



BESIG →

BUSINESS ISSUES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUSINESS ENGLISH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP



Munich, Germany – the venue for the 29th IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference

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Autumn 2016 Issue 94

- 03 Editorial – Chris Stanzer
- 04 Letter from the Coordinator – Julia Waldner
- 06 BESIG online: a round-up of the SIG's online activities – Pete Rutherford
- 08 First BESIG Online Symposium, 18 June 2016 – Sue Annan
- 10 Weekend Workshop reviews – Sue Annan
- 14 Shakespeare in business English: looking to the past to prepare for the future – Kirsten Waechter
- 16 Analytical tools in business English – Ben Dobbs
- 19 Bringing background noises to the forefront – Tim Cornwall
- 20 Mining professional forums to supplement a business English course – Olya Sergeeva
- 22 Never miss an episode of *Game of Thrones* again! – Mandy Welfare
- 24 What is Mind Mapping? – Ron Morrain
- 26 Mind Mapping Matters: Using ready-made mind maps in your business English classroom: The Elevator Pitch – Ron Morrain
- 28 Creating and using mind maps as a classroom tool – Lalitha Murthy
- 29 Zeitgeist Unleashed: Augmented reality – Claire Hart
- 30 The Practice: Game of languages – Roy Bicknell
- 32 Research Review: Learning how to speak like a 'native': speech and culture in an online communication training program – Evan Frendo

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Full page	£360 + VAT
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Landscape (174mm x 128mm)	
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Quarter page	£60 + VAT
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Discounts: Three consecutive ads per year: 10%; Visible link to BESIG website on your website: 10%; Both: 20%. Booking 3 or more consecutive ads also entitles the advertiser to place an advert on the BESIG website free of charge for the duration of the contract with the newsletter.

All changes to advertisements ordered as a series (for a run of two, three or more) are the advertiser's sole responsibility. If any change is required, the new artwork must be emailed to the Newsletter Editor before the copy date for articles and advertisements for the next issue of the newsletter.

All bookings for space, inserts, flyers, quotes for colour, setting, etc should be made to the Newsletter Editor at the address on the left.

Submissions should be sent as an email attachment to the Newsletter Editor: chris.stanzer@besig.org.

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Disclaimer

Views expressed in *Business Issues* are not necessarily those of the editor, of the IATEFL BESIG or its staff or trustees.

Contributing to *Business Issues*

Business Issues, the publication of BESIG – the Business English Special Interest Group of IATEFL (the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign language) – is published three times a year, in spring, summer and autumn. The Spring issue is digital only, whereas the Summer and Autumn issues are issued in print and digital form. If members wish to receive the print issues, they can select this option in the members' area of the IATEFL website.

Submission dates for articles and advertisements are: 15 December (Spring issue), 15 March (Summer issue) and 15 July (Autumn issue).

BESIG reserves the right to accept or reject articles depending on their quality and suitability for our readership. If an article is accepted for publication, the editor reserves the right to alter titles and headings where appropriate and make minor editorial changes deemed necessary for reasons such as space, style, clarity or accessibility. If more than minor changes are needed, the author will be consulted and an edited version of the article will be sent to the author for approval.

Although every effort will be made to include articles accepted for publication in the next issue, BESIG reserves the right to

postpone publication if necessary.

Advertising is also very welcome. Details can be found on the webpage <http://www.besig.org/newsletter/advertising.aspx> or from the Newsletter Editor.

Notes for contributors

When you write for *Business Issues*, please use Arial 12pt and do not exceed the maximum 1200 words. One page articles (approx. 600 words) are also welcome. Please include a short biographical note of no more than 40 words at the top of the article. Please also include your address (this will not be published) and a (separate) recent full-face photograph of yourself.

Send photographs and graphics separately as .jpg files (not embedded in Word documents), label them clearly and indicate where they should be placed in the text. Please also ensure that you have obtained permission to reproduce any illustrations submitted.

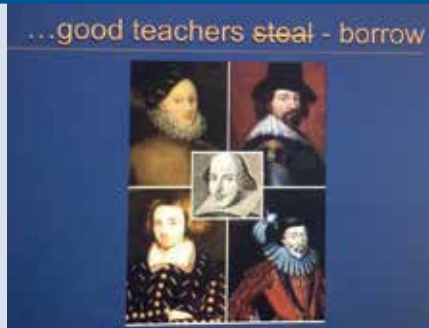
We assume that your article has neither been previously published, nor is being considered for publication elsewhere. If we do wish to reprint, we need to know where the article was first published and what permission you have obtained.

Editorial

Welcome to this autumn issue of the BESIG newsletter where you can read about both recent and upcoming events in the BESIG calendar plus articles from our regular contributors together with some new ones. This issue also sees the start of two new series of articles from Ron Morrain and Claire Hart. You can read about these below.

This June, BESIG held its first online symposium, consisting of six Pecha Kuchas, a question and answer session with the six speakers, three webinars and ended with a panel discussion. You can read a review of the day on page 8. Kirsten Waechter's Pecha Kucha on the impact of Shakespeare on business English lent itself to being written up as an article, so those of you who missed it first time around can enjoy it now on page 14. Ben Dobbs's webinar included so many useful tools to use in the business English classroom that we thought they should also be preserved in print. You can read about these on page 16.

The Weekend Workshops have continued to be held monthly and reviews of these by Sue Annan appear on page 10.



Kirsten Waechter's Pecha Kucha on the impact of Shakespeare on business English

Tim Cornwall has contributed a new angle on a listening activity and we have articles from first-time contributors Olya Sergeeva and Mandy Welfare.

Roy Bicknell and Evan Frendo continue in their regular spots with *The Practice* and *Research Review*, and this issue sees the first of a new regular column from Ron Morrain who has been making mind maps for his learners for many years. We are very fortunate that he has offered to share them with us regularly. His article *What is Mind Mapping?* introduces the topic, while *the Elevator Pitch*, the first of the series of ready-made mind maps, follows together with suggestions on how to use this in the

classroom. (page 26).

Ron will also be presenting a workshop on this topic at the BESIG conference in Munich on the Sunday morning, and for those of you who can't be there or would like to know even more on this topic, he will be hosting a BESIG webinar on 5 February.

Lalitha Murthy further complements this topic with an article on creating mind maps with her students in the classroom on page 28.

The second new regular column is from Claire Hart entitled *Zeitgeist Unleashed*, where she looks at current developments in ELT, giving an outline of the development, how it relates to business English and including an activity which teachers can use to make use of, or interact with, it. The first of these, *Augmented reality*, is on page 29.

Happy reading, and I hope to see many of you at the BESIG conference in Munich. If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter please approach me there or write to the address opposite.

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Letter from the Coordinator

Vacant Position

Bethany Cagnol's, the BESIG Treasurer, term of office will end in November 2016 and we are looking for someone to fill this non-committee position. If you are interested, please contact either Bethany (bethany.cagnol@besig.org) or myself (julia.waldner@besig.org) to find out more details.

Awards and Scholarships

The IATEFL BESIG Maria Keller Scholarship

For the second year running, we have awarded this scholarship for a first-time speaker at the Annual IATEFL BESIG Conference. This scholarship is in memory of Maria Keller, who was IATEFL BESIG Treasurer from 1999-2002. Maria passed away on 11 May 2007.



The winner this year is Sherri Williams (above), a freelance business English trainer from Massachusetts, USA. She teaches in-company, private and telephone lessons to professionals in Berlin, Germany. She is also active in her local ELTA (ELTABB) where she is the current Chair. At the IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference in Munich, she will be giving a talk entitled *Teaching business English over the telephone – outdated practice or wave of the future?*



BESIG Online Symposium

The David Riley Award for Innovation in Business English Teaching and ESP

The submission period has now closed and the winner will be announced at the opening ceremony of the 29th IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference in Munich on 4 November 2016.

IATEFL BESIG Online Symposium, 18 June 2016

This year saw IATEFL BESIG's traditional face-to-face summer symposium replaced by an online symposium – the SIG's first ever web-based symposium (and second online conference). The day consisted of six Pecha Kucha presentations, three webinars, and a Question Time panel discussion on the day's theme: *Business English in the era of global English*.

Despite the allure of European Championship football, international rugby, the usual Saturday distractions and commitments, an early morning start in the Americas and a late finish in Asia, the event attracted more than 120 business English trainers from around the world. IATEFL

BESIG was very proud to have speakers from Japan, India, South Africa, Russia, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, the USA, Brazil and Argentina.

The day's recordings are now posted for IATEFL BESIG members in the members-only section of the BESIG website (www.besig.org). To access them, click on Events→Conferences→2016 Online (under Past Events). Please click on the speaker's names to access the Pecha Kucha, webinar and panel discussion recordings.

29th IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference in cooperation with IATEFL MaWSIG, 4-6 November 2016, Munich, Germany

Early-bird registration for the IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference has now closed but online booking is open until 21 October. It will also be possible to pay on the day. The theme of this conference is Next generation workplace and the plenary speaker is Robert Gibson. There will be two pre-conference seminars on

the afternoon of Friday 4 November: *The future of business English training and How to write excellent materials*. For more information please visit our website (<https://goo.gl/9Be3Ns>) and to register for the conference (<https://goo.gl/Vv0nmP>).

IATEFL BESIG Pre-Conference Event (PCE) at the Annual IATEFL Conference Monday, 3 April 2017, Glasgow, UK

Which skills? Which English?

Helping learners to develop the language, business and intercultural skills for an ever-changing business world.

The aims of the IATEFL BESIG Pre-

Conference Event are to:

- identify the business skills, soft skills and intercultural skills that our business English learners need to develop to be able to function effectively in international business.
- consider the role that English as a Lingua Franca plays in the international business environment and examine trainer attitudes towards errors and feedback.
- question what skills trainers need to have in order to be able to help our learners develop the relevant skills in our learners.
- look at the materials available to both learners and trainers which can be used to develop learners' language, business and intercultural skills.

Six experienced business English practitioners will guide participants through each of these topics, presenting their own ideas but also encouraging discussion and self-reflection. The speakers will also suggest activities that can be used with learners to help them develop these skills.

The PCE is sponsored by Cornelsen.



We look forward to seeing you online or face-to-face at IATEFL BESIG events this year.

Julia Waldner and the IATEFL BESIG Committee

Julia Waldner teaches in-company in Germany, mainly in the Frankfurt area. She is also Coordinator of BESIG. Email: julia.waldner@besig.org.



Contribute to our Wider Membership Scheme (WMS)

Established over ten years ago, the IATEFL WMS helps the international ELT community reach out to teachers in parts of the world who need additional financial support. It provides teachers with professional development that would otherwise be beyond their means.

Each year IATEFL Associates are invited to apply for a limited number of places on the scheme. An Advisory Committee looks at all the bids and the money available and puts forward suggestions to our Trustees for allocation of the memberships via the WMS. Decisions are based on the position of each country on the HDI list, together with estimated earnings of teachers in that country. Successful Associations are then awarded WMS memberships at a significantly reduced rate which they can allocate to individual teachers. This has led to tangible improvements in English language teaching and learning in parts of the world that need support the most.

The IATEFL Head Office contacts our Associates each year to invite them to put in a bid. If you need more information on how to apply, our criteria and what we can do for your Association please contact membership@iatefl.org.

To donate to the IATEFL WMS please visit the donations section on our website at <https://secure.iatefl.org/onl/donate.php>

BESIG ONLINE: A round-up of the SIG's online activities



Kirsten Waechter led IATEFL BESIG's first-ever 'How to...' webinar at the beginning of October. The session was a 1-hour double-header which looked at how to give a talk or workshop at the BESIG annual conference for first-time presenters and how to make the most of the BESIG conference. Kirsten spent the month of September collecting questions and comments on the topic via BESIG's social media, which ensured the webinar was tailored perfectly to the expectations and needs of the attendees. Based on Kirsten's excellent start, BESIG intends to continue and grow its 'How to...' series of webinars on a regular basis in 2017.

Perhaps the biggest event on the annual BESIG Online calendar is the November conference simulcast for our web-based audience and various satellite events around the world. This year, Mercedes Viola took the helm to organise a crack-a-jack online programme of popular, established speakers and exciting new presenters. The simulcast will be streamed live from Munich on Saturday, 5 November, and Sunday, 6 November, and is open to everyone not able to attend the weekend's events in person. Recordings of all streamed talks and workshops are available to BESIG members as one of the many perks of membership to the SIG.

Almost immediately after the annual conference finishes, BESIG's programme of online Weekend Workshops resumes with Peter Travis leading a session on helping students preparing for speaking examinations on Sunday, 13 November. This practical session looks at what students need to know in order to prepare effectively and perform optimally while avoiding common exam pitfalls on the big day.

IATEFL BESIG simulcast sessions

Saturday 5 November

Title	Helping learners communicate internationally
Speaker	Chia Suan Chong
Presentation theme	Next generation workplace
Presentation type	Workshop (60 minutes)
Audience	Mixed

Title	Facilitating the development of a credible business-like persona
Speaker	Sylvie Donna
Presentation theme	Next generation workplace
Presentation type	Workshop (60 minutes)
Audience	Mixed

Title	The 10-step path to success with low-level business English learners
Speaker	Mike Hogan
Presentation theme	Next generation workplace
Presentation type	Workshop (45 minutes)
Audience	Mixed On behalf of Cornelsen

Title	Where are we with BELF? And where are we going?
Speaker	Evan Frendo
Presentation theme	BELF
Presentation type	Talk (45 minutes)
Audience	Mixed

Title	Teaching English for a more fulfilling career
Speaker	Oksana Hera
Presentation theme	Next generation workplace
Presentation type	Talk (30 minutes)
Audience	Mixed

Title	ESP: Becoming a non-expert expert
Speaker	Ben Butler
Presentation theme	ESP / Business English
Presentation type	Talk (30 minutes)
Audience	Mixed On behalf of: The London School of English

IATEFL BESIG simulcast sessions

Sunday 6 November

Title	Business model teacher: apply a business approach to freelance teaching
Speaker	Justine Arena
Presentation theme	Freelance teaching
Presentation type	Workshop (60 minutes)
Audience	Mixed

Title	Leading international projects
Speaker	Bob Dignen
Presentation theme	Project management
Presentation type	Talk (45 minutes)
Audience	Experienced On behalf of Kogan Page (Management Publisher, UK)

Title	A matrix for developing learners' business, language and intercultural skills
Speaker	Helen Strong
Presentation theme	Next generation workplace
Presentation type	Talk (30 minutes)
Audience	Mixed

Title	Outside of the classroom, who are our business English students?
Speaker	Christopher Williams
Presentation theme	Next generation workplace
Presentation type	Talk (30 minutes)
Audience	Mixed

well-attended offering of monthly online events for BESIG. Many SIG members have indicated that they benefited enormously from these free Weekend Workshops. Justine is already working on the programme for 2017, with the first two events for the new year confirmed.

To kick off the year, the BESIG Online Team will be leading an interactive discussion session on Sunday, 8 January, which welcomes members to the SIG's online programme for 2017. This panel discussion will be highly interactive with attendees having the opportunity to contribute to the content via BESIG's social media in the December and January build-up to it as well as on the day. Keep an eye on the BESIG website, Facebook group and Twitter feed for the latest information about the first BESIG event of 2017.

In February, Ron Morrain is scheduled to give an online weekend workshop on mind mapping in the modern business English classroom. Webinar participants will get hands-on experience with mind mapping and take away several mind maps that they can use immediately in their business English courses or coaching sessions.

BESIG's Facebook group, maintained by Sue Annan and Shanthi Streat, has become an increasingly popular place for BESIG members to meet, share ideas and materials, and discuss the latest business English developments – all between the SIG's regular online events. With well over 1,200 members from around the world and counting, the group has become an indispensable addition to many business English trainers' professional development hotspots.

Finally, it's always a good idea to keep an eye on the BESIG World Blog. Dana Poklepovic has breathed new life into the blog ever since taking over responsibility for it. With the launch of the new BESIG website scheduled for the first half of 2017, we look forward to more regular blog installments from around the world in the New Year.

As always, all the details about previous and upcoming online events are available on www.besig.org.

Upcoming Weekend Workshops

3pm UK time / 4pm CET

Date	Speaker(s)	Titles
13 November	Peter Travis	Helping students prepare for speaking exams (67)
3 December	Olga Sergeeva	Professional forums and YouTube videos as sources of authentic communication (68)
8 January	BESIG Online Team	Introducing BESIG Online 2017 (69)
5 February	Ron Morrain	Mind mapping in today's business English classroom (70)

The final BESIG weekend workshop for 2016 will be given by Olga Sergeeva on Saturday, 3 December. Olga will be looking at how to use professional forums and online video as sources of authentic

business English communication.

A big thank you should be extended to Justine Arena who was responsible for putting together 2016's innovative and

Pete Rutherford is a Düsseldorf-based communication and business English trainer who has worked in Germany, Spain and South Africa. He is also the IATEFL BESIG Web-Coordinator. Email: pete.rutherford@peterutherford.de.



First BESIG Online Symposium, 18 June 2016

Saturday 18 June was the culmination of weeks of planning when IATEFL BESIG hosted its first Online Symposium. The team responsible had been trying to find a winning formula, and I'm sure that participants would agree that they managed it.

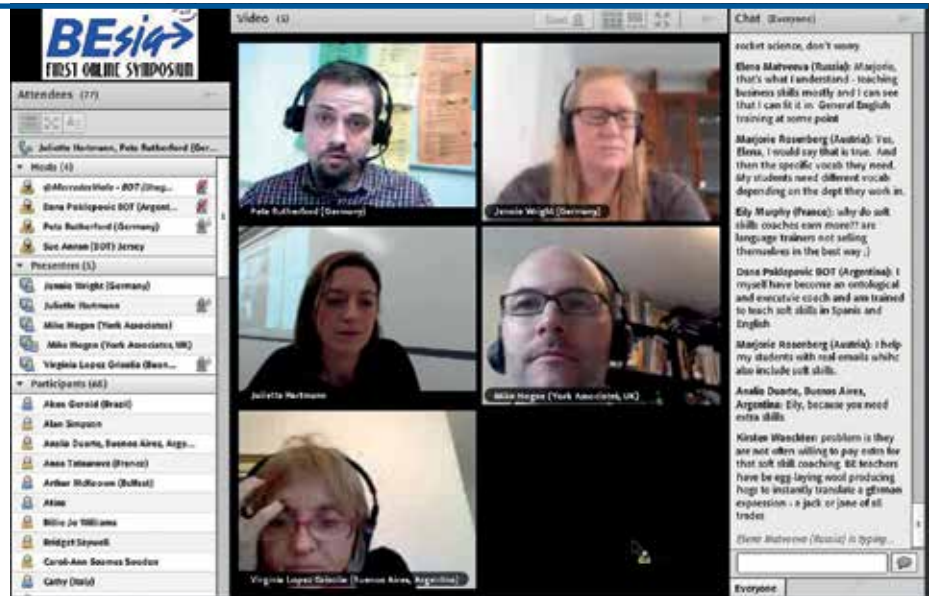
A Facebook comment mentioned the audacity of starting with Pecha Kuchas, the method of presenting 20 slides for 20 seconds each. As you can imagine, this is an unusual formula, made more complicated by being online where the slides cannot be programmed to run automatically. But we at BESIG love a challenge!

Following a welcome from BESIG's Coordinator, Julia Waldner, the first Pecha Kucha was introduced: Alan Simpson in Japan drew the short straw. His talk, *Business English in Asia*, contained some excellent insights into working with Japanese business people and the cultural and linguistic problems that entails.

This was followed by Rachel Appleby in Hungary with *The confidence to stand up and talk!* This looked at presentation skills and she left us with 7 points to reflect on at our leisure.

These two fun, fast, but ultimately sensible PKs were followed by Roy Bicknell's, whose *Trip to Planet B.E.* was wacky, fixated on the number 30 – and purple! There was, however, an underlying message about the number of acronyms we use and I really liked his amusing interpretations, for instance, CEFR: Cool English for Robots.

A second set of three PKs started with some great explanations from Geoff Tranter in Germany with his talk *English for what business purposes?* He looked at the material available and specialisation needed in BE and gave us much food for thought.



BESIG Online Symposium panel discussion

Kirsten Waechter, who studied Shakespeare at university, followed with *Fourscore ducats: the impact of Shakespeare for BE*. In this, the 400th year since his death, her clever and topical slides charted the ways that today's business dealings mirror Shakespeare's plays.

Elena Matveeva from Russia completed this second set. Her tips on *How to present in the era of global English* and ways to help develop oneself as well as one's students were well received.

These were followed by a short Q & A session with the PK speakers, ably led by Mercedes Viola. For tips on teaching BE, it was agreed that the BESIG website was

the go-to place, as were certain books, the BBC and British Council websites and Facebook groups. TED talks came up in Elena's PK, and it was clear that they have a role to play in demonstrating good presentations, yet the fact that they are so polished, having taken a long time to prepare, could be overwhelming for some students and teachers. Not everyone was in favour of the tool Prezi either – some people preferred PowerPoint slides with no bells or whistles. The takeaway was the idea that BE is a catch-all term which includes transferable skills. Does a definition actually matter?

The middle of the programme was assigned to three interesting webinars of around 45 minutes each. The first of these was presented by Ben Dobbs. His talk, *Analytical tools, creative problem solving and BE*, greatly interested the audience. Ben broke his talk into 4 sections and expanded on each: tools (SWAT or GANTT charts, LoNGPESTEL and others); approaches (delegating or coaching); interpersonal skills (influencing, motivational, affirmative or developmental feedback, conflict handling and decision making) and finally thinking processes



A slide from Elena Matveeva's Pecha Kucha

(mind-mapping, brainstorming, lateral thinking).

Ben finished by outlining the uses of these tools and approaches:

1. Added value – teachers can move beyond the usual teaching of presentation skills, telephoning, etc.
2. Can be used for coaching for individuals or groups, for projects or written reports, etc.
3. They help develop critical thinking
4. Introduce real business into the classroom, not just grammar and lexis
5. In a TBL approach they will make a good carrier or driver for the language
6. Will help to develop decision making in simulations/ case studies
7. To improve communication overall

Soon it was Rob Howard's time to take the stage with *You have no business teaching BE, or do you?*

Rob started by asking the audience questions: Are your lessons interesting, engaging and challenging in a meaningful and fluent way? Are you a business English teacher or language coach? What is your background, expertise, experience? Rob made a point of the need for flexibility – you are being hired as the company's business solution. We need to know their business terminology to have credibility. Here the participants were again tested on their knowledge

of up-to-date acronyms. Rob suggested that we should use company material to contextualise learning, teach content we are comfortable with, choose content relevant to our students and ensure it is relevant to both their company and social culture.

He finished by expressing the need for teachers to take steps to improve our own professional profile – be aware, do research and study cultural differences and use UTC as a time reference to minimise problems.

After a short break we were treated to Lalitha Murthy's *Communication challenges while working with Indians*. She was unambiguous in her statement that cultural traits can make or break business relationships. Today's difficulties are often found when global teams work virtually, in a language not their own, and with communication difficulties caused by culture (which can unconsciously interfere with our perceptions). Her interesting anecdotes showed that there are always two sides to any communication and our opinion often doesn't take theirs into account. She offered us work-arounds for some scenarios and explained why some situations could arise due to cultural differences. Lalitha gave the example of vertical collectivism, where it is not possible to contradict the boss, or where one needs permission to speak. She left us with some sage advice:

1. Do not judge
2. Ask evaluative questions
3. Leave cultural baggage behind
4. Put things in writing
5. Learn about the other cultures and preferences

Above all, remember that Indians are adaptable and tolerant because of their history.

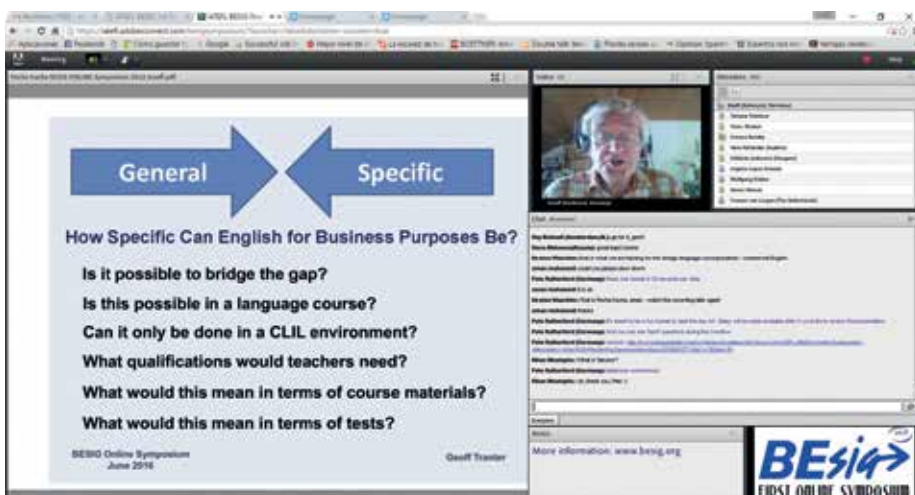
We ended with a panel discussion, comprising Jennie Wright, Juliette Hartmann, Virginia Lopez Grisolia, Mike Hogan and moderated by Pete Rutherford. The questions had been collected in advance and added to by several put forward during the day. Each panellist was invited to give their definition of BE today, the definition of Global English today, the introduction of soft skills (which have been around for quite a while in reality) and the changes which technology is bringing to our profession. There were ideas for and against many of the points put forward. However the overriding points were: be relevant, talk to your students regularly to make sure you are still delivering lessons according to their needs, use coursebooks sparingly and be flexible where tech is concerned – it may mean changing what we do, as technology becomes ever more sophisticated and may impact on what we need to provide.

These points may help inexperienced teachers, and although modern books are changing to reflect what our students need to do in the workplace, it was agreed that after a while a bank of shared material might be more useful.

And finally: where did the panel see BE in ten years' time? They thought that teaching would follow new tech, that we would need to look at how people are doing business and that there might well be less face-to-face work and more online teaching.

But above all – we must move with the times and not be afraid of it.

Dana Pocklepovich skilfully wrapped up the day and thanked everyone for giving up their time.



As well as being an Eltchat moderator, Sue Annan works in a private language school in the Channel Islands, where she teaches both general and business English and trains teachers for Trinity College London. She has been a member of BESIG since 2008.



Weekend Workshop reviews

Weekend Workshop 61: Ron Morrain – Going from a freelance language teacher to an independent language provider

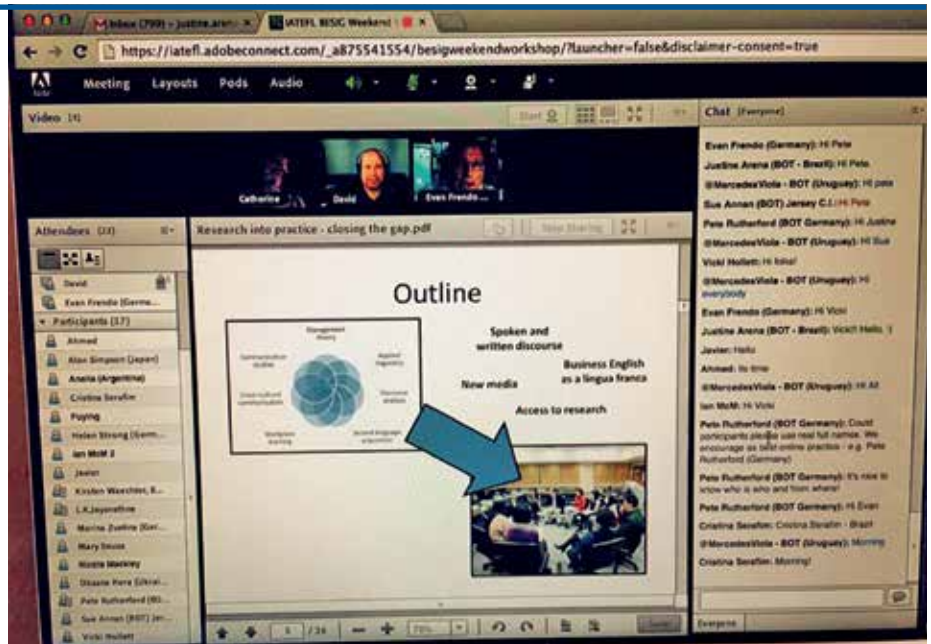
First, the participants were asked to define a freelancer and an LSP (language services provider); basically, someone who pays their own costs while working for several providers, and the hirer of those freelancers, the edupreneur.

Ron then went on to discuss how to move from freelancer to service provider by first focussing on establishing a unique selling point (USP).

Having worked out your USP and contemplated the situation vis-à-vis working capital, qualifications and research, it is time to create a saleable concept. It is important to do research to find out what the competition provides, so that your offering can be unique. Are there any services which you could attach, such as feedback reports, assessment or team-building events? This is important, as English, Ron stated, is not a product, so a 360 degree full service is needed. Next, promote the idea. Use social media, host a website, have the business mentioned in training catalogues or educational portals if you can.

The main body of the workshop, and the part which elicited many questions, was the checklist for making an offer to new clients. Ron kindly translated his German document for us and it contained some important nuggets. You should consider:

- A time limit for training to start and end
- People to contact: can you remove roadblocks from the decision process?
- The venue address and cost implications (does a hotel need to be booked?)
- Terms of payment: who pays for what?
- The number expected to participate and the number of trainers required
- Training goals and approaches to be used
- Assessment: will it be included in the price?



Weekend Workshop 62: Research into Practice

- Any special requirements of the customer
- The price per person taking part – (usually required for HR)

Ron mentioned the value of a business mentor to help with the tender and bidding process.

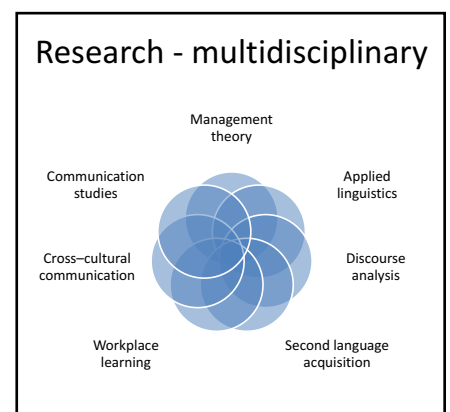
Finally, the business plan needs to be financed, insurance organised, presentations designed and the plan itself might benefit from the expertise available at the local Chamber of Commerce.

All in all, this was a very helpful webinar, leaving the participants with ideas to mull over and perhaps ideas to put into practice in the near future.

Weekend Workshop 62: Research into Practice – closing the gap! Panel discussion with Catherine Nickerson and David Kertzner, moderated by Evan Frendo.

Evan kicked off by asking the speakers to define the term 'Business English'. Catherine's definition was "language used in order to get work done" while

David suggested that each situation would be specific to the context, although taken from an amorphous core. There was talk, too, about the social aspects where tasks also needed to take place in English and so the idea of teaching Strategic Communication, (a calculated use of language for specific professional environments) was offered.



Evan next produced a couple of slides to focus the discussion. Looking at the first slide, 'Research - multi-disciplinary', Catherine was quick to point out that the field has shifted over the last two decades, from the right-hand side to the left, which has become more dominant, although it

hasn't been completely left behind. David used anecdotes to show how important a role research has but stressed that it must impact learning. The starting point for training should be what actually happens in the workplace.



Where the first slide looked at academic research, the second slide looked at sharing experience and good practice. But sharing with whom? The problem seems to be that access to research is not always readily available. David advocated engaging with managers and sharing what we're doing in the training environment, essentially educating and informing them to be more supportive of the process as the learning context is no longer just the classroom.

Evan's next question was how research has influenced the classroom.

Catherine has been investigating the amount of published material available, where only a few isolated cases are based on the latest research. According to both speakers, cross cultural communication is important, as cross-cultural issues can impact relationships which then impact work. The skills needed to deal with direct or indirect societies differ greatly. Catherine said that she has found the work of Geert Hofstede useful.

They then moved on to discuss BELF.

Influential research has been done in the European context, showing that language is just one of the core competencies required in today's business world. The Lingua Franca idea suggests the need for a neutral way of considering language, instead of the 'correct/ incorrect' model. Trainers are useful for modelling answers as a stepping-off point, with preferably more than one answer being offered.

Evan then asked what research is being done into the 21st Century catch-all term 'New Media' (a vague term covering everything on the Internet and the interplay between technology, images and sound), both in terms of language use and pedagogy.

Catherine agreed that some research is being done on language use – analysing emails and suchlike, but that research on pedagogy is still in its infancy.

David, who uses remote teaching as a core part of his business, blamed the lack of learning about tools or platforms in teacher training programmes. Today's teachers need to learn how to be effective in an online environment.

Evan then stated that there is research available, we're just not looking at it, so what are the problems?

The major ones seem to be a) current research is in academic journals and publishers may, or may not, allow a certain amount of affordable access, (there is a current EU proposal to make access free by 2020); b) it is often written in academic jargon which classroom practitioners might find difficult; c) we don't know where to go to access it; d) there is so much of it that we are swamped and have little time to read it.

The discussion was wrapped up by the panellists suggesting to look at blogposts, journal websites, or forums (such as this BESIG webinar) where the conversations are stimulating and provocative.

Weekend Workshop 63: Claire Hart and Kristen Acquaviva – Bringing video into business English courses: a fresh approach

Claire introduced the session by listing three benefits we should expect to get out of a professional development workshop such as this one:

1. Space to reflect on our teaching
2. New ideas
3. Practical applications for our next classes

She next set us two polls in order to find out how often, and why, we used video

with our learners. She continued by playing a video clip and then elicited from us what she had deliberately done wrong – no task set-up, no idea of the video length and no background introduction.

Her tips for a fail-proof lesson then included ways to set up, play and exploit the material, from downloading the clip in advance, to ideas regarding which software to use.

She considered the fact that there are three opportunities for work with video: before, during and after watching. Her onion visual represented the different stages: exposure to voices, the accent and content and at a comprehension level. This all leads to the productive element using strategies which help transfer the skills or language into the real world.



What can a film help you do?

1. Raise language awareness: this can be done by preparing for what will be seen, or asking students to make notes of what they hear.
2. Give exposure to global Englishes: good for students who need practice with particular accents. They can predict features and note down their reflections.
3. Provide a production model.
4. Offer a glimpse into the business world.

Kristen continued the session with four videos illustrating the above four points. The first one compared facts and figures, using the continuous, rather than the more usual simple tense, which could raise awareness of a particular grammar feature.

Her second video was from China and she demonstrated a variety of ways to use it to develop vocabulary.

Video three, about a manufacturing company, was a good model for anyone doing in-company tours. This could be used for predictive work and for question writing practice.

The final video was from a car company in India which, as well as offering a glimpse into a real business environment, with its attendant vocabulary, skills and process, also gave exposure to speakers with different world Englishes.

Kristen's list to consider before using video clips is as follows:

- Native or non-native speakers?
- Authentic or scripted conversation?
- Intercultural or interpersonal communication?
- A focus on gist or language?
- Intensive (one video) or extensive use?

She finished with a key point: remember copyright! A lot of material is available, both from publishers and generally online. Make sure that, if you are using clips in class, you are aware of your rights to make use of that material.

This was a useful and interesting session which did indeed give us much to reflect on and practical ideas to try out in the classroom.

Weekend Workshop 64: Dana Poklepovic – Walking the fine line between training and coaching

August's weekend workshop was provided by the BESIG Online Team's very own Dana. After explaining how she entered the world of coaching, she showed an image of a show-jumping horse and rider and asked the participants to decide what the horse rider needed to help him master his technique (training) and develop courage and concentration (coaching).

She went on to explain that by training we mean the transfer of skills or knowledge to the trainee by a direct approach, while coaching works with the coachee to help them improve their effectiveness

What's the difference?

TRAINING

- **Method:** Directive
- **Goal:** Learning
- **Trainer:** expert
- **Evaluation:** test
- **Needs:** Language, communication

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COACHING

- Driven by questions
- Development
- Coach: not expert
- Feedback, reflection
- Behavioral, emotional, organizational needs

The difference between training and coaching

and performance and find their own solutions. They cross over in that both are communication focussed and also promote learning.

Dana offered us a very clear table to show the competencies of each role, showing the fine line to be walked between the two disciplines. She then suggested five areas where coaching can help our students:

1. Become more effective
2. Identify their blind spots
3. Increase their performance
4. Clarify their goals
5. Manage their anxiety and become more assertive.

From here, Dana went on to answer key questions: What roles do we play with our learners? Can we switch roles? She suggested that switching roles is a good idea, according to what is required on any given day. What is an effective coach? An effective coach should build trust and show empathy. They must be careful not to bias the conversation, or make assumptions. Powerful questions help, as does active listening but the main requirement is observation.

Dana explained her interest in Ontological Coaching. With its focus on generative language, body language and emotions, it encourages the coach to ask themselves: Do you state facts, make assumptions, make requests or offers? Can a small shift in body language make a positive change?

Is emotion impairing your communication? We finished the session by considering the **GROW** model: Is your **Goal** clear and measurable? What is the **Reality** that can be attained? Have you identified **Obstacles** in your path? Now it is time to design an action plan for the **Way** forward. We then watched a short video clip on workplace bullying and discussed the language we had observed: <https://youtu.be/kA724DnLrts>.

It was interesting to see what we had already learned from Dana's session based on our responses to the video. And after giving us a very useful handout with some coaching ideas: (<http://bit.ly/2bAUBHH>) she left us with homework: What hat/s do we want to wear? How do we plan to organise that?

It was such an engaging session that there is already talk of a part 2. Watch this space....

Weekend Workshop 65: Erica Williams – Marketing communications in English

In September the audience consisted of teachers from almost every continent, most of whom knew very little about the subject. This was certainly not the case by the end, as we all left with more information than we started with.

Having determined what marketing communications is; what a company

communicates about itself to the outside world, we looked at integrated marketing, where everything works in a consistent, connected way, using all of the media sources possible.

ATL (Above – the awareness building work), BTL (Below – the more direct PR and direct mailing services) and TTL (Through the line) are all expressions which Erica's students, and the industry as a whole, use on a daily basis. We completed a matching exercise to see whether we could fit vocabulary into the three categories.

We then moved on to the main part of the workshop, which analysed a variety of techniques used in guerrilla marketing. This term was coined by Levinson in the 1980's and relates to unconventional marketing. This can help start-up companies and younger, trendier challenger brands advertise for minimal cost.

We looked at 'Wild posting', a way of



putting up eye-catching advertising posters in urban places. 'Ambient media' or 'out of home media' can be found on staircases, escalators, lift doors etc. 'Projection advertising' such as the Olympic message on Big Ben, allows messages to be screened in unexpected places, without damaging the structure.

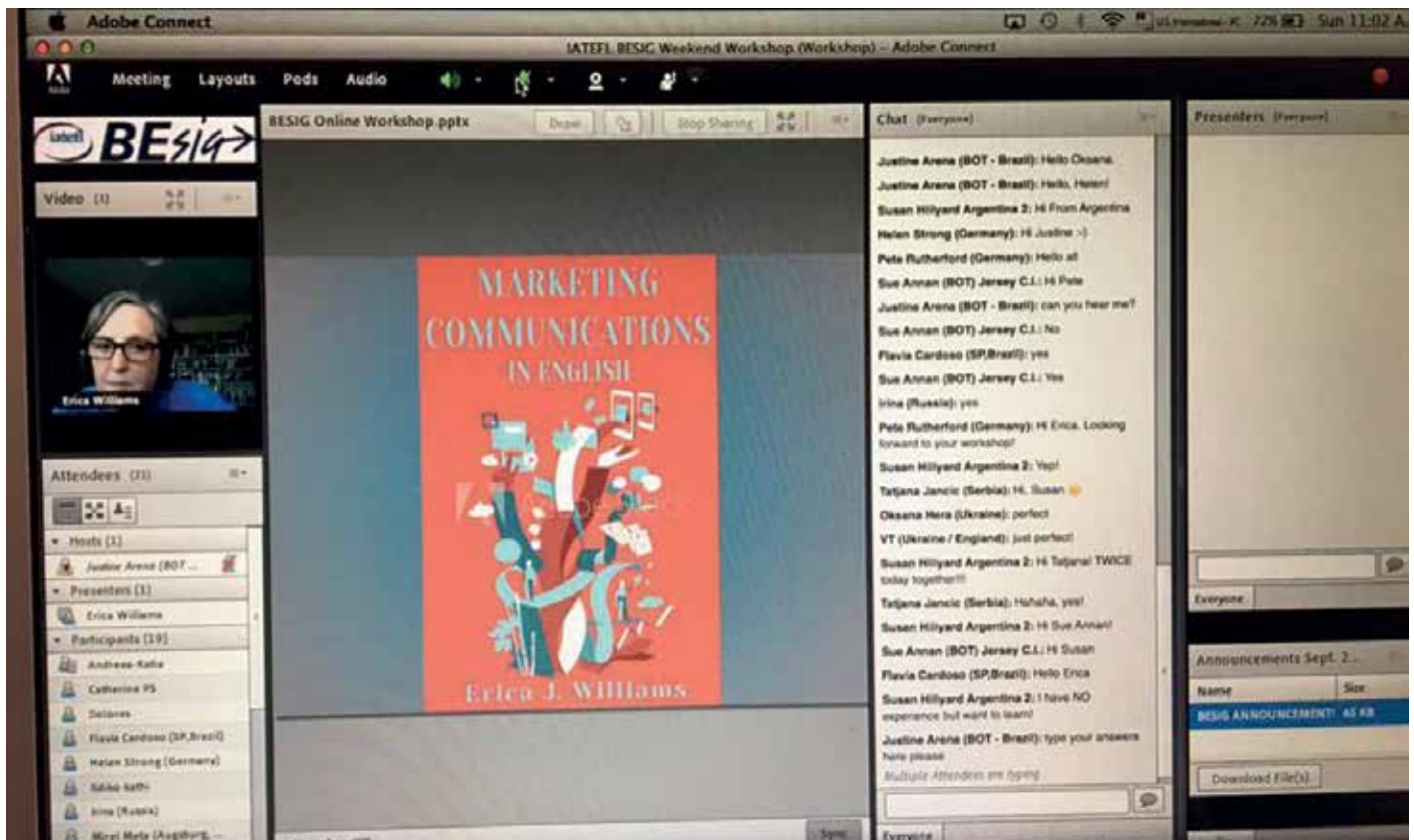
Today it is quite common to find bloggers,

youtubers, instagrammers etc. using 'Influencer marketing' especially in the fitness/cosmetics industries. My personal favourite was 'Ambush marketing' which can offer a great effect for minimal costs. This could be as simple as giving out free samples of something to athletes to help its popularity, but is not connected with the official sponsorship deal.

We then discussed practical applications in the classroom. The chat box was particularly busy during this workshop, and some great ideas were offered which you can read while watching the recording of the webinar on the BESIG website.

Erica has recently published a book with Wayzgoose Press and those, and many more ideas, are contained therein.

We were left with her conclusion that business English is too broad a subject, and that to continue to work in the future we will all need to become specialists of some kind or another.



As well as being an Eltchat moderator, Sue Annan works in a private language school in the Channel Islands, where she teaches both general and business English and trains teachers for Trinity College London. She has been a member of BESIG since 2008.



Shakespeare in business English

Kirsten Waechter looks at the past through Shakespeare’s plays to prepare for the future.

You may find my title odd for two reasons: first, what has Shakespeare got to do with business? And secondly, why looking to the past to get ready for the future? Well the answer to question one is – a lot, as Shakespeare was also a savvy businessman who in his life and his plays applied a lot of stratagems at use in international business today. The answer to question two is that in Shakespeare’s times, the great scientists believed that in the present we make a memory to make use of it in the future when the present will be past. So Shakespeare’s plays can be seen as memories or blueprints that are still useful today.

Shakespeare as a businessman

Let us start with Shakespeare’s qualities as a businessman: he was part-owner of the Globe theatre and another London theatre; for both he sold different types of tickets to increase the audience, from one penny for the grounds to six pennies for the seats. And even in his plays he catered for this mixed audience: so he really knew his target groups!

The money he made from his theatre activities he invested wisely: he bought land in his hometown Stratford. He is also reported to have bought and sold grain, so he did not limit his activities to the arts. Actually, you wonder where he found the time to write all those plays!

Just like any major Hollywood studio, he was aware of the return on investment that you could get from making sequels – the first and second parts of *King Henry IV* and *King Henry V* and the first, second and third parts of *King Henry VI* can only be compared to the other most successful British series – James Bond!

Today, we only need to look at Shakespeare the brand: popular across the globe, you can label anything



Theatre manager: Shakespeare’s Globe in London

‘Shakespeare’ and you have a money printing machine. So even 400 years after his death, the marketing of the Shakespeare legacy is a great example of franchising, brand stretching and milking it while you can. And that will hold true possibly for the next 400 years as nothing British sells better except for the Royal Family, another great brand. Which nicely introduces the next theme of leadership – a great topic in many of Shakespeare’s plays.

Leadership and management

One central theme in many plays is that of good and bad leadership; there are successful leaders who motivate and inspire people, win wars and unite nations (*Henry V*), and there are usurpers and poor leaders who lack principles and are a danger to their country (*Macbeth*).

Another interesting aspect useful for management is Shakespeare’s take on gender, language and power. Changing the gender of characters reveals gender

as the power-lending aspect and illustrates the different use of power language. Both can be studied in, for example, *12th Night* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

One of the best known cases of what happens when a leader misses out on decision-making power is certainly Hamlet. His procrastination, his inability to act, his lack of leadership and his intrigues cost a lot of people their lives and lose him his empire in the end.

Another hot topic is that of proper succession management: King Lear cannot let go of his power and fails to see which of his three daughters would make the best successor. We learn how important succession management is to save your business enterprise – and a kingdom is nothing but an enterprise – from going under.

Trade and globalisation

Thinking about trade and globalisation one needs to realise that Shakespeare lived in an age when Britain started

building its empire, e.g. establishing new colonies in the US and fighting against Spanish hegemony. As a result, these topics were important for Shakespeare too so Shakespeare had his plays set outside the UK, in Denmark and also Italy. The first play that comes to mind here is *The Merchant of Venice* (from which I borrowed my title) and features several aspects of business such as trade and the value of assets.

Globalisation can best be illustrated with *The Comedy of Errors* where characters have to locate certain countries and are unable to. This play also voices the feeling of homelessness and uncertainty that many people experience with globalisation.

A more surprising topic might be the recent revival of barter trade: exchanging goods for goods and not money. In *Richard III*, when he is about to lose the final battle, King Richard in his famous speech would have swapped his kingdom for a horse when he had to ask himself a very crucial question: what use are all your fixed assets of land and buildings and other property that make up your kingdom in a situation where you just need a high level of flexibility and mobility? In other words, accessible assets such as money or means of transport. How much would you get for a kingdom these days, anyway?



Barter trade: a kingdom for a horse as in *Richard III*

of Denmark” reflects the current anti-EU tendencies there – and not only there. So *Hamlet* may be an excellent kick-off to discuss the EU with a group of BE learners. Remember, in the end, Norway takes over and they are not members of the EU at all!

Business communication

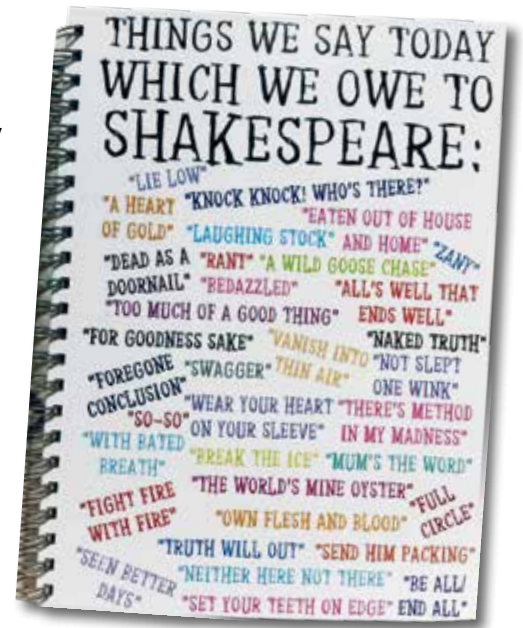
Shakespeare also looked into how we use language to get what we want. In *The Tempest*, today often interpreted as a post-colonial play, the slave and the master negotiate their terms of freedom. And as Shanti Cumaraswamy Streat writes, the military leader Coriolanus needs to learn the ropes of political negotiation to succeed in being elected as a senator; he needs to learn how to get people’s trust.

And trust is not only a problem for Coriolanus. Which employees to trust is one of the key issues in *Othello* – is his trouble not simply due to poor recruiting and people management? That you should never hire people who a) despise you because of your background and skin colour and b) want your job?

And to *Hamlet* once more: the BBC invited some of the finest actors (including Judi Dench, David Tennant, and Benedict Cumberbatch plus a comedian and Prince Charles) for a comedy sketch and asked them to do the famous “To be, or not to be” soliloquy – this video is an excellent case study for presentation courses looking at emphasis and pronunciation.

Shakespeare recorded and coined a lot of phrases in his time and made a vast contribution to the English language we use today – not only in business. His quotes are popular with management coaches and you can find plenty of examples on the Internet if you want to use them in your classroom. So, All’s Well that Ends Well.

Don’t forget – if Shakespeare did not know



something, he made it up or borrowed from others. Some people still believe he was not alone in writing his plays but had collaborators, so getting inspiration from different sources is another quality where the bard can be a role model for business English teachers and students.

So you see, the past can make sense as a blueprint for the future if we just know where to look. Although we have all these new apps and technologies, we still seem to be fighting the same struggles as the characters in Shakespeare’s plays.

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- <https://goo.gl/XBBUxL>

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Analytical tools in business English

Ben Dobbs describes some essential tools for business English trainers.

Business English will often be the medium used to troubleshoot, solve problems, think creatively or analyse situations or the context of the business environment in which a business unit operates.

To solve problems creatively requires a range of essential tools and strategies which can also be brought into business English training situations. Here, I will give a brief overview of some of the tools. This is not intended to be exhaustive but to serve as a quick introduction, source of ideas and pointer to further research which a business English trainer may wish to undertake to know, understand and use these tools better.

There are several essential tools and strategies that a business English trainer may use in their sessions whether these are group or one-to-one sessions. These are beneficial to course participants on two levels: firstly, as a carrier for language and, secondly, for the actual analytical content which may benefit an international worker in their working life. They are also engaging tasks which can work alone or in open or closed groups (they may form part of a written report or presentation). As an added benefit, they require very little preparation or material. The final product can be presented on a flipchart, text or slides.

The only caveat for their use, for the trainer, is to remember we are training our participants in business English, not their business practices. Additionally, especially in a one-to-one context, sensitive or confidential information may also surface, so a contract in terms of non-disclosure may need to be signed.

There are nine easy-to-use tools which can be of great use to business English teachers, trainer and coaches: the classic SWOT and variants on PEST analysis,

the Marketing Mix and Product Life Cycle, the planning tool known as a Gantt Chart, the BCG Matrix, Porter's Five Forces, Stakeholder Analysis and the Ansoff Matrix.

SWOT and LoNG PESTLE:

SWOT is a classic tool which can be applied to multiple entities; a SWOT analysis can be used to analyse not only the, mainly internal, strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) of a company and the, mainly external, opportunities (O) it has and threats (T) it faces but also those of a department, a team, a campaign or of an individual such as a manager in the form of self-evaluation and reflection. What falls under each category will depend on the focus of the analysis.

PESTLE (political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental) is a related tool used to analyse the environment in which a business operates – the results under each heading may be positive, negative or neutral. A PESTLE analysis should also be LoNG in that it focuses on local (Lo), national (N) and global (G) factors which impact upon a business unit. As these variables are typically external to a business unit, they can link to the O and T of SWOT depending on their nature and impact.

These analyses can be applied to the real world and the context in which course participants work or may form part of a case study analysis. Whatever the analysis forms part of, each should be justified and each point made must be elaborated upon in a critical way. The results may be presented as part of a presentation or written report, most likely along with other tools. If written, they may be expressed in a matrix/grid or as paragraphs.

The Marketing Mix, the Product Life Cycle, BCG Matrix and the Ansoff Matrix:

First there were the 4 Ps, then the 7 Ps, now you may be able to find 11 to 17 Ps or more. Each one relating to some variable connected to a marketing plan. For language training, some lend themselves better than others and so we should remember to adapt the tool for our ends rather than thinking as marketers. Some suitable Ps for the language training room which can drive creativity rather than, perhaps, real-world marketing plans in a short time are:

- Product(s) – what is being offered or developed.
- People – who is involved, the target customer or demographic, management, staff and so on.
- Participation – in what ways people can engage with the product or company; linked to promotion in many ways (such as online social media).
- Place – where the product is sold, manufactured, used and so on.
- Price – costs and pricing including those to the customer and the manufacturer.
- Process(es) – what is involved in producing, obtaining or delivering the product or service?
- Predictions – what do you think will happen? This includes forecasts.
- Promotion – advertising in a traditional (mass, non-specific) or non-traditional (targeted) way using a range of platforms.
- Packaging – in the case of physical items; not simply a matter of aesthetics, but of making the item appealing and using packaging that is appropriate and functional.

All of the above link to the idea of brands and branding and, while these tools are more naturally suited to marketing, they are still good carriers for general business language and that which relates more specifically to marketing. Another tool which may be brought in here is the Product Life Cycle which will inform changes needed to the Marketing Mix.

The Product Life Cycle tracks the stages a product goes through from its development to introduction in the market and growth, to maturity and ultimate decline. This is measured in terms of time and sales. At introduction, there will be low sales and likely high costs and no profits. This gives way to the growth stage. During growth, sales increase and hopefully profit is achieved. A product will at some point reach maturity. At maturity, sales are constant but head into decline after peaking; at this point, the product may be withdrawn.

The BCG (Boston Consulting Group) Matrix can also inform strategy relating to products such as range and marketing plans. This contrasts relative market share with market growth rate. This results in classification of products as ‘dogs’ (low market share and low growth), ‘question marks’ (low market share with high growth), ‘cash cows’ (high market share and low growth) and ‘stars’ (high market share and high growth).

Similarly, the Ansoff Matrix looks at products and markets – each classified as current existing products or markets, or future potential ones – and provides information linking to marketing. This puts forward four marketing possibilities: market penetration (for an existing product and market), product development (for new products to an existing market), market development (new markets for an existing product) and diversification (new products in a new market).

Gantt Charts:

Gantt Charts are management tools used for planning the stages of projects and showing what events or processes are running concurrently or consecutively and what the milestones (i.e. progress markers) or tollgates (i.e. stages that must be completed as a pre-requisite to the next) are.

Planning a launch:

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Market research												
Data analysis												
Product designs discussions												
Materials sourcing												
Marketing planning												
Manufacture of first batch												
Marketing campaign												
QA												
Launch												

A research project:

	w/c 1st	w/c 8th	w/c 15th	w/c 22nd	w/c 29th	w/c 5th	w/c 12th	w/c 19th	w/c 26th	w/c 3rd	w/c 10th	w/c 17th
Market Research Phase												
Design												
Piloting and revisions												
Conducting Research												
Data Analysis Phase												
Compilation												
Statistical testing												
Analysis												
Final Report Production												
Planning												
Writing												
Editing and rewriting												
Production and handover												

The two rather generic examples above show how Gantt Charts can be used in project planning. The first simply showing the length of each stage while the second shows the total time for each stage and its subdivisions.

Other variations are possible – a shifting line can be added to show the current time, more colours may be placed to show actual time taken and colours codes can also show who is responsible. Markers may be placed on the charts to show milestones and tollgates.

Gantt Charts work well with real or imagined projects and are useful for practising tense and aspect. They can also be used with case studies and as part of the planning for implementation of a solution or some form of action such as a marketing plan.

Stakeholder Analysis:

A stakeholder is anyone who is affected by or affects a business unit. It is commonly confused with shareholder which is only one of many potential stakeholders. Analysing and managing stakeholders is useful for its real-life implications but also for the language it requires. To begin with, it is necessary to (once we have checked understanding of the term) brainstorm all stakeholders, then to analyse the relative levels of power and interest each

stakeholder has and place them into the visual representation of the analysis.

The analysis may be presented as a grid with the various stakeholders placed into boxes. Alternatively, the analysis may also be represented as plots on a graph plotting power against interest. Once we have our analysis, other variables such as likelihood to use power and motivation can be considered. Finally, a justified, critical and creative action plan can be produced.

Five Forces:

A Five Force Analysis considers five areas in order to analyse the issues of threats and who is in possession of the power in a business situations:

- Competitive rivalry
- Threat of substitution
- Bargaining power of suppliers
- Bargaining power of buyers/customers
- Threat of new entrants

From this analysis, a business can know the relative strength of its own position in its business environment or when analysing a potential move into a new environment.

Follow-up:

Each tool provides informative and interesting data through the application of creative and critical thought. In order to be

useful, this should always be followed by consideration of the practical applications of the synthesised information and production of a practical action plan.

Justification for use of the tools:

So, why should we as business English trainers use these tools?

- As added value to the basic content of business English training and to move beyond the 'big six' traditional functions of business English: presenting, chairing and participating in meetings, writing business documents, negotiating, socialising and networking and lastly, telephoning.
- When providing one-to-one training or when coaching (such as a client who is 'stuck' or needs to create a plan or analyse a business situation).
- As group tasks with analysis of a case study for open groups or one's own company for closed groups or one-to-one sessions.
- As part of projects or written reports such as case study analyses, feasibility reports, academic work or critical research work in business English for English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) training.
- To challenge mindsets, assumptions and thought processes or to drive reflections and creativity.
- Developing critical and creative thinking and decision-making.
- To ensure that there is appropriate 'business' content during the training which uses the client as a resource.
- As a carrier for language and a driver for language feedback when taking a task-based approach in training.
- To discover more about your client, their context, products, situation, ideas and roles.
- In meeting simulations, to remove the acting of roleplay and bring in real life or create more realistic business-like meetings or presentations with real-life content.
- For real-life decisions, problems and challenges and allowing our trainees

BESIG

BESIG, the Business English Special Interest Group of IATEFL, is a professional body representing the interests and serving the needs of the international business English teaching community.

BESIG's members are mainly teachers of Business English and include both native and non-native speakers of English. The largest proportion of our members come from Europe but we also have members in over 50 countries including South America, Africa and Asia.

BESIG offers you ways to improve your expertise in teaching Business English and a link with other people in the profession. We do this through our annual international BESIG conferences, regional workshops, regular newsletters and reports describing conference papers/workshops in detail.

For information of current interest, please see:

- Our website at: <http://www.besig.org>
- The wiki: <http://wiki.besig.org>
- The LinkedIn group: <http://linkedin.besig.org>
- Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BESIG>

Important Dates

- **28–29 Oct 2016:** TEASIG & ETAS joint conference, Aigle, Switzerland
- **4–6 Nov 2016:** BESIG 29th Annual Conference with MaWSIG strand, Munich, Germany
- **3 April 2017:** IATEFL BESIG PCE, SECC, Glasgow
- **4–7 April 2017:** IATEFL Glasgow 51st Conference and Exhibition

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to find their own paths and improving their own working, managerial or leadership practices.

- As tasks or exercises to use that require little or no preparation (beyond a flipchart and markers in some cases) but have real benefit to the trainer and participants.

Conclusions:

Business English trainers can deal

with much more than just the linguistic and the functional. That is to say they can go beyond grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, lexis and the traditional focuses of language for presentations, negotiations and so on. Think critically, think creatively and consider who you are working with and what their objectives really are. Evaluate which of these tools can be applied, where, when and how. By using some, or at least keeping them in your repertoire, you can add much more to your business English training.



Ben Dobbs is an independent in-company trainer and coach who is also accredited to run the Cert IBET teacher training qualification. He specialises in areas of communication and business functions ranging from language to intercultural and interpersonal skills, coaching and leadership. Email: ben@bd-comms.eu.

Bringing background noises to the forefront

Tim Cornwall explores how sound effects in recorded listening exercises can reveal language clues.

It is important to encourage students to employ previously acquired knowledge gained through other classes or from life experiences when trying to make sense of English. One method to encourage students to use this knowledge is to focus on background sound effects and noises, i.e. non-linguistic features such as ring tones, doorbells, street noises and mechanical sounds included in many recordings.

Most sound effects can be placed on two interesting and very different continua:

The first continuum stretches from readily identifiable sound effects, such as traffic and airport announcements, to those that cannot be identified (perhaps as they are not very clear). The second continuum ranges from sound effects unidentifiable as to country of origin to those that can be identified, for example telephones and sometimes the language spoken in the background.

Identifying noises

As this exercise requires students to use non-linguistic clues to help understand what they are hearing, the content should be somewhat difficult. The goal is to have them use these noises to make some sense of what they are listening to and not vice versa. I find with published material that recordings from later in the same text or from more advanced texts are ideal.

The first important step is to have students identify what they have heard. Before we listen to a recording, perhaps even before I have completed any pre-listening activities, I ask them to listen and make a list of everything they hear.

After the first listening, I elicit ideas from the class and write them on the board. A second and third listening often encourage students to add to the list. If they are uncertain about vocabulary, they can stop the recording and discuss what they have heard. When they have been able to identify most of the background noises, we can begin to use them to make sense of the recording.

Discussing noises

While I do not overtly mention the two different continua, we begin to classify the sounds. For example, which sounds might be heard in their home country, Thailand, and which ones would not. Telephones, police sirens and ambulances are good examples of these sounds. With telephones in particular, many students realise that while they know it is a telephone, more importantly they know it is not a phone in Thailand.

It is great if the country of origin can be determined, because it might offer students insight into what is being said. This asks them to draw on one of many experiences gained outside class to help understand a recording.

Another set of background noises are those unique to a particular environment. This includes arrival and departure information at airports, train and bus stations or sound effects from parks, zoos or stores.

These are also discussed in terms of where the conversation might be taking place and what the speakers might be discussing. While student answers might not be correct, it is encouraging them to

use previously acquired knowledge to guess what speakers might be saying.

Adding noises

If a recording has some background noises, but could use more, I ask students for ideas. This exercise works best when students have been able to understand most, if not all of a recording, but perhaps found the content a bit dull.

I divide them into small groups and give them a tape script. Once they have reviewed the content and learned the vocabulary, they provide a secondary sound track. Encouraged to use their imagination and with the variety of electronic equipment they carry, students often use a wide range of sounds from roosters crowing to waves at a beach.

Once they are ready, it is show time with each group adding their background sounds while everyone else listens. Invariably quite funny and creative, students often have questions about different sounds a group has used leading to questions and conversation among each other.

If students are encouraged to listen to and use background sounds in a recording to help make sense of what they are listening to, another knowledge base is being actively employed in trying to understand English.

In doing so, students often come to realise they know a great deal from experiences in and out of school that they can use to help them to understand something in English.

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Mining professional forums to supplement a business English course

Olya Sergeeva turns to professional online forums as substitutes for specialist corpora.

With the growing body of materials informed by corpus analysis, it is now widely known that some long-held intuitions about language turn out to be plain wrong when we examine real language in use. This means that, ideally, BE trainers should inform their materials for in-company learners with a specialist corpus that is fairly representative of the learners' workplace communication.

Unfortunately, like many other BE trainers, I do not have access to such a corpus. In this article I will share an example of how I have partially addressed this issue, by informing my materials with professional online forums and WebCorp (<http://www.webcorp.org.uk/>), an online tool which allows access to a website as a corpus. Since

my learners work in an IT company, examples in this article come from Stack Overflow (<http://stackoverflow.com>), an online community of programmers. However, as there are professional forums for a wide variety of professions out there, the same approach would work for other specialisms.

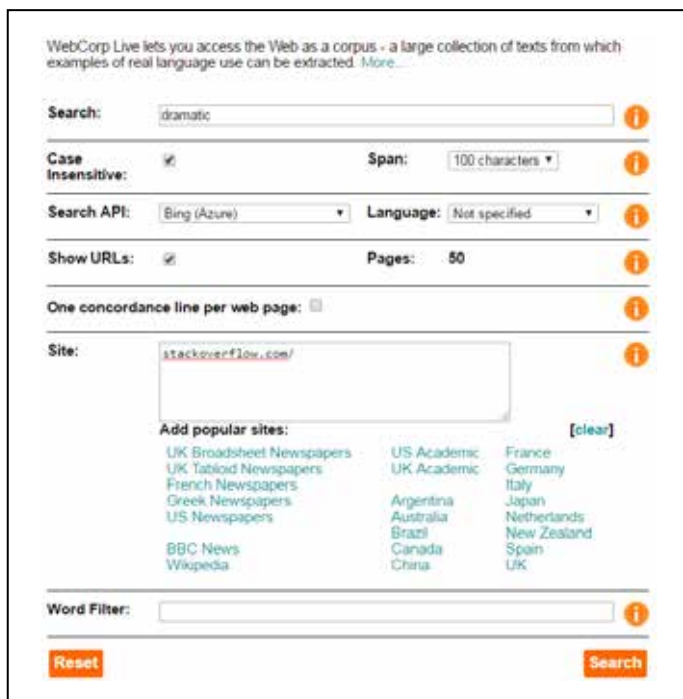
Before class

I wanted to explore the language for describing *change* with a pre-intermediate group. The coursebook page presented language for describing graphs (something that, according to the needs analysis, my learners didn't need to do) so I was wondering what context, lexis and grammar would be more appropriate

to focus on. To find out, I decided to look at the way the word 'dramatic' is used on Stack Overflow, as this word often pre-modifies nouns of change, e.g. 'a dramatic increase'.

To retrieve concordance lines from the forum (Fig 1), I opened WebCorp, typed in my search term (*dramatic*), chose the search engine (*Bing*) and typed the URL of the forum (stackoverflow.com) in the Site field (under 'Advanced Options', without the 'http://' prefix). I then copied the concordance lines returned by WebCorp to a Word document.

The concordance lines returned by WebCorp seemed to contain a lot of examples that shared the same topic of *a technical issue that causes some kind*



WebCorp Live lets you access the Web as a corpus - a large collection of texts from which examples of real language use can be extracted. [More...](#)

Search:

Case Inensitive: Span:

Search API: Language:

Show URLs: Pages:

One concordance line per web page:

Site:

Add popular sites:

UK Broadsheet Newspapers	US Academic	France
UK Tabloid Newspapers	UK Academic	Germany
French Newspapers	Argentina	Italy
Greek Newspapers	Australia	Japan
US Newspapers	Brazil	Netherlands
BBC News	Canada	New Zealand
Wikipedia	China	Spain
		UK

Word Filter:

Figure 1

Results for query "**dramatic**" from the site: stackoverflow.com

3: A **dramatic** speed difference between pdf to png vs pdf to jpeg up

4: What might be causing the **dramatic** increase in time for some cycles?

8: Why is there a **dramatic** difference between aov and lmer?

23: Database with SQL Server Backend: **Dramatic** Slow-Down with Multiple Users

57: Unfortunately, we've discovered today, that during April, there has been a **dramatic** drop-off in the number of pageviews (and other data) being reported for each individual

65: ... to 0.325s! That's a pretty significant speed increase! Why did that simple change cause such a **dramatic** performance increase?

68: ... sees a (push), it switches to a different solver that supports incrementality and that can have a **dramatic** impact on the performance.

69: Clever use of `std::vector` can bring **dramatic** performance improvements by exploiting caching.

77: ... if one particular installation lists its computers as `ibm1, ibm2, ibm3, ...`, there could be a **dramatic** effect on efficiency if a search tree is used.

79: ... so there are more weight updates, which takes a longer time? I don't see why that would cause a '**dramatic**' increase though.

Figure 2

What might be causing That would cause The use of ... could bring There is There has been There could be	(a) dramatic	↑ increase	in server response time in speed
		↑ performance increase performance improvements	
		↓ slowdown	when I roll out a new version
		↓ drop-off	in the number of page views in file size
		↑↓ difference between [speed] difference between	
(That can) have		↑↓ impact effect	on the performance on efficiency

Table 1

Why isn't it working It's not outputting My loop is acting Why is my form submitting	like the way the opposite of how when	it's supposed to	work? . . be making an ajax call?
(Present/Past Continuous)			

Table 2

of impact, e.g. 'What might be causing the dramatic increase in time for some cycles?' I decided to make this topic the focus of the communicative task (a discussion in which the learners share a curious case from their professional life and the way it was solved) and chose around a dozen appropriate lines for the handout (Fig 2).

In class

After a quick warmer (a discussion about recent changes in our town), I focused the learners on the nouns describing change and the word 'dramatic'. We looked at the concordance lines from the forum and noticed the patterns containing the word 'dramatic' in the first three lines ("a dramatic speed difference between"; "might be causing the dramatic increase in time"; "why is there a dramatic difference between... and ...?")

The learners underlined the patterns in the remaining lines (I monitored, encouraging them to look both to the left and to the

right of the word) and then were asked to organize them into a table (initially working as a whole group, and then completing their tables individually) - see Table 1.

Having compared their tables, the learners then tried to reproduce them from memory, checking with the handout of the forum examples when they got stuck. In the final production task, the learners wrote about two or three situations from their own professional experience using the patterns from the table and discussed those experiences in a communicative mingling activity.

Later I tried the same procedure with intermediate and upper-intermediate groups with the chunk 'it's supposed to' – a grammar point that I find quite tricky to explain through 'rules'. In this case, too, it was clear from the concordance lines that the structure has a very frequently used function (describing a situation where something isn't working the way it was supposed to), so I used this as a basis for the communicative task. It was also

evident from the concordance lines that the structure is often used in recurring patterns - see Table 2.

Reflection

On the whole, the lessons I taught using forum data had a very authentic feel to them, as the communicative tasks suggested by the examples from the forum were something that the learners could easily relate to. Moreover, by noticing and organizing patterns during the language presentation stage, the learners explored highly useful lexis and grammar that were inherent in the task and specific to their specialism: a similar search on an accounting forum (e.g. <https://goo.gl/tzW5A>) might well return the same verbs used with 'dramatic', but there's no doubt that the last column would be different. I also felt that presenting language points through patterns (and not through rules) made them easier for the learners to grasp and use.

Of course, there are issues with using forums as a corpus. While data from real corpora, such as the Corpus of Contemporary American English, are carefully selected, forum data are likely to contain typos and mistakes. Forum pages will also contain other elements, such as signatures and ads, which might skew the results. In other words, concordance lines returned by WebCorp need to be carefully proofread, but my experience shows that they still may be a very valuable source of information for a business English trainer.

IATEFL SIG Webinars

Please check <http://goo.gl/XPbV4X> for more information.

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Never miss an episode of *Game of Thrones* again!

Mandy Welfare recommends three interactive activities for using video in your classroom.

I have some tough students! One class, for example, has very specific needs ranging from requesting permission for renovations at a property to discussing investment analysis. Furthermore, they communicate with British English speakers in the UK and their level is B2. Quite a challenging class! I've found that using video with them is not only highly relevant as it provides authentic, specific and technical language, but it also relaxes the students after long work days (we meet at 6pm!).

Managing their expectations was my first challenge as they quickly learnt to expect more than just a cinematic experience without the popcorn! My second challenge was finding appropriate materials. Teaching tailored courses requires extensive online research to find materials which are both suitable and cover the required language point. YouTube videos are often long, over informative, too academic or contain bad language. Creating a fun and pedagogically sound lesson plan in a timely fashion which won't eat into that evening's episode of *Game of Thrones* is more challenging than you'd think! My third challenge was personalising activities so that they suit

my students, which sometimes proved time consuming, especially on Sunday nights which are not exactly conducive to feeling inspired!

So that you never miss the beginning of your favourite series and can enjoy it with your favourite tittle away from your desk, here are some tried and tested video activities you can adapt to suit your business English classes.

The voice-over

This is an activity which can be done at any level and for any topic. Let's say you have been covering the topic of interviewing potential new employees. Simply enter 'job interview' or something similar into YouTube and find an appropriate video. I'd recommend videos with more gesticulation and where you can see the participants' faces. Coursebooks also often have such videos (which makes our lives even easier as they are described in the contents pages).

So, you have your video: watch it. Please watch it! YouTube is a great resource but you never know what surprises could crop up.

The great part now is that no more preparation is required! When it comes to the video section of your lesson, tell the students they are going to watch a video of an interview without sound. Get them to speculate what the interview could be about and what questions could be asked. Watch the video without sound and ask them to take notes on the body language. Does this give them any clues as to what is being spoken about? Next, students work in pairs and create a voice-over dialogue. If your students are advanced and creative, they could do this spontaneously. However, for most students I'd recommend giving them time

to prepare and practise first. If they have their own devices, give them the link so they can re-watch the video. If you have a large screen, play the video on repeat so students can re-watch. Once they have prepared, each pair presents their voice-over. Once each pair is finished, watch the video with sound and see which pair was closest with their interpretation.

I hear some of you at the back saying "but why not just get them to role-play?" Getting students to act in role plays can fall flat on its face. Many students hate acting and the word role-play makes them shudder! Doing video voice-overs allows them to not have to worry about performing but just concentrate on the language. They are still using the skills of recognising body language from the video and will probably gesticulate naturally. I found that this relaxes students and is a good step into setting up a role-play organically.

Freeze-frame!

There are several ways of using freeze-frames in class and I'd like to mention two. One requires a bit more tech know-how than the other! Both involve predicting. Let's call the first: 'The future freeze-frame approach'.

The idea is to watch a video of something related to the topic of the class and stop at several points in order to analyse what has just happened and predict what might happen next. The main bulk of work for you here is finding the video. Once you have a video, watch it and choose 3-5 crucial points where you want to stop the video. These points should be just before something important is going to happen. Write down the exact times on the video or, if you are very tech-savvy, cut the video so it stops automatically. After watching the whole video, tell the students they will watch it again and

Online shop

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make notes on what could have been done differently or what feedback they'd give the people in the video. End the class with this discussion.

This next activity has the catchy name: 'The past-present-and-future freeze-frame approach'.

This approach differs somewhat from 'The future freeze-frame approach' as you don't initially show the students the video. Choose 3-5 points in the video either at random or at crucial moments, and create a freeze-frame image (sorry technophobes! However, do not fear, there are tutorials online which explain how to do this in a simple way. Even I learned how!). These are the images you will give the students with the task of creating the story which the video could tell. You could do this gradually giving them one freeze-frame at a time, or give them all the frames at once. Students present their stories to the class and then you watch the video stopping at each freeze-frame to summarise what is actually happening. Great fun!

The Apprentice Critique

Call it a guilty pleasure but I am a huge fan of this programme and my students tend to like it too. It incorporates a wide range of soft skills, business language, natural language and, most importantly, examples of how NOT to behave! This leads me to my final activity (drum roll please): *The Apprentice Critique*. This is a versatile activity and can be used with other videos too. It is a perfect follow up to the topic of giving feedback.

The procedure goes as follows: choose an episode – and ask students to watch the task section for homework. In class, each student is given the role of the team leader of one particular person in the video – watch the video with students focussing on that one person with the task of giving them performance feedback.

After watching, pair up students and allow them to role-play their feedback, practising feedback strategies and phrases which have been covered in class.

A final activity could be role-playing a meeting to discuss which person should be fired. A word of warning here: please

be aware of the company's current climate as this activity could be too close to home for some students if their company is making cuts.

I hope you find my suggestions useful! Now my work is done, it's *Game of Thrones* time!



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What is Mind Mapping?

Instead of writing information in vertical sentences, mind mapping is a simple technique for drawing information in diagrams using key words, phrases, and questions. Mind maps can take the basic format of a tree, for example, with a single focus point in the middle that branches out and divides repeatedly. The words, phrases, or questions are part of the overall meaning and lead the learner to understand and grasp a concept much more quickly:

(Adapted from the definition on Tony Buzan's website: <https://goo.gl/Kji2Je>)

In so doing, it gives learners the freedom to roam the infinite expanses of the human brain. Mind Maps are applied to every aspect of life where improved learning and clearer thinking will enhance human performance.

Mind mapping in today's business English classroom

It is important for teachers to apply as many different methods and approaches in the L2 learning experience as they can. Mind maps and mind mapping are only a few of the many alternatives available to teachers for today's modern classroom. They can be an alternative to course books, which do not appeal to certain learners. Using course books does not serve some learners well, especially those who have problems dealing with heavy text-based materials. Teachers should stimulate the L2 learning process by creating a collaborative and positive L2 learning experience; mind maps help to create that meaningful and positive L2 learning experience.

Pre-determined learning outcomes (as prescribed in many course books) may not lead to a 360 degree learning experience for the L2 learner. Mind maps stimulate the

“ Teachers should stimulate the L2 learning process by creating a collaborative and positive L2 learning experience; mind maps help to create that meaningful and positive L2 learning experience.”

L2 learning experience because learners begin to make cognitive associations with any given topic. With mind maps, learners become introspective, are able to recall experiences, and start to attach words to the existing pictures in their minds. Most importantly, they begin to write, so mind maps directly encourage the skill of writing. Senseless linear notetaking slowly goes out the window, and habits and attitudes towards L2 learning begin to change.

While mind maps support the fundamentals of any positive learning/teaching experience, they are not new to education; additionally they are no silver bullet to L2 teaching and L2 acquisition. They are simply another form of instruction, which helps to bring diversity into the L2 learning experience. Because L2 learners often wrestle with language emergence, teachers need to challenge L2 learners, and mind maps help to do just that. Nevertheless, in the end learners are all the better for the mind mapping task or project-based learning (TBL/PBL) experience. As an alternative to traditional methods, mind maps offer students and teachers the opportunity to grow and develop together in the L2 learning process. They also help to remove the idea that L2 learning should have forgone conclusions.

By using mind maps in L2 classrooms, teachers can:

- allow for task-based, project-based, problem-based and inquiry-based learning approaches to be integrated into the L2 learning experience
- convert the classroom into a laboratory for research and collaboration
- create interactive learning (communicative-oriented learning)
- give L2 learning long-term goals by chunking the learning experience
- help to create focus oriented classrooms with positive learning dynamics
- move to student-centered learning approaches within the L2 learning context
- support collaborative learning by eliminating frontal teaching (chalk and talk)

Teachers who use mind maps in the L2 classroom:

- remove pre-determined outcomes in their teaching approaches
- create recyclable lessons, which are easily adaptable to all different L2 learning levels
- personalize the learning experience by interacting with small groups
- take a step back and allow students to take over the classroom
- take a step back and witness 'learning in action'

By using mind maps in the L2 classrooms, learning is supported by:

- combining all L2 skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar)
- highlighting intercultural awareness in certain lessons
- integrating higher level thinking and problem solving into the learning process

- integrating 21st century skills into L2 learning
- integrating technology into learning (use those smartphones and tablets)
- integrating teamwork into the learning process.

By using mind maps in the L2 classrooms, students are supported by:

- being allowed to use their inquisitive and creative talents
- becoming introspective and retrospective (which can be motivating in itself)
- creating the language they need to express their own life experiences
- developing skills which can be used in real life situations
- enabling them to slowly become autonomous and start making choices for themselves
- improving their research skills and using technology in the process
- learning what is useful to them and their future goals
- understanding the meaning and sense of the L2 learning experience
- willfully participating in the learning process because L2 learning becomes interesting



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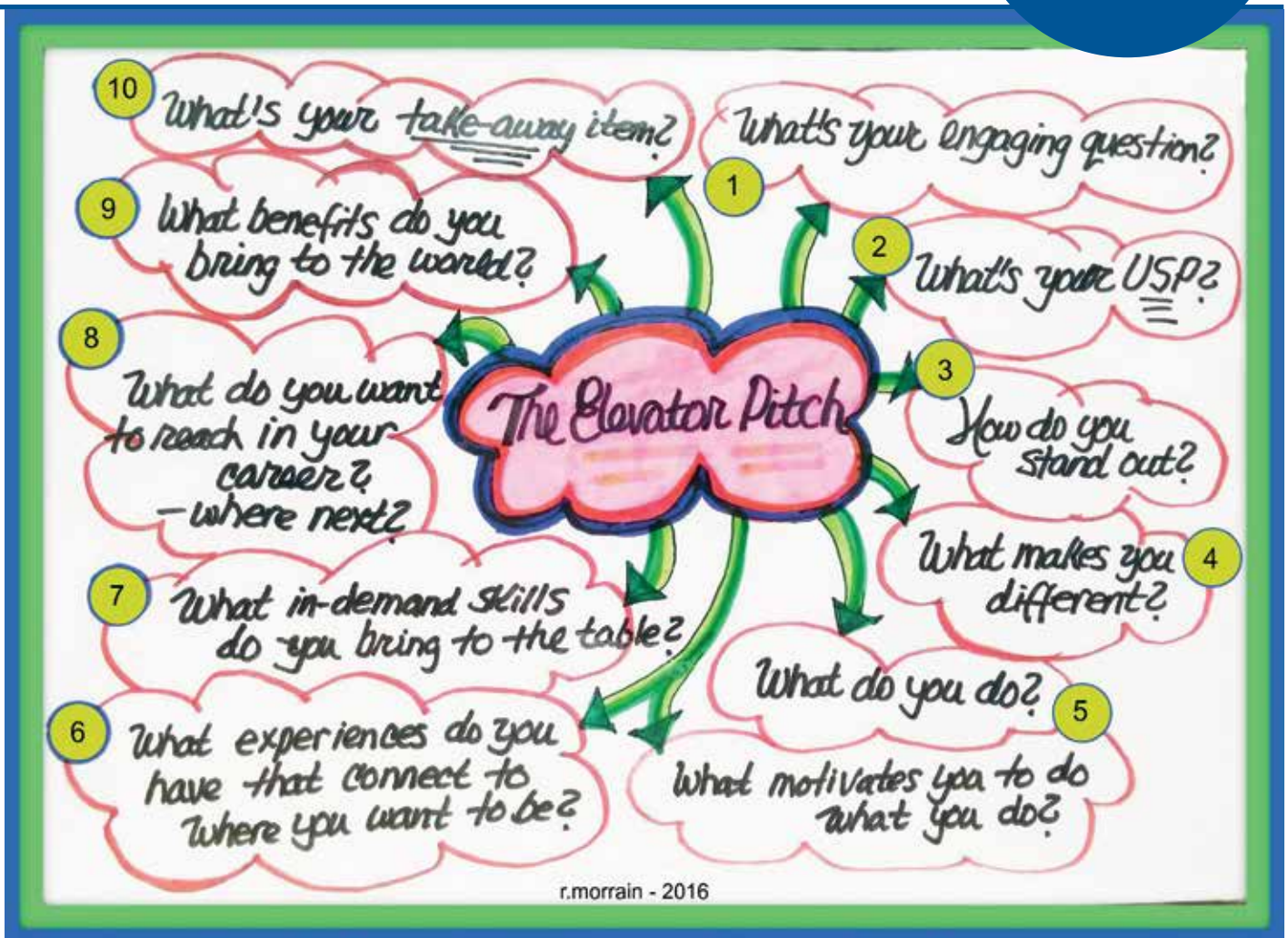
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MIND MAPPING MATTERS:

Using ready-made mind maps in your business English classroom



The Elevator Pitch

What do you need to make this task/project-based lesson (TBL/ PBL) lesson successful?

1. Three (3) A4 sized copies of the mind map (preferably in color), one projector, laptop.
2. Copy of the mind map (as a JPEG or PDF on your laptop).
3. Knowledge of PPT, and Pecha Kucha®.
4. Master copy of a Pecha Kucha® style PPT (preset with 10 frames @ 20 seconds each).
5. Good classroom management skills.
6. Some understanding of lesson chunking, plus basic knowledge of TBL/PBL.

Lesson 1: Part 1a – Speaking skills (45 minutes)

1. Write 'The Elevator Pitch' on the (white) board, flip chart, etc.
2. Ask for knowledge of the following terms: elevator pitch, engaging question, take-away, and USP.
3. Allow students to use their smartphones to research definitions.
4. Use YouTube for clips about the 'Elevator Pitch' to pre-teach (great listening exercise).
5. Walk around the room and engage students in an interactive dialogue.

6. Write their answers on the (white) board, flip chart, etc.
7. Ask them the questions put forth on the mind map, (do not show them the mind map yet).
8. Give them time to think their answers out.
9. Make a second round and listen carefully to their answers.
10. Be Socratic if needed, and remember that there is no right or wrong answer.

Part 1b – Connecting the dots – writing skills (45 minutes)

1. Project the mind map onto the wall; do not hand out separate copies of it to each student.
2. Have several A3 color copies handy to pass around the room (highly recommended).
3. Students can use their smartphones to take a picture of it (this always works out better).
4. Next, have them take 3 sheets of A4 sized paper, and cut each into 4 equally sized pieces. Make it fun by guiding them through a quick psychomotor exercise (fold and tear).
5. Have students write each question of the mind map on a separate piece of paper.
6. Students can arrange the questions in any order they choose but must answer all 10.
7. Now, allot the rest of class time to answering the questions.
8. After about 5 minutes, start walking around the room and checking for progress.
9. Assign the unfinished work as an out-of-class task.

Lesson 2 – Practice makes perfect – speaking skills (90 minutes)

1. As soon as the next class starts, have them pull out their finished assignments.
2. Assign them to work in teams (pairs).
3. Have them present their finished work to each other as practice and use their answers to formulate their individual elevator pitches.
4. Walk around the room to monitor for language and grammar errors. Make suggestions for improvement.
5. After about 30 minutes, have volunteers make their elevator pitch to the group.
6. Give immediate diagnostic feedback on language errors and solutions for improvement.
7. Depending on the size of the group, not everyone may get a chance to present.
8. Take the time to give everyone a chance – even if that means repeating this part again.
9. Announce the Pecha Kucha® assignment at this point.
10. If using Moodle or another communication platform, upload a master copy of a Pecha Kucha®, or email this to the learners.

Lesson 3 – Storytelling: preparing a Pecha Kucha® style presentation (90 minutes)

1. Introduce the PPT Pecha Kucha® style by showing them how it works.
2. Display and demonstrate the master PPT.
3. Go over the details of your expectations for the PPT:
 - 10 frames @ 20 seconds each (no exceptions)
 - Total presentation is about 3 minutes 30 seconds (10 X 20 = 200 seconds)
 - PPT changes automatically every 20 seconds once it has been started
 - No bullet points allowed
 - Each frame can have a maximum of three pics
 - No 'over the top' animation within the frames (very distracting)
 - Other than that, let them be as creative as possible within the given framework
4. Now, allow them to use the rest of classroom time to start putting it together.
5. Wait a few minutes before making your rounds, act as a knowledgeable guide.
6. Encourage them by giving praise, and be Socratic.
7. Before ending this part, be sure to go over any assessment criteria.
8. Let them finish their PPT work at home.

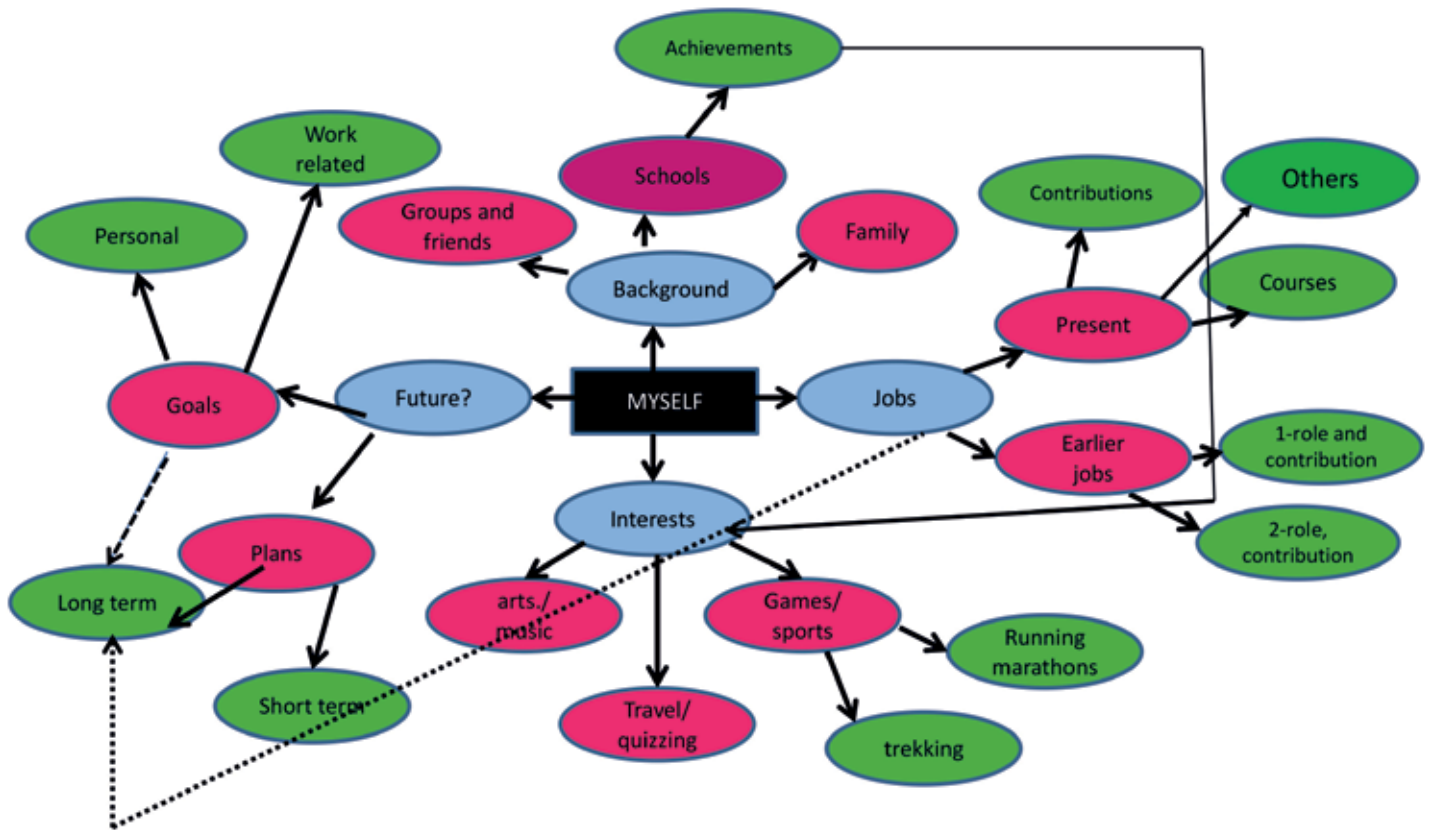
Lesson 4 – Pecha Kucha® Day (90 minutes)

1. Student's attitude towards their personal learning experience stands out on this day.
2. Be fair by letting them take numbers for the presentation order.
3. Upload all PPTs onto one laptop – this will save time and avoids any technology glitches.
4. Get started, and be consistent.
5. Give diagnostic feedback right on the spot.
6. You have successfully completed a PBL lesson with a simple mind map.
7. Moderate a round of reflection with the learners about their experience.
8. The more you repeat this lesson, the smoother it runs.

Ron Morrain from Houston, Texas, is co-founder and Director of Studies at the Language Learning Center Duisburg, Germany. He is also, among other things, responsible for staff development programs in the HRD department of the University Duisburg Essen.



Creating and using mind maps as a classroom tool



Mind map on Introductions

Mind maps (also known as concept maps) are a great tool in the business English classroom. They help to organize one's ideas and ensure that communication is easy to understand. They also help to clarify which ideas to focus on, keeping the audience in mind.

Some of the ways in which they can be used are to:

- Organize and collect ideas for a report or even a difficult email
- Manage time in a presentation
- Develop vocabulary
- Prepare notes/key points during a meeting

- Sum up at the end of a presentation/virtual meeting

The two main challenges that my students face are organizing ideas for both written and oral communication, and managing time in a presentation. I teach them to use mind maps to help them in these activities.

Mind maps are most useful in introductions. Whether you are facing an interview or just introducing yourself, a mind map can help to tailor your introduction to suit the situation and the audience (see above).

I get my students to prepare a mind map like the one shown above. If they are appearing for an interview, the mind map helps them focus on their overall qualities and achievements, and to answer without hesitation. Thus, they come across as fluent and confident.

Mind maps are versatile tools which can help in preparing for most communicative tasks. Personally, I use mind maps whenever I present publicly. I also use them when I create a course. Though mine are self-made, there are many apps available on the Internet which can be used to create mind maps.



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ZEITGEIST UNLEASHED:

Augmented reality, what it is and why it is relevant to the world of business English.



Usually, getting our business English learners to drag themselves away from emails and phone calls long enough to concentrate on our training is enough of a challenge. And now, just when you and your learners were getting to grips with vocabulary apps, another development has come along in the world of mobile learning. Enter the next big thing: augmented reality. But what is it exactly and is it relevant to the world of business English?

You access augmented reality (AR) through apps for mobile devices. Its key aim is to link and create interaction between your mobile device and the world around you, for example by allowing you to access live computer-generated guides to your surroundings. More obviously relevant to the world of language learning is the use of AR for the spontaneous translation of texts with apps like *Wordlens*.

If you use augmented reality with your trainees, you may be introducing them to it for the first time, so it's important that you take the plunge and demonstrate using it first. *Layar* is a good place to start. You can download the app for free to any device. Then log in to the *Layar* website (<https://www.layar.com/>), upload a photo, e.g. a photo of their company logo or whatever is relevant, and add a link to a video of you giving your learners a short voice message. None of this will cost you any money and it shouldn't take more than 20-30 minutes. You can then demonstrate to learners how the video automatically starts playing when you scan the image you used with your phone. As the original purpose of *Layar* was to help companies create interactive marketing opportunities, you can have learners who are involved in marketing use it to create their own

image-activated videos or voice messages which market their company's products. If learners participate actively in the use of augmented reality by creating their own content, they're more likely to enjoy the experience of working with it and be more motivated to push themselves to use it to communicate in English.

Augmented reality also lends itself to activities that business English learners can do outside of the training room to maintain contact with English in between lessons. For example, they can use the *Wikitude World Browser* app (<http://www.wikitude.com/app/>) to find out information in English about places in the town where they live or places around them when they're away on a business trip. Learners could then use the vocabulary in the texts they read for vocabulary building and/or use it to help them talk about the town where they live or where their company is with business visitors. When learners become more comfortable with creating their own content in augmented reality apps, they could also create their own interactive guides to these places on their phones.

As is true whenever you're using technology, it's important to be well-prepared and have a clear purpose in mind when you ask learners to use augmented reality. These apps are usually free and easy to use, but their main advantage for us as trainers is that they provide that 'wow' factor which can help us get weary executives to tear themselves away from those calls and emails and concentrate on English. Augmented reality is also a good fit for training situations where learners have to travel a lot as it allows them to access information and media in English relating to the world around them at any time and in any place.

Activity

Product or service presentation

Level: A2+

Time: 30 minutes preparation time + 30 minutes activity time

Technology needed: A mobile device with a video recording function and an Internet connection.

1. Ask students to take or find a photo of a product that they work on or with or a photo showing a service they work on or with.
2. Then, ask students to prepare a short (1–2 minute) video presentation in which they describe the product or service they've chosen and explain what it does or how it works.
3. Once students have prepared the content of the video presentation, they can use a device, such as a smartphone or video camera, to record themselves giving the presentation.
4. Students upload the video they recorded to a video-sharing platform, such as <https://vimeo.com/>, and retrieve the link for the video.
5. Students then create an account on *Layar*, if they haven't done this already, and log on to the website.
6. Students upload the photo of a product or service they chose to *Layar* and add the video link to this photo.
7. Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to access each other's videos through the photos on *Layar*.
8. They watch each other's videos and each student prepares at least one question in response to it.
9. Students ask and answer each other's questions about the content of the video presentations they made.
10. Monitor students' Q&A sessions and give feedback on them and their video presentations.

Claire Hart combines in-company and university teaching with materials development. She specializes in Business English and ESP, mainly technical English. Claire is interested in the latest developments in the world of ELT and helping to demystify them for other teachers.



THE PRACTICE:

Game of languages



What Wittgenstein said

Ludwig Wittgenstein was a 20th century philosopher whose writing has had a profound influence on how we view language. Recently I wrote a short reflection on how language relates to the world as we see it. I then referred to Wittgenstein's proposition that the "limits of my language stand for the limits of my world". We could interpret his statement quite literally and extend this to our classroom practice: in this specific sense we could also say that teaching our business English students develops their world.

The above may seem obvious or simple but I think on taking a closer look that it isn't. All our teaching is focussed on students acquiring skills in their second language, yet nevertheless we may overlook (in the heat of classroom practice) how connected student learning is to the real world. There have been many interpretations of Wittgenstein's statement but the above literal interpretation is meaningful when we look at the context of the classroom. Language is embedded in how we think and act; it cannot be separated from what we do. In that sense language itself is an activity: what we express in language is just as concrete and real as opening a book or leaving a room.

Language games

This idea of language as real activity may have led to Wittgenstein developing his famous language game concept, with the underlying idea being that language is similar to a game: the words we use have or acquire meaning, depending on the different ways we use them. So, almost like in a chess game, we make moves when we use language and obey certain rules, whether they are implicit or explicit. In this sense we all encounter different languages, each with its own set of rules.

This idea of language as game is immediately clear when we think of how children learn and use language, but it's also striking how appropriate this seems for second language acquisition. Many language-learning activities are game-like in this sense. Think of roleplays or simulations and the call-and-response nature of many business communication activities. When we ask our students to practise modifying their responses during a meeting simulation, we are in effect asking them to participate in a language game as Wittgenstein might have understood it.

Speak, memory

It's these two strands – language as real activity and language as a game – that I often have in mind when working with my business students. As a teacher I want them to notice the reality of the language they're using: it does matter what they say and how they say it. I also want students to be more aware of the game-like nature of language. What they say or leave out has an effect or evokes a response, for example in the more immediate forms of interpersonal communication.

With this in mind, I try to sensitise students to the construct-like nature of the language that they will encounter in business communication. I introduce awareness-raising activities which have an explicit learning purpose, but a twist is then added. One good example is an activity which I've adapted from one in a recent book by Nick Bilbrough (2011) on using memory in second language acquisition, retention in the working memory being an important condition for the ability to speak fluently. This particular activity (Working Memory Challenge, p.27-8) aims to help integrate new language in the working memory. The activity is as follows: students make a list of sentences using a structure which gets progressively longer. Learners work

in pairs. Learner A looks at the sheet and reads out sentences in that order. Learner B listens and tries to repeat exactly the sentence that Learner A says.

How far can students get before it becomes too much to retain and they start making mistakes? There are a number of didactical considerations here but the most important one is that listening also comes to the foreground, a skill that fosters comprehension and sharpens the response of students. Listening is a skill that could be given more attention in classroom practice, and this activity does exactly that.

Here's my own version of the above activity. I introduce it first as a basic model, dictating the statements for repetition by the whole class. This is to prepare the ground and raise student awareness of the game-like nature of the language we'll be practising. It's only then that we proceed with the pair work. The explicit goal of the activity is memory retention while exploring the use of the past simple, but I've turned this into a mini-story and added a surreal element by bringing a crocodile into the story.

Recently I happened to see a huge crocodile figure seemingly suspended on the wall of a Cologne building. It's not what visitors expect to see but the effect is striking and sharpens your sense of detail and the immediate environment. I thought a similar effect could be achieved with the students by introducing the crocodile in our storyline. The incongruousness of the crocodile in a classroom allows students more opportunity to notice how the language is being used and focus on the grammatical form they are practising.

We watched the huge crocodile (5)
 It just strolled into the classroom (6)
 We all politely asked it to leave (7)
 That's when it ate our beloved teacher (8)
 Still quite hungry, it gobbled the front row (9)
 Sitting right at the back, I watched the real-time show (10)
 But then a bell went off and finally I could get lunch (11)

The humorous twist in the story does get the students' attention, but when practising their own variations on other models I provide them, they see more clearly that there are rules at work when using language. In this particular case it's the 'rule' that the longer a sentence is the more complex it becomes. They see that certain grammatical structures are needed to make the longer line work which they wouldn't need for shorter statements. A didactical benefit is that this kind of activity immediately demonstrates that acquiring proficiency in a second language is a complex process and also involves effort and work.

Rules of the game

One of the most important considerations is that language is governed by rules but these like the above are not necessarily the obvious ones like grammatical rules. It's relevant that students become more aware of the game-like nature of the language they're learning. We want them to achieve fluency in production but they need to see the constructs in language and work on them too. Lessons which allow for activities that explore these constructs can support a better understanding of the skills they're seeking to develop.

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RESEARCH REVIEW:

Tabitha Hart

Learning How To Speak Like a ‘Native’: Speech and Culture in an Online Communication Training Program.

Journal of Business and Technical Communication 2016, Vol. 30 (3), 285-321



So often in this column we look at things in terms of communities, which fits so nicely into the idea of business English being about groups of people communicating in a particular context. This article reports on such a community, this time in the form of a case study on a virtual language learning community. It investigates not only what oral communicative competence in such a community means, but also how it is locally defined by the members of the community. The community in question was a school in the US that taught English to Chinese learners in China via a user interface that allowed communication by both voice and text, and included a comprehensive programme on how to communicate effectively in English. The lessons were one-to-one and designed specifically to improve oral English communication skills in preparation for the oral component of the IELTS test. Although this test is not specially aimed at business English learners the article makes various observations which are very relevant to what we do in the business English classroom.

Hart studied the community over a period of six years, using ethnography of communication and speech codes theory to analyse the speech code, or code of communicative conduct, used by members of the community. Her research question was as follows: “What are the local norms, premises, and rules guiding oral communication in this virtual community?” (p 290). Hart collected data from a wide variety of sources, including regular liaison with the community founders, participating as a volunteer trainer, transcribing lesson recordings, face-to-face and remote interviews with admins, students and trainers. This data collection and subsequent analysis led to

“...communicative competence is locally defined, emphasising the need for trainers to really understand how a community communicates, and not to attempt to come in as an outsider and tell people what is and isn’t correct.”

a decision to focus explicitly on a popular series of lessons which were designed to teach students how to answer specific question types.

Hart’s results show that the programme not only emphasised the aim of being able to communicate like a ‘native’, but was very clearly designed and run by native speakers aiming to get their learners through an IELTS test. Hart argues that the speech code operating in this series of lessons is significant for three reasons. First it reflects what was required for effective communication in the community (e.g. “organising your speech into a clear sequence, getting right to the point, not reciting prepared answers, and sharing unique and personalised information” (p 307). Second, it showed how the community developed its own cultural values, such as a “preference for being open and honest, having a positive attitude, acting proactively toward your own development, and taking charge of your own learning” (p 308). And thirdly, it demonstrated how students were in effect

“learning a culture” (p 309). Hart suggests that although the specific findings of this case study are not necessarily generalizable, there are nevertheless implications for anyone interested in business communication training, such as the premise that different communities “will hold multiple (and sometimes conflicting) understandings of how to speak effectively and interpret speech”, that such an investigation into a community’s communicative culture is potentially a useful part of a needs analysis and hence course design, and that “teaching and learning oral communication skills is not a culture neutral activity” (p 311).

So why did I find this article so relevant to what we do? For me there were various issues. First of all, although Hart uses ethnography of communication and speech codes theory, the findings seem to confirm what many other investigators of communities in different academic traditions (e.g. discourse communities, communities of practice, English as a lingua franca)) have found – communicative competence is locally defined, emphasising the need for trainers to really understand how a community communicates, and not to attempt to come in as an outsider and tell people what is and isn’t correct.

“... being able to account for the ways in which a culture shapes communicative behaviour is now a de facto requirement.”

Secondly, such video conferencing tools are becoming more common in the business world for a variety of communication tasks, including training and education, and have developed their own conventions and ways of doing things, just like any community; learners and trainers are still learning how best to use these technologies. This is of particular relevance to those of us who are dipping our toes into this type of training – we need to make sure that we understand the uniqueness and

limitations of the communication practices which develop in such a virtual training environment, partly (but not wholly) influenced by the washback prevalent in any language testing situation.

And thirdly, the article provides solid evidence of the interconnectedness of language and culture. In this case the community's conventions and practices were heavily influenced by the native speaker instructors and their own perceptions about what makes

communication successful. This is much more than the sort of language training which focuses mainly on topics such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. As one participant put it, "it didn't teach me what to answer, but how to answer the question" (p 286). Hart is quite right to argue that for anyone working in the business and technical communication community "being able to account for the ways in which a culture shapes communicative behaviour is now a de facto requirement" (p 311).



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Evan Frendo has been active in business English and ESP since 1993, mostly in the corporate sector. His methodology book for teachers, *How to Teach Business English* (Longman, 2005), is used in teacher training all over the world. Email: evan.frendo@e4b.de.



29th Annual BESIG Conference

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Join us at the Holiday Inn, Munich from 4-6 November 2016 for the 29th Annual IATEFL BESIG Conference, in cooperation with IATEFL MaWSIG. The theme of the conference is “Next generation workplace” and the plenary speaker is Robert Gibson (see below).

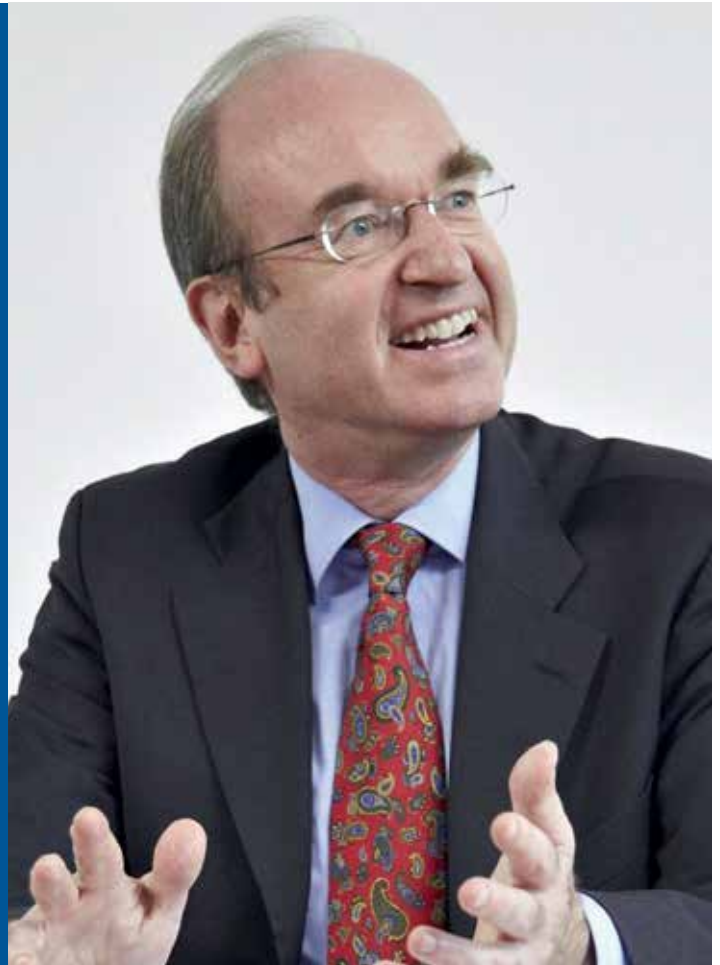
This year’s conference is being held in cooperation with the IATEFL Materials Writing Special Interest Group. There will be a total of 89 talks and workshops over two days, nine of which are dedicated to materials writing.

We are also pleased to be able to offer two excellent seminars on the Friday afternoon before the main conference begins: “The future of business English training” and “How to write excellent materials”.

Online registration for the conference closes on 21 October 2016. Further information is available on the BESIG website. We look forward to seeing you there!

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Plenary speaker: Robert Gibson – Next Generation Workplace: Challenges for language and intercultural trainers – a business perspective

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Robert Gibson has over 30 years of experience of language and intercultural teaching and training in education and business. He currently leads an international team of specialists which provides intercultural training and consultancy services for individuals, teams and organizations. He is also adjunct Professor in Cross-Cultural Management at Bologna Business School. His publications include *Germany* (Blackwell), *The New Skyline* (Klett), *Office Files* (Hueber), *Intercultural Business Communication* (Cornelsen and OUP) and over 70 articles for *Business Spotlight* magazine.

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