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Author's Guide of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation (Thesis)

*Multilingualism as a Phenomenon of Intercultural Competence
in the Framework of Peace Support Operations*

by COL Dr. Josef Ernst

SCIENTIFIC SUPERVISOR:
Brigadier General Prof. Dr. József Padányi

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INTRODUCTION

There are three personal operating areas that already have persuaded me for a long time in dealing with this topic more closely: **Firstly**, there is a direction connection to my profession as a member of the Language Institute of the Austrian Armed Forces (AAF LngInst). It was after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact when I was called by the former head of the Language Institute. **Secondly**, personal participations in several peacekeeping missions, many duty travels abroad and other activities and cooperation with members of national and international organizations, agencies and institutions, which encouraged me to this thesis. **Thirdly**, it is the task of the language institute to prepare not only the members of the military diplomacy (defence attachés) or for their duties or officers participating in international exercises, but also to train soldiers linguistically and intercultural, in particular for peace support operations.

The liquidation of the Warsaw Pact and hence the resulting independence of former block-countries as well as the process of autonomy and independence of some countries, either by unification (Germany) or by separation (Czech and Slovak Republic), has changed the political situation fundamentally not only, but especially in Europe. The global financial crisis has also the requirements to meeting these challenges successfully, immensely strengthened. The possibilities of the third dimension, namely the Internet, both of political and infrastructural nature, are getting bigger, but also more dangerous. All these fundamental changes have to meet the Armed Forces under the political specifications and guidelines of their governments. Almost all of them are now facing the difficult task to meeting these difficulties and entirely new threats with less financial and personnel resources than previously under different conditions. The internationalization of the Armed Forces requires not only a thorough competence in foreign languages and professional language training, but also an appropriate intercultural competence.

THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS

Austria has a tradition of participation in international peace missions over decades, predominantly in the framework of the United Nations. More than fifty years ago, exactly in the year 1960, barely five years after the accession of Austria to the United Nations,¹ the first Austrian contingent (medical unit) was sent to the Central African country of Congo. Many of

¹ The admission was signed on 14 12 1955.

the 60,000-70,000 Austrian soldiers (an exact number can no longer be collected) however, were repeatedly abroad, some of them even fifteen to twenty times. My thesis will raise the problematic situation that there are not enough linguistic resources within the Austrian Armed Forces in order to carry the ambitious goals, both in the bilateral and multilateral context. It should offer problem-solving and recommendations to enable military personnel to be able to interact linguistically and culturally successfully in different scenarios. To examine these aspects in more details is a result, inter alia, of the mission of the language institute, to prepare Austrian soldiers for foreign missions linguistically and in cooperation with other departments also intercultural.

Along with the surveys and the statistical evaluation of the questions given by a questionnaire on language skills, language training and intercultural aspects, combined with the reflection of the own foreign assignment experience, should provide an empirical confirmation of the measures taken to the given statements and the theoretical relationship. In the present work have different implications and factors referring to both sectors. Especially their impacts will be examined more closely. The presentation of these factors will show the complexity which is inherent to this topic. It should be proved that only the combination of multilingualism together with intercultural competence largely share the success in fulfilling the mission of Peace Support Operations, not exclusively but to a high degree excessively. In addition to the soldier's profession intercultural sensitivity and language skills are the most important prerequisites for successful interactions in an international military environment. Because of the complexity of the research questions and on the basis of the research problem the following hypothesis are being raised:

- ***"Multilingualism and Interculturalism together constitute the guarantee for a successful interaction in Peace Support Operations."***
- ***"The implementation of multilingualism and interculturalism must be in the near future included into the curricula of training activities for all professional soldiers at all levels, whether they are career courses or training seminars."***
- ***"In addition to the soldier's profession intercultural sensitivity and language skill are the most important prerequisites for successful interactions in an international military environment."***
- ***"I think the material and the research method support it, and they are important and reinforce the new scientific results."***

Along with the surveys and the statistical evaluation of the questions given by a questionnaire on language skills, language training and intercultural aspects, combined with the reflection of the own foreign assignment experience, should provide an empirical confirmation of the measures taken to the given statements and the theoretical relationship. This still results in a plurality of additional questions, which should also be investigated in this work:

- In what way and to what extent support multilingualism and intercultural competence Peace Support Operations? – For this the focus should be on the languages of the different areas of operations, the intercultural communication and the intercultural language teaching at the language institute.
- What sorts of criteria of intercultural competence are effective in a military environment? - Some fields of activities of interculturality in military situations are being examined here more closely.
- How can intercultural training be standardized and implemented in mission preparations? - These models will be presented in order to meeting the requirements in these two challenging fields.
- What factors can support access to intercultural and language training? – Both, general and as well as military measures and activities should show how these possibilities can be realized.
- How can language training and intercultural training better linked as part of the pre-deployment preparation? - Organizational, structural and personnel measures should show how improvements can be achieved in this case.

Deriving from the main statement it will be necessary to define both, multilingualism and intercultural competence in the Austrian Armed Forces in terms of increased participation in Peace Support Operations. In addition to this, it is also important to incorporate the commitment of the increased participation in international peace missions into the defence doctrine and concepts (Military Strategic Concept, Training Concept, etc.) as part of Austria's Security and Defence Policy.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this work is to capture the complexity of the subject in general and the two areas, multilingualism and intercultural competence, in particular. At new perspective to these areas should be represented, especially in the international military context, to achieve a deeper understanding and a more sensitive of awareness on this. It is important to identify, the complexity of interculturalism at several levels on the one hand and on the other hand to work out the visibility of multilingualism. In the latter case, the field of interests should be further more specified. In that regard, the status quo of the language training has to be determined the extent, to which interculturalism in the Austrian Armed Forces plays a role, requires to be investigate.

The present work will also show a remarkable number of factors which are inherent to these issues which affect them and the deep impacts they can have not only to the military but can also being directly linked to the civilian market. These include the fundamental changes to the Austrian Armed Forces that arise from globalization in the context of Peace Support Operations. It may also provide the impetus for a broader discussion showing that Peace Support Operations highly require specialists with professional skills, which have been rather neglected so far. This requires soldiers who know far more than their military skills. Their picture of theatre differs much more from the general of the classic war fighter. Specific requirements are needed.

This work will be demonstrated to a wider audience the discrepancy between "peace supporters" and "fighters" and to learn about it. Both the politics and the society as a whole has to bear in mind that they are substantially share the responsible on it. Nevertheless, it will also be proved that the individuals are the main factors, and therefore they are the main responsible factors. Therefore, the parameters are important for the individuals performing their specific duties.

The present work will also confirm what others for a long time already assume, in particular an increased demand in training in order to achieve both an improvement in foreign language and intercultural skills. This should also help the military leadership to reconsider the pre-deployment training of the two areas, where an appropriate and restructured system which has to be integrated into all levels of the general military education is required. Finally, this study will present possible solutions and models, supporting these demands. A remarkable feature of most missions of the past, was the fact that the soldiers, although they had a good command in the working language English (at least in management positions), but

extremely rarely they had at least rudimentary knowledge of the national language(s). It was the same with the national and cultural understanding of the target region or the target country. Occasionally there are professional or reserve officers or NCOs who speak one of the Balkan languages, due to their migration background and voluntarily signed up for a foreign assignment in this region.² However, it is forbidden by law to send such soldiers who have a personal relationship with one of the conflict parties. This is justified by a possible problem of impartiality. But it is precisely their skilful, sensitive and diplomatic action which could be extremely useful for the success of a mission. This prohibition should be reflected and reconsidered. The questions of how it was previously possible to be successful, on what basis, in what areas and what measures of improvements can be made to meeting the changing and increasingly difficult demands. Due to the increasing number of operations that are not defined as warlike operations ("Military operations other than war") there is in addition to the conventional tactical skills knowledge in regional and local cultures needed.

This work is also intended to show that there are not enough linguistic resources are within the Austrian Armed Forces in order to carry the ambitious goals, both in the bilateral and multilateral context. But it should also offer solving of problems and recommendations to enable military personnel to be able to interact linguistically and culturally successfully in different scenarios. The implementation of multilingualism and interculturalism must be in the near future included into the curricula of training activities at all levels, whether they are career courses or training seminars.

RESEARCH TECHNIQUES AND METHODS

To achieve the research objectives of the chosen theme, the triangulation of methods was chosen in this work. This "mixture of methods" (mixed-methods designs or mixed-methods approach) consists of the

- analytically-nomological method, a statistical method with
 - standardized examination methods,
 - quantifying the findings and
 - evaluation by means of statistical methods.

² For participating in a foreign operation the principle of voluntariness still prevails in the Austrian military.

Through this mixture of methods the objectivity (traceability and transparency), reliability (accuracy of data collection) and validity (validity of the results) should be reached to the highest possible level.

□ explorative-interpretative (hermeneutic) method, a method of detecting complex areas of reality with the aim of their changing. Validity, objectivity and reliability are here the most important criteria, whereas statistical criteria do not play a dominant role. As essential tools survey apply here in the form of interviews, discussions or questionnaires, observation and collection and analysis of documents such as weekly or duty rosters, teaching materials or portfolios. Specifically, the following formats as a "mixture of methods" were selected and chosen in this work ":

- Study, research, survey and analysis of concepts, guidelines and directives of the Austrian Armed Forces relating to the two areas;
- Study, systematization, evaluation and analysis of personal accessible research literature, such as publications (books, journals, essays and articles) as well as various research documents related to this subject, including the summary of common and contradictory factors and own conclusions;
- Consultations of national and international military experts on this topic
- Reflection and classification of personal experiences on this subject during various Peace Support Operations and various positions abroad
- Reflection of own presentations and the results of the international NATO-PfP Conference in 2007 in Vienna, where 'Multilingualism and Interculturality in a Military Environment' was the general theme ("Developing and Delivering of Linguistic and Cultural Competencies") and conducted by the Austrian Armed Forces Language Institute. The outputs and findings were published afterwards;
- Inclusion and incorporation of own articles, published in various scientific books and journals, as well as own presentations at various national and international conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia;
- Collecting and gathering of data and evaluation of the results of the survey conducted at the Austrian Armed Forces Centre for International Operations after repatriation of soldiers using a standardized questionnaire;
- Statistical processing of specific language training data in the Austrian Armed Forces educational institutions and their analysis.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, in which the political changes are presented in the introduction that have led Austria's security and defence policy to a shift of paradigm. But this has not changed the situation of general global security and safety. Austerity measures cause in almost all countries, a strong reduction of the armed forces, both in material and human terms. This leads to more joint operations and to an increased multinational composition. Additional to this is the fact that it is paid too little attention to conflict prevention. Therefore, the response time for a decision participating in an operation is becoming lesser and lesser. The lack of language skills and intercultural competence in this context does not play an insignificant role.

Chapter 1 deals with the dissertation work per se, which means

- the choice and the background of the topic
- the hypothesis in connection with the linked research questions on this topic
- the various methods that have been brought in a mixture for the elaboration of this dissertation
- the structure, the aim finally and the purpose of this research
- the added value resulting from this thesis and
- the current state of research

In **Chapter 2** the different types of Peace Support Operations are analyzed in terms of their definitions and their contents. Subsequently, the Austrian situation is examined; especially the factors and criteria for Austria's participation in Peace Support Operations are considered as relevant. These factors should demonstrate the need for a comprehensive access ("comprehensive approach"). In addition to the historical overview of Austria's contributions in such missions both the current status as well as an outlook on possible future operations is presented.

In **Chapter 3**, the concept and the content of intercultural competence are closer investigated, especially in connection with an international military environment. Starting from the general and various terminologies a direct reference to the Austrian Armed Forces is being shown. On this stage the question is being taken in account of whether there exists also an internal and external interculturality. Additionally, of whether there is taking place already a kind of intercultural language teaching and if this is really new.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to multilingualism, which is first subjected to a general and after an in-depth Austro-military reflection. In this chapter, the basic difference between the internal and external effects of multilingualism in the Austrian Armed Forces is worked out. For this purpose not only the Armed Forces of other countries are taken for comparison purposes, but also the situation in the multinational state of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Policy implications on multilingualism in the Austrian Armed Forces are presented in this chapter, influencing both, the part of the civilian sector, linked to the European Union Education Policy, as well as of the military side, linked to NATO, where Austria is involved in the "Partnership for Peace" program (Partnership for Peace - PfP). International organizations, in which Austria is a member and under their auspices were mission carried out, will complete and round up this issue.

In **Chapter 5**, the different factors that are both for multilingualism and for the intercultural competence in the Austrian Armed Forces are of crucial importance, are illuminated. They are divided into four groups:

- national civil fundamental areas/documents,
- international organizations,
- national military guidelines and regulations and
- other factors.

Chapter 6 contains the empirical part of the research, which was carried out mainly in the form of a questionnaire and through their own experiences and discussions with other experts, comrades and colleagues. In addition to the creation and the structure of the questionnaire, the aim and purpose, the type of data collection, the key issues and the analysis and evaluation as well as the conclusions will be presented.

In **Chapter 7** the summary and the recommendations arising from the conclusions are presented. Furthermore, solutions and models for improving the educational situation in the two areas will also be presented. Such solutions and models already exist in similar form in other, partly civilian areas. Here, they were, however, adjusted to the military. At the end they are again summarized pulled out in a résumé.

SUMMERIZED CONCLUSIONS

The theme of the present work is dealing with Multilingualism as part of Intercultural Competence in the context of Peace Support Operations. In the survey as part of the thesis the

high-reconstructive study of the status quo was examined. In the form of basic studies on the one hand and the field research through a questionnaire on the other hand the research question implied the need for reform has been shown. The fact that some progress in language education already achieved, could be confirmed. The lack of structures and the lack of stringency are still apparent. The necessary measures have been set out in several recommendations. Because of the massive organizational (personnel), administrative and financial savings as well as the planned merging together of almost all military education and training institutions in the Austrian Armed Forces expresses the fear that the necessary measures are taken in the recommendations only partially or not at all. This would not only inhibit the development of professionalization, but also lead to an extraordinary loss of quality. Not to finance (financial) crisis in education and training would be a strong aberration and counterproductive.

The aim of the study was to investigate the current situation in the areas of language and the nature of interculturality in the Austrian Armed Forces. Recommendations of this thesis make an important contribution to the effective development of multilingualism and intercultural competence in the military. The results show a clear need for further deepening

SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

1. The analysis of primary and secondary sources, based on personal experiences and field investigation the thesis shows the interdependence of language and culture in peace support operations, the necessity of intercultural and linguistic competency and the low effectiveness of specific military training prior to deployment.

2. The specification of the broad spectrum of the two research fields' factors and the establishment of a self-developed three-dimensional model demonstrate the close interplay of multilingualism and intercultural competence in theory and in practice. By studying and analyzing historical (Austro-Hungarian army) and modern examples the thesis justified the incomparableness of those armed forces with the current situation in the Austrian Armed Forces.

3. The thesis proves the need of change in the way of thinking and approaching the "new" peace support operations. By doing this, it demonstrates a tool to boost the security level of the military personnel involved in these operations. With several recommendations the thesis provides alternatives and additional tools to the current system. Due to the new

security challenges, laid down in several official documents, this system must be re-evaluated. With this change the leadership of the Austrian Armed Forces can make steps to establish professional capabilities and furthermore, more operational interoperability under the patronage of UN, NATO, EU or OSCE-led missions and operations.

4. On the basis of a comprehensive overview the thesis provided a complex picture on this topic by examining with scientific thoroughness and proved its importance in today's commitment of Austria's contribution to peace support operations. Furthermore it suggested making some modifications in the current Austrian training programmes, simultaneously it also illustrated that a comprehensive intercultural and language training reform can only be carried out by a profound concept and a number of specific measurements at all levels and different services and branches. The thesis provides further recommendations, alternatives and tools to the current system that would improve these soft skills and increase its effectiveness.

An added value is mainly due to the detected and evaluated data by using scientific methods on selected topics. But it is ultimately derived from the analysis and the current conditions and precise solutions and models, which are intended to cover the increased needs identified in the training. Clearly, this should display the figure on the classification of linguistic support in three levels (strategic, operational, and tactical). The taxative and detailed list, the comprehensive and extensive view as well as the display of the degree of impact criteria can detect for the first time the complexity of the two fundamentally conditional areas of linguistic and intercultural competence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Introduction of a Military Language and Intercultural Portfolio.

The Military Language and Intercultural Portfolio (MILSIP) is not based on linguistic and communication services and skills only, but also on intercultural experiences. In contrary to the civilian language portfolio such as the European Language Portfolio (ELP), which focuses primarily on the promotion of multilingualism, mobility and reflection on the school level, the MILSIP goes far beyond the civilian portfolio. Concerning foreign languages in this respect only a rudimentary basic approach in the form of personal legal administration of language training activities in the personnel file of the relevant staff through the so-called personal department exists. In this personal file all the data and facts that are relevant for the

career to enter. Typically, this includes courses that end with an examination and thus may be for a future or other higher posts of interest. Conveying or refresher seminars, trainings, conference or symposium participations, both domestically and abroad, to language-specific events, are not always and not automatically included in this act. The situation is similar in the intercultural field: In the personnel file, although the respective missions and the permanent, was participated in those notes. However, there is no substantive specification or personal description about it. Based on the European Language Portfolio, which also contains options for introducing intercultural aspects, the MILSIP should be structured adult-oriented on the one hand, and provide a special focus on intercultural aspects.

Recommendation 2: Institutionalizing of linguistic support at the strategic, operational and tactical level

At the **strategic level**, the deployment of Austrian soldiers in African countries has already been executed on several occasions due to the re-orientation of foreign policy. At the **operational level**, a mechanism should be put into place, the current predictions of future operating language requirements - in accordance with the strategic trends – for global 'Hot spots' identified in the future. On the **tactical level**, one should embark on the search for the best and already tested practices. With their implementation soldiers should then be empowered to fulfil the tasks in contact with the local population, local authorities and members of other organizations. The measures include appropriate language and cultural training, the support of local interpreters, technical support

Recommendation 3: Establishment of "Linguistic Reserves"

Armed Forces, participating in peace support operations, are often faced with the dilemma that they should be readily available on the one hand, but on the other hand (or because of it) there is hardly any time available, to develop just as quickly as possible linguistic capacities of the region concerned. The establishment of a (full-time) linguistic supervisor for these capacities should go hand in hand with this development. Heritage speakers are usually native speakers in the second or third generation due to the emigration of their ancestors. Not only citizenship, but also security clearance is a requirement for postings as linguists abroad.

Recommendation 4: Establishment of regional intercultural and language training modules

Regional expertise of cross-cultural understanding is of fundamental importance and thus a prerequisite for a peaceful coexistence of people. Regional expertise includes

geographically referenced and logically coherent physiographic and socio-economic information. Local expertise is precisely the key to a better understanding of diversity, impacts and influences. A regional language (or maybe even several), which belongs to the most spoken or most widespread languages of the region, should be presented and compared with others. A general introduction for the understanding of this language should raise the motivation to continue in learning this language. In general, the language part should be designed to increase the operational efficiency.

Recommendation 5: Creating level-based training structures of intercultural competence

Peace Support Operations, which eventually may also be robust, requires other approaches than previously. This training must be qualified and systematically and accompany an operation in three phases, in particular before, during and after the operation. To generate intercultural competence however, are only the first two phases of importance, because the third phase is an individual and no more intercultural. First, a general cultural training is necessary, which should be an integrative part of all military career courses, both for non-commissioned officers as well as for officers. The second concrete mission-specific part can already refer to the respective country, operational area (Area of Operation - AOO) and the mission itself.

POSSIBILITY OF PRACTICAL USE OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

My thesis paper as well as its individual chapters can be used as a book of reference for establishing a new concept and restructuring language and intercultural training programs at the military education institutions of the Austrian Armed Forces (Training Division of the Ministry of Defence, the Military Academies, and the Training Centres of the different branches as well as the Austrian International Command).

However, for educational and moral reasons the thesis should help to raise awareness of these issues and developing a better understanding of this complex subject.

The work can be an aid to support military personnel assigned to participate in foreign operations to become acquainted with their own (personal, national and military) culture as well as with the cultures of the respective area of operation on the one hand and with members of other military contingents with different cultural background.

The results I have achieved in my work can be utilized in connection with the implementation of new or the application of additional language and intercultural training

tools to meet the requirements for new regions and different operations, especially under the aspect of short-notice availability of troops.

The thesis also might serve as an informal base for researchers who are interested in questions discussed and areas dealt with in the different chapters.

LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS

Books

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- Ein systematischer Vergleich des Sprachinstituts des Bundesheeres an der Landesverteidigungsakademie in Wien mit dem Sprachausbildungszentrum an der Verteidigungsuniversität in Brünn [A systematic comparison of the Austrian Armed Forces Language Institute in Vienna with the Language Training Center of the National Defence University in Brno], In: Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift 5/2015, p. 576-582.
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- Foreign Language is not enough! – A Case Study on the Example of the Austrian Armed Forces Language Institute in Vienna, held at the National Defence University in Brno 14. 9. 2011.
- Koncept jazykové přípravy na Národní akademii obrany ve Vídni [The Concept of the Language training at the National Defence Academy in Vienna], held at the National Defence University in Brno 11. 5. 2011.
- Third Language Training for Interoperability? held at the NATO-PfP BILC-Professional Seminar in Varna 11. 10. 2009.
- Má druhý jazyk smysl pro interoperabilitu? [Does the acquisition of a second foreign language make sense for interoperability?], held at the Language Conference of the Czech Ministry of Defence in Olomouc 20. 10. 2010.

- Dějiny výuky češtiny v Rakouské armádě [The History of the Czech language training in the Austrian Army], held at the Charles University in Prague 13. 4. 2010.
- Stav a vývoj jazykové přípravy v Bundesheeru [Status and development of the language training in the Austrian Army], held at the Language Conference at the Czech Ministry of Defence, Olomouc 22. 8. 2008.
- Zkušenosti a problémy v terminologické práci v kontextu rakouské bezpečnostní politiky [Experiences and problems in terminology work in the context of the Austrian security policy], held at the National Defence University in Brno 2. 4. 2009.

Other scientific activities

- ♣ Lecturer for Czech business language at the University of Applied Sciences in Eisenstadt, 2007/2008
- ♣ Chairman of the BILC Study and Working Group „Terminology & Translation“, Vienna, Vilnius, Bled, Brügge, since 2011.
- ♣ Participation and Member of the Scientific Board of the International Conference „International Scientific Community – Army and the Knowledge Society“, National Defence University in Brno 21. 5. 2011.
- ♣ Co-organizer of the International Terminology Conference „Terminology of National Administration Structures“, Vienna, Reichenau 7.-9.6.2011.
- ♣ Member of the Scientific Working Group „Education and Training, Vienna and Wiener Neustadt, 2012-2013.
- ♣ Chairman of the Scientific Research Project „Multilingualism and Interculturality in Peace Support Operations, Vienna, since 2013.
- ♣ Member of the Scientific Committee of the Research project „Language and speaking competence of Military Professionals and the Impact of ICT and the Development at the National Defence University in Brno 18. 3. 2014.

PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC CURRICULUM VITAE

Address:

Office: Austrian Armed Forces Language Institute, National Defense Academy, Vienna, AG
Stiftgasse, Rossauerlände 1, A-1090 VIENNA

Phone: 0043502011028510, fax: 0043502011017104

Mobile phone: 0043-664-622-1353

Email: josef.ernst@bmlvs.gv.at ernst.josef@gmx.at

Nationality: Austria

Civil Education:

- 1966-74 Pedagogical High School
- 1992-95 MA degree in Slavic languages and pedagogic at the University of Vienna
- 1993/94/95 Language studies at the Charles University in Prague, the Masaryk University and the Military Academy (now Defence University) in Brno
- 2000-2002 Doctoral program in Slavic language studies at the University of Vienna
- 2000-2003 Postgraduate studies (Master of Business Administration - MBA) "Education Management"

Military training and uses:

- 1974-75 National military service
- 1975-78 Officers training at the Theresan Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt
- 1978-82 various positions as platoon leader and company commander
- 1982-92 Staff officer at the Military Motor Transport School in Baden and chairman of Automotive Examining Board
- 1992-dato Head of Section and Department, Deputy Head of the Austrian Armed Forces Language Institute at the National Defence Academy
- 2013-15 Acting Head of the Austrian Armed Forces Language Institute

Foreign assignments:

Repeated and extended participations in missions with the United Nations in different positions abroad such as Military Observer, Motor Transport Officer, Sector Humanitarian and Economic Officer, Staff Officer Operations/Liaison Officer, member of a Board of Inquiry in the countries of Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria and Israel.

Language proficiencies:

German:	native
Czech:	4/4/4/4
English:	4/3/4/3
French:	2/2/2/2
Slovak:	passive