



Title of Report: Linguapeace Europe

Case Report Author: Boian Savtchev, Major, Bulgarian Army Reserve

Jack Lonergan, Professor Emeritus, UK Ministry of Defence Languages
Examinations Board

Training Organization: [European Centre for Education and Training](#)¹ – Sofia, Bulgaria

Date of Publication: May 2012

1. Identify and describe the training program.

This case report describes *Linguapeace Europe*. It involves a program in English language training for the 21st-century workforce, but extends beyond that to aspects of syllabus design, curriculum content, assessment, pathways to further qualifications, and transferability to foreign languages.

Linguapeace Europe was a project funded to 75% of its costs by the European Union (EU) under its *Leonardo da Vinci* initiative as project No. BG/03/B/F/LA-166009. It focused on the use of English by the military forces in the new Europe with reference to post-Communist Eastern Europe. As a particular example of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) with certificated outcomes, it was particularly interesting, but the project was more than just ESP. It also offered insights into the sociological and military developments of contemporary Europe and beyond, reflecting both the changing geopolitical and societal realities of Europe, and the changing role of military forces in the world.

Led by Bulgaria, the project included representatives from Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Spain, and the UK, with accreditation from the pan-European International Certificate Conference (an NGO of the Council of Europe). There was also specialist native speaker input from the UK, including the Ministry of Defence Languages Examinations Board (MODLEB). Details of partners are on the project website <http://www.linguapeace-europe.net>.

2. Describe the target audience for the training program.

The target audience for the *Linguapeace Europe* programme consisted of military personnel whose work required them to operate in English. Typically, these were people seconded to UN or NATO missions, where the language of interoperability is English. This target group was reached through language trainers, whether in military establishments or in organisations contracted to provide teaching.

¹ **Terms of Use and Disclaimer:** TIRF is providing this information as a service to our constituents, and no endorsement by TIRF of the program described in this case report is intended or implied. The information is made available free of charge and may be shared, with proper attribution. If you have reprint questions, please contact the training organization identified above.



Because the project was funded by the European Commission, that was the target group for reports. All project reports and outcomes must be submitted to the European Commission, as continued financing depends on meeting the agreed project criteria for budgets, quality outcomes, and sustainability.

3. Describe the needs assessment procedures utilized to develop the program.

The needs analysis for *Linguapeace Europe* was extensive. The information fed into the project came from eighty-four participants in peace support operations worldwide, trainers of languages for military purposes, and assessors from the UK Ministry of Defence Languages Examinations Board.

Although the extent of the contributors' knowledge was substantial, the information they had to offer differed widely in how it was presented. A specially drafted needs analysis form helped present a great deal of information in a consistent format, but other experiences – such as teaching, examining, and service in the field – also contributed.

The needs analysis listed twenty-five activities identified by informants as core tasks. These included liaison at headquarters; manning checkpoints and border crossings; escorting civilians and refugees; verifying ceasefires and investigating violations; safety health and hygiene; and taking witness statements.

Each task had checklists about aspects of the communication that were relevant. For example, *Taking witness statements* requires modes of discourse (talking one-to-one; writing) not applicable everywhere. Respondents with relevant experience were asked to indicate all suitable answers from lists such as these:

- interlocutors for *Taking witness statements*: colleagues, headquarters, police, paramilitaries, civil authorities, and civilians;
- communicative activities in *Taking witness statements*: explain obligations and rights of the witness, describe the incident, describe the person(s), take statements, do the interrogation, sign documents by witness, make follow-up appointment; and
- frequency of activities: every day, a few times a week, once a week, or a few times a month; once a month.

The input from all these factors is incorporated into the outcomes of *Linguapeace Europe* as appropriate.

4. Explain the English language training program's over-arching goals and specific objectives.



The over-arching goal of military language training programs is to produce service personnel with an assessed level of reliability and competence in the target language. Training is targeted to task, but the tasks of military personnel are diverse. The *Linguapeace Europe* project had the specific objective of identifying these tasks systematically, relating them to existing schemes of competence descriptors, and providing trainers, learners, and assessors with improved tools for their pedagogy.

The existing competence descriptors are in NATO Standardisation Agreement 6001 (STANAG 6001), which outlines the language competences needed to facilitate interoperability between a wide variety of communication and information systems. These systems include personal contacts, which are essential for NATO and Allied operations.

While the USA, Germany, and the UK, for example, have detailed language training programs, some countries very active in the United Nations (e.g. Ireland) have a very limited language development policy. Others, such as Bulgaria and Turkey, are striving to broaden their programs to encompass STANAG.

5. Describe the teaching methods and training procedures used in the program.

The teaching methods used by the partners who deliver language training in *Linguapeace Europe* focus on communicative competence. Simulation and role-play, reflecting military training practice, are used widely to foster information retrieval, negotiating, and presentation skills, as well as note taking for consecutive interpreting.

The teaching methods are based on presentation, understanding, practice, and use. This approach involves taking small steps which are normally mastered, and then moving on cumulatively. Rules about language usage are given with explanations of grammar and structure, but always as an enabling tool to communicate, not as a target of the tuition. The assessment processes are entirely about communicative competence; there are (for example) no grammar gap-filling exercises in the final assessments.

The partners in *Linguapeace Europe* who deliver language training do so in a wide variety of ways, as illustrated by these scenarios:

- Individual tuition for a Liaison Officer at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), Belgium. The officer must be able to function at the level of his rank and tasks in English. Depending on previous knowledge, the training program will last from one to ten months, usually in an intensive mode.

Small group tuition (two to six people) for experienced linguists who can transfer their skills to a new language in a short space of time. For example, a group of soldiers who already have good skills in Spanish take a 100-hour, 21-day course in Angolan



Portuguese. The timescale is enough for the group to master the limited set communicative tasks needed to help with crowd control at elections. This means no writing, very limited reading, some listening, and many spoken instructions and directives.

- Group tuition (up to twelve participants) for specialists who will use their language in the target region. Beginners courses are normally intensive, last forty-four weeks, and require three to six hours of committed study per day. At the end of this period, if all skills are studied, the linguist is a competent consecutive interpreter, can monitor broadcasts and print materials, and can draft written texts.
- Class tuition (ten to twenty+ participants) for a general language class, perhaps as a precursor to selection for further training. Such sessions may last one week, several weeks, several months, or even a year.

6. Describe the teaching materials used in the program.

The three main sets of materials and supplements for teaching are (1) the *Linguapeace Europe* European Language Portfolio, (2) sample training materials, and (3) the *Linguapeace Europe* Glossary. There is no internationally prescribed set of teaching materials for English for military purposes teaching programs. Major institutions such as the US Defense Language Institute, the UK Defence School of Languages, or the German Bundessprachenamt have developed their own materials, and many institutions do the same. Others, less successfully, use standard EFL/ESL textbooks, possibly supplemented by military themes. An objective of *Linguapeace Europe* was to offer language training providers and assessors with the meta-contents of curriculum, graded descriptors of competence related to European norms, and assessment methods. A template for such a package is the European Language Portfolio (ELP), a development from the Council of Europe. See the website at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/portfolio/?l=e&m=/main_pages/portfolios.html.

Information about the *Linguapeace Europe* Language Portfolio (LPELP) is available on the project website in English. The LPELP for *Linguapeace Europe* has four main components, reflecting the activities and attainment of a language learner:

- LPELP Passport
- LPELP Biography
- LPELP Dossier
- LPELP Strands of Progression Scales

Three pre-publication sample units for teaching English as a foreign language are available on the project website: *Disaster Relief*, *Intelligence Gathering*, and *Liaising with the Locals*. A major aid for language enhancement and development, available in twelve languages,



was the *Linguapeace Europe Glossary*. The project website contains a working model of this glossary.

The *Linguapeace Europe Glossary* contains a database of terms in English used in international peacekeeping missions. The glossary entries (ca. 3,000 words) were selected from various sources after consultation with eighty-four participants in peace support operations worldwide, as well as trainers of Languages for Military Purposes. The glossary is developed in twelve access languages: Bulgarian, Dutch, Estonian, French, German, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Slovakian, and Spanish.

Users can locate terminology by theme and by letter. For example, the theme *Peace Support Operations* and the letter *N* leads to the term *negotiated access*. Users can do any or all of these:

- Hear the pronunciation in English: *negotiated access*.
- Read the translation of the English term *negotiated access* in their own language, e.g. *Zugangsverhandlungen* (German); *tárgyalással elért segítségnyújtási jog* (Hungarian); *vienošanās par humanitārās palīdzības piegādi* (Latvian).
- See the definition in English: *negotiated access*: a process in which humanitarian organizations negotiate with a warring party the right to deliver a specified number of aid shipments, along a specified route, to a population in need.
- Consolidate vocabulary through interactive activities such as anagram finders, gap and matching exercises, or listen-and-write tasks.

The need for the glossary arose because there is no established standard for the many terms used in peacekeeping missions by NATO, the UN, or other forces. The multi-faceted nature of peacekeeping includes the language of a wide range of groups, such as the military, military police, civilian police, civilians, humanitarian organizations, or local authorities. The entries reflect reality and range from general terms, such as *captivity* or *concealment*, to the highly specific language of legal documents, battle plans, command structures, and official regulations. The *Linguapeace Europe Glossary* does not claim to be a comprehensive manual of military talk; it serves as a source of reference and as a didactic aid. It is suitable for users at the intermediate level and above, corresponding to language levels B1-B2-C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, or to Operational level (2.5) or higher on the NATO STANAG 9-point scale of 0 to 4, where a score of 2.5 marks the boundary of operational ability.

7. Explain the content of the English language training program.



A. What written and spoken genres are covered in the training program?

The written and spoken genres in the *Linguapeace Europe* project cover all aspects of the communication within the military when operating as a joint force with interoperability. They also address all actions associated with those outside the military, such as liaison, rescue, arrest and detainment, or interrogation. Written materials include memos, commands, instructions, maps and itineraries, situation reports, progress reports, military safety manuals, emails, telephone interactions, announcements, press briefings, panel briefings, and witness statements.

Topic areas include repair of schools, roads and bridges; traffic operations; assisting fire brigades; protection of international workers; food distribution; accommodation (tents, water supply); hygiene and health care (hospitals, medicines, medical supplies); checking papers (passports, drivers licenses, or cargo letters); checking vehicles, luggage, and cargo for weapons, electronics, and drugs; planning routes; interpreting maps; and taking witness statements.

B. What communicative functions are covered in the training program?

An indicative list of communicative functions includes liaison, negotiating, clarifying, providing oral instructions, following instructions, getting information, making and declining requests, issuing warnings, giving orders, planning, explaining, interrogating, and making announcements. Participants must also be capable of briefing the press, civilians, and colleagues.

C. What speech events are covered in the training program?

The contexts in which English and other languages are used after training are covered in *Linguapeace Europe*. They include any form of communication appropriate to the tasks and topics outlined above.

An important aspect of context concerns the military personnel who operate in their mother tongue and in English. As members of the armed forces they are part of the scenario, whatever that may be: administration, rescue, fighting. They will carry out these tasks in one or both of their languages. At other times their bilingual capability means that they may be functioning as interpreters or translators – a bridge between other active participants, yet not functioning as participants themselves. This role distinguishes them from professional interpreters, for example, who are not part of the scenario or narrative; and from serving personnel, who are always participants in the scenario or narrative. The qualified military linguist can act in both capacities.

8. Explain the delivery mechanisms employed by the program.



The primary delivery mode for English language and foreign language tuition to the military is classroom-based instruction, whether for individuals, small groups, or whole classes. In all cases this instruction is accompanied by closely monitored student committed time for follow-up, preparation, and consolidation tasks.

Various electronic modes are used increasingly. The national defence institutions mentioned above also have online material to enable service personnel to study when and where that is possible. The *Linguapeace Europe Glossary*, described above, is an example of IT delivery of supplementary materials which enable communication. The UK MODLEB has examination papers at several levels (and in many languages apart from English) as reference and study material. Contact MODLEB for further details through the website at <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/business/specialised-language-examinations/modleb/exam-info>.

9. Explain the assessment procedures used in the program.

The essential focus of the assessment of these learners is communicative competence. Armed forces personnel are learning the language because they are tasked to do something which requires use of the language. As with all specific tasks in the armed forces – driving, cooking, navigation, command – competence in performance is required. Assessment takes place through the learning programme, focussing on three areas – enabling tasks; communicative competence below the required target level; and assessment of the learners' operational capability. Only this last has validity as certification of competence.

The ongoing assessment of enabling tasks - which are necessary steps towards communicative competence - could involve testing items such as vocabulary or pronunciation. Success or failure in these enabling tasks is not measured by scores for the tasks, but by how the candidate copes with the communicative tasks which are the target learning objective.

The ongoing assessment of communicative competence which is below the level required for use in a military context gives valuable feedback on progress to the learner or trainer, but does not count for validation. For example, writing is usually employed as a learning tool, as an aid to memory, or as a reference point. There may be a stage where learners can write simple texts, but where their writing is at too low a level for operational functionality. This level of writing may be assessed but not certificated for professional use.

The final stage is assessment of the learners' operational capability, for which communicative competence is required. The Common European Framework of Reference rates each skill at one of six levels of ability: *Basic User* (A1 and A2), *Independent User* (B1 and B2), and *Proficient User* (C1 and C2).



The project mapped these descriptors against the descriptors and levels of outcomes in NATO STANAG 6001 Language Proficiency Levels for Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, as interpreted by the UK Ministry of Defence Languages Examinations Board (MODLEB).

STANAG defines levels of ability, from 0 (no operational competence) to 4 (native speaker competence). A score of 2.5 marks the boundary of operational ability, but the numbering system is merely a shorthand reference to the communicative competence demonstrated. On the rare occasions when a pass/fail decision is challenged, then an operational criterion (e.g. *Have I learned enough from this candidate to make a decision in the field?*) might count the most.

10. Explain the program evaluation mechanisms used.

The independent EU evaluation gave *Linguapeace Europe* a very positive rating. It was one of the ten recipients of a *Helsinki Award* for best practice and was included in a *Best Practice Projects Compendium*, a special publication of the European Commission.

The *Linguapeace Europe* project is assessed by its reception among professionals inside and outside the project. It is also subject to internal evaluation, both formally and through peer group analysis. Finally, it is subject to compulsory evaluation by the EU.

The outcomes of *Linguapeace Europe* have been widely used in language training centres with contracts to teach military personnel. It has also informed pedagogic thinking among official bodies, such as the German Bundessprachenamt, the UK MODLEB, and the Public Service Language Centres in Latvia and Lithuania.

During the project, one partner was nominated as an internal evaluator. This evaluation task was concerned with the processes of the program, not primarily with the outcomes. The internal evaluator observed and reported on how the project was conducted. The role was designed to encourage harmony, resolve conflicts, and facilitate best practice in reporting, financial management, and producing the project outcomes.

The EU requires detailed reports covering all aspects of administration, finance (especially staff travel and subsistence costs) and a complete set of any outcomes. The *Linguapeace Europe* deliverables include the website, needs analysis, sample training materials, multilingual interactive glossary, sets of descriptor specifications, the European Language Portfolio, numerous background applied linguistic reports, and schemes of assessment.

11. Discuss the challenges involved in offering this English training program.



The challenges involved in *Linguapeace Europe* include geopolitical and societal change within countries, the changing international roles of the military today, and cross-cultural awareness.

Geopolitical and societal change in Europe is evident in the changing nature of the relationship between citizens and the military. In some countries, the military are seen as part of a hostile state. The tone of communications between the military and civilians can vary enormously; for example, requests to leave an area because of a prohibited demonstration or to stand in line at election halls can be alienating and, if disobeyed, can lead to trouble very quickly.

Changing international roles of the military have also changed the purposes of learning languages for the military. For most military personnel, the idea of merging into a new culture has traditionally been actively discouraged. It is not the place of the fighting soldier to readily understand and empathise with the other side. Compare fraternisation with brotherliness. Where troops once had a hostile role only, there are now many whose role is not meant to be offensive but is based instead on fostering international co-operation, even though achieving this goal might be carried out in dangerous circumstances.

When it comes to language learning, the mindset of the non-linguist soldier can be a disadvantage. The good speaker of foreign languages has to yield something of his or her own behaviour and culture, to be partly assimilated into a different culture. Soldiers have traditionally been trained not to do this.

Cross-cultural awareness is an essential corollary to the points above. The challenge for *Linguapeace Europe* was to try to make the diversity of Europe's societies accessible to the military of other countries by promoting cross-cultural awareness and international understanding.

12. Describe the successes of the program and explain how they are documented.

The main focus of the *Linguapeace Europe* project is clearly on language use, materials development, and assessment. However, underpinning these objectives are considerations concerning the new Europe, which has emerged since the immense changes in Eastern Europe and the enlargement of the European community.

A first, more limited project attempted to bring about a change in thinking and culture among the primary target groups, namely the uniformed personnel of two former communist states with aspirations to join the EU (Bulgaria and Slovakia). That project was deemed successful but limited. Further funding was obtained for *Linguapeace Europe*, which embraces a far larger constituency of former Communist states and a wider selection of existing NATO or EU countries.



The success of *Linguapeace Europe* as a project extends beyond its deliverables. It has influenced other developments, showing sustainability both in materials and in their transferability to other scenarios.

One area of development includes encouraging respect for the individual. Through the medium of the *Linguapeace Europe* course materials, the target groups have learned how to show empathy, how to address people more softly, how to elicit answers more gently, and in general how to establish rapport with the civilian population. Apart from this feature being desirable in an enlarged European Union, it is also necessary for international work, for example with refugees.

Cross-cultural awareness is another important area of emphasis. Soldiers or police officers whose experience had been limited to their home country – albeit newly democratic after many years of totalitarianism – have learned much from observing and partaking with others in professional scenarios.

Personal development is yet another important focus. Military training is normally based on immediate need, and is offered at the time of need. However, there are several scenarios where the individual needs individual handling, and perhaps an extra qualification for the future. For example, there may be a surfeit of military personnel; or they may retire after thirty years of service and find it difficult to adapt to civilian life. *Linguapeace Europe* offers a new possibility to many members of the armed forces: gain a good language qualification and take your part in the new united Europe. This experience can support the process of resettlement in the civilian community. For instance, reports from project partners in Eastern Europe show that there is keen competition to become a UN police officer.

Here are two examples that show how the outcomes of *Linguapeace Europe* have been successfully transferred. First, the high standard of consecutive interpreting, information retrieval, and presentation skills shown by military officers led to academic validation of the STANAG 6001 outcomes under Accreditation of Prior Learning. The use of credits required that participants enroll in an MA course in *International Liaison and Communication (MA ILC)*, and complete two modules – one of them a full MA thesis. The modules were structured to allow service personnel to study while serving. This MA ILC has successfully been awarded to scores of military personnel, who hitherto had gained no civilian recognition for their competence.

Second, in the run-up period to the Beijing Olympic Games of 2008, a one-year training program for Chinese police officers was instituted, leading to the same MA ILC. The course was held yearly for four years, using specially designed materials, many professional visits, and an emphasis on communicative competence for the fifty young officers who went on to take the MA ILC and to have key roles in Olympic security in Beijing. Some of these officers have now joined UN missions as police officers in places such as Haiti.



The International Research Foundation
for English Language Education

2011 © Jack Lonergan & Boian Savtchev

References

MODLEB <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/schools/humanities/modleb>.

Council of Europe http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/portfolio/?l=e&m=/main_pages/portfolios.html