

January 25, 1960

TO: Dr. Ruben V. Austin, Coordinator
FROM: Dr. Lloyd D. Musolf, Chief Advisor
SUBJECT: Attached Commentary on Your Memo of January 12
and Mr. Lawson's Letter

The Police Administration Division has been greatly interested in the exchange of letters between yourself and Mr. Lawson. The attached commentary should be of interest to Lawson as well as to yourself and Elsie Cunningham.

IDM/dcm

Enclosure:

Turner memo to Musolf, Jan. 22,
subj: English Proficiency of Police Participants



Dr. Lloyd S. Muself, Chief Advisor

January 22, 1960

Ralph F. Turner, Chief, Police Administration Division

English Proficiency of Police Participants

Regarding Miss Cunningham's memo no. 399, and Mr. Lawson's letter dated December 31, 1959, perhaps you will be interested in our work along these lines. In October 1959 we began an analysis of the 1959 English instruction program for participants. Following is a short summary of the program, our observations, and some tentative conclusions.

I. English Instruction Program.

- A. English proficiency was one of GVN's initial selection criteria. A Vietnamese-to-English translation exercise was employed.
- B. Acceptable participant candidates were given an English classification test and placed in classes of appropriate level, i.e. elementary, intermediate, advanced, etc.
- C. English instruction, under VAA-MSUG contract, began February 16, 1959 at 15 hours per week. Beginning October 14, 1959, this was expanded to 35 hours per week, terminating December 4, 1959. Each participant candidate received approximately 650 hours of English instruction.
- D. Participants underwent written and oral examinations at the VAA on four occasions. Additionally, police advisors of MSUG and USOM conducted a board examination of all participants on November 19, 1959 for purposes of program analysis.
- E. MSUG police advisors provided 20 hours of US police orientation lectures during August and September, in English. The lectures were comparable to those offered in a US classroom. The MSUG participant advisor provided 10 hours of US culture orientation lectures during the same period.
- F. Of the original 96 participant candidates, 56 were dropped from the program. Inadequate English proficiency was the screening criterion in most cases.

In the course of the study, a number of problems became readily apparent. These relate directly to the degree of accomplishment which may be expected of participant candidates undergoing English instruction.

1. English Teachers.

Teachers of English are recruited by the VAA from among dependents of Americans staffing NSUG, USOM, MAAG, etc. Occasionally, the VAA succeeds in employing a certified public school teacher with experience in English instruction. This happens rarely because qualified teachers are sorely needed by the American Community School in Saigon. Many of the teachers employed by the VAA have had some college education, some have had none.

Although the VAA seeks to provide some in-service training for English teachers, this is of a perfunctory nature. Teachers are required to attend training seminars; however, many teachers never attend, realizing the VAA's recruitment problems and feeling secure in their positions.

2. Teaching Facilities.

The Director General of Police and Security Services has required that all English instruction be provided within the confines of Camp des Mares, headquarters of the service. The classroom facilities provided, in most cases, are not conducive to teaching or learning. One teacher complained bitterly of rats scurrying about between the rattan ceiling and roof of her building. Several teachers were distressed by the lack of toilet facilities. Lighting often consists of a bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling. Windows are not screened and fans are rare. The classrooms are very dirty, the furniture covered with dust. While some teachers accept the facilities with good humor, others register frequent complaints of discomfort.

3. VAA Written and Oral Examinations.

Having observed in detail the examination process of the VAA, we have reservations concerning the validity of the results, especially in light of the ICA policy of accepting only participants who have achieved an arbitrary numerical score of 75 in both written and oral examinations.

The written examination is administered four times for each group of participants. There is no change in this test; throughout its use it remains the same. Participants pre-arrange the memorization of blocks of questions, then pool their information to reconstruct the test for study.

The oral examination is administered without regard for standardization or uniformity, by VAA personnel ranging from qualified, experienced examiners to persons having had no training in the field and absolutely no experience. The examinations often take place in general office areas, amid the movement of clerical staff and visitors, the ringing of telephones, and the noise of conversation.

4. The problem of raising all participants to the arbitrary score of 75 in written and oral examinations will be further complicated by a new selection standard. In the past, GVN selected participants largely on the basis of English language proficiency, with little regard for the functional, geographic and rank distribution of participants.

The current (1960) selection program employs criteria including the functional experience relationship with proposed training, geographic distribution of candidates, and extent of organizational responsibility. We have been told that participant candidates selected under this program will have, in nearly every case, not even a smattering of English language background.

Accepting the lack of English language background, we intend to expose the candidates to an intensive, full-time program of English instruction. We have asked the VAA for the best possible training program for the group, and they are cooperative in every respect.

It should be realized, however, that we will proceed under the handicaps outlined above. There appears to be little relief from a lack of qualified teachers, from inadequate facilities, and from invalid examination procedures coupled with ICA numerical score requirements.

A complete analysis of the English instruction-examination program for police participants is now under preparation and will be available shortly. This study will contain documentation of the brief remarks made in this memorandum, in addition to comparative testing data and recommendations.

TO: Lloyd Musolf
FROM: Elsie Cunningham
DATE: January 29, 1960
SUBJECT: English Language Training #426

Just prior to his departure I mentioned to Dr. Austin the possibility that we might be able to improve the English language training in Vietnam if there were available a person trained at the English Language Institute (University of Michigan). This particularly comes to mind as Miss Vu Thi Kim Chau, who has been working with us on the Project since she came to East Lansing in July 1958, will be graduating in June from Michigan State University with a B.A. in English. The English Language Institute does offer summer courses.

As it now stands, Miss Chau is returning to Vietnam with a degree but with no job in sight. I do not believe she has the financial resources to pay for this additional study at the University of Michigan, but it would certainly be useful to all concerned if she had this additional training. At present Miss Chau is assisting Dr. Leichty in the special class that he is giving twice a week for our nine participants who just arrived. If financial support were found to allow her to study at the University of Michigan this summer, we could then anticipate that given the proper support, Miss Chau could help with the English language training program in Saigon.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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March 21, 1960

To: Coordinator
From: Ralph F. Turner
Subject: Pre-Departure English-Language
Training of Participants

Enclosed please find two copies of a little report which we have prepared on pre-departure English-language training for participants. I know that the Coordinator's office and many instructors on campus who work with participants have frequently wondered what, if anything, is done to prepare the participants in English language before arrival in the states. This report will give you some idea as to what was done during the year 1959 for the group which is currently on campus. I hope this will give you some idea of the problems which we have to contend with out here and how we are trying to handle them.

I will appreciate it if one of these copies is sent to the Police Administration Department for circulation to Brandstatter, Baril, Nicol, and any others who work with participants.

We are sending an additional supply via surface mail.

Enclosures



copy to Austin
Given to Brandstatter
4/4/60

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND PUBLIC SERVICE
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

April 6, 1960

To: Ralph Turner
From: Ruben V. Austin
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Subject: English Language Training for Participants

Thank you for the two copies of the report which you have prepared concerning pre-departure English language training for participants. We certainly are interested in the work you are doing in this area and have sent a copy to Art Brandstatter for distribution by various members of his department. Our own office, naturally, is very interested in this field. Thank you for this report.

RVA/ap

cc: Cunningham ✓

16-24

TO: Ralph Turner
FROM: Elsie Cunningham
DATE: May 4, 1960
SUBJECT: Attached Remarks by Dr. V. E. Leichty #494

Dr. V. E. Leichty indicated some time ago that he had some comments to make on your Review of English Language Training Program for Police and Security Services and Civil Guard Participants. I am hereby enclosing his remarks.

Some Suggestions for Examination Procedures in Saigon -- by Dr. V. E. Leichty

1. The rating chart for proficiency in speaking and understanding English (p. 12) would be satisfactory if it were used by a group of well-trained examiners who had worked together to determine exactly what is meant by each category, but it is not the kind of a chart that can be used by anyone who happens to be picked up to administer the examination.

Since highly-skilled examiners are relatively rare in Saigon, it might be better to construct an examination (or several parallel examinations) in which the rater would be asked to grade the comprehension or pronunciation of one specific item at a time. For example, the answer "yes" or "no" to the question, "Do you prefer to go to the movies or to the concert?" would indicate lack of comprehension of that specific structure. And in the statement, "The tanks are full," which the student might be asked to read, the rater would be asked to observe only the pronunciation of the nks of tanks.

This would, of course, necessitate a longer and more carefully prepared examination, but the results could be quite objective despite the lack of trained examiners. A checksheet would have to be provided, of course, on which each item could be marked right or wrong.

Another possibility might be to conduct the examination in the language laboratory by using tapes. This would insure identity of reading rate and pronunciation for examination of comprehension. By gradually increasing the reading rate and blurring the pronunciation, it would be possible to make the examination simple at first, but more and more difficult as it progressed.

There might be some value also in using the spaced tape with time for the student to reply to questions or even simply to repeat what is said in examining pronunciation. The advantage of having his replies on tape would of course be that doubtful cases could be reviewed by experts.

2. The grammar section of the rating chart suggests social level usage rather than grammar. I should like to point out that two categories are impossible if this is what is being examined. We have to understand what the speaker means before we can determine whether he should have used lie instead of lay or sit instead of set. I would suggest that this section be omitted, and more attention be given to structure. The difference between "What do you want in it?" and "What do you want it in?" is essential to meaning; the difference between niceties of usage is not.
3. It would seem to me that knowledge of structure might be examined passively as a part of comprehension. This could however be supplemented by the suggestion under 4.

4. Since it is difficult to predetermine what vocabulary an individual may need, as good a test as any of vocabulary and production of sentences might be to ask the student to talk for a couple of minutes about some topic that would be familiar to him - e.g., Why do you want to go to the United States? How can I get from here to Dalat? Tell me about the Cao Dai religion. Tell me about your home in Hanoi. This very subjective part of the examination could be handled by experts such as Stacey and Weir. The more objective grading of checklist items could be done by almost anyone. The responses here could be taped also, if it was thought that review of the scoring would be desirable.
5. Memorization of blocks of examination questions can be handled very simply. All that is needed to make many different examinations of one is to scramble the order of the questions. If this is done, block memorization becomes a hindrance rather than an aid. Actually, however, despite the work involved, it would be better to make numerous forms of the oral examinations and use several of them haphazardly during any one examination period.
6. A real innovation might be introduced in the pronunciation examination. A long check list of words or phrases might be given to the student in advance, and he could then be told that the examination items would be taken from this checklist.
7. If taping of the comprehension section is impractical, the examiners who will read these to the students should be trained to read at a fixed rate and with the same accent.
8. One space suggestion: The Faculty of Letters is rarely used on Saturday afternoons. The various classrooms there might be used for giving these examinations.