters should be equipped with a digital voice recorder.
- The interpreters should have high-quality dictionaries available.
- The interpreters' role as a part of the Combat Information Centre (CIC) should be shaped to fit the requirements of the operation.
- Using the interpreters for Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) should be considered separately for each specific case. The interpreters always require careful guidance and comprehensive training when performing OSINT.
- The interpreters' language requirements should include Somali and Arabic, as well as French if possible. In addition, the interpreters should have wide-ranging knowledge of the operation area to be able to assess matters from a cultural viewpoint. (MERIVE 2011; SKJI 2011)

The conclusions of the Finnish Navy's lessons learnt report reveal a number of similarities with lessons learnt by Footitt and Kelly (2012b, 242–246). The Finnish Navy's comprehensive report of experiences and suggested improvements stands out as a good – and rare – example of how crisis management forces can contribute to improving linguistic support and interpreter tactics. Of the lessons learnt reports from Finnish military crisis management operations that I had access to, the vast majority contained no references to linguistic support (cf. SKJA 2014). My personal opinion is that this is a matter of approach. In other words, although linguistic support might not have urgent issues that are worthy of immediate reporting, there certainly has to be room for improvement and lessons to be learnt in most operations and deployments.

The Semi-annual Report 2/2015 of the Army Crisis Management Operations (MAAVE 2015a) comments on the availability of military interpreters for the Human Intelligence (HUMINT) team that is deployed in Afghanistan. The report states that two military interpreters in good physical condition should be selected for each team. Two interpreters are necessary to get the most out of the team. For example, when a meeting is conducted inside a building, a second interpreter needs to be available to communicate with locals outside. Furthermore, the workload of only one interpreter easily becomes extreme, and working more than 12 hours per day will challenge the endurance of the personnel over time. The report

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<sup>29</sup> The LI/LL process applied in FDF's crisis management operations, as well as its prospective developments, are described in sources such as PE (2009) and PVTUTKL (2015).

concludes that a team operating with only one interpreter is in a very vulnerable position should the interpreter have to be repatriated for health reasons (ibid.).

While the information in the LI/LL reports described above might be new for the FDF, their suggestions and recommendations reverberate many of the conclusions by Footitt and Kelly (2012b). Similarly, a number of problems underlying the remarks in the FDF's LI/LL reports might have easily been pre-empted, for example by adhering to the guidelines stipulated in the NATO doctrine for linguistic support (NATO 2011).

## 6.8 Interpreter Tactics: International Comparison

Let us now turn to analyse the linguistic support in the armed forces of another European country in closer detail. By examining how linguistic support is managed in Germany and by comparing their policies and practices to those present within the FDF, my aim is to arrive at a more in-depth understanding of the translation culture and interpreter tactics of the FDF. In particular, my aim is to establish what solutions and best practices in Germany would be applicable to the FDF, or what is referred to as benchmarking. At the same time, it is important to take into account the differences in the interests, missions, and resources of the armed forces of these two countries.

During my studies at the GSOC of the German Armed Forces (*Bundeswehr*) Command and Staff College (FüAkBw), I had the opportunity to visit the Federal Office of Languages (*Bundessprachenamt*, BSprA), which provides linguistic support to the Bundeswehr. The reason for my visit was to collect source material for a short paper that I was writing as a part of the curriculum of the FüAkBw. Having selected the recruitment and training of military interpreters in the Bundeswehr as the subject matter of my paper, I was warmly received at the BSprA, and had the opportunity to interview members of the administrative staff in charge of linguistic support to Bundeswehr's international operations, as well as a number of military interpreters. Unless indicated otherwise, this sub-chapter draws from my paper for the FüAkBw (Snellman 2018a).

### 6.8.1 The Federal Office of Languages

The BSprA is a higher federal authority of the Ministry of Defence. One of the responsibilities of the BSprA is to provide linguistic support for the international missions of

the Bundeswehr. The department responsible for the coordination and guidance in matters related to the linguistic support for international operations as well as for the recruitment and training of military interpreters is the International Operations' Support Division (*Sprachmittlerdienst* (SMD) 3, or *Unterstützung Auslandseinsätze* (UAE), which has 12 employees in permanent positions. The International Operations' Support Division's foremost responsibility consists of filling the vacant positions for interpreters in the various international operations of the Bundeswehr. In addition, this division also assumes responsibility for the functional supervision of the locally recruited interpreters on operations. In April 2017, the BSprA needed to fill 36 positions for military interpreters on 7 military crisis management operations (as a comparison, in 2013, the number of military interpreter positions was 32). To meet this demand, the BSprA employs 56 military interpreters (in 2013: 74) with fixed-term temporary employment contracts.

The Bundeswehr has no single document or policy that specifies how linguistic support for international operations should be organised and conducted. However, many administrative regulations allude to the topic indirectly. The Bundeswehr does not apply the NATO STANAG Linguistic Support for Operations (NATO 2011) because thus far, there has been no need to use it. In the view of the BSprA, the Office provides linguistic support for the German national contingents, not the operations themselves. Thus, the STANAG has no practical relevance for the linguistic support in the Bundeswehr.

#### 6.8.2 Recruitment of Military Interpreters in the Bundeswehr

The BSprA recruits military interpreters based on the needs of the Bundeswehr. All recruitment for military crisis management missions is on a voluntary basis. Either the linguistic support personnel deployed on operations hold a permanent position with the BSprA, or they may be specifically recruited to fill a vacancy in a specific operation, in which case they are given a temporary contract. When deployed, the linguists of the Bundeswehr almost exclusively serve as soldiers, which means that they have military status. The service contracts of military interpreter as a rule do not exceed 12 months, which covers the valid mandate of the operation in which they are to participate. When the mandate of an operation is extended, the interpreters who are needed to support that particular operation receive a new contract. On the other hand, should the German contingent in an operation be cut and the numbers of military interpreters need to be reduced, the service contracts of a corresponding number of military interpreters will be discontinued.

The BSprA also tests the applicants to ensure that their language and interpretation competence is sufficient to meet its requirements. The applicants for open positions are selected through a process that consists of a preliminary screening based on the applications, a language test, and an interpreting test, all of which are conducted by the BSprA. The applicants do not take SLP tests in each of their working languages. The translation test involves translating two texts from German into the applicant's mother tongue, and one text in the other direction. To pass the translation test, two of the three translations must be accepted. The interpreting test involves a simulated dialogue, which the applicant must interpret between German and his mother tongue. This interpreting test is obligatory and applicants are not given exceptions.

The competence required to serve as a military interpreter in the Bundeswehr is comparatively high: many of the applicants do not attain the qualifications that are required for the positions for military interpreters. The most common reason for failing the tests are shortcomings in one or more areas of language competence. For instance, an applicant may be highly qualified in one language but has limited reading and writing skills in the other. Alternatively, while being perfectly competent in both languages, the applicant may lack the cognitive ability to interpret between them.

However, if there is an urgent need for a military interpreter, an applicant may be recruited even if he only passes the interpreting test. Should an approved applicant's language competence in a certain language not match the required level, the BSprA may provide him with additional training in that language at a later stage. The examinations that are included in the recruitment process as well as the language competence required from civilian professional interpreters are regulated by law. While there are no standards or regulations regarding the language competence or the translation and interpreting skills needed to become a military interpreter, the BSprA adheres to the regulations for their civilian professional interpreters, where applicable. In practice, the regulations only apply to interpreters of languages for which there are university-level studies available in Germany. Thus, in many cases the required linguistic standard is set by a subjective decision of the BSprA, although this decision is based on the minimum standards provided by law.

The BSprA requires neither that the applicants know English, nor are their English skills routinely tested. Nonetheless, English language competence is often required by the military,

because in practically all multinational crisis management operations, the common working language is English. This is often a problem, because applicants with the required language competences in German, the language of the operation area, as well as English are very difficult to find.

### 6.8.3 Training of Military Interpreters in the Bundeswehr

Military interpreters receive introductory military training and undergo a security screening. While these structural procedures are necessary, they have caused some delay in the deployment and limitations in the availability of military interpreters. Prior to the deployment of the military interpreters, the BSprA also organises interpreter training and a preparatory briefing. The BSprA actively collects feedback from its linguists and the soldiers who work with them, but has no structured system of processing and evaluating the military interpreters' experiences. The Bundeswehr's linguistic support is neither active in international cooperation nor in the private sector of the language industry.

It is difficult to compare the linguistic support of the FDF and the Bundeswehr due to their underlying differences with respect to aspects such as personnel management and available resources. However, my paper points to a number of topics where benchmarking in linguistic support between Finland and Germany could be mutually beneficial. Firstly, the results indicate that the quality management in the recruitment of military interpreters is superior in Germany. This is because the Bundeswehr conducts thorough testing of the language and interpreting competences of its military interpreters, whereas this testing of interpreters is virtually non-existent in Finland (cf. Snellman 2014, 40–41).

One positive aspect of the Finnish system is that the military training of military interpreters would appear to be more inclusive in the Finnish crisis management forces. Both Germany and Finland normally provide pre-deployment training as well as a training period of Hand-Over/Take-Over (HOTO) in theatre. Yet, in contrast to the German military interpreters, the majority of Finnish military interpreters have completed their national compulsory military service (Snellman 2014, 41–42). The results suggest that the Bundeswehr views military interpreters not as real soldiers but rather as civilian specialists serving with a military status. Finnish officers, by comparison, tend to view military interpreters as normal soldiers who have the added benefit of linguistic competence (Snellman 2018b). What is interesting is that both Finnish and German military interpreters considered their military training to be

exceedingly important in terms of performing as a part of a military unit (cf. Snellman 2018b; 2014, 47).

## 6.9 Interpreter Tactics: Summary of Results

An analysis of Finnish officers' conceptions reveals that as a rule, the FDF understands the importance of interpreter tactics and linguistic support in the field. Nevertheless, this understanding has not always been achieved in practice: the recruitment, training, deployment, use, management, and leadership of military interpreters in the field in the FDF leaves much to be desired. An example of this is the lack of language testing for Finnish military interpreters. The question is what this reveals about language awareness in the FDF. On the other hand, the results propose that as an organisation, the FDF has ample expertise and experience in terms of linguistic support. This is evidenced by the many successful military crisis management operations that the FDF has conducted over the years. The results also suggest that as a learning organisation, the FDF is capable of developing this remarkable intellectual capital in linguistic support to its advantage. Promising instances of this include the initiative for international cooperation in the training of military interpreters as well as the training provided for the crisis management force in Pori Brigade that use role-playing exercises. Even so, it appears that the playing field of interpreter tactics in the FDF is fragmented, and that there is little coordination between the many stakeholders of interpreter tactics.



## 7. DISCUSSION

The two concluding chapters complete my analysis by discussing and interpreting the research results in their specific contexts. Based on the preceding three chapters, I describe the outcome space of my phenomenographic analysis using a SWOT matrix and comment on this description. I analyse the available results from a different perspective and return to the two research questions with their sub-questions, the expected results, as well as the theoretical framework, as introduced in Chapter 2.

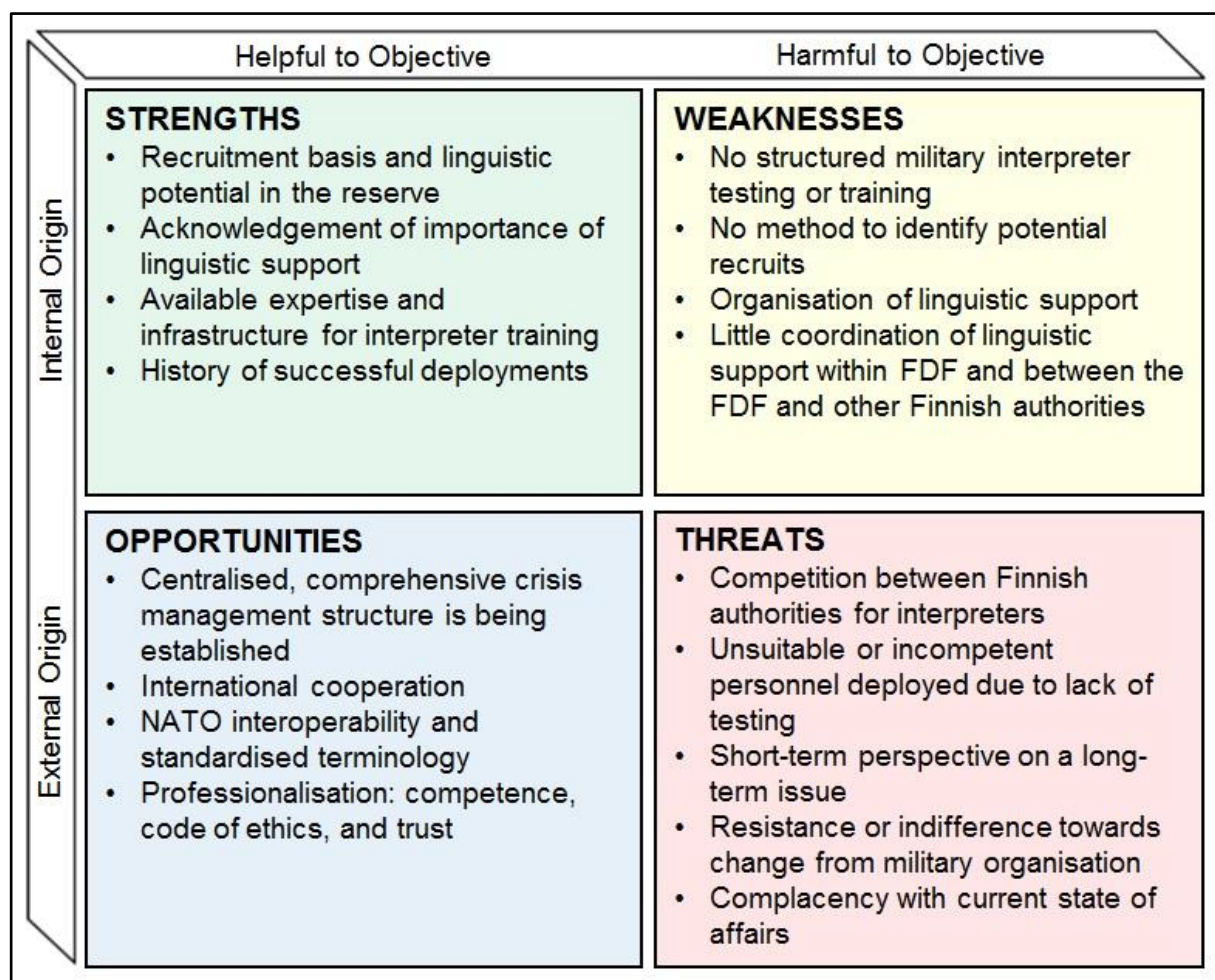
### 7.1 SWOT-Analysis

A SWOT analysis is an examination of an organisation's internal strengths and weaknesses, its opportunities for development, as well as the threats presented to its survival. A SWOT analysis is a tool that organisations use in the preliminary stages of strategic planning and decision-making. A SWOT analysis typically consists of three stages. Firstly, key data is collected and evaluated, and the organisations capabilities in the respective key areas are assessed. Secondly, the data is categorised and grouped into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Strengths and weaknesses usually emerge within an organisation, whereas opportunities and threats usually stem from external factors. Thirdly, during the final stage, a SWOT matrix is developed. After this, the organisation incorporates the results of the analysis into its decision-making process (Harrison 2010).

I adopt the SWOT analysis to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the FDF's institutional language policy, that is to say, its translation culture. In the FDF, military crisis management is currently being complemented with capability development. This development provides the FDF with an opportunity to create policy guidelines and a programme and these delineate its language policy and linguistic support. This policy should coordinate all of the FDF's linguistic requirements and objectives and target an audience that is both domestic and international. For example, the FDF should predict the number of bilingual conscripts and reservists and support their language skills and cultural competences that are necessary for the FDF in the future. Research should dictate the contents of the programme as well as evaluate its necessity (Interview A).

The SWOT analysis matrix is central to the outcome space of the phenomenographic analysis of my study (cf. Yates et. al. 2012, 106–107). The outcome space, and thus the SWOT analysis, should be viewed in the context of the study. Taken out of context, the SWOT

matrix may well oversimplify the research results. Furthermore, it should be noted that the SWOT analysis describes the FDF's current advantages and disadvantages as well as those likely to follow should a policy programme for linguistic support be prepared and implemented. The analysis does not evaluate whether or not this type of programme would actually be beneficial to the FDF. In my opinion, this analysis would need to be made in an official capacity, and it should include a time estimate, cost analysis, a personnel plan, and so forth.



**Figure 6.** SWOT analysis of the FDF's translation culture. The SWOT matrix also represents the outcome space of the phenomenographic analysis.

The SWOT matrix in Figure 6 is self-explanatory when presented in light of the results in the previous chapters. Nonetheless, I believe that the SWOT analysis alone does not answer the research questions, provide the expected results, or place them in the theoretical framework of this study. An explanatory discussion of the outcome space is necessary to deliver unambiguous, summarising answers.

## 7.2 Reframing the FDF's Language Policy and Translation Culture

My previous article presented a brief survey of the recruitment and training of military interpreters in the militaries of Estonia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Snellman 2014, 81–90). This short inspection revealed many contrasts to the FDF's linguistic support, policies, and practices. It appears that the armed forces of many other nations prioritise linguistic support more and allocate more resources to it than the FDF does.

The availability of linguistic support is a strategic concern or even a national security issue for militaries with a global reach, (cf. Rafael 2007; US Congress 2010). Their interests and budgets for linguistic support are radically different compared to Finland. For the FDF linguistic support is fundamentally a matter of priority. Indeed, the FDF's stance towards military crisis management is conflicted. Officially, it is one of FDF's tasks prescribed by law, and its importance is emphasised in many policy papers. In reality, however, recruitment for military crisis management missions is voluntary, which may be reflected in the attitudes of FDF personnel towards military crisis management (Niemelä 2016, 88).

As a comparison, Sweden and Denmark are both Nordic countries with similar interests to those of Finland concerning military crisis management. The armed forces of both Sweden and Denmark have special schools for military linguists and their professional military interpreters have established career paths. Thus, it could be argued that the Swedish and Danish Armed Forces have advanced further in the professionalisation of their military linguists, and that their translation culture is more developed than that of the FDF.

Jones and Askew (2014, 4) identify the following factors in the provision of language services in operations: the organisation and supervision of linguists; their recruitment, training and retention; security and trust; as well as cultural and social pressures from the operation areas. In the current study, I examined the first three of the above-mentioned factors. Based on the results, I propose that in its current state, the FDF's translation culture originates from four factors:

1. *Prioritisation*: The FDF considers international military crisis management as a task of lesser priority, with focus on national defence.
2. *Professionalisation*: While Finnish officers acknowledge the importance of linguistic support, the language awareness in the FDF is insufficient: there is a limited in-depth understanding of what linguistic support requires among decision-making military personnel.
3. *Permanence*: The FDF's linguistic support organisation and responsibilities are fragmented, and unsuitable for the characteristically long-term project of creating language capabilities.
4. *Policy*: Finnish language policy – the registration of foreign language speakers in particular, their integration into Finnish society, and maintaining their language skills – provides the FDF with limited prospects of utilising its significant linguistic potential during the conscript service and in the reserve.

Prunč (1997, 103) argues that the fundamental reasons for the lack in understanding and appreciation of translation are related to misconceptions about the nature of language, or in other words, the absence of language awareness. More specifically, he blames the commonly held opinion that anyone who knows two languages is able to translate or interpret between them. This misconception would somewhat explain the lack of FDF training programmes for military interpreters. The unavailability of language testing for military interpreters also reflects a simplistic notion on what constitutes language skills and translation competence.

Syrjänen (2014, 104) provides an interesting observation when concluding in a similar note that “the translation culture of the Finnish Defence Forces can [...] be considered rather unregulated and uninstitutionalised.” It is remarkable that Syrjänen studied Russian speakers in the Finnish land forces during the Second World War. It appears that the FDF has not actively sought to improve its established routines of providing linguistic support over the decades.

When examining the history of Finnish language policy, it is easy to ascertain certain pivotal points when changes have occurred. The current trend of internationalisation in the FDF, in combination with the influence of increased immigration to Finland, indicate that such a pivotal change is currently taking place, but the cause and effects of this change are difficult to discern at this time. A change in policy requires a change in the military and changes in conditions, such as a significant yearly influx of reservists with an immigrant background. When a change in language policy eventually occurs, it is important to draft the necessary policy papers and to have them signed by the relevant authority, and to have the necessary personnel available to implement the proposed changes (Interview A).

The results of this study suggest some discrepancies between Finnish officers' conceptions about linguistic support and the language practices of the FDF. Similar inconsistencies exist between the official translation culture of the FDF, specifically the few official documents that regulate linguistic support, and what actually occurs on the ground. However, inconsistency between policy and practice does not necessarily have drastic consequences. Sometimes the practices on the ground overtake official policy rather mundanely, which is exemplified by the status of French as an official language of NATO in comparison with English as the *de facto* working language.

### 7.3 Framework Proposal

Next, I propose concrete measures to develop the interpreter tactics of the FDF. The implementation of the following suggestions would presuppose that the FDF consider linguistic support a higher priority than it currently does. Based on the results of the current study, I propose that the FDF should:

1. Establish a structure or appoint a director with the overall responsibility for all of FDF's linguistic support. This organisational change would bring together the many stakeholders of the FDF's institutional language policy. In addition, the new organisation could direct or even control the interpreter tactics used by the FDF on the ground. A centralised leadership of linguistic support would parallel the tactical principle of *unity of command* (cf. NATO 2015).
2. Issue an administrative order or doctrine titled that could be titled 'Linguistic Support in the FDF'. The doctrine would provide guidance for the interpreter tactics of the FDF for future Finnish military crisis management operations as well as national defence. The purpose of this doctrine would be to direct the FDF towards consistent thinking and terminology without imposing restrictions on creativity. The doctrine should also contain balanced standard procedures, which could subsequently be used when planning operations and in critical situations. This would save time and assure that problems are solved consistently (cf. Gjelsten & Rekkedal 2013, 14–19).
3. Establish language and interpreting tests as well as training of Finnish military interpreters prior to their deployment. A training and testing programme would not only serve to standardise quality and provide the FDF with valuable information about its military interpreters, but this programme could also enhance military interpreters' status, and thus support recruitment. The need for training in interpreter tactics would also apply to soldiers in the crisis management force who work with interpreters.
4. Specify the FDF's language strategy and requirements with regard to linguistic support. The FDF should clearly state its position on Finnish language policy: what the FDF's interests and needs are regarding specific languages, linguistic personnel, language capabilities, language statistics, and so forth. The FDF's language strategy should also explicate why the FDF needs the specified resources and be compatible with the FDF's long-term planning.

It is evident that of the three dimensions that this study observes (policy, culture, and tactics), the aforementioned measures primarily concern the institutional level, more specifically, the FDF's translation culture. In my opinion, Finnish language policy provides a firm foundation for FDF linguistic support. Moreover, linguistic support on a tactical level has been sufficient to enable the FDF's many successful military crisis management missions. Yet the FDF's own institutional translation culture still has its issues. It can be argued that the measures proposed above could constitute a response, if not a remedy, to the four main factors that delineate the current state of affairs of linguistic support in the FDF (Prioritisation, Professionalisation, Permanence, Policy; see sub-chapter 7.2). Let us now turn to elaborate on a number of the issues presented above.

### 7.3.1 Professionalisation

The professionalisation of linguistic support in the FDF would entail providing Finnish military interpreters with training that is specific to their tasks, issuing them a code of ethics, and encouraging them to form professional associations. These steps of professionalisation, as identified by Wilensky (in NATO 2015), seem realistic and purposeful. Indeed, professionalisation need not be viewed as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. Through increased professionalisation, the FDF would be able to assure the quality of its linguistic service (cf. *ibid.*). It has also been demonstrated that professionalism enhances trust between language professionals and their clients (Jones & Askew 2014, 176–180).

Professionalisation is not a short-term project. For example, the professionalisation of NATO's language capacity was "both long-running, and dependent on the informed input of linguists working within the organisation" (Footitt & Kelly 2018, 169; see also Jones & Askew 2014, 69–72). In other words, the military is not capable of professionalising linguistic services on its own. That said, I am of the opinion that the training of military interpreters should not only be undertaken by civilian linguists, as the professionalism of military interpreters may be, in part, fundamentally different from the professionalism traditionally ascribed to civilian interpreters (cf. Footitt & Kelly 2018, 166).

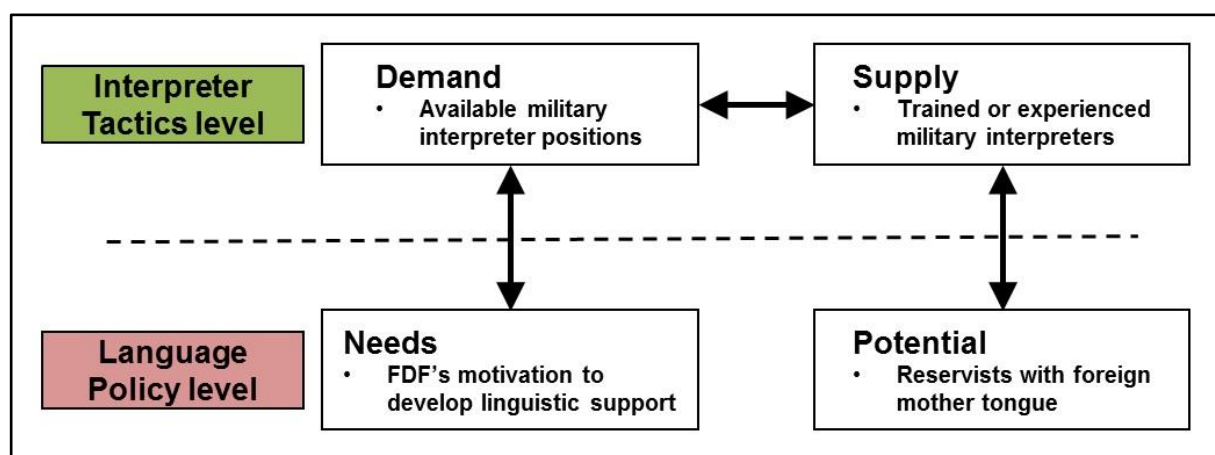
### 7.3.2 Doctrine

The lack of regulations for a profession indicates underdevelopment. Instead of explicating their norms in a written doctrine, the different actors repeat certain patterns ‘like they have always done before’, because what they do ‘has worked before’ and they feel they have produced good results. On the other hand, policies and doctrines can be understood as a formalisation of existing practices and intentions. Explicit doctrines and guidelines may be a factor in shaping practices, but they may also be less important than the systems, customs, and other established patterns that provide structure to practices (Kelly & Baker 2013, 199).

Thus, doctrines draw from practice and experience (cf. Jones & Askew 2014), and were the FDF to draft its own doctrine on linguistic support, there would be ample material and examples of existing documents to use as models. I have already mentioned the NATO STANAG as well as the linguistic doctrines of the UK and USA. In addition, it is easy to envision opportunities for benchmarking with the linguistic structures of the armed forces of countries such as Germany, Sweden, and Denmark.

### 7.3.3 Prioritisation

In essence, investing time and resources in linguistic support is a matter of appreciation. Does the FDF consider linguistic support a priority capability or an unavoidable but necessary nuisance, even though the crisis management force unfortunately cannot fulfil its task without that support? Brecht and Rivers (2012) note the parallels between the market forces of supply, demand, needs, and capacity in the supply of linguistic workforce to the US military and emphasise the interdependence of the tactical and strategic dimensions of creating linguistic capabilities. This interdependence enables tactical considerations, such as an immediate need for military interpreters in a specific operation, to possibly shape national language policy for years to come. In my adaptation of Brecht’s and Rivers’ model, I aim to illustrate that the FDF needs to address issues on both the tactical and political levels simultaneously so that it can develop its linguistic support capabilities (see Figure 7 below).



**Figure 7.** The market forces framework for linguistic support in the FDF (adapted from Brecht & Rivers 2012, 265–266).

The prioritisation of interpreter tactics should concern both the supply and demand of military interpreters because these are often connected. The FDF's linguistic requirements and its language potential should also be encouraged in the long term on the level of language policy. Of course, in the spirit of a market analysis, the FDF would have to weigh the estimated costs of prioritisation against its prospective benefits.

#### 7.3.4 Training

It is impossible to foresee the linguistic requirements for future military crisis management operations, and training linguistic personnel for an imminent operation can never be accomplished quickly enough. An important solution is to recruit personnel with existing language competences. These personnel also require training to achieve the professional competence of military interpreters. In my opinion, Finland already has sufficient expertise and infrastructure in place to train military interpreters. For example, many educational institutions offer specialised vocational training for community interpreters (TAKK 2018) and for court interpreters (DIAK 2018). One option is to adopt the applicable parts and best practices of these training programmes and vocational examinations by supplementing them with military elements. Within Finland, an example of institutional interpreter training is the guidelines published by the Finnish Immigration Service for interpreters participating in the asylum process (MIGRI 2010).

From an international perspective, many training initiatives are currently facilitating interpreter-mediated communication. For example, based on experiences from earthquakes in Turkey, a training programme was developed by the organisation Interpreters-in-Aid at



Disasters (IAD). This programme prepares interpreters for the physical and psychological working conditions of disaster areas, as well as to act as independent agents to facilitate a common objective (Bulut & Kurultay 2001, 259–260). In addition, courses to assist interpreter training in conflict zones are provided online (Moser-Mercer & Bali 2008; cf. Footitt & Kelly 2018, 170–171). An interesting alternative for linguistic personnel in military organisations could be the Applied Consecutive Interpretation Techniques (ACIT) course, which is held twice a year at the Partner Language Training Center Europe (PLTCE) of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies<sup>30</sup>. This course is a joint effort by the DLC of the FDF, and the Language School of the Danish Defence Forces.

The officers' conceptions and experiences presented in this study suggest that the leadership skills needed to lead linguistic personnel in the field may differ from what is required from leaders of ordinary military personnel. This means that any training programme for military interpreters needs to be complemented by training provided to the military organisation on the management and leadership of military linguists.

### 7.3.5 Interpreter Tactics in Field Manuals and Reports

The US Center for Army Lessons Learned handbook titled *Small Unit Operations in Afghanistan* (CALL 2009) contains four pages of instructions on how to work with interpreters for soldiers. These instructions are written from the perspective of the US military, but summarise several points that are relevant to military personnel who have limited experience in working with an interpreter, and in my opinion, most of the advice could also be adapted by the FDF. At the same time, experts on interpreting in a civilian context might find some of the suggestions in this handbook to be unorthodox or disconcerting. Nonetheless, this handbook is published as a product of the lessons learnt process of the US Army, and the advice it provides is presumably based on profound experience and understanding of the realities on the ground in Afghanistan.

A number of US field manuals for soldiers also provide information and guidelines on linguistic support. One of them is *The Field Manual on Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Conducting Peace Operations* (FM 3-07.31 2003), which includes a six-page appendix on interpreters. This appendix focuses on the recruitment, selection, and training of local interpreters, which are in my experience often overlooked areas of interpreter

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<sup>30</sup> For more information, see the Marshall Center website: <http://www.marshallcenter.org/MCPUBLICWEB/en/>

tactics. A similar seven-page appendix is included in *The Field Manual on Counterinsurgency* (FM 3-24 2006). Another example is *The Field Manual on Intelligence Interrogation* (FM 34-52 1992), which contains tactical instructions for questioning using an interpreter.

Besides the officially mandated military manuals on the use of interpreters, many other accounts on interpreter use are published in various unofficial reports, such as magazine articles. While these sources might not offer much new information on actual interpreter tactics, they provide interesting insights into the military's view on the interpreters' role and linguistic support in general (for example, see Schmitt 2002; Pesonen 2010, 22–23; Murphy 2011; Cummings 2012; Falkenburg 2012).

It may seem one-sided to provide examples only from publications by the US Armed Forces. There is a good reason for this: the US military has an unparalleled need for linguistic support due to its global deployment in over 100 countries. Language skills are also regarded as a national security issue in the US, and the US military and intelligence sectors have the most developed language policy and leading innovation in language acquisition and deployment in the country (Brecht & Rivers 2012, 262–265). Thus, as an institution, the US military has acquired ample experience in interpreter tactics, which is also reflected in their field manuals.

Civilian organisations have also expressed concern for how the military works with linguists. To address this perceived problem, the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), the International Federation of Translators (FIT), and Red T have issued a field guide that describes the basic rights, responsibilities, and practices of interpreters who serve as field linguists for the armed forces in conflict zones as well as the users of their services (Fitchett 2012). This field guide, which is labelled a recommendation, is also available in Finnish.

### 7.3.6 Multilingualism as a Driver for Change

There are more possibilities for the recruitment and the use of military interpreters in Finland now than a decade ago. This is because many people with immigrant backgrounds have completed their compulsory national military service in Finland. The group of people who can potentially be trained to become military interpreters is considerably larger now than there are people who know both the language of a specific area as well as the military culture of the FDF. It would perhaps be in the FDF's own best interest to concentrate more on linguistic support and language policy issues in order to improve their level (Interview A). As a first

step, the personnel databases of the FDF should be adapted to allow the language competences of bilinguals and multilinguals to be registered.

The special linguistic and cultural competences of multilingual and multicultural Finnish reservists could also provide an advantage for the FDF in terms of national defence when conducting operations in the information and human dimensions of battlespace. The FDF should have a particular interest in the largest language minority in its reserve, the Russian speakers. It is not difficult to envision wartime units or tasks of the FDF, in which the language expertise of Russian-speaking reservists would become necessary.

Of course, the language proficiency and cultural competence of Finnish reservists do not necessarily or automatically contribute to Finland's military crisis management operations or to its national defence. To fully benefit from the multilingual personnel available to the FDF, the reservists' training and personal aptitudes should match their intended duties. For example, multilingual reservists would need to take part in specially targeted supplementary training to be eligible for military interpreter positions in crisis management forces or other language specialist positions in the wartime organisation of the FDF.

The FDF is not capable of solving the issue alone, as the FDF functions as a part of Finnish society, and Finland's national language policies shape the circumstances where the FDF operates. If Finnish language policy further promoted bilingualism or multilingualism, the FDF would have a broader recruitment base with wider linguistic capabilities (Interview A). In addition to Finnish language policy, the language policies of the EU, UN, and NATO also contribute to how the FDF as an institution handles linguistic issues.

## 7.4 Validity and Reliability of the Results

The results of this study reflect a general satisfaction in the linguistic support of Finnish military crisis management operations, and the FDF has conducted successful operations with adequate linguistic support. It could be argued that there is actually little room for improvement in the FDF's interpreter tactics and linguistic support. This raises the question of what would be the consequences of maintaining the system as it is.

Despite this apparent disparity, I maintain that the issues of linguistic support presented in this study are very real. Consistent with the principle of triangulation, I collected my research data

from multiple sources using several methods and analysed it using more than one method, which increases the validity and reliability of the research results. Assuming that the research results are correct, the Finnish officers' contentment with the status quo could be attributed to a number of reasons. Firstly, Finnish officers may be adaptable and adjust to the existing circumstances, or they may cope with the established routines of linguistic support in military crisis management operations out of habit. Secondly, they may not have sufficient understanding of the issue and thus completely fail to identify the weaknesses of linguistic support.

In sub-chapter 2.1, I argued that the impact of a study hinges on the urgency and applicability of its findings. The validity and reliability of this study can also be assessed from the perspective of impact, that is, whether it managed to provide tangible suggestions for improvement or increase language awareness, as it intended. The impact or effectiveness<sup>31</sup> of research within the defence sector, especially the Ministry of Defence, has been criticised. To be effective, research presupposes cross-sector and international networking, sufficient volume of research, a strong commitment, as well as information on ongoing projects (Raivio et. al. 2009, 14). Thus, from the standpoint of impact, an isolated study might not be able to achieve its goals, despite it being valid and reliable.

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<sup>31</sup> When assessing research, the term *effectiveness* usually refers to the changes caused by the research results (Raivio et. al. 2009, 14).

## 8. CONCLUSION

### 8.1 From Conceptions to Language Awareness

Military institutions and personnel generally acknowledge the importance of linguistic support and military interpreters. Yet, some of the problems surrounding them seem to persist, as military organisations appear to be incapable of acting upon these issues. This inaction, in turn, frustrates the linguistic support specialists, who are unable to provide the support that the military needs. Linguistic support has improved in many ways, especially in NATO in recent years, and much of this development derives from the lessons learnt in the operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan (for example, see Jones & Askew 2014). Despite this, my opinion is that linguistic support continues to receive insufficient attention with regard to its importance even though improvements in linguistic support could yield significant results with relatively little effort (cf. Falkenburg 2012, 41–42).

Jones and Askew (2014, 8) note that “effective linguistic support is crucial for the success of operations and should be seen as an essential element of planning and mounting operations”. In addition, these authors argue that developing language awareness in the military is necessary to allow for advance planning and decision-making:

[...] Language support should be viewed in the same way as any other asset deployed by a military force [and it should] be considered and planned for well in advance of the operation. [...] The difficulty here is that there is generally limited time between a decision being made to embark on an operation and its start. Moreover, to be able to train linguists for an operation, the need for capability in a particular language would need to be known years in advance, which is obviously impossible. These challenges notwithstanding, the approach is clear: linguistic support must be planned as much as possible before an operation commences [...]. (Jones & Askew 2014, 193–194)

NATO doctrine also strongly advises that advance planning and preparations must be made before military crisis management operations are launched (NATO 2011). My position is that there is no common, universal model to solve all the issues with linguistic support. While there is a great deal to learn from the militaries of other nations, any solutions formulated by the FDF need to observe the special national circumstances and existing structures. NATO doctrine advocates establishing a single structure to control all aspects of linguistic support (NATO 2011). In my opinion, the DLC might be best suited for this task in the FDF.

Jones and Askew (2014, 193–194) assert that the planning of linguistic support should be “done by individuals who have the appropriate skills and knowledge regarding not only the management and organisation of a linguistic service but also the particular sociolinguistic situation on the ground”. In doing so, I think they refer to civilian linguists rather than professional soldiers. The question is valid: should interpreter tactics in general be the responsibility of military organisations, or should they have an expert civilian leadership?

In my opinion, linguistic support is a joint effort and both military and linguistic competences are essential. The testing and training of military interpreters would require the professional competences of trained linguists, but they may have a limited understanding of the military realities in the field. In addition, interpreters deployed in military crisis management operations can only be led by soldiers. The soldiers in charge of linguistic personnel should have sufficient language awareness and understand some aspects of how language experts work.

At present, Finland has continuously deployed a military crisis management force in Afghanistan (ISAF/RS) for more than 15 years and it is probable that the FDF will need a commitment in Afghanistan with consistent linguistic support in the local languages for years to come. The results indicate that FDF has not taken significant measures within the last 15 years to improve the recruitment or training of military interpreters for these languages. For this particular operation, there has been ample time to train Finnish soldiers, even people without previous connections to the region, to become military interpreters. The ongoing wars in Syria and Ukraine are eventually going to end and Finland would likely participate in a subsequent crisis management operation. (cf. Snellman 2014, 72). Due to these particular crises, one could argue that it is indeed possible to foresee the FDF having a potential need for linguistic support in for example Arabic, Ukrainian, Dari, and Pashto.

## 8.2 The ‘Ideal’ Military Interpreter?

It is important that the FDF utilises the significant linguistic potential of its personnel and especially the reserve. Modern concepts of armed conflict emphasise the importance of the information domain on all levels of warfare, from strategic to tactical (for example, see Nurmela 2010; FM 3-07.31; Footitt & Kelly 2018). On a tactical level, the human dimension and the social domain of battlespace have been recognised as having a key role. The reality of modern conflict and military crisis management is that the initial battles are fought on social

media where the most recent information is available. In general, success in the human dimension of battlespace is subject to language, culture, and communication (cf. Nurmela 2010, 73–82).

What exactly should the FDF then search for when recruiting military interpreters? Apart from the established recruitment criteria, the research results provide some clues as to an ‘ideal’ profile of a military interpreter. As already mentioned, the only compulsory requirement is Finnish citizenship. The interpreter also needs to have a good overall command of at least three languages: the ‘rare’ language of the operation area, Finnish, and English. Ideally, he or she has also studied interpreting or has experience in it. Another merit would be that the person would have completed his or her conscript service as a non-commissioned officer or an officer, and be in good physical and psychological condition. It would likewise be preferable for the applicant to have life experience and to be female. As for personal qualities, the person needs to be intelligent, sociable, and able to cope well in stressful situations.

It is of course highly unlikely that anyone will fully match the above description. My profile of an ideal military interpreter does not label applicants who deviate from this description to be unsuitable or to discourage them from applying. On the contrary, I aim to illustrate the FDF’s priorities and thus inspire people who are interested in serving as military interpreters to strive towards achieving these standards. It is also important to note that linguistic support can never be accomplished by one person alone, as it is the result of a close coordination and cooperation of the overarching military organisation, and from a wider perspective, of society.

### 8.3 Suggestions for Further Study

Do military interpreters continue to be key players in international crisis management operations or will artificial intelligence and speech recognition algorithms lead to a breakthrough in machine interpreting? Despite the significant progress made in machine translation technologies in recent years, human translators and interpreters continue to be indispensable, especially those with a broad skillset and deep subject-matter expertise (cf. Moorkens 2018). Progress in automated interpretation in the military has been modest thus far, and it is difficult to imagine how even a flawless machine translator could replace the many cultural competences that trained military interpreters possess (cf. Rafael 2012, 60–64), not to mention the military skills that trained military interpreters bring to their unit.

Notwithstanding, I view future trends in the field of linguistic support as an important avenue of research, particularly because the information domain has been regarded as increasingly important in future conflicts (cf. Footitt & Kelly 2018, 166; 171–173).

In my previous article (Snellman 2014, 98–99), I suggested that military interpreter training be researched further. This raises questions such as the type of training that would best prepare military interpreters for deployment. Furthermore, what areas are most important in the training of military interpreters? What impact does military interpreter training have on the overall performance of crisis management forces?

As a final suggestion, I would like to highlight the role of language awareness in the military. Although not concerned directly with military linguists or linguistic support, Thomson's (2014) sociolinguistic study to understand the role language plays in determining the culture of the Australian Defence Forces provides a good example of promoting language awareness in the armed forces. How can military decision-makers' language awareness be improved? What is the understanding and role of language in the FDF?

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

Males born 1990 - 2007, permanently residing in Finland, according to mother tongue and citizenship on 31 December 2015									
Year of birth	Age	Whole age group	Finnish citizens	Dual citizenship*	Foreign nationals	Finnish citizens		Largest language groups	
						Mother tongue: Finnish, Swedish, Sami	Mother tongue: foreign language	Language	Number
2007	8	31 162	30 033	975	1 129	29 060	973	Total	<b>15 676</b>
2006	9	31 146	30 001	937	1 145	29 065	936	Russian	3 565
2005	10	30 336	29 281	860	1 055	28 397	884	Somali	2 393
2004	11	30 709	29 655	931	1 054	28 769	886	Arabic	1 162
2003	12	29 842	28 857	927	985	27 997	860	Kurdish	1 023
2002	13	29 560	28 636	907	924	27 821	815	Albanian	901
2001	14	29 617	28 699	890	918	27 833	866	English	896
2000	15	30 240	29 252	848	988	28 498	754	Persian	607
1999	16	30 338	29 403	821	935	28 611	792	Estonian	596
1998	17	30 040	29 057	870	983	28 211	846	Vietnamese	553
1997	18	31 146	30 159	845	987	29 306	853	Chinese	344
1996	19	32 287	31 156	985	1 131	30 234	922	Turkish	339
1995	20	33 363	32 217	970	1 146	31 273	944	Thai	264
1994	21	34 331	33 080	989	1 251	32 146	934	Spanish	242
1993	22	34 326	32 888	998	1 438	32 035	853	German	173
1992	23	35 886	34 083	960	1 803	33 227	856	French	155
1991	24	35 426	33 250	919	2 176	32 387	863	Bosnian	150
1990	25	36 054	33 551	899	2 503	32 712	839	Bengali	107
1990-2007	8-25	575 809	553 258	16 531	22 551	537 582	<b>15 676</b>	Other	2 206

\*) Finnish citizens who also hold the citizenship of another country. Are included in the number of Finnish citizens.

**Table A1.** Number of males born in 1990 to 2007 who are permanently residing in Finland by mother tongue and citizenship on the 31 December 2015 (Rapo 2016 / Statistics Finland).

The mother tongue of Finnish conscripts at their time of mustering out between 2011 and 2015											
2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
Number	Language	Number	Language	Number	Language	Number	Language	Number	Language	Number	Language
21 489	Finnish	21 138	Finnish	20 794	Finnish	28 416	Finnish	20 718	Finnish	20 149	Finnish
1 187	Swedish	1 188	Swedish	1 135	Swedish	1 618	Swedish	1 221	Swedish	1 318	Swedish
195	Russian	152	Russian	142	Russian	259	Russian	152	Russian	157	Russian
39	Somali	37	Estonian	34	Somali	62	English	31	Kurdish	53	Somali
33	English	29	English	26	English	47	Kurdish	31	Other	42	Kurdish
27	Estonian	24	Somali	24	Vietnamese	44	Estonian	30	Estonian	41	Other
26	Kurdish	22	Kurdish	23	Estonian	39	Vietnamese	29	Somali	37	English
21	Arabic	18	Albanian	23	Kurdish	37	Somali	28	English	35	Estonian
19	Albanian	18	Vietnamese	23	Albanian	29	Other	26	Vietnamese	24	Albanian
19	Vietnamese	18	Chinese	21	Arabic	26	Albanian	25	Albanian	24	Vietnamese

**Table A2.** The mother tongues of Finnish conscripts who have completed their compulsory military service between 2011 and 2015 (PE 2016c).



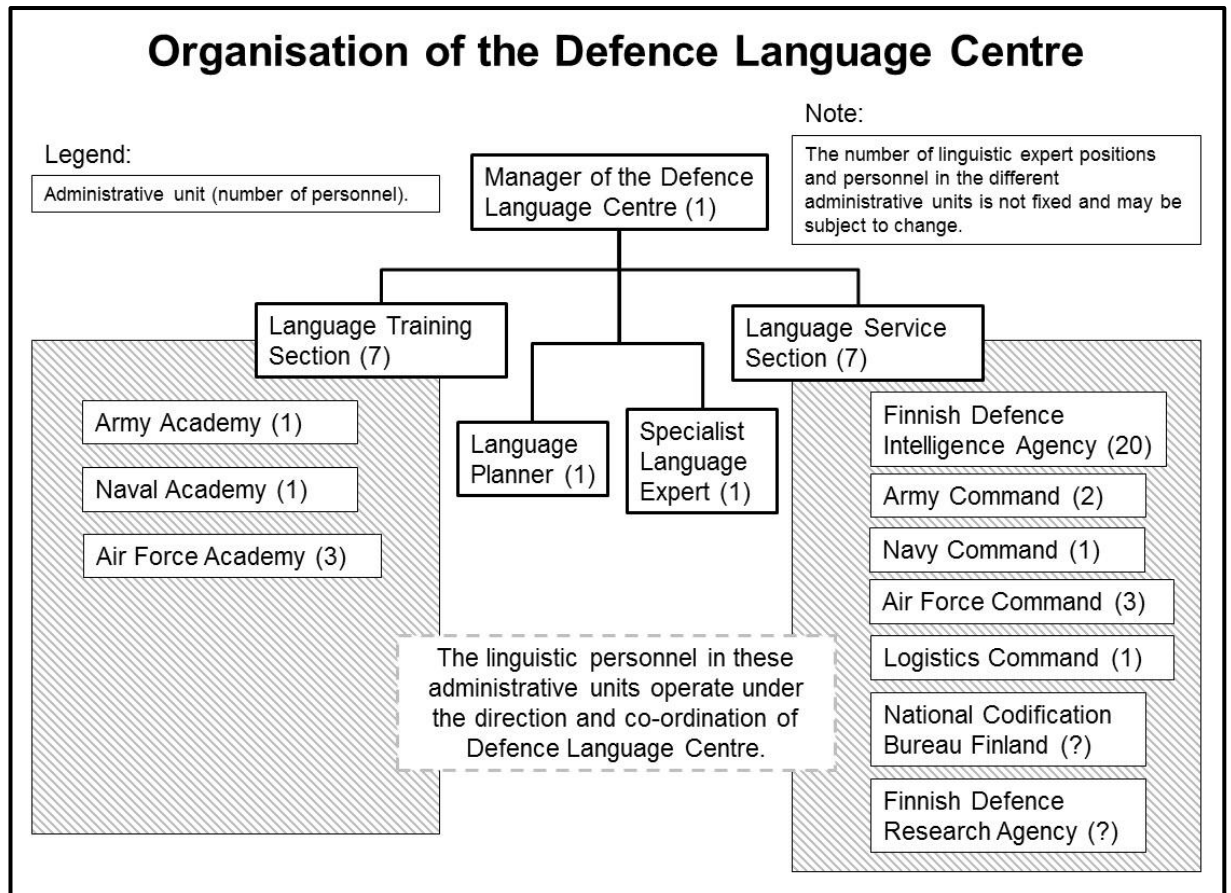
## APPENDIX B

Number of military interpreters deployed in Finnish Military Crisis Management Operations												
	Contingent number/year of deployment											
	1/2007	2/2009	1/2010	1/2011	2/2012	1/2013	2/2013	1/2014	2/2014	1/2015	2/2015	1/2016
<b>Finnish Crisis Management Force*</b>												
SKJA (ISAF, RS)	N/A	1	1	N/A	2	N/A	2(3)**	N/A	N/A	1(2)**	1(2)**	0
SKJI (ATALANTA)	OUT	OUT	OUT	2	OUT	OUT	OUT	OUT	OUT	OUT	OUT	OUT
SKJK (KFOR)	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SKJL (UNIFIL)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	N/A
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Legend:</b> N/A Figure not available OUT Operation had not been started or already ended 1/year First half of the year (Jan-Jun) 2/year Second half of the year (Jul-Dec) * The Finnish abbreviation refers to the Finnish crisis management force and the geographical area in which it is deployed: SKJA: Afghanistan, SKJI: Indian Ocean, SKJK: Kosovo, and SKJL: Lebanon ** A figure in parentheses ( ) indicates a military interpreter position, which can optionally be filled with another task. Whether this is due to the possible limited availability of military interpreters is not known.												
<b>Sources:</b> MAAVE esitys MI14942, 14.5.2012 "Esitys SKJA:n organisaatioksi ja HYKTY:ksi 10.9.2012 alkaen" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys MI30411, 9.10.2012 (3268/24.01/2011) "Esitys SKJL organisaatioksi ja henkilöyksikkötyypiksi 2/12 alkaen" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys MJ15848, 16.5.2013 (965/24.01/2013) "Maavoimien esikunnan esitys SKJL:n organisaatioksi ja henkilöyksikkötyypiksi 2/13" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys MJ5540, 8.3.2013 (965/24.01/2013) "Maavoimien esikunnan esitys SKJL:n organisaatioksi ja henkilöyksikkötyypiksi 1/13" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys MK13098, 25.4.2014 (2025/24.01/2012) "Esitys SOK:N 1/14 HYKTY:ksi" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys MK24251, 9.9.2014 (965/24.01/2013) "Esitys SKJL:n 2/14 henkilöyksikkötyypiksi" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys MK5933, 21.2.2014 (965/24.01/2013) "Esitys SKJL:n 1/14 henkilöyksikkötyypiksi" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys ML13986, 16.6.2015 (1339/14.02.00/2015) "Esitys SKJA:n 2/2015 kokoonpanoksi ja HYKTY:ksi" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys ML17641, 21.8.2015 (47/14.02.00/2015) "Esitys SKJL:n 2/15 henkilöyksikkötyypiksi" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys ML28120, 14.12.2015 (1339/14.02.00/2015) "Tarkennettu esitys SKJA:n lakkauttamisen jälkeisen Suomen osasto Afganistanissa HYKTY:ksi" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MAAVE esitys ML6476, 20.3.2015 (47/14.02.00/2015) "Esitys SKJL:n 1/15 henkilöyksikkötyypiksi" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö MERIVE kertomus DH6838, 23.8.2011 (496/24.01/2011) "Suomalaisen kriisinhallintajoukon Intian valtamerellä loppukertomus" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö PE esittely AC17613, 5.10.2006 "SKJK:N ORGANISAATIO 8.11.2006 - 8.5.2007" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö PE päätös AJ7842, 11.6.2013 (1321/24.01/2012) "Suomalaisen Kriisinhallintajoukon Afganistanissa kokoonpano ja tehtävät 1.6.2013 ja 10.9.2013 lukien" ST IV viranomaiskäyttö												

**Table B1.** The number of military interpreters deployed by the Finnish Defence Forces on military crisis management operations between 2007 and 2016.



## APPENDIX C



**Figure C1.** The organisational structure of the linguistic services of the Finnish Defence Forces (MPKK 2009b; MPKK 2015; Interview A).