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SATISFYING THE ARMY'S LINGUIST NEEDS:
HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

BY

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provide some new approaches to defining and quantifying linguist requirements, particularly in the Communications Intelligence field, and addressing alternatives that would provide sufficient linguists in the right languages at the right time. Recruiting, training and retaining linguists must be directly tied to an integrated Active and Reserve Component language effort. Alternatives for effectively achieving this integration by creating a linguist specialty, creating linguist units, integrating Army missions with support to civil infrastructure needs and expanding the use of linguists in recruiting efforts are also discussed. The key to improving, if not solving, the Army's linguist problems is the application of innovative and insightful approaches to the old problems.

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SATISFYING THE ARMY'S LINGUIST NEEDS:
HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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The Army has struggled with determining its linguistic needs since the founding of this nation. The recent changes to the world order and the resultant decreases in the Army's force structure have further exacerbated the challenges of determining what languages are required, how many linguists are required in each language and what level of proficiency is needed for each linguist. Identifying the Army's linguists requirements is a constantly changing dynamic caused by surging threats and fluctuating alliances that create a language recruiting and training dilemma. The Army's current language program has been dedicated to constantly adjusting the linguist inventory to match linguist requirements that change several times faster than training for any single language. The result is that the Army is always a day behind in providing trained linguists to satisfy current language needs. To a large degree this problem is simply reflective of the constantly changing nature of the world, but there are other roadblocks to decreasing the problem that can be addressed and corrected. By looking at each of the four areas (requirements, recruiting, training and retention) it is possible to identify innovative and daring new approaches to improving the efficiency and productivity of each area. This paper will provide some new approaches to defining and quantifying linguist requirements, particularly in the Communications Intelligence field, and addressing alternatives that would provide sufficient linguists in the right languages at the right time. Recruiting, training and retaining linguists must be directly tied to an integrated Active and Reserve Component language effort. Alternatives for effectively achieving this integration by creating a linguist specialty, creating linguist units, integrating Army missions with support to civil infrastructure needs and expanding the use of linguists in recruiting efforts are also discussed. The key to improving, if not solving, the Army's linguist problems is the application of innovative and insightful approaches to the old problems.

INTRODUCTION

The book of Genesis, Chapter Eleven, states that upon discovering the construction in Babylon of a tower to reach unto the heavens, the Lord was dismayed and the Lord said,

> Behold the people are one, and they have one language; this is just the beginning of what they are going to do. Soon they will be able to do anything they want! Let us go down and mix up their language so that they will not understand each other.[1]

In much the same manner, the downfall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a new world order have created a new language challenge for the U.S. Army. As the focus of threat planning has shifted from a single Russian threat to a global contingency awareness, the Army's linguist needs have likewise shifted from needing many linguists in just a few languages to the need for sufficient linguists in many languages. The perplexing question is, how many linguists are enough to handle the possible threat contingency language needs in a world with hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects?

Even defining the term linguist is at best difficult. Webster's defines linguist as "A specialist in the science of the structure and development of a particular language"[2] and language as "All the vocal sounds, words and ways of combining them common to a particular tribe, nation, or group."[3] These two definitions clearly state that language is a tool and a linguist is an individual that specializes in the study and use of that tool. Army regulations are not as clear in describing these two terms.

Army Regulation (AR) 350-20, Management of the Defense Foreign Language Program, describes the military service's responsibilities, functions and procedures for fulfilling total Department of Defense (DOD) foreign language training, but does not define or even use the term linguist.[4] AR 611-6, Army Linguist Management, sets policies and procedures for establishing Army linguist requirements and identifying and managing Army linguists, but stops short of designating a linguist as a military specialist in the use of a language.[5] Instead, the Army linguist is initially trained and evaluated against generic language skills that are not directly related to any specific Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).

The Army labels soldiers with a degree of proficiency in the use of a foreign language as a linguist, but has not come to grips with the differentiation between a linguist who is a technical expert in a language as opposed to a technician who is also a linguist. The purpose of this study is to review the Army's current process for satisfying linguist requirements and provide possible alternatives for managing linguists in an Army that is changing in both mission and structure.

THE ARMY'S LINGUIST NEEDS

Effective communication is the tie that binds allies together in a mutually supportive effort. The key to effective

communication is in being able to understand each other's spoken and written language. Understanding an enemy's language is also critical to the collection of information and the creation of meaningful intelligence that supports the allied Commander's plans and operations. The Army's need for soldiers skilled in the use of an ally's or an enemy's language is obvious. The real challenges are to determine what languages are required, how many individuals are needed for each language and what technical proficiencies are required of those individuals.

Proficiency with a language can be measured against three very different but very related criteria. First, there is the proficiency with which one individual can communicate with another in everyday conversational terms. This proficiency can be expressed in terms of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills with various levels or degrees of proficiency further assigned to each of these skills. AR 350-20 provides detailed descriptions of each of the four proficiency skills and further assigns levels of proficiency from zero to five within each skill.[6] These skills and proficiency levels are accepted throughout both the military and academic communities as effective statements of general language proficiency.

Second, there is a measure of cultural knowledge associated with proficiency in a language. Simple knowledge of the semantics of a foreign language will not prepare an individual to

fully understand the meaning of a native's spoken or written word. The more an individual understands the native's national history, religious beliefs, ethnic traditions and social standards, the better the understanding of the language and hence, a higher proficiency with the language.

Third, every soldier possesses a technical military specialty in which he has achieved some measure of technical proficiency. He is in fact a technician first even though his work may require the use for a foreign language. As such, his language proficiency will also need to be specialized to ensure that the technical terms and techniques of the specialty are understandable.

The Army needs technicians with language skills in diverse areas that range from simple translation to intelligence collection. Language translators are required for numerous administrative, logistic, investigative, liaison and attache positions. Trainers with language skills are required by Special Operations forces, Foreign Military Sales teams and Military Assistance Advisory organizations. Military Intelligence uses language skilled technicians to conduct counter-intelligence operations, interrogate Prisoners of War, translate captured documents and intercept enemy voice communications. Requirements for soldiers with language skills vary based upon specific duty positions and locations but only two military specialties

currently require designation as a linguist as a condition for qualification in those specialties. Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) 97E, Interrogator, and 98G, Voice Interceptor, are required to possess and maintain a language in accordance with standards established in AR 611-6.[7]

By far the most difficult linguist challenge is determining the number of language skilled soldiers required to support each MOS. Each time the force structure or mission of the Army changes the language requirement changes. As of 1 October 1992, the total authorizations for linguists was 9,087 positions designated as requiring soldiers with language capabilities. The two language required MOS, 98G and 97E, accounted for 41% (3,730) of those positions and Military Intelligence Branch in total accounts for 54% (4,949) of the positions.[8] The remaining 46% (4,138) of the authorizations are required by other Army branches with the Special Forces being the largest source, followed by the Military Police and the Adjutant General Corps. These 9,087 linguist requirements cover dozens of different languages based upon the Army's global threat assessment. Unfortunately, the assessment is currently subject to very frequent and drastic changes as the United State's role in the new world order and the Army's mission and structure are being redefined by the Clinton administration. Trying to accurately identify, train and manage the soldier linguists needed by the Army for the 1990s and beyond

is an enormously difficult challenge that requires a language
program that is innovative, flexible and effectively managed.

THE ARMY'S LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The overall objectives of the Army's language program are
straight forward and realistic. Simply put, the objectives are
to determine what linguist requirements exist, to recruit enough
personnel to satisfy the requirements, to train and maintain the
proficiency of those linguists and to retain as many of the
proficient linguists in the active or reserve component as
possible.

The Army's language program falls under the broad umbrella
of the Defense Foreign Language Program (DFLP) which covers the
foreign language training of all DOD military personnel. The
DFLP includes all resident, nonresident and sustainment training,
except training conducted by the National Security Agency under
the Consolidated Cryptologic Program.[9] The Secretary of Defense
has designated the Army to serve as the Executive Agent (EA) for
executing the DFLP and the Secretary of the Army has further
designated that responsibility to the Director of Training,
Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans
(DCSOPS). Additionally, the Secretary of the Army has designated
the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence (DCSINT) to serve as
the Army Service Program Manager (SPM) for the Army's language

program.[10]   These two Army staff principals together with the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) have overall responsibility for the acquisition, training, utilization and retention of Army linguist personnel.

Other key players in the language program are the Chief of Army Reserve (OCAR) who, in coordination with U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), manages the language program for Army Reserve linguists: the Chief, National Guard Bureau (CNGB)who provides the same support for Army National Guard linguists; the Commander, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) who supervises the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), the principal language trainer of all DOD linguists; and the Army Service Centers and Schools who serve as the proponents for the technical MOS that require language skills.

Overall review and assessment of the Army's language program is accomplished by the Army Language Program Review Committee (ALPRC) of which the DCSINT is the chairperson and all other key Army agencies and staff are participants.[11]   The ALPRC ensures that linguist policy and language requirements are appropriate and clearly stated while the SPM is responsible for the actual development, coordination and conduct of the language program.

SHORTFALLS OF THE ARMY LANGUAGE PROGRAM

AR 350-20 and AR 611-6 provide an efficient and flexible management structure for the Army language program that provides sufficient latitude for direct coordination between all the services and the other DOD agencies involved in training and utilizing linguists. The real shortfalls of the current language program are synonymous with the program's objectives. Linguist requirements cannot be effectively quantified, sufficient numbers of soldiers cannot be recruited to fill all the appropriate requirements, training in the languages does not meet or sustain desired proficiency levels and sufficient numbers of trained linguists cannot be retained in the Army.

As already described, the linguist requirements are in a constant state of change due to adjustments to the language mix and to the total force structure. Although sufficient numbers of recruits are placed into the language training system each year, those recruits will spend 25 to 63 weeks in language school alone and by the time they graduate the requirement for their language will possibly have shifted to another language.

Training at DLIFLC prepares the linguist to speak and read to a minimum level of proficiency of 2/2(Limited Working Proficiency), however, the unit training programs have never been

able to maintain that level in the field to any great degree of
success.

Lastly, the first term reenlistment rate for soldiers in the
two linguist MOS (98G & 97E) has been around fifty percent for
several years now. The bottom line is that the Army may have a
significant number of soldiers who are identified as linguists,
but they do not possess the right mix of languages, cannot
maintain their language proficiency in the language in which they
were initially trained and half of them will leave the Army after
only one five year tour.

CURRENT LANGUAGE PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Although the language program would appear to be in serious
trouble, there have been valiant efforts to improve both the
quantity and quality of Army linguists. In particular, the
Service Program Manager and the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and
School (USAICS) have come forth with proposals to improve the
training, retention, requirements and recruiting portions of the
language program.

In the area of recruiting, the USAICS has begun efforts to
expand the Army's relationship with high school and university
language departments to increase interest in the Army linguist
program and is also working an initiative to better identify all

soldiers with a language capability.[12]   The SPM has also taken

steps to expand the Reserve Component linguist force structure by

creating or increasing linguist specific units that can serve as

augmentation pools to provide linguists during contingency

operations.[13]   Perhaps the most significant recruiting effort of

the last ten years was the SPM's efforts in obtaining Kuwaiti and

Somali linguists from the foreign national population residing in

the U.S. During Desert Shield/Storm the SPM directed the

recruitment, training and deployment of several hundred Kuwaiti

students in support of Central Command's Arabic linguist

requirements. The same procedures were used again in December

1992 to obtain over 100 contract Somali linguists in support of

Operation Restore Hope.[14]

Efforts in the training area include work at USAICS on the

development of MOS specific language tests to supplement the more

generic Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and the

integration of language specific training in intelligence MOS

courses.[15]   The SPM has also begun efforts to increase RC

Linguist authorized training hours and to increase Army language

readiness reporting standards from a minimal 1Speaking/1Reading

proficiency level to a 2/2 level.[16]

Retention initiatives include the SPM's work on increasing

the dollar amounts of Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP)

paid to both AC and RC qualified linguists and the USAICS efforts

to place more emphasis on language proficiency for promotions and selection for schooling. Additionally, the USAICS has also begun work on development of a life-cycle management program for Army linguists to ensure that they receive proper personnel and career development throughout their careers.[17]

Work in the requirements area by the SPM to develop a regional contingency assessment approach to defining linguist requirements based upon risk assessment will help decrease the frequent changes in the language requirements mix.[18] USAICS is also working on a methodology to code existing linguist requirements with a desired proficiency level in order to ensure that language proficiency is balanced with technical skills.[19]

ALTERNATIVES FOR IMPROVING THE ARMY LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The Army's approach to training and using linguists is primarily based on a process that was designed in the 1960s. Since the early 1980s the Army has undergone tremendous technological change with marked improvements in communications and intelligence collection systems. However, the missions and functions performed by linguist technicians, particularly in the two intelligence MOS, are still based upon duties developed to support technical missions used in Vietnam with ancient systems and virtually no automated analytical aids.

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The 1990s have brought a change in the global order and a shift in American emphasis from defense to economics. The Clinton administration is going to make sweeping changes in the U.S. defense structure and the Army must bend and adapt or be prepared to have someone else dictate missions and structures. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin has challenged the military services to adjust to the shift in political emphasis and find new ways to make the military operate more like a business. It is time for innovative ideas and drastic changes in order to ensure that the Army's language needs are fully satisfied in the future. It is time to re-look the Vietnam philosophy of training and using linguists and find new ways to fulfill language needs in the new global contingency environment.

The balance of this study will focus primarily upon improvements to the Military Intelligence community's linguist program since over fifty percent of all linguist requirements are used by this branch. The proposals to improve the two current linguist MOS, 97E and 98G, should help create a more viable total Army language program that can satisfy all Army language needs.

LINGUIST REQUIREMENTS PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVES

The first major problem area in clearly defining linguist requirements harks back to the linguist definition discussion in the opening page of this paper. For years there has been an

ongoing debate over the issue of whether a linguist is a linguist first or a technician first. All soldiers are promoted based upon their performance in their technical MOS and their language proficiency may or may not always be taken into consideration. As a result, sufficient emphasis upon language training is often lost by both the linguist and the unit commander.[20] If the soldier and the unit are not graded on language proficiency then it will not receive much attention. Unfortunately, the solution to this problem is not easy in light of the historical baggage attached to the traditional technical MOS way of thinking.

Two possible alternatives for emphasizing linguist requirements are to more clearly describe linguist positions and to create a linguist unique MOS. The former will be addressed in the next paragraph and the latter in the sections on recruiting, training and retention alternatives.

The second requirements problem deals with the proper identification of linguist positions in terms of language proficiency required. The USAICS position on coding current authorization documents with required language proficiencies will work for non-linguist duty positions but does not adequately address the problem for the Voice Interceptor (98G) positions. Most current and future communications intercept and jamming equipment operated by 98Gs will probably be utilized primarily in a targeting role as opposed to the historic voice translation

role. This change in doctrinal employment has occurred for two primary reasons.

First, many communications systems available worldwide are so technically sophisticated that it is fairly simple to protect plain voice communications with effective encryption or frequency hopping devices. These capabilities make it difficult to find the signal much less translate the buried communication.

Second, the same technological advances have also improved the direction finding, hence the target locating, capability of signal intercept systems.[21] In light of these technical advances the commander will more often opt to simply target an emitter rather than try to exploit the protected communication being broadcast. These facts raise the question of whether the 98G operating these systems actually requires a language capability to conduct the targeting portion of the intelligence mission. The question is not whether there is any voice intercept mission to be performed, but whether all the 98Gs assigned to these targeting/translating systems need to be linguists.

There is only one effective alternative to this problem of identifying the true linguist requirement for the voice intercept mission. The intelligence community needs to conduct a thorough and innovative Mission Area Analysis (MAA) of the Communications

Intelligence (COMINT) function to ascertain what percentage of the function actually requires linguistic proficiency. This percentage will then identify what percentage of the operators should be linguists and what percentage should be non-linguists. Previous MAAs have focused on requirements for exploiting voice communications in this technologically enhanced environment, but have always assumed that the operator of the system would be a 98G linguist. It may well be that there is a requirement for all voice exploitation system operators to be linguists, but the only way to effectively determine that is with a thorough mission analysis that is not biased by the assumption that all operators will be linguists. This same analytical approach may also be appropriate for identifying Human Intelligence (HUMINT) linguist requirements, as well as other functional linguist requirements in all MOS.

The third major requirements problem area is determining the appropriate language mix required to support changing worldwide contingencies. Historically this problem has been approached with the philosophy that the Army needs sufficient linguists in all languages that could be required by any contingency. Since most units have several contingency missions assigned at the same time, it would be necessary to have linguists that are skilled in several languages each or have multiple sets of linguists assigned to each unit. Given that neither of these solutions is practical nor affordable, the Army has used threat risk

assessment to arrive at the most likely threat and provide sufficient linguists to handle that threat. Consequently, whenever a low risk threat, such as in Somalia, becomes a problem there are not any linguists available because all the linguist authorizations were allocated to the higher risk threat languages.

An alternative approach to this problem is to base the language risk assessment upon the state of the entire world and not individual threat countries. This approach assigns risk assessment based upon three categories of world order. The first is a peaceful world without immediate threat of a large scale war. This scenario requires linguists in many languages but does not require great numbers of linguists in any one language because their primary role would be one of threat development as opposed to rapid and massive deployment. This assumption is based on the expectation of sufficient mobilization time being available to bring deploying units up to strength with linguists from the reserves. The second category is a transition state requiring linguists to support limited deployments and the threat development mission. This scenario requires that linguists be assigned to deploying forces when necessary and assumes that those linguists would be drawn from active component linguist pools and reserve component linguist units as envisioned by the SPM.[22]

The third category of world order is full scale combat and assumes that full mobilization will assign linguists in sufficient numbers to deploying units. The bottom line is that the peacetime scenario requires and assigns linguists to threat development missions only and does not fill tactical intelligence units with linguists until needed for mission support. This risk assessment process assumes that the MAA described previously has been accomplished and that linguist positions in tactical voice intercept systems have been significantly reduced, that linguists are pooled in language oriented units and that an appropriate linguist mix between AC and RC has been achieved.

This leads to the third problem area in determining linguist requirements, the functional mix of linguists between the AC and RC. The effort to increase the number of linguist spaces and create linguist units in the RC is the first step in solving the AC/RC mix issue, but the action is still based upon MOS functions not language skills.[23] Here again the MAA analysis will help identify positions that specifically require linguists and allow for a better pooling effort. If the risk assessment process proposed above is applied, the AC/RC mix would require linguists in the AC to support threat development and some limited deployment options and linguists in the RC to support the transition and total combat scenario linguist requirements. This mix would retain a limited but effective number of linguists on active duty and place the preponderance of the linguists in the

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RC. This of course offers an enormous training challenge to ensure that the RC linguists maintain a level of proficiency that will allow them to deploy on short notice and effectively accomplish their missions. An alternative to ensure that this training is accomplished will be addressed later in the training section of this paper.

An additional structure consideration would be creating linguist units that have subordinate elements in both the AC and RC. A typical battalion might have a Headquarters Company and one linguist company on active duty with two or more linguist companies in the U.S. Army Reserves (USAR) or National Guard (NG). This concept would allow an infrastructure that could be maintained on a daily basis to provide continuous support for the linguist companies and allow the linguist companies to focus on language maintenance and language mission support.

LINGUIST RECRUITING PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVES

The recruitment of individuals to be trained as linguists is a highly competitive market since all of the uniformed services are attempting to satisfy their needs for individuals with the talents to learn a language. There are two problems in the recruiting area that make it difficult to fill the service's needs.

The first problem is created by the requirement for linguists who are technicians first. The Army recruits individuals to satisfy MOS requirements and since the two linguist MOS require technical skills and security clearances, the prospective linguist must meet both academic and security standards. This severely restricts the potential population that will meet these screening qualifications and almost totally eliminates the native language speakers that have immigrated to the U.S.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 1990 census there are almost 20 million foreign born residents in the U.S. and almost 32 million Americans who speak a language other than English at home.[24] However, most of these individuals would have difficulty meeting the security screening standards for Top Secret and Special Access clearances and would therefore not be eligible to enlist for the 98G, Voice Interceptor MOS.[25]

The vast foreign born population offers too great a linguist potential to be overlooked and the Army must either lower clearance requirements for the 98G MOS or develop a unique Linguist MOS with lower clearance requirements. Lowering the clearance requirement for the technical COMINT MOS is not practical but the MAA analysis may reduce the 98G linguist requirements and therefore reduce the total linguist requirements.

The most viable alternative to effectively using the native speaking population and improving the overall attractiveness of being an Army linguist would be the creation of a pure linguist MOS. The RC has already developed a 97L, Interpreter/Translator MOS and will manage their linguists through a MI Augmentation Detachment (MIAD) centrally controlled at U.S. Army Reserve Command.[26]

The USAICS has also begun research into creating a similar MOS for the AC, but their version would still be a very technically oriented Foreign Language Intelligence Collector MOS.[27] This MOS would merge the current 98G and 97E MOS into a single MOS and require the linguist to be able to perform technical functions formerly associated with both MOS. Given the current difficulty that a linguist has learning a language and one technical specialty, this would present a formidable task.

An alternative approach would be to create a linguist MOS that stresses only language skills during the grade of Specialist (E4) and Sergeant (E5) and then allows the linguist to branch into a technical MOS after his language proficiency is well honed to the 3/3 level. This basic skill level linguist would be used in translator, interpreter, administrator, liaison and other less technical positions that require only limited technical training and a minimum security clearance. The major advantages to this concept are threefold.

First, it creates a pool of linguists ready to be technically trained to fill short fuse MOS needs in a shorter amount of time than it would take to train a technician a language. Second, it allows time to assess the linguist's language ability before selecting a specific technical MOS. For instance, an Interrogator (97E) requires a sound proficiency in listening, speaking and reading, while the Voice Interceptor (98G) needs a higher proficiency primarily in the listening skill. The life-cycle management of linguists will be further discussed in the training and retention sections to follow. Third, the limited security clearance requirement would open the MOS to the large native linguist population discussed earlier.

Another recruiting alternative requires increasing the visibility of the Army's linguist program to the general public. The USAICS has taken steps to increase publicity for the Army language program by establishing an academic relationship with high schools and universities.[28] This concept should be expanded to include the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs in both high schools and universities. Today there are ROTC programs in 936 high schools and by 1997 this number will increase to 1,680.[29] AC or RC linguists working with the ROTC program could greatly influence students towards the Army as a career and also establish quality connections with the academic language community.[30]

There is a growing national agenda to increase American student's language capabilities and many schools have begun language immersion programs that teach a foreign language while the student is learning other subjects.[31]   This teaching technique is one that is already used by the 300th MI Brigade in Provo, Utah and illustrates the language potential of many ethnically oriented areas throughout the U.S. that the Army must focus upon for obtaining already trained linguists.[32]

Public visibility for the linguist program could also be generated by ensuring that RC units with linguist positions are established in areas with a high ethnic populace. Senator Nunn has often spoken of a community regeneration program that calls for direct employment of military units in support of community efforts to restore decaying infrastructures.[33]   This proposal would locate Engineer, Civil Affairs and PSYOPS units in cities needing assistance of the type that those units are structured to provide and would benefit the units training programs as well as assisting the cities. By taking this a step further and assigning linguists to units located in ethnic areas where the linguist's language is spoken, the linguist would directly benefit. Not only could the linguist maintain his language while using a technical MOS skill, but he would also be able to serve as an effective recruiting source within the local ethnic population.

LINGUIST TRAINING PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVES

Training of linguists is a two stage process. First, if the soldier does not already speak a language, he must attend a language course at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California. These courses last from 25 to 63 weeks depending on the language and produce a linguist with a 2/2 speaking/reading proficiency.[34] The difficulty experienced at DLI is that the attrition rate for language students varies from 20 to 40% for various languages.[35] This attrition rate not only reflects lost instructor time and vacant training seats at DLI, but it also means that the Army must pump 20 to 40% more soldiers into the recruiting pipeline in order to get the required number of linguists out of DLI on a yearly basis. Although there have been numerous complaints that DLI trains only a global language capability as opposed to a technical language, the school has performed its assigned task of teaching generic linguists quite well.[36]

The second stage of the language training process begins when the linguist is assigned to a unit. Since the linguist is a technician by MOS he is managed by the personnel system as a technician first. The result is that language and language proficiency are often overlooked or unaccounted for by the personnel managers and unit commanders resulting in great

difficulty in locating soldiers with specific languages when they are required for specific missions or additional language training.[37]

Within the unit the competition between language duties and technical MOS duties becomes fierce and generally favors the more visible non-linguist requirements with the result being degradation of language skills.[38]   The MAA analysis will help this problem by reducing the number of linguists required in a tactical intelligence unit, but the 97E, Interrogator and some 98G, Voice Interceptor requirements will remain. In order to assist in maintaining the language capabilities of these linguists, assuming that they have not been replaced by a new linguist MOS, they should be pooled at division or corps level and focus upon language training and language support missions. Improved communications systems now allow live mission training to be conducted virtually anywhere in the world and the same principle can support pooling of linguists without degrading any unit's training and readiness.

The key to this pooling effort requires the creation of another new MOS to replace the remaining Skill Level One 98G spaces that do not require a language capability. This MOS could be an initial entry MOS only and would require the soldier to reenlist for some other functional MOS after serving an initial enlistment term of two to three years. The principle duties of

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the MOS would be focused on the operations, maintenance and targeting functions of the Intelligence Electronic Warfare (IEW) systems currently authorized at division and corps level.

Properly managed, this MOS could serve as an initial entry level MOS for all Career Management Field (CMF) 98 positions in all Echelon Corps and Below (ECB) units. Much like the entry level linguist MOS, this generic IEW Systems Operator could be evaluated for potential in other CMF 98 MOS before the Army has expended extensive time and money in long technical and language training courses and on Top Secret and Special Access clearance investigations. This possible new MOS should be evaluated as a part of the MAA process. A similar MOS structure may also be feasible for the CMF 97 MOS 97E, Interrogator, 97B, Counterintelligence Agent and 97G, Counter-Signals Intelligence Specialist.

As difficult as it is for AC units to maintain their linguist's language proficiency it does not compare to the problems faced by linguists in the RC. Limited training time and training facilities require the linguist to virtually attempt to maintain his language on his own. Some alternatives to this problem have already been addressed in this paper but there are other alternatives that bear review. One option is the use of RC linguists to supplement the AC language support missions at centralized locations. The pooling of linguists from the AC and

RC in linguist units would greatly improve the RC linguists training and assist the AC language support missions. The creation of an AC linguist MOS would also allow AC linguists to be assigned to RC units as instructors replacing the need for contract language instruction in those units.[39]

The Army must also exploit other national assets and teaching techniques in training linguists. Great innovations have been accomplished in computer assisted translation and interactive communications that must be incorporated into training methods.[40] As technology advances, so will the teaching applications of technology and all new ideas must be approached with a positive and insightful attitude in order to ensure that the Army effectively uses the natural talents of the American business and academic sectors.

LINGUIST RETENTION PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVES

The reason most often given by linguists for leaving the Army is job dissatisfaction.[41] The Army spends over $100,000 to train each linguist/technician, uses them as linguists for only four plus years and then loses nearly half of them at the end of their first tour.[42] The average linguist does not want to be treated like a prima dona, but after spending a considerable amount of time learning a language he simply wants to be used as a linguist and not abused as a technician. The creation of a

linguist MOS is by far the simplest and most effective solution to improving job satisfaction and overall linguist productivity.

Life-cycle management of a linguist MOS would be no more difficult than for any other MOS and the results should be reflected by higher quality linguists that remain in the Army for a full career. Linguists in a separate MOS could be developed along two distinct but interoperable career paths. Initially all linguists would be used in positions requiring a primacy of language skills over technical skills. After reaching Skill Level Two (Grade E5) the linguist who desires the challenge of technical MOS duties would transition into a technical MOS and attend advanced language and Non-Commissioned Officer Educational System (NCOES) schools for that MOS. The linguist that desires to stay a pure linguist would continue along the linguist MOS path and would become the principal source of language trainers for DLI, the Branch language schools and other duty positions requiring a high degree of language proficiency.

The linguist MOS would fill the job satisfaction and recognition void now facing most Army linguists and would drastically reduce the Army's shortages of skilled linguists. It is equally critical that proficiency pay and training opportunities be accorded the RC linguist in the same manner they are available to the AC linguist. The RC linguist has less training time to maintain proficiency in a language, receives

less proficiency pay even if he maintains the language, and consequently has less incentive to work at maintaining the proficiency. Maintaining language proficiency requires extraordinary effort for both the AC and RC linguist, and benefits should also be based upon recognition of the after duty effort expended by both linguists.

The key to success in properly satisfying the Army's linguist needs rests in a language program based upon an appropriate mix of AC and RC linguists fully integrated in recruiting, training and retention activities. As the Army is restructured into a more equal mix of AC and RC forces it is imperative that the linguist program be a single Army program and not two separate AC and RC programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The changing nature of the world and the U.S. defense structure demand that innovative and adaptive new ideas be applied to properly identifying the Army's language requirements and maximizing recruiting, training and retention opportunities. The current Army language initiatives have been well thought out and researched and will contribute immensely to improving the state of the existing linguist program. However, the following five recommendations offer new approaches to solving an old

problem and should provide fertile ground for insightful research
and imaginative application.

First, the Army needs to clearly define its linguist
requirements. This process would be initiated by conducting a
Mission Area Analysis (MAA) of the Communications Intelligence
(COMINT) field to determine what functions require a language
capability and what percentage of the current 98G, Voice
Interceptor, positions should be linguists. The effort could be
additionally supported by basing language risk assessment upon
the state of the entire world and not individual threat
countries. This would allow a layering of linguists between the
Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC), rather than
resourcing the AC for every contingency. These two areas are the
most urgent requirements, as the potential reduction of linguist
requirements by this analysis will reduce the demand upon both
the recruiting and training of linguists.

Second, the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and School
(USAICS) should accelerate its development of a linguist MOS.
The life-cycle management process should be developed with Army
staff assistance to ensure proper and expeditious creation of a
generic linguist MOS that supports career development of
linguists and satisfies technical MOS needs as well. The 97L MOS
being used by the RC could serve as the developmental model and
would allow the linguist MOS to mature from supporting non-

technical MOS requirements to supporting the technical MOS needs. This effort should also evaluate the feasibility of creating an entry level MOS for CMF 98 to satisfy those duty system operator positions that do not require a language capability.

Third, linguists should be concentrated in pools or linguist units at division and corps level in order to maximize training and language support mission requirements. Where appropriate, AC linguist units should be associated with RC linguist units, possibly as split component units with elements in both the AC and RC. This recommendation is based upon adoption of the world order threat philosophy and the creation of a language MOS.

Fourth, language training must be thoroughly integrated between AC and RC units. This could be best accomplished by creating cross training relationships between AC and RC linguist units that support each unit's strengths and deficiencies. AC linguists can train RC linguists and RC linguists can train AC linguists by maximizing the technological capabilities provided by available computer and communications systems.

Fifth, all linguist efforts should maximize the direct relationship between the Army and the general public by concentrating on the common language bond between the linguist and the ethnic centers of American cities. AC and RC units with missions that are closely associated with public infrastructure

functions should be located in cities that allow mission training opportunities to support civic development efforts. Linguists should be assigned to these units based upon the language prevalent in each city in order to enhance the training reality, provide better support to the civic support effort and serve as recruiters for potential Army linguists from the ethnic population. Likewise, linguists should be used to expand the high school and university language program associations by assigning them as instructors to ROTC programs and as recruiters in ethnic areas.

In conclusion, improving the Army language program is not only possible, but the improvement potential is limited only by an unwillingness to be innovative, imaginative and resourceful. During this period of declining budgets and shrinking force structure it is paramount that the Army consider any and every possible alternative that can improve its language capability and also support the force reduction.

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