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Translation of Military Register in the Polish Subtitles of American War Movies

Abstract

The paper allows a closer look at the problems with translation of military register from English to Polish. The examples taken from four movies depicting the Battle of Mogadishu, Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom served as a research material to establish which strategy – foreignization or domestication – is more often employed and which gives better results. The discrepancies between Polish and American military register make the task challenging and pose many interesting research questions not only in the field of translation studies but also in cultural and rhetorical studies.

Key words

military register, translation, war movies, domestication, foreignization

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Translation of Military Register in the Polish Subtitles of American War Movies¹

1. Introduction

This paper attempts to explore the translations of American military register into Polish. The form of presenting war in movies has changed greatly over the last twenty years and so has the language used in them. It is more lifelike and closer to reality, encompassing specialist vocabulary, jargon, and slang. Due to the many differences between Polish and American military traditions, the translation of the military register poses a great challenge with the two translation strategies – domestication and foreignization – being the main options available. The present study will allow to determine how the American military register is rendered in the Polish subtitles and therefore to what extent the translation is true to the original. A study will be made on contemporary American war movies depicting the Battle of Mogadishu, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom². Surveyed examples are to establish which strategy of translation is most often employed and gives the best results.

The two strategies in question, namely domestication and foreignization, have entirely different dynamics in terms of conveying the original message, making it not only a translation issue but also a rhetorical one. Every genre has characteristic means of communicating the message, and military register, with its strong and complex language, is a particularly difficult discourse to translate. If the text is to be domesticated, the translator inevitably loses some of the original rhetoric while he transposes foreign ideas into more familiar ones, e.g. influenced by the growing popularity of political correctness. If the text is foreignized, the original rhetoric might lose its force due to simplifying the message to make it understandable to the target audience (France 2005, 261). The translator acts as a mediator

1. A shortened version of a thesis written under the supervision of Prof Adam Wojtaszek and presented as a partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts at the Higher Philological School in Wrocław in 2014

2. *Black Hawk Down*, 2006, Ridley Scott; *Jarhead*, 2005, Sam Mendes; *The Hurt Locker*, 2008, Kathryn Bigelow; *Generation Kill*, 2008, Simon Cellan Jones, Susanna White

who decides on a new form of conveying the rhetoric of the author without falsifying the original idea and creating the illusion that the author wrote in the target language (255).

The paper firstly considers the relevant theoretical background of the translation studies. It also focuses on the theory of audiovisual translation which is followed by the elaboration on the theory of special purpose registers of language. It concludes with the review of American and Polish military registers as well as the contrasts between real military register and its representation in the media. Then, it examines the instances of American military register notified in the films and their translations. Lastly, it elaborates on the main findings resulting from the research.

2. Translation procedures

As it will be a vital notion for the empirical study, two divisions will be taken into account, namely condensed approach of Vinay and Darbelnet in contrast with more elaborate approach by Newmark.

Vinay and Darbelnet (2004, 84) list seven procedures put into two groups, direct and oblique procedures. The authors give three direct procedures. *Borrowing*, acts as a way of overcoming a metalinguistic *lacuna* (a gap) where a target language equivalent does not exist, e.g. French *rendezvous* or *déjà vu* (Vinay and Darbelnet 2004, 85). Another direct procedure is *calque*, which is considered an alternative form of *borrowing* as the source language expression is not only borrowed, but also translated into the target language, e.g. *science-fiction* (85). The last direct procedure is the *literal translation*, which employs direct rendition of the source language text to target language with keeping the grammatical and idiomatic appropriateness of the target language. In principle, the translation should be fully reversible (86), e.g. *black market* – *czarny rynek*.

Following direct procedures, Vinay and Darbelnet (2004) proceed to four oblique procedures. In *transposition* the translator replaces one word class with another without change in the meaning (88). This procedure can be illustrated by the sentence *This trip will cost me \$1000.* = *Koszt tej wycieczki wyniesie 1000 dolarów.*, where the verb *cost* was transposed into a noun *koszt*. *Modulation*, involves changing the correct, but clumsy, grammatical structure into a suitable one by means of changing the perspective (89). A Polish translation of English phrase *Take care!* would suit this type, where the literal translation *Opiekuj się!* does not fit its meaning in context of ending a conversation, where more appropriate is *Trzymaj się!* *Equivalence* is a rendition of one situation into the target language by completely different stylistic and structural forms and in consequence an equivalent

text is produced. e.g. *Ouch! – Au!* (90). The last oblique procedure is *adaptation*, used as a last resort, when the source language situation is unknown to the target language and a new situation is designed to render the original as close as possible to be regarded as an equivalent (90). Such situation can be illustrated with the term *Super Bowl*, which is unfamiliar to most Polish people and could be substituted with *the final of the Ski Jumping World Cup*, which is equally popular in Poland as the *Super Bowl* is in the United States.

Vinay and Darbelnet's direct procedures correspond to Newmark's (1988) *transferring*, *through-translation*, and *literal translation* respectively. *Transference* is a process of transferring a source language word into the target language. It is employed to a variety of groups, e.g. names, periodicals, titles, institutions (unless they have recognized equivalents), e.g. *décor*, *Malawi* (Newmark 1988, 81). *Through-translation* is less vague term for a *calque*. It is a literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations, and popular phrases (84). Following Newmark's description we can find such examples of through-translation: *Unia Europejska* (*European Union*), *Organizacja Narodów Zjednoczonych* (*The United Nations*). *Literal translation* is the basic translation procedure for a translator. It is rejected because of its unnaturalness; however, the less context-bound words are there in the source text (technical terms, original metaphors, acceptable collocations) the more likely a literal translation will be more suitable (68).

Correspondence between oblique procedures of Vinay and Darbelnet's and Newmark's procedures is less transparent. *Shift or transpositions* correspond to their *transpositions* as it also involves a change in the grammar from the source language and the target language, e.g. from singular to plural, or changing the position of adjective (1988, 85). Newmark (1988, 88) discusses Vinay and Darbelnet's *modulation* and does not fully recognize it calling it "a super-ordinate term covering almost everything beyond literal translation". Furthermore, he completely rejects *equivalence* and *adaptation*, claiming that the terms are too ambiguous and broad (90). Instead, he proposes several other procedures. *Naturalization* is adapting the source language word to the normal pronunciation and morphology of the target language, e.g. *Thatcherism - Thatcheryzm* (82). *Equivalence* is divided into *cultural equivalent*, which uses the nearest target language terms to the source language cultural term (Polish *Matura* – English *A-level*), *functional equivalent* is a neutralization or generalization of the source language or adding some particulars (*Sejm – Polish parliament*), and a *descriptive equivalent* which adds vital information to the term for a better understanding of it, e.g. *Samurai – the Japanese aristocracy* (83).

3. Translation strategies

Venuti (2001) defines strategy of translation as a process of choosing the text to translate and establishing the method applied to translation of a foreign text, which can depend on some cultural, economic, or political factors. Abundance of the strategies led Venuti to divide them into two major categories: domesticating and foreignizing strategies (240). Venuti (1995, 20) describes domestication strategy as minimizing the cultural elements of the foreign text and replacing them with the target culture elements familiar to target text readers. Munday (2001, 146) adds that this kind of translation involves understandable and natural reading, reducing the presence of a translator. Foreignization, on the other hand, entails exclusion of any target culture elements and display of the source culture elements in order to familiarize the reader with the foreign concepts, according to Venuti (1995, 20). This strategy, as Munday (2001, 147) claims, emphasizes the presence of the translator as he is responsible for featuring the foreign culture of the source text, simultaneously preserving it from the influences of the target culture.

Munday (2001, 148) argues that although Venuti himself endorses foreignizing, he is aware of its contradictive nature as the foreignizing mechanism entails some elements of domestication because the target readers are to decide how the source culture will be received and to what extent they will be able to detach themselves from their native culture.

4. Audiovisual translation

Despite its importance in our everyday life, audiovisual translation was a trade to study by the translator on his own. In the minds of theoreticians it did not pose research questions worth exploring; therefore, it was neglected for years. The last years, however, showed that the linguistic society saw the growing need to systematize already existing knowledge about the audiovisual translation.

Martinez-Sierra (2012, 146) defines the audiovisual translation “as a translation of a text (1) that is transmitted through two simultaneous and complementary channels (acoustic and visual) and (2) combines several signifying codes”. He intentionally split the definition in two as it simultaneously defines audiovisual translation and characterizes the text type of the translation, since it carries certain factors that differentiate it among other types, e.g. oral or written (2012, 145).

According to Baker and Hochel (2001, 74) oral language transfer can take two forms, dubbing and revoicing. Dubbing refers to target language voice track that is being recorded and put into the movie instead of the source language track, which aims at harmonizing with the timing, lip movements, and phrasing of the original dialogue. Revoicing refers to the all forms of voice-over, and does not aim at any

synchronization with the original (2001, 75).

The technique that is more vital in the later research is subtitling, which Gottlieb (2001, 224) defines as textual versions of dialogues, displayed during the screening of a movie, comprised of one or two lines of 35 signs located at the bottom of the screen; a list of subtitles is created from a post-production script by a cinema subtitler and it is placed into the movie by others. O'Connell (2007, 126) stresses that the main advantage of the subtitles is their low cost and short time of production. Additionally, she points out that leaving the original voice track stimulates the learning of a foreign language and encourages the research in the foreign culture (2007, 126). Gottlieb (2001, 247) expresses his concern for the limitations that subtitles encompass. The translator is forced to make some redundancies allowing the viewer quicker comprehension of the text presented on the screen, which also prevents the poor-sighted, children, and illiterate people from viewing the movie.

O'Connell (2007, 128) concludes that while choosing the translation method, it is the target audience that affects the selection, and the key factors that should be taken into account are: the age, sex, educational background, and social class.

5. Special purpose registers of language in translation

With the renewed interest in the discourse analysis in the 1990s the special purpose registers of language regained its place in the research of translation studies after years of being treated as the less attractive investigation material. Since the majority of the translated texts are the so called non-literary texts (e.g. manuals, leaflets, commercial correspondence, etc.), this turn in the research interest was more than welcome. Pytel (2002, 48) sees Language for Special Purposes as a highly conventional semiotic system, which has its foundations in the natural language, being at the same time part of specialist knowledge. It is employed to convey specialized information about specialized subject matters among professionals.

The most interesting and applicable to this paper is the classification from the anthropological point of view introduced by Grucza (2009, 20), who classifies Language for Special Purposes into two categories. The first one describes it as an actual language employed by experts in specific fields which has its functions and characteristics. The second one describes it as a general language (ideal model) of a given trade or field which is not an actual language used by people, even among the experts, but it is a product of their mutual work. Following this division, actual language versus their generalizations (ideal models), the phrases "law register" or "chemical register" become more than ambiguous as they mean both the respective actual language as well as their generalizations.

Regarding LSP translation problems, Kłos, Matulewska and Nowak-Korcz (2007)

distinguished four major categories and one minor category of the encountered translation problems in the specialized texts. The first category of the translation problems are those which result from the polysemic character of the language which complicates communication, making it less effective, even in academic or law discourse. This does not cause problems in everyday communication when there is a context involved, but in the specialized translation this phenomenon is not welcome, especially in the scientific or technical translation where one mistake can cause serious consequences (84).

The second major category of problems is more complex. They have put here the problems that result from the insufficient knowledge of the given field, including its terminology and lack of equivalency in the target language. The knowledge of the subject matter, the field, and the terminology are probably the most significant elements in the process of translating specialized text. On the other hand, words from the source language do not always coincide semantically with the target language words (86).

The next translation problems are caused because of the insufficient knowledge of the mother tongue and the foreign language. The perfect command of the mother tongue, in our case Polish, especially of its orthography, punctuation, stylistic features, inflection, and syntax is scarce (2007, 94).

Another problem category is the lack of knowledge of the specialist language. The most common are the register mistakes and stylistic mistakes-- for instance, mixing colloquial and formal language, using tautologies, unsuccessful rendering the metaphors or similes (2007, 95). Minor translation problems are the ones that result from too close a relationship between two languages, the translator's misunderstanding of the text (it can lead to false sense of the text, opposite sense of the text or nonsense), and where some important information was omitted or the interpretation was too remote from the original intention (95).

6. Military register in reality and film

Military register has its own special etymology. Dickson (2003, 9) notes that words and phrases of this register originated from the monstrosities of war, e.g. conflict, bad humour, bad food, death. He strongly believes that those words and phrases enabled us to look at war more closely from the soldier's perspective to see the terrible situations when blood was being spilled and also to sense the meaninglessness of war, irony of the everyday situations at war, and most importantly, the feeling of comradeship (2003, 10). All these factors make military register hard to translate as it is one of the most context-bound registers, not to mention the emotional burden carried by those words and phrases.

McFarnon (2013) stresses that creating the military slang helps soldiers survive the war. By swearing and renaming the objects, they reduced the monstrosities of war to the bearable level. The swearing phenomenon is especially visible in the movie “Platoon,” by Oliver Stone, the word *fuck* replaced other verbs, adjectives and adverbs, e.g. *fuck up* for mistake, *fuck over* for abusing, *fuck with* for mess with somebody. Felker (1988) points to the use of homophobic language, when soldiers are calling each other *cocksucker*, which was also noticed by Wright (2004, 82) where soldiers are making homoerotic hints: *Maybe on your little bitch asshole from all the cocks that’s been stuffed up it*. Felker’s explanation of this behavior relies on the womanless character of the war and the macho image of the soldiers which acts as a defensive mechanism. Moreover, such use of offensive language may come from the soldier training where drill instructors aim at preparing the recruits for the war giving them what they think is the taste of it. Felker (1988) refers to the opening scenes of “Full Metal Jacket” by Stanley Kubrick, in which the drill instructor uses wide variety of ‘racial slurs, sexual comments, insults, and obscene instructions ... the instructor’s verbal sadism is spellbinding in its outrageous, dazzling vulgar imagery.’

On the other hand, films produce some misconceptions about the military register. With the release of “Hurt Locker”, the actual Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) officers were not enthusiastic about the portrayal of the main character Staff Sergeant William James. Blake (2010) interviewed the officers from this unit and they criticized his impulsiveness and ignorance of regulations. They said that in their job there is no place for such behavior as it requires scientific approach based on technical knowledge. Moreover, officers do not talk or sound like cowboys; his heroic statements (when asked what is the best way of dismantling bombs he answers: *The way you don't die, sir*) or constant diminishing of danger (*Well, you're gonna have plenty of time for that, amigo.*) makes him unfit for the job, since it relies on calculating the risk and analytical thinking. Another fallacy made in the war movies is more of a paralinguistic character. As Wright (2004, 81) observes, the radio communication in the movies is depicted as fervent and dramatic with officers’ shouting, while in reality it is unwelcome. He quotes a lieutenant general who says that ‘An officer job is to throw water on fire, not gasoline.’

6.1 American military register

Following the anthropological classification of registers by Grucza (2009, 20), provided in the previous subchapter, the military register can be divided into two categories. The first one being the so called “unofficial” language used by soldiers in the actual military situations, which finds its representations in commands,

orders, instructions, slang, and jargon. The second one being the official language presented in the rule-books, statutes, and military theories. Due to the later empirical study of the military language used in the movies, this subchapter will focus on the unofficial language used by soldiers.

Given the extreme conditions the soldiers work at, every part of the military register has been created to evoke an instant reaction. The shortness of utterances enables establishing quick and effective communication at the battlefield which is a key factor in achieving the objective. One of the most distinctive uses of this characteristic is NATO's Phonetic Alphabet. Its usage is spread among various parts of soldiers' life, e.g. Wright (2004, 18) gives examples of the companies in the battalion which has been given names from the NATO Phonetic Alphabet, which are *Alpha*, *Bravo*, and *Charlie*, which normally would be *Company A*, *B* and *C*. Pajzderski (2010, 10) points out that letters from this alphabet often serve as a source of acronyms, e.g. Oscar Mike stands for *On the Move* which means that the unit is ordered to move towards its objective. Dickson (2003, 383) gives example of *Lima Charlie* which stands for *Loud and Clear*. He also notes that the NATO phonetic alphabet serves as a source for stating the coordinates, which requires precision and leaves no place for mistakes, e.g. *Fire mission. Grid coordinates: Zero, Four, Foxtrot, X-ray, Two, Yankee, Zero. Fire for effect. Out.*, which in plain English is: *Request for a fire mission* (support provided by artillery and mortars). *The location of the mission given in grid coordinates* (coordinates expressed through use of symbols of grid squares): *Z, 4, F, X, 2, Y, 0. Fire for destruction. End of conversation.* (2010, 10).

Another feature, common for every special purpose register of language, is the precise and accurate use of specific terminology. Pajzderski (2010, 10) stresses that in military register one term is used for one notion which eliminates the possibility of making synonyms; he exemplifies this by phrase *recon in force* which is never spoken of as a *reconnaissance by combat*, although those phrases mean exactly the same. The usage of one standardized form aims at avoiding misunderstanding and misinterpretation in combat situations.

The next feature that Pajzderski (2010, 12) describes is naming the military equipment with everyday words a civilian would use; For instance, *cover* is a name for all kinds of headwear, *torch* is a name for flashlight, and *deck* is a place where soldiers are standing, be it desert, floor or actual ship deck.

The last important characteristic given by Pajzderski (2010, 12) is the specific manner of telling the time. The military dropped the twelve-hour system because of the additional information needed to specify the time and since a.m. and p.m. sound very similar the message on the radio can be distorted. The army employed the system of four digits in a 24 hour system; he exemplifies this by *0800 hrs.*

(abbreviation for hours), which is 8 o'clock in the morning, read *zero eight hundred hour*. 8 o'clock in the evening is *2000 hrs.* read *twenty hundred hours*.

6.2 Polish military register

The division introduced in the previous subchapter, can be also found in the Polish military register. However, Marciniak (1987, 54) argues that the vernacular of the soldiers, which are the words invented by the soldiers themselves, stand apart from this division, but this matter will be discussed further on.

Marciniak (1987, 6) points to the most important factor in creation of the Polish military register. Although soldiers did not know any linguistic methods and acted only intuitively, the outcome of their language use was very satisfactory. They obeyed only by three simple rules: be concise, be transparent, and be pithy. These uncodified rules became the determinants for spontaneous progress of Polish military register. In the course of the long-lasting evolution the economical, short forms of orders and dispatches came into being as well as formalized commands.

Marciniak (1987, 47) describes Polish military register on a few levels. The vocabulary consists mostly of Polish words, however, it borrows words from foreign lexicons when such need arises, e.g. *bank danych* (from English *data bank*), *fugas* (from French *fougasse* - *Improvised Explosive Device*). He (1987, 135) claims that Polish military vocabulary still suffers from the phenomenon of polysemy, homonymy, and synonymy complicating the use of military terminology. Since those terms belong to the national language they are easily confused, especially when the terms are defined differently for different units of army. For instance, the word *podśluch* (*wire*) in tactics is defined as a *hidden post intended for enemy surveillance* and in reconnaissance it is *tapping the enemy's telephone or radio line*.

Military register also develops own idioms, beside those already existing in the Polish language. Marciniak (1987, 166) gives vast amounts of examples of that. The first group of idioms are those which belong to the specific unit of army. For example, communications unit idioms as *prowadzenie wymiany radiowej* (*radio communication*) or *stacja wzmacniakowa* (*repeater station*) are very common whereas in combat unit they are scarce. Another group represents idioms of military origin which entered everyday use, especially in political register, e.g. *taktyczne rozegranie* (*tactical play*) or *bronić pozycji* (*defense of position*) (168). The last important group are idioms incorporating the definition of the term, e.g. *kompleksowe wykorzystanie środków transportu* (*comprehensive usage of means of transport*).

The last aspect of the Polish military register that will be discussed is the soldier's vernacular, which Marciniak considers to be separate part of the register.

He (1987, 200) explains that this separation is caused by the different conditions they emerged in and great distance in their functions and social role. The origins of this vernacular form can be found in the enlisted men and their diversity as they have different social and educational backgrounds and come from different regions of the country. They created it to get accustomed with the new material, organizational and customary situation which resulted in a new culture manifesting itself through language. A soldier finds himself in a new and undoubtedly stressful situation, so he tries to accustom himself with the unfamiliar reality by making it more accessible and straightforward. In consequence, new vocabulary emerges that uses simplification, irony, humor, or disdain. Żemła (2011) gives many examples of the soldier's talk, e.g. *wiatraki* (*windmills*) as name for helicopters, *zajqce* (*hares*) for the army as they constantly drill in the forest training ground, *druciki* (*wires*) for soldiers in the communication units and *muchomorki* (*toadstools*) for Militia in reference to their red berets.

7. Framework of analysis

The study will focus on the Polish translation of American military register in the war movies, which depict Operation Desert Storm (“Jarhead”), Battle of Mogadishu (“Black Hawk Down”) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (“Generation Kill” and “Hurt Locker”).

The corpus for the study was collected by watching the original undubbed version of a given movie in search for military register accompanied by simultaneously reading the Polish subtitles for their translations and transcribing the instances of the military register in the form of a table. For the purposes of later study, the collected material was divided into two major groups following the anthropological classification of special purpose registers of language, introduced by Gruzca (2009, 20) and discussed in section 5.1., namely: into formal military language and the actual language (the vernacular). Those two major groups will be later subdivided into several minor categories: ranks, units, vehicles, acronyms, etc.

Instances of those categories will be compared with their Polish translation and on the basis of such comparison translation procedure or strategy will be identified and later assessed to the extent of its correct use. If the procedure or strategy in question was used erroneously the causes behind mistakes will be explained and, when possible, more proper technique and translation provided. The main aim of the research is to establish whether the used procedures were domesticating or foreignizing. In other words, were the instances of American military register translated closer to Polish military tradition or did they retain American military tradition.

We will now proceed to the research itself which will answer in detail the points of focus raised above. Every section will be discussed from a quantitative (the procedures and strategies) and qualitative (the evaluation of the procedures and strategies) angle. The evaluation will be supported by the entries from *Słownik terminów militarnych* by J. Danysz.

8. Formal military register

The research will start with the discussion of the translation of formal military register. Owing to the fact that most instances within this part of register have recognized equivalents it makes it a less obscure branch than the informal language, which lulls the translator into a false sense of security, because the differences between the Polish and American military system are sometimes too great to follow the apparent equivalent.

8.1 Ranks

The American military rank system does not correspond with the Polish military rank system due to its vast complexity. Whereas in the movies investigated ranks such as *lieutenant*, *corporal*, *captain*, *general* or *colonel* did not pose serious translation problems which were translated correctly as *porucznik*, *kapral*, *kapitan*, *generał* i *pułkownik* respectively, other ranks were not so straightforward.

The case of lieutenant colonel in the TV series “Generation Kill” and the movie “Jarhead” was translated as *pułkownik*, where in fact it is a rank lower making it *podpułkownik* in Polish as Danysz claims (2001, 106). The procedure used here is a functional equivalent as it generalizes the rank. However, at the same page Danysz mentions the tradition of addressing *lieutenant colonel* as *colonel*, a tradition which also exists in Poland. Soldiers in the movie and TV series follow this pattern, but there is deeper context of this in the TV series. In “Generation Kill” it is said that the lieutenant colonel is trying to get a *full bird colonel* (*pełny pułkownik*), which makes it confusing for the viewer who thinks he already is a *colonel*. Therefore it would be more advisable to have soldiers address him as *pułkownik* but when they are talking about him, refer to him as *podpułkownik*.

The same problem is encountered while translating the ranks of *sergeant* which are very elaborate in the American system. In “Generation Kill” the rank of *sergeant major* was translated as *sierżant*, whereas it is several ranks higher and Danysz (2001, 158) proposes *chorąży*, which denotes a soldier responsible for the discipline in the armed forces which would agree with the character in the series responsible for implementing various regulations. Another example of this

is *gunnery sergeant* also translated as *sierżant*, but again since it is several ranks higher, Danysz (2001, 84) suggests *sierżant sztabowy*. On the other hand, in the movie “Jarhead” *staff sergeant* was translated as *sierżant sztabowy*, where in fact it is *starszy sierżant* (2001, 164). All these examples are also functional equivalents as they generalize the specific ranks of sergeant into just one.

All of these examples represent the domesticating patterns where the translators ignored the complex American rank system and focused on making the viewer comfortable, not trusting their knowledge at the same time.

8.2 Call signs

By the definition given by Danysz (2001, 27), a call sign serves as a means of identification on the radio which can take a form of a name, string of letters, or numbers. It is not only a vital part of communication between the units during military operations, but it is also used in everyday communication among soldiers, employed while referring to other soldiers, usually company or battalion commanders. In the movies investigated, two approaches to translating call signs were adopted, namely the call sign was rendered into Polish or the English word was left intact.

In “Generation Kill” all call signs were translated into Polish, *Chaos – Chaos*, *Godfather – Ojciec Chrzestny*, *Raptor – Rabuś*, *Hitman – Zabójca*, *Assassin – Zabójca*. All of these instances represent literal translation procedure. However, the examples of *Assassin* and *Hitman* may cause some confusion in the viewers’ minds, as both were translated into *Zabójca*, making it also an undesirable situation on a battlefield where commander of Alpha Company and Bravo Company have the same call sign in Polish. *Assassin* and *Hitman* are equivalents in Polish although it would be preferable to change one in order to retain a resemblance to a real-life military situation, for instance translating *Assassin* into *Zamachowiec*.

The second approach is shown in the “Hurt Locker” where call sign *Blaster* was not translated, which is a transference procedure. In “Black Hawk Down” we can see both approaches as *Night Stalker* was literally translated as *Nocny Zbir (Night Thug)*, but *Barber* was left in the original form, which again exemplifies a transference procedure.

The procedures used for translating call signs represent both domesticating and foreignizing strategies. The employment of literal translation facilitates the reception of the movie as the viewer is not distracted by a foreign word; however, this procedure could not take place in translating formal documents since it would cloud the comprehension of the text. On the other hand, the case of *Assassin/Hitman* translation shows that automatic rendition of the dictionary entries can bring some

confusion. Retention of the original call signs to avoid confusion would be a superior solution in this case because both words are quite recognizable in Polish in opposite to *Blaster* or *Barber* which are not associated with any particular concepts.

8.3 Units

Despite the fact that American division of military units does not differ greatly from the Polish one, translators seem oblivious of some minor details concerning the nomenclature of the particular units.

In the American military system, names of companies are given from the NATO phonetic alphabet, e.g. Alpha Company (Kompania A). In “Hurt Locker” *Bravo Company* and *Delta Company* were translated into *Kompania Bravo* and *Kompania Delta*, although more correctly would be *Kompania B* and *Kompania D* since this is a conventional way of referring to companies in Polish. *Bravo* is a name for the ‘b’ letter as Danysz defines it (2001, 23) taken from the NATO phonetic alphabet adopted for clear radio communication and it is not so widely used in Polish military tradition. Moreover, translating *Delta Company* into *Kompania Delta* may bring wrong associations with Delta Force, an elite unit of American Army which is not depicted in the movie. Again, the procedure of transference has failed, because although foreignizing strategy has some didactic values it should not be used in excess, especially when the target language has its own recognizable way of referring to particular items.

In “Black Hawk Dawn” all mentioned units were translated through functional equivalent procedure into *oddział* which is a too general word. Ranger units, which are the main focus of the movie, differ from the standard military division in terms of nomenclature, e.g. they use a word *chalk* which Dickson (2003, 374) defines as a helicopter squad who is led by a platoon leader. Danysz (2001, 165), on the other hand, defines *squad* as *grupa* or *drużyna*; however, since it is led by a platoon leader it should be translated as *pluton*. An alternative, and a presumably better, version was given in the Polish translation of “Black Hawk Down” book, where it is rendered as *grupa desantowa* (2011, 1), which satisfies Danysz’s translation of a *squad* and Dickson’s description of a *helicopter squad*, complying with the character of the Rangers’ task.

Domestication that took place while translating the units into one general term *oddział* is not corresponding to the variety of units presented in the movie and it clouds the reception of the movie making the viewer falsely believe that division of units is straightforward and lacking in hierarchy.

8.4 Acronyms

Acronyms play a vital role in the military community. They enable swift exchange of information contributing thus to the effectiveness in establishing radio communication within a unit. American military register employs vast amount of acronyms in contrast to Polish military register where this tradition is not so much developed. The abundance of acronyms in American register compared with the scarcity of them in the Polish register left the translator with a limited number of options. Due to the amplexness of acronyms used in investigated movies, especially in the TV series “Generation Kill”, the discussion of their translations will be divided into three parts.

The first group constitutes the acronyms omitted by the translator. In “Generation Kill” the acronym *OPS chief* was not translated in the sentence: *OPS chief assured me they're coming. – Zostały wysłane.* (batteries for night vision gear). *OPS chief* stands for *Operations chief*, who is tasked with coordination and administration of the unit’s operational tasks and Danysz proposes *oficer operacyjny* (2001, 125). However, due to the limited amount of letters allowed in the subtitles, the sentence *Oficer operacyjny zapewnił mnie, że baterie zostały wysłane* may seem too extensive thus not only fitting poorly into the subtitles environment but also making it harder to comprehend. There were two more acronyms in the series that were also not translated, namely *AO* and *MSR* which, according to the “Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms” issued by Department of Defense, stand for *Area of Operations* (2013, 18) and *Main Supply Route* (2013, 167) respectively. *AO* could be easily translated as *rejon działań* (2001, 10) and *MSR* as *Zasadnicza Droga Manewru* following Kawka’s translation (2010); however, they are not mentioned in the subtitles at all. For example, the sentence *Our orders are to set up positions as we see fit along the MSR and hunt for paramilitaries operating in the AO* was translated as *Mamy zorganizować obronę i zwalczać grupy paramilitarne*. Once more, being aware of the technical constrains of the subtitles decision to omit the acronyms is understandable as the sentence *Mamy zorganizować obronę wzdłuż zasadniczej drogi manewru i zwalczać grupy paramilitarne operujące w rejonie działań* does not comply with the technical constrains and without the acronyms the translation is easily comprehensible to the audience who does not need that long explanation of the soldiers’ order.

The second group comprises acronyms that were domesticated. In “Generation Kill” the *SOP* acronym standing for *Standard Operating Procedure*, which encompasses the instructions for performance of tasks and duties, is translated as *regulamin*, by means of functional equivalent procedure. Danysz (2001, 165) defines it as *Stałe Procedury Operacyjne*, while Majewski in his article (2012, 6) in addition to the *Stałe Procedury Operacyjne* gives the English abbreviation *SOP*

in brackets, but the article is aimed at specialists in the field who are familiar with the terminology and their foreign equivalents unlike the viewers. Nonetheless, full name of the abbreviation may seem longish and the word *regulamin* concedes with the character of the *SOP*. Another example is *ROE* acronym, which stands for *Rules of Engagement*, translated in the TV series as *Zasady walki* which does not fully coincide with its definition in contrast to *Zasady użycia siły* as defined by Kwiatkowski (2009). *Zasady walki* implies the rules of fighting during the actual battle whereas *Rules of Engagement* provides principles regarding engaging in fighting with enemy. In other words, when a soldier can start shooting, e.g. in self-defense.

Another interesting example is the case of *NJP* acronym, standing for *Non-Judicial Punishment*. It serves as an alternative to Court Martial (*Sąd Wojenny*) where the crimes of lesser gravity are being evaluated and punished by superior commanding officers and Tokarczyk (2011, 442) translates it as *niesędziowskie karnie*. However, the translator adapted this uncommon term for an average viewer, and translated it instead as *Oberwiemy*. The use of such drastic adaptation is justified as the whole sentence uttered by an enlisted man, a sergeant, sounds *They're probably gonna NJP all our asses*. The use of offensive word *ass* indicates the informal context of the situation, though the sergeant was addressing his superior, and therefore the translator was able to change the register from the formal acronym to the informal *Oberwiemy*, clarifying the unfavourable situation soldiers were in and sparing the effort of processing unfamiliar term *niesędziowskie karnie*.

The last group includes acronyms which have recognized equivalents and were translated as such. In “Generation Kill”, *MRE* (Meals Ready-to-Eat, also humorously called Meals Rejected by Ethiopians), defined by Danysz (2001, 118) as *amerykańska racja żywnościowa* was rendered as *racja*, leaving out the words *amerykańska* and *żywnościowa* which is self-explanatory. On the other hand, phrase *MRE cookies* was translated as *ciasteczka regulaminowe*, which may refer to the translation of *SOP* as *regulamin* or individual regulations on the subject of meals in the army. Such situation is also exemplified in the instance of acronym *LAV*, *Light Armoured Vehicle*, translated as *transporter opancerzony*; however, the Polish translation does not underline that the vehicle is light armoured (2001, 103), but since it is not an official document such difference does not disturb the reception of the movie. Another example which has recognized equivalents is *SAR*, *Search and Rescue*, in the “Black Hawk Down” used in *SAR bird*, which was properly translated as *helikopter ratunkowy* which complies with Danysz’s definition of *SAR* as *ratowniczy* (2001, 156), though it usually collocates with word *operation*.

The discussion of the military acronym translation was divided into three parts to clearly underline three approaches to translating them. The first group that was investigated presented examples of acronyms that were omitted, not due to the fact that they lacked proper equivalents but due to the technical constraints imposed on the craft of subtitling. Lack of their translation does not influence the reception of the movie as the context is still easily accessible. Putting the translations into the subtitles might have resulted in long, incomprehensible sentences as Polish military register does not operate with that many acronyms which necessitates putting their full forms. The second group of acronyms that were examined were acronyms translated by means of functional or cultural equivalent and adaptation procedures. Once more, those acronyms have recognized equivalents but for the sake of brevity and better understanding of the military community the translators decided to render them with more familiar terms rather than formal equivalents recognizable only to soldiers or military experts. The last group of acronyms that were studied had recognized equivalents and were translated as the dictionary entries defined them or closely following those definitions. They were sometimes adjusted to the particular context in the movie or rephrased to make the context clearer for the audience. Similarly, such decisions do not distort the meaning. On the contrary, they facilitate the reception of the movie and keep the pace with heated repartees. All of the discussed examples clearly show the domestication approach to translating acronyms from American military register. The translators attempted to make them comprehensible, sometimes forgoing original definitions in favor of better understanding. Since American acronyms do not have equivalents in Polish acronyms, they had to be elaborated but it did not influence the quality of the translation.

8.5 Vehicles

The most frequently used vehicle in the investigated movies is a *Humvee*, *HMMWV*, which stands for *High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle* able to move on all types of terrains and Danysz translates this as *Amerykański wielozadaniowy pojazd terenowy* (2001, 89). Although the Polish army also uses this particular type of vehicle, the Polish language lacks a word describing it in a short and condensed manner as American *Humvee*.

In “Generation Kill” it was translated as *Hummer*. Although it delivers proper associations with a sizable heavy-duty vehicle it is a civilian version inspired by the military design. It constitutes a functional equivalent or a case of severe adaptation, confusing the audience by the fact that soldiers ride in civilian *Hummers* that are nowhere to be seen in the movie.

In “Hurt Locker” two contradictory techniques were applied, namely, functional equivalent (generalization) rendering *Humvee* as *wóz* and borrowing, where *Humvee* was transferred into Polish subtitles intact. This inconsistency should confuse the audience, but it slowly introduces them to the notion of a new term which can be later associated with *Humvee*. In “Black Hawk Down” translator has completely forgone translating the unfamiliar term and generalized *Humvee* to *wóz* or *pojazd*, leaving the audience to decipher what a *Humvee* in the movie is.

Most of those approaches are strictly domesticating apart from the direct rendition of *Humvee* into Polish, which seems to be the best solution. Although this term is unfamiliar to the audience, they are able to identify the word with the picture.

8.6. Units of measurement

Despite the fact that the U.S. Army adopted the metric system in the 1957 (De Simone 1971, 40), soldiers still tend to use the so-called imperial units. The U.S. Army uses the metric system for measuring the caliber, distance, height, but in some situations the imperial units are favored because of the tradition, convenience or habit and thus still employed in various situations.

In “Generation Kill” the temperature is given in Fahrenheit’s scale and the unit is directly transferred into Polish subtitles, even though the Polish viewer will not comprehend $85^{\circ}F$ simply because such unit is not present in the Polish tradition. $30^{\circ}C$ would be a better choice. The same situation is presented in giving the speed. The soldiers use *miles per hour*, while in Poland we favour *kilometers per hour*, again as *70 miles per hour*, transferred into *70 mil na godzinę* is intelligible for the Polish audience and should be replaced by *112 kilometrów na godzinę*. The last transferred unit is a yard, which is used by sniper teams to measure the distance separating them from the target. Once more *5 yards* was directly transferred into *5 jardów*. The only converted unit was an *inch*, which in “Jarhead” was given in *millimeter*.

Belczyk (2007, 106) claims that units of measurement belong to the culture and the translator should seriously consider the rendition of them, but at the same time he acknowledges the need of transparency. In the case of military translation, this transparency should be maintained, as the swift action in the war movie does not allow taking the time to convert the units. The pattern here is clearly foreignizing; the translator either wanted to bring us closer to the American military culture or simply did not bother with time-consuming conversion of units.

8.7. Other terminology

This subunit will discuss instances of terminology that did not fall into either of previous category, however, several interesting mistranslation phenomena will be analysed that occurred in the movies.

The first curious example is the issue of translating *Medic* or *Doc* into Polish. According to Danysz (2001, 114), a *medic* is a soldier who is a trained medical care-giver but is not a doctor and should be translated as *sanitariusz*. However, in “Black Hawk Down” *Medic!* is translated as *Lekarz!*, which is incorrect as there are no doctors on the battlefield. The word *Doc* translated as *Doktor* is also incorrect as *Doc* is the nickname which is given by fellow soldiers, usually to a corpsman (which is a navy medic), as sign of great respect, as Hogan points out (2006).

The second striking mistranslation is rendering the term *negligent discharge*. By the definition given by Danysz (2001, 121) *negligent discharge* is an unintentional firing of a weapon which in Polish is *nieumyślny wystrzał*. In “Generation Kill” the sentence *H&S company had a negligent discharge today* is translated as *Zaopatrzenie dostało opierdziel*. The translator not only switched to the informal register but completely changed the meaning of the word. He did not research this term but derived the meaning from the basic sense of these words. Consequently, the H&S company was not given reprimand and a soldier was not discharged from duty because he neglected his responsibilities but an unintentional firing of a weapon had occurred, which can be concluded from the order that follows this sentence *So the CO personally wants to make sure we brass-check our weapons*.

The last instance is not a case of mistranslation but of an unnecessary change of register. In “Generation Kill,” a sergeant is asking his lieutenant for permission to snatch a group of suspiciously looking Iraqi men. The sergeant says: *I strongly request permission to set up a snatch mission on them* which the translator rendered as *Możemy ich zgranąć?* The lieutenant answers: *Our request for a snatch has been denied* translated as *Nie ma zgody na aresztowanie*. Although the sergeant and lieutenant used the same word, *snatch*, the translator decided that the sergeant must sound more informal as he is an enlisted man in contrast the lieutenant who must be an educated man and therefore sound more formal. Such changes only strengthen the stereotype which is no longer valid as Wright (2004, 24) underlines that there are Marines who come from lower classes but at the same time there are men who turned down scholarships, graduated from prep-schools or come from wealthy and educated families. Such change would be justified if the sergeant used some informal words in his request but the sergeant formulated his request in a perfectly formal way and should be translated as such.

All of those mistakes result from the lack of knowledge of the military vocabulary, culture and background. They would never occur if the translator researched those issues instead of treating them superficially.

9. Informal military register

The research now moves to the discussion of informal military register. Due to the fact that most instances within this part of register do not have recognized equivalents it is the ‘murky’ branch of the military register. The standard dictionaries will be of no help here, so the examples will be analysed and compared with soldiers’ accounts, Polish military traditions and definitions of American military slang given by Paul Dickson in his book *War Slang: American Fighting Words and Phrases Since the Civil War*.

9.1 ‘Ranks’

This subunit will be devoted to the translation of ‘ranks’. The word is in inverted commas because the investigated examples do not come under the strict definition of ranks that most people are familiar with. The ‘ranks’ that are going to be discussed are the slang ranks or unofficial names describing fellow soldiers, officers or superiors.

The most pejorative term, used in that sense in “Generation Kill,” is a *POG*, which one of the characters in the series develops into *Person Other Than Grunt*. A grunt is a neutral word denoting an infantryman and Danysz translates it as *żołnierz piechoty* (2001, 82). In “Generation Kill” it was translated as *piechociarz* and in “Jarhead” as *zwykły żołnierz*, both options are equally plausible and do not carry any other associations. Dickson (2003) defines *POG*, also spelled *pogue*, as a “sissy” in the Marine Corps (199) which is a derogatory term for a military person who is stationed outside the combat zone (284). Soldiers who earned this title in “Generation Kill” are usually supply unit soldiers, reservists and chaplains. They are constantly belittled for their lack of professionalism and excess of ostentatious warrior behaviour, so they are at the bottom of the military hierarchy, despite that some of them are highly ranked officers and officially treated as such. The translator, by means of equivalence, managed to transfer the derisive overtone and rendered the word into Polish words of similar meaning *dekownik* and *fajansiarz*. In addition, the translator exploiting the fact that *POGs* are stationed at the rear, also created expression *rycerze tyłów* (*knights of the rear*). All of those translations easily evoke the same negative associations that their English counterpart evokes. The translator using well-established words as *dekownik*, which implies

a person avoiding military service, and *fajansiarz* who is an oaf to put it mildly. Through domestication translator achieved the same comical effect and enabled the audience quick access to the term *POG*.

Another slang word, not derogatory though, is “Jarhead” which denotes a soldier serving in the Marine Corps. The character in the movie “Jarhead” says that the word originated from the distinctive haircut imposed on Marines by regulation which gives their heads the shape of a jar. When the character in the movie explains this term the translator used the expression *łeb jak słój*, but in the other instances it was simply translated as a *Marine*. Although it does not convey the slang character of the word “Jarhead”, it is a better option than clumsy literal translation which would result in awkward neologism.

The last example is a reversed case. In “Generation Kill” whenever soldiers among themselves are referring to their superiors as *platoon leader*, *company commander* or *battalion commander* the translator always translates it as *Stary*. Although it is an established custom to refer to your superior as *Stary*, not only in the military, it should not be translated this way as the original text does not contain any slang in this moment. Again, the translator interferes with the source text, as in the case of *snatch*, changing the character of the utterances according to his own perception.

9.2 NATO acronyms

The present subunit will be devoted to the acronyms derived from the NATO phonetic alphabet. Since the United States of America joined NATO fifty years earlier than Poland, American soldiers are already well acquainted with the phonetic alphabet designed for better communication which is used by the soldiers in a very creative way. There is a great discrepancy between Poland and the USA in this matter, as Polish soldiers do not use NATO phonetic alphabet in the way the American soldiers do.

In “Generation Kill” the most frequent acronym is *Oscar Mike* which, according to the glossary on the official website of the series, stands for *On the Move*. Soldiers depicted in the series are constantly using it when they are ordered to move; *We are Oscar Mike* is translated as *Zaraz ruszamy*, *Możemy odpalać* or simply *Ruszamy*. Since Polish military register does not operate with any acronyms from NATO alphabet, and the acronym was never explained in the series, it would be hard to find any equivalent so the translator rendered it into the nearest informal expression in Polish. This technique stands in opposition to the translation of another acronym *November Juliet* which one of the characters develops into *Nigger Juice*, a slang expression for coffee. In this case the translator decided

to render the acronym, first the expression *November Juliet* appears in the subtitles in its unchanged form and when the acronym is developed it is rendered as *Nieświeży Jebaka (Stale Fucker)*. Translating *November Juliet* could not have been avoided in those circumstances and the result is very satisfactory. The translator decided to obey by the letters and created equally amusing expression.

The last example is a derogatory expression *whiskey tango trailer park*, which stands for *white trash trailer park* which is said in the series. Marines use it to offend the soldiers who used to live in poor, often dysfunctional families, but it is rendered only as *przyczepa*, leaving out the NATO acronym. Since such situations do not occur in Poland, the Polish audience may not understand this as an offense. Maybe if the translator could have added *biała biedota mieszkająca w przyczepach* the derisive context would be more comprehensible.

9.3 Slang

For an outsider military slang, like any other type of slang, sounds incomprehensible. As it was stated in the first chapter, soldiers rename certain objects to domesticate unfamiliar surroundings and according to Allan and Burrige (2006, 70) such process enhances the group solidarity as their vernacular marks them as a group. For the sake of brevity, only the most representative instances of slang will be discussed, as this subunit could be developed into a separate thesis.

In “Jarhead” great variety of slang words for everyday objects were given. Hands are *dickskinners*, translated as *napletozdiery*, and mouth is *cum receptacle*, in Polish *spuszczylew*. These words were translated with the use of calque technique which preserved their informal and vulgar character but sound awkward in Polish language. Further instances are *moonbeam* (a flashlight) – *oświetlacz*, *ink stick* (a pen) – *rysik*, *rack* (a bed) – *decha*. They exemplify the literal translation technique where a more generalized word was used in renaming the object. Other examples from the movie were translated without the preservation of the slang character of the words. A *sickbay*, a ship hospital, nowadays also applied to the field hospital was translated as *szpital*, a term that is too general, where a more military term would be *lazaret*. The second example is *shitters*, rendered as *latryny*. Once more, the term is too general and does not carry any negative associations. More appropriate, in this case, would be word *sracze*, as it is similarly colloquial..

In “Generation Kill” two instances of slang were omitted in the translation. The term *donkey dick*, according to Wright (2004, 21), denotes a piece of equipment, e.g. a fuel spout, -- in other words, any piece of equipment of phallic shape. The term is never translated, e.g. *Yo, Dirty, pass me a donkey dick. Radiator? – Potrzebna mi chłodnica*. This sentence omitted the term *donkey dick*, focusing

only on the *radiator*. Polish military slang seems to lack similar expression but Polish language could supply the translator with words such as *dzyndzel*, *wihajster* or more vulgar and therefore more compatible word with the original term *pierdolnik*. Another untranslated instance is a *chicken suit* which Wright (2004, 41) describes as a preposterous and flashy camouflage overcoat. Again, the term is omitted by the translator although attempts could be made, e.g. *wyfiokowany* or more birdlike metaphor *pawie piórka*. On the other hand, there were plain expressions in the series that were translated into Polish slang expressions. When one of the soldiers says: *When we get out of the corps*, it is rendered *Kiedy pójdziemy pod kapelusz*, which is a common military expression in Polish denoting the end of the service. The second sentence *You don't have food*, translated as *Nie ma koryta*. In both of these examples the slang character was added in the Polish translation which probably compensates for the untranslated instances of slang in the movie.

American military slang is rich which makes the task of discussing it a challenge. This subunit investigated only the most illustrative examples and it showed how demanding is the job of translating them.

9.4 Slang for indigenous people

The custom of giving the enemy pejorative names is very old, but as Hughes (2006, 262) notes, during the World War II it became more apparent through propagandistic movies made in Hollywood. Those movies presented the Japanese people as perfidious and sly people which contributed to the coining of terms *gook*, *chink* etc.

This custom is still present in the military culture. In “Generation Kill” the term for Iraqi people is *Hajis*. According to Prysner (2009), Haj is an honorific title given to a Muslim person who made pilgrimage to Mecca and it is the highest title a Muslim can get but American soldiers attached racist sense to this word. In the series it was translated as *Irakijczycy*, omitting the pejorative sense of this word, while *Iraqis* was translated as *Arabusy*. It should have been done conversely as *Iraqis* is a plain term denoting only the nationality, while *Haji* in the military sense is any person of Middle East descent. This could be further supported by the phrase *Haji rice* which was translated as *wrogi ryż* maintaining the negative association of the word *Haji*.

In “Black Hawk Down” the nickname for Somalis is *Skinnies* because of their starved physical appearance due to famine in Somalia. The translator did not attempt to render it in any creative way and used words *tubylec* or *Somalijczyk* which are neutral and do not carry any associations. On the other hand, the translator of the book “Black Hawk Down”, rendered word *Skinnies* as *Zdechłaki*

or *Chuchra*, making it a superior version to the movie translation as it coincides with the derogatory usage of American *skinny*.

9.5 *Get some!*

Get some! is probably the most ambiguous expression to translate in the American military slang. Although Dickson (2003, 272) says it means to kill an enemy, its usage is far more wide nowadays. Excerpt from *Generation Kill: Devil Dogs, Iceman, Captain American and the New Face of American War* covers the elaborate employment of the term:

Get some! is the unofficial Marine Corps cheer. It's shouted when a brother Marine is struggling to beat his personal best in a fitness run. It punctuates stories told at night about getting laid in whorehouses in Thailand and Australia. It's the cry of exhilaration after firing a burst from a .50-caliber machine gun. *Get some!* expresses, in two simple words, the excitement, the fear, the feelings of power and the erotic-tinged thrill that come from confronting the extreme physical and emotional challenges posed by death, which is, of course, what war is all about. Nearly every Marine I've met is hoping this war with Iraq will be his chance to get some. (Wright 2004, 2)

This quotation presents the wide array of situations where soldiers employ this phrase so there is no direct equivalent and no single translation to this expression. The investigation of the phrase has resulted in multitude of translations in the movies and TV series depending on the situation it was used.

There is also the question of whether uniformity is achieved. In "Generation Kill" *Get some!* was mainly used in combat-related situations. The first episode of the TV series was entitled *Get some!*, and this phrase appears in the opening sequence, but since no associations can be drawn because of the lack of context the translator generalized it into *Zabić ich*. However, this translation is too direct. The first episode depicts the soldiers' dreams about *getting some*, but they do not think about killing, although it is mentioned several times, but about proving themselves during combat.

Another employment of this phrase occurred while soldiers were observing Cobras and one of them exclaimed *Get some!* This could be understood as cheering or wishing the pilots luck in succeeding in their mission, and it was translated as *Rozwalcie ich!*, which seems an appropriate cheer for a helicopter attack. Another time, during maneuvers, one of the soldiers did not have a chance to fire his weapon and he says *We'll get some later*, rendered as *Potem go załatwimy*. He utters this to his gun in a consoling way, and there is no clear reference who is to be done with later, more appropriate would be *Potem coś ustrzelimy*. Different translation appears when a helicopter shoots a bomb into a building and one of the soldiers exclaims *They got some* rendered as *Trafili coś*. This is a straightforward

translation as this is not a metaphor as the rest of the translations are. The pilots made an action and they succeeded, so in military context they *got some*.

This expression is also employed in everyday utterances, e.g. soldiers say *Getting some?* which the translator understood as equivalent expression to *How are you?* and it was rendered as *Co u was?* which again seems to be a good solution here, because the soldiers are just greeting which each other and there is no possible way to draw any associations from such a scene.

There are two more examples from “Jarhead” to discuss. The first instance of this expression appeared while the main character arrived in the military base and his new comrades were pretending to brand him as a way of greeting, one of them shouts *Get some!* translated as *Trzymać go!* It is shouted to the soldiers but in a different sense as they are already holding him. He meant watch it closely, make the most of it, so more appropriate would be *Patrzcie!* The second example appears when the news about overthrowing Kuwaiti government reached Marines and they are preparing to go to Kuwait they hear *Get some, Marines* translated as *Do roboty Marines*. As they do have plenty of preparations to do this translation makes perfect sense.

As it can be seen from the examples discussed, uniformity is unattainable in translating *Get some!* It is culture and context-bound phrase impossible to domesticate or foreignize with its load of meaning which has to be constructed from the circumstances of its usage.

9.6 Vulgarisms

As it has been stated in the first part, vulgarisms play a vital role in the military community. They are employed in many situations, leading sometimes to the creation of new words. Belczyk (2007, 109) argues that if the dialogues are rich with vulgar expressions it is not advisable to translate the dialogues literally but to restrain them to several instances as vulgarisms slow down the pace of reading and it may not sound natural due to differences between Polish and English swearing. However, in the case of military register it is deceiving to the audience. English vulgarisms have established place in the Polish language and are well-recognized so if the viewer hears a vulgarism and does not see it in the subtitles he may feel cheated. Moreover, it influences the outlook we have on American soldiers. The audience may think that they are very well-mannered young men who can control their emotions where it is exactly the opposite.

“Generation Kill” is the most representative example here as it is the longest footage investigated and showed soldiers in various situations. The translator of this movie shares Belczyk’s views as during the entire series only two vulgar

expression appear. *Fuck* is the most frequent vulgarism that has been toned down to *Cholera* as well as *fucking* who either has been omitted or replaced by *pieprzony*, e.g. *Watch the fucking road* – *Patrz na drogę*; *Fucking Captain America* – *Pieprzony Kapitan Ameryka*. Another striking example is the sentence: *Godfather needs to unfuck this clusterfuck now* translated as *Ojciec Chrzestny kazał to załatwić*. Even if the translator wanted to avoid vulgarisms he could resort to colloquial language, translating *clusterfuck* as *burdel*. This avoidance of vulgar expression leads to logical mistakes, e.g. *That was a no-shit scud attack* which was translated as *Nie było ataku scudów*. In fact there was a scud attack and it was *no-shit*, meaning a heavy missile attack. This leads to a confusion as the next sentence uttered is *Awesome! I just lived through a Scud attack*. The only translated instance of vulgarism is *fucked up countries* rendered as *pojebane kraje*. The other instance is an example of compensation - *do nothing but eat* translated as *wpierdalać*.

The investigation of vulgarisms showed that the translator avoided the Polish vulgar expressions despite the fact that Polish swearing words can be used creatively. Even if the translator thought that vulgarisms are not acceptable in such amount he could have used the colloquial language instead of using formal register. This leads to the false image of war situation, especially compared to Polish movies made in the last twenty years where characters mightily swear.

9.7 Other instances of informal register

This subunit, as well as its counterpart in the previous section, will discuss several instances of informal military register that did not fit into any of the preceding categories.

Another ambiguous word which caused translation problems is *screwby*. This example is analogous to *get some*, as it also covers wide range of meaning that is difficult to define. Wright (2004, 146) notes that even soldiers are uncertain what it exactly means although they use it to express positive (“kind of cool”) as well as negative (“this sucks”) feelings. One of the episodes of “Generation Kill” was entitled *Screwby* and it was translated as *Pierdoła*. Again, as in the case of *get some*, there is no context to derive the meaning but later in the series *screwby* was never referred to a person. When it was used to express admiration, e.g. to congratulate on shooting an enemy or making good sketch of observed building. In both cases it was translated as *Szczegół*. Although, it may sound appreciatory it does not comply with the definition of the word or its colloquial character. More appropriate would be *Zajebioza* or less vulgarly *Bajer*, *Po byku*. On the other hand, when used to express disregard or disrespect it was translated as *Palant* or *To bez sensu*. Once more the translator directed the translation at a person although

the definition states that is used to refer to a situation and *To bez sensu* is too mild to convey negative feelings carried by the word *screwby*. If the translator rendered *screwby* as *zajebioza*, the antonym could have been *chujzoza*. Making such a decision would compensate for the untranslated instances of vulgarisms and since this word is the so-called catchphrase used by one soldier, the same ending of the words could still be associated as this particular soldier's saying.

The last example is the naval use of *deck* which refers to any surface the soldier is standing on. The expression *on the deck* was used in "Black Hawk Down" and it was translated as *na ziemi*. Although it is a proper rendition, a functional equivalent, it does not coincide with the slang character of the expression. If the translator was to foreignize it and translate it as *na pokładzie* the audience would be able to recognize a slang phrase. It would strengthen the realism of the situation and gave the audience a touch of American military register.

All of those instances exemplify the vagueness of informal American military register. The discrepancies in the two military registers in question are too great to provide not only direct equivalents but also a single translation to the investigated expressions. The translator overcame this problem by means of domestication strategy; however, it depletes the slang, comic or vulgar character of the American expressions.

10. Practical implications of the conducted study

First, it is worth discussing how the translation might have influenced the viewers' perception of the American army. Since the translator acts as a mediator between the source text and the recipients, he has a direct impact on the overall effect of the movie. Consequently, his decisions influence the audience in many aspects, e.g. their knowledge, perception and emotions towards the themes presented in the movies.

The research has revealed that translators of the investigated movies simplified complex structure of American rank and units systems. By means of domestication strategy, the translation impaired that complexity and contributed to the false image of American army structure. People who were familiar with its structure might feel disgruntled at such decisions and people with no prior knowledge of it are given incorrect information. Despite the advantages of the domestication strategy it was misused in those cases as it led to confusion.

Another aspect where the translator's influence was visible are the instances of his interference within the source text. The unnecessary changes of register from formal to informal, which occurred on several occasions, contribute to the stereotype about the enlisted men being uneducated and sounding colloquial. On the other hand, the translators were toning down the vulgarisms, portraying

the soldiers as mild characters who do not resort to violent language. As English foul words are recognizable in Poland this constitutes a distortion of reality. However, the constant softening of derogatory names for indigenous people who are considered to be enemies is less surprising due to development of the political correctness. Nevertheless, since the source text was not moderated, the translation should not have undergone such scrutiny. Those changes were unnecessary since they contribute to the misrepresentation of the reality of the American army and false beliefs held by recipients. Second, the knowledge of the specialist terminology and the field itself is a key aspect in translating special purpose registers of language. Yet, in some of the investigated cases it was neglected. The fact that the movie characters use very precise and specialist vocabulary should prevail over the fact that it is a translation of subtitles.

It could be argued that those movies were not directed at specialists in the field but at a general public but this matter did not concern the makers of the movies as they are packed with specialist terminology. Therefore, if the original audience was given such picture of the American army it is the translator's duty to gain knowledge about the field and produce equal version for the target audience. The examples of simplification made in the translation could have been avoided. If the translator researched American structure of the army he could have found that there are proper equivalents for some ranks and units. The unification of some terms into *sierżant* or *oddział* does not correspond with the rule of accuracy. Terms like *medic* or *negligent discharge* were also mistranslated because of the lack of knowledge. To sum up, this is a very sensitive issue that is, unfortunately, not taken seriously. This attitude is based on a presumption that viewers lack knowledge or readiness to gain it.

Third, there is a question of which strategy to use in military translation: domestication or foreignization. The two strategies nowadays both have their merits. It is the translator's choice whether to domesticate the source text, making the recipients comfortable, or to foreignize it, making it more demanding but educating. In the case of military translation there is no straightforward answer to this quandary.

The investigation demonstrated that domestication gave poor results in most cases. It led to simplification of the terms, unnecessary changes of registers and omissions. The translators focused on rendering the source text in familiar terms to the target audience sometimes forgoing the original text and its cultural background. On the other hand, domestication proved itself in translation of acronyms which lacked equivalents and would have necessitated inserting them in full forms. However, through domesticating the acronyms translator facilitated the reception and retained their meaning without developing them.

Foreignization failed only in the case of rendering the units of measurement. Polish viewers are aware of the different units that are used in the United States but leaving them intact in the subtitles resulted in incomprehensible measures with no time to converse them. Applying domestication strategy would have facilitated the viewing and given the audience a clearer image of the distance and speed discussed in the movies. However, saying that foreignization is a better choice is an overstatement as it resulted in awkward neologisms in the case of slang translation. We cannot decide which strategy is a better choice for the whole military register. The military register with its complexity and ambiguity constitutes a challenge for the translator and each example is different, therefore it should be considered individually.

11. Conclusion

The focal point of this paper was to investigate which strategy of translation is dominant in the area of military register translation and which results in better quality of translation which allows the target audience experience the movie as the original audience did. In order to establish this, the paper aimed at providing necessary theoretical background of translation studies, which encompassed following issues: procedures and strategies of translation; the audiovisual translation focusing on the definition, and types; the special purpose registers of language examining its definition, divisions, and translation problems; and finally the review of Polish and American military registers and their realizations in media. The analytical part firstly presented the framework of analysis on which the investigation was based, dividing it into two parts, namely the formal military register and the informal military register later subdivided into several separate categories. Finally, we considered the practical implications resulting from the conducted study and explained the reasons of their importance.

The main finding of the work has been that although domestication strategy was more frequent, it did not serve its purpose as its usage led primarily to many simplifications and omissions. On the other hand, the foreignization method also failed in several cases, resulting in incomprehensible units or awkward neologisms. It seems that there is no consistent and unified approach to translation of military register. Due to its vastness and complexity each instance has to be considered individually, not as a whole. Moreover, owing to the disparity between Polish and American military system some of the problems are impossible to overcome. From the rhetorical point of view neither of the available strategies facilitated the conveyance of the original message. The soldier's talk lost its aggressiveness and force, which are the main components of military rhetoric, in favour of balanced

and circumspective language. To a certain degree the original rhetoric underwent a process of censorship, making the American war rhetoric passionless but civil. The richness of rhetorical devices present in the source text (irony, hyperbole, similes, metaphors, etc.) has been flattened to a dull and uncreative language incapable of evoking the same reactions in the target audience.

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