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*Form Approved
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1. REPORT DATE October 2010	2. REPORT TYPE Technical	3. DATES COVERED (From - To) October 2010
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4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Special Operations Forces Language and Culture Needs Assessment: 09L Use in the Special Operations Forces Community	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER USZA22-02-D-0015
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S) SWA Consulting Inc	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) SWA Consulting Inc 311 S. Harrington St. Suite 200 Raleigh, NC 27603 SWA was a subcontractor to Gemini Industries, Inc. under Contract # USZA22-02-D-0015	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER 2010011014
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9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Special Operations Forces Culture and Language Office HQ USSOCOM Attn: SOKL-J7—SOFLO 7701 Tampa Point Blvd MacDill AFB, FL 3362	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) SOFLO
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
A. Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

The 09L program currently recruits native and heritage speakers of certain Middle-Eastern languages (e.g., Arabic) into the Army as interpreters. This report provides perspectives from Special Operations Forces (SOF) operators and leaders about their use of and experiences with 09Ls. Results from this study indicated that most SOF operators (53%) and leaders (61%) who participated in the study have never worked with 09Ls. Of those who have worked with 09Ls, results indicated that 09Ls are effective; however, there are opportunities to improve the 09L program. For example, respondents suggest that 09Ls should receive additional training to include tactical training, dialect-specific language training, and pre-deployment training with their unit. Additional findings and recommendations for using 09Ls are also presented in this report.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
09 Limas, interpreters, needs assessment, translators

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 48	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Surface, Eric A.
a. REPORT U	b. ABSTRACT U	c. THIS PAGE U			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 919-480-2751



**Special Operations Forces
Language and Culture Needs
Assessment Project: 09L Use in the
Special Operations Forces
Community**



OCTOBER 2010

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SPONSORED BY: SOFLO, USSOCOM

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY: SWA CONSULTING INC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an effort to explore ways to meet critical foreign language requirements, the U.S. Army instituted the 09L Translator Aide Pilot Program in 2003 (Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, 2007). The success and importance of the pilot program led to the addition of the 09L as an official Army military occupational specialty code (MOS) in 2006. The 09L program currently recruits native and heritage speakers of certain Middle-Eastern languages (e.g., Arabic) into the Army. Presently, 09Ls are deployed with Special Operations Forces (SOF) units as Soldiers who perform interpreter duties; however, the SOF community lacks feedback about the program and the performance of the 09Ls (Cooper, 2010). This report provides perspectives from SOF operators and leaders about their use of 09Ls.

Overall, most SOF operators (53%) and leaders (61%) who responded to the *2009 Language and Culture Needs Assessment (LCNA)* survey had never worked with an 09L. Furthermore, 26% of SOF operators and 30% of SOF leaders did not know what an 09L was. Those who worked with 09Ls were overwhelmingly from the Army, specifically from 5th Special Forces Group (SFG). These findings were expected given that the current 09L program is Army-specific and the heritage speakers recruited into the program are aligned with the languages associated with the Central Command [i.e., 5th SFG's area of responsibility (AOR)].

Although most respondents had not worked with an 09L, those who had found them to be *effective* or *very effective* (62% of SOF operators and 66% of SOF leaders) and were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* (53% of SOF operators and 60% of SOF leaders) with having one on their team. Few respondents indicated strong negative responses (i.e., *not effective* or *not satisfied*) regarding their experiences with 09Ls, suggesting overall positive feedback regarding the 09L program and the 09Ls used during deployments. However, there were significant differences across SOF type and USASOC organizations, such that Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) operators found 09Ls to be more effective and were more satisfied with having one on their teams than Special Forces (SF) operators. Additionally, 4th Psychological Operations Group (POG) found 09Ls to be more effective and were more satisfied with them than 3rd SFG operators.

In comparison to the generally positive quantitative findings, qualitative findings provided a different view of 09Ls. Sixty-three percent of SOF operators and 68% of SOF leaders who reported working with 09Ls provided comments. Their open-ended comments were mixed; however, the majority of the comments provided were negative¹ ($n = 181$). Nevertheless, these negative comments can be viewed as suggestions for future improvements to the 09L program. If the objective is to have greater usage of 09Ls in the SOF community, then these comments highlight specific barriers that need to be overcome in order to meet this objective.

The most frequent negative comment was that 09Ls lacked the necessary tactical skills and needed more military training. Several other negative comments and suggestions pointed to the need for additional

¹ It is important to note that not all respondents provide comments in response to open-ended items, and for those that do, there tends to be a negative response bias, such that most comments provided tend to have a negative tone (Poncheri, Lindberg, Thompson, & Surface, 2008).

training. For example, SOF leaders suggested that 09Ls should participate in pre-deployment training with the unit with which they are deploying.

“09L are ideal for supporting tactical units (ODA) when de facto permanently assigned to the unit, able to train to perform missions alongside operators (i.e., “in the stack”) and retain a relationship with the same team over multiple deployments.”

SOF Leader, Other SOF Organization

Another concern expressed in open-ended comments was the 09Ls lack of the local dialect. The lack of dialect often created a loss of rapport or credibility with the local populace during deployments. Several respondents indicated that in some cases, the local populace was not able to understand the 09L because of the differences in dialects. This suggests the need to provide dialect-specific training for 09Ls.

“As with my comments on the use of CAT II and III interpreters; if an 09L is not originally from the location they will be deployed to, pre-mission training in the target dialect will be extremely helpful and will cut down on the learning curve every new interpreter encounters.”

SOF Operator, 5th SFG

One additional concern expressed in comments was 09Ls lack of proper security clearances. This was consistent with previous findings indicating that in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), 40% of 09Ls do not have security clearances (Beyerl, 2010). Appropriate security clearances allow the 09Ls to be more effective and useful to the operators with whom they work. Additionally, operators may be more willing to trust the 09Ls.

“09L’s need to have a security clearance, otherwise they cannot be involved in at least 50% of what we do.”

SOF Operator, Deployed SO Unit

Given the newness of the 09L program, the following are recommended for improving the current 09L program in the Army:

- In addition to basic combat training, ensure 09Ls receive the necessary tactical training by requiring all 09Ls who will work in the SOF community to attend SOF training.
- Require 09Ls to participate in pre-deployment training with the unit with which they will deploy. This will not only provide 09Ls with additional training, but allow them to gain the trust of the SOF operators with whom they will be working.
- Provide 09Ls with pre-deployment language training in the dialect of the region to which they are deploying.
- Ensure all 09Ls have the appropriate security clearances prior to deploying with a unit.
- Recruit additional languages into the program. Although the primary focus should continue to be the languages associated with Central Command (CENTCOM) languages, it would be beneficial to recruit a variety of heritage speakers and train them to be 09Ls for deployments to other regions.

Additionally, the other military Services (i.e., Air Force, Marines, and Navy) should consider implementing a similar program because 09Ls are considered useful, effective, and members of other SOF components have expressed an interest in the program. For instance, focus group participants from Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) and Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM) expressed interest in having similar 09L programs for their components.

This report presents specific experiences of SOF operators and leaders who worked with 09Ls, including the effectiveness of the 09L used and satisfaction with having one on the team. Additionally, SOF operators and leaders provided feedback related to their experiences with 09Ls and suggestions for future improvements to the program. Section I provides an overview of this report and the *SOF Language and Culture Needs Assessment (LCNA) Project*. Section II provides details related to operators and leaders thoughts on effectiveness and satisfaction with 09Ls. Section III analyzes open-ended survey comments and focus group discussions of 09Ls. Section IV provides concluding remarks and recommendations based on findings presented in Sections II and III. Appendix A details the *2009 SOF LCNA Project* and Appendix B provides an overview of the report methodology, including participants, measures and analyses. Appendices C-E provide additional results to supplement findings from Sections II and III. Appendix F contains comment code definitions and examples.

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SECTION I: REPORT AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

09L Use in the SOF Community Report Purpose

The U.S. Army instituted the 09L Translator Aide Pilot Program in 2003 (Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, 2007). In 2005, Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Dr. David S. C. Chu, recommended expansion of the program and integration of 09L as a new military occupational specialty code (MOS), calling the program “of critical importance in our Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) efforts” (2005, September 2). In 2006, 09L became an official Army MOS (Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, 2007). 09Ls must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, and may enlist in one of the following, space permitting: the Active Component (AC), the Army Reserve (AR), or the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).

The 09L program is another potential resource available to Special Operations Forces (SOF) to meet language-related capability requirements. In order to gather feedback from the SOF community about the 09L program, the *2009 SOF LCNA* survey asked several general questions regarding the use of 09Ls by SOF operators and leaders. As indicated, the 09L program is new and Army-specific; thus, it was interesting to examine who in the SOF community had worked with an 09L on their team/in their unit and whether or not all SOF components were aware that such a program existed. Examining the SOF community’s awareness of the 09L program will point out whether its intended targets, currently the Army, are aware and using the program. For instance, if a large portion of USASOC leaders are unaware of the program, it would be important to know this information in order to address the issue.

In order to address any potential issues and evaluate the 09Ls currently used on deployments, this report examined SOF operators’ and leaders’ satisfaction with having an 09L on their team/in their unit, as well as the effectiveness of the 09L used. Both qualitative and quantitative findings presented in this report narrow the feedback gap by providing information about the effectiveness and satisfaction with the 09Ls currently used by the Army. The report is divided into three sections, along with a number of supporting appendices. Section II provides details related to SOF operators’ and leaders’ thoughts on effectiveness and satisfaction with 09Ls. Section III analyzes open-ended survey comments and focus group discussions related to 09Ls. Section IV provides concluding remarks and recommendations based on findings presented in Sections II and III. Appendix A details the *2009 SOF LCNA Project* and Appendix B provides an overview of the report methodology, including participants, measures and analyses. Appendices C-E provide additional results to supplement findings from Sections II and III. Appendix F contains comment code definitions and examples.

LCNA Project Purpose

The Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) commissioned the *2009 SOF LCNA Project* to gain insights on language and culture capability and issues across the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). The goal of this organizational-level needs assessment is to inform strategy and policy to ensure SOF personnel have the language and culture skills needed to conduct their missions effectively. Data were collected between March and November, 2009 from personnel in the SOF

community, including operators and leaders. Findings, gathered via focus groups and a web-based survey, will be presented in a series of reports divided into three tiers. The specific reports in each of these tiers will be determined and contracted by the SOFLO. *Tier I* reports focus on specific, limited issues (e.g., *Inside AOR Use of Language*). *Tier II* reports integrate and present the most important findings across related *Tier I* reports (e.g., *Use of Language and Culture on Deployment*) while including additional data and analysis on the topic. One *Tier III* report presents the most important findings, implications, and recommendations across all topics explored in this project. The remaining *Tier III* reports present findings for specific SOF organizations [e.g., Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Special Forces (SF) Command]. Two foundational reports document the methodology and participants associated with this project. Report topics are determined by the SOFLO and are subject to change.

Relationship of 09L Use in the SOF Community to the LCNA Project

09L Use in the SOF Community is a *Tier I* report. Findings from this report will be integrated with the following *Tier I* Reports: *Mission-Specific Use of Interpreters* and *General Use of Interpreters* in a *Tier II* Report: *Use of Interpreters* (Appendix A for the report structure). The final reports produced will be determined by the SOFLO.

SECTION II: USE OF 09L INTERPRETERS/TRANSLATORS

This section explores SOF operators' and leaders' views related to the effectiveness of and satisfaction with 09Ls, based on their experiences working with an 09L on their team or in their units. Findings in this section provide user reactions to the current 09L program and areas of opportunity for improving the program.

Research Questions

The following questions are addressed:

- Have SOF operators ever worked with an 09L on their team? If so, how effective were they? Does this differ based on Army SOF type (i.e., SF, CA, and PSYOP) or units within USASOC (e.g., 3rd SFG, 5th SFG, etc.)?
- How satisfied were SOF operators and leaders with the 09Ls on their team/in their unit? Does this differ by Army SOF type or for units within USASOC?

Main Findings

Although considered to be effective, 09Ls are not widely used in the SOF community. Most SOF operators have not worked with an 09L on their team, and most leaders indicated their unit had never worked with an 09L. Furthermore, nearly half of the Air Force, Marine, and Navy respondents indicated they did not know what an 09L was. These findings were expected given the current focus of the 09L program (i.e., being an Army-specific program and recruiting only Middle-Eastern languages). However, those who reported working with (or their unit reported working with) an 09L found them to be effective and were satisfied with their performance.

There were SOF operator differences in 09L satisfaction and effectiveness across SOF types and units within USASOC. Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) operators found 09Ls to be more effective and were more satisfied with having one on their team than Special Forces (SF) operators. There were no significant differences between SOF leader subgroups for satisfaction or effectiveness.

Detailed Findings

Use of 09L

Most SOF operators (53%, $n = 713$) had never worked with an 09L on their team (Figure 1, p. 9) and many Air Force (40%), Marine (44%), and Navy (60%) SOF operators did not know what an 09L was (Table 1, p. 9). These findings were expected due to the program's newness and Army-specific nature. 97% of the 278 SOF operators² who had worked with an 09L indicated their service as Army (Appendix C, Tables 1-2 for component breakdowns).

² See *Participation Report*: Technical Report #2010011003 for details on the survey attrition rates across topic areas.

Figure 1. Overall SOF Operator Use of 09Ls

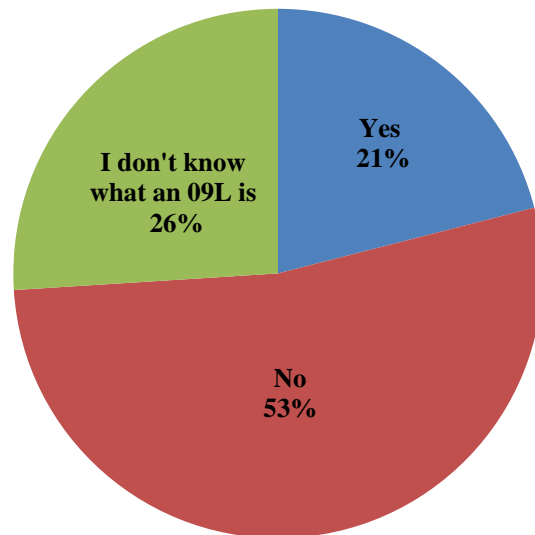


Table 1. SOF Operator Use of 09Ls by Service

Service	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	I don't know what an 09L interpreter/translator is
Army	1,242	22%	54%	24%
Navy	20	15%	25%	60%
Marines	25	8%	48%	44%
Air Force	40	5%	55%	40%

Within USASOC, only 26% ($n = 245$) of Army SOF (ARSOF) operators did not know what an 09L was (Table 2, p. 10). However, 54% ($n = 513$) of ARSOF operators never worked with an 09L on their team. The highest proportion of ARSOF operators who previously worked with 09Ls were from 5th SFG (55%, $n = 86$) and 19th SFG (31%, $n = 4$). This finding was also expected given the languages recruited into the 09L program (i.e., Middle-Eastern languages), which are associated with both 5th SFG's and 19th SFG's areas of responsibility (AOR; i.e., the Central Command). 7th SFG and 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (CAB) had the highest proportion of operators who either had not worked with an 09L on their team or did not know what an 09L was. Typically, 7th SFG operators are not provided with interpreters as frequently as other units (see *General Use of Interpreters* Technical Report #2010011013 for frequency of interpreter use inside and outside the AOR) because their AOR is the Southern Command. The primary language of the Southern Command is Spanish (i.e., a Category [CAT] I language), which is easier for native English

speakers to learn than other languages; therefore, these SOF operators tend to have higher proficiency levels.

Table 2. SOF Operator Use of 09Ls by USASOC Organization

Organization	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	I don't know what an 09L interpreter/translator is
USASOC Overall	954	20%	54%	26%
USASOC HQ	7	14%	71%	14%
SWCS-Staff	30	20%	47%	33%
CA/PSYOP HQ	3	0%	100%	0%
4th POG	173	16%	55%	29%
95th CAB	198	9%	62%	30%
SF Command HQ	1	0%	100%	0%
1st SFG	78	15%	56%	28%
3rd SFG	90	17%	53%	30%
5th SFG	157	55%	43%	2%
7th SFG	103	7%	50%	44%
10th SFG	57	26%	56%	18%
19th SFG	13	31%	38%	31%
20th SFG	29	10%	66%	24%
Other	5	20%	0%	80%

Note. USAJFKSWCS-Students, 75th Ranger Regiment, and 160th SOAR not included in this table because there was a 0% response rate.

Consistent with SOF operator findings, 61% ($n = 569$) of SOF leaders indicated their unit had never worked with an 09L on their team or they did not know what an 09L was (Figure 2, p. 11). Similar to SOF operators, most Air Force (65%), Marine (60%), and Navy (45%) SOF leaders were unaware of the 09L program (Table 3, p. 11; see Appendix C, Tables 3-4, for component breakdowns). Only 13% ($n = 125$) of SOF leaders reported their unit used/worked with an 09L and that they were in a position to comment on their unit's use of them³. An additional 26% ($n = 240$) of SOF leaders indicated they were aware of the program, and their unit had worked with an 09L, but they were not in a position to answer questions related to the topic.

³ See Appendix B for the methods and survey items related to this report.

Figure 2. Overall SOF Leader Use of 09Ls

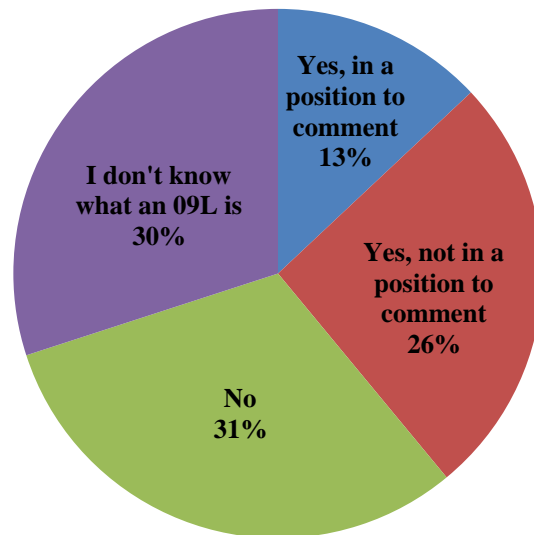


Table 3. SOF Leader Use of 09Ls by Service

Service	<i>n</i>	Yes, and I am in a position to comment on my unit's use of an 09L interpreter/ translator	Yes, but I am NOT in a position to comment on my unit's use of an 09L interpreter/ translator	No, my unit has never used/worked with an 09L interpreter/ translator	I don't know what an 09L interpreter/ translator is
Army	828	15%	27%	32%	26%
Navy	33	3%	18%	33%	45%
Marines	58	0%	17%	23%	60%
Air Force	60	0%	18%	18%	65%

Consistent with SOF operators, 99% ($n = 124$) of SOF leaders who indicated their unit used/worked with an 09L were from the Army. Within USASOC, 30% ($n = 167$) of ARSOF leaders reported their unit never worked with an 09L and 27% ($n = 149$) did not know what an 09L was (Table 4, p. 12). A number of units, including 4th POG (41%, $n = 45$), 95th CAB (40%, $n = 29$), and 7th SFG (42%, $n = 16$) were among the highest proportion of ARSOF leaders who indicated not knowing what an 09L was. Among the highest proportion of leaders whose units worked with 09Ls were 5th SFG (56%, $n = 45$) and 10th SFG (35%, $n = 17$), which differs from the operator findings.

Table 4. SOF Leader Use of 09Ls by USASOC Organization

Organization	<i>n</i>	Yes, and I am in a position to comment on my unit's use of an 09L interpreter/translator	Yes, but I am NOT in a position to comment on my unit's use of an 09L interpreter/translator	No, my unit has never used/worked with an 09L interpreter/translator	I don't know what an 09L interpreter/translator is
USASOC Overall	555	15%	28%	30%	27%
USASOC HQ	19	5%	21%	58%	16%
SWCS- Staff	41	15%	10%	61%	15%
CA/PSYOP HQ	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
4th POG	110	2%	12%	45%	41%
95th CAB	72	1%	24%	35%	40%
75th Rangers	2	50%	50%	0%	0%
160th SOAR	4	0%	25%	25%	50%
SF Command HQ	10	0%	50%	50%	0%
1st SFG	45	13%	38%	33%	16%
3rd SFG	49	10%	27%	29%	35%
5th SFG	81	56%	40%	4%	1%
7th SFG	38	3%	26%	29%	42%
10th SFG	48	35%	46%	6%	13%
19th SFG	10	0%	50%	0%	50%
20th SFG	11	0%	45%	9%	45%
Other	7	14%	29%	14%	43%

Effectiveness of and Satisfaction with 09Ls

Overall, most SOF operators who worked with an 09L found them to be *effective* or *very effective* (62%, $n = 170$) and were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* (53%, $n = 146$)⁴ with having one on their team. Few operators indicated strong negative responses regarding their use of 09Ls (Figures 3-4, p. 14), suggesting an overall positive response to the 09L program. There were significant differences across SOF type and units within USASOC regarding SOF operators' effectiveness and satisfaction ratings of 09Ls. Overall, CA and PSYOP operators found 09Ls to be more effective and were more satisfied with having an 09L on their teams than SF operators (Tables 5-6, p. 15). Additionally, 4th POG operators found 09Ls to be more effective and were more satisfied with having an 09L on their team than 3rd SFG operators (Tables 7-8, pp. 16-17). There were no significant SOF operator differences for effectiveness or satisfaction ratings of 09Ls across other SOF organizations (Appendix D, Table 1, and Appendix E, Table 1).

SOF leader results for effectiveness and satisfaction were similar to operator results. Those who indicated their unit had used an 09L found them to be *effective* or *very effective* (66%, $n = 81$) and were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* (60%, $n = 74$) with having one in their unit (Figures 3-4, p. 14). However, there were no statistically significant differences for leaders across units in USASOC or SOF types (Appendix D, Tables 2-4, and Appendix E, Tables 2-4).

There were several significant differences between SOF operators' and leaders' satisfaction with 09Ls. SF leaders reported higher levels of satisfaction than SF operators; specifically, 5th SFG leaders were more satisfied than 5th SFG operators (Tables 9-10, pp. 18-19). Additionally, leaders at USSOCOM headquarters (HQ) were more satisfied with 09Ls and found them more effective than operators at USSOCOM HQ (Tables 11-12, p. 20). There were no significant differences between SOF operators' and leaders' effectiveness ratings of 09Ls (Appendix D, Tables 5-6).

⁴ There was a strong positive relationship between effectiveness and satisfaction (for SOF operators, $r = .856$, $p < .01$; for SOF leaders, $r = .857$, $p < .01$); specifically, those who found 09Ls to be very effective tended to be very satisfied with having one on their team.

Figure 3. Overall Effectiveness of 09Ls

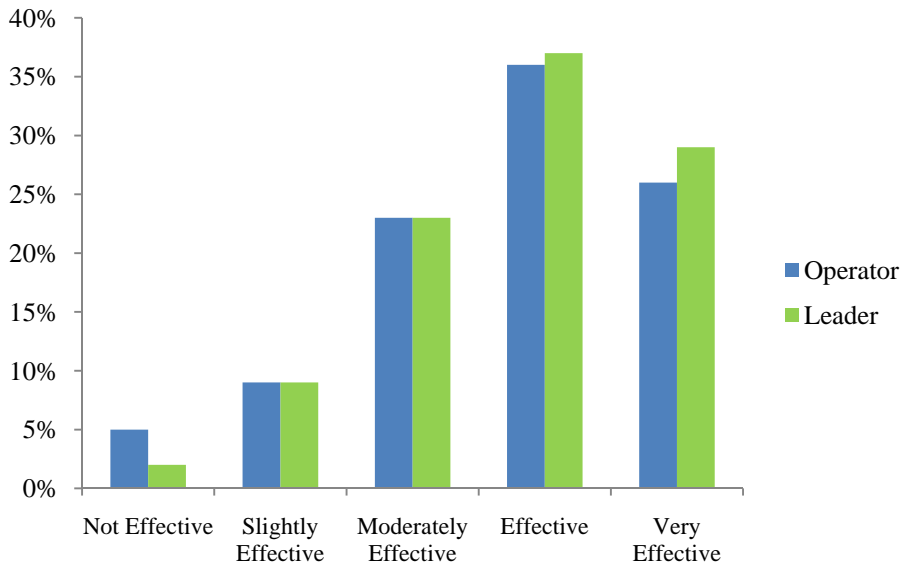


Figure 4. Overall Satisfaction with 09Ls

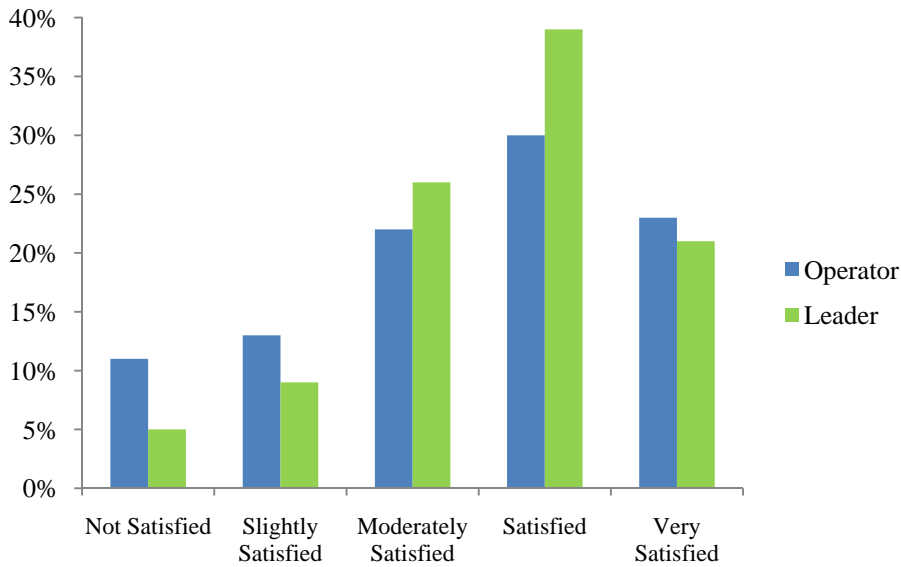


Table 5. SOF Operator Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by Component and ARSOF Group

Component and ARSOF Group	n	Mean	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective
Overall	275	3.67	5%	9%	23%	36%	26%
AFSOC	2	3.50	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
WARCOM	2	4.00	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%
MARSOC	2	3.50	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
USASOC	194	3.74	6%	9%	21%	36%	29%
CA	19	4.26 ^a	5%	5%	5%	26%	58%
PSYOP	27	4.26 ^a	0%	4%	15%	33%	48%
SF	146	3.58 ^b	7%	10%	23%	38%	22%

Note. Army SOF (ARSOF) groups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different effectiveness ratings. ARSOF groups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different effectiveness ratings. Please refer to the mean to determine which ARSOF group provided higher or lower effectiveness ratings.

Table 6. SOF Operator Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by Component and ARSOF Group

Component and ARSOF Group	n	Mean	Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Overall	275	3.41	11%	13%	22%	30%	23%
AFSOC	2	3.00	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%
WARCOM	2	4.00	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%
MARSOC	2	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
USASOC	194	3.45	11%	12%	21%	32%	24%
CA	19	4.11 ^a	5%	5%	11%	32%	47%
PSYOP	27	4.04 ^a	0%	4%	26%	33%	37%
SF	146	3.26 ^b	14%	15%	21%	32%	18%































































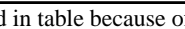


Note. Army SOF (ARSOF) groups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different satisfaction ratings. ARSOF groups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different satisfaction ratings. Please refer to the mean to determine which ARSOF group provided higher or lower satisfaction ratings.

Table 7. SOF Operator Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by USASOC Organization

Organization	n	Mean	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective
USASOC Overall	194	3.74	6%	9%	21%	36%	29%
USASOC HQ	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
SWCS-Staff	6	4.00	0%	0%	33%	33%	33%
4th POG	27	4.26 ^a	0%	4%	15%	33%	48%
95th CAB	17	4.18	6%	6%	6%	29%	53%
1st SFG	12	3.33	8%	8%	33%	42%	8%
3rd SFG	14	2.93 ^b	7%	29%	36%	21%	7%
5th SFG	85	3.61	8%	6%	25%	39%	22%
7th SFG	7	3.57	0%	29%	0%	57%	14%
10th SFG	15	3.87	7%	13%	7%	33%	40%
19th SFG	4	4.50	0%	0%	25%	0%	75%
20th SFG	3	4.33	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%
Other	1	2.00	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

Note. SWCS-Student, CA/PSYOP HQ, 75th Rangers, 160th SOAR, SF Command HQ not included in table because of a 0% response rate. USASOC organizations sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different effectiveness ratings. USASOC organizations NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different effectiveness ratings. Please refer to the mean to determine which USASOC organization provided higher or lower effectiveness ratings.

Table 8. SOF Operator Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by USASOC Organization

Organization	n	Mean	Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
USASOC Overall	194	3.45	11% 	12% 	21% 	32% 	24% 
USASOC HQ	1	4.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 
SWCS-Staff	6	4.17	0% 	0% 	33% 	17% 	50% 
4th POG	27	4.04 ^a	0% 	4% 	26% 	33% 	37% 
95th CAB	17	4.00	6% 	6% 	12% 	35% 	41% 
1st SFG	12	3.33	8% 	8% 	33% 	42% 	8% 
3rd SFG	14	2.57 ^b	21% 	36% 	14% 	21% 	7% 
5th SFG	85	3.29	15% 	13% 	21% 	28% 	22% 
7th SFG	7	2.86	0% 	43% 	29% 	29% 	0% 
10th SFG	15	3.33	20% 	13% 	0% 	47% 	20% 
19th SFG	4	4.25	0% 	0% 	25% 	25% 	50% 
20th SFG	3	3.67	0% 	0% 	33% 	67% 	0% 
Other	1	3.00	0% 	0% 	100% 	0% 	0% 

Note. SWCS-Student, CA/PSYOP HQ, 75th Rangers, 160th SOAR, and SF Command HQ not included in table because of a 0% response rate. USASOC organizations sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different satisfaction ratings. USASOC organizations NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different satisfaction ratings. Please refer to the mean to determine which USASOC organizations provided higher or lower satisfaction ratings.

Table 9. SOF Operator vs. Leader Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by Component and ARSOF Group

Component and ARSOF Group		n	Mean	Satisfaction Level				
				Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Overall	Operators	275	3.41	11%	13%	22%	30%	23%
	Leaders	123	3.63	5%	9%	26%	39%	21%
AFSOC	Operators	2	3.00	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%
	Leaders	0	0.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
WARCOM	Operators	2	4.00	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%
	Leaders	1	2.00	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
MARSOC	Operators	2	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	Leaders	0	0.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
USASOC	Operators	194	3.45	11%	12%	21%	32%	24%
	Leaders	84	3.61	5%	8%	29%	38%	20%
CA	Operators	19	4.11	5%	5%	11%	32%	47%
	Leaders	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
PSYOP	Operators	27	4.04	0%	4%	26%	33%	37%
	Leaders	2	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
SF	Operators	146	3.26	14%	15%	21%	32%	18%
	Leaders	72	3.65*	4%	7%	29%	39%	21%

Note. Means with an asterisk (*) indicate that the ARSOF group gave significantly higher satisfaction ratings. Significance tests were conducted within components and ARSOF groups between SOF operators and leaders. Significance tests were not performed for AFSOC, WARCOM, MARSOC, and CA due to low sample sizes.

Table 10. SOF Operator vs. Leader Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by USASOC Organization

Organization		n	Mean	Moderately				
				Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
USASOC Overall	Operators	194	3.45	11%	12%	21%	32%	24%
	Leaders	84	3.61	5%	8%	29%	38%	20%
USASOC HQ	Operators	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	Leaders	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
SWCS- Staff	Operators	6	4.17	0%	0%	33%	17%	50%
	Leaders	6	3.17	0%	17%	50%	33%	0%
4th POG	Operators	27	4.04	0%	4%	26%	33%	37%
	Leaders	2	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
95th CAB	Operators	17	4.00	6%	6%	12%	35%	41%
	Leaders	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
75th Rangers	Operators	123	3.63	5%	9%	26%	39%	21%
	Leaders	1	2.00	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
1st SFG	Operators	12	3.33	8%	8%	33%	42%	8%
	Leaders	6	3.33	0%	17%	33%	50%	0%
3rd SFG	Operators	14	2.57	21%	36%	14%	21%	7%
	Leaders	5	2.80	20%	20%	40%	0%	20%
5th SFG	Operators	85	3.29	15%	13%	21%	28%	22%
	Leaders	44	3.80*	2%	5%	27%	43%	23%
7th SFG	Operators	7	2.86	0%	43%	29%	29%	0%
	Leaders	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
10th SFG	Operators	15	3.33	20%	13%	0%	47%	20%
	Leaders	16	3.69	6%	6%	25%	38%	25%
19th SFG	Operators	4	4.25	0%	0%	25%	25%	50%
	Leaders	0	0.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20th SFG	Operators	3	3.67	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%
	Leaders	0	0.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	Operators	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	Leaders	1	1.00	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note. Means with an asterisk (*) indicate that the USASOC organization gave significantly higher emphasis ratings. Significance tests were conducted within USASOC organizations between SOF operators and leaders. Significance tests were not performed for USASOC HQ, 95th CAB, 75th Rangers, 7th SFG, 19th SFG, 20th SFG, and Other due to low sample sizes.

Table 11. SOF Operator vs. Leader Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by Other SOF Organizations

Organization		n	Mean	Moderately				
				Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Effective	Effective	Very Effective
USSOCOM HQ	Operators	27	3.33	4%	22%	30%	26%	19%
	Leaders	14	4.07*	0%	7%	14%	43%	36%
JSOC	Operators	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	Leaders	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
TSOC	Operators	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	Leaders	8	3.63	0%	13%	25%	50%	13%
Deployed SO Unit	Operators	24	3.50	8%	4%	29%	46%	13%
	Leaders	12	3.67	0%	25%	17%	25%	33%
Other	Operators	21	3.86	0%	10%	24%	38%	29%
	Leaders	3	4.33	0%	0%	33%	0%	67%

Note. Means with an asterisk (*) indicate that the SOF organization gave significantly higher satisfaction ratings. Significance tests were conducted within SOF organizations between SOF operators and leaders. Significance tests were not performed for JSOC and TSOC due to low sample sizes.

Table 12. SOF Operator vs. Leader Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by Other SOF Organizations

Organization		n	Mean	Moderately				
				Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
USSOCOM HQ	Operators	27	3.11	15%	26%	11%	30%	19%
	Leaders	14	3.93*	0%	7%	14%	57%	21%
JSOC	Operators	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	Leaders	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
TSOC	Operators	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	Leaders	8	3.38	13%	0%	38%	38%	13%
Deployed SO Unit	Operators	24	3.13	17%	13%	29%	25%	17%
	Leaders	12	3.50	8%	17%	25%	17%	33%
Other	Operators	21	3.73	5%	10%	29%	24%	33%
	Leaders	3	4.33	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%

Note. Means with an asterisk (*) indicate that the SOF organization gave significantly higher satisfaction ratings. Significance tests were conducted within SOF organizations between SOF operators and leaders. Significance tests were not performed for JSOC and TSOC due to low sample sizes.

SECTION III: COMMENTS ON THE USE OF 09L

SOF operators and leaders commented on their experiences with and provided future recommendations related to the 09L program. Data came from two sources—focus groups and the survey⁵. On the survey, 63% ($n = 176$) of the 278 SOF operators who reported working with an 09L and 68% ($n = 85$) of the 125 SOF leaders who reported their unit worked with an 09L provided comments. This section presents the analysis of the comments provided by SOF operators and leaders.

Main Findings

Overall, SOF operators and leaders comments regarding 09Ls were mixed and often contradictory (e.g., some comments indicated 09Ls were trustworthy, while other comments indicated they were not trustworthy). However, there was a two to one ratio of negative comments to positive comments. Although the majority of the comments provided were negative, they should be considered as areas of opportunity for improving the 09L program.

The most frequent negative comments suggested that 09Ls lack the required training and technical skills of a SOF operator. Furthermore, comments indicated that 09Ls often lack familiarity with the local dialect or do not have the proper security clearances. Several comments indicated that 09Ls' lack of training and skills caused them to be liabilities and distractions to SOF operators during their missions. On the other hand, positive comments indicated that it was beneficial to have an interpreter who was also trained as a Soldier and that 09Ls were competent and trustworthy. These contradictory comments suggest that there is variability in the quality of 09Ls or at least the experiences with 09Ls.

SOF operators and leaders provided specific recommendations for future improvements to the 09L program. The majority of the recommendations revolved around training; specifically, 09Ls should be provided more in-depth Soldier training, including SOF training, not just basic training. Additionally, SOF leaders indicated that 09Ls should participate in training with the unit. SOF focus group participants also provided suggestions for the future of the 09L program. However, since few participants had experiences with using an 09L, their recommendations were to expand the program to other components, as suggested by WARCOM and MARSOC participants.

Detailed Findings

In general, SOF operator and leader comments were mixed regarding their experiences with 09Ls on their teams or in their units. Table 13 (p. 22) presents the frequency of comment codes by theme and the breakdowns for SOF operators and leaders. Overall, there were twice as many negative themes as positive themes based on SOF operators and leaders comments. The findings in this section provide discussion by comment themes and exemplar comments.

⁵Although focus group participants were not typically prompted about the 09L program or their use of interpreters, discussions often occurred in tandem with describing mission examples and experiences (see *Methodology Report, Technical Report #2010011002* for the focus group interview guide). Discussions about 09Ls occurred in six of the 23 focus groups conducted (see *Participation Report, Technical Report #2010011003* for details on focus group participants). See *Appendix B* of this report for the open-ended survey items allowing SOF operators and leaders to provide comments and recommendations about the 09L program.

Table 13. Frequency of Codes by Theme

Please provide any comments or recommendations/ feedback you have on [policies related to] the use of an 09L interpreter/translator.	Frequency (Total n)	Operator	Leader
Negative Comments	(181)	(112)	(69)
Need better 09L selection process	7	2	5
09L job roles are not clear	7	5	2
Unwilling to do the job	8	5	3
Poor English proficiency	12	9	3
Lack of target language proficiency	10	9	1
Not trustworthy/loyal	7	5	2
Liability/distraction (i.e., have to be 'babysat')	19	12	7
Lack of maturity/experience	10	5	5
Lack knowledge of local culture	4	2	2
Not familiar with local dialect	18	11	7
Lack tactical skills/need more military training	37	19	18
Lack proper security clearance/need to be vetted	17	8	9
Difficulty adapting to military environment	15	12	3
Other	10	8	2
Positive Comments	(87)	(58)	(29)
Competent	14	11	3
Useful as Soldiers	19	14	5
Trustworthy/loyal	8	6	2
Have cultural awareness	3	2	1
Provide rapport/credibility	4	2	2
Knowledge of English	3	2	1
Other	36	21	15
Mixed Comments	(25)	(15)	(10)
Mixed attitudes	16	7	9
Not better than/worse than other interpreters	9	8	1
Suggestions for Improvement	(37)	(12)	(25)
Need more/too few 09Ls	5	2	3
Need to participate in training with /be attached to unit	19	4	15
09L need promotion opportunities/retention strategies	2	1	1
Need training on how to use an 09L/interpreter	1	1	0
Other	11	5	6

Note. Some comments contained multiple themes. Therefore, the total number of codes assigned may be greater than the total number of comments.

Negative Comments

Fifty-five percent ($n = 181$) of the survey comments provided by SOF operators and leaders regarding their experiences with 09Ls were negative. The most frequent negative comments indicated that 09Ls lacked the tactical skills required and/or needed more extensive military training ($n = 37$). The current 09L program requires 09Ls to participate in Army Basic Combat Training (BCT) to become familiar with the basic requirements of serving in the U.S. Army and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) to learn the required MOS-specific skills, but they do not participate in any SOF training. Two SOF leaders expressed:

“Some of the 09Ls lacked basic soldier skills and they needed a lot of basic training on weapons and how SOF operates”

SOF Leader, USASOC HQ

“09L are Soldiers, they should be trained as Soldiers. We have received 09Ls in the past that were more of a danger on the battle field than an asset”

SOF Leader, 5th SFG

09Ls are recruited based on language, not on the specific dialects of the deployment location. Consequently, survey respondents frequently indicated that the 09Ls were not familiar with the local dialect ($n = 18$) and suggested that the 09L program would be more effective if 09Ls were selected and/or trained on the local dialects. One SOF leader expressed in the following statement:

“The 09L program would work better if they were tested for dialect. The problem I have run into is the Iraqis do not understand the dialect of Arabic that some of the 09Ls speak. During my experience my Soldiers employed the 09L to translate documents instead of taking to Iraqis”

SOF Leader, 5th SFG

An additional concern expressed by SOF operators and leaders was that 09Ls lack the proper security clearances (i.e., 09Ls need to be vetted; $n = 17$). This is consistent with other data reporting that 40% of 09Ls in the IRR do not have a security clearance (Beyerl, 2010). When deploying with units that deal with sensitive issues, having a security clearance is particularly important. Furthermore, the lack of security clearances caused several SOF operators and leaders to view working with an 09L as a liability or distraction ($n = 19$) to mission success. One SOF leader expressed these concerns:

“In most cases, these Soldiers do not yet know what it means to be a U.S. Army Soldier. This means that they harbor bad habits. The biggest problem with these Soldiers is that they arrived at the unit with no security clearance. This greatly reduced their usefulness. The SOF unit was not able to rectify the security classification status since these Soldiers were centrally managed by a different entity. The only way the 09L Soldiers can be properly employed by SOF units is when they come at a minimum with a completely adjudicated SECRET security classification”

SOF Leader, Deployed SO Unit

Positive Comments

Although the majority of the comments were negative, SOF operators and leaders provided several positive comments about their experiences working with 09Ls (26%, $n = 87$). Many respondents indicated that 09Ls were useful as Soldiers ($n = 19$). SOF operators, more often than SOF leaders, reported that having an interpreter who was trained as a Soldier was useful during missions, as indicated by the two SOF operators below:

“Not only he was a foreign born US naturalized with in depth knowledge of both cultures, but he was also a soldier who understands our priorities and work knowledge”
SOF Operator, 4th POG

“09Ls are useful because they can carry weapons and are trained to use them. They are generally in good shape compared to many other terps and have an understanding of the military...”

SOF Operator, FORSCOM

Participants also indicated that 09Ls were competent ($n = 14$) and trustworthy/loyal ($n = 8$). 09Ls are native or heritage speakers of the target language and respondents felt that they were competent in their roles as interpreters. Furthermore, respondents often found 09Ls more trustworthy than other contracted interpreters because they were trained by the U.S. Army to be a Soldier. One SOF operator expressed his satisfaction with using an 09L:

“Our teams 09L was outstanding. He was able to translate with no problems and understood his duties as the translator...”

SOF Operator, 4th POG

Additionally, one SOF leader indicated his positive experience with having an 09L in his unit:

“Well trained 09L's are an important part of a unit and provide a level of loyalty and commitment not found in most CAT II and some CAT III terps. As Soldiers the unit can expect more from a 09L and work them harder...”

SOF Leader, Deployed SO Unit

Focus group participants who worked with 09Ls had similar positive attitudes toward 09Ls. Accordingly, one focus group participant noted:

“A 09 Lima, they're usually easier to communicate with because of their English American background, but if you get 09 Lima that's from the country that you're operating in, and if you get an interpreter or something that's from the city or the province that you're working in, and speaks English that's even better”

SOF Operator, 5th SFG

Many positive comments provided by SOF operators and leaders did not specify why their 09L was an asset to their team, but provided a general positive comment about their experiences with 09Ls or the 09L

program ($n = 36$). These comments were coded as ‘other’ positive comments. Several examples of these comments from SOF operators and leaders are provided below:

“I only utilized a 09L on one occasion but he was very good and I would have been pleased to have him on more missions”

SOF Operator, 95th CAB

“Have had good experiences with 09L's”

SOF Operator, 5th SFG

“EVERY ONE THAT I HAVE WORKED WITH DID AN EXCELLENT JOB”

SOF Leader, 5th SFG

“Great asset”

SOF Leader, Deployed SO Unit

Mixed Comments

Several survey respondents reported mixed feelings regarding their experiences with using 09Ls and/or the 09L program ($n = 16$). Respondents who used 09Ls noted inconsistencies depending on the 09L, as expressed by one SOF leader:

“Consistency not there. Some 09L were outstanding, others were not”

SOF Leader, 1st SFG

Few focus group participants had actual experiences working with 09Ls, so attitudes from these participants were also mixed. Most discussed positive experiences, but several comments were neutral (i.e., not positive or negative). Consistent with survey comments, several discussed experiences with 09Ls lack of role clarity and understanding of the military community. However, the discussions reflected more of a neutral attitude than some of the negative comments provided by survey respondents. For example, one focus group participant stated:

“...But he didn't actually even know what unit he belonged to. Us even trying—actually, we tried to research it for him, and we did have—and so he definitely wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed, but us trying to find those things out, he should—it was like he got out of basic and somehow ended up being the only guy [LAUGHTER] ___ he didn't know how he got there”

SOF Operator, 10th SFG

Focus group participants who were unaware of the 09L program discussed mixed feelings on whether or not using an 09L would be beneficial. It appears that participants would be in favor of the program as long as the 09Ls trained with the unit as suggested by one participant:

“Yes and no. I don't want to have to order an 09 Lima—is that what it is?—every time I'm getting ready to go to Thailand or Cambodia or something like that and then bring

him in. An ODA is very tight-knit, and I don't want somebody there that I haven't worked with really. I'd rather we just have it internal. Now, if I'm deploying to go to like GWOT or something like that, that's something a little bit different"

SOF Operator, 1st SFG

In addition to mixed comments, respondents contradicted one another across four commenting themes (Table 14), further indicating that SOF operator and leader opinions of or experiences with 09Ls were mixed. However, in most cases, the negative comments still outweighed the positive comments by comparison. For instance, 19 comments indicated that 09Ls were useful as Soldiers, while 37 comments indicated that 09Ls lacked the necessary tactical skills for deployments and they needed more military training. Similarly, only three respondents suggested that 09Ls were proficient in English, while 12 respondents indicated they had poor English proficiency. There were a nearly even number of positive and negative comments in regards to 09Ls trustworthiness or cultural knowledge. This suggests that in these four areas, the quality of 09L a SOF operator could potentially receive is inconsistent.

Table 14. Contradictory Comment Themes

Please provide any comments or recommendations/ feedback you have on [policies related to] the use of an 09L interpreter/translator.	Positive	Negative
Useful as Soldiers v. Lack tactical skills/need more military training	19	37
Trustworthy/loyal v. Not trustworthy/loyal	8	7
Have cultural awareness v. Lack knowledge of local culture	3	4
Knowledge of English v. Poor English proficiency	3	12

Note. SOF operator and leader numbers are included in the totals for each comment theme.

Suggestions for Improvement

In addition to discussing their experiences with 09Ls, SOF operators and leaders provided recommendations for improving the 09L program ($n = 37$). The majority of these suggestions involved providing additional training. Respondents suggested that in addition to basic training, 09Ls should participate in SOF training. Furthermore, SOF leaders frequently ($n = 15$) suggested that 09Ls would be more effective if they participated in training with and/or were assigned to their unit pre-deployment. For instance, one SOF leader stated:

"09L interpreters should train with the unit during Pre Mission Train up and deploy with the ODA for the duration of the deployment"

SOF Leader, 5th SFG

As previously mentioned, focus group participants had little experience using 09Ls. Therefore, many of their discussions were in the form of future suggestions for the program. The most common suggestion was to expand the program to other components. Further discussions indicated some of the potential

barriers with expanding the program into other components. For example, several participants discussed the potential for an 09L program at MARSOC:

Participant 1: “We’d love to do that. We’re trying to do that now. The guy wants to go with us.”

Participant 2: “The one problem I see with that, manpower, a.k.a. manpower reserve fears at the Marine Corps. They make that as an MOS. We recruit people in. Oh, no, we want him no to go over with this unit. So now you could lose – ”

Participant 3: “You lose control.”

Participant 2: “Yes. Whereas, contractor, that’s who, and the quality you’re going to get, unless they money is comparable to them as c contractor. Am I going to – why wouldn’t I just go over and make \$200,000 for six months of work as a contractor? What’s the pay? I don’t know the Army program enough, so I don’t know if they’re making it at least semi-comparable or are they getting paid as coming in as an Army – ”

Participant 4: “The big incentive is a fast track to citizenship.”

SOF Operators, MARSOC

Similar discussions occurred during the WARCOC focus group:

“...I know the Navy is trying to put together something equivalent to Army’s 09Lima program. I sat in a brief WARCOC back in January about this and it’s going about it the wrong way. I think the NEC is a good way to close-loop these people, and then we will invest in those people, like if they were known [NAME] or whatever, [Participant number], is going to be around for the next 12 years, probably definitely would’ve put some more investment into it. Because the fact that you can get snatched up and sent out to a boat, and sitting on a boat doing something completely not like what they’re doing here, it makes people hesitant to invest that capital in our test, so the NEC is definitely – and that also solves their problem of not being able to screen our test, which is not related to this but definitely a bonus.”

SOF Operator, WARCOC

SECTION IV: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SOF operators rely heavily on the use of interpreters in order to successfully accomplish their missions because there is a lack of language proficiency on the team [see *Inside AOR Use of Language* (Technical Report #2010011010) and *Outside AOR Use of Language* (Technical Report #2010011011)]. The Army created the 09L program to increase language capability in the field while easing the reliance on contracted interpreters who may not qualify for higher levels of security clearance (e.g., CAT I interpreters). This report reviews the 09L program by assessing the general use and awareness of the program, as well as the effectiveness of and satisfaction with the current 09Ls used on deployments. This section provides overall conclusions and recommendations for future improvements to the 09L program based on the findings presented in Sections II and III.

Overall, SOF operators and leaders lacked awareness of the 09L program, and most of those who worked with 09Ls were from the Army. Those who used 09Ls expressed differing opinions depending upon the data source, quantitative (Section II) or qualitative (Section III). For example, SOF operators and leaders provided positive feedback related to working with 09Ls in their quantitative ratings of the program. However, most of the open-ended comments provided a negative view of the program. Although negative, these comments provide insight and recommendations for future improvements to the 09L program and should be viewed as such. It is important to note that not all respondents provide comments in response to surveys, and for those that do comment, there is tendency for respondents to provide comments that are negative in tone (Poncheri, Lindberg, Thompson, & Surface, 2008).

This report's main findings lead to several recommendations. Those who are in charge of the Army's 09L program should ensure that all 09Ls have the appropriate security clearance prior to deploying with a unit. Consistent with previous findings in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR; indicating that 40% of 09Ls do not have security clearances; Beyerl, 2010), open-ended survey comments from SOF operators and leaders also indicated concerns with the security clearances of their 09Ls. Some 09Ls did not have the proper clearances prior to deployment causing SOF operators to view them as less trustworthy and not loyal. Having the appropriate clearance allows 09Ls to be more effective and useful to SOF operators when on deployments, while allowing SOF operators to feel more at ease and view the 09Ls as trustworthy.

Several comments suggested that 09Ls need additional training because they lack the appropriate SOF background. It is recommended that all 09Ls who are going to work with the SOF community attend SOF training in order to gain the tactical skills necessary for mission success. Currently, 09Ls participate in the same basic training as all Army Soldiers with additional advanced MOS-specific training. However, SOF operators participate in intense training above and beyond basic combat training, and most of the qualitative results in this report indicated that 09Ls should participate in additional training as well. Although survey respondents indicated it was useful to have the interpreter also be a Soldier, most comments from SOF operators and leaders indicated that 09Ls lacked the necessary tactical skills and need additional military training.

Furthermore, the most frequent suggestion made by SOF leaders to improve the 09L program was for the 09L to participate in training with the unit. 09Ls should be required to participate in pre-deployment

training with the unit with which they are deploying. This will not only provide 09Ls with additional training, but allow them to gain the trust of the SOF operators they will be working with while deployed.

In addition to more tactical training, 09Ls should participate in specific dialect training for the region to which they are deploying. SOF operators and leaders reported that 09Ls lacked knowledge of the appropriate dialect. This often caused a loss of rapport or credibility with the local populace. As one survey respondent noted, providing dialect training to 09Ls before deployment would increase their effectiveness on missions. Additionally, those in charge of the Army's 09L program may want to consider expanding the program to other languages.

The other Services (i.e., Air Force, Marines, and Navy) may want to consider implementing a similar program because 09Ls are considered useful, effective, and members of other components have expressed an interest in the program. For instance, focus group participants from MARSOC and WARCOC discussed the potential benefits of this program for their respective services. The Services can use the 09L Army MOS as a model and benefit from the feedback provided about the current 09L program.

Two additional *Tier I* reports (*General Use of Interpreters*, Technical Report #2010011007 and *Mission-Specific Use of Interpreters*, Technical Report #2010011013) address the use of interpreters across deployments and as it relates to specific inside and outside AOR missions. Additional recommendations related to the use of interpreters will be presented in a *Tier II* report, *Use of Interpreters*. This *Tier II* report will integrate findings from this report as well as findings from the *General Use of Interpreters* and *Mission-Specific Use of Interpreters* reports.

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ABOUT SWA CONSULTING INC.

SWA Consulting Inc. (formerly Surface, Ward, and Associates) provides analytics and evidence-based solutions for clients using the principles and methods of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. Since 1997, SWA has advised and assisted corporate, non-profit and governmental clients on:

- Training and development
- Performance measurement and management
- Organizational effectiveness
- Test development and validation
- Program/training evaluation
- Work/job analysis
- Needs assessment
- Selection system design
- Study and analysis related to human capital issues
- Metric development and data collection
- Advanced data analysis

One specific practice area is analytics, research, and consulting on foreign language and culture in work contexts. In this area, SWA has conducted numerous projects, including language assessment validation and psychometric research; evaluations of language training, training tools, and job aids; language and culture focused needs assessments and job analysis; and advanced analysis of language research data.

Based in Raleigh, NC, and led by Drs. Eric A. Surface and Stephen J. Ward, SWA now employs close to twenty I/O professionals at the masters and PhD levels. SWA professionals are committed to providing clients the best data and analysis upon which to make evidence-based decisions. Taking a scientist-practitioner perspective, SWA professionals conduct model-based, evidence-driven research and consulting to provide the best answers and solutions to enhance our clients' mission and business objectives. SWA has competencies in measurement, data collection, analytics, data modeling, systematic reviews, validation, and evaluation.

For more information about SWA, our projects, and our capabilities, please visit our website (www.swa-consulting.com) or contact Dr. Eric A. Surface (esurface@swa-consulting.com) or Dr. Stephen J. Ward (sward@swa-consulting.com).

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APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE LCNA PROJECT

In 2003-2004, the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) sponsored the *SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* to inform the development of a language transformation strategy in response to a GAO report (2003). This *SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* collected current-state information about language usage, proficiency, training, and policy issues (e.g., Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, FLPP) from SOF personnel, SOF unit leaders, and other personnel involved in SOF language. The project used multiple data collection methods and provided the SOFLO with valid data to develop a comprehensive language transformation strategy and advocate for the SOF perspective on language issues within the DoD community.

In a continuing effort to update knowledge of language and culture needs while informing strategic plan development, the SOFLO commissioned the *2009 SOF Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project* (LCNA) to reassess the language and culture landscape across the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and develop a strategy for the next five years. Data were collected between March and November, 2009 from personnel in the SOF community, including SOF operators and leaders. Twenty-three focus groups were conducted between March and June, 2009. A comprehensive, web-based survey for SOF operators and leaders was launched on 26 October and closed on 24 November, 2009.

This project's findings will be disseminated through reports and briefings (Appendix A, Figure 1). Two foundational reports document the methodology and participants associated with this project. The remaining reports are organized in three tiers. Twenty-five *Tier I* reports focus on specific, limited issues (e.g., *Inside AOR Use of Language*). *Tier II* reports integrate and present the most important findings across related *Tier I* reports (e.g., *Use of Language and Culture on Deployment*) while including additional data and analysis on the topic. Most, but not all, *Tier I* reports will roll into *Tier II* reports. One *Tier III* report presents the most important findings, implications, and recommendations across all topics explored in this project. The remaining *Tier III* reports present findings for specific SOF organizations [e.g., Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Special Forces (SF) Command]. All *Tier III* reports are associated with a briefing. Report topics are determined by the SOFLO and subject to change.

In June, 2009, the GAO reported that the Department of Defense is making progress toward transforming language and regional proficiency capabilities but still does not have a strategic plan in place to continue development that includes actionable goals and objectives. The findings from this study can be used by the SOFLO and leaders at USSOCOM to continue strategic planning and development in this area.

This project design, logistics, data collection, initial analysis and first eight reports of this project were conducted by SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) under a subcontract with SRC (SR20080668 (K142); Prime # N65236-08-D-6805). The additional reports are funded under a separate contracting vehicle with Gemini Industries Inc. [GEM02-ALMBOS-0018 (10210SWA-1); Prime # USZA22-02-D-0015]. For questions or more information about the SOFLO and this project, please contact Mr. Jack Donnelly (john.donnelly@socom.mil). For specific questions related to data collection or reports associated with this project, please contact Dr. Eric A. Surface (esurface@swa-consulting.com) or Dr. Reanna Poncheri Harman (rpharman@swa-consulting.com) with SWA Consulting Inc.

Appendix A, Figure 1. Report Overview



Note: Foundation reports are referenced by every other report. Colors represent Tier I reports that roll (integrate) into an associated Tier II report. Reports in black are final reports on the topic but may be cited by other reports. Tier II reports roll into the Tier III reports. All Tier III reports include an associated briefing.

APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

Participants

Focus Group Participants

Twenty-three focus groups were conducted with 126 SOF personnel across the SOF community. Focus groups were conducted at AFSOC, MARSOC, WARCOC, and USASOC (*Participation Report, Technical Report #2010011003* for participant details). Section III of this report presents focus group discussion related to participants' current experiences with the use of 09Ls and future recommendations for the 09L program (*Methodology Report, Technical Report #2010011002* for the focus group interview guide).

Survey Participants

Survey respondents received the SOF operator version of the 09L items if they indicated one of the following SOF community roles:

- SOF Operator
- SOF Operator assigned to other duty

Of the 1,335 SOF operators (i.e., SOF operators and SOF operators assigned to other duties) who responded to the first 09L survey item, 21% ($n = 278$) previously worked with an 09L interpreter/translator on their team. Please see the *Participation Report* (Technical Report #2010011003) for details about the survey attrition rate across survey topic areas. The majority (97%, $n = 271$) of participants who reported working with an 09L were affiliated with the Army. However, small samples from the Air Force, Marines, and Navy were represented. Most SOF operators (71%, $n = 196$) were currently assigned to units in USASOC.

Respondents received the SOF leader version of the 09L items if they indicated one of the following SOF community roles:

- SOF Unit Commanders and Unit Leadership of O3 Commands or higher, including Staff, Support, and Specialists
- Command Language Program Manager or Component Language Program Manager (CLPMs)
- Language Office personnel and other administrative personnel associated with language
- Other civilian/military person involved in the support of language for SOF personnel not currently filling one of the above roles

SOF operators (i.e., SOF operators and SOF operators assigned to other duty) and SOF unit leaders (i.e., SOF unit commanders and unit leadership of O3 commands or higher) are the main groups of interest in this report. Due to the small number of CLPMs, language office personnel, and other civilian/military personnel supporting language who indicated they were in a position to comment on their unit's use of an 09L interpreter/translator ($n = 5$), they were excluded from this report.

Before being presented with the 09L items, SOF leaders were asked “are you in a position to comment on your unit’s use of an 09L interpreter/translator?” This allowed SOF leaders who could not accurately answer the questions to self-select out of this topic area. There were 934 SOF unit leaders who responded to the first 09L item, 13% ($n = 125$) of whom indicated ‘yes’ they were in a position to comment. The leader group includes commanders, senior warrant officer advisors (SWOAs), senior enlisted advisors (SEAs), and staff officers (O, WO, NCO, GS).

SOF Type Classification

Respondents from USASOC were classified into SOF types (i.e., CA, PSYOP, and SF) based on the following criteria:

- USASOC unit to which they are assigned (e.g., 1st SFG classified as SF, 4th POG as PSYOP, 95th CAB as CA)
- Reported MOS (e.g., 18 series classified as SF, 37 series as PSYOP, 38 series as CA)

Measures

Items

The first 09L survey item asked SOF operators if they ever worked with an 09L interpreter/translator on their team. Those who indicated ‘yes’, responded to the following items:

- Please rate the overall effectiveness of the 09L interpreter/translator
- Please rate your overall satisfaction with having an 09L interpreter/translator on your team
- Please provide any comments or recommendations you have on the use of an 09L interpreter/translator

SOF leaders answered the same items from the perspective of having an 09L interpreter/translator in their unit. However, their open-ended item asked them to “Please provide any comments or feedback you may have regarding how policies related to the use of 09L interpreters/translators could be improved”.

Analyses

All closed-ended items were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. For each item, the frequencies for each response option are presented. To compare responses across groups of participants, inferential statistics (e.g., analysis of variance, t -tests) were used to determine if any observed differences are likely to exist in the broader population of interest.

To analyze the focus group data and open-ended items (survey comments), two raters created a content code (i.e., theme) list based on available responses (*Methodology Report, Technical Report #2010011002* for details on qualitative coding). A primary rater then coded each response and a secondary rater coded 30% of the responses. Raters determined the consistency of codes applied between them and discussed any disagreements to consensus. The frequency of occurrence for each theme is presented in this report.

For further details on these methods please refer to the *Methodology Report* (Technical Report #2010011002).

APPENDIX C: KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF 09Ls

Appendix C, Table 1. SOF Operator Use of 09Ls by Component and ARSOF Group

Component and ARSOF Group	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	I don't know what an 09L interpreter/ translator is
Overall	1,335	21%	53%	26%
AFSOC	28	7%	50%	43%
WARCOM	9	22%	22%	56%
MARSOC	22	9%	45%	45%
USASOC	954	21%	54%	26%
<i>CA</i>	206	9%	61%	30%
<i>PSYOP</i>	182	15%	57%	29%
<i>SF</i>	555	27%	50%	23%

Appendix C, Table 2. SOF Operator Use of 09Ls by Other SOF Organizations

Organization	<i>n</i>	Yes	No	I don't know what an 09L interpreter/ translator is
USSOCOM HQ	146	19%	56%	25%
JSOC	4	25%	25%	50%
TSOC	20	5%	75%	20%
Deployed SO Unit	56	43%	39%	18%
Other	84	25%	57%	18%

Appendix C, Table 3. SOF Leader Use of 09Ls by Component and ARSOF Group

Component and ARSOF Group	n	Yes, and I am in a position to comment on my unit's use of an 09L interpreter/ translator	Yes, but I am NOT in a position to comment on my unit's use of an 09L interpreter/ translator	No, my unit has never used/worked with an 09L interpreter/ translator	I don't know what an 09L interpreter/ translator is
Overall	934	13%	26%	31%	30%
AFSOC	10	0%	30%	0%	70%
WARCOM	12	8%	0%	42%	50%
MARSOC	28	0%	18%	18%	64%
USASOC	555	15%	28%	30%	27%
CA	72	1%	24%	35%	40%
PSYOP	110	2%	12%	45%	41%
SF	292	25%	37%	18%	20%

Appendix C, Table 4. SOF Leader Use of 09Ls by Other SOF Organizations

Organization	n	Yes, and I am in a position to comment on my unit's use of an 09L interpreter/ translator	Yes, but I am NOT in a position to comment on my unit's use of an 09L interpreter/ translator	No, my unit has never used/worked with an 09L interpreter/ translator	I don't know what an 09L interpreter/ translator is
USSOCOM HQ	131	11%	30%	27%	32%
JSOC	8	13%	50%	0%	38%
TSOC	72	11%	14%	32%	43%
Deployed SO Unit	58	21%	17%	38%	24%
Other	60	5%	27%	52%	17%

APPENDIX D: EFFECTIVENESS OF 09Ls

Appendix D, Table 1. SOF Operator Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by Other SOF Organizations

Organization	n	Mean	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective
USSOCOM HQ	27	3.33	4%	22%	30%	26%	19%
JSOC	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
TSOC	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Deployed SO Unit	24	3.50	8%	4%	29%	46%	13%
Other	21	3.86	0%	10%	24%	38%	29%

Note. There were no significant differences between these SOF organizations. Significant operator findings across SOF components are presented in the body of the report (Table 5, p. 15).

Appendix D, Table 2. SOF Leader Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by Component and ARSOF Group

Component and ARSOF Group	n	Mean	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective
Overall	123	3.81	2%	9%	23%	37%	29%
WARCOM	1	2.00	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
USASOC	84	3.81	4%	6%	25%	37%	29%
CA	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
PSYOP	2	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
SF	72	3.86	3%	6%	25%	36%	31%

Note. AFSOC and MARSOC not included in this table because there was a 0% response rate. There were no significant differences between these SOF components and ARSOF groups.

Appendix D, Table 3. SOF Leader Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by Other SOF Organizations

Organization	n	Mean	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective
USSOCOM HQ	14	4.07	0%	7%	14%	43%	36%
JSOC	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
TSOC	8	3.63	0%	13%	25%	50%	13%
Deployed SO Unit	12	3.67	0%	25%	17%	25%	33%
Other	3	4.33	0%	0%	33%	0%	67%

Note. There were no significant differences between these SOF organizations.

















































































Appendix D, Table 4. SOF Leader Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by USASOC Organization

Organization	n	Mean	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective
USASOC Overall	84	3.81	4%	6%	25%	37%	29%
USASOC HQ	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
SWCS-Staff	6	3.33	0%	17%	33%	50%	0%
4th POG	2	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
95th CAB	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
75th Rangers	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
1st SFG	6	3.67	0%	17%	33%	17%	33%
3rd SFG	5	3.00	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
5th SFG	44	3.91	2%	5%	23%	41%	30%
7th SFG	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
10th SFG	16	4.00	0%	0%	31%	38%	31%
Other	1	1.00	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note. SWCS-Student, CA/PSYOP HQ, 160th SOAR, SF Command HQ, 19th SFG, and 20th SFG not included in this table because of a 0% response rate.

There were no significant differences between these USASOC organizations. Significant SOF operator findings across USASOC organizations are presented in the body of the report (Table 7, p. 16).

Appendix D, Table 5. SOF Operator vs. Leader Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by Component and ARSOF Group

Component and ARSOF Group		n	Mean	Effectiveness Rating				
				Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective
Overall	Operators	275	3.67	5% 	9% 	23% 	36% 	26% 
	Leaders	123	3.81	2% 	9% 	23% 	37% 	29% 
AFSOC	Operators	2	3.50	0% 	0% 	50% 	50% 	0% 
	Leaders	0	0.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
WARCOM	Operators	2	4.00	0% 	0% 	50% 	0% 	50% 
	Leaders	1	2.00	0% 	100% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
MARSOC	Operators	2	3.50	0% 	0% 	50% 	50% 	0% 
	Leaders	0	0.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	0% 	0% 
USASOC	Operators	194	3.74	6% 	9% 	21% 	36% 	29% 
	Leaders	84	3.81	4% 	6% 	25% 	37% 	29% 
CA	Operators	19	4.26	5% 	5% 	5% 	26% 	58% 
	Leaders	1	5.00	0% 	0% 	0% 	0% 	100% 
PSYOP	Operators	27	4.26	0% 	4% 	15% 	33% 	48% 
	Leaders	2	4.50	0% 	0% 	0% 	50% 	50% 
SF	Operators	146	3.58	7% 	10% 	23% 	38% 	22% 
	Leaders	72	3.86	3% 	6% 	25% 	36% 	31% 

Note. Significance tests were not performed for AFSOC, WARCOM, MARSOC, and CA due to low sample sizes.

There were no significant differences between these ARSOF Groups. Significant findings for Other SOF Organizations are presented in the body of the report (Table 11, p. 20).

Appendix D, Table 6. SOF Operator vs. Leader Effectiveness Ratings of 09Ls by USASOC Organization

Organization		n	Mean	Moderately				
				Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Effective	Effective	Very Effective
USASOC Overall	Operators	194	3.74	6%	9%	21%	36%	29%
	Leaders	84	3.81	4%	6%	25%	37%	29%
USASOC HQ	Operators	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	Leaders	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
SWCS- Staff	Operators	6	4.00	0%	0%	33%	33%	33%
	Leaders	6	3.33	0%	17%	33%	50%	0%
4th POG	Operators	27	4.26	0%	4%	15%	33%	48%
	Leaders	2	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
95th CAB	Operators	17	4.18	6%	6%	6%	29%	53%
	Leaders	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
75th Rangers	Operators	0	0.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Leaders	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
1st SFG	Operators	12	3.33	8%	8%	33%	42%	8%
	Leaders	6	3.67	0%	17%	33%	17%	33%
3rd SFG	Operators	14	2.93	7%	29%	36%	21%	7%
	Leaders	5	3.00	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
5th SFG	Operators	85	3.61	8%	6%	25%	39%	22%
	Leaders	44	3.91	2%	5%	23%	41%	30%
7th SFG	Operators	7	3.57	0%	29%	0%	57%	14%
	Leaders	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
10th SFG	Operators	15	3.87	7%	13%	7%	33%	40%
	Leaders	16	4.00	0%	0%	31%	38%	31%
19th SFG	Operators	4	4.50	0%	0%	25%	0%	75%
	Leaders	0	0.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20th SFG	Operators	3	4.33	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%
	Leaders	0	0.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	Operators	1	2.00	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	Leaders	1	1.00	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note. Significance tests were not performed for USASOC HQ, 95th CAB, 75th Rangers, 7th SFG, 19th SFG, 20th SFG, and Other due to low sample sizes. There were no significant differences between these USASOC organizations.

APPENDIX E: SATISFACTION WITH 09Ls

Appendix E, Table 1. SOF Operator Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by Other SOF Organizations

Organization	n	Mean	Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
USSOCOM HQ	27	3.11	15%	26%	11%	30%	19%
JSOC	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
TSOC	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Deployed SO Unit	24	3.13	17%	13%	29%	25%	17%
Other	21	3.73	5%	10%	29%	24%	33%

Note. There were no significant differences between these SOF organizations. Significant SOF operator findings across SOF components are presented in the body of the report (Table 6, p. 15)

Appendix E, Table 2. SOF Leader Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by Component and ARSOF Group

Component and ARSOF Group	n	Mean	Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Overall	123	3.63	5%	9%	26%	39%	21%
WARCOM	1	2.00	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
USASOC	84	3.61	5%	8%	29%	38%	20%
CA	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
PSYOP	2	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
SF	72	3.65	4%	7%	29%	39%	21%

Note. AFSOC and MARSOC not included in this table because there was a 0% response rate. There were no significant differences between these SOF components and ARSOF groups.

Appendix E, Table 3. SOF Leader Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by Other SOF Organizations

Organization	n	Mean	Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
USSOCOM HQ	14	3.93	0%	7%	14%	57%	21%
JSOC	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
TSOC	8	3.38	13%	0%	38%	38%	13%
Deployed SO Unit	12	3.50	8%	17%	25%	17%	33%
Other	3	4.33	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%

Note. There were no significant differences between these SOF organizations.

Appendix E, Table 4. SOF Leader Satisfaction Ratings of 09Ls by USASOC Organization

Organization	n	Mean	Not Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
USASOC Overall	84	3.61	5%	8%	29%	38%	20%
USASOC HQ	1	4.00	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
SWCS- Staff	6	3.17	0%	17%	50%	33%	0%
4th POG	2	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
95th CAB	1	5.00	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
75th Rangers	1	2.00	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
1st SFG	6	3.33	0%	17%	33%	50%	0%
3rd SFG	5	2.80	20%	20%	40%	0%	20%
5th SFG	44	3.80	2%	5%	27%	43%	23%
7th SFG	1	3.00	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
10th SFG	16	3.69	6%	6%	25%	38%	25%
Other	1	1.00	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Note. SWCS-Student, CA/PSYOP HQ, 160th SOAR, SF Command HQ, 19th SFG, and 20th SFG not included in this table because of a 0% response rate. There were no significant differences between these USASOC organizations. Significant SOF operator findings across USASOC organizations are presented in the body of the report (Table 8, p. 17).

APPENDIX F: COMMENT CODE DEFINITIONS

SOF operators were given the opportunity to provide comments in response to the following prompt:

- *Please provide any comments or recommendations you have on the use of an 09L interpreter/translator.*

SOF leaders were given the opportunity to provide comments in response to the following prompt:

- *Please provide any comments or feedback you may have regarding how policies related to the use of 09L interpreters/translators could be improved.*

All comments were content analyzed and common themes extracted. The resulting themes, which were the same for both operators and leaders, are provided below with a definition of each theme and verbatim exemplar comments that illustrate the theme. For more information about this study's content analysis process, please refer to the LCNA *Methodology Report* (Technical Report # 2010011002).

Note: Exemplar comments are presented verbatim and are uncorrected for spelling and other mistakes.

Positive Themes

- Competent
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls are competent in their role as interpreters. Use when referring specifically to skills as an interpreter or language capabilities.
 - “He was able to translate with no problems and understood his duties as the translator.”
- Useful as Soldiers
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls are useful because they have been trained as Soldiers (e.g., their ability to carry weapons, their understanding of the military).
 - “09Ls have the advantage of having a security clearance and being authorized to carry a weapon as a combat soldier.”
- Trustworthy/loyal
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls are trustworthy or loyal.
 - “Well trained 09L's are an important part of a unit and provide a level of loyalty and commitment not found in most CAT II and some CAT III terps.”
- Have cultural awareness
 - Definition: Respondent indicates that 09Ls are effective because of their cultural awareness in the region to which they are deployed.
 - “ They helped more with the culture and getting us connections in our AIs”
- Provide rapport/credibility
 - Definition: Respondent indicates that 09Ls contribute to mission success by providing rapport/credibility with the locals.
 - “The 09L are soldiers and aid in the rapport building much more then the CAT II terps.”

- Knowledge of English
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls have adequate English proficiency, making them more effective.
 - “Their English was excellent which is a trait often overlooked.”
- Other general effective/positive discussions about 09Ls
 - Definition: This applies to other positive discussions of 09Ls that are not covered by any other code in this section.
 - “The 09L I had on my team was exceptional.”

Negative Themes

- Need better 09L selection process
 - Definition: Respondent indicates the selection process for 09Ls should be changed/refined.
 - “We should send our 09L through some type of selection to instill in them, the SOF frame of mind. We should make it a challenge to get into SOF, and then challenge them to go to the Q course.”
- 09L job roles are not clear
 - Definition: Respondent indicates that 09L do not have clearly defined job roles or do not operate within these roles.
 - “09L’s tend to believe they are not soldiers.”
- Unwilling to do the job
 - Definition: This applies to situations where an 09L is unwilling to do his/her job (e.g., lazy, unmotivated, burnt out, etc).
 - “Ours was an E-4, unmotivated, self-serving, lazy and asked entirely too many questions about OPCYCLE and ASO.”
- Poor English proficiency
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls do not have adequate English proficiency.
 - “We have a hard time understanding their English. We continuously ask them to repeat what they said.”
- Lack of target language proficiency
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls do not have adequate proficiency in the target language.
 - “we found out from the other interpreters that he could barely speak Arabic”
- Not trustworthy/loyal
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls are not trustworthy or loyal to US or the mission (i.e., their interpretations can’t be trusted).
 - “Not all 09L’s have a clearance when they deploy and some are untrustworthy.”
- Liability/distraction (i.e., have to be ‘babysat’)
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls are a liability to the mission or need extra supervision.
 - “We have received 09Ls in the past that were more of a danger on the battle field than an asset.”
- Lack of maturity/experience
 - Definition: Respondent indicates that 09Ls lack maturity or military experience.
 - “In my limited experience, they are generally immature soldiers.”

- Lack knowledge of local culture
 - Definition: Respondent indicates that 09Ls are not effective because of their lack of cultural awareness.
 - “Equally many do not understand the local customs and courtesies (ie an Egyptian does not always workout in Iraq).”
- Not familiar with local dialect
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls do not have adequate proficiency in the local dialect
 - “The other difficulty we have is with some of the Sudanese 09Ls who are not familiar with some of the Iraqi dialects.”
- Lack tactical skills/need more military training
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls are not effective because they lack the necessary tactical skills or do not have enough military training.
 - “The 09L need to have some basic infantry skills.”
- Lack proper security clearance/need to be vetted
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls lack the necessary security clearances (i.e., need to be vetted prior to deployment).
 - “The fact that they do not have robust security clearances often hampers their use, effectiveness, and creates additional garrison requirements and manpower demands on U.S. SOF forces, especially when remotely located.”
- Difficulty adapting to military environment
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls have trouble adjusting to the difficulties of being in the military (i.e., hierarchy, military terminology, OPTEMPO).
 - “The last 09L had a hard time adjusting to life as a Soldier and was not effective during the conduct of operational missions.”
- Other general ineffective/negative discussions about 09Ls
 - Definition: This applies to other negative discussions of 09Ls that are not covered by any other codes in this section.
 - “I have not had a single good experience with 09Ls, but it was probably due to the two individuals I've dealt with and not the program overall.”

Mixed Themes

- Mixed Attitudes
 - Definition: This code applies when a respondent indicated mixed attitudes towards 09Ls, but did not specify why (e.g., it depends on the 09L).
 - “Like anything it depends on the individual.”
- No better than/No worse than other interpreters
 - Definition: Respondent indicates 09Ls are not any better than the other types of interpreters (i.e., Cat I, Cat II, Cat III) used on deployments.
 - “I am unsure whether or not 09L interpretation is any better than using the CAT I, II, or III...Only after some considerable work and validation of a specific interpreter would I begin to trust them.”

Suggestions for Improvement

- Need more/too few 09Ls
 - Definition: Respondent indicates the need for more 09Ls.
 - “the only problem my unit has with 09L interpreters is the lack of them.”
- Need to participate in training with/be attached to a unit
 - Definition: Respondent suggests 09Ls should participate in training (e.g., PMT) with the rest of the unit.
 - “Having 09L's participate in pre-deployment training with the deploying unit significantly enhances effectiveness during the deployment.”
- 09L need promotion opportunities/retention strategies
 - Definition: Respondent indicates the need for promotion opportunities available to 09Ls or strategies aimed at retaining 09Ls.
 - “The military just needs more of these Soldiers and once they are recruited and trained, they must be retained. The lack promotion potential / career progression limits the amount of time the O9L will stay in the service.”
- Need training on how to use an 09L/interpreter
 - Definition: Respondent indicated a need for training on how to effectively use 09L's or interpreters.
 - “Relationship/Leadership development w the terp is critical and should be taught.”
- Other
 - Definition: Use this code when no other code applies and the statement appears to be neutral (i.e., not positively or negatively worded).
 - “My use was very infrequent so the level of validity associated with their use is limited at best.”