

CANADIAN FORCES LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

1. The Foreign Language Programmes within the Canadian Forces address several mandates, two of which will be discussed in this report: the Foreign Language Training Programme (FLTP) and language training in support of the Military Training Assistance Programme (MTAP). These two programs of study have been designed for, and offered to, vastly different client bases, both internal (Canadian Forces) and external (foreign nationals).

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMME

2. The Canadian Forces Language School (CFLS) provides all foreign language courses through its Foreign Language section. In many respects, 2004 was a challenging year for the NCR Training Company – Foreign Languages. The ongoing changes in the organization, budget restraints, new language courses as well as many special requests on short notices, were a few of the challenges we met. The objective of the FLTP is to provide Communication Research linguists, Canadian Defence Attachés (CDAs) and their Administrative Assistants (CDAAAs), Arms Control Verification Officers, and Exchange Officers with the required foreign language proficiency needed to accomplish their duties. In addition to specific foreign languages teaching, the FLTP section is also responsible for the Language Teacher Training program in support of MTAP. As well, the Foreign Service Attachés attended the six-week English language course. The year 2004 saw more than 20 different languages taught within CFLS to approximately 160 individuals.

Language	Number of students
Arabic MSA, Iraqi	2
Arabic – UAE	1
Arabic – Syrian	3
Arabic – Egyptian	1
Chinese (Mandarin)	4
Creole	15
German	7
Italian	2
Hebrew	2
Korean	5
Japanese	1
Indonesian	2
Portuguese	3
Thai	3
Hungarian	3
Turkish	1
Polish	2
Dutch	7
Russian	21
Spanish	28
Persian	6
MTAP	28
FSA	18
Total: 23	Total: 165

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Courses to Military Language Specialists

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3. After several inactive years, the Persian course was offered again to the Communication Research trade. Last October CFLS was tasked once again to teach it. The Persian Language Specialist course normally runs for fifteen months. There is a possibility that this course will be extended for a few more weeks and consequently finish in Mar 2006 instead of Dec 2005. Over the last year, apart from the Persian Language Specialist course, CFLS was also tasked to teach the Creole Special Course. The course was arranged on short notice and was composed of two serials. Each serial lasted three weeks and was offered in March and May 2004.

Courses to CDA/CDAAA

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4. CFLS provided language courses in more than fifteen languages to CDAs, CDAAAs, as well as their spouses. Most of these courses are conducted over ten or eleven months, with the exception of Russian and Chinese courses which normally run for two years.

Exchange Officer Courses

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5. CFLS offered language training in Dutch, German, and Korean to Exchange Officers, as well as Spanish and Portuguese for members posted to Staff Colleges in Argentina and Brazil.

MILITARY TRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (MTAP)

6. The Saint-Jean Detachment of CFLS offered two English language courses of nineteen weeks' duration to 102 students from sixteen countries. In addition, 73 students from fourteen countries took French language training at the Detachment. These courses marked the arrival of seven new countries: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Philippines, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The aim of these courses is for the students to improve their language proficiency by one level (measured by STANAG 6001 level descriptors). These 175 students received 530 hours of in-class language training complemented by a twelve-day socio-cultural program. This program included cultural visits in Ottawa, Montreal and Québec; as well as sightseeing visits to places such as the Botanical Gardens and several museums. The students were given the opportunity to become familiar with Canadian culture through visits to various festivals and through guided tours of Canadian industries.

7. CFLS (Det) Borden conducted English Language training for 247 students from Europe and Southeast Asia. First time participating countries included China, Malaysia, Mongolia and the Philippines. A total of 198 students attended the two Long Courses (19 weeks) while 39 attended the four Short Courses (ten weeks). Short Courses are intended for high-ranking officers (Colonels and Generals) and government officials. CFLS (Det) Borden also conducted a special four-week course for ten officers (five from Romania and five from Russia). During their course at Borden, as at Saint-Jean, the students participated in socio-cultural activities, field trips and immersion training. They visited such areas as Ottawa, Kingston, Niagara Falls and Toronto; attended special functions such as the International Automobile Show in Toronto and Remembrance Day ceremonies at CFB Borden; toured various military, cultural and other sites such as National Defence Headquarters, the Royal Military College in Kingston, the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, Haliburton Forest

Nature Preserve, the Canadian War Museum, the CFB Borden Military Museum, various Combat Service Support Schools located in CFB Borden, and the Alliston Honda Plant.

8. The aim of the Language Teacher Training Course (LTTC) is twofold: firstly to train new teachers from other countries to teach English using the Communicative Approach to their own personnel, making them NATO operable; secondly, to familiarize them with the Canadian Forces and Canadian Culture. The Language Teacher Training Course provides the new language teachers with a methodology based on the principles of the Communicative Approach. Although the LTTC is not a language course *per se*, an English language component was offered and the feedback received from the MTAP students was very positive. Over the last year, 28 selected students from the Partners-for-Peace attended the program.

9. Since the report delivered last year, several changes were made to the Language Teacher Training Course (LTTC) Program conducted at the National Capital Region Training Company (NCR Trg Coy) in Gatineau. The requirement for admission is now a level 2 in listening, speaking and reading; students are screened upon arrival to ensure compliance. The programme is demanding, requiring a great deal of motivation and effort from its participants. Besides the teaching methodology component, the course also encompasses a military language training component (students receive NATO Military English language instruction for levels two and three), teaching practice (applied teaching), military content familiarization/teaching (students prepare and teach military lessons), an introduction to word processing, Internet navigation for language teachers, effective design and use of PowerPoint presentations, and the ELLIS multi-media program. Finally, a testing seminar, distance writing activities, and a practicum (which is the final teaching task and counts for 40% of the student final mark) complete the programme.

EVALUATION

10. The development of a Canadian General Proficiency Test battery based on the Level Descriptors STANAG 6001 is still undergoing pre-testing and validation. In 2004, a total of 80 Listening and 87 Reading test items were trialed in Saint-Jean, Borden and Asticou. Descriptive statistics were generated with emphasis on item difficulty and item discrimination. Item Review Boards were set up to analyze these statistics and identify/select items that require no or minimal modification and are congruent with the Level Descriptors. For the Listening items (Form A) 75% of the items were retained, while for Form B, the trial Listening items (80 items) were assembled in February 05 and reviewed by the Item Review Board in preparation for trial in May 05.

11. The Writing test (65 indirect measure items) is in the process of being finalized and the technical report is in preparation. Cut-offs were established and the test was used officially for the first time in Saint-Jean in May 2004. A level 2 direct measure task/essay (which changes at each administration to avoid test compromise) has been added to minimize the backwash effect and encourage teachers to continue to teach direct writing as well as the mastery of grammatical structures. The direct measure part of the test is worth 35 marks and a separate global rating evaluation grid has been standardized. The indirect measure Writing test will be used officially in Saint-Jean and Borden in May 05.

12. In 2004, Saint-Jean and Borden responded to two special requests:

- a. the preparation of benchmark items for BILC, two items per level (1, 2 and 3) for both the Listening and Reading skills; and
- b. the conduct of six Oral Proficiency (telephonic) Interviews for DCDS, to test future interpreters in English.

13. In order to ensure uniform standards for the conduct and rating of Oral Proficiency Interviews in English and French, standardization sessions were held prior to end of course testing: four sessions in Saint-Jean (two in English and two in French), and two sessions in Borden in English.

14. A tester training session was also planned and organized by Saint-Jean. Mrs. Sabine Atwell, Dean of Proficiency Standards at the Defence Language Institute in Monterey, California, was invited to conduct a workshop on higher level Oral Proficiency Interviews for both the Saint-Jean and Borden testers.

15. The Test Section in Saint-Jean also hosted an expert team visit. A delegation comprised of three professors from the Romanian Defence Academy in Bucharest visited the CFLS Detachment in Saint-Jean and participated in exchanges with French and English personnel involved in proficiency testing, curriculum development, teaching including distance teaching, as well as the MTAP English and French cultural programs, etc. The team also participated in classroom as well as cultural visits.

16. An expert team visit from Slovenia is currently being planned and organized. The main focus of this visit will be proficiency testing in French and in English.

17. Both Saint-Jean and Borden were involved in administering group tests and conducting Oral Proficiency Interviews. A total of 316 (English) MTAP candidates on the long courses in Saint-Jean and Borden, and 120 (French) MTAP candidates on the long courses in Saint-Jean were tested in all four skills. The success rates per level were as follows:

(English) MTAP long course candidates in Saint Jean and Borden N = 316

LEVEL	LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
0	12%	01%	04%	02%
1	50%	42%	25%	44%
2	36%	57%	60%	54%
3	02%	0%	11%	0%

(French) MTAP long course candidates in Saint-Jean N= 70

LEVEL	LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
0	6%	0%	2%	3%
1	27%	60%	47%	56%
2	56%	34%	24%	41%
3	11%	6%	27%	0%

(English) MTAP short course candidates in Borden N= 40

LEVEL	LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
0	27%	2%	7%	0%
1	45%	50%	30%	60%
2	28%	48%	55%	40%
3	0%	0%	8%	0%

18. Finally, Saint-Jean and Borden were also involved in testing candidates on Train the Trainers Program in Asticou. In 2004, twenty-five Oral Proficiency Interviews were conducted by telephone and Writing Tests were corrected at the end of the course. Some of these candidates were tested on intake as well.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT SECTION

19. Numerous development projects were carried out within the FL Curriculum Development Section during the course of 2004. The most important and challenging endeavor was to develop a new Persian curriculum for the Language Specialists' Course. The project commenced in May 2004 and its forecasted duration is 18 months. The developed modules (1-15) encompass level 1 through level 2+/3 material.

20. Among other projects, the development of a re-designed Chinese (Mandarin) course material was continued. The Dutch and Hebrew curricula, the development of which had begun in the previous year, were refined and finalized in 2004. Several projects in Arabic dialects continued 2004: course modules were offered in Syrian, United Arab Emirates, and Egyptian. In addition, supplementary listening materials were created in Korean.

21. As an integral part of curriculum development activities, achievement tests were constructed or revised in a number of foreign languages such as Iraqi, Korean, Spanish and Persian.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE EVALUATION SERVICES

22. There were no significant changes in the evaluation services provided by CFLS Standards. Pursuant to the Testing Directive of 2003, formative and summative evaluation instruments are used to measure students' progress and to provide them with certified linguistic profiles at the end of the course. General proficiency tests in listening, speaking and reading skills, reflecting the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) language descriptors, constitute the summative evaluation based on which both CFLS students and external military members obtain certification in language proficiency.

COMPUTER BASED TRAINING

23. The time, effort and funds invested over the last few years on the Multi-Media Computer-Assisted Language Training Programme have finally brought added value to CFLS French and

English language training activities. This project has evolved from a stand-alone programme located in different language laboratories to a networked system linking twenty-one language laboratories across Canada to our centre located at the CFLS Detachment Saint-Jean. For CF bases that did not have access to these language labs, because they were abroad or at sea, the entire programme was put on CD-ROMs. This allows students from anywhere in the world – provided they have access to an Internet service – to work from the CDs, download their work and send it via Internet to the centre for review and feedback. With this link-up came the services of on-line tutors. A study report produced in July 2004 expressed confidence in the effectiveness of distance learning for the first levels of progress (PL 1 & 2), but expressed reservations about efficiency, discipline and regular attendance of participants (a common Distance learning concern). This attendance problem, and the ideal mix of regular classroom teaching and individual learning, will constitute the main research targets for the next few years. As part of the research that aims at identifying and defining the most cost-efficient distance tutorial programme to be put in place to support those training activities, a parallel research activity was conducted in 2004 aimed at defining how much added value the conversion to an Internet version would bring to CFLS. A study done on the subject reported on the compelling need for a move to the Internet. Consequently, a two phase project was launched with two delivery dates: Phase One will see working versions online by December 2006, while Phase Two will concentrate on continued development of learning materials for December 2007.

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