FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR MILITARY TASK PURPOSES AND ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS
TASK - ORIENTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION (TOFLE)[1]

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INTRODUCTION

The scope of this paper will be based on two subheadings: *Foreign Language Teaching for Military Task Purposes* (FLTMTP) and *Adult Language Learners* (ALL) in regard to language teaching at the military language schools and institutions. However, Language for Military Task Purposes is the major concern of this article since language teaching for this purpose requires us to cover the every aspect of language teaching in the military. The tasks mentioned here are said to the ones that will probably be assumed by the military personnel for various purposes and in different posts all over the world. The tasks will be examined in the further parts of this article. As a matter of fact the term "Task" is quite different because the Military Adult learner should be familiar with the task(s) prior to his/her appointment. The task is the core word for this study, and it is necessary to give the definition of it in this context. So the task-based syllabus in the following types given by Richards (1990:9)

1. Structural (organized primarily around grammar and sentence) is quite different than the one that we are going to discuss:
2. Functional (organized around communicative functions, such as identifying, reporting, correcting, describing)
3. Notional (organized around conceptual categories, such as duration, quantity, location)
4. Topical (organized around themes or topics, such as health, food, clothing)
5. Situational (organized around speech settings and the transactions associated with them, such as shopping, at the bank, at the supermarket)
6. Skills (organized around skills, such as listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for inferences)
7. Task or activity-based (organized around activities, such as drawing maps, following directions, following instructions)

The task or activity-based syllabus above covers only the tasks or activities that should be followed in syllabus content, but the task we mention is the duties/posts that will be carried out or that military personnel will be assigned for military purposes.

As for the adults, they are the personnel that will learn a foreign language for both general and military purposes and are apt to use it for the task purposes throughout the military career. However, it is quite important to mention the adults and their peculiarities in regard to foreign language learning in the military for so-called task purposes. The designing of such a syllabus for the task purposes for the adults will be based on two kinds of communication: written and oral proficiency. So, Gardner (1991:15) emphasizes the interaction in terms of proficiency as follows: "Since language acquisition obviously involves interaction with other individuals, it is quite reasonable to expect a dimension like sociability or extraversion to relate to second language proficiency". In this context, sociability means a military task environment or a task period and duty carried out by the military adults.

As a subsequent and important part of this paper a very detailed needs analysis will be done in accordance with the military objectives of language teaching for the task

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purposes. So the following part will cover foreign language teaching to military adults for task purposes and a profound needs analysis.

ADULT LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR MILITARY TASK PURPOSES

The adults here, no doubt, will refer to military adults for whom the task based syllabuses will be designed. The adults are expected to be good learners of a foreign language for both task purposes or proficiency expectations. As Gardner (1991) proposes "the discussion of the good language learner often refers to the willingness of such individuals to take chances, be good guessers, and make active use of the language (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975)" (15). The military adults are the personnel who will be trained through special/task based language training after, at least, intermediate level of foreign language training for the basic language skills and necessary proficiency level required for the task-based language training.

The foreign language learning strategies in such a syllabus will play an important role in determining the learner strategies prior to the syllabus design. However, for language learning strategies, detail investigations have been conducted by Oxford, Nyikos and Crookall (1987) on young adults in military language program and the following five major factors were obtained:

General Study habits
Functional Practice
Speaking and Communicating meaning,
Studying or Practising independently, and
Mnemonic Devices

(Gardner 1991:13)

These major factors can be modified and increased as required in regard to the language learning, proficiency and other aspects of language learning for the task purposes. In fact, the crucial problem is the foreign language teaching method that will be followed/applied in Target Language Training for the military task purposes. The learner strategies also called here ALL strategies, however, are very significant as for design of a task-based syllabus after evaluating and processing the needs and analyzing them profoundly. As commonly observed, however, "adults undoubtedly approach several language learning with various types of strategies which major may not be productive" (Gardner 1991: 13-14) due to their experiences with many problem-solving situations.

As for the language training for special-military task purposes, our major concern will be the tasks in which the Target Language will be use as a means of communication throughout the duties. So, the number of the tasks mentioned might be too many. The real concept of the tasks is that they are the duties that Education Military Adults will assume throughout their military career. Hence, the task in foreign countries will not only require the use of linguistic abilities but the language manipulation as well. The tasks can be overviewed as in-country tasks and the tasks abroad. Depending on the tasks, their types will be the main effective factor that will help us to determine the syllabus type and its design as well as the code of language and its pragmatic use (Yalden, in Brumfit, 1984). So, in the light of recent military developments and international military affairs, the tasks might be listed as follows:

a. Multinational Peace Forces
b. Joint Peace Operations and tasks
c. Combined allied Headquarters tasks
d. NATO and UN peace forces
e. Arms Reduction Talks
f. Multinational drills and exercises
g. In-country and international NATO and UN military Headquarters

h. National and International military affairs
i. Military Attaché tasks
j. Short/long term courses
k. International observer posts/tasks

The number of the tasks above can be increased and detailed depending on military national and international duties that will be established and made up by the military officials and headquarters in regard to military international affairs concerning the allied countries. Depending on the task types, the language need and syllabus may change and the military personnel should be trained in accordance with the task type and specifications. So, as we mentioned earlier an *interlanguage* -a common language that will help the personnel to maintain the oral and written communication among the task members- is needed for the accomplishment of the duties among the member of the tasks who are mostly from different nations and having different first language background. If assume that, for instance, English is the primary language that will be manipulated in the accomplishment of these tasks, the military adults will be obliged to manipulate their own interlanguage throughout the tasks. To me, this is another matter that is left unsolved by the authorities yet. Because it is commonly known that, due to the miscommunication several undesired outcomes may occur in the course of duties depending on the lack of communication.

Concerning these tasks above, so many related issues such as types of topics that will be taught, the objectives and duration, the skills that will be put forth in the syllabus design and the like, might be added and discussed. So, in order to cover these issues above, a very detailed and pragmatic needs analysis that will lead us to a better syllabus design and Language Teaching for the military task purposes will be carried out in advance.
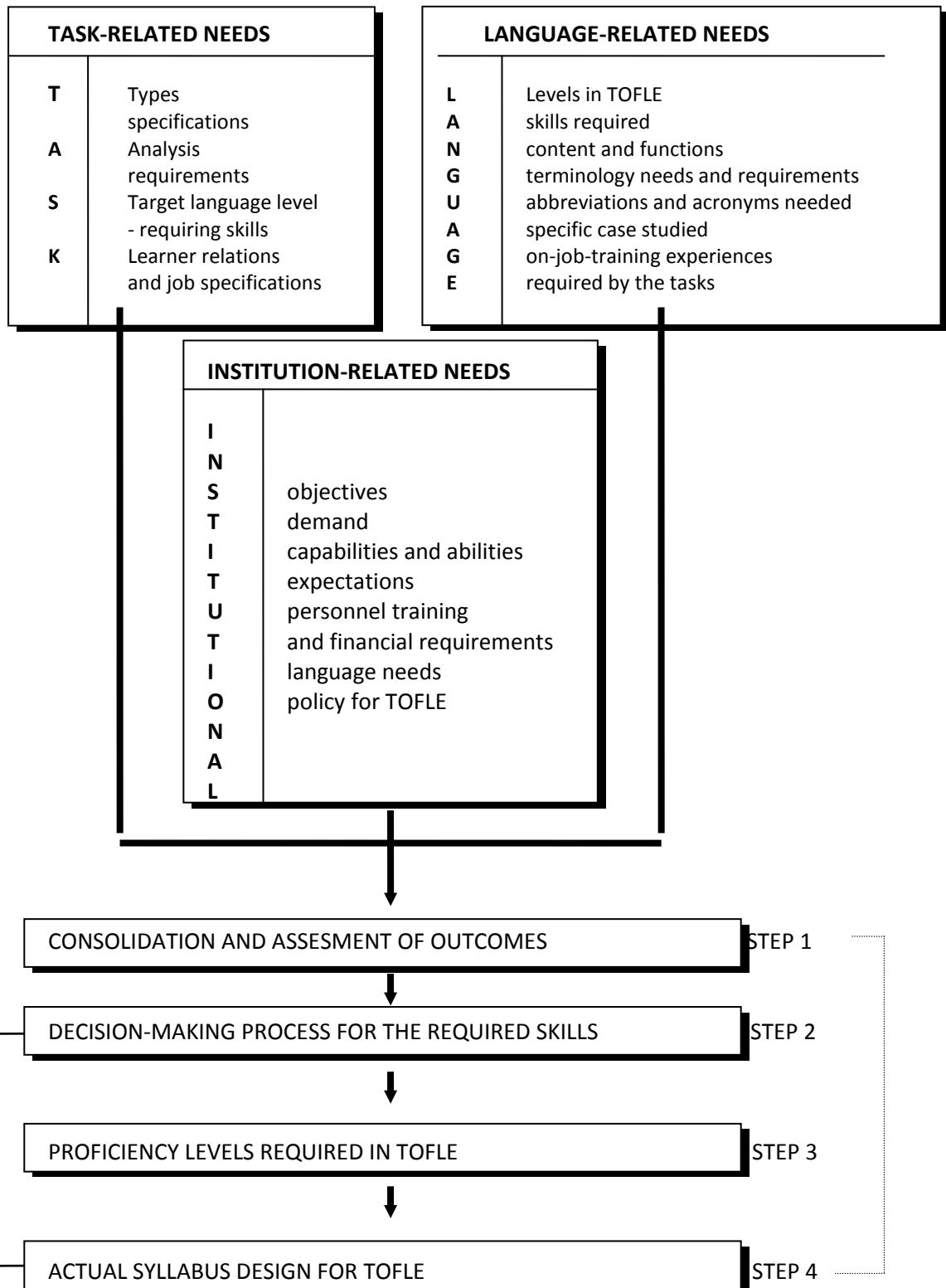
NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR TOFLE

Analysing the needs of Adult learners who may attend the TOFLE is the crucial first step for designing a syllabus throughout curriculum in this context. Such a needs analysis may not be in academic case, but serves the practical planning of courses and course content. As an initial step the Educated Military adults having carried out such tasks mention in the this article might help us in determining the basic needs and task requirements. This, of course, should be done prior to course design. Those adults might have been at these posts such as military headquarters abroad, at special tasks, exercises and drills as well. More specifically, a very detailed needs analysis not only for each task, but also for the task environment and military situations will be carried out by the curriculum planners and syllabus designers in accordance with TOFLE. So, in a general sense, a genuine needs analysis may serve the following purpose of:

1. Providing a mechanism for obtaining a wider range of input into the content, design, and implementation of a language program through involving such people as learners, teachers, administrators, and employers in the planning process.
2. Identifying general and specific language needs that can be addressed in developing goals, objectives, and content for a language program.
3. Providing data that can serve as the basic for reviewing and evaluating and existing program (Richards 1990: 1-2)

As commonly known, the impact of needs analysis has been greatest in the area of special-purposes program design. So the needs analysis in TOFLE will help us determine the objectives of the suggested courses. In fact, our needs analysis will be a different job that will cover the task specifications and language needs that the tasks will probably require in handling the military affairs. Let us take a close look at the following needs analysis procedure that will establish the basic elements of the suggested task-based syllabus:

Needs Analysis Procedure for TOFLE

TASK-RELATED NEEDS	
T	Types specifications
A	Analysis requirements
S	Target language level - requiring skills
K	Learner relations and job specifications

LANGUAGE-RELATED NEEDS	
L	Levels in TOFLE
A	skills required
N	content and functions
G	terminology needs and requirements
U	abbreviations and acronyms needed
A	specific case studied
G	on-job-training experiences
E	required by the tasks

INSTITUTION-RELATED NEEDS	
I **N** **S** **T** **I** **T** **U** **T** **I** **O** **N** **A** **L**	objectives demand capabilities and abilities expectations personnel training and financial requirements language needs policy for TOFLE

CONSOLIDATION AND ASSESMENT OF OUTCOMES	STEP 1
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR THE REQUIRED SKILLS	STEP 2
PROFICIENCY LEVELS REQUIRED IN TOFLE	STEP 3
ACTUAL SYLLABUS DESIGN FOR TOFLE	STEP 4

As seen in the chart above, the needs will be analyzed in terms of task, language and institution in which the language course will be given. All needs and requirements should be clarified and assessed genuinely so that the short or long term TOFLE courses can be

designed accordingly. The type of course, content and skills required and the language teaching method will be determined institutionally after the needs analysis assessment.

In fact, in foreign languages, so many different courses for various purposes can be designed as follows:

a. Specific task-based terminology courses (at least 3 weeks)
b. Abbreviation and acronym based orientation courses (prior to duties) (for 2 weeks)
c. Skill-based courses that tasks require (such as, reading, listening, speaking, writing, translation, interpretation, etc.) (at least 12 weeks)
d. Short or long term task-based proficiency courses related to actual task demands. (at least 16 weeks)

These course types, however, can be increased as required in need of compensation of language demands by the tasks. As a matter of fact, any syllabus that will be designed for the task purposes will have peer groups gathered for the same purposes. So needs are formed in interaction between individuals and their environments and the syllabus should be open ended and flexible that will be able to adapt to the changes (Girard 1988)[2]. The information gathered and the analysis of the needs will become a pedagogical and linguistic data for the foreign language teaching and learning on which any syllabus based.

The goals and objectives such a syllabus based on will be processed throughout needs analysis and this is rather important because the goals and objectives will be the determinants of the course content. So the available linguistic data will be processed in the course. As also stated by Richards (1990) that "in language teaching, a number of different ways of stating program objectives are commonly employed, including behavioral, skills-based, content-based, and proficiency-based objectives" (3). Among these above the content and proficiency based objectives will be taken into account after the needs analysis. Since the adults who are probably going to take up such task-based language course will be trained prior to the courses mentioned, and also they are expected to have a certain proficiency level and necessary linguistic skills required in TOFLE. The linguistic skills will be determined in accordance with the task specifications, and the content that will help the adult military learners to acquire the necessary proficiency will be designed after the needs analysis and determination of the course objectives and institutional demands.

SPECIFICATIONS AND CONDUCTING OF TOFLE COURSES

Military Task-Oriented Foreign Language Education so called M-TOFLE is neither Language for Special/Specific Purposes (LSP) nor Language for Military Purposes. Then, what is it? The answer to this question can be identified as TOFLE for Special Purposes. So, the specifications of M-TOFLE can be listed as follows:

a. Specific military tasks/posts and their requirements of language
b. Task peculiarities
c. Personnel selection for the tasks and their foreign language background
d. Foreign language training prior to TOFLE
e. Task-related specific terminology, abbreviations and acronyms'
f. Personnel exchange and cross-training for the orientation in the task environment
g. Content, duration, proficiency, level and most demanding foreign language skill
h. LSP and LMP in terms of task orientation
i. Training of the teachers for M-TOFLE - teacher selection and education

The specifications above can be increased up to a certain number to determine the purpose of TOFLE more distinctively but, on the other hand, overspecifications may hinder us from

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[2] Girard calls this initial step as <u>Identification of Needs</u> and suggests a few guidelines as well.

designing such a syllabus based on TOFLE as well. These specifications may also be accepted and concerned as the objectives of M-TOFLE for the administrators and course designers.

As for the conducting of TOFLE, there will be so many principles that institutions, administrators, teachers and the learners themselves should follow. So, the outlining detail and checklist for conducting of TOFLE will enable us to carry out task requirements, and conduct the courses with different duration, content, specifications and aspects. However, the only negative effect of TOFLE is that the various tasks we may involve in while considering the course content for syllabus design. The variety of courses based on tasks will require short/long term pilot syllabuses with flexibility, applicability and conductibility. Besides, this is a curriculum and it should have a process as to design the courses, and progress systematically from needs assessment to goals and objectives, to specifications of the institutional content of the program. Thus, Taba's (1962:12) Model of curriculum process will be the guidelines of the designing of TOFLE as well. This model has seven steps (Richards, 1990:8) as follows:

Step 1: Diagnosis of needs
Step 2: Formulation of objectives
Step 3: Selection of content
Step 4: Organization of content
Step 5: Selection of learning experiences
Step 6: Organization of learning experiences
Step 7: Determination of what to evaluate and means to evaluate

In fact, as an eighth step task-specifications and assessment can be added as well. However, we can include this in the formulation of objectives with task objectives. So under the guidance of these seven steps, our institutional principles of TOFLE can be outlined as follows:

a. course types needed after the assessment of the tasks
b. identification of objectives in accordance with each course
c. selection of course content and terminology
d. proficiency skills required and organization of selected content in accordance with course level and duration
e. teacher selection and orientation for the courses
f. authentic material and acquired experiences to be processed
g. evaluation, proficiency level and types required by the tasks
h. pilot syllabus to be designed in regard to terminology, abbreviation and very short-term objectives for the compensation of task-related requirements.

After these principles for TOFLE, the next immediate step will be the syllabus design and assessment of language training for the task purposes. Depending on the objectives of each task, the course content, duration, necessary linguistic skills and proficiency level can be determined and the syllabus design may be done within the objective limits of language for task-oriented syllabus.

CONCLUSION

In fact, in language training the syllabus has traditionally been the starting point in planning a language program, rather than activity that occurs midway in the process. Because a properly-constructed and planned syllabus is believed to assure successful learning. So, in our study the syllabus for TOFLE is requires a detailed needs analysis and assessment. The TOFLE is quite a different study that is expected to render the military adults to acquire necessary language skills for the accomplishment of the tasks they are assigned. The major issue for the TOFLE is the needs analysis that will help us to design such task-based syllabuses. Thus, the variety of the tasks will require several distinctive pilot syllabuses and the military adults are expected to have necessary skills prior to be assigned

to the posts. Besides, the teacher selection and determination of the course content should have great importance, and the military adults will be selected for the tasks in advance. As a matter of fact, the syllabus reflects the philosophical assumptions of the syllabus planners: a commitment to communicative language teaching and to a needs-based approach to program content. Such a Task-oriented Foreign Language Education is expected to lead the military adults to a success not only in language acquisition but accomplishment of the assigned duties, tasks as well. So the suggested syllabus is going to be around task topics and needs-related areas. However, the only obstacle is absolutely the variety of the tasks and their requirements. To me, the teachers and administrators are expected to teach the syllabus content and to train the military adults on such a task-oriented course program based on the learners mastery of the content of the syllabus suggested for the task purposes.

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