

## Language Barriers at the Airway: What the Specialized Helicopter School Aviators Need to Know on Board

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### Abstract

This study aims at exploring the needs of aviation pilots at the Specialized Helicopter School (SHS) - at Ain Arnat2 Setif- with respect to English language skills and specialist vocabulary. The research has been undertaken with the foremost purpose of designing an effective syllabus for pilots. Hence, a mixed method was adopted and utmost care was exercised during data collection. Nonetheless, there were some classified information to which we were granted no access for safety purposes. The main result gleaned is the insufficient level of command of English in radiotelephony, especially in the event of an emergency during flight.

**Key Words :** Military aviation, aviation discourse, phraseology, radio-communication, syllabus design.

### Résumé

Cette étude vise à explorer les besoins des pilotes de l'aviation à l'École Spécialisée d'Hélicoptères - à Ain Arnat2 Sétif- à l'égard des compétences linguistiques en Anglais et du vocabulaire spécialisé. Le but principal est de concevoir un programme efficace pour le corps militaire. A cet effet, une méthode mixte a été adoptée et les données ont été enregistrées avec soin. Cependant, il y avait des informations purement confidentielles. Le résultat majeur a été l'identification de l'insuffisance de la maîtrise de l'Anglais dans la communication par radio, surtout en cas de survenue de situations difficiles pendant les vols.

**Mots Clés** L'aviation militaire, le discours de l'aviation, phraséologie, communication par radio, conception du programme.

### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على تصورات مدربي الطيران في المدرسة المتخصصة للحوامات بعين أرناط2 فيما يتعلق بمهارات اللغة الإنجليزية والمفردات المتخصصة. الهدف الرئيسي لهذا البحث هو تصميم برنامج فعال للطيارين. و لهذا الغرض، فقد اعتمدنا الطريقة النوعية في البحث والإجابات سجلت بعناية. ومع ذلك، كانت هناك معلومات سرية لم نستطع الوصول إليها. لقد أسفرت نتائج البحث على أن الإنجليزية المحدودة المدرسة للطيران غير كافية في حالة حدوث طارئ غير متوقع في الجو و الذي يستلزم الإلمام باللغة الانجليزية و قواعدها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** الطيران الحربي، اتصالات الطيران، تصميم المنهج، اللغة الخاصة بالطيران، الاتصالات اللاسلكية .

## Introduction

With the increase of the dominance of USA economically, technologically, and culturally, and with the strong power base English has progressed as the international language of communication. English has become the language of the most powerful country whose language succeeds according to her success. Foreign language training especially in English, the de facto operational language, has become increasingly important, in different fields, and more particularly within military forces. In the case of Algeria, there is a growing number of peace-support operations, partnership activities, and international cooperation with regional and international military and civilian organizations. Furthermore, there is an international commitment towards the execution of joint military exercises, participation in symposiums and seminars, exchanges of delegations, negotiations with foreign partners and prospecting visits. The Algerian Ministry of National Defense (MDN in the French version) took practical steps towards the creation of a National Military Languages Institute to ensure the teaching of English, the development of national military curricula. Hence, a course in English for Specific Purposes is necessary to meet requirements needed for the development of ESP teaching and assessment practices in all Algerian Languages Training Centers (ALTC).

### 1. Plane versus Plain English

In addition to being the international language of technology and commerce, English has also become the language of the sea and air. Crystal (2003: 107-108) puts forward that the official use of English as the language of international air-craft control did not emerge until after the Second World War.

In our case study, the Specialized Helicopter School at Ain Arnat<sup>2</sup> (SHC henceforth), aviators are to undertake flight trainings and thus communication is necessary between them and air traffic controllers (ATC). Communication can take place in local language, French or English; depends in which language ATC addresses the pilot. As for civil aviation, several nations have adopted the recommendation of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) about English terminology. Yet, functionally, civil and military aviation are different although they may operate in the same airspace; military aviators also use the ICAO alphabets. Also, Pronunciation of letters and numbers follows the prescribed ICAO alphabet which is also common to maritime and military contexts. Moder (2013) mentions some instances such as, "P" which is read as "Papa" and "N" as "November", the fact which was confirmed by our research subject. Additionally, all numbers are pronounced as single digits: the number "9" is pronounced "niner", the number "5" is pronounced "fife" and the number "3" is pronounced "tree". Moder (2013: 230)

Recently, the ministry expends a big amount of money on language education and training abroad for the SHS aviators. However, government would more welcome in-country training and save the funds spent provided that an appropriate curriculum and proficient linguists fit the job. As mentioned above, the area of investigation of this paper falls into the field of English for specific purposes and particularly English for science and technology –Aviation English. For this reason, a brief description of what ESP is and its main reasons of emergence are provided.

### 2. What English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Is

The status of English as an international language which is essential in almost every area of activity is deeply rooted in the history of the world starting at the end of the Second World War which brought with it an "[...] age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale; for various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in the post-war world, the role [of international language] fell to English" Hutchinson and Waters (1987:6). Another reason of this language expanded importance was the Oil

Crisis of the early 1970s which resulted in Western money and knowledge flowing into the oil-rich countries. The language of this knowledge became English.

It is worth mentioning here that the most significant event that made a remarkable turning point is the *linguistics revolution*. In other words, while traditional linguistics put a great emphasis on the language structure, a revolution broke out to focus on the language used as a means of communication not as an end itself. The general effect of all this development was to exert pressure on the language teaching profession to deliver the required goods. Whereas English had previously decided its own destiny, it now became subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers (ibid, p.7). In addition to the demands of a brave new world and a revolution in linguistics, the focus on the learners and their needs became paramount because general English courses no longer met learners' needs and wants.

### 3. Statement of the Problem

The motive behind designing a program to aviators is the importance of air transportation as the safest means for transporting troops, the direct impact they have on the battlefield and to provide security for ground units. Military officers also airlift supplies, evacuating casualties from combat and flying attack missions.

Pilots perform as well navigation and surveillance reconnaissance. As for military aviation, safety and security of aviators is of a paramount importance and thus their contact with air traffic controllers is a requirement to help them remain safe in air. The life of the military aviators is linked to the communication that takes place between them and air traffic controllers, aviators when flying are not able to see or determine their goal unless they get instructions. Most aviation instructions are given in the English language which is not the General English they use in their daily life through a verbal communication which is called radiotelephony. Aviation usually uses phraseology for directing aviators during pre-service or in-service practices. Any failure in communication –either technical or language-related- would lead to disasters and accidents.

Actually, English aviators have to master two categories of knowledge: flight theory (military specialty) and verbal communication that takes place when they are on board. Regarding flight theory, aviators have to be proficient in aviation electronics, leadership, computing, flying aircraft, telecommunication, Sisco-Fletcher (2005:204) mentioned also some units such as aerodynamics, meteorology and weight and balance... etc. However, for the oral communication that occurs between the helicopter pilot and non-native air controller requires another approach of teaching and learning.

At the peacetime, pilots at SHS may foresee the situations where they are trained on, however, in talking about the wartime, they show their worries when an unexpected situation takes place and they just cannot choose one appropriate phrase from the constrained list of phraseology, also, when they cannot hear properly what the ATC says. However, those aviators are not proficient enough in English in order to be able to improvise an expression that describes genuinely the situation. Moder (2013) presents a typical situation where a pilot was forced to use plain English in reporting a situation during which a huge bird collided with the aircraft after takeoff. The pilot used 'hit bird' which does not exist in aviation phraseology.

It is worth mentioning that most aircrafts at the SHS are made in ex-soviet union and France; there exist four types of aircrafts which are mainly: MI-8, MI-2, Ecureuil 350 and MI-17. The latter aircraft and the pilots who fly it are the main concern of this study. This type of helicopter operates on air-ground missions like bombs and missiles.

#### 4. Aims of the Study

Identifying and meeting the needs of SHS pilots to learn English by designing an English syllabus for Algerian helicopter pilots is the focal concern of this study. The present study is an attempt to provide both SHS trainees and trainers with an implemented syllabus which takes into account pilots needs and military aviation requirements in English. It will take into account:

1. Readiness assessment of aviators' current knowledge to ensure successful realization of a military aviation needs-based syllabus of SHS.
2. The ability to collect pilots' perceptions of the need of English in aviation

The results and findings of the study, we hope, will contribute to:

1. Designing a better needs-based military English programs for SHS aviators for the coming years
2. Provide other schools specialized in helicopters with research findings about what military pilots of helicopters need English for.
3. The improvement of SHS needs-based syllabus and needs-based instruction which will likely help prospective students not to depend so heavily on extra-curricular activities or private language schools to develop their English language skills.
4. Provide an implemented learning procedure consistent enough to be applied by teachers within a comprehensive English program course.

#### 5. Research Questions

The purpose of the paper is to investigate the language-related needs and wants of military pilots of helicopters in order to come out with particular skills needed to be focused on in a syllabus of helicopter aviation, which prompts the following research questions:

- 1 What are the perceptions of aviation trainers of English language needed for helicopter aviation?
- 2 Are the four language skills equal in importance in aviation industry?
- 3 Are communication skills more imperative than language skills during the flight?
- 4 Is the restricted English phraseology enough for pilots in peacetime?
- 5 Is the restricted English phraseology enough for pilots in wartime?
- 6 What kind of natural general English is needed at SHS?

#### 6. Ethical Issues

Written permissions were sought from the head of the Specialized Helicopter School at Ain Arnat2 where the participants namely aviation trainees and aviation trainers were contacted with requests to participate. Written documentation included an outline of the purpose of the study and an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity were sent to participants. Prior to any interviews, consent for participating in the research was granted by the interviewees. Participants were advised of the arrangements to securely store data and use it for research purposes only.

Research data have to remain confidential and anonymous, and coding is used to ensure the anonymity of participants. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time, and documentation relevant to each research phase is made available for verification of data collected.

#### 7. Methodology

Data gathered through a triangulated method (quantitative and qualitative) in terms of questionnaire and in-depth semi-structured interview. These are the most appropriate tools for gathering the desired data due to the limited of availability and time of the school administrators and

pilots. Radio-telephony records were not possible due to classified information of the war school.

During data collection, subjects' names would stay anonymous. The purpose of this step is to examine to what extent military aviators are aware of their needs and wants for learning English.

Potential topics that were the focus of the investigation will have to do with:

- ✓ What kind of English do those aviators need?
- ✓ What skills do those aviators need most?
- ✓ Do they consider the restricted phraseology enough to be acquainted with the modern technologies?
- ✓ Do those aviators confront any difficulties when they go on training abroad where English is spoken either as a native language or as a lingua franca?
- ✓ What teaching content and learning procedure should they follow to achieve the required proficiency in English?

### 7.1. Data Acquisition

After both extensive and intensive literature was reviewed in order to elucidate and broaden the researcher's knowledge and understanding the practical phase of the study begun in late 2013 when research tools administered in terms of survey questionnaire and prospective interview protocol questions. The questionnaires consisted of twenty four (23) questions to helicopter pilots divided into four main sections (see appendix A). Demographics, age range and rank initiate the questionnaire followed by the first section which consists of three (3) main questions. The first questions' items were developed with a five point Likert scale (1= Very often, 2= often, 3 = sometimes, 4= rarely, 5 = never) .The questions tackle an investigation of the difficulties encountered regarding language skills. Subjects were asked in the remaining questions to rate the importance of English language skills in general and in their work place in particular according to a three point Likert scale (1= High, 2= moderate, 3= low)

Section two investigates in the first question the frequency of the difficulties pilots face, whereas in the remaining four questions, rating the skills and sub skills importance items were asked according to Likert scale as well (1=not important, 2= important, 3= very important). For section three, informants were asked to evaluate their language proficiency level according to a scale (1= no level of competence, 2 = low level of competence, 3= average level of competence, 4= good level of competence). The last section was a combination of further questions about respondents' preferences and perceptions about aviation English speciality establishment and whether they are taking English classes outside the SHS.

The questionnaire was handed into ten (25) informants selected randomly during the open doors on military aviation at the SHS (April 2014). Pilots did not find a problem in understanding the questions written in English and showed willingness to respond within a limited period of time which was during the three (03) days of the open doors. Pilots' ranks were varied but modesty was very apparent in their behaviour. In three days, all the questionnaires were collected by a pilot in charge of communication and gave them back to us by then. Surprisingly, the respondents provided their cell phone number so that all of them accepted to be interviewed.

Three months later, we rang five (05) pilot-trainers of different ranks. Consent and appointment were granted and the interviewees were met individually at their office. Participants were asked in French and Arabic and the tape recording was not allowed (see appendix B for the interview protocol).

## 7.2. Results and Discussion

### 7.2.1. The Questionnaire

For the findings of the final version of the respondents' questionnaire after pilot-testing the response of demographics phase of the questionnaire revealed that respondents are males of different nationalities, Algerian, Malian and Nigerian, their age ranged between 28 and 45 years old and their

ranks varied between lieutenants, colonels and commanders. For section one, the largest percentage of the respondents (56%) showed the importance of the listening skills followed by 23% devoted to speaking and then 14% goes to reading whereas writing got the minimum importance (7%). 76% of the students agreed upon their dissatisfaction of the English class taken at the SHS. Also, a considerable number of subjects (45%) rated their level as good (level 4) in writing, followed by level 3 in reading (21%) whereas listening and speaking got a low self-evaluation; 14% and 20% respectively. In section two, majority of the respondents, i.e. 90%, agree upon the difficulty of understanding recordings by native speakers. Only 5% of the pilots mentioned the infrequency of getting native English.

A large percentage 45% of the respondents showed importance of aviation phonetics. Also, understanding lengthy instructions and fast talk got the highest frequency i.e. 65% and 30% respectively. As for the writing skill, most of the pilots (53%) rated developing ideas for specific purposes as very important in addition to 61% given to reading manuals in the writing skill. Regarding section three, the mean percentage of self-assessment was the highest as 55% for average level (level 3) in the reading and the writing skill, however level 2 which describes a low level got 33% in the listening skill. Answers in section four revealed that most informants (76%) favour establishment of Aviation English speciality. Quite similar percentage (55%) and (45%) were given to general English and aviation English respectively. For skills pilots would like to improve; the listening got 43% as the largest percentage and the speaking (34%) as the second highest number, whereas reading and writing got 16% and 7% respectively.

### 7.3.2. The interview

To back up the questionnaire findings, the semi-structured interview findings showed five main themes by following template analysis. In order to elicit the subjects' subjective needs the semi-structured interview was conducted. Most pilots have a considerable experience in their positions, they all agree upon the fact that English is very important in aviation, either civilian or military, in the flight units, and all the technical terms are in English. Also, English is a vital vehicle of communication especially during the war time between non-native pilots and prospective foreign Air Traffic Controllers. Pilots confirm during the interview that English classes at the SHS are reiterated and are grammar or lesson-based and they also rely on traditional (structure-based) teaching. According to the interviewees, communicative skills were totally ignored and out of the box activities for enhancing abilities in interacting, and communicate effectively are not created either for aviation or social purposes. This was very apparent in the respondents' answers where most of them stressed the importance of comprehending and responding efficiently through radio during their training in order to be prepared for eventual war where multiple languages may be spoken between pilots, co-pilots and ATCs. It goes without saying that during war, pilots are certainly under an enormous pressure and stress and if long instructions are given in English, they require attention and focus and thus a full language comprehension is required. Additionally, pilots agreed that different accents pose difficulties for them either for phraseology aviation or general English. The latter, according to responses, is very imperative in case of emergencies and unexpected situations such as spying missions or taken hostage. In the latter cases, one-way listening skill is a pre-requisite, the skill which most pilots were in need to improve most. The following table illustrates the common codes and themes extracted from the interviewees' answers. PN stands for pilots' responses.

**Table 01: Template Analysis of the interview**

Codes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
<b>Effective radio-communication</b>	<b>1</b>				
Ability to understand instructions	1.1	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮
Ability to respond appropriately	1.11	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮
Ability to execute accurately	1.12	⋮⋮	⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮
<b>War-time English</b>	<b>2</b>				
Long instructions under pressure	1.2	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮
Instruction in English to change plan	1.21	⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮
technical difficulties	1.3		⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮
<b>Plain English</b>	<b>3</b>				
Non-routine situations	3.1	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮
Out-of-phraseology context	3.11	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮
Daily life conversation	3.2	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮	⋮
Reading general English topics	3.3	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮
<b>One-way listening</b>	<b>4</b>				
Held hostage	4.1	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮
Spying missions	4.11	⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮
Black out situations	4.2	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮	⋮
<b>Comprehension</b>	<b>5</b>				
Varied accents	5.1	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮	⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮
Different Englishes	5.12		⋮⋮⋮	⋮⋮	⋮⋮⋮⋮⋮

**8. Some Guidelines for Syllabus Design**

The conclusion highlights the general findings of the research under study. We shall chalk out all the results and see whether they address research questions. There is no doubt that identifying and meeting the language needs of a specific group of learners will be of great assistance in creating and sustaining learner motivation, and in making the entire learning/teaching operation a worthwhile endeavour. Such a syllabus easily facilitates the designing of specific purpose courses geared to the needs of groups of learners having the same needs (such as office secretaries, air traffic controllers, lawyers, or engineers) (Kumaravadivelu, 2005: 123).

### 8.1. The Aviation Syllabus

The syllabus for helicopter aviators aims at:

1. Bettering the ability of pilots to understand and produce oral English with the air-traffic controllers.
2. Enabling pilots to improvise plain English expressions in problematic or emergency situations to supplement phraseology. Hence, teaching transcripts of unexpected contexts is a vital part of the syllabus.
3. Developing the ability of reading (aviation-related issues, manuals, journals and social English topics). For this purpose TAVI (text as a vehicle of information) is emphasized as a syllabus material.
4. Expanding the range of the grammar used which is initially confined to imperatives and bare participles.
5. Increasing exposure to more function words.

### 8.2. Syllabus Description

In the course, we suggest aviation communication (discourse) course which incorporates learners with tertiary education levels. It is expected that a proficiency gap would be suitable at this context and this is why it is preferable to adopt a task-based syllabus.

This course addresses aviation-controller interaction and communication through radiotelephony, in addition to reading aviation and general topics. Also, social contacts language is also a focal point in this course; the course encompasses English for military aviation and general English simultaneously. The course objectives are designed after having obtained needs analysis results so as to guide the ESP instructors in planning their lessons and teaching. The syllabus recommended in this case study is task- or activity-based approach.

Most research participants are aviation teachers and students who already have work experience and want to improve their English. The task-based syllabus is encouraged in this context because:

- ✓ First, it promotes the eventual uses of the target language by emphasizing the real-world resemblance of the tasks with the purpose of preparing the students for the real-world tasks. In this case wartime.
- ✓ Second, tasks derived from the analysis of learners' needs increases learners' interest and motivation (Robinson, 2001).
- ✓ Third, while performing tasks, learners can learn the target language through contextualized and meaningful use of the language rather than learning sentence-level usage of the language.
- ✓ Fourth, tasks presented with gradually increasing complexity provide rich, elaborated, and comprehensible input for the language acquisition to occur (Doughty & Long, 2003).

### Conclusion

Since English has become the language of commerce and technology, aviation English learning is becoming more and more needed. It was noticed that pilots at Ain Arnat airbase rush towards language institutions to learn the language of technology. The research revealed that aviators were not satisfied of the English classes they took for they are grammar –oriented and neglect communication aspects and the involvement of the learners in the process of learning.

It was found out also that aviation instructors emphasized the role of English in aviation and stress the fact that its role is crucial either at war- or peacetime; the restricted phraseology showed to be insufficient in radio communication in case of emergencies; the fact which leads to natural English learning. Also, students evaluated themselves as not highly proficient in general English despite their previous exposure to English previously. The English course of the SHS needs to be focused on learners' working environment, rather than academic tests. This implies that the focus of ESP syllabus



should pinpoint at training learners to be fully accustomed with tasks of the target job during peace and war time.

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**Appendix A:** English language needs questionnaire for the SHS Pilots.**Background information**

Contact information (optional):

Age:

Gender:

Origin:

Occupation Rank:

How long have you been working in the SHS?

..... years

Is English needed in your workplace?

Yes

No

If yes, choose language aspects that are of interest to you :

**Section One**

1) How often do you have difficulty with each of these skills? (please circle)

	Very often	often	sometimes	rarely	never
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	1	2	3	4	5

2) How important in your study are the following abilities? (please circle)

	High		moderate		low
Listening to native speakers	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking English	1	2	3	4	5
Writing English	1	2	3	4	5
Reading English	1	2	3	4	5

1) How important are the following abilities to your job?

	High		moderate		low
Listening to native speakers	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking English	1	2	3	4	5
Writing English	1	2	3	4	5
Reading English	1	2	3	4	5

## Section Two

### 1) Listening and speaking skills

How often do the following happen to you? (Always, often, sometimes, never, NA)

Target Situations	always	often	sometimes	never	NA
It is not possible to understand instructions					
Inability to respond appropriately to particular instructions					
Difficulty to understand recordings by English native speakers					
Inability to understand radiotelephony instructions					

### 2) The Speaking skill

Rate the importance of the following situations:

Target Situations	Not important	Very important
Aeronautical Phraseology or terminology usage		
Find the right word		
Pronunciation		
Aviation phonetics		

## 1) The Listening skill

Target Situations	Not important	important	Very important
Understanding lengthy instructions			
Fast talk			
Different accents			

## 2) The Writing skill

Target Situations	Not important	important	Very important
Punctuation and spelling			
Grammar			
Appropriate vocabulary of English			
Appropriate vocabulary of aviation			
Expressing ideas appropriately			
Developing ideas for specific purposes			

## 3) The Reading Skill

Target Situations	Not important	important	Very important
Reading aviation books in English			
Read manuals			
Read magazines and journals			
Read newspapers in English			
Read aviation-related documents			

**Section Three**

Would you assess your performance in the following language skills according to the scale below.

- 1) No level of competence- no experience in the skill area.
- 2) Low level of competence- little experience in the skill area.
- 3) Average level of competence- some experience in the skill area
- 4) High level of competence- good experience in the skill area

Target Situations	1	2	3	4
understanding instructions				
Inability to respond appropriately to particular instructions				
Difficulty to understand recordings by English native speakers				
Inability to understand radiotelephony instructions				
Aeronautical Phraseology or terminology usage				
Find the right word				
Pronunciation				
Aviation phonetics				
Understanding lengthy instructions				
Talking fast				
Different accents				
Punctuation and spelling				
Grammar				
Appropriate vocabulary of English				
Appropriate vocabulary of aviation				
Expressing ideas appropriately				
Developing ideas				
Reading aviation books in English				
Read manuals				
Read magazines and journals				
Read newspapers in English				
Read aviation-related documents				

**Section Four**

1) Do you favour an establishment of aviation English Specialty?

Yes  No

2) Are you taking English language courses outside SHS?

Yes  No

2-a) If yes, is it?

General English  aviation English   
other.....

3) Skills you would like to improve :

Reading   
Writing   
Speaking   
Listening

**Suggested Assistance:**

4) Would you like to be assisted to take ICAO proficiency test (Doc 1028)?

Yes  No

5) Would you like to be assessed to attain STANAG English language proficiency level?

Yes  No

6) In case of further information, would you accept to be interviewed?

Yes  No

**Appendix\_B**

**In-depth semi-structured interview protocol:**

1. *How old are you?*
2. *How many years of experience do have for helicopter pilot position?*
3. *What is your rank?*
4. *How do you perceive the role of English in aviation?*
5. *Do all aviation tasks require a language?*
6. *Which difficulties you usually face during your daily hands-on trainings?*
7. *Is English more important at the wartime than at peace-time?*
8. *How would you behave during an emergency turn of events?*
9. *Did you ever have to change your flight course during your trainings?*
10. *Which language skills you think you need to improve most?*