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Military Jargon in the Slovenian Translation of *Hostile Waters*

Summary

The article examines Slovenian translations of military jargon in the non-fiction novel *Hostile Waters*. In the introductory part, jargon is presented as a linguistic category as well as its main features in the novel. Next, select examples from the original text are compared to their Slovenian equivalents. The focus is on collocations and lexically dense nominal phrases. The comparison finds that most translation shifts in the target text occur because of incorrect interpretation of technical jargon expressions in the original. As a result, the target text reader perceives certain situations differently than the source text reader.

Key words: military jargon, jargon, translation, *Hostile Waters*, translation shifts, non-fiction novel

Vojaški žargon v slovenskem prevodu *Sovražnih vod*

Povzetek

V prispevku so obravnavani slovenski prevodi vojaškega žargona v dokumentarnem romanu *Sovražne vode*. V uvodnem delu je predstavljen žargon kot jezikoslovna kategorija, opisane so tudi njegove glavne značilnosti v romanu. V nadaljevanju je opisana primerjava med izbranimi primeri iz izvirnika in njihovi slovenskih prevodi. Poudarek je na kolokacijah in pomensko jedrnatimi samostalniškimi zvezami. Primerjava je pokazala, da večino prevodnih premikov povzroči neustrezna interpretacija tehničnih žargonskih izrazov v izvirniku. Posledično bralec ciljnega besedila nekatere situacije dojema drugače kot bralec izvirnika.

Ključne besede: vojaški žargon, žargon, prevod, *Sovražne vode*, prevodni premiki, dokumentarni roman

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Military Jargon in the Slovenian Translation of *Hostile Waters*

1. Introduction

Hostile Waters is a non-fiction novel written by Peter A. Huchthausen, Igor Kurdin and R. Alan White, first published in 1997. Based on real events that took place shortly before the end of the Cold War, it describes the story of the Soviet nuclear submarine *K-219*, which collided with the US nuclear submarine *Augusta* and sank around 1000 km northeast of the Bermudas. The novel, which Tom Clancy in the Foreword called "one of the most fascinating true submarine stories I have ever encountered", was also turned into a movie and translated into other languages.

The Slovenian translation was published under the original title *Hostile Waters* (*Sovražne vode*) in 2002. As a realistic account of Cold War silent service events, the text poses several challenges for the translator. The main one is military, more specifically, navy jargon. Since two of the three authors, Huchthausen and Kurdin, were former navy officers with first-hand Cold War maritime experience (Kurdin even served aboard the *K-219*), the narrative at times is technical and full of navy terminology. Expressions range from the names of the parts of the submarine, weapons and equipment, to military ranks and many others. In addition, both Soviet and American terms are used alongside each other in order to add authenticity to the story. The Slovenian translation testifies to the complexity of translation issues. Even though technical terminology in general is preserved in the target text, technical jargon expressions occasionally deviate from the original. The paper presents a few examples of such translation shifts and their implications with respect to the reader's understanding of the novel.

2. Jargon and military jargon

Jargon has different meanings in linguistics and translation. In *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, it is described as learned or technical language that is used "too obtrusively or (to all appearances) unnecessarily"; it is in this sense a pejorative term (Quirk et al. 24). However, other linguists (e.g., Wodak 1989; Chaika 1980; Romaine 2000) use it as a neutral linguistic term, typically understood as "a speech variety with a minimal linguistic system and great individual variation used for communicating in limited situations between speakers of different languages, e.g. trade" (Romaine 2000, 204). In its denotative meaning, the term often overlaps with other (socio)linguistic terms, such as "argot", the secret language of closed groups, or "slang", which refers to the use of vocabulary that deviates from that of standard language. Other terms that are used almost synonymously with jargon include "occupational language" or "specialized language" or "specialized discourse". Distinctions between them are often negligible and depend on the focus of each individual study.

The main feature of jargon is that it is based grammatically on common language; however, it can differ from it lexically, semantically and syntactically (Wodak 1989, 141). These differences manifest themselves in various ways. In his study of specialized discourse, which to a large extent applies to jargon as well, Maurizio Gotti (2011) identified almost 30 different lexical, syntactic and textual strategies that speakers use (deliberately or accidentally) to communicate inside a particular professional group. The following are a few that have implications for the navy jargon in *Hostile Waters*:

Lexical:

Monoreferentiality. The term is used to indicate that in a given context only one meaning of a term is allowed, and that it cannot be suitably substituted by a synonym "but only by its definition or paraphrase". If users want to define new concepts without ambiguity or misunderstandings, they are forced to create new terms (ibid., 25-26).

Conciseness. The term refers to the practice of expressing concepts in the shortest possible form. In word-formation, various procedures are employed to create short words, such as zero derivation and the omission of affixes or merging of two words into a single word. A common procedure for coining concise terms is through acronyms and abbreviations (ibid., 31-32).

Syntactic:

Premodification. The procedure refers to the phenomenon of relative clause reduction by switching from post- to premodification. In English, this procedure is common because of syntactic rules that allow the noun to be premodified by several nominal adjectives. Such nominal phrases appear in technical English texts up to 15 times more frequently than they do in general English texts (Salager cit. in Gotti 2011, 56).

Lexical density and sentence complexity. With these two terms, Gotti denotes the consequence of frequent nominalization and the use of noun phrases with extensive premodification that results in a high percentage of content words and consequently in increased lexical density (2011, 61-62). Frequently, lexical density and a tendency to use nominalization lead to simple syntactic patterns of the type NOUN PHRASE + VERB + NOUN PHRASE (ibid., 63). Even though such structures are easier to process for the reader from a textual standpoint, their interpretation is more demanding because of the complexity of the noun phrases. Gotti also points out a tendency in specialized discourse to avoid subordination and instead mostly rely on main clauses or coordination of main clauses. On the basis of an analysis of -a specialized corpus, Barber established that as many as 71% of the sentences contained only a main clause (cit. in Gotti 2011, 63-64). When subordinate clauses are used, they are often non-finite.

These and other linguistic devices help jargon perform various functions. Elaine Chaika observed that members of a particular social group, in her case bowlers, communicated with each other in a special way so as to establish themselves as members of that group and that their speech was more important than their performance. Jargon thus serves "to identify and/or exclude" (1980, 80). Wodak likewise underlines the prestige function of jargon. According to her observations based on political jargon, jargon is used to establish group identity, consolidate the group vis-à-vis the external world and designate the group to outsiders (Wodak 1989, 141-142)[1]. Carol Burke found that military speech provides its users an outlet for humor, for the relief of anxiety, and for the expression of frustration (cit. in Kress Gillespie 2012, 117). However, from the point of view of military jargon in *Hostile Waters*, the most important functions of jargon are to communicate specific contents (Wodak 1989, 142) and to achieve communicative efficiency of concepts (Chaika 1980, 80). In practical terms, this means that the crew aboard a submarine uses specific terms whose meaning is clear and unambiguous to all of them and at the same time is as concise and economical as possible. In turn, communication among them is efficient, if to a large extent formulaic; exchanges are brief and swift, leaving the least possible room for interpretation error.

[1] Onič (2006, 164-5) points out the use of jargon to establish identity in Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

2.1 Military Jargon in Translation

For these reasons, translation of military terminology in general poses a challenging task. It is not surprising that most modern armies have special departments and experts that specialize in terminology and communication. NATO, the world's best known and biggest military alliance, for example, has had a terminology standardization department since 1951. Its main task is the standardization of military terminology for all of its members. Slovenia, also a member of NATO, is no exception. Its Ministry of Defense has had specialized terminologists, translators and interpreters since its inception in the early 1990s. Some of its early publications, for example, included two military dictionary handbooks for English and Slovenian (Furlan and Mahnič 1996; 1998). After Slovenia joined NATO in 2004, the need for more systematic terminology management became even more apparent. As a result, a special committee was established in 2007, comprising linguists and military experts in various areas. Their main task is to harmonize terminology with NATO standards and develop glossaries (Pečovnik 2008). Another indicator of the increasing awareness of the importance of military terminology was the publication of a new *English-Slovenian Military Terminological Dictionary* in 2006 (Brinc et al. 2006). As Janko Berlogar points out, the new dictionary is important not only because it adopts terms from elsewhere but also because it demonstrates that we care about appropriate indigenous Slovenian terminology (Berlogar 2006).

These developments in the domain of military terminology in Slovenia have implications for the Slovenian translation of *Hostile Waters*. When the novel was translated, the resources available to the translator were considerably fewer than are available today. While 15 years ago the majority of relevant secondary sources used for translation were on paper, today they are online. This applies to specialized dictionaries and glossaries on military terminology, websites (e.g., a Google search string of "hostile waters, novel, Huchthausen" in April 2014 alone yielded over 30000 hits), specialized military (terminology) forums, to mention only a few.

3. Hostile Waters and the *K-219*

Even though the authors admit that many details of *K-219*'s last voyage are still "shrouded in secrecy" (Huchthausen et al. 1998, v), authorities on both sides agree on the main course of events; *Hostile Waters* is a fictionalized version of them. The story begins in early September 1986, when *K-219* leaves its base in the Barents Sea. Soon after departure, its rocket officer Petrachkov finds that a seal on one of the rocket silos is leaking. Even though he is aware that the situation is dangerous because the rocket fuel contains nitrogen tetroxide and hydrazine, both of which are volatile and highly reactive with common seawater, he decides not to report the leak to Captain Britanov; instead, he decides to control the water level in the silo with the pumps. After an uneventful start to the voyage, the submarine is detected in the Atlantic by the US Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS). It becomes shadowed by an American attack submarine, the USS *Augusta*. Captain Britanov, who has a suspicion about what is going on, decides to dive below the thermocline, a layer of water where sonar and other acoustic signals can be reflected, in an attempt to shake off *Augusta*. Instead, after a few evasive maneuvers, the cat and mouse game ends in a collision between the two submarines and more damage to the problematic rocket silo number six on the *K-219*. After seawater floods it, lethal gas starts to form, and the *K-219* is forced to surface. Even though Moscow demands that Captain Britanov try to save the submarine, he decides to stop the reactor and evacuate the crew; all but four crewmembers are rescued, of whom one sacrificed his life to manually stop the nuclear reaction. The crew are evacuated by a cargo ship to Cuba and then taken back to Russia. Captain Britanov and first engineer Krasilnikov were initially sentenced to 20 years

of hard labor; however, this coincided with a famous incident in which a young West German pilot Mathias Rust penetrated Russian airspace and landed a small plane near Red Square in Moscow, after which the Soviet minister of defense was forced to resign. With the rise of Gorbatchev,the two officers were pardoned and released.

4. Translation of military jargon in *Hostile Waters*

In *Hostile Waters*, navy jargon appears throughout the novel, used both by the third-person narrator as well as the Soviet and American protagonists of the story. The former uses technical terminology when describing events on the submarine; for the latter, the use of jargon is preconditioned by the need for conciseness and monoreferentiality mentioned above. If the crew want to keep their exchanges brief, they must use short but at the same time precise terms in order for communication to be efficient. For the same reason, ellipsis is also employed frequently. As it turns out, translation of navy jargon occasionally poses a problem.

The first example is taken from the introductory part of the novel, where the *K-219*, commanded by Captain Britanov, is exiting the Soviet Northern Fleet base at Gadzhievo. Leaving port with a ten-thousand ton nuclear submarine is a technically demanding task because of its sheer size and the treacherous waters in the channel which lead to the open sea. It is usually done with the aid of special tug boats, which help to face the surfaced submarine towards the desired direction of departure. In the following scene, we learn from the context that the submarine leaves its berth by travelling backwards and then waits for the tug boats to close in and start turning it "until her bow faced north" (Huchthausen et al. 1998, 9). Once the tug boats retreat, the submarine starts moving ahead to leave the base and the fiord. The captain gives the executive officer the following command:

> "Vladimirov?" he said into the intercom. "Come to three five five degrees." **The bow moved to port** (Huchthausen et al. 1998, 12).

The captain's command is simple and comprises only a verb and a prepositional phrase with a number. However, since both the captain and the executive officer share the same jargon, the latter evidently is able to interpret the order correctly, use the rudder and bring the vessel to the requested course of 355°. Next, the narrator takes over and reports that "the bow moved to port", which again is naval jargon that requires maritime knowledge on the part of the reader if he or she is to understand the situation: while "bow" is a relatively common term for the front part of the hull of a vessel, the reader must know that "port" refers to the "left-hand side of a vessel or aircraft, facing forward" (Dictionary.com) in order to understand the situation described: after the submarine is pulled backwards from its berth, the tug boats turn it so that it faces north (its initial precise orientation is unknown), most likely a course of around 360°, after which the engines are started and the submarine starts moving towards the open sea. At the commander's order, it starts turning left (relative to the north).

When the original text is compared to its Slovenian translation, it turns out that the course of events, in particular after Britanov's order, is different:

> "Vladimirov?" je rekel v telefon. "Preidite na tri pet pet stopinj." Kljun se je premaknil **proti pristanišču** (Huchthausen et al. 2002, 20).

As the highlighted part reveals, the translation deviates from the original in the collocation *turn to port*. While in the original the submarine turns left, in the Slovenian version, it turns towards *the*

port (*proti pristanišču*). This indicates that the translator failed to identify the correct – technical – meaning of the word "port" in this context, i.e., the left side of the vessel; instead the expression is interpreted in one of its general meanings as *a place along a coast in which ships may take refuge from storms; harbor* (Dictionary.com). Jargon thus was mistaken for standard language. As a result, the submarine in the Slovenian translation moves in the opposite direction compared to the original. While this is technically possible, the direction is illogical under the circumstances described. If the bow had indeed turned towards the port, that would mean that the submarine would have been sailing back to its original position, contrary to its intention to leave the port and the fiord; also, this would mean that the boat was sailing southward, in contrast with the preceding narrative.

As it turns out, technical collocations present problems elsewhere. A typical example is the collocation *to scram the reactor*. This technical term, common in the jargon of nuclear physicists and hence also nuclear submarines, in the glossary of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission is defined as *the sudden shutting down of a nuclear reactor, usually by a rapid insertion of control rods either automatically or manually by the reactor operator* (*NUREG-1350* 2013, 202). Its etymology is also interesting from the point of view of the Slovenian translation. A deeply engrained legend has it that the collocation was first used during the first experiment involving a sustained chain nuclear reaction on December 2, 1942 as part of the Manhattan Project. According to the legend, the physicist Enrico Fermi coined the word from an acronym that stood for the Safety Control Rod Axe Man, Norman Hilberry, whose task was to interrupt a possible runaway reaction by using an axe to cut a rope that would allow the backup safety control rod to drop into the pile. However, as was discovered by the researcher Tom Wellock of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, who interviewed Hilberry's replacement, Warren Nyer, the term had a more prosaic history. Nyer dismissed the axe-man story as "a bunch of baloney". He explained that another physicist involved in the experiment, Volney "Bill" Wilson, was asked what the purpose was of a big red knob on the panel. Wilson replied that one would have to hit it in case of a problem. When asked what to do next, he replied: "Well, you scram … out of here." The word seems to have been derived from American slang (Wellock 2011). Regardless of its real etymology, the expression thus still has two meanings.

In *Hostile Waters*, this collocation first appears after an explosion aboard the submarine when it becomes clear that the reactors will most likely have to be shut down. However, a technical problem occurs at that point:

> Britanov heard the thin blade of panic in Kapitulsky's normally unflappable demeanor. Shutting down a reactor was normally accomplished from Kapitulsky's station. But he was no longer connected to his power plants. It was why he sounded so brittle, so near to breaking. If Kapitulsky could lose control anyone could. Even Britanov. "Gennady. Listen to me. Belikov is back there. Have him revert the reactors to manual control and **scram them** if he has to." (Huchthausen et al. 1998, 156).

The passage reveals that the main propulsion engineer, Kapitulsky, has realized that he can no longer control the reactor from outside. Upon learning this, Captain Britanov instructs him to have Reactor Officer Belikov revert the reactors to manual control and shut them down if necessary. The narrator provides a verbatim version of captain Britanov's instructions. As the highlighted part indicates, he does not use the standard technical expression for the procedure; instead, he reverts to jargon and has Belikov *scram* the reactors. This is understandable from a narratological point of view, since in a dangerous situation speakers are more likely to use jargon instead of standard language because it is communicatively more efficient and it also relieves tension (Chaika 1980, 80-81). The translation, however, deviates from the original:

> Britanov je v običajno hladnokrvnem vedenju Kapitulskega zaslišal rahlo preplašenost. Reaktorje so ustavljali s položaja, kjer je bil Kapitulski, a zdaj ni imel več povezave s svojima elektrarnama. Zato je zvenel tako krhek, tako blizu zloma. Če bi Kapitulski izgubil nadzor, potem so ga vsi. Celo Britanov. »Genadij. Poslušajte me. Belikov je tam. Reaktorja naj naravna na ročno upravljanje in **se nemudoma umakne stran od njih**, če je potrebno« (Huchthausen et al. 2002, 114).

As the highlighted part reveals, the captain's instructions are considerably different. While in the original Belikov was asked to shut down the reactors if necessary, he is now told to *move away from them immediately* (*se nemudoma umakne stran od njih*) if necessary. The reader of the Slovenian translation will thus perceive the same situation completely differently. Initially, it is hard to understand this decision by the translator, particularly in the light of the given context. However, it seems that the translator was misled by the other, intransitive meaning of the verb *to scram*, which is an informal, slang expression for saying *to go away; get out (usually used as a command)* (Dictionary.com). Nuclear jargon thus seems to have been misinterpreted for slang, which is difficult to understand because trying to do at least something to prevent a runaway nuclear reaction on a crippled submarine would be more logical than to do nothing. In addition, the translation uses strictly Standard Slovenian and is thus in terms of register remote from the original in this respect.

To add to the confusion, a few pages later it turns out that the translator may have been aware of the other meaning of the verb *to scram* anyway. When it becomes clear that the reactors will have to be shut down manually, the captain tells Belikov that he is the one to carry out the deadly operation:

> "We have to **scram the reactors**. You'll have to go in. There are some protective suits in eight but they –" (Huchthausen et al. 1998, 158)

As can be seen, the captain gives the instructions using the same collocation *scram the reactors*. This time, it was translated in the following way:

> "**Umiriti moramo reaktorja**. Iti boste morali noter. V osmici so zaščitne obleke, a ..." (Huchthausen et al. 2002, 115).

As the highlighted part indicates, the translator used a collocation that literally translates as *We need to calm down the reactors (Umiriti moramo reaktorja)*. This choice is much closer to the original in terms of its denotative meaning and the desired effect of Belikov's action; however, it still differs from the original collocation in terms of its commonality. While scram is the standard technical collocation for the procedure of shutting down a reactor in English, Slovenian *umiriti reaktor* is not as common, in particular not as a technical term describing the action of interrupting the chain reaction; instead, it has a more general meaning of bringing the reactor under control. A search in the corpus of Slovenian corroborates this. While *umiriti reaktor* does not appear at all, by far the most frequent collocation (5th overall) with the same denotative meaning is *ustaviti reaktor* (*to stop the reactor*); others are noticeably less frequent (Gigaplus.net).

Inconsistency in translation not only affects collocations, it also appears in various technical nominal phrases, in particular complex ones, which are another common feature of the navy jargon in *Hostile Waters*. The main reason they appear frequently is that they are concise, have a clear meaning and are thus economical from a communicative point of view. A typical example

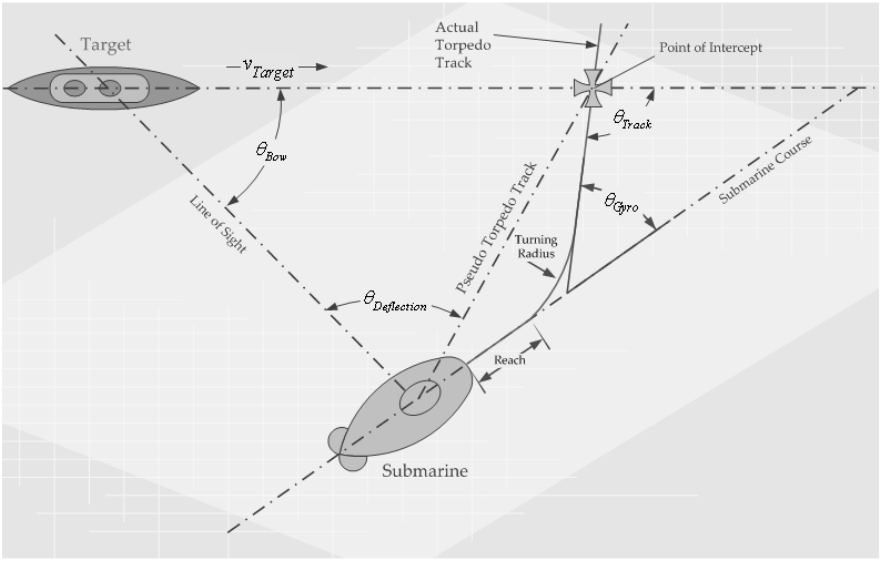

Figure 1: ***Torpedo fire-control problem (hnsa.org)***

is the nautical term *angle on the bow*, which in a US submarine navigation manual is described as *the angle between the line of sight and the target's bow measured to port or starboard of the target's bow from 0 degrees to 180 degrees* (*Submarine Torpedo Fire Control Manual* 1950, 1-1). It is presented schematically in Figure 1 (hnsa.org).

In the novel, the expression appears in a scene that describes USS *Augusta* during a torpedo practice run on a US Navy frigate. As the submarine prepares to "attack", the situation is described as follows:

> The quartermaster squeezed the button on the scope's "pickle", transmitting the attack data automatically to the Mark 117 fire control computer. "**Angle on bow, starboard twenty**. Range three hundred yards" (Huchthausen et al. 1998, 30).

The quartermaster reads out the data as it is transmitted automatically to the torpedo fire-control computer. This is standard procedure for firing torpedoes during which the submarine must obtain various items of information about the target. The most important of these are the target's speed, angle on bow (obtained by determining its course) and range, as well as the firing submarine's speed and course. Because these factors change quickly, submarines have torpedo fire-control computers that automatically perform the trigonometric calculations required to compute a target intercept course for the torpedo. This ensures that a correct firing solution is used in order to actually hit the target. The highlighted part shows that the captain's readout of the angle is *Angle on bow, starboard twenty*, which means that the frigate is in front of them, coming in from the left. Since both interlocutors are using jargon, the sentence functions in the most reduced form, in particular without any verb; instead, the verb is only implied (e.g., *The angle on bow between the ship's course and the line of sight is twenty degrees on the starboard side*). The Slovenian translation in this instance follows the same pattern:

> Navigacijski podčastnik je pritisnil gumb na periskopu, s čimer se je podatek avtomatično prenesel v računalnik mark 117 za vodenje izstrelkov. "**Kot na premcu, dvajset desno**. Oddaljenost tristo metrov" (Huchthausen et al. 2002, 31).

In the highlighted translation, whose meaning is almost the same as the English, the translator preserved the denotative meaning of the original as well as its jargon character by keeping it implicit and leaving out any redundant explanation. However, as the next example shows, this changes when the same expression is used in a different situation. In this passage, the *K-219* is damaged after it suffers an explosion in rocket silo six and has surfaced, observed by *Augusta*. Since *Augusta's* captain does not know exactly what *K-219*'s intentions are, he wants to be ready in case it is necessary to sink it. The situation is narrated as follows:

> The quartermaster squeezed the button on his pickle, transmitting the precise bearing to the Mk 117 fire control computer. "**Angle on bow, port fifteen**," he said to Von Suskil (Huchthausen et al. 1998, 115).

The highlighted quartermaster's readout in terms of form is the same as in the previous situation, which indicates that the target lock-in procedure is standardized and formulaic and is common jargon for the crew. The only difference is in the angle, which now is fifteen degrees, and the position of the target, the *K-219*, which is now approaching *Augusta* from the right. In the Slovenian translation, however, the same situation is described differently:

> Navigacijski podčastnik je pritisnil gumb in vnesel natančni položaj v računalnik, ki je nadzoroval izstrelitev Mk 117. »**Nagib trupa za petnajst stopinj levo**,« je povedal Von Suskilu (Huchthausen et al. 2002, 86).

As can be seen in the highlighted part, the translator has modified the quartermaster's readout. Unlike in the original, where he provides a standard readout for the position of the target relative to *Augusta*, the quartermaster now reports that the *hull is swayed fifteen degrees to the left* or perhaps that the *hull should sway fifteen degrees to the left*, depending on the interpretation, since the sentence contains no verb and allows both readings. Neither of them, however, corresponds to the situation. While in the original the quartermaster is clearly relaying data used by the fire control computer, in the Slovenian translation, he seems to be making reference to the angle at which the *K-219* is swayed, or, much less likely, to the way *Augusta* should sway its hull in order to adopt a better attack angle. Neither of those readings, however, allow the reader of the translation to fully understand the situation. For this reason, it would be better if the translator had translated it the same way as on page 31; an even better alternative would have been to use instead of *kot na premcu* the terms *premčev kot* or *premčni kot*, which are common in Slovenian maritime navigation (cf. Švetak).

Besides collocations, another difficult point involves technical, lexically dense nominal phrases. Such phrases are common in specialized discourse because they are concise and communicatively efficient. They often represent a short equivalent of what would otherwise be longer phrases and sentences. As Gotti points out, an established way of making sentences "lighter" is to replace postmodification in noun phrases with relative clauses with adjectives derived from them (Metal which can be worked → workable metal) or turn a verb into a past participle and place it in a premodifying position (Air which is compressed can be used for several purposes → Compressed air can be used for several purposes) (2011, 51-52). Another common way to increase semantic weight of nominal phrases is by nominal adjectivation, where nouns are used instead of adjectives for attributive functions. As Hughes has shown, compounds of the type *gravity anomaly* or *energy-*

rich molecules in scientific texts are favored compared to equivalent forms where adjectives have an attributive function (cit. in Gotti 2011, 56).

The jargon in *Hostile Waters* includes many phrases of this type, some of which pose a translation problem. A typical example appears in the introductory part of the novel, where the narrator describes the system of patrol boxes near the US East Coast, in which Soviet submarines – including the *K-219* – operated, ready to launch nuclear missiles against major American cities if ordered to do so:

> Each box contained a Soviet ballistic missile boat tasked with launching nuclear tipped rockets against major American cities. They were there to give the Russians what was known as a "**depressed trajectory shot**"; the ability to fire a missile and have it arrive over its target almost before NORAD could send out the warning (Huchthausen et al. 1998, 28).

The problematic term in the passage is the highlighted noun phrase *depressed trajectory shot*. The phrase is a military-specific technical term used in relation to Cold War special ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads called DTSLBMs or *depressed trajectory submarine launched ballistic missiles*. As their name indicates, these missiles were launched from (submerged) submarines and were designed to fly at low-apogee or "depressed" trajectories (Gronlund and Wright 1992, 103). Thus, they could have *significantly shorter flight paths, and therefore significantly shorter flight times, than those flown on a standard trajectory of the same range* (ibid.). This explains why they were used on submarines close to the US coast. Because of shorter flight paths and significantly shorter flight times they were, in theory, harder to detect in time and counter by defense systems such as NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command), which is mentioned in the passage. In the Slovenian translation, the phrase is problematic:

> Na vsakem območju je bila sovjetska ladja, oborožena z balističnimi izstrelki, katere naloga je bila izstrelitev rakete z jedrskimi konicami na pomembna ameriška mesta. Tam so bile, da bi jih Rusi lahko izstrelili in zadeli cilj skorajda prej, preden bi NORAD lahko izdal opozorilo (Huchthausen et al. 2002, 30).

In the second sentence, the phrase and its meaning are completely omitted. Instead, the sentence only reports that the missiles *were there, so that the Russians could fire them and hit the target almost before NORAD could send out the warning*, not explaining what the advantage of low-trajectory missiles was. In turn, the reader of the translation does not understand why NORAD would be unable to send out the warning. Part of the problem is in the lexical density of the phrase, which comprises the noun *shot* as the headword, which is premodified by the noun *trajectory*, which in turn is premodified by the past participle *depressed*. The longer version of the phrase thus would be *a shot whose trajectory is depressed* or a *shot with a depressed trajectory*. While a direct translation of the original nominal phrase is not possible, the latter paraphrase could also be used to find its equivalent in Slovenian: *strel z nizko krivuljo leta*. If *strel* (*shot*) was replaced with *izstrelek* (*missile*), the translated sentence would render the meaning of the original even better and also familiarize the reader with the advantages of a DTSLBM. Another possibility would be to provide an explanation of the term in a footnote.

Difficulties with translating nominal phrases of this type manifest themselves in a similar example. In the following passage, the narrator describes a US Navy officer from the Fleet Ocean Surveillance Information Center who is looking at maps and preparing intelligence for the deputy chief of staff:

> Lieutenant Commander Gail Robinson was staring up at the wall-sized chart of the Atlantic Ocean, putting together the overall picture to give the deputy chief of staff for intelligence. She focused on the three Redfleet missile patrol boxes right off the US shore; **the so-called depressed trajectory zones** from which a missile could put a warhead over Washington in a matter of minutes. A Soviet preemptive strike designed to kill American leaders in one swift stroke would come from one, or all three, of these boxes (Huchthausen et al. 1998, 132).

Syntactically, the phrase is similar to the one in the previous example. With the exception of the determiner *the* and the first participial adjective *so-called*, which, however, do not semantically affect the remainder of the phrase, it features the same premodified adjectivized nominal attribute (*depressed trajectory*) as the previous example; the only difference is in the headword *zones* (and its number). Thus, while the first example describes the type of shot, the second describes the type of zone from which missiles with depressed trajectory can be fired. In the Slovenian translation, however, the meaning of the phrase changes:

> Namestnica poveljnika Gail Robinson je strmela v zemljevid Atlantskega oceana, ki je pokrival celo steno, in se pripravljala na poročilo odgovornemu v štabu obveščevalne službe. Osredotočila se je na tri patruljna območja Rdeče flote tik ob ameriški obali; **tako imenovanih pasivnih trajektornih območjih**, s katerih je raketa lahko v nekaj minutah odposlala bojno konico nad Washington. Tako bi Sovjeti prizadeli ameriške voditelje z enim samim naglim udarcem, ki naj bi priletel z enega ali vseh treh območij (Huchthausen et al. 2002, 97).

The translator decided to translate the original phrase as *the so-called passive trajectory/trajectorial zones* (*tako imenovanih pasivnih trajektornih območjih*), which is a deviation from the original. While the nominal attribute in English makes it clear that reference is being made to zones from which missiles with low trajectories can be fired, in Slovenian, the meaning is vague, because the adjective *trajektoren* – which is uncommon in Slovenian – does not suggest in any way that the zone is instrumental in firing missiles; instead it can be understood as a zone that is located on some trajectory or as a zone of a trajectory character. In addition, the preceding adjective *pasiven* does not help clarify the meaning; on the contrary, it suggests that the trajectory/trajectorial zones are passive in character, without making it clear in what sense. Both examples indicate that the translator failed to correctly interpret the meaning of the *depressed trajectory* nominal attribute and, consequently, of the entire phrase. As a result, both translations are vague and incorrect and leave the reader at a loss with respect to the implications of depressed trajectories.

5. Conclusion

A comparison of *Hostile Waters* to its Slovenian translation reveals discrepancies between the two texts with respect to navy jargon. Our focus was on technical collocations and complex nominal phrases as two typical features. We found that the main problem with the translation was incorrect interpretation of navy and military jargon in the original because it is often technical in character and requires specialized knowledge from these two domains in order to be understood. As a result, the Slovenian translations of these terms are imprecise or incorrect. These translation shifts, in turn, have an impact on the reader's understanding and perception of the narrative. Occasionally, the reader of the translation, compared to the reader of the original text, is unable to fully understand certain situations in the novel. Even though the Slovenian translation of *Hostile Waters* is, in general, a quality rendition of the original, in particular since considerably fewer on-line secondary resources were available in Slovenian, compared to English, occasionally what is otherwise standard jargon in the original becomes less convincing non-standard technical language in the target text.

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