From Grammar to Genre: Teaching Oral Incident Reports in Technical English

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Teaching Context: Bosch TGA Vietnam – Technical English Instruction

Teaching Resource Summary:

This unit presents a genre-based adaptation of "Technical English 1B – Unit 10: Safety", designed for first-year vocational engineering trainees at Bosch Vietnam. Drawing on the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) within an SFL framework, the unit guides learners through structured speaking practice to deliver oral incident reports in workplace safety briefings. The unit addresses learners' speaking anxiety and lack of exposure to genre-based instruction by combining scaffolding, role-play, and an AI-supported simulation tool.

1. Rationale For Unit Selection and Teaching Approach

Considering ongoing geopolitical and economic shifts across the Asia–Pacific region, countries such as Vietnam are increasingly integrated into global supply chains due to low labour costs and strategic foreign investment (Basturkmen, 2022). This integration has made English a vital communicative tool in the workplace, particularly within foreign-invested manufacturing corporations such as Bosch Vietnam. This unit was selected based on my experience teaching technical English at Bosch TGA in Ho Chi Minh City and allows integration of insights from the Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication and Language for Specific Purposes units. It reflects Vietnam's educational context, where technical students are

strong in scientific subjects but often lack confidence in spoken English due to grammar-focused schooling. Having worked closely with these learners, I observed how this background contributes to speaking anxiety. A genre-based approach grounded in local cultural and educational realities can help bridge the gap between students' technical skills and their ability to communicate professionally in English (Cheng, 2008; Hyon, 2017; Basturkmen, 2022).

This report follows Option 1 of the assignment task, focusing on the analysis and adaptation of an existing unit of study—specifically, Unit 10 "Safety" from the coursebook *Technical English 1B*—to better address the target genre and the needs of LSP learners at Bosch Vietnam. The choice of this unit is pedagogically motivated by its direct relevance to the learners' future job roles, in which they are expected to participate in safety briefings and incident reporting procedures using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

The focus genre is the oral incident report presentation- a key spoken technical genre in workplace safety briefings. Its purpose is to convey structured, factual details about incidents, including time, place, cause, consequences, and follow-up actions. For Bosch Vietnam trainees, mastering this genre is essential for communicating clearly with German supervisors and international colleagues using ELF. However, most learners have little exposure to functional, structured speaking tasks in their prior English education.

 To address this gap, the unit was adapted using a genre-based ESP approach, drawing on the Teaching and Learning Cycle (Rothery, 1996; Martin & Dreyfus, 2015). Learners progress through Deconstruction (analysing a model), Joint Construction (collaborating on a safety report), and Independent Construction (presenting their own scenario). This aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, supporting knowledge internalisation through interaction and scaffolding.

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Grounded in local workplace realities, the unit not only develops learners' spoken fluency and genre awareness but also enhances their capacity for professional communication, supporting both immediate job readiness and future career advancement.

2. LSP Teaching Context And Theoretical Needs Analysis

The target learners are first-year engineering trainees (aged 19–22) at Bosch TGA in Ho Chi Minh City, enrolled in a German-standard dual vocational program combining classroom instruction and factory-based training. Their English proficiency ranges from A2 to B1 (CEFR). While they have solid technical knowledge and basic workplace vocabulary, they lack confidence and structure in spoken communication-particularly when delivering incident reports in English. The class consists of approximately 20 trainees, meeting three times per week for 90-minute sessions. English instruction is embedded into their vocational schedule, alternating between classroom and factory-based learning environments.

At Bosch Vietnam, *Technical English 1B* was selected as the core textbook as it aligns with the German-standard dual vocational model and includes relevant topics, vocabulary, and grammatical structures suited to real-world industrial contexts. Unit 10, "Safety," addresses the familiar theme of workplace safety and introduces language commonly used in incident reporting and risk communication. Moreover, the textbook's language level corresponds to Vietnam's national secondary English curriculum outcomes, which target B1 proficiency by the end of Year 12 (Hoàng Văn Vân, 2022), thus providing a clear bridge between general education and ESP requirements in vocational settings.

However, in actual classroom practice, learners in Vietnam often experience anxiety when speaking English and tend to rely on fragmented, grammar-focused learning methods—a result of traditional instruction that emphasises form over communication. While some vocational programs have introduced speaking activities and group work, their effectiveness remains limited due to a lack of grounding in pragmatics and clearly defined communicative

goals in lesson design (Ngo & Tran, 2023). As such, although the textbook offers a useful content base, the unit requires adaptation to more effectively support speaking skills, genre awareness, and context-sensitive language use.

To address these challenges, the lesson was redesigned using the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) (Rothery, 1996; Martin & Dreyfus, 2015), a genre-based model that scaffolds language development through three stages: Deconstruction, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction. This model is particularly suitable for learners who benefit from exposure to model texts and guided practice before producing independent speech. TLC also helps learners move beyond disconnected utterances toward coherent, purposeful spoken presentations.

Learners are motivated by both short- and long-term goals. In the short term, they use English to communicate with German supervisors and international colleagues in technical meetings, safety briefings, and projects. In the long term, English is viewed as a means to career advancement, higher income, and social mobility. Many trainees come from rural or low-income backgrounds, where vocational education offers a practical path to early employment. In this context, English serves not merely as an academic subject but as a functional tool for global workforce integration (World Bank, 2019; Ngo & Tran, 2023).

To ensure the lesson addressed real-world communicative needs, a theoretical needs analysis was conducted using a triangulated approach. This included: (1) diagnostic surveys on learners' goals and speaking challenges, (2) interviews with trainees to identify communication breakdowns, (3) interviews with technical supervisors to clarify expectations, and (4) analysis of internal materials such as incident reports and safety documents. The findings revealed a major gap in learners' ability to deliver oral technical incident reports—a genre crucial for workplace safety but rarely taught explicitly. These results justified the use of the Teaching

and Learning Cycle (TLC) to develop not only language skills but also fluency, discourse organisation, and pragmatic competence in technical contexts.

3. Unit Of Study

3.1 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

Deliver a structured oral incident report using a five-stage format.

Use modal verbs (e.g., *should*, *must*) to make safety recommendations.

Apply past tense, sequencing devices, and technical vocabulary accurately.

Communicate more fluently and confidently in ELF-based safety briefings.

3.2 Genre Overview and Justification

This lesson focuses on the oral incident report; a spoken genre commonly used in workplace safety briefings at Bosch Vietnam. It enables learners to present technical incidents clearly and systematically, following a five-stage structure: stating the incident, providing context, describing the event, reporting the outcome, and recommending actions. The final stage was added to reflect authentic workplace communication practices. Despite its relevance, this genre is often neglected in prior English instruction.

To address this gap, the unit adopts the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) within the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework, supporting learners' development from genre awareness to independent performance through structured scaffolding (Rothery, 1996; Martin & Dreyfus, 2015). Each phase is designed to progressively build learners' control over the genre: deconstruction focuses on analysing model texts and identifying key language features; joint construction provides scaffolded practice in pairs or groups; and independent construction enables learners to apply the structure and language independently in delivering structured incident reports in realistic workplace scenarios.

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3.3 Field Building

The lesson begins with a short discussion on common workplace accidents (e.g., slips, falls, equipment issues) to activate learners' prior knowledge. Visual prompts and safety signs are used to introduce core vocabulary.

Key terms such as *incident*, *injury*, and *hazard* are presented in a vocabulary box. Learners match words to pictures and use them to describe real or imagined situations. This prepares them to understand the communicative purpose of oral incident reports before analysing the model in the next stage.

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Unit 10 : Instructional Guide for Teaching the Oral Incident Report Presentation

Figure 1. Annotated genre stages in the oral incident report, mapped onto Unit 10 of Technical English 1 B.

3.4 Deconstruction

In this stage, learners analyse a model oral incident report from Unit 10, guided by the teacher to identify five key stages: stating the incident, providing context, describing the event, reporting the outcome, and recommending actions. The fifth stage, *Recommending actions*, is not included in the original textbook but was added to the lesson design to reflect real-world

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safety communication. Learners need to practise suggesting preventive measures using modal verbs (e.g., *we should clean the floor*, *warning signs must be installed*).

Students underline relevant parts of the model dialogue and match them to each genre stage. They also highlight key language features such as past simple verbs, sequencing expressions (e.g., *then*, *after that*), and modal verbs (e.g., *should*, *must*). Figure 1 is used to help learners visualise how the stages align with textbook content, while teacher-led discussion explores how each stage functions in workplace communication.

3.5 Joint Construction

In this stage, learners work in pairs to co-construct an oral incident report based on role-play tasks. One learner takes the role of an investigator, the other plays a technician reporting the incident. Using visual prompts or teacher-assigned scenarios (e.g., slipping on oil, falling from a ladder), they practise asking and answering questions to complete the report form. The teacher provides language scaffolds such as sentence starters and sequencing phrases. Learners rehearse together and give each other feedback based on a checklist that aligns with the five genre stages. This stage prepares them to produce a full spoken report independently in the next phase.

3.6 Independent Construction

In this final stage, learners individually deliver a short oral incident report based on a scenario assigned by the teacher. They use the five-stage structure practised earlier and refer to the report form as planning support.

Each learner presents for 1–2 minutes, focusing on clarity, sequence, and appropriate language use. The teacher uses a simple rubric to provide feedback on content coverage, organisation, and use of key expressions. This stage builds learner confidence and prepares them for real-life workplace reporting tasks.

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3.7 Language Features

Throughout the unit, key language features are explicitly taught and recycled. These include:

Past simple tense for reporting events (e.g., *He slipped, the ladder broke*)

Sequencing expressions (e.g., *first*, *then*, *after that*, *finally*)

Passive voice for objectivity (e.g., *The injury was reported immediately*)

Modal verbs for recommendations (e.g., *should*, *must*)

Technical vocabulary from safety contexts (e.g., *hazard*, *injury*, *equipment*)

These features are highlighted during model analysis and practised through controlled and freer speaking tasks, enabling learners to use functional language for structured workplace communication.

3.8 Adaptations from the Original Unit

While Unit 10 in *Technical English 1B* introduces relevant vocabulary and a report form for workplace accidents, it mainly focuses on controlled Q&A and lacks explicit genre instruction or extended speaking practice. To address this, the lesson was redesigned using the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC).

A key adaptation was the addition of Stage 5 – *Recommending actions*, absent in the textbook, introduced through speaking tasks using modal verbs (e.g., *should*, *must*) to reflect real-world safety communication. Other changes include a model dialogue annotated with genre stages, visual prompts to support vocabulary learning, and a final oral presentation task. These adjustments aim to foster structured, purposeful spoken communication aligned with technical workplace needs.

4. Limitations

While the genre-based Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) provides structured scaffolding for oral communication, its implementation in vocational contexts presents some limitations. Time constraints within compressed training schedules may hinder full realisation of each stage. Learners may also become over-reliant on formulaic expressions and struggle to transfer language flexibly across unfamiliar scenarios. For example, in trial lessons, some students were able to report incidents fluently in rehearsed situations but failed to adapt when the context or technical vocabulary changed slightly. Furthermore, TLC does not explicitly address intercultural nuances in ELF communication—an essential component at Bosch Vietnam, where learners often interact with non-native English-speaking supervisors. To mitigate these issues, TLC can be complemented by Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which promotes spontaneous interaction, pragmatic competence, and greater adaptability in real-world tasks.

5. Additional Recommendation: AI-Based Speaking Simulation

As an innovation beyond the textbook, our teaching team at Bosch Vietnam is piloting an AI-driven English-speaking simulation platform tailored to technical communication. This tool is designed to align with coursebook units and reinforce oral practice at home. After completing Unit 10, for example, learners access a corresponding virtual module where they deliver a spoken incident report based on guided prompts.

The system evaluates each recording using three automated metrics—semantic accuracy, genre completeness, and pronunciation clarity—then generates individual learner dashboards for formative assessment. For instance, a sample dashboard shows that a student successfully included all five genre stages but received feedback to improve sequencing expressions and articulation of modal verbs. Teacher feedback is also integrated to guide future

attempts. This AI-supported platform encourages learner autonomy and supports fluency development while providing actionable performance data for instructors.

6. Conclusion

Bridging the gap between technical expertise and English communication competence has become a strategic priority for vocational education, especially as young engineers are expected to engage in safety-critical tasks and international collaboration using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

This unit, centred on the oral incident report genre, addresses limitations in the existing coursebook by introducing structured, genre-based speaking instruction through the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC). Learners develop the ability to report workplace incidents clearly and professionally using modal verbs, sequencing devices, and technical vocabulary. Complemented by AI-powered speaking simulations that offer personalised, out-of-class practice, the unit promotes communicative competence, autonomy, and fluency—essential skills for success in bilingual and ELF-based engineering environments.If implemented effectively, this model can help learners take on roles requiring English communication, access better job opportunities and salaries, and confidently contribute to international teams. In the long term, combining genre-based pedagogy with targeted technology offers a scalable, equity-driven approach to vocational English reform, empowering technical graduates in Vietnam to participate more fully in the global workforce.

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