

Teaching business English – some perspectives from the North

Evan Frendo
www.e4b.de



In my country it is different!



Teaching business English – some perspectives from the North

Our business English teaching profession has many voices. At the centre are the learners and teachers who are actively involved in teaching, but we all know that there are many other stakeholders outside the classroom, including academic institutions, clients, publishers and testing organisations. We also know that some of these stakeholders have very loud voices. In this session I would like to discuss the nature of business English teaching by considering some of these different voices. All come from projects I have recently been involved in. First I will talk about business English teacher training courses in China which I have been running for several years, and discuss how business English teachers operate in one of the largest economies in the world. We will then travel to Europe and peak into some of the processes that take place in the world of materials development, both from an author's perspective working for global publishers, but also from an in-house corporate training perspective. Finally, we will look at a maritime English training project in the Asia Pacific region, and consider the relationship between business English and ESP. My aim in this session is hopefully to get us all thinking a little about similarities and differences across the globe.

Outline

To discuss the nature of business English teaching by considering different perspectives



Teacher training in China



Materials writing in Europe



ESP project shipping industry

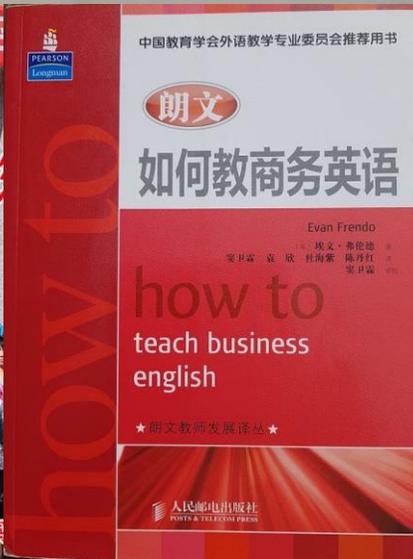
Teacher training in China



BE in China

FTBE

Business English is booming in China





Long-term workplace communication needs of business professionals: Stories from Hong Kong senior executives and their implications for ESP and higher education



Clarice S.C. Chan

Department of English, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history:
Available online 28 August 2019

Although past research has shown some differences between junior and senior employees'



Towards an integrated approach to teaching Business English: A Chinese experience ☆

Zuocheng Zhang *

Department of Linguistics and Literature, University of International Business and Economics, 10 Huixin Dongjie, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100029, China

ISSN 1799-2591
Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 379–383, April 2011
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New Developments of Business English from ESP in China *

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Abstracts—In recent years, researchers have made ongoing researches into the new development of business English as a sub-branch of ESP in China since the Ministry of Education approved business English as a formalized new discipline in 2007. The paper, through review and reflection into the findings of the previous

An investigation of the English language needs of Business English graduates in mainland China

Liao, L.

Submitted version deposited in CURVE March 2016

Original citation:

Liao, L. (2015) An investigation of the English language needs of Business English graduates in mainland China. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Coventry: Coventry University

The Asian ESP Journal Current Issues in and around Business English in China

January 2011

Volume 7 Issue 1



对外经济贸易大学

University of International Business and Economics

Original Research

The English Communication and Learning Needs of Master of Business Administration Students and Curriculum Development at a Chinese University

SAGE Open
January-March 2019: 1–16
© The Author(s) 2019
DOI: 10.1177/2158244019835951
journals.sagepub.com/home/sgo



Qing Xie¹ and Jie Chen¹

Abstract

This study investigates the communication and learning needs of Master of Business Administration (MBA) business English students and their perceptions of effective curriculum design. The research instruments are two-stage surveys of 99 MBA

Article

English as a Lingua Franca in Mainland China: An Analysis of Intercultural Business Communicative Competence

Yao Yao¹ and Bertha Du-Babcock²

International Journal of Business Communication
1–21

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DOI: 10.1177/2329488419898221
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The use of English in the professional world in China

DEYUAN HE¹

ABSTRACT: The status and use of English in mainland China are topics of intense interest for researchers, although most previous research has been conducted within the field of education, with few data from the professional world. The current study attempts to focus on the professionals in China and their use of English. The study has drawn data with a questionnaire from 2,247 participants in workplaces

Chinese English in as lingua franca in global business setting: A case study of ongoing emails of a foreign company in China

Wenpu Wang & Lin Wei

Chengdu Technological University, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

ABSTRACT: With the process of globalization, English has been increasingly become the lingua franca for people speaking different languages to communicate with each other, among whom the number of non-native



“the number of English learners exceeds that of English native speakers around the world”

Jin, Y., Wu, Z., Alderson, C. *et al.* Developing the China Standards of English: challenges at macropolitical and micropolitical levels. *Lang Test Asia* 7, 1 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-017-0032->

Language teaching in China is changing

China - Confucious

- Teacher-centred
- Questions discouraged
- Group work rare
- Teacher as authority
- Regular interaction outside class
- Teachers responsible for success
- Criticism and discipline
- Exam scores are primary

West - Socrates

- Learner-centred
- Questions encouraged
- Group work common
- Teachers as facilitator
- Little interaction outside class
- Learners responsible for success
- Praise and encouragement
- Exam score is one factor



Zha Ying (Merinda)

Teaches at a university in Beijing

- Business English
- Intercultural communication
- College English

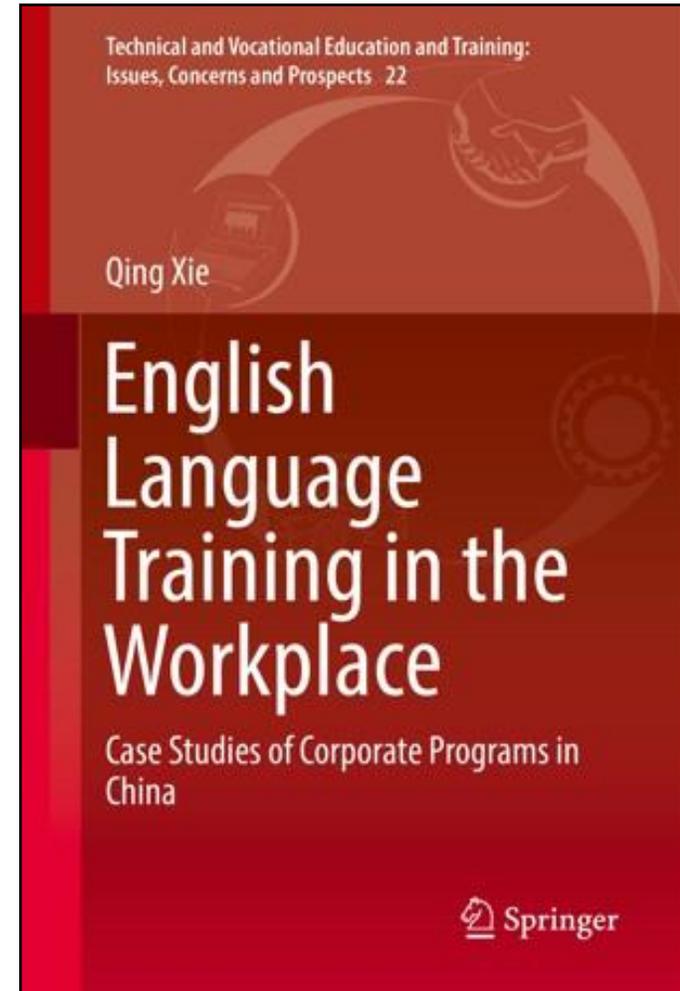
Typical day

- Online class - business letters
- Discussion with student about graduation paper
- Class – case studies presentations

Business English in China

Workplace training

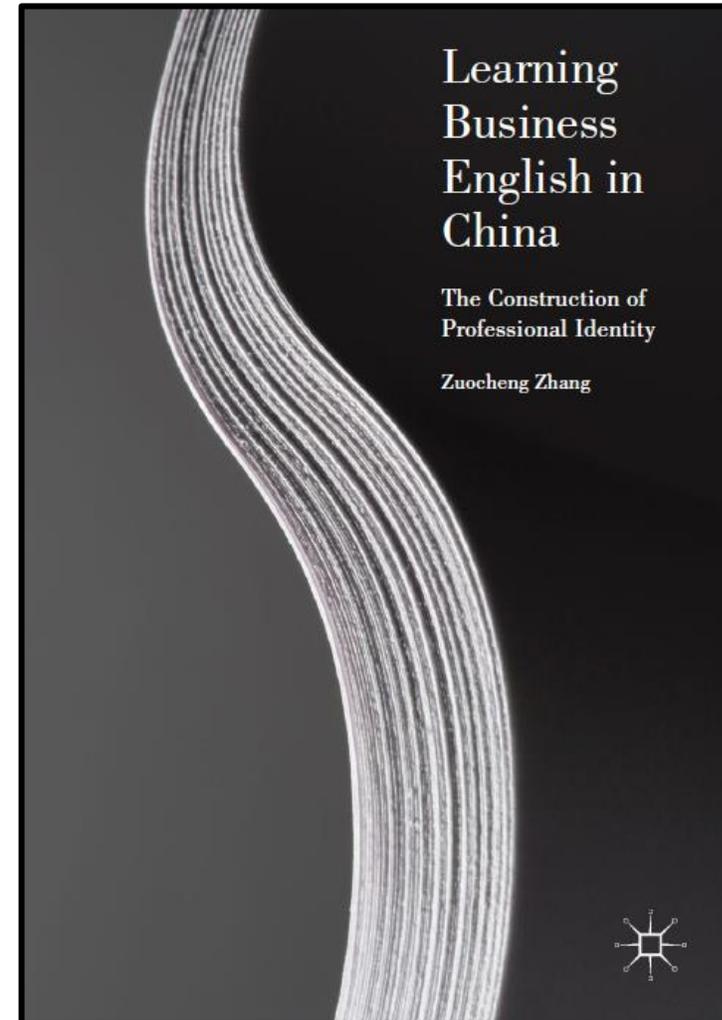
In summary, in the Chinese context, companies have invested in employee English training programs to facilitate the business globalization, in the form of on-site classroom-based training, off-site institution-based training, and alternative methods such as E-learning and blended learning modes identified by global language training providers' surveys. (p. 4)



Business English in China

Business English major

- ~ 300 universities
- Fits between traditional English degree, and a business studies degree
- Three components – knowledge of business disciplines, business discourse, professional practices



Business English

Acquire the language, business, and intercultural competencies to help you succeed anywhere in the world.

- Develop the English and intercultural skills needed in the international business environment.
- Master the business fundamentals to maximize your entrepreneurial potential.
- Benefit from the opportunities to practice with authentic business studies.

Job Opportunities

- Project Manager
- International Relations Director
- Human Resources Professional
- Writer and Editor
- Translator
- Television Anchor or Presenter
- Customer Service Coordinator
- Broadcaster
- Executive Secretary

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ENGLISH

🕒 04 May 2020

👁 5224 times

Language of Instruction: **Vietnamese and English**

Location: **Foreign Trade University, Hanoi campus and Ho Chi Minh City campus**

Duration: **4 years full-time**

Assessment: **Coursework and exams plus thesis/ orinternship & final comprehensive exams**

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- High school diploma
- Passing the national university entrance examination
- International students: refer to page 18 for further information

KEY FEATURES

- Progressive development of English language skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, translating, and interpreting
- Strong links with topics such as international business, finance, marketing, economics, and communication
- Preparation for a range of graduate careers in business. Our Business English graduates are very successful in the job market

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The first and second years of the program will enable students to develop valuable practical skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, and interpretation in English. The third and fourth years focus on developing professional skills and knowledge of business, finance, marketing, economics, communication, management, problem solving and team work.

The program provides students with opportunities of apprenticeship to further develop entrepreneurial skills and familiarize students with the workplace. On successful completion of the course, students are given a Bachelor Degree in Business English.

This degree is recognized by employers. BBE graduates can work as translators, interpreters, businessmen and officers in government ministries, agencies and various national and international organizations and projects.

Teacher training - FTBE

Aims

The aims of this syllabus are to enable candidates to develop a basic knowledge and understanding of the Teaching Business English (TBE) profession in order to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the professional skills required of the Business English teacher
- identify the methodologies that are most effective in the Business English classroom
- demonstrate an understanding of the basic business concepts and practices with which the Business English teacher is expected to be familiar.

Comparison of FTBE groups

China

- Large groups
- Well-qualified experienced teachers
- Very little in-company experience

Europe

- Small groups
- Often “native-speakers” with a CELTA level qualification
- Mostly freelance / in-company (via language schools)

FTBE example question

Scenario

You have been asked to propose a course outline for a marketing manager from a leading manufacturer of building materials. The course will run for 12 weeks for 3 sessions a week. Each session will last 2 hours.

Although the manager's level of English is currently pre-intermediate, in 3 months his firm will be starting a joint venture with a large UK company.

He also wishes to prepare for a trade fair which is taking place next month where he will be representing the company and discussing its products in English.

- (a) Based on this, what specific objectives would you propose to help your client prepare for his responsibility in the new joint venture. (8 marks)
- (b) What specific objectives would you propose to help him prepare for the forthcoming trade fair? (8 marks)

News Global News March 2021 Uncategorized

China considers dropping English as core subject

By **Melanie Butler** · 17th March 2021

395 0



Calls for English to be dropped as a core subject in China's national school curriculum were heard at the country's annual Two Sessions conference, with National Committee member Xu Jin proposing on 4 March that more emphasis should be put on physical education, music and art.

Questions to think about



China has recently become the world's largest economy. Some scholars argue that China English is now the world's largest variety of English.

- How will this influence the development of business English?
- Will we be teaching China English in our classrooms?

Materials writing in Europe

Published materials

Tailor-made materials





ELT Journal 73/4 October
2019 pp. 463-482

(available at www.e4b.de)

SURVEY REVIEW

Business English materials

Evan Frendo

Introduction

A survey review of Business English (BE) materials has appeared in the *ELTJ* five times (1997, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2011). In the eight years since the last review, much has changed. For some observers, BE has been (and is still) seen as a subset of ESP, but there is no doubt that research in many different disciplines has continued to offer new insights into BE methodologies and coursebooks. Chief among these are academic disciplines such as corpus linguistics, or research into English as a lingua franca (ELF), Business English as a lingua franca (BELF), business communication, and intercultural communication. Non-academic input has also played a role, ranging from publishers' marketing research, to authors' and practitioners' personal experiences, the world of work and its focus on training and development (e.g. negotiation and presentations skills training), and the sharing of ideas online via social media or at face-to-face events such as the IATEFL BE Special Interest Group (BESIG) Annual Conference. The aim of this survey is therefore threefold: to provide an overview of recent research and scholarship in the field of BE, to present a selection of coursebooks published since 2011, and to comment on the influence of the research and scholarship on those coursebooks.

BE and coursebooks
What is BE?

A clear definition of what we mean by 'BE' has always been difficult to

Teaching context



- Language school
- In-house / corporate
- One-to-one
- Tertiary education

“coursebooks that are perfect for one context may be totally inappropriate in another.”

Frendo, 2019, p. 464

What does the learner need?

Language **about** business
or
doing business?

business studies

interviews with business people

management theory

current affairs articles

academic articles

watching the
financial news

Language of talking about business is different from the language of doing business.

socialising with foreign clients

small talk

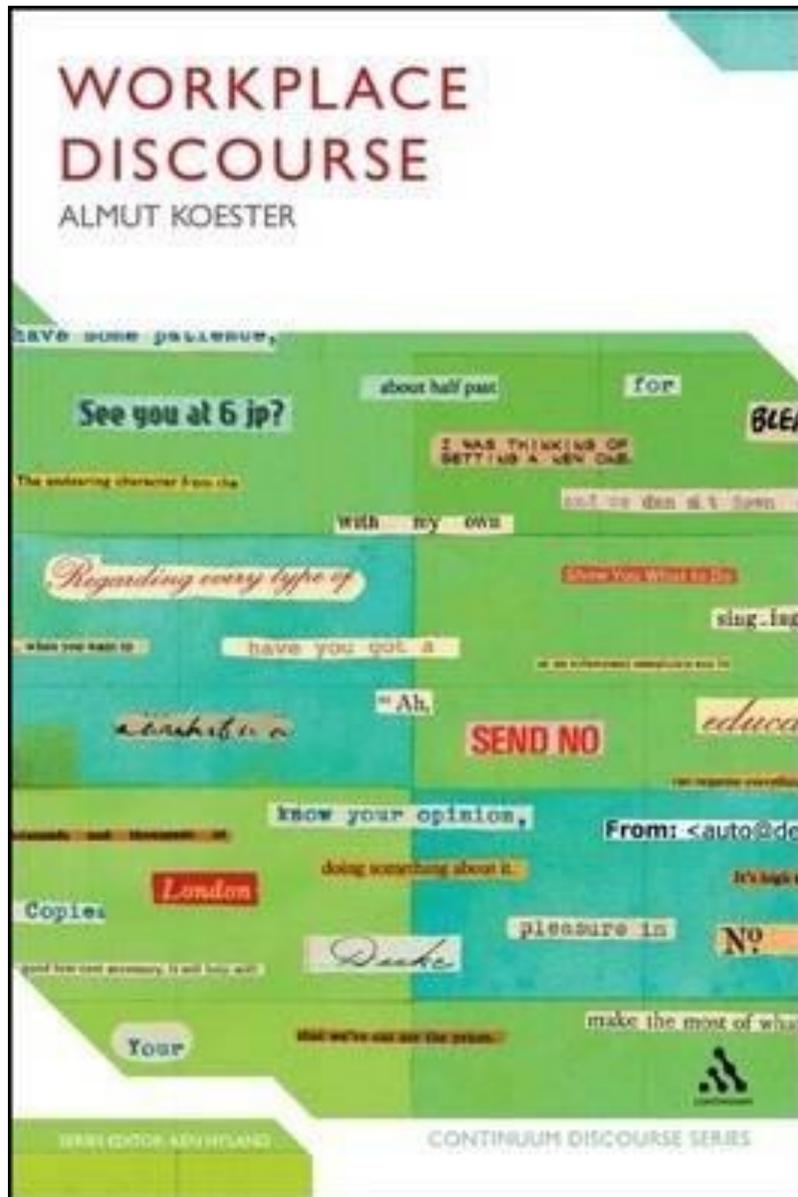
writing emails

meetings with suppliers

presentations

reading contracts

negotiations



‘in writing or talking about business (usually for public consumption), the emphasis will often be on successes and positive developments, whereas when actually engaged in doing business, the focus is often on problem solving of some kind’
(p. 51)

Koester, A. (2010). *Workplace Discourse*. London: Continuum.

Relevant business content

- Increasing employability?
- Hard skills, the “B” in BELF

“Business Knowledge ... an integral component of the concept of BELF and the glue that ties the members of the business community of practice (CoP) together”.

Kankaanranta, A. & Louhiala-Salminen, L. (2018). ‘ELF in the domain of business—BELF. What does the B stand for?’ in J. Jenkins, W. Baker, and M. Dewey (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*. London: Routledge.

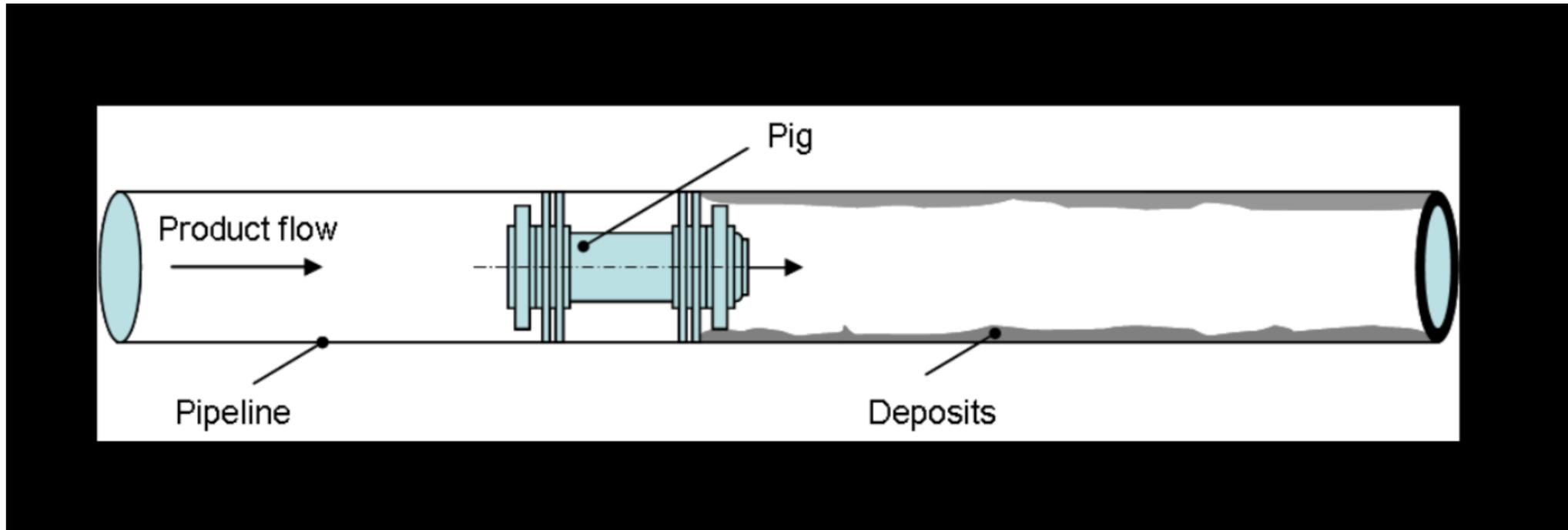
PARSNIPS

- Politics
- Alcohol
- Religion
- Sex
- Narcotics
- -isms
- Pork



<https://pixabay.com/de/photos/pastinaken-gem%C3%BCse-zutat-pastinaca-74305/>

Politically correct



Published materials - where are we now?

- In-company and tertiary in one pack
- Coursebooks as package
- Fewer ESP books
- Some publishers going for adult market rather than BE

Publisher-driven resource

-
- Blended learning / online delivery / flipped classroom
 - Big data / learning analytics
 - Automatic assessment / adaptive learning

Technology playing an increasingly important role

How are tailor-made materials in a corporate context different?

Aim to make a profit?

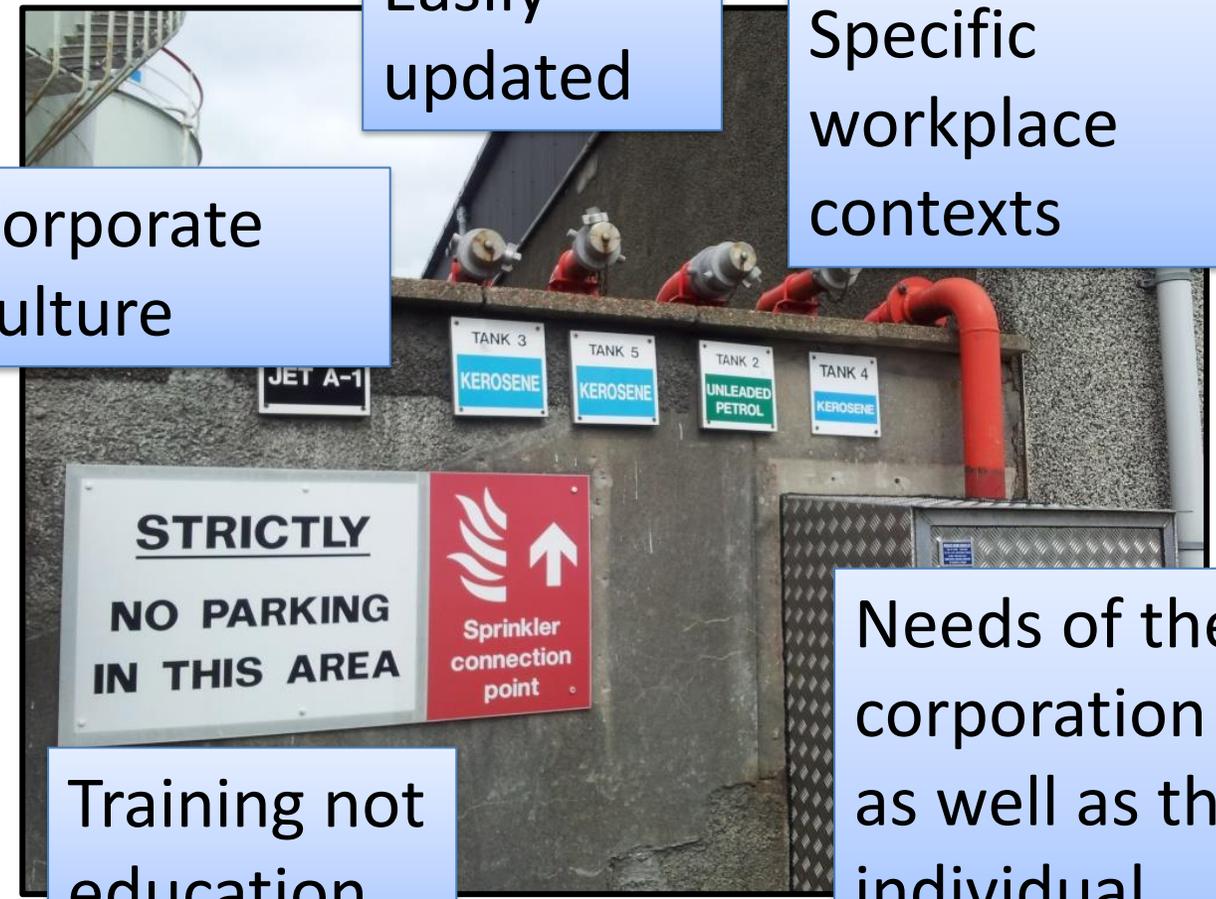
Easily updated

Specific workplace contexts

Corporate culture



Politically correct



Training not education

Needs of the corporation as well as the individual

Tailor-making – what do we mean?



- Evidence not intuition
- Not language of “a profession” – much more blurred
- Investigating the community of practice
- Multiple perspectives / thick description
- Using experts to tell you what counts as “successful” communication

Operating manual for a CNC machine



Attribution: Nathaniel C. Sheetz

~ 21 pages

~ 110,000 tokens
(running words)

~ 3,100 types (distinct
words)

Gap-fill (based on concordance lines)

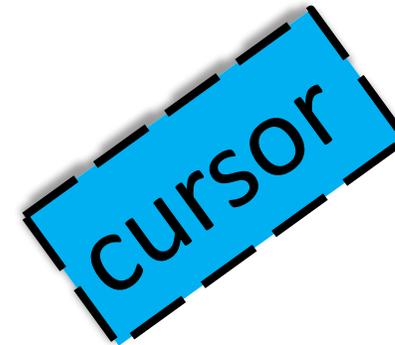
Which word from the word cloud fits in all four lines?

Place the _____ at the node.

Move the _____ to the last block.

Bring the _____ down one line.

Position the _____ over the circle.



Collocates

Use the words in the box to fill the gaps.

feedrate mode cycle axis radius

finding, milling, positioning, facing, roughing, tapping cycle

specified, 0.25 inch, tool, corner, large, arc radius

programmed, slow, medium, original, automatic, pass feedrate

manual, edit, draw, auto, incremental, step mode

Z, rotary, selected, single, auxiliary, fourth axis

Questions to think about



- What is the added value of tailor-made materials? Are they worth the effort?
- Do we have the skills to produce tailor-made materials effectively?

ESP project shipping industry



Relationship
between
business English
and ESP

Young officer training



- Job interviews
- Presentation skills
- Intercultural communication training

VTSO training



Radio communication skills

INFORMATION
MV Anna 3 nm west of you,
proceeding northeast to
Berth Juliet.

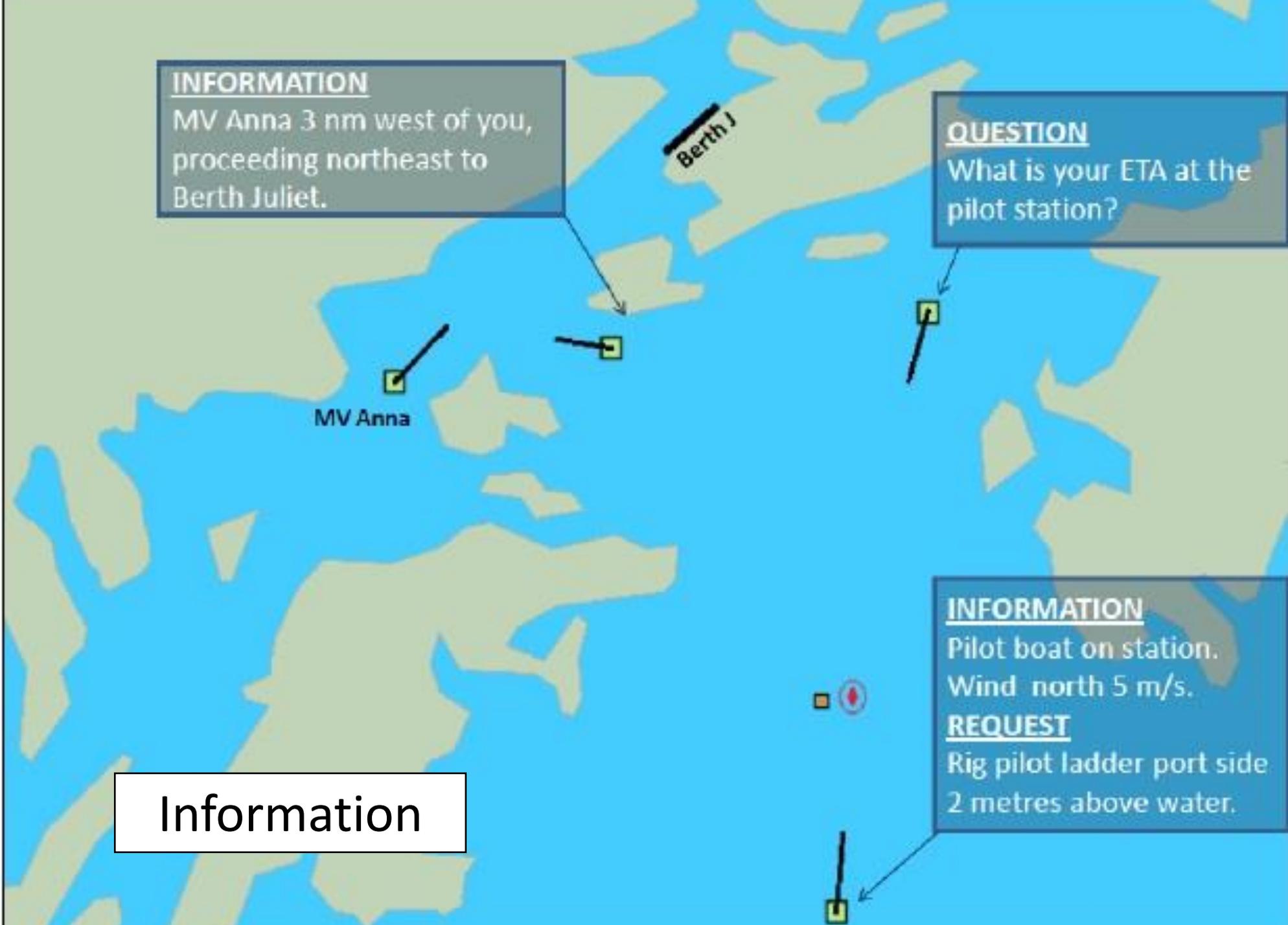
QUESTION
What is your ETA at the
pilot station?

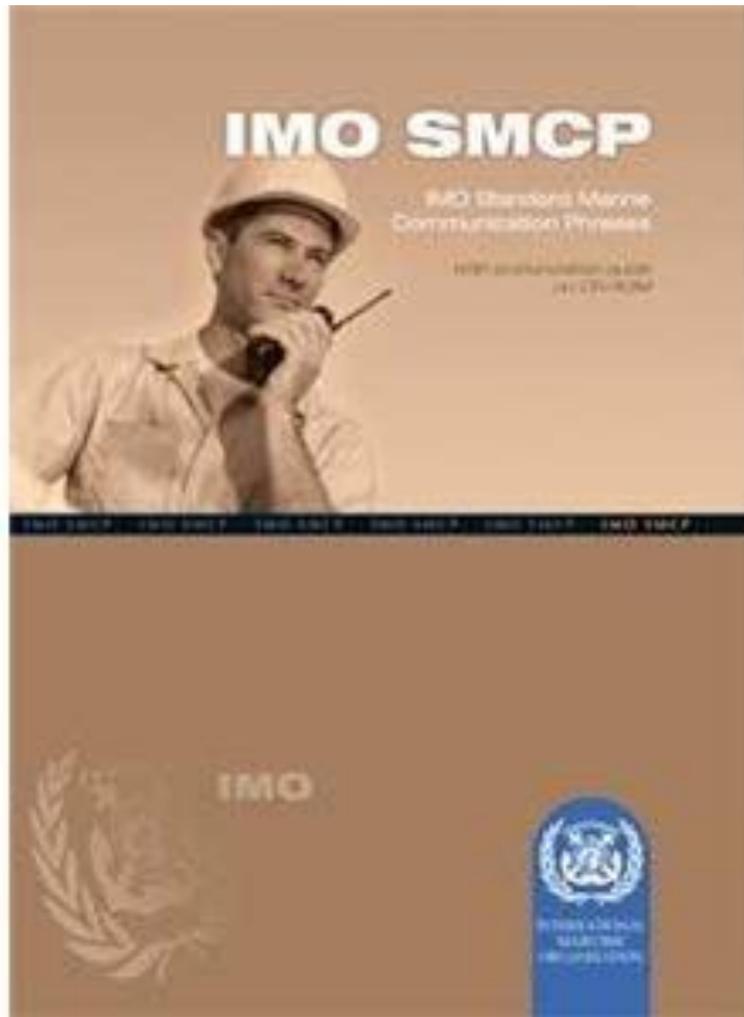
MV Anna

Berth J

INFORMATION
Pilot boat on station.
Wind north 5 m/s.
REQUEST
Rig pilot ladder port side
2 metres above water.

Information





Standard Marine Communication Phrases

Numbers

| Number | Spelling | Pronunciation |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 0 | zero | <u>ZEERO</u> |
| 1 | one | WUN |
| 2 | two | TOO |
| 3 | three | <u>TREE</u> |
| 4 | four | <u>FOWER</u> |
| 5 | five | FIFE |
| 6 | six | SIX |
| 7 | seven | <u>SEVEN</u> |
| 8 | eight | AIT |
| 9 | nine | <u>NINER</u> |
| 1000 | thousand | <u>TOUSAND</u> |

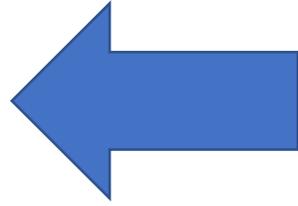
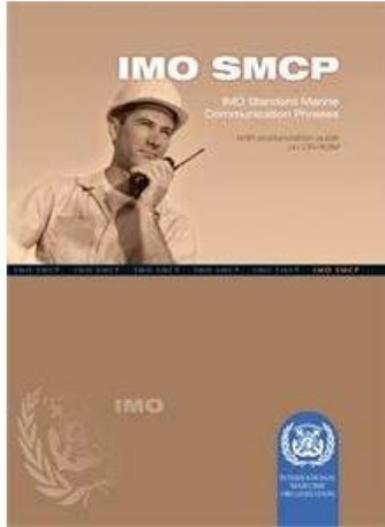
IALA Model Course Requirements

Initial language training - approx 90 days (IELTS 5 entry) = a third of VTSO training

- Language structure (terminology, plain English)
- Standard phrases (SMCP) - VHF communications and routine and non-routine broadcasts
- Specific VTS message construction
- Collecting information (questioning techniques)
- Dealing with non-English speakers

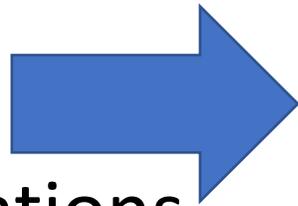
Follow-up courses (eg supervisor training)

On-the-job training



Standard phraseology

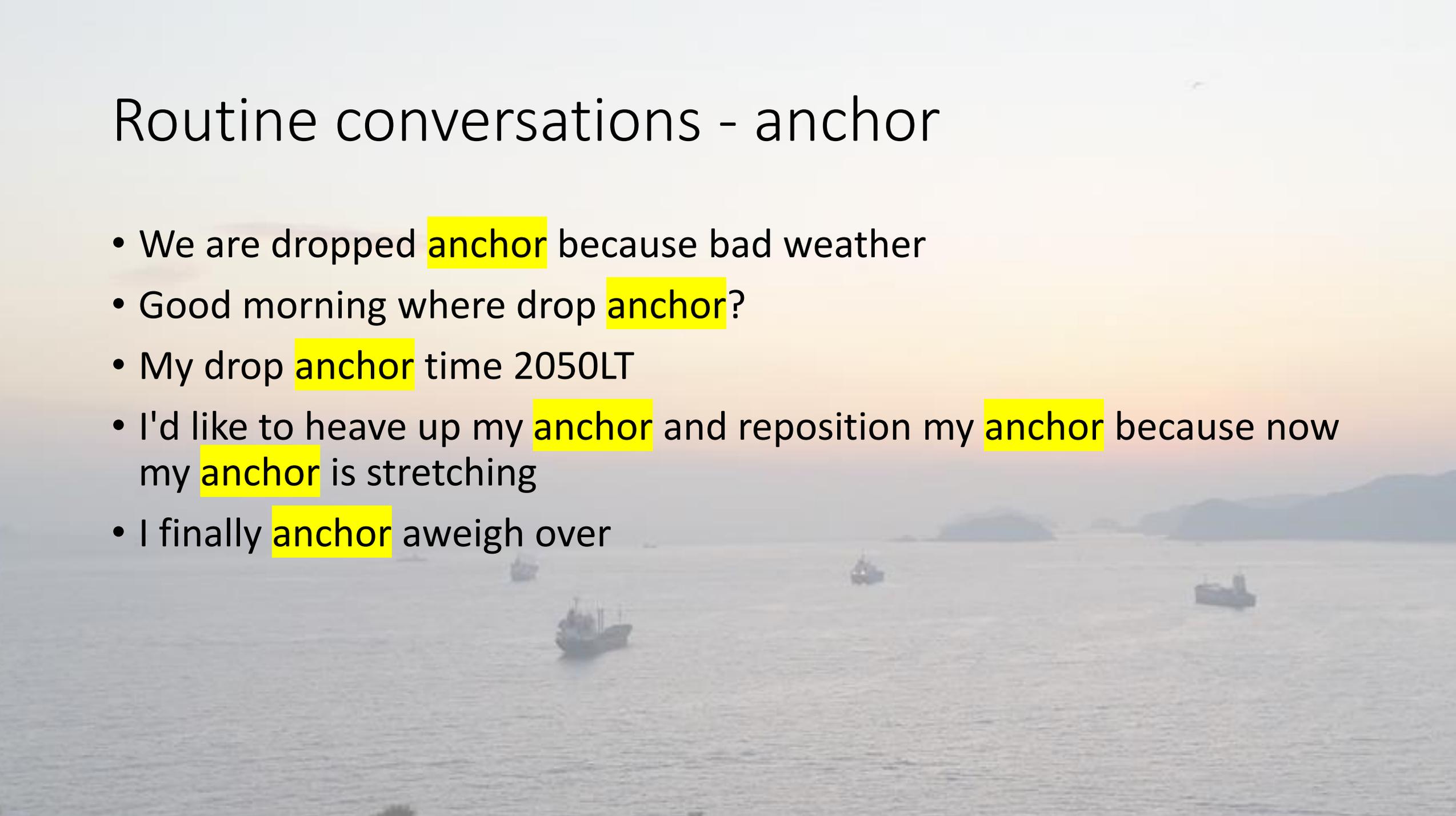
Corpus data
(360 conversations
recorded and
transcribed)



| 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 |
|--------|----------|---------|
| [SN] | sir | and |
| VTS | position | call |
| you | I | go |
| is | thank | calling |
| anchor | degrees | good |
| over | your | ahead |
| ok | please | the |
| yes | to | drop |
| this | port | my |
| ABC | pilot | copy |

Routine conversations - anchor

- We are dropped **anchor** because bad weather
- Good morning where drop **anchor**?
- My drop **anchor** time 2050LT
- I'd like to heave up my **anchor** and reposition my **anchor** because now my **anchor** is stretching
- I finally **anchor** aweigh over



| | |
|--------|--|
| VTS | Your cargo is crap. That is correct? Crap? |
| Vessel | Scrap. Sierra Charlie Romeo Alpha Papa. |
| VTS | Ah scrap copy your message. |
| Vessel | Thank you your cooperation. |

copy = I understand

| | |
|--------|--|
| VTS | I give you anchor position over. |
| Vessel | You give a anchor position. |
| VTS | Yeah that's correct. |
| Vessel | Are you ready to copy over? |
| VTS | Yeah you give anchor position I will write it. |

copy = write

| | |
|--------|---|
| VTS | Yes this is XXX VTS. |
| Vessel | Copy. |
| VTS | I will give you anchor position. Let it copy. |
| Vessel | Anchor position. |
| VTS | Yes correct. |

| | |
|--------|--|
| VTS | XXX VTS [SN], go ahead. |
| Vessel | VTS, I will give you anchor position and copy. |
| VTS | Copy copy. |

Findings

- Routine conversations rarely cause problems.
- SMCP is a useful guideline, but VTSOs need to deal with vessels who do not use it (e.g. *copy*).
- VTSOs need to be prepared to deal with non-routine conversations (e.g. emergency situations).

Solution



- Classes held with experienced VTSOs discussing real life scenarios (in Korean).
- Language teacher (Korean speaker) then works with the group to draft a possible radio conversation in English.

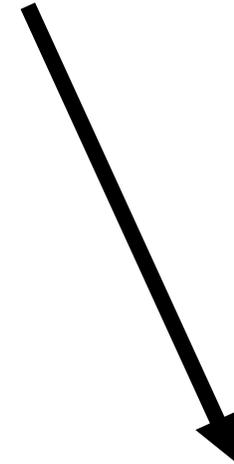
Business English and ESP

Different techniques?

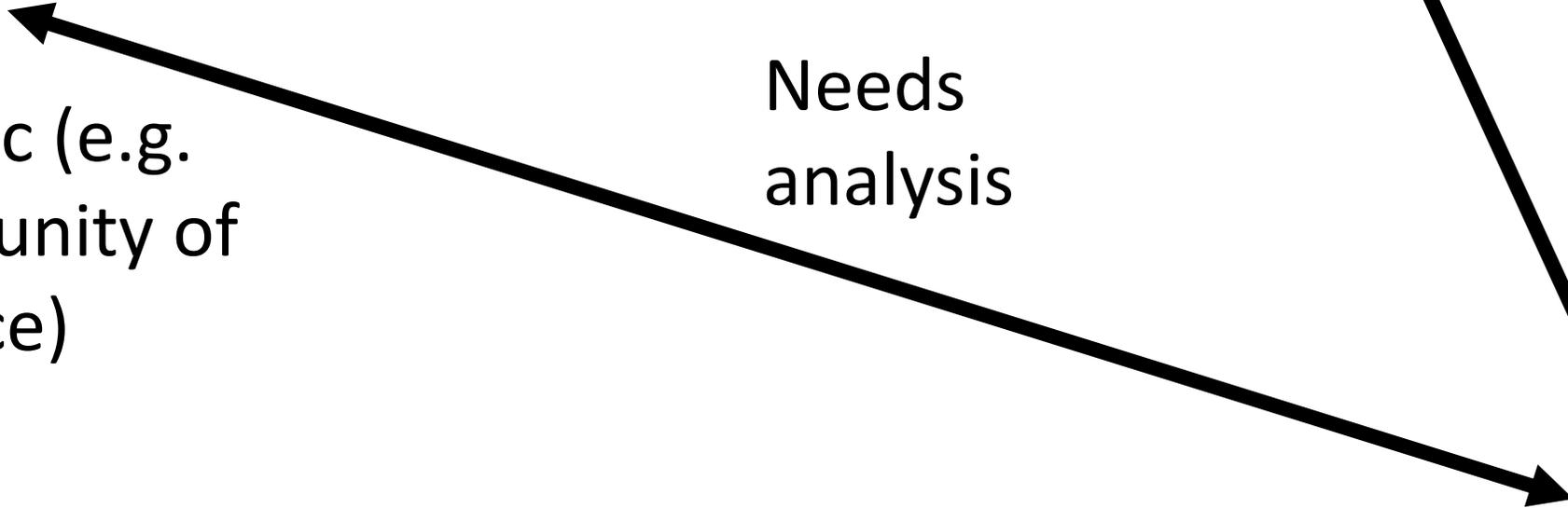


Specific (e.g.
community of
practice)

Needs
analysis



General (e.g. business
communication skills)



Questions to think about



- What is the relationship between business English and ESP? Is there a difference?
- Why is this community APIBA BESIG and not APIBA ESPSIG?

In my country it is different!



We all have pieces of the puzzle.
No-one has the complete picture!



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Evan Frendo
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