

**MILITARY JARGON USED BY THE FIRST  
RECONNAISSANCE MARINES IN *GENERATION KILL*  
MINISERIES**

**THESIS**



**By**

**Yohanes Alan Darmasaputra**

**Reg. Number: A73215136**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES  
UIN SUNAN AMPEL SURABAYA**

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NIM : A73215136  
Department : English  
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by  
Yohanes Alan Darmasaputra  
Reg. Number: A73215136

Approved to be examined by the Board of Examiners, English Department, Faculty  
of Arts and Humanities, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

Surabaya, July 20, 2021  
Thesis Advisor



Raudlotul Jannah, M.App.Ling.  
NIP. 197810062005012004

Acknowledged by:  
The Head of English Department



Dr. Wahyu Kusumajanti, M.Hum  
NIP.197002051999032002

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This thesis of Yohanes Alan Darmasaputra (Reg. Number: A73215136) has been approved and accepted by the Board of Examiners, English Department, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya on August , 2021.

The Board of Examiners are:

Examiner 1



**Raudlotul Jannah, M.App.Ling.**  
NIP.197810062005012004

Examiner 2



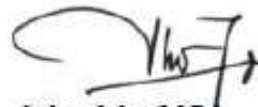
**Prof. Dr. Zuliati Rohmah, M.Pd**  
NIP.197303032000032001

Examiner 3



**Dr. Mohammad Kurjum, M.Ag**  
NIP.196909251994031002

Examiner 4



**Suhandoko, M.Pd.**  
NIP.19890528218011002

Acknowledged by:

The Dean of Faculty of Arts and Humanities  
UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya



**Dr. H. Agus Aditoni, M. Ag**  
NIP. 196210021992031001



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Jl. Jend. A. Yani 117 Surabaya 60237 Telp. 031-8431972 Fax.031-8413300  
E-Mail: [perpus@uinsby.ac.id](mailto:perpus@uinsby.ac.id)

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Fakultas/Jurusan : ADAB DAN HUMANIORA / SAstra INGGRIS  
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language varies according to its uses as well as its users, according to where it is used and to whom, as well as according to who is using it. The addressee and the context affect our choice of code or variety, whether language, dialect, or style (Holmes, 2013, p. 239). According to the previous statement, it can be concluded that many factors and reasons cause language variety. People's interaction with others has resulted in the language to grow and develop in society.

There are many types of people having so many different backgrounds. They may have different occupations, different social statuses, and different cultures. Each of these differences affects the language used for their communication. Even though the messages or information they deliver are the same, their choice of utterances bears specific characteristics that might differ from others. It shows variations in language as a result of people's interaction process.

The study related to language varieties in a particular society is called jargon. As a part of language variation, jargon concerns the language used in a particular community. According to Holmes, sociolinguistics is concerned about the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. Examining the way people use language in different social contexts provides wealthy information about the way language works, as well as about the social relationships in a community (Holmes, 2013, p. 1). It can be concluded that language owned and used by a particular community has certain characteristics and contexts that reinforce its user's identity.

A register is defined as a language used by a particular group or community in which its members share common interests or occupations or a language used, such as the language of engineers, paramedics, academicians, etc. Ferguson (1994) mentioned that people participating in recurrent communication situations tend to develop similar vocabularies, similar features of intonation, and characteristic bits of syntax and phonology that they use in those situations (cited in Biber & Finegan, 1994, p.20). Ferguson's statement means that the characteristics of the register in certain communities were developed by its members who frequently meet and conduct the same activity or perform activity for the common purpose. On the other hand, jargon is a set of special or technical words or vocabularies used by a particular community. Additionally, Hornby mentioned that jargon consists of technical words or expressions used by a particular profession or group of people and is difficult for others to understand (Hornby, 1995, p. 296)

There are blur lines in terms of register and jargon. Several experts agree to name register as a big umbrella covering jargon and several special languages that are owned and used by particular community. Register focuses on the level of formality in a certain situation, such as the language used during a class meeting is different from the language used in the coffee shop. In comparison, Jargon focuses on the sets of vocabulary items used by an individual or a group of communities in certain matters and certain purposes. Both register and jargon were connected by their function and purposes. A teacher uses formal language and speaks academic jargon while teaching and learning process in a class. The

level of formality was part of the register while using specific academic vocabularies was part of the jargon. A language used in one community might have different pronunciations, intonation, writing, and vocabulary from other languages.

As mentioned before, register and jargon are strongly associated with communities. A community is a social unit or group of people with something significant in common or working for a common purpose. There are many communities in our society, such as the bicycle community, designer community, gaming community, occupation-based community, and many more. Each group or community has characteristics and different languages. They agree to share specific vocabularies that can only be understood by the community member, which is known as jargon. Usually, their language usage technically makes their communication simpler and easier when they are performing activities. Besides, the usage of their language indicates that their communities exist in society.

One of many professions that has its language is armed forces or military forces. Jargon in the military profession can be categorized as occupation-based style jargon. The military personnel speak and communicate using a language that can only be understood by themselves, especially during their time performing duties, in the middle of the battlefield, or back in the base. Military jargon can be found in real life or even in some movies. In real life, the use of jargon by military personnel can be found in real-combat footage videos, military books, or military documentation. While in some movie movies, jargon

can be found in the dialogue script between the characters. The source for actual military jargon is generally restricted to the public, especially the jargon used on the battlefield. Subsequently, quite a few movies provide concrete military jargon accurately. One of the movies that provide military jargon is the HBO miniseries entitled *Generation Kill*. *Generation Kill* is an American television miniseries produced for HBO that aired from July to August 2008. This miniseries is based on Evan Wright's book about his experience as an embedded reporter with the United States Marine Corps' 1st Reconnaissance Battalion 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon Bravo company "Hitman" during the 2003 invasion of Iraq and eventually was adapted for television by David Simon, Ed Burns, and Wright. Vocabularies used by marines in the *Generation Kill* series have different characteristics apart from the typical standard English language used as an identity marker reinforced by force recon marines. Therefore, the language used by the First Reconnaissance Marine member in *Generation Kill* is considered jargon.

In this Study, the researcher investigates the use of jargon by the characters in the *Generation Kill* series. The language used by the characters in the *Generation Kill* series represents the jargon used by the real-life United States Marines Corps. The researcher chooses to study the jargon used by the marines in the *Generation Kill* series because the variety of language used in the series is unique to be analyzed and interested to be discussed because language is dynamic. The language used by characters representing the First Reconnaissance Marines has its characteristics different from other

communities. The language used by First Reconnaissance Marines is situational context-based. The use of particular language frequently appears in conversation among the members of First Reconnaissance Marines in the series. The audience, mostly ordinary people with no military background knowledge, often finds it hard to understand the terms used in the series. Only the insider (First Reconnaissance Marine and military personnel) used the terms in the series or even in the battleground. Based on the previous phenomena, this study intends to investigate the jargon used by 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon Bravo Company 1<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Marine Battalion in HBO miniseries entitled *Generation Kill*.

In correlation with this research, the researcher used some previous studies related to this research to help him to developed his research. Here, the researcher put three previous research that concern language jargon. The first related study was conducted by Dwi Sugiyarti (2012). She analyzed the military jargon used by Special Forces in a movie entitled *Behind Enemy Lines: Colombia*. Sugiyarti collected the data by reading the movie script and found many technical terms related to special military operations. Another study was conducted by Fadillah Rizky Perdana (2015) about the naval jargon in an action movie entitled *Battleship*. It aimed to discover the jargon used by the international navy in the *Battleship* movie and compare the international navy jargon to the jargon used by the Indonesian Navy. The third study was done by Rinaldi (2014) about military jargon in video games entitled *Call of Duty*. He aimed to discover the jargon used by the characters in video games. The data were collected by reading and marking the dialogue script of characters in *Call of Duty*. The researcher found



out that the jargon used in *Call of Duty* is about technical terms used by Allied forces during the World War II era.

However, several gaps can be found in the previous studies. Sugiyarti's study discovers the jargon used by US Navy SEAL in a movie. On her research, she discovers military jargon and attempting to implement it in the teaching and learning process. In Sugiyarti's research, the meaning of military jargon was not explained in detail. She did mix the type of jargon found in her research, consisting of abbreviation, word, and phrases type. In her research, Sugiyarti did not explain the meaning of abbreviation types. For example, "SEAL" which have meaning Sea Air Land, it refers to the name of the Special Forces unit in her research object. The second study analyzed the military jargon of the international navy in a movie entitled *Battleship*. In this study, the researcher found the technical terms related to oceanography and naval warfare. Not many similar military vocabularies were found, besides the researcher also did compare the international naval jargon to the jargon used by Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Laut. The third study also had a lack. The jargon on the third research was used by the military community in the World War II era. Since a language has characteristics that develop over time, most of the jargon used in the World War II-era is irrelevant to be used by the military community in the present day.

This research is intended to fill the gap from the earlier studies and discover more about military jargon that appears in *Generation Kill* miniseries, especially the vocabularies used by the characters that represent the First Reconnaissance











































and word jargon. The researcher also distinguishes the jargon based on its meaning, literal meaning, and non-literal meaning. The military jargon with literal meaning does not need any additional context since the meaning represents the original text's exact words. An example of military jargon that has a literal meaning in *Generation Kill* is the term gunner. This term directly refers to military personnel who operates or specialized in using a machine gun.

Military jargon that has non-literal meaning requires specific background information and additional context related to its usage. An example of military jargon with non-literal meaning in *Generation Kill* is the term “bird” The term “bird” refers to a vertebrate animal that can fly and lay eggs. Meanwhile, in *Generation Kill*, the jargon “bird” refers to the helicopter that can transport marines and provide fire support. Detailed explanations of the meaning of military jargon used by First Reconnaissance Marines in *Generation Kill* miniseries are shown below.

#### **4.1.2.1 Number jargon**

The researcher found 10 number jargon used by the characters representing the First Reconnaissance Marines in *Generation Kill* miniseries. The number jargon is presented in table 4.2 below.











































































**Table 4.5 word jargon used by The First Reconnaissance Marines in *Generation Kill***

Jargon	Meaning in <i>Generation Kill</i>	Type of Meaning	
		Literal	Non-literal
Armors	This term refers to the thick armor of the tank body	V	
Actual	The Reconnaissance Marines used this term to refers a leader or officer		V
Skinny	The First Reconnaissance Marines uses this term to refers information related to military operation		V
Irregulars	This term refers to non-professional military forces, or it can be classified as militia.		V
Optic	This term refers to an action of spotting an object or enemy presence using telescope or binocular		V
Air	This term refers to the plane or helicopter that provides fire support		V
Storm	The desert storm Shamal that blows in Iraq region	V	
Rotary	This term refers to the rotor blades of helicopter		V
Smoked	The informal term that refers to the condition of a marine who was killed by getting shot		V
Ass	The term that First Reconnaissance Marines used to refers a tank		V
Klicks	This term refers to kilometer, the parameter for counting the distance		V
Victors	First Reconnaissance Marines used this term to refer to a group of vehicles in <i>Generation Kill</i>		V
Grunts	The terms used by the marines to refers an infantry		V
Corpsman	This term refers to a US Navy doctor that joining the marines corps	V	

Here are the following detailed explanation of the context and the meaning of word jargon used by Force Reconnaissance Marines in *Generation Kill* miniseries.



























#### 4.1.3.1 Efficiency of Communication

The main purpose of communication is that the sender conveys messages to the recipient without reducing the message's information. The researcher found out the technical term employs by The First Reconnaissance Marines in *Generation Kill* miniseries has played its fundamental role as a language item that helps the marines to deliver information during communication, especially on the battlefield. The information related to tactics, strategies, status, and reports that were frequently discussed on the radio or even the direct conversation was clearly delivered with the help of several technical terms owned by The First Reconnaissance Marines community. The jargon such as "SITREP," "Good Effect," "Clear Hot," "blue on blue," "Oscar Mike," and "Step off" provides clear information in a very short way and is efficient for saying the status and situation encountered by the marines during the mission. The term "SITREP" was used for stating the situation and condition of the marines, or the situation of the battle. It is way too wordy for asking the condition of the battlefield or the unit in the battlefield in a way like this "unit blablabla, how was the condition of the battle? Do we have casualties? Is there any obstacle? How many enemies?". In other hand, it is simple and clear for asking the condition of the marines unit or the battle situation by using the term "Unit 01, SITREP" so the marines will reply it by stating like this "This is unit 01, we're pinned down, we have two wounded marines (stating the condition of unit), there's an enemy machine



show the identity of the member of First Reconnaissance Marines. The jargon discussed above also can only be understood by the member of First Reconnaissance Marines. There are several jargon that only used and known by the reconnaissance marines, while several others are commonly known by people outside the first reconnaissance community. An example of the term that stands as identity marker for First Reconnaissance Marines is “Devil Dogs” this term refers to the history of the United States Marines Corp back in World War I. The marines earned the name “devil dogs” from their enemy, the Prussian “German” during the battle in 1918. The marines fought hard like a dog, an aggressive dog that possessed by the devil. To the present day, the name “Devil Dogs” is tagged along the United States Marine Corps. The name “Devil Dog” is categorized as a jargon, but this term was known by many people outside the Reconnaissance Community. So the jargon has its function as a marker for the member of the First Reconnaissance marines.

When the jargon was spoken, people will notice that the terminology might be part of reconnaissance marines or any community closely related to reconnaissance marines. The researcher uses the word “corpsman,” the word corpsman refers to the navy doctor who qualified to fight along with the marines corps. The military community that uses the term corpsman for



Marines used the Abbreviation jargon refers to the name of a thing, object, or unit, the rank and role of marines, and the parameter or measurement. For example, B.D.A or Battle Damage Assessment is a report of damage caused by fire support. Another example, Lt or Lieutenant is a rank for those responsible for commanding a platoon of marines; and, mikes, the military phonetic for “m” refers to minutes used by the first reconnaissance personnel to measure the estimation or the duration of action.

The second things to discuss in this part of the section are the meaning of each 82 jargon found in *Generation Kill*. The researcher attempts to classify each jargon's meaning into two types of meaning: literal meaning and non-literal meaning based on Hurford and Saeed's theory of meaning. The findings show that most of the military jargon used by the characters in this miniseries has non-literal meaning. For example, 25mm refers to the type of ammunition used in the light armored canon, and B.R.C or Basic Reconnaissance Course, a school for marines before joining the First Reconnaissance Battalion.

On the other hand, only several military jargons have the literal meaning, which means that the jargon does not require additional context since the literal represents the original text's exact words. For example, the term gunner has literally referred to the person that operates a certain gun. And, fight dirty, which means that the first reconnaissance marines were expected to fight on an environment or battlefield was exposed to chemical material. The term dirty refers to using the chemical material as a weapon that Geneva Convention banned because its impact on humans is incurable even after the war.

The third thing discussed in this section is the function of military jargon in *Generation Kill* miniseries. According to Brown and Attardo (2000), jargon has two primary functions; the first function of jargon is to provide the speakers of specialized domains with clear, unambiguous terms to refer to their activities. The second function of jargon is to provide speakers of a sub-group to mark in-group membership and exclude outsiders (Brown and Attardo, 2000, p. 119). The findings show that the military jargon used in *Generation Kill* miniseries shows similar functions as Brown and Attardo's theory. It serves two main functions: efficiency of communication and showing identity.

The efficiency of the communication function covers several sub-functions: giving situation reports, warning, and giving a command. An example of giving situation report function is the use of jargon "good effect." The marines used this technical term to report the damage caused by fire support on targeted objects or buildings. Further, the giving warning function is using jargon "blue on blue," which means that two units of the allied unit were accidentally shooting each other. The marines used the jargon "blue on blue" to warn the unit that shot the allied forces to stop shooting immediately. Last, the example of giving command was shown in jargon "step off", this jargon has meaning as proceed to go for next mission. The term "step off" was given by the officer to marines when they are about to do a mission.

Next, the main function of jargon in *Generation Kill* miniseries is showing the identity as a part of First Reconnaissance Marines jargon serve two main functions. The findings show that almost all the jargon in *Generation Kill* formed



a marker for its user. The researcher takes two examples of jargon that could be used as the identity marker for its speaker. They are the jargon: “Devil Dog” and “get some” The term “Devil Dog” is a nickname or another name of the Marine Corps, the Marines used it to call out another marine. Moreover, “Get some” is jargon owned by the Marines Corps. The marines used this term to express their excitement about something related to their pride.

Moreover, there are different focuses in this research among other researches done before. In this research, the writer focuses on the use of military jargon used by Force Reconnaissance Marines. Then the writer found four kinds of military jargon used by the characters represent Force Reconnaissance Marines and two main functions of the jargon. The only thing differentiating this research from previous research is that the researcher uses *Generation Kill* miniseries as the data source. The researcher analyzes the military jargon based on its type and its function.

This findings of this research is similar to two previous research in terms of the types of the military jargon and showing the function as Brown and Attardo’s theory. This research found four types of military jargon as well as the research done by Perdana (2015). She also found four types of naval jargon, they are acronym jargon, abbreviation jargon, phrases, and word jargon. For example, *CIWS*, *XO*, *John Paul Jones*, and *roger*. The term “CIWS” stands for Close in Weapon System was used for referring the name of weapon system. next, the term “XO” or Executive Officer refers to the rank or the role of a sailor who responsible in the ship. Then, the term “John Paul Jones” refers to the name of the

US navy ship. Last, the term roger was used by military personnel and law enforcement to indicating that the messages relayed to them has been received. This research, however, also found four types of military jargon, except for the acronym types mixed into abbreviations, and this research found the use of number-based jargon.

This research also similar to the previous research was done by Rinaldi (2018). He found the two functions of jargon on his research. As Brown and Attardo said, jargon primarily has two main functions, and they are: providing speakers of specialized domains with clear, unambiguous terms to refer to their activities and providing speakers of a sub-group with a means of marking in group membership and excluding outsiders. Rinaldi found military jargon that functioned as an unambiguous term in communication among the soldier in *Call of Duty*, such as the term “incoming” and. The soldier used the term incoming to mention there is enemy artillery or mortar round fires toward their position. It is too wordy and long to explain and mention the coming of enemy artillery or mortar rounds in a chaotic situation requiring quick action to save their lives. To ease the wordy warning sign, the soldier uses the term “incoming”. Rinaldi found jargon that shows the second function of jargon that serves as a means of marking of soldiers in *Call of Duty*, such as “squad” this jargon means as a sub-unit of infantry platoon. This jargon functioned as a marking to show the closeness and relationship of its member and exclude the non-member of their infantry squad.



the majority of military jargon in *Generation Kill* has non-literal meanings.

For instance, *brass-check*, *25mm*, and *R.T.O.*

Last, the military term that appears in *Generation Kill* miniseries has two primary functions of military jargon. The first function of military jargon is providing the Force Reconnaissance Marines technical terms that helping them establish efficient communication. The second function of military jargon served as an identity marker for showing identity as a part of Force Reconnaissance Marines

## **5.2 Suggestion**

The researcher suggests the future researchers who want to study jargon, especially military jargon to apply this theory with register theory. Both are considered as language variations, and there's no clear line between jargon and register. The register is concerned with the formality of conversation or dialogues, while jargon focuses on the vocabularies or technical terms. Both can be connected by analyzing the formality of conversation or dialogue, resulting in particular jargon in a specific community. Last, the writer hopes this study will benefit the readers in enriching their knowledge about language variety, especially the military jargon.



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