



**THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEEDS
OF ARMED FORCES OFFICERS**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), comprising the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, and entrusted with the important responsibility of national security, is also expected to project a positive image of Malaysia in the international arena as it (the MAF) engages in peace-keeping and relief operations with joint forces from various other countries. Like almost every other institution in the world, it has been impacted by globalisation, and is thus constantly engaging in efforts to upgrade itself in all aspects, especially those related to equipping itself with the necessary knowledge and expertise required to meet the demand for better services to the country and the people. Its efforts to increase efficiency and efficacy are built on the twin concepts of Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and the K-Force, and realised through the concept of the MAF as a learning organisation. The RMA aims to improve military effectiveness, while the K-Force attempts to produce a knowledge-enabled Armed Force, where its soldiers and officers have relevant knowledge and ICT skills, and are receptive to technological and global changes. A crucial issue here is that in order to fully utilise the potential of the RMA and the needs of a learning organisation, it is necessary to be proficient in the English language, as most of the military literature and technical manuals are in this language, as is all interaction with international joint forces. In addition, there is a need to enhance the proficiency of MAF personnel, especially the officers, as many of the daily activities of the MAF involve the use of the language; it is also the medium of instruction in the military colleges where MAF personnel are sent for courses. Despite the importance of the language, MAF personnel do not appear to have the necessary proficiency in the language to cope with their needs. It is thus the purpose of this study to look into the English language needs of the Armed Forces officers. The study also looks at the status quo of the English language in relation to the three Services (Army, Navy and Air Force), and the role played by the English language in the career development of an Armed Forces officer. Lastly, the study offers recommendations to the type of English language course needed to cater for the needs of Armed Forces officers in order to face a globalised and technological savvy world. The sample for this study comprises 138 officers from all three services undergoing training courses in two military institutions, namely, the Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College (MAFDC) and the Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College (MAFSC), which work with University Kebangsaan Malaysia and University Malaya, respectively, to offer courses to MAF personnel. The medium of instruction throughout the one-year course at these colleges is English. A mixed methods approach has been adopted for the study, and data was gathered via four investigative tools. The first is a questionnaire administered to the students of Course 35/2006 at the Staff College and for Course 26/2006 at the Defence College to cover the language needs of the students. Next, interviews were conducted with student leaders, the Directing Staff of the colleges, and the lecturers of the two universities. A document study was done to give further information on the usage of English, the curriculum and the appraisal system at both the Colleges. The findings show that all four language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing are important to the MAF officers. The findings also highlight the need for the Army to conduct at least 75% of their Junior Officers Career Courses in English in order to stem the decline in the command of the English language among Junior Officers, and to be at par with those at the Navy and the Air Force

ملخص البحث

تضم القوات المسلحة الماليزية ثلاث قوات، وهي: قوات الجيش وقوات البحرية والقوات الجوية، وهي تمثل العمود الفقري في تحمل مسؤولية الأمن القومي. ويتوقع من هذه القوات الثلاث أن تمثل ماليزيا بصورة مشرفة على المستوى الدولي، ولا سيما في قوات حفظ السلام الدولية، وقوات العمليات الدفاعية المشتركة في مختلف بلاد العالم. تأثرت هذه القوات الثلاث كغيرها من المؤسسات الأخرى في العالم بالعولمة وقامت بجهود حثيثة لمراجعة خططها في كل المجالات، وبخاصة فيما يتعلق بالمعرفة والخبرات التي تتطلب خدمات أفضل للبلاد وللمواطنين بماليزيا. تقوم المؤسسة العسكرية بجهود جبارة أساسها زيادة المهارات والخبرات عبر وحدتين مهمتين، وهما: وحدة مستجدات الشؤون العسكرية ووحدة التوجيه المعنوي، حيث توزع مسؤولياتها عبر القوات المسلحة بجعلها كهيئة تعليمية. تهدف وحدة مستجدات الشؤون العسكرية إلى تحسين أداء القوات المسلحة، بينما تقوم وحدة التوجيه المعنوي بإعداد قوات عسكرية ذات معرفة؛ بحيث يملك أفرادها معرفة جديدة ومهارات في تقنية المعلومات والاتصال، ولديهم قابلية للتغيرات التقنية الحديثة على المستوى العالمي. ومن القضايا الرئيسية في هذه الدراسة موضوع الاستفادة من أهمية وحدة مستجدات الشؤون العسكرية ووحدة التوجيه المعنوي ومهارة أفراد الجيش بمعرفة اللغة الإنجليزية؛ لأن معظم الأدبيات العسكرية والآلات المستعملة تستخدم اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل مباشر، وهي تنتظم بعلاقة تكاملية مع القوات العسكرية الدولية، وفضلا عن ذلك ثمة حاجة لتحسين مهارات أفراد القوات المسلحة الماليزية وموظفيها، وبخاصة الإداريين الذين يستخدمون اللغة بشكل مستمر في تعاملاتهم، وكذلك بوصف اللغة الإنجليزية الوسيلة المستخدمة في الكليات العسكرية التي يلتحق بها أعضاء الجيش الماليزي. وعلى الرغم من أهمية اللغة لموظفي القوات المسلحة الماليزية إلا أنه يظهر للباحث أنهم لا يملكون مهارة لغوية لتحقيق حاجاتهم؛ ولهذا فإن هذه الدراسة تبحث في حاجات موظفي القوات المسلحة الماليزية في اللغة الإنجليزية وعلاقتها بوحدة التوجيه المعنوي، وتبحث الدراسة أيضاً في أوضاع اللغة الإنجليزية في القوات العسكرية الثلاث ودورها (اللغة) في تطور كفاية موظفي القوات المسلحة باللغة. وأخيراً تقدم الدراسة بعض المقترحات والتوصيات ف

ي نوع المنهج الدراسي المقترح لتحقيق حاجات موظفي القوات المسلحة من أجل مواجهة فهم العولمة والتقنية المعاصرة في العالم. كان عدد عينات الدراسة 138 موظفا من القوات العسكرية الثلاث الذين لا يزالون تحت التدريب في وحدتي التدريب العسكرية، وهما: كلية الدفاع للقوات المسلحة الماليزية، وكلية منتسبي القوات المسلحة الماليزية، بالتعاون مع الجامعة الوطنية الماليزية، وجامعة الملايو. يتم تقديم الدروس للقوات المسلحة باستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة وسيطة في التدريس، وتستخدم طرق ومداخل متنوعة في تدريسها في فصل دراسي لسنة واحدة. وتجمع المعلومات في هذه الدراسة عبر وسائل أربع، وهي: أولاً الاستبانة المقدمة للدارسين في الفصل الدراسي (35) لعام 2006م، في كلية المنتسبين للقوات المسلحة، وللصقل الدراسي (26) لعام 2006م، في كلية الدفاع، وذلك لتغطية حاجات الدارسين اللغوية؛ وثانياً يتم بعد ذلك مقابلة الدارسين القادة والموظفين في الكلية، والمحاضرين في الجامعتين المذكورتين أعلاه. وقد قام الباحث بدراسة توثيقية لإعطاء تصور واضح عن المعلومات المتعلقة بوحدة اللغة الإنجليزية، والمنهج ونظام التقويم في الكليتين. وأخيراً بسبب أن الباحث نفسه محاضر في القوات المسلحة فقد أصبح المصدر الرئيس في ملاحظة الدارسين وطرق دراستهم. وجدت الدراسة أيضاً أهمية المهارات الأربع: الاستماع والكلام والقراءة والكتابة، للدارسين في القوات المسلحة الماليزية، وبينت النتائج أيضاً حاجات الدارسين في القيام على الأقل بنسبة 75% من الأعمال الصغيرة في دورات اللغة الإنجليزية من أجل تحديد الإنحراف في الأوامر في اللغة الإنجليزية بين الموظفين الصغار، ولتكون متساوية مع القوات البحرية والقوات الجوية.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Surjeet Singh Jeggy

Signature:

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**My late parents,
Mr. Peara Singh Jeggy
&
Madam Ranjeet Kaur Jessy**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Aircraftsmen
ADFELPS	Australian Defence Force English Profiling System
ADFG	Australian Defence Force Journal
AFC	Armed Forces Council
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
BM	Bahasa Malaysia
BOG	College Board of Governors
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CDF	Chief of Defence Forces
CDS	Chief of Directing Staff
CLA	Communicative Language Ability
Col	Colonel
DISD	Defence Intelligence Staff Division
DITC	Defence International Training Centre
DS	Directing Staff
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGP	English for General Purposes
ELD	English Language Development
EME	Electrical and Mechanical
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESP	English for Specific Purposes

EST	English for Science and Technology
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangement
HQ	Headquarters
IIUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
IPDA	Institute Pengurusan Tentera Darat (tr. Army Institute of Management)
KESBAN	Keselamatan dan Pembangunan
JCC	Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee
JSSC	Joint Services Staff College
JSSD	Joint Services Staff Division
Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel
MAF	Malaysian Armed Forces
MAFDC	Malaysian Armed Forces Defense College
MAF HQ	Malaysian Armed Forces Headquarters
MAFJSSC	Malaysian Armed Forces Joint Services Staff College
MAFSC	Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College
MATM	Markas Angkatan Tentera Malaysia
M & C	Management and Coordination
MCS	Malaysian Civil Service
MINDEF	Ministry of Defence
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPAT	Maktab Pertahanan Angkatan Tentera
MS	Military Studies
NA	Needs Analysis
NDP	National Defence Policy
NDUM	National Defence University Malaysia
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

OOTW	Operations Other Than War
OR	Other Ranks
PSC	Passed Staff College
PTD	Pegawai Tadbir dan Diplomatik (Administrative and Diplomatic Officer)
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RMAF	Royal Malaysian Air Force
RMN	Royal Malaysian Navy
RMP	Royal Malaysian Police
RMR	Royal Malay Regiment
RRR	Royal Ranger Regiment
SCBI	Sustained Content Based Instruction
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
SSIR	Strategic Studies & International Relations
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages
TL	Target Language
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UM	University of Malaya
UMNO	United Malay National Organisation
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

It is a well-known fact that almost every institution and organisation in the world has been impacted by globalisation, which brings with it several phenomena, such as increased competition and incessant efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of products and services. These have in turn created a number of forces that have come to be labeled as the K-factors (where K stands for knowledge-based), and include phenomena such as the K-Revolution, the K-Economy, and the subject of this study, the K-Force. And since these forces are dependent on effective communication and demand the use of a common language, English, the undisputed *lingua franca* of international communication for business and technology, has fitted comfortably into this role.

The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), comprising the Army, the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF), are no exception to this trend, and are thus constantly engaging in efforts to upgrade themselves in all aspects, especially those related to equipping themselves with the necessary knowledge and expertise required to meet the demand for better services to the country and the people. Their efforts to increase efficiency and efficacy are built on the twin concepts of Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and the K-Force, and realised through the concept of the MAF as a learning organisation.

The RMA has contributed significantly to the advancement of military doctrine and the modernisation of the MAF, and changed the paradigm for the need of advanced technological hardware. It gives emphasis to quick reaction, knowledge of the warfare zone and pin-point accuracy of weapons. According to the explanation given by the Australian Defence Studies Centre in the Australian Defence Force Journal, ADFJ (No. 44, Sept – Oct 2000: 1)

a military revolution typically occurs when the application of the new technologies into a significant number of military systems combines with innovative operational concept and organisational adaptation in a way that dramatically increases military effectiveness and fundamentally alters the character and conduct of military operations.

A crucial issue here is that in order to fully utilise the potential of the RMA, it is necessary to have a sound understanding of military literature, which is mainly in English.

The K-Force stands for the creation of a knowledge-enabled Armed Force, where its soldiers and officers have relevant knowledge and ICT skills, and are receptive to technological and global changes (ADFJ: 9). Like for the RMA, in order for them to be so enabled, they should have a good command of the English language. In order to achieve the tenets of the K-Force, the MAF needs to have the right kind of labour in place. Soldiers have to be equipped with the right skills and training. Ways of thinking have to change as the MAF seeks to acquire the technology and knowledge that would make it a continuously relevant force well into the 21st century. These are the days where the enemy is fought beyond the horizon and where every bit of information and step of an operation or movement is digitalised.