

COMPILING AND EXPLOITING A PLURI-LINGUAL COMPARABLE CORPUS OF THE “MILITARY LANGUAGE” IN FRENCH AND SPANISH

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Abstract

Our project arises from a practical need: how to teach foreign languages (in particular French and Spanish) to the Non-Commissioned Officer Scholars of the Italian Army, with a special attention to the Language of Military Forces. To reach this target we started to build a multilingual comparable corpus (French and Spanish) to create a language resource in order to teach French and Spanish to Italian people concerned with Military Affairs.

Our goal is to provide students with authentic materials to improve their linguistic competence (including written and spoken comprehension as well as speech) and to implement linguistic activities for learners. From all the documents and all the activities created, we will extract lexemes to be integrated into a Glossary of Military Language in the two languages (Spanish and French).

Keywords: military language, authentic materials, teaching French and Spanish for specific purposes, Non-Commissioned Officer Scholars of the Italian Army.

*1. Introduction*³

Nowadays, in our globalized world, English is an essential tool to communicate in every kind of situation. In fact, since early 17th century, it has become a worldwide language for technology, science, tourism, commerce, finance, international politics and the military (Er, 2012: 280). Within the domain of military organizations, where the success of military operations relies on accurate communication, the uses and teaching materials of a global *lingua franca* and the fundamental link between that language and intercultural understanding are the undeniable factors to be considered in language education.

In addition to these considerations, we can say that European governmental and non-governmental Organizations, according to the multilingualism policies of the European Union, ask us to learn more than one foreign language. This is why in

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our education context, the School for Non-Commissioned Officers of the Italian Army, military personnel is required to learn a second European language; in our case French or Spanish.

We started our examination of military language by considering two points of view: firstly, what kind of language we need, and secondly what the teaching of specific military language could mean for us and for our students. The lack of research on military discourse persuades us to deepen our investigation.

In this paper, we will initially characterize military language as a language for specific purposes, thanks to some English, French and Spanish works on this subject. Secondly, we will describe our educational context to indicate what our scholars' needs and expectations are. Thirdly, we will focus our attention on the collection of textual data to study this particular language and to design appropriate learning materials and activities. We will finally add an example of learning material we have already tested on our students during a course that ended in March 2015.

2. Is Language of Army - a language for special purposes?⁴

Our first methodological problem is trying to understand if we are teaching a "special/specialized" code or not.

As regards this question, we realize that some of its characteristics lead us to think that it is a two-faced language. On the one hand, it is shared only by the members of a specific professional group, which communicate through sectorial terms, and on the other hand, it employs structures and instruments of common language, but with specific meanings and shades.

The complexity of this topic is also evidenced by the wide variety of proposals to define it: *lenguas especiales (lingue speciali)*, *lenguas de especialidad*, *lenguas especializadas (langues spécialisées, specialized languages, linguaggi specialistici)*, *lenguas/lenguajes con/para fines específicos (languages for specific purposes -LSP-)*, *lenguajes sectoriales (linguaggi settoriali)*, *microlingue (microlanguages)*, *discurso especializado (specialized discourse)*, etc.

This heterogeneity is also a consequence of the developments in science and technology, biology, information technology, and all specific professional sectors (law, trade, politics and tourism), and it has been the object of an increasing interest during last decades, especially in conjunction with the new linguistic perspectives, based on the pragmatic dimension and the communicative context rule.

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Calvi's broad overview on the interpretations of these languages emphasizes how the Spanish definition of *lenguas/lenguajes con/para fines específicos*, for example, derives from English language, and it is especially used in foreign language teaching activities. In fact, in 1968 the British Council organized its first conference on *Languages for Special Purposes*, denomination that was later modified into *Languages for specific purposes (LSP)*, highlighting the specific needs of foreign language learners (Calvi 2014: 17).

Within the range of possible definitions, the definition of *lenguas especiales* should be also mentioned. In this category one could distinguish between *lenguajes sectoriales* to define the scopes (journalistic, political, administrative) and *lenguajes científico-técnicos* (used by the scientific community's members). All these options rely on the idea of "specialty" or "specialization": *langues spécialisées*, *specialized languages*, *lenguas especializadas*, *linguaggi specialistici*, or *discurso especializado* as well. The latter definition, also employed by Gotti, who opts for "specialized discourse", is based on the use that specialists make of general language (Calvi 2014: 19).

However, there is an increasing tendency to suppose a continuity among different levels of specialization, special languages and the standard. In addition, linguists pinpoint that the greater or lesser effectiveness of a definition depends on the peculiarities of the analyzed area:

«Il criterio della non-separatezza dalla lingua comune è servito a classificare la lingua dei testi giuridici fra i cosiddetti linguaggi settoriali con l'opinione "che l'aggettivo *settoriale* esprima bene l'attinenza del linguaggio giuridico ad un aspetto dell'esperienza umana e della vita sociale (quello che, appunto, riguarda "il diritto"), senza però enfatizzare (a differenza degli aggettivi *speciale e tecnico*) una sua "separatezza" rispetto al linguaggio ordinario» (Belvedere cit. in Mortara Garavelli 2014: 8).

Another interesting element should be also taken into account: despite the fact that special languages are permeable to cultural factors, as these codes represent social-professional sectors, globalization is having a very significant impact on them, and internationalization is playing a key role for the consecration of English as *lingua franca*. Gotti underlines how English is by now the *lingua franca* of contemporary age, thus, also in the legal one, consider, for instance, its function in the European context. The Italian linguist analyzes the case of international commercial arbitration, a legal instrument for the mediation procedure, used to solve trade disputes. The need for harmonization among the various national *modus operandi* led United Nations to issue the UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) document as a model for all the member states in their arbitration lawmaking, generating many interpretative problems. As this document has been translated from English into many other languages, some issues arise from the adaptation of the original speech both to other languages and cultural constraints (Gotti 2008: 184).

Anyway, as we will try to demonstrate in the following paragraphs, military language is a vast and extremely varied subject. In fact, on the one hand, its linguistic technicality is evident - with its own codes and phraseology - on the other hand, the terms employed by military officers very often pertain to other linguistic areas: geography, international relations, history, economics and law, disciplines that, inevitably, trespass the limit of a special language and emerges into general language.

2.1 Complexity of the military language⁵

The fact that the English language has become a "common" language spoken all over the world by troops participating in multinational military operations, implies that the linguistic community has started to focus on this peculiar linguistic area, its characteristics and its cultural implications. We can consider military English and all military languages as mediums to be used not only as workplace languages but also as languages of common daily life while participating in multinational coalitions abroad.

We know that, as most specialised languages, e.g. the language of tourism, military language is not only composed of a single domain but it is characterised by several genres to be analysed, described and taught.

Even if military language is composed by written and spoken discourse as other specific languages, it appears structured as a template that leaves little room for any individual linguistic improvisation. In fact, especially in specific patterns, such as ritual discourse, Senior Commanders' Speech or administrative documents, we find standardised formulas that seem to be pre-established statements. For example, those "fixed sentences" uttered at the end of a radio communication ("over and out") or to give task orders.

Another highlighted genre is that of professional press publications addressed to military personnel as well as to general public, for large scale distribution and popularization. These kinds of texts are written by the Army or by independent agencies. Actually, as suggested by Paveau (2000), a sort of distrust characterises relations between the Army and journalists because one of the essential parameters of the first is rejecting any kind of contact with external dimension (represented for example by the existence of defence areas). However, as argued by Oger (2000) there is a need for cooperation with the media due to a military strategy to promote the image of military corps to "civilians".

Another genre that belongs to the military language is the "field" discourse used during military operations. It consists of the language used on battlefields and the

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concept “field discourse” refers to the language used in many kinds of situations, in an open-air space, in a tank or in a blockhouse. This is the most difficult genre to collect because it is hard to access recordings directly from the field.

In addition to this description of genres concerned with military language, we should also consider the complexity of language mainly due to the role of the military community vis-à-vis the rest of civil society. In fact, military forces are the guarantors of the country’s safety and by their speeches, Senior Commandants have to convince the population and their enemies of the strength of their own militia even in spite of possible untruthfulness (Joxe 1997:8). They have to reassure the population of its safety; they have to keep state secrets and never exceed in words.

The kind of communication used by military forces when speaking to the public or to other foreign military forces is considered as manipulative in the sense that it implies always a deception (Joxe, 1997:8). Moreover, as every other governmental officer, military personnel must request authorisation from its superiors for speaking publicly about political arguments or about anything related to foreign countries or international organisations (Paveau, 2000). We can therefore assert that communication in military language takes place in a scenario of secrecy.

Trouillon (2006) studied what kind of lexical items are employed in Anglophone military forces’ language. First, he noticed that it is rich in acronyms and abbreviations, because of the need for concision of messages (they are in fact linguistic mechanisms reducing time of transmission and reception of messages). This characteristic leads also to the opacity of military discourse for people who do not belong to military forces. The use of borrowings and loanwords seems to be typical of English military language. Trouillon (ibid.) says, in fact, that many English military terms, as the terms for designing officers’ ranks (i.e. *colonel*), movements (i.e. *advance*) or tactics (i.e. *flanckguard*), have been borrowed from French language⁶. In our research, we should study if this fact also occurs in French and Spanish military languages, and especially if corresponding words refer to the same entities in the three languages.

Military English language is also concerned with diachronic variation, especially in some sectors such as that of weapons. That mainly because these sectors are involved in scientific and technological evolution, as the creation of new arms.

Moreover, in military language there is a significant use of commercial brand names deriving from the name of the specific item (i.e. M16 to designate the rifle

⁶ As in general language, also in military language there are false friends that don’t correspond through different languages. For instance, a *section* in English is a group of combat, however, in French it stands for a military unit of few people which is a part of the *compagnie*.

adopted by the US Army) or from the manufacturer's name (i.e. Garand is the rifle but it is also the designer's surname) (Biffi 2011).

Finally, we cannot ignore the use of different military jargon spoken in the barracks, or on a battlefield. For instance, barracks' jargon has little by little passed through general language and many terms are known by "civilians" as well. Furthermore it can vary from corps to corps.

2.2 Teaching a Language for Specific Purposes⁷

Many educational and academic authors (Orna-Montesino 2013, Er 2012, Bouguignon 2008, Gaultier M.-T., Fonseca 1986, Masselin J. 1973), recently and in the past decades, have focused their attention on teaching languages for specific purposes. Their suggestions concern not only teaching methods to be adopted when addressing a specific public but also some reflections on learners, goals and contents.

Since the development of the communicative approach (Hymes 1972) and the publication of the *Common European Framework of References for Languages* (CEFR) in 2003, language teachers have mainly turned to a student-centered approach. This approach takes into account for student communication needs to develop skills in authentic contexts of interaction. Gaultier and Masselin (1973) in particular, assert that four factors should be considered: 1. context and conditions in which learning takes place, for instance if the learning occurs in learners' native country, if it is addressed to an individual learner or to a group of them, if we have access to new information and communication technologies; 2. kind of learners, namely their age, educational background, expectations (Er, 2012), or if they are already specialised in a particular domain; 3. level of initial learners' language proficiency and if it consists on a partial, passive competence, etc.; 4. skills to be achieved, that concern their particular domain, for example, if learners have to learn a foreign language for professional reasons, teachers must take into account their occupational duties.

In this kind of approach, learners are faced with tasks, i.e. goals to be achieved in particular contexts of situation. In fact, it is very important performing professional tasks in communicative situations that are specific to the specialized discourse. Moreover, they should acquire those psycho-social-cultural skills that are so important in the production of discourse.

For example, in a context of international relationships, teaching specialized languages implies also teaching cultural components in order to have successful and effective international relationships. Moreover, efficient international

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relationships are based on mutual knowledge of partners' cultural identity and on an high sensitivity for the Other which should be known and respected (Fonseca 1986).

To do this, it is necessary to strengthen the teaching of cultural components (ibid. 1986) and "to adopt content addressing global issues by focusing on cross-cultural comparison" (Er, 2012: 284). Cultural education will provide students with cultural competence in such a way as to acquire mutual confidence⁸.

These premises allow us to think that learning this kind of foreign specialized language will lead our students first to familiarize with generic lexico-grammatical features than to acquire skills needed to produce military discourse.

3. The Teaching Context⁹

Our professional experience in teaching French and Spanish to the students of "Scuola Sottufficiali dell'Esercito italiano" of Viterbo¹⁰ (under an agreement with the University of Tuscia), dates back to 2013. Our students attend professional and military specific courses to reach the rank of *maresciallo* (marshal).

This experience has represented a useful opportunity to ask ourselves some questions. All these questions inevitably arise from the fact of not having to deal with a traditional kind of students, as they have some professional characteristics and needs that modify and orient, specifically, their training objectives.

Assuming, in fact, that each teaching process should begin after a careful analysis of the students, we considered two factors: first of all, their linguistic skills, which resulted at a beginners level, and secondly, their professional needs. Our courses, in fact, are addressed to a class of about 20 students, aged between 20 and 40 years, without, apart from some exceptions, any basic knowledge of foreign languages. This situation, together with the scarcity of hours (60) of the course (8 CFU), forced us to adopt a teaching program starting from the alphabets and the phonetic systems.

We had also to consider that our teaching activities, that took place at the Political Sciences and International Relations Faculty, are delivered in parallel with the professional ones: for this reason, the hours for the individual preparation are rather limited.

⁸ According to a 2013 study (Orna-Montesinos 2013: 101), the lack of linguistic proficiency and of cultural competence are the causes of fatal miscommunication errors, failure in communicating with local populations and inadequacy in representing the military institutions in an international context.

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While evaluating all these crucial issues, we had also to face a practical question, that is at the same time a scientific curiosity: what kind of lexicon would be appropriate for our students?

Biffi, for example, defines military language: «un linguaggio settoriale composito poiché, come avviene anche per altri ambiti (ad es., l'architettura), in realtà nell'insieme di pertinenza specifico rientrano varie discipline», in which the strong technical-scientific component (related to the military innovations) is combined with the legal-administrative specificity (Biffi 2011).

In order to conclude these preliminary reflections, four more relevant elements, have to be reported: 1. we didn't receive any indication about the teaching methods and programs; 2. our students attended two foreign language courses: English course, first and mandatory language (FL), and French or Spanish as second ones (SL); 3. the scarcity of references and recent studies in this research area; 4. the distribution of our 60 students into three groups of 20 (according to the linguistic proficiency verified by means of a test access). Despite this subdivision, all the students are reunited to pass the final exam. This situation hinders the submission of a final test focusing only on the military lexicon, as not all the students would be able to pass this kind of specific exam. In order to overcome this drawback, we tested the lexicon skills by submitting tests and mock exams during the course.

The above presented is the context in which our foreign language courses took place, the opportunity for us to start considering to collect and further deploy all the original material used in our classes.

4. Describing the ML Corpus: different genres of discourse¹¹

After this brief overview of the main military language components, we will now turn to the resource we are compiling.

In our opinion, the better way to teach French and Spanish military language is to provide authentic, interesting and practical materials for our students. This leads to what is called "data-driven language" (Johns 1989), that refers to the process of learning a foreign language by using authentic materials which students can analyze and exploit.

Since military language is composed of a plurality of genres, the resource we are compiling will be layered in several sub-corpus of the two languages in order to satisfy the lexical, communicative and cultural needs of the students. There are four kind of documents that we collected: 1. specialized press articles; 2. glossaries of military language; 3. video-description of ordinary military life; 4. internal and external communication documents.

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4.1 French Sub-Corpus¹²

There is already a corpus of French military language compiled by Paveau (2000: 45), focused on the discourse between the French Army and journalists and the characteristics of their communication in particular. It is a corpus composed by 78 articles from the magazine *Armées d'aujourd'hui* issued between 1989 and 1996. This is a resource of remarkable importance mainly because of the section entitled “*libres réflexions*” dedicated to the free-expression of the military personnel. The magazine is published by the *Délégation à l'information et à la communication de la Défense*: a 68 pages magazine with news from the French Defence and the outline of the different components of the French Armed Forces, the Army, the Air Force and the Navy. At this point, it must be remarked that we are not concerned with a description of the entire French military apparatus, but only of the Army, so we will make reference only to the articles concerned with it.

A magazine dedicated specifically to the Army is *Terre Information Magazine*, published by the French Ministry of Defence. Its goal is giving a complete and accurate overview on the French Army; it contains news concerning land forces and, every month, a dossier on cross-cutting subjects, as civil personnel, weapons programs, environment, military operations on the national territory, and so on.

There is another interesting resource that we will include in our corpus: the *RMS* (the *Revue Militaire Suisse*). It is a Swiss magazine whose explicit focus is informing general audience about relevant questions concerning Swiss defence and safety. We maintain that a useful approach is presenting our students with different varieties of the French language, as well as showing differences in terms of cultural habits¹³.

In addition to the already quoted magazines *Forces terrestres*, reports news about the French Army, the activity on the field, during military ceremonies or open houses.

Another resource of our corpus is the *Revue Historique des Armées*, (Historical Magazine of the Army), which is published by the French Ministry of Defence four times a year. It concerns the history of the French Ministry of Defence since 1945. This is an interesting resource to study the diachronic change of military language.

The *Armée Média*, another on-line magazine, addresses to all citizens in uniform, thus articles concerning Policemen, Gendarmerie and Armed Forces in France. It is published by non-military editors interested in subjects that imply The Army and safety.

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¹³ Moreover, this characteristic of our French sub-corpus component could be very useful in the study of the variations of French military language across space.

We also drew upon a web resource (Lexicool.com) which mainly consists of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and glossaries. This resource is conceived for translators, linguists, students and everybody concerned with the study of foreign languages. It contains currently more than 8000 links concerning tools mostly created by translators who work in a specific domain, with a specific lexicon.

In the “military section”, we found of a specific list of glossaries and terminology, which was very useful in comparing different acronyms or abbreviations, and so on. At the moment of our research we could not have at disposal any a plurilingual glossary - this mainly because the only plurilingual resources are usually English coupled with French or other European Languages (this for the well known role of English as a global language); there isn't for example a bilingual glossary of French to Italian and of Italian to French, nor of Spanish to Italian and of Italian to Spanish.

The last resource we employed, mainly to collect the spoken component of our corpus, is the website www.sengager.fr, conceived to present the military world to new potential adepts. It is the official website of the French Army in which we were able to find not only written documents about the Army but also some interesting videos depicting ordinary military life, in the barracks or in a base abroad. They are available to all those who want to know more about, for example, the meals for military personnel, sports activity, military training, military life and so on.

4.2 Spanish Sub-Corpus¹⁴

Before constructing our Spanish sub-corpus, we will mention some bibliographic references and premises.

First of all, during the nineteenth century many Spanish military dictionaries were compiled: Fernández Mancheño (1822), *Diccionario militar portátil* (...); Sánchez Cisneros (1826), *Ensayo de un diccionario razonado sobre la ciencia de la guerra*; Marchesi (1849), “*Glosario*” *del Catálogo de la Real Armería*; D’Wartelet (1863), *Diccionario militar* (...); Almirante (1869), *Diccionario militar*; Rubió y Bellvé (1895-1901), *Diccionario de ciencias militares*; Moretti y Cascone (1828), *Diccionario militar español-francés*; De la llave (1848), *Vocabulario francés-español de términos de Artillería*; Corsini (1849), *Vocabulario militar* (...); Enrile (1853), *Vocabulario militar francés-inglés-español*; Agar (1853-1866), *Diccionario ilustrado de los pertrechos de guerra*; Hevia (1857), *Diccionario general militar de voces antiguas y modernas*; Tamarit (1853), *Vocabulario técnico del material de artillería e ingenieros* (...); Cañada y Gisbert (1878),

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Diccionario tecnológico inglés-español (...); Garrido (1885), *Vocabulario militar español-alemán*; Trépied (1889), *Vocabulaire militaire espagnol-français (...)*.

Later, after a period of relative decline, the interest in the military genre has become stronger again. This renewed attention produced various Spanish military dictionaries: López Muñiz (coord.), *Diccionario Enciclopédico de la guerra* (1958); Bordeje Morencos (1981), *Diccionario militar estratégico y político*; Rodríguez González (2005), *Diccionario de terminología y argot militar*.

All these studies could be used for a diachronic reflection on the description of military world.

With specific reference to the last decade, it should be also reported that Spanish Government issued a glossary of military terms, published in 2007 on the institutional website of the Ministry of Defence. It is a directory of expressions related to defense, and especially to Spanish Armed Forces, but also to other military and international organizations.

Other important support for our study are some specific documents, issued by the Spanish Armed Forces (*El Reglamento de Empleo. Orden Cerrado; El Reglamento de Empleo. Orden Cerrado. Instrucción de Unidades*), reporting, among other peculiar utterances, command expressions and terms, that should be used in different circumstances.

Moreover, the fact that this sector is regulated by definite national laws should not be overlooked: the *Reales Ordenanzas* not only establish the principles of military conduct, but also include standard and polite expressions, that must be employed by the members of the military corps. In addition, *El Procedimiento Radiotelefónico ACP-125 (E)* provides a code for the radio communications among military units: «las transmisiones radiotelefónicas deberán ser tan concisas como sea posible, sin sacrificar la claridad. La utilización de fraseología normalizada proporciona mayor brevedad» (Gordo Peleato 2007: 29).

On the other hand, the need for synthesis and exactness is satisfied by massive employment of acronyms: «Muchos de los documentos, conferencias, declaraciones relacionadas con la seguridad española están tan trufados de siglas de pronunciación imposible, que resultan poco menos que indescifrables para cualquier lector corriente. Es un auténtico idioma oficial que se ha convertido en una seña de identidad para los diplomáticos y militares que trabajan en la defensa de los intereses de Madrid en todas y cada una de las instituciones» (Ortiz, in Águila Escobar 2012).

For what concerns the contributions in the terminological and lexicological areas, even if in a bilingual perspective, we refer to the *Diccionario de Términos técnicos y militares español-inglés* (2001), edited by the Texas Inter American Air Forces Academy.

For Gordo Peleato some interesting data, as well as useful (teaching) tools, could be obtained from non-conventional resources, such as the translational considerations on the cinematographic representations of military operations (Gordo Peleato, "La traducción de las expresiones militares estandarizadas en las películas del género bélico", 2007) in order to enrich the Spanish military language by comparing it with the English counterpart.

The Spanish Ministry of Defence website represents a very useful source of data by offering a very wide range of resources, from the presentation of the *cadena de mando* (*Ley Orgánica de la Defensa Nacional 5/2005*), which comprehends all the military corps (Estado Mayor de la defensa, Ejército de Tierra, Armada, Ejército del aire, Cuerpos comunes, Reservistas voluntarios), up to listing the specific publications of discursive field.

Within the textual genres related to the military language, a particular attention has to be devoted to the main discursive genres. For this genres, obeying rules and specific operational purposes (clarity, brevity), we refer to Águila Escobar, who sketched out the basic taxonomies of military speech and text:

- *textos técnicos*: in most cases manuals;
- *textos jurídicos*: above all, Military or International law texts;
- *textos interdisciplinarios*: related to the application of certain disciplines to the military context (i.e. *Sanidad Militar*);
- *textos históricos*; historical texts;
- *obras de divulgación*: popularization activities edited in the field of Institutional magazines;
- *textos destinados al funcionamiento interno de los distintos departamentos en los que se divide el ejército*: everyday documents, with a predefined structure, very similar to the bureaucratic discourse, such as *la cuenta, el informe, la nota de despacho, el oficio, el tanto, la nota informativa, la minuta, las actas, los mensajes, los partes, las memorias, los certificados, las instancias, las declaraciones, los estados, las relaciones y los índices* (Águila Escobar, 2012).

The internal documents, the latter category indicated by Águila Escobar, while very interesting, will be difficult to be identified, due to the confidentiality of this sector.

Finally, our corpus involves all the references quoted, and is distributed into four main categories:

- magazines (both those published by the Ministry and those by associations of individual corps);
- glossaries and dictionaries;
- websites;
- videos (institutional videos, and films).

5. Teaching French and Spanish military Language: practical reflections on methodology and materials

In this section we will focus our attention on some learning materials and activities we have designed or intend to design.

5.1 Teaching Spanish military language¹⁵

In the case of Spanish, whose teaching/learning process by Italian speaking students is conditioned by the advantages and disadvantages of the inter-linguistic affinity, a program based on “tasks” would be very useful (Nunan, 1990; Zanón, Estaire, 1990).

Always taking into account the particular conditions of our students, such as, for instance, the scarcity of time and the contingent professional needs, we prefer implementing activities that help them to develop written and oral understanding and producing skills around specific thematic areas.

The potential of a teaching activity based on tasks turns explicit and relevant when students, in performing a certain requested activity, are encouraged by teachers to explore and use all the terminological and morphosyntactic structures necessary to carry out a final task related to their professional or study interest.

Starting then from the quoted references, our objective is to help the students to develop a disposition for interlinguistic comparison, in order to reflect on the elements of contact or/and discrepancy between Spanish and Italian.

An important part of this activity is becoming familiar with the military basic lexicon, referred to the organization roles, which characterize the several military corps (*cueros*) (Cuerpo General Ejército de Tierra, Cuerpo General de la Armada, Cuerpo general de Infantería de Marina, Cuerpo General del Ejército del Aire), according to the rank of the officers (*empleo*): *teniente/Alférez de Navío, Capitán/Teniente de Navío, Comandante/Capitán de Corbeta, Teniente Coronel/Capitán de Fragata, Coronel/Capitán de Navío, General de Brigada/Contraalmirante, General de División/Vicealmirante, Teniente General/Almirante, General del Ejército/Almirante General/General del Aire, Capitán general S.M. el Rey* (www.reclutamiento.defensa.gob.es).

In addition, by using the classification proposed by Gordo Peleato in the work already mentioned, we introduce students to the study of the four main military taxonomies of the *expresiones estandarizadas* («fórmulas específicas que los miembros del ejército usan para comunicarse entre ellos en el ámbito profesional») (Gordo Peleato 2007: 15):

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1. *expresiones de cortesía militar* – polite military expressions («Todo militar que deba dirigirse de palabra a un superior se cuadrará ante él, le saludará y le dirá "a la orden de (tratamiento) mi (empleo del superior)", cuando tenga tratamiento de excelencia o señoría, y "a sus órdenes mi (empleo del superior)", cuando tenga el de usted, quedando luego en la posición de firmes mientras no se le indique otra cosa» (*Reales Ordenanzas del Ejército de Tierra*, 1983, art. 287, in Gordo Peleato: 15);
2. *fórmulas de despedida* - expressions of greeting and leave taking («Todo militar... al despedirse se cuadrará, empleará la fórmula "ordena (tratamiento) alguna cosa mi (empleo del superior)" y volverá a saludar. Cuando encontrándose en formación haya de dar parte de novedades, permanecerá saludando mientras lo expone; el superior lo recibirá de igual modo» (*Reales Ordenanzas del Ejército de Tierra*, 1983, art. 287, in Gordo Peleato: 15);
3. *las voces de mando* («son expresiones militares estandarizadas formuladas por un superior jerárquico cuya finalidad es indicar a los subordinados que tiene delante los movimientos que tiene que realizar. Estas voces tienen dos partes consecutivas: primero se ordena la voz *preventiva* y en segundo lugar la voz *ejecutiva*. Con la voz *preventiva* se advierte al individuo de que se va a ordenar un movimiento, y le previene para que se prepare. Con la voz *ejecutiva* se le ordena que realice dicho movimiento. Cuanto más breve sea esta voz *ejecutiva* más sincrónicos serán los movimientos de los individuos que los estén realizando; de ahí que sea solo la primera sílaba de la voz *ejecutiva* la que realmente se pronuncia»), that involve certain actions by subordinates: «¡Vista a la derecha!», «¡de frente...mar!», ¡Media vuelta...mar!, «¡Sobre el hombro derecho...armas!» (*Reglamento de Empleo. Orden cerrado*, 2005, 3-8, 3-1, 1-10, 2-62, in Gordo Peleato: 28);
4. *el lenguaje radio: corto, cambio, alto y claro, recibido* - radio communication (Gordo Peleato: 15-16).

Thus, the general aim is to improve: 1) written comprehension and production skills, by focusing primarily on the enrichment of vocabulary with the help of glossaries and other materials to which we have referred to; 2) listening and speaking skills, by using films and videos, such as those published by institutional organizations to promote the military recruiting activities.

The use of a teaching language for specific purposes methodology turns out to be even more effective when it urges students to face real and concrete activities of language use. Given the extremely pragmatic and contingent nature of courses devoted to military students, we develop and test those teaching strategies requiring students to perform real operational activities such as writing a speech, decoding internal information, interpreting correctly directives and instructions. These latter activities on the one hand create a great interest and involvement in students, and on the other hand guarantee the achievement of teacher's expectations. However,

also in this case, major issues arise from the Spanish-Italian affinity, as the students tend to homologate, excessively, vocabulary and morphosyntactic structures of the two languages. This latter problem has to be continuously monitored.

Our didactic plan is intended to be a first step toward the acquisition of communication skills, beyond the formal and grammatical competences. In this context, the use of authentic materials, taken from the press, manuals and documents actually used by the military, enables our students to familiarize with the technical military vocabulary and its discursive and textual structures.

5.2 French teaching materials¹⁶

At the beginning of the course, we administered a placement test to divide students in class of the same linguistic level (60 students into three classes). In fact, their linguistic level (except one or two students in three years) spans from a beginner's level to a basic user's level; therefore, our courses start with the basic concepts of French phonetics, syntax, lexicon, phrase structure and so on.

Another point to notice is the fact that each class has its own teacher and, even if they have the same curricula and work in synergy, everyone has his/her own teaching method, his/her learning activities and materials. Moreover, due to organizational reasons, we cannot assess content and skills that the two other teachers did not deal with. Therefore, we were forced to limit the assessment of any formative and proficient activity only to our class (CEFRL¹⁷, 2004: 183). The former is the assessment of specific objectives and refers to a single week student's routine; the latter is the evaluation of what someone can do in relation to the application of the subject in real world. These two kinds of assessment are formative, in the sense that they are "ongoing process[es] of gathering information on the extent of learning, on strengths and weaknesses" (ibid.: 186).

The above (crf. the *fiche pédagogique* and the *fiche étudiant*) is a learning activity performed by our students to acquire the basic lexicon of their military garment. Starting from the vision of a short video (*Un soldat, ça s'habille comment?*) from the website sengager.fr, they had to complete the *fiche étudiant* and employ the vocabulary presented to describe their garment. During this class, we have also

¹⁶ Section by Sonia Di Vito.

¹⁷ The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFRL) "provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis." (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf, p.1).

focused on some historical events that belong to French History (namely the Storming of the Bastille and the signing of the Armistice at the end of the First World War). As the main part of the activity is based on a video in which soldiers address to French young people, the language resulted difficult to be understood by our students, even if the pace of the speech was quite slow. Therefore, at the beginning of the class, we familiarized students with intercomprehension strategies¹⁸ that could facilitate the comprehension of an unfamiliar language belonging to the family of Romance languages. They could indeed exploit lexical similarities among French and Italian to understand the global message first, and secondly to deepen the understanding of details of the message.

5.2.1 Describing the learners' activity: expectancies, lead-in activities, input description

The main aim of the activity designed in the *fiche pédagogique* and *fiche étudiant* is to develop students' ability to talk about their garment using the specific lexicon related to the topic. We focus our attention also on the development of students' ability to listen and comprehend a spoken description and to search informations about French History on the WEB. It is designed for beginners (A0 to A1 level of the CEFRL).

To introduce the topic and pre-teach the language necessary for the ensuing activities, we can show the students some pictures of clothes and speak about the difference between everyday clothes and working clothes and uniforms. Students can describe what they usually wear when they are out of the barracks¹⁹. Meanwhile, the teacher can write down on the blackboard the two French words that stand for the word "uniform": *treillis* and *tenue* because these words are non-transparent for an Italian speaker.

Before starting to watch the video, the teacher can also remind students to think about the general topic of the document they're going to watch, and to think about what they already know (for example they can think about the description of their uniform in Italian). The teacher should also remind them that, while listening, students can also rely on similarities of lexicon between the two languages (French and Italian), and use specific intercomprehension strategies. For example they can rely on words that have the same root because they belong to the same family of language, or assume the meanings of the words according to their semantic and discursive contexts²⁰.

¹⁸ See, for example, this video (<http://www.miriadi.net/intercomprehension-explanations-english>) by Erik Hemmings who explains what intercomprehension strategies are.

¹⁹ In a previous activity, we focused our attention on the description of everyday clothes, so students already know this kind of lexicon.

²⁰ For further details on this topic see also <https://www.miriadi.net/comprehension-1-oral-et-1-audiovisuel#simple-table-of-contents-7>.

The teacher then introduces the document by describing the different topics it outlines: uniform description; events during which a soldier wears a particular kind of uniform; military garment every cadet receives by his/her first day in the barrack²¹.

The last step in describing input is to ask students to read out loud and carefully the questions proposed on the *fiche étudiant* (activities 1 and 2).

5.2.2 Results, potential problems and possible further extensions

The general aim of this activity (to learn and reuse the lexicon of military garment) was successfully achieved by all the students. In particular they appreciated the activity designed to fix the lexicon.

Unfortunately, they got a bit lost in doing the last exercise (the webquest on the two events mentioned on the video): in fact, they didn't know where to find the information required (kind of event, date and historical event related to them). To overcome such obstacle, we suggested to tape a web address²², and to click on the links to the right side of the home page, "*Le 11 novembre*" and "*Le 14 juillet*". There, they found all the information they needed²³.

We exploited this video to design an activity focused on the learning of the vocabulary of military garment, and we used it also to introduce some historical knowledge about France. We can consider many kinds of learning activities compiled from the resources available in our corpus. We can also complete them by using the intercomprehension strategies to improve reading and listening comprehension. We are now planning to design some reading activities on texts taken from the magazine *Terre Information Magazine* and to exploit concordances²⁴ from the corpus to teach grammatical/syntactic topics.

²¹ After the first watching and activity, the teacher will introduce following steps and exercises.

²² <http://www.evous.fr/Calendrier-2013-a-Paris-les-grandes-ceremonies-de-l-annee,1180673.html>

²³ These two little tests are very simple especially because there are many key-words having the same root than the Italian ones, for example, *anniversaire* (*anniversario*), *armistice* (*armistizio*), *fin des combats* (*fine dei combattimenti*), *les Alliés* (*gli Alleati*), and so on.

²⁴ According to Sinclair (1991:170) a concordance "is an index to the words in a text [and it is] at the centre of corpus linguistics, because it gives access to many important language patterns in texts". It is produced by computer or machine and lists alphabetically every word in a text in a KWIC (Key Word In Context) format.

6. Conclusions²⁵

Teaching a language for specific purposes presumes teaching a foreign language regarding specific professions, subject or purpose. Teachers are not required to be specialists in the field but rather being trained to teach a foreign language for someone that *is* a specialist. In fact, the students know their subject better than the teacher, and teachers had to help them “develop the essential skills in understanding, using, and/or presenting authentic information in their profession” (Bojovic 2006).

The teaching hours we spent with our students are unfortunately not enough to acquire a high level of communicative skills; the only reasonable aim is providing them with some language skills and cultural understandings in order to develop an interpersonal dimension in their workplace.

Moreover, the complexity of the language of the Army, vastly discussed before, suggests some final conclusions. The variety of activities in which military language is used (defense tasks, territorial prevention activities, war and peacekeeping activities), the role that the armed forces play in the international contexts too, and the supporting activities for the prevention of international crimes, such as drug dealing, human trafficking, child abuse, clandestine immigration, and environmental crimes, lead us to cross individual national borders. Therefore, this kind of studies have to be coordinated with the overall vision of the armed forces in the international theatre, considering also that military forces are assuming less and less exclusively “military” roles.

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²⁵ Section by Sonia Di Vito and Roberta Giordano.

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Web resources

- <https://www.asfaspro.es/> (Asociación profesional de suboficiales de las Fuerzas Armadas)
- <http://www.defensa.gob.es/> (Ministerio de la Defensa de España)
- <https://www.reclutamiento.defensa.gob.es/> (Ministerio de la Defensa de España)
- <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/> (Ministère de la Défense de France)
- <https://www.miriadi.net/comprehension-l-oral-et-l-audiovisuel#simple-table-of-contents-7> (The skills reference data on multilingual communication in intercomprehension - REFIC)
- <http://www.evous.fr/Calendrier-2013-a-Paris-les-grandes-ceremonies-de-l-annee,1180673.html> (Schedule of the main ceremonies of the year 2016 in Paris)
- http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - CEFRL)

Magazines

- <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/terre/base/magazine-mensuel-de-l-armee-de-terre>
- <http://www.armee-media.com>
- <http://rha.revues.org/>
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- <http://www.ejercito.mde.es/publicaciones/revistaejercito/index.html> (*Revista Ejército de Tierra Español*)

Glossaries/dictionaries

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- <http://www.oliviercadic.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Brochu> (dictionnaire thématique français-anglais/américain sur la défense et la sécurité)
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- <http://rebiun.absysnet.com/cgi-bin/rebiun> (Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias)
- <http://www.mcu.es/bibliotecas/MC/CCPB/index.html> (Catálogo Colectivo del Patrimonio Bibliográfico Español)

- <http://www.rae.es/obras-academicas/diccionarios/diccionario-de-la-lengua-espanola> (Diccionario de la Real Academia de España)
- <http://books.google.com/books>

Portals:

- <http://www.info-militaire.fr/>

Videos:

- www.sengager.fr

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Appendix 1

Fiche pédagogique (auteur : Sonia Di Vito)

Titre : *Un soldat, ça s'habille comment ?*

Type de public : étudiants de niveau A0/A1

Matériel de support :

1. vidéo authentique de description
(http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xlhovj_mission-360-episode-2-un-soldat-ca-s-habille-comment_news; durée 3:27)
2. transcription de la vidéo
3. fiche étudiant à compléter

Compétences visées

- comprendre/produire une description orale
- lire un texte sur l'histoire de France

Objectifs

- suivre une description faite par des locuteurs natifs ;
- apprendre le lexique des vêtements pour les militaires ;
- réutiliser à l'oral le lexique appris ;
- connaître quelques événements de l'histoire de France (14 juillet - prise de la Bastille pendant la Révolution Française; 11 novembre - célébration de l'Armistice de la Première Guerre mondiale)

Déroulement de la séquence

- annonce des objectifs et suggestion des stratégies intercompéhensives à employer (10'); distribution et description de la fiche étudiant ;
- compréhension orale globale (10'): vision de la vidéo pour accomplir la tâche 1;
- compréhension orale détaillé (15'): réécoute et accomplissement de la tâche 2;
- production orale : description de son propre équipement (15');
- recherche internet: les événements qui correspondent aux dates évoquées pendant la vidéo (15')

Appendix 2

Fiche étudiant : *Un soldat, ça s'habille comment ?*

1. **Regardez la vidéo et complétez l'exercice de compréhension globale. Pour comprendre la vidéo essayez de mettre en œuvre les stratégies d'intercompréhension à l'oral.**

- a. quel(le)s sont les tenues/treillis dont on parle dans le document? Choisissez:
- tenue de parade
 - tenue de travail
 - tenue de sport
 - tenue de terrain
 - tenue de défilé
 - l'ensemble des cinq tenues
- b. existe-t-elle une tenue différente pour les femmes ?
- c. Que représentent les insignes sur la tenue ? Choisissez :
- la spécificité professionnelle du soldat
 - le grade
 - son régiment d'appartenance
 - son numéro de régiment
 - sa brigade
 - les décorations obtenues pendant les opérations extérieures

2. **Regardez à nouveau la vidéo et complétez l'exercice.**

- a. Quels sont les éléments qui composent un treillis ?

- b. Le treillis félin :

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| a. est employé sur le terrain | V | F |
| b. ne permet pas la transpiration | V | F |
| c. est plus agréable lorsqu'on est en opération extérieure | V | F |

- c. A quelles occasions emploie-t-on la tenue de sport ?

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- d. Le treillis de défilé est utilisé pour le service? oui non
- e. Comment la tenue utilisée pour les parades s'appelle-t-elle ?
- f. La tenue pour les féminines se compose de _____ et _____
- g. Quels sont les objets qu'un soldat reçoit dès son arrivée au régiment?
Soulignez les bonnes réponses.



Poncho



Tee-shirt manche courte
camouflé



Tee-shirt manche longues
camouflé



veste camouflée



pantalon



chemisette



polaire (fem.)



duvet d'été/d'hiver



Tapis de sol



jumelle



rangers



tente



gilet de combat



genouillères



coudières

- h. Vous devez présenter vos tenues pendant le jour des portes-ouvertes de votre école à des nouveaux adeptes potentiels. Quelle tenue portez-vous pour l'occasion? De quels éléments se compose-t-elle ?

- i. Dans le document vidéo, le soldat parle de deux défilés. Lesquels ? Renseignez-vous sur internet et complétez l'exercice.

Premier événement : _____

date _____

à l'occasion de _____

Second événement : _____

date _____

à l'occasion de _____