

**Doctoral Council of
ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS
NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY**

Author's presentation of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation titled

The importance of the knowledge of the local language and culture for the
personnel participating in peace support operations (with special regards to the
West Balkan)

of **Mrs Sibalín Katalin Fekete**

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THESISBOOK

Mrs Sibalin Katalin Fekete

The title of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation:

The importance of the knowledge of the local language and culture for the personnel participating in peace support operations (with special regards to the West-Balkan)

Scientific consultant:

Dr. Szabó Olga PhD

Budapest, 2011.

Formulation of the scientific problem

Within the process of establishing national states the conflicts between the different nationalities and religious groups living in them, the efforts to autonomy and separation, and contrary to this, the increased nationalistic expressions of the majority of the nation have resulted in international, regional or local crises in several cases. To handle crises escalating into military conflicts, peace operations were organised with international cooperation, whose activities are controlled by international organisations. With the fall of the bipolar world order the activity of peacekeeping significantly expanded. For the sake of political settlement several international and regional organisations (UN, OSCE, EU, NATO) take an active part in international conflicts getting more complicated.

In our modern, global world several factors take part in the formation of our nature and personality, from which one of the strongest influential factor is culture. Due to the internationalization of the political, economic and social sphere, and the extension of multinational relations we can face more frequently with the differences between cultures and the conflicts resulting from this. The conflicts of our time are undergoing changes, besides those of economic and ideologic nature the differences and conflicts between civilizations are also coming to the front. The risk of evolution of military conflicts and civil wars occur in the field of culture in many cases, since civilization involves the cultural characteristics of peoples and nationalities. According to the classification of civilization by Huntington, three civilizations meet at the Balkan, which are the Western Christianity, the orthodox Christianity and the Islam.

The military and law enforcement missions carrying out operations in the crisis areas of our changing world face with new multicultural and intercommunicational challenges. The effective forces of missions serving within regions full of conflicts have to live together not only with the multicultural characteristics of international units, but, looking over the fence of the barrack, they also have to cooperate (communicate) and achieve results with the state and municipal representatives of the operation area and with its multinational population.

The local cultural and language characteristics and differences of the peoples (nationalities) living within the operation area can have serious effects on the intercultural communication relations of the peace missions. The knowledge of cultural and within this, language differences, moreover the appropriate application of this knowledge can be an important „communication” device in increasing the efficiency of the peace operation activity – carried out in an area full of conflicts of the different cultures.

I wish to show and proof my above statements through the examples of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo which are some of those West Balkan states which serve as an operation area for the military and law enforcement peacemaking and peacekeeping missions with Hungarian participation. In the West Balkan we can find almost all of the crises typical of our time, from which in my dissertation I focus on the analysis of the differences of local culture and within this, the language. I am of the opinion that the knowledge and effective usage of the local languages play an important role in the work of military and particularly law enforcement peacemaking and peacekeeping missions working in the numerous crisis areas of the world.

In my opinion the knowledge of the Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Albanian languages is an advantage in carrying out professional tasks in case of the Hungarian contingents serving in the countries of the West Balkan I studied.

Research aims

On the basis of my hypothesis the subject of the dissertation is the importance of the knowledge of local language and culture for the personnel participating in peace missions (with special regard to the West Balkan). In line with the subject I set the following main aims when elaborating the subject.

- With the help of historical review identify the existing problems in the areas of West Balkan which are politically not yet stable or full of “nationality” or “minority” conflicts which have not been settled satisfactorily yet, with special regard to the religious and communication reasons and features of conflicts occurred as a result of the opposition of nations.
- To value the actual economic and social policy and security status of the states concerned, through which I make conclusions concerning the main changes of the security status influencing the peace operations of the region and the trends of the international participation.
- With the theoretical evaluation of the challenges of multicultural features and intercultural communication determine the factors of the nationality diversity – influencing the peacekeeping activity as well – with special regard to the role of the language diversity of the region typical of the states of the West Balkan.
- To review and analyse the procedural order and methodological requirements used in preparing the military and law enforcement missions undertaking peacekeeping role on

the West Balkan, with special regard to information and training supplements available in education.

- To determine the importance of difficulties deriving from multiculturalism and intercultural communication in preparing the military and law enforcement missions participating in peace operations, and to help the staff concerned in carrying out their tasks with drafting recommendations.
- On the basis of questionnaire survey results, measure the features of language competence of personnel participating in military and law enforcement missions, and draw conclusions concerning the necessity to know local languages.

Research methods

Through the research methods I focus the aims of the dissertation mainly to achieve such results with the help of which the language and cultural preparedness of the personnel of missions can be increased. In my dissertation I applied the following concrete research methods:

- I used my own experiences and professional knowledge gained in language teaching.
- In my researches I used significant amount of foreign and domestic source materials concerning West Balkan – which are listed as literature as well.
- I drafted an individual questionnaire for my examinations evaluating the cultural and language characteristics affecting the preparation of missions taking part in the peace operations of the West Balkan, and I analysed and evaluated it on the basis of the rules of empirical research method.

During my research work I deemed it extremely important to adapt the experiences gained at international and domestic conferences in domestic environment.

Short description of the performed analysis

In the course of preparing the dissertation I deal with the issues of the history, religious, ethnical and cultural (including language) diversity of the West Balkan and its peoples, the economic, social, safety reasons, circumstances and consequences of the development of conflicts, and the effects and subject-specific evaluation of all of these aspects on the preparation of peace operations. Pursuant to the order of my aims **the dissertation can be divided into the following three main parts.**

CHAPTER I

Review and evaluation of the history, actual economic, social and security status of the
West Balkan region

On the basis of my scientific aims in the first chapter I outline the historical antecedents of the West Balkan, where I pay special attention to the process of national renewal of the Southern Slav peoples, to the establishment of their joint statehood and its later downfall, furthermore the political reasons of the Bosnian and Kosovar crisis, and the attempts to solve the crisis. In the second part of the chapter I review and evaluate the social, economic and security status of the states in the region.

CHAPTER II

The interpretation and evaluation of the phenomenon of multiculturalism and
intercultural communication in the states of the West Balkan

In the second chapter of my dissertation I detail the realization of multiculturalism and intercultural communication in those states of the West Balkan to which the activity of the peace contingents extends. After evaluating the cultural diversity of the region I outline the characteristics of culture, intercultural communication and interculturalism concerning the West Balkan states, and their language aspects. Finally I deal with the religious, ethnical and language diversity and division of the states in this region.

CHAPTER III

The evaluation of cultural and language characteristics in preparing personnel taking part in
the peace operations of the West Balkan

In the third part of the dissertation I deal with the realization of cultural and language preparation of military and law enforcement missions participating in the peace operations of the West Balkan. In the first part of the chapter I outline the cultural and language aspects of the training of domestic peace missions operating within the area, moreover I deal with the issue of civil-military cooperation, which is examined with special care from the aspect of the subject to be studied. In the second part of the chapter I carry out the assessment of language competence and language experiences of the participants of military and law enforcement mission within the framework of questionnaire survey.

Summarized conclusions

I. Review and evaluation of the history, economic, social and political status of the West Balkan region

1. There are significant economic, social and political differences in development between the states of the West-Balkan. The economic productivity of the examined states is behind the average of the European Union. The relations between the countries are getting better from the Southern Slav war, but they are burdened with custom duties, safety, wealth distribution and ethnical problems. Hardly any signs of easing can be observed in tensions between the West Balkan countries. The West Balkan countries – due to differences originating in the past – are far from the practical realization of peace attempts. The accession to the European Union is a primary interest of the West Balkan countries. The financial and political assistance of the European Union, and the perspective of the integration can significantly help in the process of introducing the unpopular structural, economic, social and political reforms.
2. The peace processes and the improvement of political relations between the countries are the results of almost exclusively external “global political” assistance, in which the international missions enforcing peace agreements, keeping peace and improving public security play a primary role.
3. The security status of the region is expected to make the activity and contribution of international peace missions necessary for a long time. Euro-Atlantic integration and economic development could bring significant changes. The international and as a part of it the Hungarian participation to the peace mission can be a tool of mediation between different positions and a guarantee of peace. It is necessary to employ special country- and region-specific solutions to improve the success rate of peace missions.

II. Interpretation and evaluation of multiculturalism and intercultural communication in connection with the states of the West Balkan

4. The problem of the West Balkan is that groups of people having diverse languages, cultures and religions live together. These groups of people are not separated regionally and their history intertwines for a long time. Prejudices, religious and cultural differences, and the lack of discourse, communication are the sources of divergences. The cultural divergences were abused by the states conducting great power politics in the region to their own political goals. The Southern Slav region is a special scene of security challenges, where region-specific solutions are necessary.

According to one of the solutions the multicultural societies of the West Balkan must strive for reaching compromises in the cultural, economic and other fields with which they can ease the peaceful coexistence of majority and minority communities.

5. Regional initiatives, strengthening trust, cooperation, coordinated EU-perspective can be external shaping factors of multiculturalism. Peacekeeping forces can keep opposing forces apart for a while, but it takes several generations to develop a multicultural attitude and embed it in the society. Foreign national defense and law enforcement corps cannot succeed without knowing the culture, religion, economic, social, political circumstances and language characteristics of the peoples living in the target area. Peacekeepers must strive for the knowledge and respect of local level multicultural characteristics. Soldiers and policemen of the peace missions must know the multicultural characteristics on a different level. Preparation of the personnel must be conducted considering the principle of subsidiarity.
6. It is recommended to provide a preparation course specializing on “local civilization” studies for the members of the mission to introduce the operation-specific religious, language and cultural differences. The multicultural preparation of the missions and compliance with the behaviour rules of intercultural communication must be included among the command (leadership) priorities.

III. Evaluation of cultural and language specifics on the field of the preparation of the personnel taking part in the peace operations of the West Balkan

7. Peacekeeping activity is an internationally acknowledged activity of the last two decades of the Hungarian Army and the law enforcement corps. Because of the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the peoples of the West Balkan the contribution of Hungarian troops is accounted for in the international peace missions serving in the crisis areas of the region. In the area of the region providing conditions of peaceful coexistence with international cooperation can define the activity of the Hungarian troops in the region for the years (decades) to follow, and through that the cultural-language preparation of the personnel.

Higher level country and operation area-specific cultural and language preparation of the personnel could be a new device in preparing mission participants. Members of the military corps depend less on having language skills, but military commanders conducting CIMIC duties are an exception. Policemen on mission in the field of law enforcement and

mainly public security and observation must maintain a multilayered contact with the local residents and the state and local government authorities and organizations.

Having a certain level of English language skills is a prerequisite for participating in a mission. Local language skills can only be utilized in a limited way as a working language, but can be utilized in a wide range of uses in case of social contacts between armed organizations. Having local language skills is not a typical entry prerequisite. Active language skill refreshment occurs only in a limited way when preparing missions. Besides refreshing English language skills, learning important expressions of the local language is also important. Preparation time concerning the given culture can be defined by the planned sphere of tasks of the delegates.

8. English language skills can be supplied well by local language skills during work. Lack of local language competence is a factor making mediation roles more difficult. In case of official contacts knowing the local language helps the delegate to overcome language obstacles and in accurate understanding and recording the intentions and information of local authorities.

New scientific results

1. By evaluating the states of the West Balkan based on their actual economy, society and defense policy I **proved that cultural, religious and language differences existing between these nations indirectly contributed to the escalation of conflicts and crises between peoples (nations) living together in this region.**
2. Through critical analysis of the national and international literature and my practical experience gained in this specific field of study and my comparative evaluations I **explored and evaluated the local cultural, religious and communication factors that affect the application of Hungarian military and law enforcement missions in the West Balkan.**
3. Based on the results of a questionnaire survey I **proved the importance of knowing the local languages which can affect the success of the activity of the personnel participating in peace missions abroad.**

Recommendations of the dissertation

- 1 The dissertation can be used in the local language and culture preparation process of soldiers and policemen taking part in peace missions.
- 2 The dissertation can be used for the creation of professional conceptions, internal regulators helping the application of law and methodological guides in connection with the realization of what is written in point 1, also for the elaboration of execution plans and to determine priorities.
- 3 My dissertation can be used as a teaching supplement in the education system of the Hungarian Army, the Police and the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University, and in the education of the institutions of higher education working in this field.
- 4 The studies conducted in the dissertation can serve as a basis when defining research directions in the field of the preparation of international peace missions.

Publication list

I. Revised articles in Hungarian periodicals

Articles published in relevant Hungarian language periodicals

1. Sibalinné Fekete Katalin: „A délszláv válság kialakulásának okai” *Magyar Rendészet* 2008/3.sz 79-88. o. HU-ISSN 1586-2895 (printed), HU-ISSN 1787-050X (on-line)
2. Sibalinné Fekete Katalin: „Az interkulturális kompetencia kialakításának kérdései a katonai és rendfenntartói missziók tükrében”, *Rendvédelmi Füzetek*, no. 2010/1. p. 170-175. ISSN 1585-1249
3. Sibalinné Fekete Katalin: „Koszovó – a balkáni mozaik legújabb darabja?”, on-line version of *Új Honvédségi Szemle* 2010 August
https://www.parbeszed.hm.gov.hu/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=924&parentname=CommunityPage&parentid=0&mode=2&in_hi_userid=2&cached=true
4. Sibalinné Fekete Katalin: „A helyi nyelvek ismeretének fontossága a békemissziók tevékenységében” (empirikus kutatás eredményeinek ismertetése), ZMNE Library
<http://193.224.76.4/download/konyvtar/digitgy/publikacio/Fekete01.pdf>

5. Sibalinné Fekete Katalin: Nyelvi sokszínűség vagy megosztottság: szerb, horvát, bosnyák, *Hadtudományi Szemle online version*, (to be published)

Article published in a foreign language periodical published in Hungary

1. Intercultural Aspects for the Preparation of International Peace Missions, *Hadtudományi Szemle online kiadvány*, 2010.4.
<http://hadtudomanyiszemle.zmne.hu/?q=en/authors/katalin-fekete-sibalinne>

II. Papers published in a conference publication

Paper published in a national conference publication

1. Idegen nyelvek oktatása a Rendőrtiszti Főiskolán, lecture October 2008, published in the publication of the conference titled „Nyelv, Szaknyelv, Katonai szaknyelv” pp. 63-67.
2. Értékrend a rendészeti felsőoktatásban a rendszerváltozás előtti és utáni években, (lecture April 2009, published in the publication of conference titled „Katonai Kommunikáció Nemzetközi Szemlőkből” Konferencia pp. 151-156. ISBN: 978-963-7060-65-6
3. Az interkulturális kompetencia kialakításának kérdései a katonai és rendfenntartói missziók tükrében, (lecture November 2009, Rendészeti Doktorandusz Konferencia) – published in Rendvédelmi Füzetek, no. 2010/1. pp. 170-175. ISSN 1585-1249

III. Scientifically based lecture notes and teaching supplements

1. Szerb Nyelvi Társalgás, Rendőrtiszti Főiskola. 1995.
2. Szerb nyelvtani gyakorlatok, ZMNE. 1996.
3. Horvát Nyelvi Társalgás, ZMNE. 1999.
4. Magyar-Horvát Határrendész-Vám-és Pénzügyőr Szótár, ZMNE. 1998.
5. Mintafeladatok az „ARMA” írásbeli nyelvvizsgához horvát nyelvből B1, B2, C1 szinten ZMNE. 2010. (egyetemi jegyzet)
6. Mintafeladatok az „ARMA” írásbeli nyelvvizsgához szerb nyelvből B1, B2, C1 szinten ZMNE. 2010. (egyetemi jegyzet)
7. Tansegédlet szakmai szituációkhoz orosz nyelvből kezdőknek, Rendőrtiszti Főiskola Idegennyelvi Intézet, 2011. (Főiskolai jegyzet)

Scientific-professional curriculum vitae

Name: Mrs. Sibalin Katalin Fekete

Date of birth: 25 June 1957

Studies:

- 2007 - Ph.D. education, ZMNE Doctoral School of Military Science
 ELTE BTK Institute of Slavic and Baltic philology
 Specialization: Croatian language and literature arts student
- 1975-1979 Teacher's College, Pécs
 Specialization: Russian, Serbian, Croatian language teacher
- 1971-1975 III. Béla High School, Baja

Further training:

- 2002 Science University of Zagreb, Department of Philology, postgraduate training
- 2001 ELTE Foreign Language Center for Further Education, examiner training
- 2001 ZMNE Language Exam center,
 ARMA examiner training from Russian, Serbian and Croatian languages
- 1999 Selce (Croatia), summer university, further training as language teacher
- 1984 Moscow Lomonosow University, postgraduate training
- 1982 Science University of Belgrade, Department of Philology, further training as language teacher

Professional experience:

- 1979-1982 Budapest, Pattogós str. Elementary School, Russian language teacher
- 1982- Police College, Russian, Serbian, Croatian language teacher
- 1990-2003 ZMNE Foreign Language Institute, Serbian, Croatian language part-time teacher
- 2004- ZMNE Language Exam center, ARMA language exam organization

Language skills:

Croatian: Advanced, Type 'C', Russian: Advanced, Type 'C', Serbian: Advanced Type 'C'
 English: basic language skills

Union membership: Magyar Nyelvtanárok Egyesülete

Budapest, 28 February 2011

Mrs Sibalin Katalin Fekete