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14. ABSTRACT

This report examines the extent to which Special Operations Forces (SOF) unit leaders, Command Language Program Managers (CLPMs), and language office personnel know about the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO), contact and receive support from the SOFLO, and find its support helpful. Respondents were first asked about their awareness of the SOFLO. Findings indicate that unit leaders in the SOF community are largely unaware that the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has a language office. For the most part, those who are aware of the SOFLO have neither contacted nor received support from the SOFLO. The respondents who have received support find it helpful, suggesting that the support that the SOFLO is currently providing is meeting the needs of current users. Implications and recommendations are discussed.

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Special Operations Forces Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project: Special Operations Forces Culture and Language Office (SOFCLO) Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One element of the Special Operations Forces Culture and Language Office's (SOFCLO) mission is to study, identify, and implement methods to increase SOF cultural and regional expertise and language capability. The SOFCLO's ability to accomplish this and other aspects of its mission (e.g., training support) is affected by its visibility in the SOF community and the SOF community's knowledge, use, and evaluation of the services it offers.

This report examines the extent to which unit leaders (i.e., commanders, senior warrant officer advisor/senior enlisted advisors, and staff officers), Command Language Program Managers (CLPMs), and language office personnel know about the SOFCLO, contact and receive support from the SOFCLO, and find its support helpful. Respondents were first asked about their awareness of the SOFCLO. Those with knowledge of the SOFCLO were provided the opportunity to respond to three additional closed-ended items related to contacting the SOFCLO about language issues, receiving support from the SOFCLO, and the effectiveness of support received. In addition, respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments about the SOFCLO in response to one open-ended item.

Findings indicate that unit leaders in the SOF community are largely unaware that the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has a language office. Leaders of lower level commands (i.e., O3 and O4) are less aware of SOFCLO than leaders at higher level commands. For the most part, those who are aware of the SOFCLO have neither contacted nor received support from the SOFCLO. The respondents who have received support find it helpful, suggesting that the support that the SOFCLO is currently providing is meeting the needs of current users. It is likely that more members of the SOF community could benefit from the SOFCLO's services if they were aware of the services offered. The SOFCLO should carefully consider the options for and the costs and benefits of increasing visibility to unit leaders, especially those at lower level commands (i.e., O3 and O4), and consider collecting additional data to determine the best approaches for communicating awareness of the SOFCLO and services available. Further findings are presented within the report.

This report details the method, findings, and recommendations related to SOFCLO support. Section I of this report provides an overview of both the report and the SOF Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project (LCNA). Section II provides an overview of the report methodology, including participants, measures and analyses. Section III provides an overview of the knowledge and use of the SOFCLO and highlights differences between unit leaders, CLPMs, and language office personnel. Participant comments about support from the SOFCLO are reviewed in section IV. Section V provides recommendations based on findings presented in Sections III and IV of this report.

See Appendix B of this report for additional details about the SOF LCNA Project. For questions or more information about the SOFCLO and this project, please contact Mr. Jack Donnelly (john.donnelly@socom.mil). For specific questions related to data collection or reports associated with this project, please contact Dr. Eric A. Surface (esurface@swa-consulting.com) or Dr. Reanna Poncheri Harman (rpharman@swa-consulting.com) with SWA Consulting Inc.

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SECTION I: REPORT AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

SOFCLO Support **Report Purpose**

One element of the Special Operations Forces Culture and Language Office's (SOFCLO) mission (see Appendix A for this mission statement) is to study, identify, and implement methods to increase SOF cultural and regional expertise and language capability. The SOFCLO's ability to accomplish this and other aspects of its mission (e.g., training support) is affected by its visibility in the SOF community and the SOF community's knowledge, use, and evaluation of the services it offers. This report examines the extent to which unit leaders (i.e., commanders, senior warrant officer advisor/senior enlisted advisors, and staff officers), Command Language Program Managers (CLPMs), and language office personnel know about the SOFCLO, contact and receive support from the SOFCLO, and find its support helpful. In addition to presenting detailed findings, this report will also offer recommendations designed to enhance the SOFCLO's ability to achieve its mission.

Overview of Key Findings and Recommendations
Results from the SOF Language and Culture Needs Assessment (LCNA) survey reveal that unit leaders in the SOF community are largely unaware that the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has a language office, and for the most part those who are aware have neither contacted nor received support from the SOFCLO. Furthermore, unit leaders at lower command levels (i.e., O3 and O4) indicated less awareness than those at higher command levels. The respondents who have received support find it helpful, suggesting that the support that the SOFCLO is currently providing is meeting the needs of current users. It is likely that more members of the SOF community could benefit from the SOFCLO's services if they were aware of the services offered. The SOFCLO should carefully consider the options for and the costs and benefits of increasing visibility to unit leaders, especially those at lower level commands, and consider collecting additional data to determine the best approaches for communicating awareness of the SOFCLO and services available. Further findings and details are provided throughout this report.

Report Structure
Section II provides an overview of the report methodology, including participants, measures and analyses. Section III provides an overview of the knowledge and use of the SOFCLO and highlights differences between unit leaders, CLPMs, and language office personnel. Participant comments about support from the SOFCLO are reviewed in section IV. Section V provides recommendations based on findings presented in Sections III and IV of this report.

LCNA Project Purpose

The Special Operations Forces Culture and Language Office (SOFCLO) commissioned the SOF Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project (LCNA) to gain insights on language and culture capability and issues across the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). The goal of this organizational-level needs assessment is to inform strategy and policy to ensure SOF personnel have the language and culture skills needed to conduct their missions effectively. Data were collected between March and November, 2009 from personnel in the SOF community, including operators and leaders. Findings, gathered via focus groups and a web-based survey, will be presented in a series of reports divided into three tiers. The specific reports in each of these tiers will be determined and contracted by the SOFCLO. As originally planned, Tier I Reports focus on specific, limited issues [e.g., Inside/Outside Area of Operations (AOR) Use of Cultural Knowledge, Inside AOR Use of Language] Tier II Reports will integrate and present the most important findings across related Tier I reports (e.g., Use of Language

and Culture on Deployment) while including additional data and analysis on the topic. One Tier III Report will present the most important findings, implications, and recommendations across all topics explored in this project. The remaining Tier III reports will present findings for specific SOF organizations [e.g., Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Special Forces (SF) Command]. Two foundational reports document the methodology and participants associated with this project. As mentioned, the additional reports will be determined by the SOFCLO and may differ from what was originally planned.

See Appendix B for more details about the 2009 SOF LCNA Project and initially planned report structure.

Relationship of *SOFCLO Support* to the LCNA Project

SOFCLO Support is a final Tier I Report. The findings from this report will not be integrated with other reports in a Tier II Report, but may be cited by other Tier II or Tier III reports (see Appendix B for the initially planned report structure). The final reports produced will be determined by the SOFCLO.
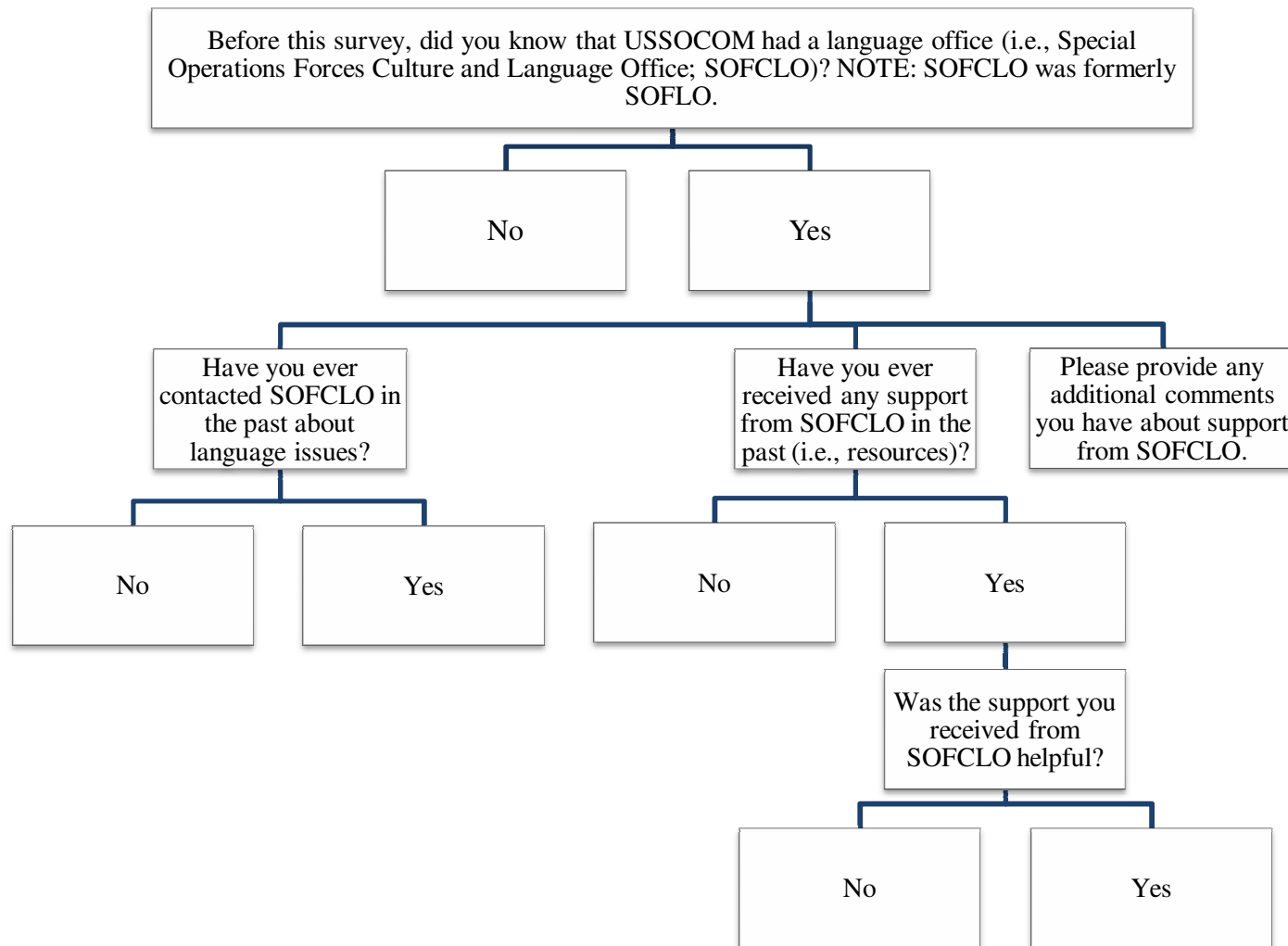
SECTION II: METHODOLOGY

Participants

Only respondents to the SOF LCNA survey who identified their role in the SOF community as unit leaders, CLPMs, or language office personnel were presented with questions about the SOFCLO. Of the 1,238 respondents who indicated one of these roles in the SOF community, 64% answered the first item (i.e., before the survey, did you know USSOCOM had a language and culture office?) addressed in this report. Only responses from these 796 survey participants are included in this report. The majority of the respondents were leaders of active duty units (command level of O3 or higher) in the Army. There was participation by leaders of the other services. Of the 796 participants, 772 identified themselves as unit leaders (commanders, senior advisors, or staff officers) with 17 indicating being command language program managers (CLPM) and 7 being language office personnel (component, service, etc.). The participation rates are consistent with those of all unit leaders, CLPMs, and language office personnel beginning the SOF LCNA survey. For further details on participation and dropout rates, please refer to the *Participation Report* (Technical Report #2010011003).

Measures

An overview of the items and branching logic for this section of the survey can be found in Figure 1. Respondents were first asked about their awareness of the SOFCLO. Those with knowledge of the SOFCLO could have responded to three additional closed-ended items and one open-ended item. Of the 296 respondents who were presented with the open-ended item (i.e., participants who were aware of the SOFCLO prior to the survey), 37 (13%) provided comments relevant to the question.

Analyses

Survey data for this report was analyzed using percentages, cross tabulations, and qualitative analysis. Percentages were used for all closed-ended items. Cross tabulations were used to investigate potential differences based on position, service, experiences, and language background. For further details on these methods please refer to the *Methodology Report* (Technical Report #2010011002).

Figure 1. SOFCLO Support Items and Branching Logic

Before this survey, did you know that USSOCOM had a language office (i.e., Special Operations Forces Culture and Language Office; SOFCLO)? NOTE: SOFCLO was formerly SOFLO.

No

Yes

Have you ever contacted SOFCLO in the past about language issues?

Have you ever received any support from SOFCLO in the past (i.e., resources)?

Please provide any additional comments you have about support from SOFCLO.

No

Yes

No

Yes

Was the support you received from SOFCLO helpful?

No

Yes

SECTION III: KNOWLEDGE AND EVALUATION OF THE SOFCLO

The SOFCLO's ability to achieve its mission depends upon unit leaders, CLPMs, and language office personnel being aware of the SOFCLO and the services and support that it can provide. If members of the community in leadership and language support positions are not aware of the SOFCLO, then SOF units and personnel cannot benefit from its services and support. One goal of the SOF LCNA project is to determine the current awareness and knowledge of the SOFCLO in the SOF community. This information can be used to identify with and to whom the SOFCLO may need to increase visibility. A second goal is to determine the effectiveness of services and support provided by asking if those who are aware of the SOFCLO and received support viewed it as helpful. This information can be used to improve the services and support offered.

Research Questions

This section addresses the following questions:
- Are unit leaders, CLPMs, and language office personnel aware of the SOFCLO?
- Have those who are aware of the SOFCLO contacted the office in the past about language issues?
- Have those who are aware of the SOFCLO received support from the office?
- Do those who receive support from the SOFCLO find the support to be helpful?

Main Findings

While unit leaders are largely unaware of the SOFCLO, the majority of CLPMs and language office personnel know that USSOCOM has a language office. Furthermore, unit leaders at lower command levels (i.e., O3 and O4) indicated less awareness than those at higher command levels. The majority of unit leaders, who are aware of the office, have not contacted the SOFCLO about language issues and have not received support from the SOFCLO, while the majority of CLPMs and language office personnel have contacted and received support from the SOFCLO. Those leaders, CLPMs and language office personnel that have received support from the SOFCLO overwhelmingly found the support to be helpful.

Detailed Findings

Knowledge of the SOFCLO
Sixty-two percent of respondents did not have prior knowledge of the SOFCLO. These respondents were primarily unit leaders (see Table 1). Sixty-four percent of unit leaders reported that they did not have prior knowledge of the SOFCLO. Within this group, no notable differences were observed between unit commanders, SWOAs/SEAs, and staff officers. However, there were differences based on the unit leaders' level of command (see Table 2). The majority of the unit leaders who responded to this item indicated a command level of O3 or O4. The unit leaders at these levels also reported having the least amount of prior knowledge of the SOFCLO (76% of O3 level command and 69% of O4 level command with no prior knowledge of the SOFCLO). Additional differences were found when comparing unit leaders to CLPMs and language office personnel. The majority of CLPMs and language office personnel indicated that they were aware of the SOFCLO (83% and 85% respectively). Generalizing the survey results to the larger population, it can be reasonably assumed the SOFCLO is unknown by the majority of unit leaders in the SOF community, specifically at the lower levels of command (O3 and O4). This has potential implications for the SOFCLO's mission of providing language-related support to SOF units and personnel.

Although a smaller percentage of the Army and Air Force respondents reported knowledge of the SOFCLO when compared to Navy and Marine respondents (see Table 1), this is likely due to the way respondents were solicited for participation in the survey. The SOFCLO leaders contacted groups of Navy and Marine respondents directly and requested their participation personally, whereas requests for participation from Army and Air Force personnel happened through indirect channels (i.e., memos distributed via email, generic email requests, etc.). There were some differences at the group and unit level as well (see Table 3).

Contacted the SOFCLO
Respondents with prior knowledge were asked if they had contacted the SOFCLO in the past regarding language issues. Overall, 77% of those with prior knowledge reported that they had not contacted the SOFCLO regarding language issues. An examination of who contacted the SOFCLO reveals a pattern mirroring findings about knowledge of the SOFCLO. Eighty percent of the unit leaders who had prior knowledge of the SOFCLO reported that they had not contacted the office regarding language issues in the past. The majority of CLPMs and language office personnel however, reported that they had contacted the SOFCLO (72% and 67% respectively). There are five possible interpretations for the finding that most unit leaders with knowledge of the SOFCLO have not contacted the SOFCLO about language issues: 1) they have had no language issues, 2) unit leaders do not know how to contact the SOFCLO, 3) unit leaders are not aware of the specific services and support available, 4) unit leaders who responded are too new to have contacted the SOFCLO, or 5) unit leaders are not contacting the SOFCLO directly, but are communicating their needs to CLPMs or through their chain of command who then contact the SOFCLO. To rule out differences in leader tenure in their current assignments, the tenure data were statistically compared for those who contacted the SOFCLO and those who did not with there being no statistically significant difference.

Received Support from the SOFCLO
Respondents with prior knowledge were also asked if they had received support from the SOFCLO in the past, independently of whether or not they had contacted the SOFCLO in the past about language issues. Consistent with the findings for contacting the SOFCLO, 67% reported that they had not received support from the office in the past.

The overall findings for the receipt of support from the SOFCLO are largely due to responses from the unit leaders in that 70% indicated that they had not received support from the SOFCLO. The majority of CLPMs and language office personnel have received support from the SOFCLO in the past (71% and 83% respectively). There are three interpretations for the finding that most unit leaders have not received support from the SOFCLO: 1) unit leaders have not received support from the SOFCLO, 2) unit leaders were not aware of support that their unit is receiving from the SOFCLO, or 3) unit leaders were not aware that support received was from the SOFCLO.

Table 1. SOFCLO Support Responses by Overall and by Subgroup

	Knowledge of the USSOCOM language office (SOFCLO)		Contacted the SOFCLO regarding language issues		Received support from the SOFCLO		Found support from the SOFCLO helpful	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total	296(38%)	500(62%)	68(23%)	226(77%)	99(33%)	197(67%)	96(97%)	3(3%)
SOF Role								
Unit Leader	276(36%)	496(64%)	54(20%)	220(80%)	84(30%)	192(70%)	81(96%)	3(4%)
CLPM	14(83%)	3(17%)	10(72%)	4(28%)	10(71%)	4(29%)	10(100%)	0(0%)
Language Office Personnel	6(85%)	1(14%)	4(67%)	2(33%)	5(83%)	1(17%)	5(100%)	0(0%)
Unit Leader Position								
Commander	100(32%)	217(68%)	15(15%)	85(85%)	31(31%)	69(69%)	28(90%)	3(10%)
Senior Advisor	38(37%)	65(63%)	4(11%)	34(89%)	8(21%)	30(79%)	8(100%)	0(0%)
Staff Officer	138(39%)	214(61%)	35(26%)	101(74%)	45(33%)	93(67%)	45(100%)	0(0%)
Service								
Army	246(35%)	461(65%)	48(20%)	197(80%)	76(31%)	170(69%)	73(96%)	3(4%)
Air Force	11(38%)	18(62%)	6(55%)	5(45%)	6(55%)	5(45%)	6(100%)	0(0%)
Navy	17(61%)	11(39%)	8(48%)	9(52%)	8(47%)	9(53%)	8(100%)	0(0%)
Marines	17(63%)	10(37%)	3(19%)	13(81%)	7(41%)	10(59%)	7(100%)	0(0%)

Note. Percentages for demographic variables are presented within each category for each question.

Table 2. Knowledge of the SOFCLO by Level of Command

	Had Prior Knowledge of the SOFCLO	**Did Not Have Prior Knowledge of the SOFCLO**
O3	53 (24%)	171 (76%)
O4	55 (31%)	123 (69%)
O5	57 (45%)	70 (55%)
O6	54 (50%)	53 (50%)
O7	12 (43%)	16 (57%)
O8	22 (52%)	20 (48%)
O9	8 (40%)	12 (60%)
O10	15 (43%)	20 (57%)

Note. This is the level of command in which respondents work, not their grade. This table only includes responses from unit leaders.

Table 3. Knowledge of the SOFCLO by SOF Assignment

	Had Prior Knowledge of the SOFCLO	**Did Not Have Prior Knowledge of the SOFCLO**
USSOCOM	35 (36%)	62 (64%)
AFSOC	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
NAVESPECWARCOM	12 (75%)	4 (25%)
MARSOC	16 (66%)	8 (33%)
USASOC	180 (37%)	310 (63%)
USASOC HQ	7 (36%)	12 (63%)
USAJFKSWCS – Staff	25 (62%)	15 (38%)
CA/PSYOP HQ	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
SF Command HQ	4 (44%)	5 (56%)
1st SFG	19 (45%)	23 (55%)
3rd SFG	17 (38%)	28 (62%)
5th SFG	19 (28%)	49 (72%)
7th SFG	9 (28%)	24 (72%)
10th SFG	12 (30%)	28 (70%)
19th SFG	4 (50%)	4 (50%)
20th SFG	3 (25%)	9 (75%)
4th POG	25 (27%)	68 (73%)
95th CAB	26 (43%)	35 (57%)
75th Ranger Regiment	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
160th SOAR	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
JSOC	2 (33%)	4 (66%)
TSOC	21 (37%)	35 (63%)
Deployed SO Unit or Element	15 (32 %)	32 (68%)
Other	13 (25%)	39 (75%)

Contacted v. Received Support

Most of the respondents neither contacted nor received support from the SOFCLO (63%; see Table 4). Nine-teen percent of the respondents contacted the SOFCLO and received support whereas only 4% of respondents indicated that they contacted the SOFCLO, but did not receive support. Of the 68 participants who indicated contacting the SOFCLO, 84% included receiving some kind of support. Keep in mind that contacting the SOFCLO for language issues does not mean that they requested support. The 16% who contacted the SOFCLO but did not receive support may not have requested it. The findings also suggest that the SOFCLO is providing support to members of the SOF community who have not contacted them directly, as 14% of the respondents indicated that they received support from the SOFCLO without having previously contacted the office regarding language issues. Additionally, this suggests that the unsolicited support is being identified as coming from the SOFCLO in these cases.

Table 4. SOFCLO Contact and Support

	Received Support from the SOFCLO	**Did Not Receive Support from the SOFCLO**
Contacted the SOFCLO	57(19%)	11(4%)
Did Not Contact the SOFCLO	42(14%)	184(63%)

Note. Percentages are based on the total number of respondents to these two items, not column or row totals.

Helpfulness of the SOFCLO

Of the respondents who reported receiving support from the SOFCLO, 97% indicated that the support was helpful (see Table 1). All CLPMs and language office personnel who received support from the SOFCLO indicated that the support was helpful. This implies that when support is received from the SOFCLO, the support is perceived as helpful in addressing their unit's requirement or issue.

SECTION IV: COMMENTS ABOUT THE SOFCLO

All respondents who were aware of the SOFCLO were given the opportunity to provide comments about support from the SOFCLO. These comments supplement the evaluation of the SOFCLO's helpfulness addressed in the previous section by allowing respondents to elaborate on their view of the SOFCLO's support.

Research Question

This section answers the following question:
- What additional comments did respondents have about support from the SOFCLO?

Main Findings

A small percentage of those who had knowledge of the SOFCLO provided relevant comments containing positive and negative feedback, as well as suggestions for improving support. The majority of the comments were provided by respondents who had received support from the SOFCLO. The overall tone of the comments reflects a positive view of the SOFCLO consistent with the perceived helpfulness of the SOFCLO addressed in the previous section. However, participant comments included some negative feedback and suggestions for ways that the SOFCLO could improve its support to the SOF community, with the majority being provided by those who had not contacted the SOFCLO but who had received support from the SOFCLO.

Detailed Findings

Overall Comment Themes
Thirty-seven respondents (13% of those with knowledge of SOFCLO) provided relevant comments. Unit leaders offered the most feedback about the SOFCLO's support with 32 comments. CLPMs and language office personnel provided a total of 5 comments. The themes represented by these comments are provided in Table 5.

Of the total SOFCLO support comments offered, there were 22 positive themes. For example, one respondent wrote: "Outstanding support from the SOFLO office. Their support has been instrumental in allowing us to try and develop unique and mission-specific approaches." Comments coded into positive themes demonstrate general and specific feedback on the helpfulness of the SOFCLO's services and support.

Respondents also provided some negative feedback (17 themes) and suggestions (4 themes) in their comments. Although respondents indicated overwhelmingly that they found the SOFCLO's support to be helpful overall in the quantitative results, comments with negative themes or suggestions point to ways in which the SOFCLO may improve its support. For example, one respondent provided a comment that included both positive and negative feedback, "My unit regularly receives money and other language tools from SOFCLO. These resources helped us build our language lab and provided funding for CLP, LET, and other forms of distance learning. SOFCLO is a good organization but it is very Bragg CENTCOM focused. It's understanding of PACOM is minimal."

Comment Themes: Contacted v. Received Support from the SOFCLO
An examination of the comments' themes based on responses to the quantitative items related to contacting the SOFCLO and receiving support from the SOFCLO reveals further insights. Table 6

presents the verbatim comments in each of these four quadrants. The majority of comments were provided by respondents who have received support from the SOFCLO ($N = 31$). Additionally, the majority of these comments were provided by individuals who indicated that the support was helpful. Only two of the comments provided were from individuals who indicated that the support they received was not helpful. Very few comments were provided by those who had not received support from the SOFCLO.

Table 5. Frequency of Codes by Theme

Themes	Frequency
Positive Feedback	*(22)*
General positive comments about SOFCLO	7
SOFCLO provides resources specific to mission needs	5
Use of SOFCLO resources/services	4
Positive comments about SOFCLO leadership	3
SOFCLO's support for students/operators	2
SOFCLO's support for the language lab	1
Negative Feedback	*(17)*
General negative comments about SOFCLO	7
Resources are limited	5
LCNA survey is too long	3
Unaware of SOFCLO's mission	2
Suggestions	*(4)*
SOFCLO should continue existing services	2
Suggestions for SOFCLO	2
Neutral Feedback	*(3)*
Other comments	3

Note. The frequencies exceed the total number of comments, as some comments addressed more than one content area. Eleven comments are not reflected in this table (10 "n/a" or "none" comments and one comment not relevant to the question).

Table 6. Comments for Contacting v. Receiving Support

	Received Support from the SOFCLO	Did Not Receive Support from the SOFCLO
Contacted the SOFCLO	• Outstanding support from the SOFLO office. Their support has been instrumental in allowing us to try and develop unique and mission-specific approaches. • This survey is too long. Geez, it took an hour for me AND I care. / / If you want an effective survey for the operators, you need to make it shorter. OR, you'll get middle columns, NA's etc. on most of your questions. • THese guys are GREAT! The go the extra, extrr mile to help. Key resource! • Keep it up. • Jack Donnelly and Mark Roemer are great! • Great. I am enrolled in an online course now. • good job • *No language or cultural expertise • They were a great asset in getting the ranger regiment's language program going. • This office is not the issue, it the CSU leadership! • very helpful in getting us lang trng • Keep up the online language classes • This office helps the CLPMs make it happen, a vital and important piece of the language program. • Perceived from the Group as a HQ staff element that places the operator first. • Resouces in Pashto are very limited. • Great Office.. Jack Donnely is tremendous.. • Roemer is OK but Donnelly is prickley • Great Support.... Thank you!	• It is good but our langauge lab provides us adequeate training • **did you know that CLO in many european languages refers to the 'water closet' or toilet
Did Not Contact the SOFCLO	• There is no denying every resource is available at all units. The only resource not abundantly available is time. We only have so much time to train prior to deployments. Language is important, but so are the other two hundred individual skills that are needed to survive in today's contingency environments. • They provided native speakers for a training exercise in support of our CMSE deployment. The awssistance was very useful and greatly enhanced training. • This survey is way too freaking long. • My unit regularly receives money and other language tools from SOFCLO. These resources helped us build our language lab and provided funding for CLP, LET, and other forms of distance learning. SOFCLO is a good organization but it is very Bragg CENTCOM focused. It's understanding of PACOM is minimal. • This survey is too long. • wrong guys running it. should be SWC. • I used the SOFTS on-line class and thought it was an excellent tool. I hope it is expanded and the timeslots become more tailorable to the students training schedule. • Great in providing support for students and now placing first in the training, clearly displays the command priority to language of future SF personnel. • Did a great job for me in lining up training through the SOFTS program. • Provided information that would have had to be purchased by individuals of team to prepare for mission. • *Files and lists of training aids were saved in conflicting file formats or ghost links that were no longer available. • Somewhat responsive - but only certain resources available. Other resouces I had to pay of pocket for. • they will do what you ask....but you could get those products from google if you really needed to.	• SOFCLO doesn't seem to have much to offer other than advertising self-learning language tools. • I saw the SOF CLO page on DKO, but have not used it. • If language is important then it would be completely intertwined within the current qualification course phasing • Don't know what their mission is • I have only heard of SOFLO onetime before and heard that it was near impossible to get immersion training from them. • 9: "None" or "N/A" comments

* These comments were provided by individuals indicating that the support received from the SOFCLO was <u>not</u> helpful. All other comments from those individuals receiving support from the SOFCLO indicated that the support was helpful. ** This comment was coded as not relevant to the question.
Comments are presented verbatim and are uncorrected for spelling and other mistakes.

Table 7. Overview of Themes for Contacting v. Receiving Support

		Received Support from the SOFCLO	Did Not Receive Support from the SOFCLO
Contacted the SOFCLO	Positive Feedback	14(30%)	0(0%)
	Negative Feedback	4(9%)	1(2%)
	Suggestions	2(4%)	0(0%)
	Neutral Feedback	1(2%)	0(0%)
Did Not Contact the SOFCLO	Positive Feedback	8(18%)	0(0%)
	Negative Feedback	9(20%)	3(7%)
	Suggestions	2(4%)	0(0%)
	Neutral Feedback	0(0%)	2(4%)

Note. The frequencies exceed the total number of comments, as some comments addressed more than one content area.

Comments from those who contacted and received support from the SOFCLO indicate an overall positive view of SOFCLO's support (30% of themes; see Table 7). Respondents in this category provided all of the general positive themed comments and the positive SOFCLO's leadership themed comments. This indicates that when the SOF community receives support after contacting the SOFCLO, the support is perceived in a positive light. This is exemplified by one respondent who stated: "They were a great asset in getting the ranger regiment's language program going."

Comments from those receiving support from the SOFCLO without having contacted the SOFCLO contained a mixture of positive and negative feedback. Comments such as: "Did a great job for me in lining up training through the SOFTS program." and "Somewhat responsive - but only certain resources available. Other resources I had to pay of pocket for." were made by respondents in this category. Respondents in this category also provided the majority of the comments that included discussion of more than one content area. The mixture of positive and negative feedback indicates that while support from the SOFCLO was helpful, there were aspects of the support that could be improved upon.

Those who did not receive any support from the SOFCLO provided negative or neutral comments related to lack of resources or lack of awareness of the SOFCLO's mission. For example, one respondent stated "SOFCLO doesn't seem to have much to offer other than advertising self-learning language tools." Though there were a limited number of comments made by respondents who have not received support from the SOFCLO, the comments provided suggest that those who fall into this category are either unaware of the support available or that the services and resources available are not aligned with their needs. Therefore, these comments offer insight as to why the respondents have not used the SOFCLO's services.

SECTION V: RECOMMENDATIONS

The SOFCLO should determine if it is important for unit leaders in the SOF community to be more aware of the language office than the current findings indicate. The SOFCLO is successfully providing support to those who are aware and requesting support. It is possible that unit leaders, especially those at lower level commands (i.e., O3 and O4), who would benefit directly from the services provided by the SOFCLO, are not aware of the type of support that is available. Another possible interpretation of these findings is that unit leaders are communicating their language and culture needs to CLPMs or component language office personnel and these personnel in turn are working with the SOFCLO. So, while these leaders may not be aware of the SOFCLO, their language and culture needs may be met by local and component language personnel. However, there could be other benefits to increasing visibility to unit leaders, including communicating the importance of language and culture in USSOCOM and increasing unit leadership support for language.

It is important for the SOFCLO to determine if spending resources to create more visibility with unit leaders is consistent with its goals and mission and will provide a sufficient increase in its mission effectiveness to justify the resources required. If the SOFCLO's goal is for more members of the SOF community to use its services and resources, the office may want to increase visibility and awareness to unit leaders. In particular, the SOFCLO should consider the implications of increasing visibility at lower level commands. Increasing visibility at all levels enhances the SOFCLO's ability to understand and respond to the language and culture requirements of leaders and their units. Increasing visibility to leaders at lower level commands should enhance SOFCLO's ability to meet the needs of the SOF operator.

A caveat is that if the SOFCLO is successful in creating more visibility with leaders, the SOFCLO will need to ensure that it can accommodate an increase in requests for services and resources. Additionally, creating this visibility and contact with unit leaders will potentially impact the services and resources the SOFCLO provides as units leaders may request support not previously offered or resourced.

If the SOFCLO determines that it is important to increase visibility to leaders, then two approaches should be considered and evaluated: 1) increase awareness to unit leaders through CLPMs and language office personnel, or 2) directly contact unit leaders to communicate services available. If part of the SOFCLO's current strategy is to spread awareness of the language office and its services through CLPMs, these findings show that there is potentially a breakdown in communication between CLPMs and unit leaders. Regardless, the SOFCLO should work with CLPMs and component language office personnel to create visibility for language and culture issues and resources and the SOFCLO's role in supporting units. For example, the SOFCLO should provide updated informational briefs for use by CLPMs to brief unit commanders on language issues and resources. If part of the SOFCLO's strategy is to communicate its mission via channels other than CLPMs and language office personnel, the SOFCLO should develop a plan to increase visibility with unit leaders directly. Regardless, the initial step is for the SOFCLO to determine or reassess its goals in terms of visibility and communications. Then, the SOFCLO can develop or revise its strategy to achieve its goals.

Going forward, there are numerous specific options for improving visibility, communications and support. A follow-up study could be conducted to determine the best approaches for communicating awareness of the office and the services available. This would have the benefit of creating awareness of specific SOFCLO resources and services. The SOFCLO may want to contact CLPMs and language office personnel to determine what type of information they are advertising to leaders at their units/components and evaluate if this is sufficient. Additionally, the SOFCLO may want to ask CLPMs what types of communication support are required to keep their unit leadership informed. The SOFCLO could offer new CLPMs a session on how to communicate the importance of language and culture and the availability

of resources to unit leaders at either the USSOCOM Language and Culture Seminar or the Command Language Program Managers training course. The SOFCLO should make sure its website is effective in communicating policy, issues, resources, and support. There was a comment about the ineffectiveness of the web resources. Having a focused website that is easy to find and navigate with current files and resources is part of an effective communication strategy. Regardless of the specifics, the SOFCLO needs to evaluate whether a communications plan is needed to increase its visibility (or to meet its other visibility and communications goals) and to develop the specifics of the plan if it is required.

Finally, the comments provided indicate areas where there is potential for the SOFCLO to improve in terms of providing support to the SOF community. If the SOFCLO determines that it is beneficial to consider recommendations from the respondents, they should consider the following recommendations implied by the comments:
- Conduct an evaluation of the resources available compared to the demand for resources in specific languages.
- Determine if the type of resources needed by the SOF community are being offered by the SOFCLO.
- Evaluate the function of the SOFCLO website.
- Consider expanding the SOFTS classes and tailoring them to accommodate training schedules.

ABOUT SWA CONSULTING INC.

SWA Consulting Inc. (formerly Surface, Ward, and Associates) provides evidence-based solutions for clients using the principles and methods of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. Since 1997, SWA has advised and assisted corporate, non-profit and governmental clients on:

- Training and development
- Performance measurement and management
- Organizational effectiveness
- Test development and validation
- Program/training evaluation
- Work/job analysis
- Needs assessment
- Selection system design
- Study and analysis related to human capital issues
- Metric development and data collection
- Advanced data analysis

One specific practice area is research and consulting on foreign language and culture in work contexts. In this area, SWA has conducted numerous projects, including language assessment validation and psychometric research; evaluations of language training, training tools, and job aids; language and culture focused needs assessments and job analysis; and advanced analysis of language research data.
Based in Raleigh, NC, and led by Drs. Eric A. Surface and Stephen J. Ward, SWA now employs close to twenty I/O professionals at the masters and PhD levels. SWA professionals are committed to providing clients the best data and analysis with which to make solid data-driven decisions. Taking a scientist-practitioner perspective, SWA professionals conduct model-based, evidence-driven research and consulting to provide the best answers and solutions to enhance our clients' mission and business objectives.

For more information about SWA, our projects, and our capabilities, please visit our website (www.swa-consulting.com) or contact Dr. Eric A. Surface (esurface@swa-consulting.com) or Dr. Stephen J. Ward (sward@swa-consulting.com).

APPENDIX A: SOFCLO MISSION STATEMENT

The SOFCLO's mission is to "develop, coordinate, and execute foreign language and regional expertise policy and strategies for Joint Special Operations Forces and the SOF Service components to satisfy USSOCOM validated required capabilities, identified by supported combatant commands and USSOCOM; develop, validate, and execute joint SOF training, training delivery means, and training materials; and study, identify, and implement methods to increase SOF cultural and regional expertise, language capability, and report readiness." The SOFCLO's success in achieving this mission has a direct impact on the current levels of language and cultural capabilities as well as ensuring that any needs identified are met.

APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE LCNA PROJECT

In 2003-2004, the Special Operations Forces Culture and Language Office (SOFCLO; formerly, SOFLO) sponsored the SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project to inform the development of a language transformation strategy in response to a GAO report (2003). This SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project collected current-state information about language usage, proficiency, training, and policy issues (e.g., Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, FLPP) from SOF personnel, SOF unit leaders, and other personnel involved in SOF language. The project used multiple data collection methods and provided the SOFCLO with valid data to develop a comprehensive language transformation strategy and advocate for the SOF perspective on language issues within the DoD community.
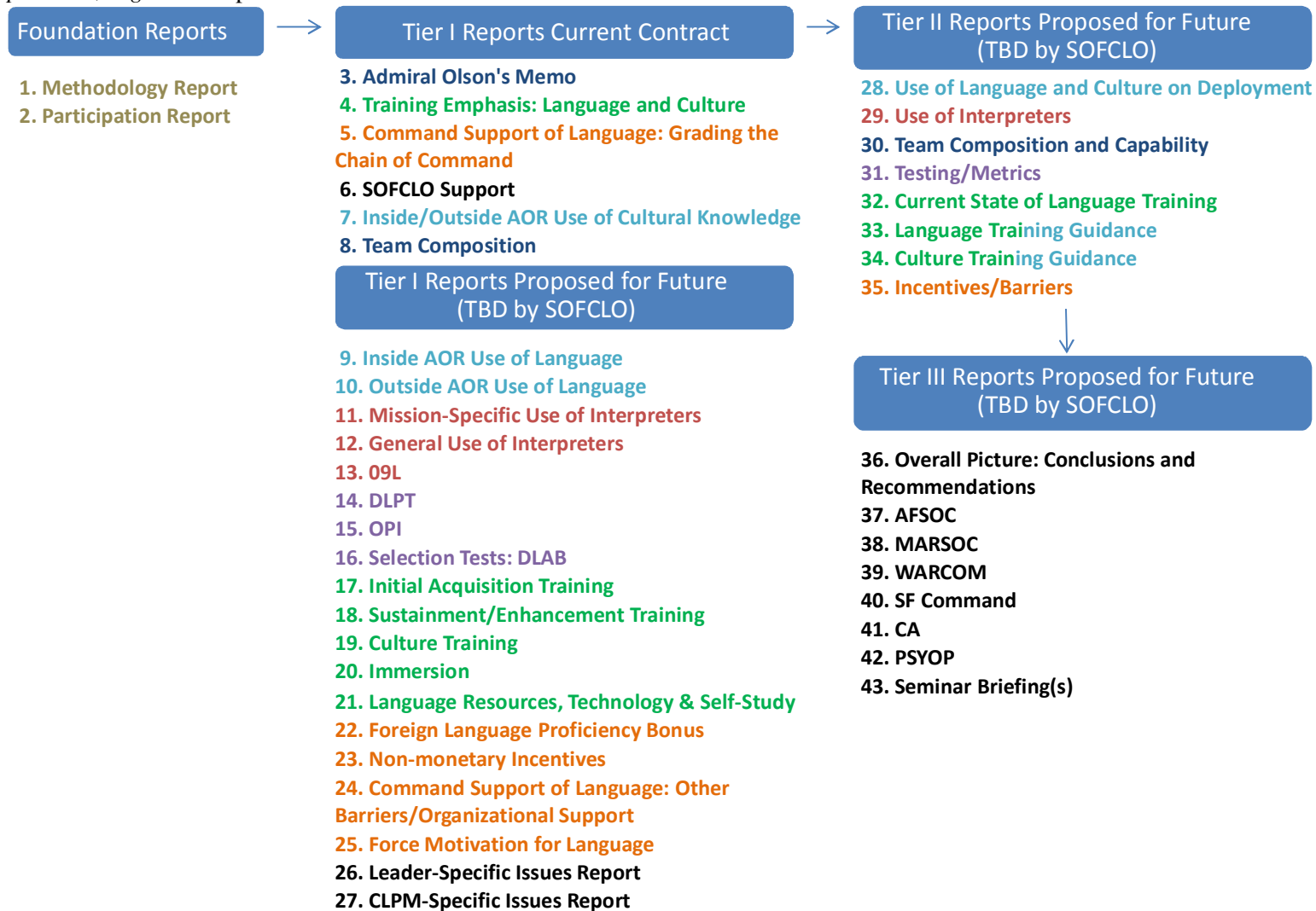
In a continuing effort to update knowledge of language and culture needs while informing strategic plan development, the SOFCLO commissioned the 2009 SOF Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project (LCNA) to reassess the language and culture landscape across the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and develop a strategy for the next five years. Data were collected between March and November, 2009 from personnel in the SOF community, including operators and leaders. Twenty-three focus groups were conducted between March and June, 2009. A comprehensive, web-based survey designed to gather information from both operators and leaders in the SOF community was launched on 26 October and closed on 24 November, 2009.

This project's findings will be disseminated through reports and briefings (see Appendix B, Figure 1 for an overview). Two foundational reports will document the methodology and participants associated with this project. The remaining reports will be organized in three tiers. The specific reports in each of these tiers will be determined and contracted by the SOFCLO. As originally planned, twenty-five Tier I Reports will focus on specific, limited issues [e.g., Inside/Outside Area of Operations (AOR) Use of Cultural Knowledge, Inside AOR Use of Language]. Tier II reports will integrate and present the most important findings across related Tier I reports (e.g., Use of Language and Culture on Deployment). Most, but not all, Tier I reports will roll into Tier II reports. One Tier III Report will present the most important findings, implications, and recommendations across all topics explored in this project. The remaining Tier III reports present findings for specific SOF organizations [e.g., Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Special Forces (SF) Command]. All Tier III reports will be associated with a briefing. As mentioned, the additional reports will be determined by the SOFCLO and may differ from what was originally planned.

In June, 2009, the GAO reported that the Department of Defense is making progress toward transforming language and regional proficiency capabilities but still does not have a strategic plan in place to continue development that includes actionable goals and objectives. The findings from this study can be used by the SOFCLO and leaders at USSOCOM to continue strategic planning and development in this area.

This project design, logistics, data collection, initial analysis and first eight reports of this project were conducted by SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) under a subcontract with SRC (SR20080668 (K142); Prime # N65236-08-D-6805). The additional reports mentioned above are proposed for the future (TBD by the SOFCLO). For questions or more information about the SOFCLO and this project, please contact Mr. Jack Donnelly (john.donnelly@socom.mil). For specific questions related to data collection or reports associated with this project, please contact Dr. Eric A. Surface (esurface@swa-consulting.com) or Dr. Reanna Poncheri Harman (rpharman@swa-consulting.com) with SWA Consulting Inc.

Appendix B, Figure 1. Report Overview

| Foundation Reports | → | Tier I Reports Current Contract | → | Tier II Reports Proposed for Future (TBD by SOFCLO) |

Foundation Reports

1. Methodology Report
2. Participation Report

Tier I Reports Current Contract

3. Admiral Olson's Memo
4. Training Emphasis: Language and Culture
5. Command Support of Language: Grading the Chain of Command
6. SOFCLO Support
7. Inside/Outside AOR Use of Cultural Knowledge
8. Team Composition

Tier I Reports Proposed for Future (TBD by SOFCLO)

9. Inside AOR Use of Language
10. Outside AOR Use of Language
11. Mission-Specific Use of Interpreters
12. General Use of Interpreters
13. 09L
14. DLPT
15. OPI
16. Selection Tests: DLAB
17. Initial Acquisition Training
18. Sustainment/Enhancement Training
19. Culture Training
20. Immersion
21. Language Resources, Technology & Self-Study
22. Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus
23. Non-monetary Incentives
24. Command Support of Language: Other Barriers/Organizational Support
25. Force Motivation for Language
26. Leader-Specific Issues Report
27. CLPM-Specific Issues Report

Tier II Reports Proposed for Future (TBD by SOFCLO)

28. Use of Language and Culture on Deployment
29. Use of Interpreters
30. Team Composition and Capability
31. Testing/Metrics
32. Current State of Language Training
33. Language Training Guidance
34. Culture Training Guidance
35. Incentives/Barriers

Tier III Reports Proposed for Future (TBD by SOFCLO)

36. Overall Picture: Conclusions and Recommendations
37. AFSOC
38. MARSOC
39. WARCOM
40. SF Command
41. CA
42. PSYOP
43. Seminar Briefing(s)

Note: Foundation reports are referenced by every other report. Colors represent Tier I reports that roll (integrate) into an associated Tier II report. Reports in black are final reports on the topic but may be cited by other reports. Tier II reports roll into the Tier III reports. All Tier III reports include an associated briefing.