

## PDF hosted at the Radboud Repository of the Radboud University Nijmegen

The following full text is a publisher's version.

For additional information about this publication click this link.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2066/111856>

Please be advised that this information was generated on 2021-06-20 and may be subject to change.

# Mission Uruzgan

*Collaborating in Multiple  
Coalitions for Afghanistan*

*Edited by Robert Beeres,  
Jan van der Meulen, Joseph Soeters  
& Ad Vogelaar*

PALLAS PUBLICATIONS

# 14 Talking to strangers, learning to listen

*René Moelker and Michelle Schut*

## **Introduction: the military name game**

Benjamin Lee Whorf claimed language ‘may be shaped by the world, but in turn shapes the world’. In his study of Hopi language, Whorf found that linguistic structures determine not only interpretations of the world but that they actually shape the physical, social, economic, political and symbolical world people live in. Because Hopi language does not have words comprising the concept of time, neither words for the future, nor for the past, it would be impossible for a Hopi Indian to understand the western way of long-term planning. Neither would the Hopi be able to refer to the past. Activities are seen as preparations but they are not associated with a date on which a product or service should be ready and/or delivered. Probably the Hopi do not have a word for ‘deadline’. A Hopi Indian would not have the conceptual tools, i.e. he lacks the words to shape his life in western society, to make sense of it all, but the same goes for the Westerner who would find it difficult, if not impossible, to adapt to Hopi society.

If one does not understand a language and a culture and is not willing to learn, nor willing to listen, one will remain a stranger. An outsider. The renowned Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that stemmed from the study among the Hopi is summarized adequately by David Thomson (2008, 115): ‘we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language’.

Exactly this is brought to the military field by Sarah Boxer (2009) in an excellent paper on ‘Manipulating Meaning: The Military Name Game’, which stipulates phenomena common to military all around the world: by name giving, one can transform a military operation from one realm into a different one, for example from the kinetic order of things (shooting, killing) to a political order and/or the symbolic order of ideology. The name ‘Desert Storm’ signifies the kinetic nature of the operation. ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’ would provide the wording that transforms a military operation into a political and symbolic order that promises both stable democracy and free enterprise. In short, to quote Andrea Van Dijk and Joseph Soeters (2008: 303), ‘language matters in the military’.

For the Dutch in Afghanistan the desired political reality, necessary to convince the constituency during times of elections, was to reconstruct Afghanistan. The

military operation in Afghanistan was legitimized by the rhetoric of helping the Afghans reconstruct their society, to assist the central government and to contribute to the stabilization of the nation (Brinkel et al., 2009). Intervention ideally should not provoke the local population for the Dutch did not come to occupy, did not come to conquer. The intervention should be de-escalating in character. The Dutch were to contribute to governance and safety, and therefore social patrols were asked for, provincial reconstruction teams should be doing their work outside of the safety of the compounds, contacts with the local population were desirable and these contacts should be friendly, culturally aware and culturally sensitive. As was to be expected from the Sapir and Whorf hypothesis and the Military Name Game, the training method for the soldiers was given a name that fitted the political objective: 'smile and wave'. The desired political reality, reconstruction and stabilization, required renaming the military way of training into something friendly sounding, like smile and wave, to substitute other epithets like 'shock and awe' that were characteristic for the earlier American entry phase and was symbolic name giving for hunting down terrorists and scaring the hell out of anyone who even merely thought of being slightly critical of this enterprise. Training for the mission that was baptized International Security Assistance Force cannot go well if the mission was given another albeit terrifying name. General names for present day kind of missions vary from 'reconstruction mission' to 'counterinsurgency mission', from '3D operations' (Defence, Diplomacy, Development) to 'stabilization operations'. All of these soundbite terms may hold some truth in them, because words create their own reality.

Smile and wave is the minimalist version of 'talking to strangers, learning to listen', an approach to training that was clearly intended to inculcate a non-violent attitude and friendly posture towards the local population, who were not the enemy, but the victims of a, so perceived, brutish Taliban regime. Talking to strangers and learning to listen is a strategy that goes further and that fits into the objective of winning hearts and minds. It is perceived the model for soldier behaviour in the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan where soldiers eventually patrolled not on foot but on mountain bikes.

Cultural awareness, as we already asserted, started by trying to teach soldiers to smile and wave. And the learning process was not easy because at the moment that the mission oriented training began acceptance was low. The documentary 'Smile and Wave' by Marieke Jongbloed (2003) intimately portrays an infantry platoon during training and on mission in Afghanistan. The third scene of the documentary frames a classroom situation where the soldiers receive not only their rules of engagement but are also taught rules for behaviour. They are told that the brigade commander and higher up officially commands them to 'smile and wave'. Clearly audible is the first gut reaction from one of the guys who swears 'goddamned.' The instructor explains that when they behave 'too tightly and too sharp, the population will think that we are an occupational power.' There is some laughter and mild dis-

cussion because the soldiers fear they might not be taken seriously, but this initial resistance is broken by the persuading rationality of the instructor's arguments.

The next scene is shot outdoors at the training facility 'Het Harde' in the Netherlands. Learning by experience is the step by which theoretical knowledge, the concept of 'smile and wave', is to materialize into practice. Military exercises are powerful training tools. And during these exercises role players, often participants from earlier deployments handing over their experiences in a reenactment of these experiences, dress up as local Afghans to play according to some scenario.

The soldiers on patrol meet rioting Afghan civilians that are stoning a woman for some behaviour unbecoming (perhaps presumed adultery or 'flirting' in public?). The soldiers break up the crowd with an excess of violence telling the mob to 'go away'. They use their firearms to push the locals away. The locals are protesting by making a lot of noise whilst the soldiers are pulling them away, dragging them over the street, whilst pointing the gun at the unarmed civilians. In the after-action debriefing, the role players step out of their character and comment to the soldiers 'well ... I think this was quite a display of aggressiveness, one of the soldiers kicking me in the stomach! I think in the evaluation you will be told that this is not like it is intended to happen. If you act like this you will have a problem over there, because all of them will turn against you.' From his perspective, if this had been real it could have escalated easily. The platoon commander adds meaning to the context as he explains that the soldiers actually meddled into the private affairs of an Afghan family, and the soldiers dealt with the family matters quite violently.

These soldiers were not really 'talking to strangers', they were beating them up! But they were in a training situation where they are supposed to 'learn to listen'. And in this situation the sense of reality, as Anne Irwin (2005) points out, is a social construction. To be more precise, the soldiers were in the process of acquiring cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness. The objective of the training in 2002 did not go beyond 'smile and wave', whereas nowadays in the preparation for Uruzgan the discussion on the objective of such exercises ranges from cultural awareness, cultural literacy, cultural competence to cultural intelligence (Abbe, 2007; Selmeski, 2007; Winslow, 2010). Using concepts like 'smile and wave' and 'cultural awareness' are important because language shapes the world in which the soldiers are active agents, doing their job in operations with alternate name giving.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the manner in which Dutch soldiers acquire cultural awareness during preparation and how they put it to use during the execution of mission Uruzgan. The assumption is that the motivational factor is very much helpful to acquiring this awareness, whilst fear and anxiety is hampering learning processes. By analyzing the content of four documentaries, i.e. '*Smile and Wave*', '*0911 Zulu*', '*Fokking Hell*' and '*Dagboek van onze Helden*', paradigmatic examples of failures in listening behaviour, but also examples of learning behavior, successes in acquiring cultural awareness and threats to becoming a cultural change agent are presented. The chapter ends by discussing the state of the art in training in the Netherlands and the possibilities for future improvement.

## Cultural awareness

Some of the footage provides hilarious material and a good illustration of the importance of language. When on a traditional mission where interaction with the population is limited to kinetic contact, understanding the other is probably only relevant to information gatherers or psyops officers. But when a soldier is given the assignment to let nobody pass at a checkpoint because a military convoy must for safety reasons pass first, as was the case in the documentary *Fokking Hell* (Feijten, Stakelbeek and Ter Velde, 2010), it becomes ridiculous and embarrassing to watch the soldier trying to stop some and allowing others to pass. The shots alternate between the checkpoint and the studio where soldiers express feelings that go along with their cultural experiences:

[checkpoint] The Dutch soldier at the checkpoint stops a car that, according to the Afghan driver, is transporting someone who got ill. The driver asks to let him pass because 'she is not doing well.' The soldier does not give in, because it 'won't take long before the military vehicles have passed, we are almost done.'

[studio] To the interviewer a captain states 'in retrospect it is always different than you had thought it to be, you cannot simulate reality in the Netherlands, ... the way how to deal with the population, in reality it is different.'

[checkpoint] To the driver the soldier apologizes: 'I am sorry for the problems, but I have to.' The soldier at the checkpoint maneuvers all cars to the side of the road, clearing the road.

[studio] Vice-admiral Borsboom confides in the documentary maker 'no matter how well prepared you are, when you are over there, the complexity is much greater.' A colonel remarks on the complexity of a strange culture 'you are dealing with a Muslim country.' A soldier expresses his own feelings of uncertainty by stating 'the population is very unreliable, you never know what someone is hiding, however innocent their stories are. You never know if they are gonna hurt you, you never know'.

[checkpoint] Then a car, a small transporter, arrives at the checkpoint with civilian dressed locals, all armed to the teeth. They introduce themselves as police officers. Judging from their looks, they could easily be a band of bandits. They are heavily bearded, wear turbans, and lack identification papers, police insignia and uniforms. Even so, because they insist on being policemen, the soldier at the checkpoint lets this car, and only this car, pass. He is very clearly in doubt because there is no way to establish whether the bearded guys are lying. Probably they are because they know that pretending to be policemen will guarantee their passage at the checkpoint. 'Sir ... are you police?' the soldier asks an Afghan senior citizen, who clearly is too old to be on active duty, and lets him pass. He knows he's being fooled, but what is he to do? The soldiers lack the knowledge of language and do not know the cultural codes by which he could ascertain truth or lie.

Understanding starts with language, but reading the cultural code, in other words acquiring cultural literacy, is equally important for the military on mission. Understanding the words is one side of the coin, understanding how institutions (organized norms and values) work is the other side. In *Smile and Wave* (Jongbloed, 2003) high ranking Dutch soldiers, amongst whom is a military legal advisor, visit a women's prison and find out that one can be easily manoeuvred into a position where Western and Afghan values clash and where the urge to intervene becomes pressing and awkward.

The woman's prison does not look like a high-risk penitentiary installation, and has some feel of coziness because it is a community in itself, but to the foreign soldiers it all is dirty. The NCO jokes to the police general 'we don't need to see the restrooms.' In one room, more than eight women are present and the same NCO is surprised at the children that also reside there. 'What can a women have done, that she is here?' he asks the young mother. She married, divorced and then remarried. Now, the first husband claims she never divorced him. She has to stay in prison for eight years. The NCO (who cannot hide his non verbally expressed surprise) 'so the child will grow up in prison?' All of the women seem to have had marital problems. One was mistreated and after filing a complaint she consequently was sent to prison herself. The police general explains that a woman can only remarry when her husband has repudiated her.

The NCO says that they want to show the footage to the Dutch viewers who are not familiar with these problems. He wants to persuade the women to present bold statements but instead the women are infuriated: 'you can videotape this, but we need help now, tell them to let us out ... we want our right, help us get out of here.' Lt Colonel Roel Krimp asks the translator to say that 'they are here because of the legal system in Afghanistan, ... ISAF cannot easily interfere, but we can show the footage to the world to obtain political leverage.' The Lieutenant Colonel saves the situation brought about by the overly empathic but not too diplomatic NCO. Not being familiar with gendered institutions, women's place in Afghan society, and with the penal code that consolidates the gendered institutions, the Dutch military brought upon them a political discussion they got entrapped in.

Maaïke, a lieutenant in the Navy starring in *Dagboek van onze Helden* (2010, third broadcast of the series), makes part of a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Uruzgan, Camp Hadrian, as liaison officer, and to get building projects started she regularly has meetings with local contractors. She is very much culturally aware, and especially so regarding gender issues. Maaïke is always careful about the way she dresses. Whereas male colleagues might wear a T-shirt when it is warm, she will never display uncovered arms. She discusses projects, and also grants projects to contractors; therefore she has the power to reward people and is treated with the respect due to any military professional, male or female. Maaïke first wondered 'how are they going to react to a female officer? I will have to be modest, not draw attention, because this is not normal procedure in this culture. ... I always wear long sleeves ... The Afghans think the Dutch female soldiers can stand up for them-

selves. We sometimes are complimented with the fact that Dutch females are educated.' The principle of reciprocity is at work during these meetings. The contractors of course want a project, and in turn they sometimes give safety information about, for example, Improvised Explosive Devices.

Being unfamiliar in 'strange' cultures can be a barrier in interacting with locals, not knowing the language, not knowing the institutional arrangements, but nevertheless one can be aware of the cultural context or at least try to be and gain respect by showing respect.

### **Learning to listen: motivation and cultural inquisitiveness**

From the content analysis of all the footage it appears that two factors are important in learning to listen. Both are related to attitude. Motivation determines whether or not people want to listen and have an open mind. Cultural inquisitiveness also seems related to the learning attitude, but can backfire when soldiers are overdoing it, when they are prying into other peoples' lives.

In *Dagboek van onze Helden* (2010), political advisor Tom walks towards the Slovakian guard who is responsible for security of the inner circle of the compound. He wants to inform them that the guard should let someone pass without searching. According to the cultural advisor the Afghans are uncomfortable with body searches and find them humiliating. The cultural adviser has instructed him about these Afghan sensitivities. Only the visitor highest in rank is exempted from the normal routine. It seems a minor issue, but trust is won by giving trust and showing respect. And there is no security risk, because the soldiers can count on the Afghan honour system. Tom is professionally motivated to listen to and use the council of the cultural advisor, because it will further cooperation with the Afghans.

Motivation, wanting to listen, is important for learning behaviour. Lieutenant Maaiké, who starred in *Dagboek van onze Helden* also seems inquisitive in a positive way. She shows genuine interest in people. But one can also demonstrate exalted behaviour, and then over-the-top curiosity and inquisitiveness can become unhealthy. From the outside the behaviour looks like cultural curiosity and empathy, while it is in fact an unbecoming interest in some cultural arrangements that is displayed. Etiquette and politesse dictate that one does not poke around in the paradoxes of these arrangements because they obviously are honour- and shame-related. The hard questions lie with status issues or are in the domain of private lives.

Shaming images are derived from *Smile and Wave* in a conversation between corporal Maikel Tanger and ISAF interpreter Jumshed Jongbloed (2003) frames the issue by a subtle build-up. She knows well that one can only learn about the other culture if one better understands one's own culture. The spectator back in the Netherlands is presented contrasting and stereotypical images of posters in the soldiers'

quarters and pictures of Indian women at booksellers' shops in Kabul. The pictures are all projections of male imagination. Western soldiers seem not so different from Afghan men. Cultures are different, but men generally have comparable appetites for the other sex.

Alternating shots. Footage of women in burkas walking the streets. The camera zooming in at feet wearing fashionable shoes. The camera is simulating the masculine objectifying gaze as the camera 'looks' just like 'our' western male soldiers look at the feet of these women. The soldiers wonder what is underneath the blue garments and in a group discussion imagination runs wild. Soon the brilliant documentary maker Marijke Jongbloed has the boys talking about 'jerking off' in the little privacy that a restroom has to offer. The soldiers are candid, but we can distinguish between those who are bragging and perhaps want to impress the female interviewer, and those who, although equally deprived sexually, feel embarrassed about the uncalled for frankness of the confessions. The documentary maker in fact repeats the message 'boys will be boys', be they Dutch or Afghans.

Back in the private quarters, Maikel Tanger asks the interpreter Jumshed if he already had sex with his fiancée. Jumshed: 'of course not, because it is bad for her reputation.' Maikel presses on: 'you did not have sex with someone yet?' Jumshed: 'I cannot say no! I am not a virgin ...' Maikel now identifies the paradox in Afghan society, because you cannot lose your virginity if women won't have sex before marriage. The answer is shockingly simple: 'if you succeed in finding a girl that is a little bit lazy or not too smart, then the boys go there and trick them, like telling that it is healthy for her.' Maikel concludes that Jumshed needs to become more world wise and gives him three porn movies free of charge: 'as a present we give them to you and we hope that you will learn something of it.' Jumshed claims he already knows, but Maikel insists. Jumshed confides that oral sex is out of the question in Afghanistan, but would like to watch the movies together with his friends. He rejects Maikel's suggestion to privately masturbate using these movies as 'jerking off is also forbidden in Afghanistan, but it happens a lot ... Allah knows.'

Maikel is astonished, but one of the other soldiers, Eggink, who originates from the Dutch Bible belt, stands by silently. Eggink probably understands Jumshed better. At the end of the documentary we are witnesses to his marriage. A marriage out of responsibility. Coming from a Dutch religious family he cannot but marry the girl that he got pregnant nine months earlier. Many of his relatives wear traditional clothing, not much different from burkas or other Afghan attire.

### **Constraints on cultural communication**

Learning about 'strange' cultures is hampered by barriers like mindset, frustration and fear. Learning is facilitated under safe and secure conditions. When under threat or otherwise engaged in tense situations, the default human reaction is to fight or to fly. New learning experiences are blocked because people will fall back

on routines, drills and behaviour that will help them overcome stress and enlarge chances for survival.

09:11 *Zulu* provides some striking examples of decreasing communicative effectiveness during the operational mode. At five minutes from Camp Holland an IED facilitator, a person making bombs, lives in a farmhouse (Franke, 2007). The Dutch Special Forces have authorization to carry out a 'hard knock operation'. It is going to be dangerous and the men are looking forward to being engaged in action. Armed to the teeth, the special forces pass the farm's gate, and enter the mud house. They kick in one of the rooms that give entrance to the private quarters of the residents and search the house seemingly calmly and professionally until they arrive at the courtyard where they only encounter women of various ages and children. The soldiers are vigilant and sharp, not edgy, but they clearly have trouble to de-escalate when confronted with women who are unaware and surprised by this armed raid. The women try to cooperate but do not understand that the soldiers only want them to move in order to separate them from the men. One young woman flaps her arms like a bird because she thinks that the soldier wants her to do so. She misinterprets the sign language of the soldier who only gestured here to 'come over this way.' The soldier loses his patience and pulls her garment in order to direct her towards the desired location. It is not fear that makes the soldier communicate badly with the women, but they are in an operational mode and mindset, constantly aware of danger, acting the soldier part and unable to see the women as they are, ambushed, surprised and frightened, violated in their honour and homely privacy.

In *Dagboek van onze helden* the Dutch unit in Uruzgan was affected emotionally as a whole because of the death of two colleagues who were victims of an Improvised Explosive Device. The viewer witnesses the collective trauma from the beginning, as these series of documentaries was shot by embedded reporters. The soldiers were filmed up close giving a day-to-day account and therefore the viewer emotionally identifies with the soldiers. We see the dead and wounded being brought to the infirmary, we are present at the memorial meeting being organized in Uruzgan and we experience the unit's grief. Two weeks later the events do appear to affect the tactical level of operations. One of the marines, Remon, is ordered to arrest a local who is suspected to be one of the bomb layers. Remon is one of the Marines, 22 years of age and Uruzgan is his first mission. The Marines have rounded up several men in the village amongst whom was the insurgency leader of the area. In addition the Afghan National Army arrested the person who placed the bomb. The Marines are highly motivated. Remon remarks 'we really wanted to catch these guys, we didn't want to come back home empty handed.' Grief over lost buddies motivated the marines, but not being allowed to revenge them also frustrated them: 'preferably I'd like to beat these guys up totally, but eh, this is not allowed because of the Rules of Engagement, so however sour, we have to stick to these rules.' The marine felt restrained and unfulfilled in his appetite for revenge, but he and his buddies did manage to inhibit emotions and act professionally during the arrest.

One can, however, imagine that events like this result in destructive and morally undesirable behaviour.

Really scary situations did not make part of the footage under study. Even when under fire, as in *09.11 Zulu*, the soldiers were not anxious or fearing for their lives. In *09.11 Zulu* the soldiers experience not fear but the thrill of combat. The footage was more or less shocking to the audience in the Netherlands because the special forces were evidently euphoric during the fight which is an emotion that was until now seldom caught on celluloid by an embedded reporter (Franke, 2007). But the fear factor hampering communication is well studied and well known. Fear blocks out knowledge of the other, reduces contact between oneself and the other and leads to a spiral of ever more antagonistic stereotyping. The strategy for reversing the communication breakdown caused by fear is also well studied and in essence simple. The more one knows about the other, the less there is to fear. People do not fear each other when they have gained trust from personal contact. Informal contact does further understanding and is the social cement of institution building. The management strategy is straightforward: do not be a stranger! Listen! Talk!

### **Discussion: soldiers as cultural operators**

Because language shapes the world, the cultural operator, i.e. the soldier, should be able to talk to strangers and should learn to listen. The analysis of footage from operations in Afghanistan clearly illustrates the need for cultural awareness, the pitfalls, and the barriers in communication. The footage clarifies the conditions for learning about culture which are positive when people are motivated and when they demonstrate healthy forms of curiosity. It also illuminated the 'old school' training in cultural awareness from before 2003 when training was limited to briefings telling soldiers to *smile and wave* and the 'do's and don'ts.'

The training bureau that provided most of these briefings, the bureau *Culturele Achtergronden en Information* [cultural background and information] was not content with this situation and neither were mission commanders, who assigned cultural anthropologist Jeffrey Schwertzel to organize a more elaborate two-day *Cultural Awareness Training*, using, amongst other strategies, role play in simulated environments like qualas and mock Afghan villages. The bureau *Culturele Achtergronden en Information* now provides these types of training at a commanders' request during the *Mission Oriented Training*. But training is limited both in time and in content and does not extend beyond furthering cultural awareness.

Evaluation studies (Ooink, 2010) arrive at indecisive conclusions on the effectiveness of this training. Measurements before and after deployment show a decrease in positive attitudes regarding the local population, but stressful events and the difference between Force Protection Teams and Provincial Reconstruction Team (who have more contact with the local population and show positive attitudes, whereas Force Protection Troops more often are engaged in fire fights)

explains this decrease. Whether or not the training is effective cannot be gauged by survey-based methodology, but the effect of training cannot but be modest regarding the low intensity and short duration of the programme. One even needs to be careful that training does not affirm and reinforce preexisting negative attitudes and thereby negatively affect the military preparation for missions. Culture experts have identified two points of discussion: one regards the content and level of training, the other is related to the organization and the timeframe of training.

Regarding content and level of training, the discussion is about the degree of cultural proficiency soldiers need to acquire. Regularly four levels are distinguished (Selmeski, 2007; Ooink, 2010). Cultural literacy departs from understanding the own culture whilst being aware that other people will look at the world from a different perspective. Other cultures are regarded as different but equal. By knowing one's own culture one is emphatically able to read other cultural codes. In contradistinction, cultural awareness specifically is based on factual knowledge of other cultures and learning to behave without breaching cultural codes. Cultural competences (sometimes cross cultural competences or 3C) are defined as 'a set of cognitive, behavioural, and affective/motivational components that enable individuals to adapt effectively in intercultural environments' (Abbe, 2007). Dijk, Soeters and Ridder (2010) more specifically specify seven competencies: flexibility, openness, cultural empathy (sensitivity), emotional stability, and social initiative, respect and trust. One who is culturally competent not only reads and knows cultural codes, but also knows how to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. An operator that is culturally intelligent is able to individually adapt to an unfamiliar culture by collecting new cultural knowledge, by motivation and by adequate behaviour.

Only the psychologists Ng and Early claim that all soldiers should be proficient at this highest level, the level of being culturally intelligent and they also claim that this level should already be attained during initial phases of training '... it will enable effective cross-cultural learning in the multinational environment, i.e., they will have developed meta-cognitive and cognitive capabilities to learn fast during their mission' (Ng and Early, 2007: 8). Most anthropologists (Selmeski, 2007; Abbe, 2007), however, will find this claim overly ambitious and will modestly propagate acquiring cultural awareness as relevant for all soldiers, whereas they would deem it desirable to develop cultural competences at officer level, especially where it concerns members of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, CIMIC-officers, information operation officers and the like. Commanders, political advisors and cultural advisors are normally required to develop or to have cultural intelligence.

And all this leads to the second point of discussion that regards the organization and timeframe of the training. If all soldiers should at least be culturally aware and savvy, training should not start at the last minute, just shortly in time before deployment. During mission oriented training many topics are important and often culture is considered the poor sister when it comes down to allocating time and resources. Training should start during the initial phase to lay down general prin-

ciples and to sharpen soldiers' cognition and intuition. Learning psychology dictates that learning at cognitive, affective and behavioural levels requires repetition. That is why during the initial phase of training cultural literacy should be acquired. Ooink (2010) recommends cultural awareness training during the pre-deployment phase. During the deployment phase the cultural advisor can coach the military, the commander should motivate his troops and recognize possible culture shock. Interactive e-learning with information on local culture could be posted on the net. After deployment lessons are learned, mission reviews and questionnaires should enhance knowledge and culturally proficient agency and understanding. Salmoni and Holmes-Eber (2008: 237-271) propagate a comparable organization of cultural learning in phases and levels.

Afghanistan and Uruzgan are associated with counter-insurgency operations. Winslow (2010) wonders how long the interest with counterinsurgency will sustain the opinion that cultural insights will also be relevant for future operations. Will cultural lessons learned soon be forgotten when conflicts are perhaps more kinetic in character? It is likely that culture will also remain highly relevant in future conflict, but Winslow's words do put the use of cultural competences in perspective by looking through military lenses: 'Just as Malinowski argued in the 1920s, practical men need cultural information to govern and improve the condition of the natives. Then the question arises as to what type of cultural knowledge they [the military] really need. Do they need to understand all aspects of anthropology? I would argue that they do not. And out of practical necessity soldiers are able to gather cultural knowledge when it is useful to their endeavor. ... With some training and insight I believe that the military can in fact be culturally aware and recognize cultural intelligence for what it is – Intel' (Winslow, 2010: 19-20).

## References

- Abbe, A., L. van Gulick and J.L. Herman (2007) *Cross-Cultural Competence in Army Leaders: A Conceptual and Empirical Foundation*. U.S. Army Research Institute.
- Boxer, S. (2009) Manipulating Meaning: The Military Name Game. In: Spradley, J. and McCurdy D.W. (eds.) *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, Pearson, 56-60.
- Brinkel, T., R. Moelker and S. Westmaas (2009) Politiek-militaire betrekkingen: Recente ontwikkelingen met betrekking tot het primaat van de politiek (Political-military relations: Recent developments with regard to the primacy of politics). In: Moelker, R. Noll, J. and De Weger, M. (eds.) *Krijgsmacht en Samenleving*. Amsterdam: Boom, 163-190.
- Dagboek van onze helden (Diary of our heroes)* (2010). Broadcasted on National Geographic in six episodes from 12 December to 27 December.
- Feijten, E., Stakelbeek, H. and Ter Velde, P. (2010) *Fokking Hell*. Broadcast Sunday 23:30 uur, Nederland 2.

- Franke, V. (2007) 09:11 Zulu – Nederlandse commando's in Uruzgan, Documentary broadcasted Monday 20 November, 23:10 uur, Nederland 2.
- Irwin, A. (2005) The Problem of Realism and Reality in Military Training Exercises. In: Ouellet, E. (ed.). *New Directions in Military Sociology*. Whitby: De Sitter Publications, 93-133.
- Jongbloed, M. (2003). *Smile & wave*, Documentary, NPS Korte Film.
- Ng, K.Y. and Early, P. (2005) *Culture and Intelligence, old constructs, new frontiers*. London: Sage.
- Ooink, B.J.H. (2010) Cross Cultural Training. *Militaire Spectator* 179(3), 133-146.
- Salmoni, B.A. and Holmes Eber. P. (2008) *Operational Culture for the Warfighter. Principles and Applications*. Virginia: Marine Corps University Quantico.
- Selmeski, B. (2007) *Military Cross-Cultural Competence: core concepts and individual development*. Centre for Security, Armed Forces & Society Royal Military College of Canada.
- Thomson, D.S. (2008). The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: Worlds Shaped by Words. In: Spradley, J. and McCurdy, D.W. (eds.) *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, 4th ed., Pearson, Chapter 12.
- Van Dijk, A. and Soeters, J. (2008) Language matters in the military. In: Caforio, G., Kümmel, G. and Purkayastha, B. (eds.) *Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution: Sociological Perspectives (Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development, Volume 7)*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 303-325.
- Van Dijk, A., Soeters, J. and De Ridder, R. (2010) Smooth Translation? A Research Note on the Cooperation between Dutch Service Personnel and Local Interpreters in Afghanistan. *Armed Forces & Society* 36(5), 917-925.
- Winslow, D. (2010) Anthropology and Cultural Awareness for the Military, In: Leuprecht, C. Troy, J. and Last, D. (eds.) *Mission Critical: Smaller Democracies' Role in Global Stability Operations*, Montreal and Kingston: Queen's Policy Studies Series, McGill-Queen's University Press.