



Phraselator Questionnaire Responses

by James D. Walrath

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14. ABSTRACT A questionnaire designed to elicit Soldier judgments of, and comments about, the upgraded Phraselator speech translation device was completed by seven personnel serving in Iraq. Aggregate responses to yes or no questions are provided, as are the frequency of usage by mission, acceptability by mission, and all comments made by personnel to open-ended questions about the usefulness of the Phraselator during actual missions.					
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1. Introduction

As part of the response to a request from elements in Iraq for additional and upgraded Phraselator speech translation devices and instruments to support evaluation and feedback, a Phraselator user survey (appendix A) was prepared and provided. This report details the responses received from personnel serving in Iraq.

2. Demographics

Ten questionnaires were returned, of which seven were determined to be usable.

The years of service reported were, 5, 2, 8, 9, 9, 20, and 7, with an average of just over 8½ years.

Five of the respondents stated that their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was 31B (Military Police), one gave an MOS of 09L (Translator Aide), and one stated an MOS of 92Y (Unit Supply Specialist).

3. The Questionnaire

3.1 Questions 1 through 7

The intent of questions 1 and 2 was to insure that the remaining portion of the questionnaire would only be completed by Soldiers who had used a Phraselator on a mission. Seven respondents replied “yes” to questions 1 and 2 and their questionnaire data are provided in this report. Two questionnaires were marked indicating that the respondent had never had access to a Phraselator, but that they had used one on a mission. These two questionnaires also appear to have been filled out by the same person posing as two different people. One respondent answered “no” to both question 1 and 2.

A synopsis of the responses to questions 3 through 7 is provided in figure 1.

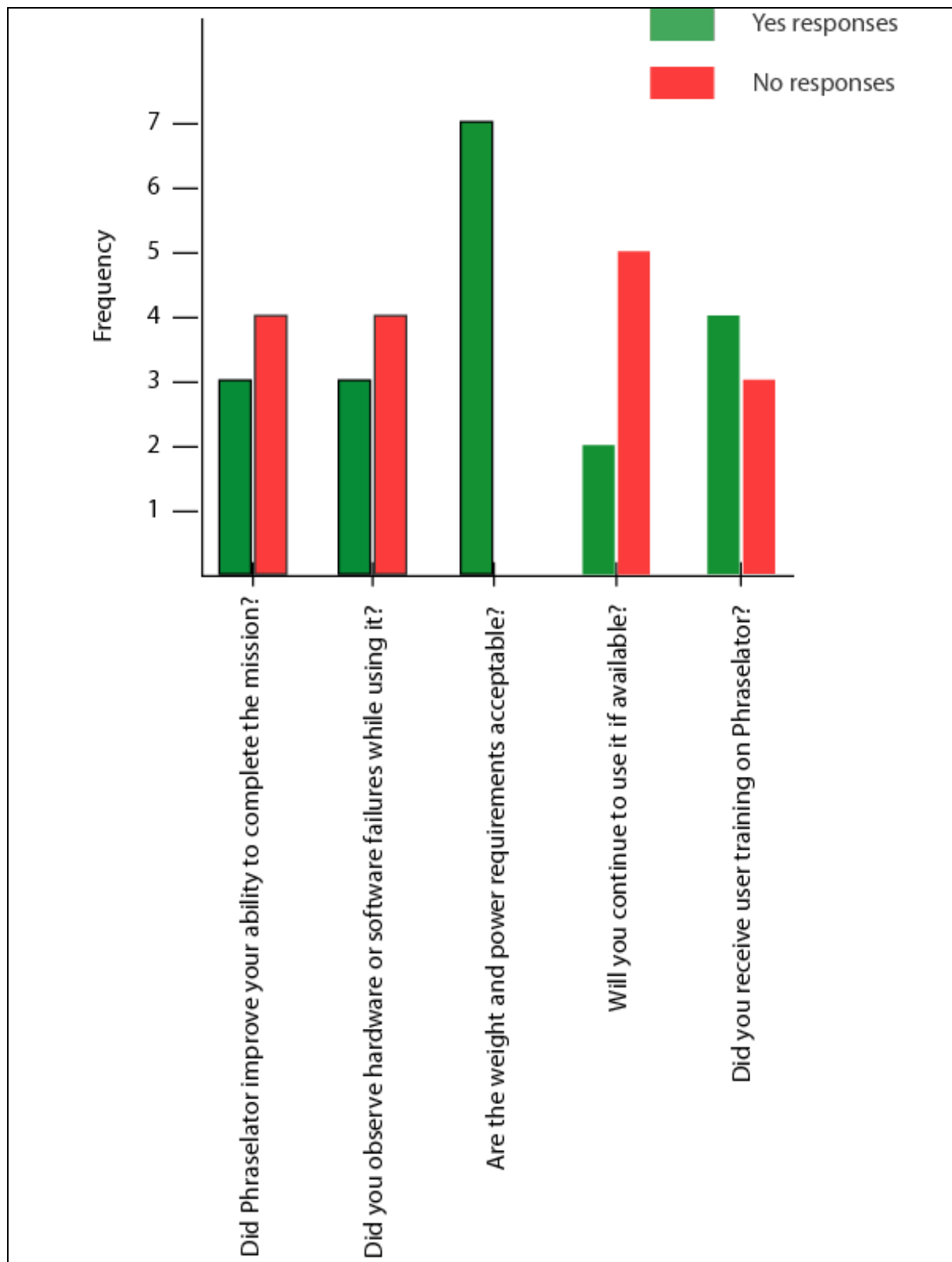


Figure 1. Responses to yes or no questions on the Phraselator questionnaire.

Soldier comments on questions 3 through 7:

3. Did Phraselator improve your ability to complete the mission?

Took too long to translate the correct phrase.

Translation wrong more often than not.

No it translated the wrong words.

Wind and noise reduce its performance.

Is not adequate for “heat of the moment” situations. Takes to (sic) long and often doesn’t understand.

4. Did you observe hardware or software failures while using it?

Wrong translations.

5. Are the weight and power requirements acceptable?

There were no written responses to this question.

6. Will you continue to use it if available?

Terps personnel are usually available. Phraselator doesn’t work very well in noisy environment.

7. Did you receive user training on Phraselator?

A few hours.

15 minutes

Briefed and shown by OPS

3.2 Mission and Phraselator Acceptability Data

Mission use and the reported acceptability of the Phraselator, by mission type, is provided in figure 2.

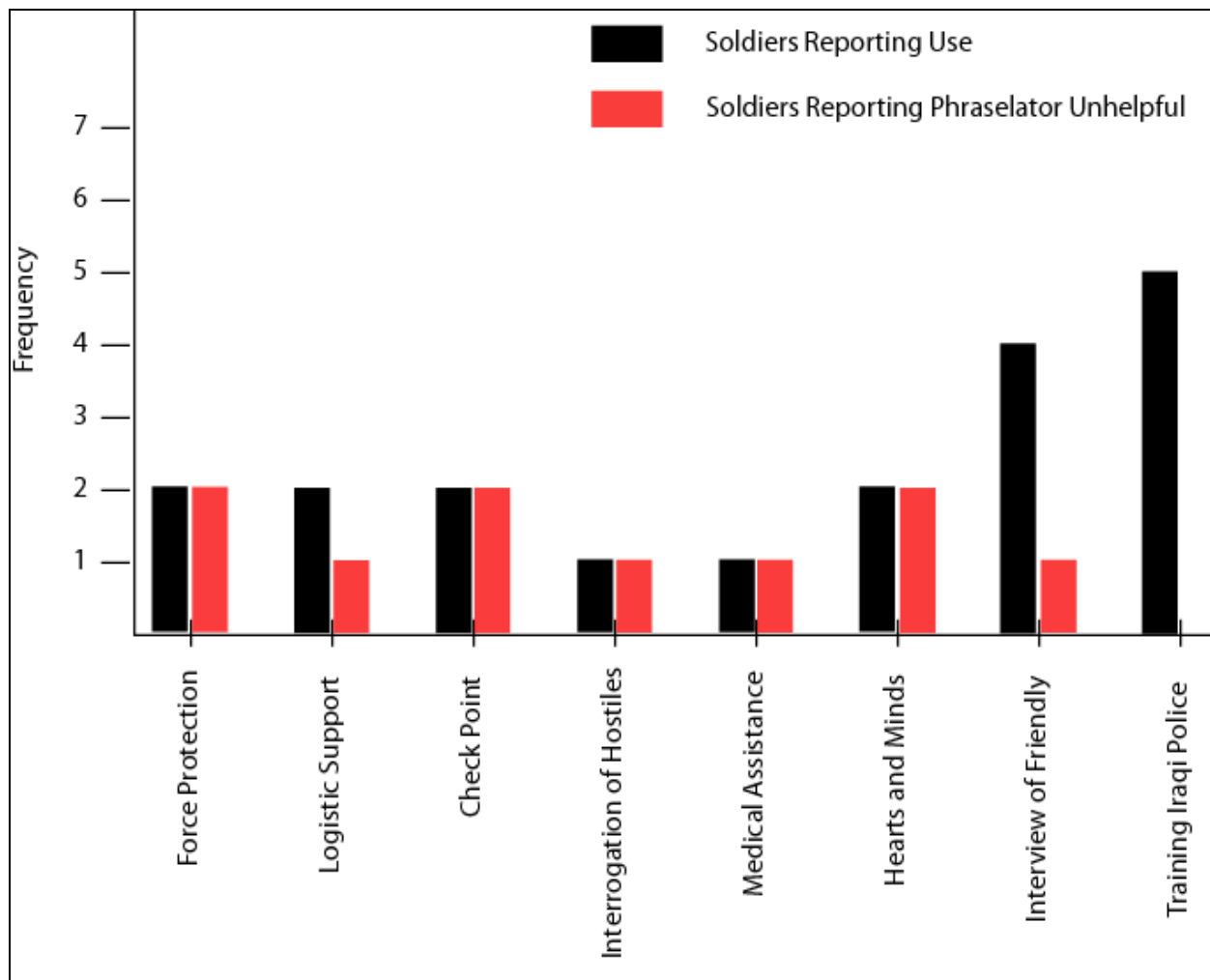


Figure 2. Soldier usage by mission and acceptability.

The following are responses to the question, “If you could do one thing to make the Phraselator better for operational use, what would it be?”

It should come with a hand mic for remote operations.

More work on software. Did not translate Arabic to English after many attempts by many different Arabic users.

Translates English to Arabic pretty good indoors. Not very good with background noises—loses accuracy. Arabic to English is horrible gets 75% wrong. Works well indoors. Slow to compute. Easy to Use. Slow to start up.

The technology is still too primitive for field use. I’m sure under optimum conditions it works well but not in the field. Perhaps being able to type words or phrases into it and get the target language translation would be better.

Make it better in a noisy environment.

Appendix A. Phraselator Questionnaire

Phraselator Questionnaire

Your Unit: _____ Years in Service: _____

Your MOS: _____ Your Job: _____

1. Have you ever had access to a Phraselator? YES NO

2. Have you used a Phraselator on a mission? YES NO

If you have used a Phraselator on a mission please fill out the rest of the questionnaire. If you have had access to a Phraselator but never used one on a mission you do not need to complete the rest of the questionnaire but please explain why it was not taken on any missions.

3. Did Phraselator improve your ability to complete the mission? YES NO (If no, why not?)

4. Did you observe hardware or software failures while using it? YES NO (If yes, what happened?)

5. Are the weight and power requirements acceptable? YES NO (If no, explain.)

6. Will you continue to use it if available? YES NO (If no, why not?)

7. Did you receive user training on Phraselator? YES NO (If yes, how much?)

.....

Please circle any missions for which you have used the Phraselator.



Force Protection

Interrogation of Hostiles

Interview of Friendly

Logistic Support

Medical Assistance

Cordon and Search

Check Point

Hearts and Minds

Other: _____



Please put an “X” through any missions for which you used the Phraselator and found it unhelpful.

.....

If you could do one thing to make the Phraselator better for operational use, what would it be?

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