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**Some Changes in the Foreign Language Training and its
Structure in the Hungarian Defence Forces from the Change
of the Social System to Date**

The author's resume of the PhD dissertation

2003



1. THE OUTLINE OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

Hungary's Association with the North Atlantic Council, the Partnership for Peace initiatives, NATO-membership and the prospect of a European Union membership are all steps that are crucial for enforcing Hungarian national interests.

The accession to Euro-Atlantic organizations along with adapting to a new security and military environment is a unified process embracing the social and economic and military policy. Meeting requirements relating to the integration including meeting the linguistic requirements is an important task in order we could gain and enjoy the advantages of full membership. The changes of language priorities generate new cultural impacts and changes in attitude.

My study focuses on the changes in the altered language needs and requirements, the ways of meeting them, the current situation and position of language training in Hungary and in the Hungarian Defence Forces from the change of the social system to date.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

My objectives are:

1. to give a comparative analysis of the development level of economy and language knowledge. I wish to prove that in the process of globalization the more developed a society is the stronger the demand for foreign language knowledge is particularly among the professionals. (With the only exception of the United States of America and Great Britain where there is no genuine need for learning a foreign language other than English.)
2. to present the quantitative training launched in order to meet the requirements generated by new priorities after the turn of the millennium; the responses to the challenges of quality language training in the Hungarian Defence Forces; this process to date.
3. to analyse the language preparedness of Hungarian peacemakers and peacekeepers and that of employed in NATO institutions, European Union, and military diplomacy in the context of the new linguistic requirements.

3. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

In order to achieve the set objectives I used the following methods in conducting my research and writing the present study:

1. *I collected and processed* the domestic and foreign special literature, the results of the latest research, related to the topic, and dissertations, decrees, reports on language training, including military language training.
2. *I took part in domestic and foreign conferences.* I use the experience gained there in my teaching.

3. *I made personal interviews and had consultations* on language requirements to the Hungarian Defence Forces, on meeting these requirements, and on experience on using language knowledge, with language training experts, high ranking officers of the Hungarian Defence Forces.
4. *I studied* the measures, decrees and orders of the Ministry of Defence and the Hungarian Defence Forces related to language training and to the long term development plans of language training.
5. *I statistically processed* language training-related data in the Hungarian Defence Forces, analysed them and compared them with those in Hungarian higher education, European Union, former Socialist countries, particularly the so called Visegrad countries.
6. *I regularly published* the partial results of my research.

4.A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ANALYSES PERFORMED

In Chapter 1 I give a brief outline of the changes that took place in the field of economy and security policy in the world and primarily in Europe with their impact on requests presented by language learning and language knowledge.

In Chapter 2 I analyse the position and situation of language training in the Hungarian Defence Forces. Rapid changes in international environment improving East-West relations generated illusions not only among the peoples but also in political life.

Social differences are on the increase, Hungary borders seven countries with which it maintains different relations. Due to the Yugoslav war Hungary bordered a crisis region. Our cooperation with Hungary's southern neighbours and the Visegrad countries is not entirely problem-free. To maintain good relations and cooperation with the Russian leadership, with the United States of America as the only super-power, and with the German Federal Republic, which is our most significant trade partner is of crucial importance.

I come to the following conclusions:

- a. while the Hungarian People's Army was the tool of politics the officers' social prestige was low and that of the NCOs' was at the minimum.
- b. The level of language knowledge used to be also very low in general. The entire language training system was stricken by the country's belonging to the Warsaw Pact. (While before the change of the social system Russian was the preferred language at present due to Hungary's NATO-membership English took over this role.)
- c. The knowledge of Russian in general motivation was low.
- d. During the 10 years following the change of the social system 17,000 commissioned officers left the Hungarian Defence Forces. The majority of them are talented people with foreign language knowledge drained by market economy.

- e. The association with the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and then the PfP, participation in the activities of NATO institutions and organizations, and also military diplomacy required an increasing number of officers with a good command of English.
- f. Foreign language knowledge is of determining importance for the armed forces in the context of cooperation.
- g. The number of opportunities for language-learning, language teacher-training in native environment or other NATO countries has been increasing and it has become clear that it is only the ZMKA, now ZRINYI MIKLOS NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY, that can be the center for and basis of domestic military foreign language training.
- h. The importance of military professional language has increased which necessitated the need for new language training programs and primarily the elaboration of military English training material with highly qualified language trainers able to teach military language at a high level.
- i. As military language training is regulated by similar decrees as civil training thus an intermediate level of language knowledge is a pre-condition for military language training too.
- j. Another basic pre-condition for military language training is the compilation of a differentiated teaching material for the different branches, services, support elements, units and sub-units and also the identification of areas within the MoD where the knowledge of military or general foreign language is required.
- k. The first half of the 1990's was characterized by a transition phase.
- l. Foreign language training became a part of the entire system of officer training and foreign language knowledge turned a pre-condition of meeting new requirements.

The actual cause of the ideas presented in Chapter 1 is the fact that social and economic changes gave an entirely new direction to the tasks of foreign language training. As the world turned single-polar, the United States of America has a clear economic and military advantage, its strong influence on scientific and cultural life led to an inevitable consequences for the western allied states as well as for the former socialist countries including Hungary, after the change of the social system.

In my study I point out the importance of preparing appropriate language teachers of western foreign languages, the difficulties related to the Russian teachers' retraining ensuring the meeting of quantitative needs and to the single-language teachers' training catering for qualitative requirements, highlight the significance of language teacher training and further training including the advantages and importance of further training in a native environment, due to the fact that western languages took the foreground.

I devoted a separate sub-chapter to the issue of importance of the Hungarian system of education and stated that general language skills have to be acquired in elementary and secondary schools for which the personal, material and financial pre-conditions should be provided. In accordance with the current goals leaving secondary education should be accompanied with an intermediate-level knowledge of a foreign language and at least

a basic-level command of another one. In the future the pre-condition of GCSE examination will be a pass of a foreign language examination. Consequently, in the field of language training institutes of higher education including military colleges and ZMNDU should focus on professional language training and teaching a second foreign language at a high level.

In Chapter 1 I devoted a separate part to the significance of mother tongue in the area of foreign language training. This is because in my opinion without a considerable and precise knowledge of a native language there is no high level command of a foreign language and on the other hand in the European Union the usability of nations' language and culture will be given a high priority. Thus the importance of the so called small languages will also grow while the increasing language relations between Hungary and ethnic Hungarians abroad will enable a better use of the advantages provided by the common language.

In my study I also drew attention to the various ethnic groups in Hungary and made proposals in the field of recognition of importance of language opportunities of the neighbouring countries, highlighting the significance of acquiring these languages. I also made a proposal on a better and more coordinated exploitation of the language knowledge of students graduating from ethnic secondary schools – even in military establishments.

In the second part of my study I analyze the language training in the Hungarian Defence Forces between the change of the social system and the turn of the millennium. Due to the reasons outlined above the changes needs and tasks appearing in various fields of society also became clear within the Hungarian Defence Forces.

In the conclusion of my dissertation it is clear for me to emphasize that in modern Hungarian officers' training foreign language training should be continuously developed.

- m. conducting quality language-training resulting in communicative language knowledge;
- n. establishing a Foreign Language Training and Examination Centre ensuring the coordination and maintaining of basic re- and further language training;
- o. setting the necessary level of foreign language required for particular positions;
- p. checking the fulfillment of examination obligations of language-course students;
- q. a consequent meeting of existing rules and regulations.

5.SUMMARIZED CONCLUSIONS

The actual cause of the ideas presented in Chapter 1 is the fact that social and economic changes gave an entirely new direction to the tasks of foreign language training. As the world turned single-polar, the United States of America has a clear economic and military advantage, its strong influence on scientific and cultural life led to

an inevitable consequences for the western allied states as well as for the former socialist countries including Hungary, after the change of the social system.

While Russian lost its importance the needs for the so-called western languages has rapidly increased in the ex-socialist countries. The analysis of data clearly indicates the process of gaining ground by English in the countries analysed in my study, primarily in the Visegrad states.

In my study I pointed out the importance of preparing appropriate language teachers of western foreign languages, the difficulties related to the Russian teachers' retraining ensuring the meeting of quantitative needs and to the single-language teachers' training catering for qualitative requirements, highlight the significance of language teacher training and further training including the advantages and importance of further training in a native environment, due to the fact that western languages took the foreground.

I devoted a separate sub-chapter to the issue of importance of the Hungarian system of education and stated that general language skills have to be acquired in elementary and secondary schools for which the personal, material and financial pre-conditions should be provided. In accordance with the current goals leaving secondary education should be accompanied with an intermediate-level knowledge of a foreign language and at least a basic-level command of another one. In the future the pre-condition of GCSE examination will be a pass of a foreign language examination. Consequently, in the field of language training institutes of higher education including military colleges and ZMNDU should focus on professional language training and teaching a second foreign language at a high level.

Currently the institutes of higher education are clearly language-examination-centered. According to my finds there are a lot of things to be done for teaching the appropriate level of foreign languages and proper use of language for communication that is the primary target of language training. There are significant deficiencies in the field of language teacher training and differences between requirements in language training programmes of various secondary schools. (Capital versus provincial schools, bilingual schools, schools teaching ethnic minority languages, secondary grammar schools v. vocational schools.) Consequently, the first-year students of higher education begin/continue their foreign language training. Statistics indicate the successful process of lineup showing that the number of students failing their language examinations thus unable to take a final examination and leaving the institute/university without a degree.

I state that further training of language teachers, developing elementary and secondary school training, standardization of language requirements are all of paramount importance. Due to the deficiencies the organization of language training tasks in higher education including officer-training establishments is an extremely important job. This is even more so as here an intermediate- and/or basic-level "C" type professional language examination in one or two foreign languages is an output pre-condition.

In Chapter 1 I devoted a separate part to the significance of mother tongue in the area of foreign language training. This is because in my opinion without a considerable and

precise knowledge of a native language there is no high level command of a foreign language and on the other hand in the European Union the usability of nations' language and culture will be given a high priority. Thus the importance of the so called small languages will also grow while the increasing language relations between Hungary and ethnic Hungarians abroad will enable a better use of the advantages provided by the common language.

In my study I also drew attention to the various ethnic groups in Hungary and made proposals in the field of recognition of importance of language opportunities of the neighbouring countries, highlighting the significance of acquiring these languages. I also made a proposal on a better and more coordinated exploitation of the language knowledge of students graduating from ethnic secondary schools – even in military establishments. Besides, I also pointed out the significance of elaborating a language-examination system of and accreditation for these languages that has already been put into practice since then.

As soon as possible the opportunity for taking professional examinations in these languages should be provided thus meeting the requirements for obtaining a degree. These measures will again increase the motivating force of learning languages of ethnic minorities and taking examinations in them. The long-term advantages of the knowledge of languages of ethnic minorities are so obvious that I do not prove them only reinforce them with special regard to the historic past of the region and the approaching Union opportunities.

In the second part of my study I analyze the language training in the Hungarian Defence Forces between the change of the social system and the turn of the millennium. Due to the reasons outlined above the changes, needs, and tasks appearing in various fields of society also became clear within the Hungarian Defence Forces.

One of the most important pre-conditions of NATO membership and of accession is creating language compatibility, establishing military language training. The modernization of foreign language teaching became a necessary requirement. Its primary reason is that the practical need for English language knowledge has grown in the greatest extent.

- English is the primary working language of NATO;
- In Hungarian military training establishments it was mainly IMET, a USA-financed training and education program that supported language teaching;
- The United States of America and several Western European countries run military training programs at various graduate and post-graduate levels;
- The significance of foreign language training has grown significantly in officers' training and in the entire Hungarian higher education including the compilation of teaching material (course-books, textbooks, audio and video materials) and preparation of language teachers. The establishment of examination system was structured primarily around English.

The English Language section of the Foreign Language Institute of Zrinyi Miklos National Defence University became the centre for preparation which is an integrated part of the university curriculum and constitutes a single unit with it. The appearing new requirements and tasks: learning new military way of thinking, new priorities of languages, increased quality requirements in foreign language training, and also learning and teaching military language of specialised areas in the armed forces, the elaboration and organisation of military language examinations provide the language teachers of the Institute with a significant work load.

It can be stated that thanks to the efficient work of the language teachers the language knowledge of the officers' Corps of the Hungarian Defence Forces is above that of other strata of Hungarian society thus reinforcing the social prestige of army officers and the Hungarian Defence Forces as a whole.

The synthesis of special literature gathered during my research work and presented in my dissertation along with the opinions of the interviewed Hungarian and foreign experts and also my personal opinion assisted me with drawing comprehensive conclusions.

I wish to publish a summary of my research results and the solutions to problems recognized and brought up by my studies.

Partial conclusions are drawn at the particular partial themes within my dissertation. In my opinion, as a summary of my dissertation it is useful to give a generalized summary of my research related to the most important elements of the research theme. In the conclusion of my dissertation I consider the highlighting of the need to continuously develop of the level of foreign-language training in modern Hungarian officer training a primary role.

6. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

1. *I proved* that Hungary's geographical location and position within NATO justified the establishment and operation of a tri-lingual model (mother tongue, world language, regional language).
2. *I reinforced* the direct connection between economy, defence, information, modernisation, and language knowledge (including British/American English); the direct proportion between the level of development of economy and the knowledge of foreign languages; as the knowledge of foreign languages indicates as openness while the lack of knowledge of foreign languages supports the closes nature of society.
3. *I proved* the fundamental and reinforced importance of a mother tongue from the aspect of foreign language knowledge and that of the Union ideas; highlighted the dangers of borrowing English German words and those of conservation for the small languages; underlined the significance of incorporating of Hungarian equivalents of foreign words into the structure of

Hungarian. I proved that selecting a language reflects a change in mentality, quality and culture.

4. *I stated* that a high-level use of a foreign language is the base of common activity and interoperability in international environment (NATO institutions, authorities, staffs, courses, participation in UN tasks and missions, peace support operations, military diplomacy, etc.) Foreign language knowledge is a pre-condition of enlarging professional knowledge, studying foreign special literature, and participating at international professional events, conferences. It is important to ensure to acquire and maintain language knowledge at this level, and also to pass it.
5. *I processed* the situation of foreign language knowledge within the Hungarian Defence Forces and stated as a regularity the primary character of extensive language training in the transition periods and that the foreign language knowledge of the officers corps, regarding the dominant languages, extended over the national average in the intensive phase.

7. PRACTICAL USE OF THE RESEARCH FINDS

In my opinion the researched theme may:

- contribute to raising standards of foreign language training in secondary and higher military training establishments, to shaping more successful teaching materials, and to the elaboration of new course-books, manuals, and regulations;
- enhance the more successful resolution of practical problems in foreign language training;
- provide a base for further research in the field of military language training;
- indicate the possible directions of further training;
- be used for outlining language expectations and requirements necessary for meeting direct needs related to military activities, for compiling the necessary teaching materials and training techniques.

8. A LIST OF PUBLICATIONS BY THE PHD STUDENT

1. A gazdasági biztonság és a gazdasági stratégia néhány összefüggése [Some Interrelations between Economic Security and Economic Strategy] Armadia 11/2002.
2. A NATO, a PfP. és az EU az angol nyelvoktatás aspektusaiból. Doktori értekezés szerzői ismertetése. [NATO, PfP and the EU from the Aspects of English Language Training. Author's résumé of dissertation.] Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University PhD School January 2002.
3. A nemzetközi kapcsolatok átalakulása és a nyelvoktatás jelentősége [The Shaping of International Relations and the Significance of Foreign Language Training] College of General Business Management Scientific

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1982-1992 Karikas Frigyes Elementary school, Budapest
1992-1998 Terezvarosi Bi-lingual Elementary and Secondary School,
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1998-- College of General Business Management, Budapest

My field of interests includes language training and its security policy ..