



BETTER COOPERATION FOR BETTER OPERATION OF THE FUTURE VISEGRAD EU BATTLE GROUP

WYŻSZA SZKOŁA OFICERSKA
WOJSK ŁĄDOWYCH
im.gen. Tadeusza Kościuszki

EDITED BY
MAREK KULCZYCKI

WROCŁAW 2013

*The project „Better cooperation for better operation of the future Visegrad EU Battle Group”
is partly funded by the Standard Grant of the International Visegrad Fund*

Reviewers:

Brigadier General Professor Dr. József PADÁNYI (Hungary)
Colonel (Ret.) Professor Andrzej BUJAK, PhD (Poland)

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Publisher

CHROMA Drukarnia
Krzysztof Raczkowski
ul. Przemysłowa 5
68-200 Żary

Principal

**The General Tadeusz Kosciuszko
Military Academy of Land Forces
Wroclaw, Poland**

Edition 150 pcs

ISBN 978-83-61315-68-1

COL Miroslaw SMOLAREK*

ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR MULTINATIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Abstract: Changes in the global security environment faces the contemporary world, defined new tasks for military. Armed forces cooperate more and more combined, which means, in operations participate troops from many countries. In order to effectively accomplish given tasks the soldiers have to communicate effectually and use common language. The author's survey concerning preparation of the Polish land forces officers for utilization of specialized military terminology shows gaps in this matter, areas for improvement and need for developing common linguistic military training concept.

Key words: military terminology, language training, international cooperation, service abroad

INTRODUCTION

The late twentieth and early twenty-first century is a period in which one can observe intense changes in the security environment at international as well as regional levels. This concerns not only the political, economic but also military spheres. The political transformation that has taken place after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, led to significant changes in the geopolitical balance of power not only on the European continent but throughout the world. In our times one can notify a significant reduction the "old" threats such as a possibility of total nuclear war between military blocs (NATO and the Warsaw Pact) or "cold war" struggle for world dominance. However at the same time new fears have appeared, such as international terrorism, cyber-terrorism, transnational organized crime, failed states just to mention only some of them. Moreover nowadays significantly increased the number of local conflicts, where particularly the civilian population is suffering the horrible atrocities of war. All these processes caused reevaluation of the role and importance of the armed forces, which

"...from a tool of aggression have become a means of enforcing and maintaining the peace".¹

Armed Forces, in addition to performing their primary tasks like preparing and conducting the "classic style" warfare aimed at the defense territory of their own countries, have started to implement a number of other tasks relating to providing international security and maintaining peace in an international environment. Furthermore military contingents deployed to the stabilization and peacekeeping operations generally have a multinational character, soldiers from different countries have to work and effectively communicate together.

New geopolitical conditions also resulted in development of regional cooperation initiatives in the field of common security and responsibility for international security. An example of such collaboration can be the Visegrad Group and declaration of this organisation regarded preparation of the EU Battle Group, which should achieve its operational readiness in 2016. Visegrad EU BG will be an instrument of European Defense and Security Policy and could be "deployed outside Europe", but with permission of international community because "deployment will require an UN mandate."²

1. COMMON LANGUAGE AS A COOPERATION TOOL

One of the most important elements of ensuring effective cooperation between soldiers from different countries in order to achieve common goals is the ability to communicate and transmit information effectively. Without skills relating to efficient communication every organization wishing to work effectively with another counterpart is doomed to failure. The problem of the effectual and uninterrupted flow of information is especially important in human life-threatening situations, which appears quite often during armed conflicts, during efforts to resolve the conflicts or in peace support operations. International organizations and multinational forces should have a smooth network of transmission of information and the staff who can effectively understand each other and communicate with the external environment. Q. Wright noticed that the world is one big

* COL Mirosław SMOLAREK PhD, Chief of Reconnaissance and Command Department, Military Academy of Land Forces, 51-150 Wrocław, Czajkowskiego str. 109, Poland, e-mail: m.smolarek@wso.wroc.pl

¹ J. Zieliński, *Zarys teorii sztuki operacyjnej wojsk lądowych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, wyd. Adam Marszałek, Toruń 1998, s. 5.

² M. Kulczycki, *Visegrad Group as a platform of regional cooperation*, [in:] M. Kulczycki, Armed Forces in the system of international security", WSOWL, Wrocław 2013, p. 60.

communication network, which determines the nature of the relationship between states³. Therefore, each element of the system must function properly in order not to disrupt the operation or efficiency of the entire organization.

Knowledge of foreign languages has always been, and still is, a major determinant of the development of nations, dissemination of science, effective cooperation, sharing of views and experiences. The language was and is a tool in resolving disputes and conflicts in a peaceful manner. The ability to communicate efficiently is extremely important in the era of the globalizing world. The concept of "global village"⁴ introduced by M. McLuhan in 1964 based on the knowledge of foreign languages, since this factor provides a free access to the press, radio, television and the Internet.

Attempts to introduce one common language constituting a homogeneous platform of communication were already made centuries ago. One can recall the importance of Greek as the language of philosophy, Latin as a tool for spreading the faith, science and culture, French as the "language of diplomacy" or nowadays English as the language of business and science. Acquiring of foreign languages, which became so called "Lingua Franca"⁵ plays a special role in international institutions where people of different nationalities, who speak different languages, work together. The fundamental need in such situations is to establish a common communication platform - to determine the language or languages - which assure the efficient flow and exchange of information.

That is why, the ability of mutual communication and understanding takes on a special role in the military environment. For example, it is unimaginable functioning of the NATO consisting of 28 members without a main common communication platform that is English and French. For this reason, learning of foreign languages, especially in terms of the professional, specialized military vocabulary assumes a new dimension and importance. This kind of skills should be implemented from the earliest years of soldiers' training, especially for future officers, who, in their career paths, certainly will have to participate in various forms of military international cooperation.

³ Q. Wright, *The Study of International Relations*, Appleton Century Crafts, New York 1995, p.294.

⁴ M. Mc Luhan, *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*, MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1994, p. 17.

⁵ lingua franca

a: a common language consisting of Italian mixed with French, Spanish, Greek, and Arabic that was formerly spoken in Mediterranean ports;

b: any of various languages used as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech;

c: something resembling a common language <movies are the *lingua franca* of the twentieth century.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Incorporated, Springfield, Massachusetts 1993, p. 678.

In all the international institutions officers have to make decisions about operational issues, which requires appropriate expertise skills acquired during military service and furthermore they have properly convey their decisions. They have to possess a suitable toolbox of specialized vocabulary in order to communicate effectively with soldiers from other countries: superiors, subordinates or co-workers and productively participate in decision-making processes. Therefore, the question of the appropriate linguistic preparation, and in particular the knowledge of the English operational - tactical terminology is of paramount importance for the flawless functioning of the international military structures and proper execution of the tasks conducted by them.

Each NATO member is obliged to nominate for service in the Alliance's military institutions or for combined operations outside the country adequately prepared staff, who should possess extensive expertise and be adequately prepared to solve problems arising from the need for intercultural communication. The problem of clear communication is extremely important not only for cooperation between soldiers of different nations, but also for proper conducting of peacekeeping operations. This kind of skills are a key element in overcoming conflict situations, in resolving contentious issues as well as communication and cooperation with the local military or civilian population. Soldiers performing such tasks abroad should be not only properly prepared in terms of special training and language skills, but they should also have the necessary characterological abilities, which facilitate intercultural communication. Among a number of features which they should have (e.g. military observers) are qualities that greatly facilitate intercultural communication⁶:

- the ability and willingness to cooperate within multinational staff;
- ability to take responsibility;
- firm, but polite behavior, the power of persuasion and the ability to put decisions into practice;
- responsibility for own behavior and conduct,
- flexibility
- ability to improvise.

⁶ B. Szulc, (red.) *Misje pokojowe – Podstawy teoretyczne działań wspierających pokój pk. „Misje”*, AON, Warszawa 1998, p. 73.

In activities related to coping with the conflict parties a key problem is the knowledge of cultural, religious and ethnic issues, customs and rituals, prejudices and stereotypes, as well as languages that allow dialogue with interlocutors, because efficient intercultural communication can sometimes determine the success of taken actions and even decide about human life. In addition, one should keep in mind, that every soldier who have contact with representatives of other nations is as "ambassador" his/her country and the way of conduct affects the perception not only of the entire army but even a nation.

2. STUDY POPULATION

In order to determine the role and importance of military specialized language in the service in the international institutions the author conducted a research study focused on a group of 104 Polish land forces officers who have experience in the service of the various duty posts in international military institutions, peacekeeping missions and stabilization operations abroad in which Poland was or is involved.

Among the study population 31% of the respondents served in international institutions and HQs of NATO and European Union outside Poland, 25% in the Polish Military Contingent (PMC) in Afghanistan (ISAF), 14% in international HQs of peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, 12% in the PMC in Iraq, 10% in HQs of UNIFIL and UNDOF in the Middle East, and 8% in multinational forces located in Poland (Multinational Corps North-East and Joint Force Training Centre).

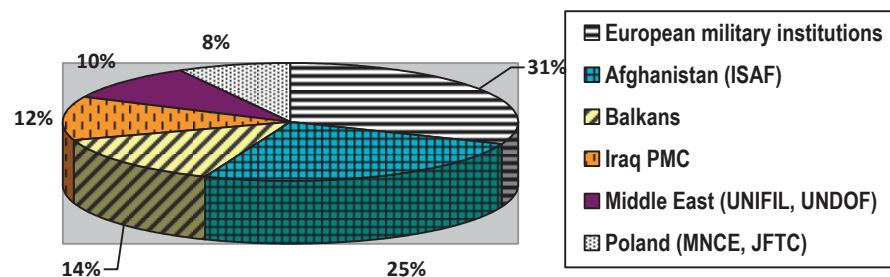


Fig. 1. Place of duty of the research population.
Source: Based on own research

53% of respondents were senior officers (mainly in the rank of the major - 36%), and 47% were young officers, but all of them with longer or shorter experience in serving abroad.

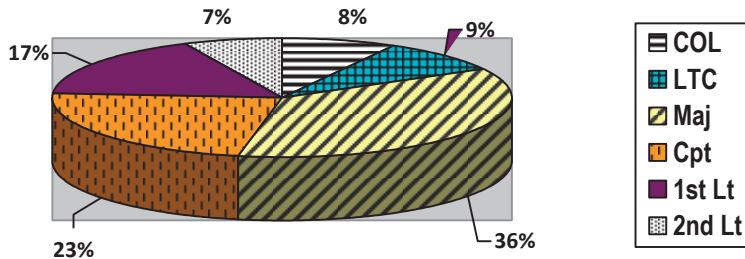


Fig. 2. Ranks of the research population.

Source: Based on own research

Quite 1/3 of the respondents were relatively young officers with less than 10 years of duty experience. They served abroad generally in peacekeeping/ peace support missions. Officers with the longer time of duty served generally in international military institutions such NATO staffs, EU Military Staff or in international HQs.

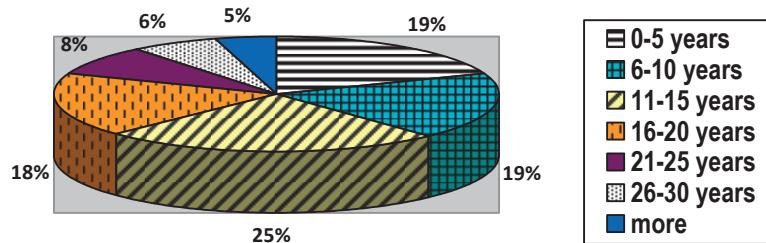


Fig. 3. Time of duty of the research population.

Source: Based on own research

During the service abroad majority of respondents (56%) occupied staff posts, 20% commanding positions (on various level), support tasks fulfill 16% of study population (10% logistics and 6% administrative). 8% of respondents specified their tasks as “others”.

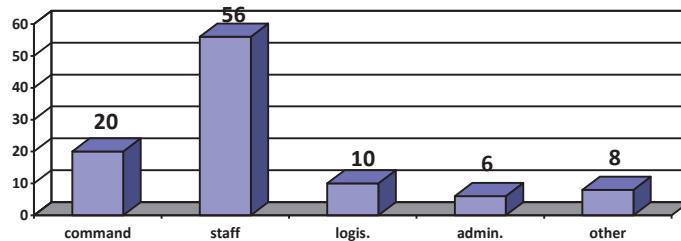


Fig. 4. Position occupied during serving abroad by the research population.
Source: Based on own research.

An interesting issue was the correlation between the military rank and occupied duty post in the international institutions or HQs. Mostly very young officers (2nd and 1st lieutenants) occupied lower command positions (platoon leader or company commander), but the captains and the majors conducted staff duties, what can suggest a direction of preparations of staff assigned for serving abroad, but the issue demands much detailed research.

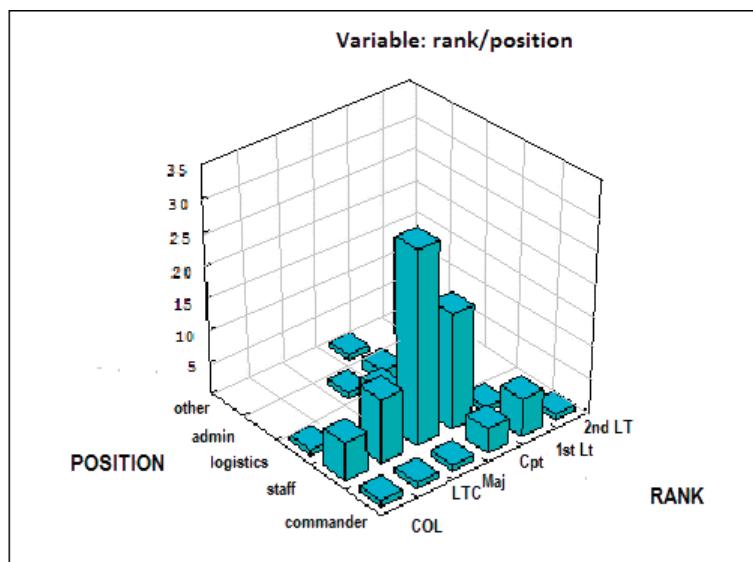


Fig. 5. Correlation between rank and position during serving abroad.
Source: Based on own research.

On the basis of calculations of so called Cramer's V-factor referring to measurement of association between two nominal variables, (in this case $\phi_c = 0.42$) it should be noted that there is an average correlation between the military rank and the position occupied in international assignment.

The results of the research and personal opinions of the members of the study population permitted the author to analyze the system of preparation of the Polish officers for the service abroad, but it will be not presented in this paper. However the research allows to make conclusions relating to a possibility of developing a proposal for specialized military language course for land forces young officers and officer-cadets.

An interesting question was if officers, who served abroad, really had to solve tactical and operational problems which requested sophisticated and specialized military terminology.

65 % of the respondents frequently used such kind of vocabulary, only 9% did not to use advanced military terminology during the period of their service abroad.

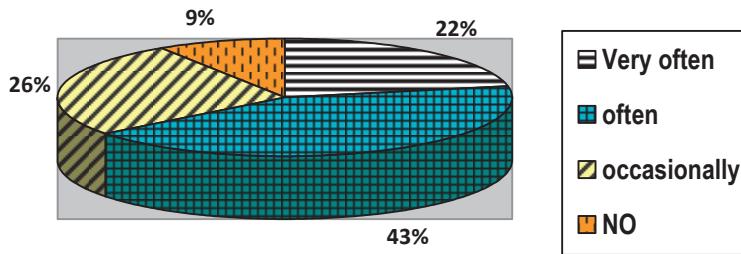


Fig. 6. Frequency of use of specialized military terminology by members of the study population.
Source: Based on own research.

3. SURVEY RESULTS

The respondents – the army officers – poorly evaluated their own level of professional linguistic preparation for conducting the service in multinational environment. Before deployment they participated in various pre-deployment courses including language preparation. 8% said that linguistically the courses did not prepare them at all, 17% said that they were prepared only on a minimum level, 36% rated the preparation as moderate. Just 29% of respondents estimated their preparations good and only 8% that stated, that

they have been prepared on very good level for conducting their service in multinational environment.

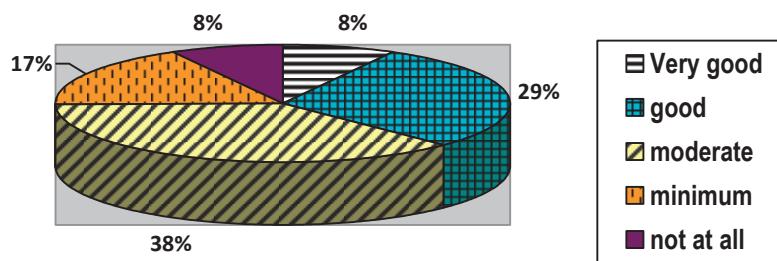


Fig. 7. Frequency of use of specialized military terminology by members of the study population.

Source: Based on own research.

The study identifies areas of the educational process in which there are the possibilities of modifications in order to increase the degree of the language preparedness to the level which could enable the courses participants smooth implementation of tasks conducting in multinational forces as well as in the military institutions.

Contrary to popular belief the teaching of foreign languages is an important element of the preparation of candidates for service in international environment. Inappropriate language skills are one of the few reasons resulting in problems during the service abroad and could even threaten human life in peace support or stabilization operations. Appropriate knowledge of special military terminology is a key element for performing the tasks efficiently and for professional collaboration.

The results showed that the officers trained during the language courses were quite well prepared for functioning in the typically "civilian" areas such as coping with everyday problems, living conditions, cultural events or social life. Interviewed respondents stressed that they had no major problems with the adaptation to a new environment. They did not experience so called "cultural shock" which usually is caused by being in a new social environment. But some of them experienced inconveniences in performing professional duty because of lack of the sophisticated military terminology.

However officers tried to supplement their own gaps in knowledge of military terminology in the process of self-education, but it is not a solution and an adequate level of preparation in the field of military terminology should be assured by the national

educational system of preparation of the military resources. The analysis of factual material, the suggestions from respondents based on their service experience has allowed to identify areas of the learning process, which can be modified in order to increase the linguistic preparation of army officers and officer-cadets. Some of them are:

- modifying the contents of English language teaching programs for STANAG 6001 courses;
- changing the organizational forms of teaching foreign languages;
- improving of infrastructure and teaching means used in teaching process;
- applying an additional training for civilian foreign languages teachers in area of specialized military terminology (special international courses conducting by native NATO military staff);
- Involving specialized military terminology in the early stages of officer-cadets language training.

Interesting would be results of similar surveys conducted in NATO non Anglo-Saxon countries.

For the purpose of greater interoperability, not only between NATO members, seems to be advisable to consider standardization of the language training in the armed forces of the Alliance countries. The STANAG 6001 standard specifies only the qualifications framework, but does not define the content and areas of language education, because different learning facilities conduct classes at different level of providing the specialized military terminology. Moreover there are no standards for STANAG 6001 tests and every country developed its own layout. That is why there is a need for establishing of a single module of language training for all NATO armed forces, in order to establish common communication platform for multinational military operations abroad.

For the Visegrad Group the ideal prerequisite for the preparation of a such common model of the specialized military language training seems to be the creation of the European Union Battle Group for 2016. Due to the fact that the main force provider will be the land forces of participating countries, it would be desirable to create a common module for specialized language training. The module would be addressed to sub-units commanders and EUBG staff officers. A teaching staff should be from military academies of these countries as well as officers with experience in peacekeeping operations and

service in the previous EU Battle Groups. Below one can find, for discussion, a proposed outline for a two weeks military specialized terminology course. In author's opinion such course could be a nucleus for the future common module for the officer-cadets language training and pre-deployment courses related to NATO military terminology.

CONCLUSION

Political changes which took place around the world forced modifications in the field of doctrinal concepts of using armed forces. The military has received new tasks, the spectrum of employment of the troops has been extended to operations other than war including bright spectrum of providing peace and security outside the borders of their native countries. The contemporary armed forces begin to lose their typical national character, the states create alliances, in which troops of different nations work together and fight shoulder to shoulder. The NATO members are responsible for the proper preparation of its soldiers in order to achieve the highest degree of interoperability with the purpose of carrying out received tasks effectively. That is why one of the most important elements of achieving interoperability is an adequate linguistic preparation of soldiers and staff designated for combined operations.

Knowledge of foreign languages has a significant impact not only on the level and quality of conducting duties, effective collaboration in international teams, but it has also an impact on the deployment of a soldier for service abroad, his/her mood and pace of adaptation to new socio – environmental circumstances. According to the famous hypothesis of the Sapir-Whorf the language is a mean to put an individual into social reality. People cannot live alone in the objective nor in the social world, as is commonly believed, but they are at the mercy of the particular language which has become a source of expression for these societies. An illusion is the notion that a human being can adapt to the reality without the use of language and that a language is merely a trivial mean of solving specific problems of communication or transmission of ideas. The fact is that essentially so called "real world" is in a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the social group. There are no two languages which could be so similar that they can be considered that exactly reflect the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not the same world defined only by other names.⁷

⁷ Sapir E., *The Status of Linguistics as a Science*, [in:] E. Sapir Culture, *Language and Personality*, University of California Press, Berkeley (CA) 1985, s. 69.

ANNEX A

Proposal (for discussion) of the outline for the Introduction Course to Tactical - Operational Military Terminology

General goals:

After completing the course participants should:

- use general and specialized military terminology regarding the military branches, types of the land forces, their organizational structures, weapon systems and equipment;
- know the specialized vocabulary in conducting basic types of combat and non-combat activities;
- be familiar with the terminology associated with peacekeeping and peace support operations;
- use the terminology on the operational - tactical level;
- explain and prepare basic operational documents in English language;
- understand and to give orders and instructions at a normal rate of speech;
- read and understand general military texts and specialized with utilization of the dictionary;
- seek information relating to the life of a military unit.

No.	Topics	No. hours
1	<u>Introduction to military terminology</u> Military ranks, types and structure of sub- and units, basic military symbols, basic equipment and weapon systems, basic commands and military courtesy, life in barracks.	6
2	<u>Military branches and their tasks</u> Land forces, Airforce, Navy. Specific military branches in NATO countries (eg. Marines in USA, Carabinieri in Italy, special forces in Poland etc.)	6
3	<u>Land forces</u> Structure of Land Forces: combat, combat support, and combat service support units – tasks, organisation, basic equipment and types of weapon systems, tasks during the combat.	12
4.	<u>Peacekeeping/ peace support operations</u> UN and NATO terminology related to PSO operations, history of PSO, other actors (IOs, NGOs) in PSO operational environment, basic activities and duties in PSO (patrolling, convoying, running of observation posts, cordoning etc.), Rules of engagement and way of conduct in PSO	12

5.	NATO Article 5 and Non – Article 5 operations Basic terminology, types of operations, tasks and conducting role of, role of Land Forces in joint and combined ops, CJTF concept. NATO Response Force, involvement of Alliance in Crisis Response Operations. Role of CIMIC in Non Article 5 Ops	12
6.	Staff work in international environment Command and organisation, staff branches, their tasks and structures, basic staff terminology, types documents, role of staff branches in Military Decision Making Process	12
	TOTAL number of hours	60