



Military English

Lesson: Military Linguist – Reading

Level: CEFR B1 / ADFELPS 5
and above

TEACHER'S COPY

Overview:

This lesson is about the important role Military Linguists play.

In this lesson, you will:

- ✓ read and find general information in a text
- ✓ learn the meaning of new words
- ✓ use new words in a discussion
- ✓ practise interpreting skills in a dialogue.

Teacher's notes are indicated by this: **TN →**

Prepare for Reading

- 1) ☐ Watch the video clip below and answer the questions with a partner. Type "Learn another language" on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eknGauMhEw), or scan the QR Code. **TN →** This funny video can be used to engage the students and to activate their interest in this topic. Before you play the video, ask the students to read questions a and b **only**. Then after the video ask students to discuss all four questions in pairs or groups. Encourage students to extend their answers by discussing the benefits of speaking other languages.



- a. What language did the fish use? **The fish spoke 'dog' language**
 - b. Why did the cat run away? **The cat thought the fish was a dog**
 - c. Can learning another language save your life? Why? **Yes/No because....**
 - d. Why do some military personnel need to learn a foreign language? Tell your partner what you know about that job. **(open question)**
- 2) Think about the role of an Australian army linguist and look at the activities listed below (a to f). Tick the activities you think a military linguist would usually do. **TN →** This activity aims to further engage students in the topic and encourage them to think about the roles of a military linguist. Encourage students to discuss why they chose a certain answer. Answers: b, c, d, e, f (all except a).
- a. Ask people to speak in English.
 - b. Learn a foreign language.
 - c. Translate documents from one language to another.
 - d. Work with international defence force personnel.
 - e. Communicate with military officers from another country in their own language.
 - f. Talk with local community leaders in a foreign country.



Reading

- 3) Read the article below and underline the activities CPL James Rigg usually did. Check your answers with a partner/a group. Do not use a dictionary yet. You are going to learn the meaning of the words in **bold** in the next exercise. **TN →** Students first gist read the text, but should not use a dictionary, as checking every single new word can make reading very time consuming. Students can guess the meaning of new words based on surrounding words and context, as well as analysing the grammar – for example: is the word a noun/verb/adjective? Is it plural/singular, or countable/uncountable?

Tip: When you read a text for the first time, you

- can try to read it quickly, to get an overall idea of the meaning of the whole text or of the topic of the whole text
- can try to complete the task that the teacher gives you but try not to worry about the words you don't understand
- are usually looking for some key words or key ideas



During Exercise Southern Jackaroo, Corporal James Rigg was one of six **Military Linguists** working with the Japan Ground Self-Defense* Force. He participated in every **range movement** and **daily brief**.

Japanese is a difficult language to learn. Corporal Rigg studied Japanese at the Australian Defence Force School of Languages for 12 months. He said 12 months was not enough for him to become **confident**. In the year after his language course, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) **posted** Corporal Rigg to Tokyo, Japan. Corporal Rigg

said, "This was a great opportunity for some **in-country language training** and this made a big difference for my interpreting skill".

According to Corporal Rigg, "It's not only about being confident in a foreign language, a Defence Force Linguist also needs to know the culture of the country". During Exercise Southern Jackaroo, Corporal Rigg explained some Japanese culture to his Australian colleagues, so they could **interact** with Japanese soldiers in a positive way. Corporal Rigg said the hardest part of this job was when he had to be the interpreter for a Japanese Officer who spoke really fast and with a different **accent**. "I really had to concentrate so I could understand what he said".

this is one
vocabulary item:
in-country training

Being an **interpreter** and **translator** is a very important job for the ADF's **mission** to support **peace and stability** in the region. It helps Australia **build relationships** with other countries. Corporal Rigg explained why he loves this job: "As an Army Linguist, I travel a lot, meet new people, learn about other cultures, and be the **point of contact** between Japanese and Australian forces. This is a job I'm proud of".

* Please note "Defense" is the American spelling. Japan uses American spelling for English words. Australia uses the British spelling: "Defence".

4) Answer the following questions with the information from the text:

TN → Have Ss read and answer the questions. Compare with a partner and then have open class feedback as a class. Just remember that the last activity is quite long, and don't spend too much time on this!

- How many military linguists were in James' team during Exercise Southern Jackaroo? **Six (6)**
- How long did James Rigg learn Japanese at the Australian Defence Force School of Languages? **12 months/one year**
- Where did James start to feel better about his Japanese? **Tokyo, Japan**
- Why was interpreting the Japanese Officer so challenging? **He spoke really fast and with a different accent.**
- What do interpreters help build? **Relationships**
- How does James feel about his job? **Proud**

Learning Military Vocabulary

- 5) The words in bold in the text are important military vocabulary that you should learn to use. Match the military words on the left to their definitions on the right on tables one and two. Look at the bolded example on table one. **TN →** After the students have explored the text and checked meanings, confirm their understanding of bolded vocabulary with 'Concept Checking Questions' (CCQs). For example, "what do you think happens during range movements?" A possible answer could include: "Moving troops, vehicles, or weapons systems across a training range or battlefield to a new place". If necessary, explain the meanings of key vocabulary in the student's first language.

Table 1

A Military Linguist helps people to communicate when they don't speak the same language	e	a. (n) moving troops, vehicles, or weapons systems across a training range or battlefield to a new place
range movements to relocate troops and equipment	a	b. (adj) feeling sure about what you can do and be successful
daily brief for planning an exercise	f	c. (n) when a student joins a school in another country
a confident speaker	b	d. (v) to send somebody to work or study in another place, or country
The ADF posted Corporal Rigg to Tokyo	d	e. (n) an officer who uses language skills for the military. This includes translating words, interpreting what people are saying, or teaching others a foreign language. The main job is to help people in the military understand each other better when they speak different languages.
in-country training (in-country language training)	c	f. (n) a short talk or update that happens every day to give information about what's going on

Table 2

interact with foreign military forces	j	g. (n) a person who you can speak to in an organisation when you need to talk about work or tasks
He speaks with an accent	l	h. (n) to make friends with someone by keeping in contact for a long time. This connection can bring benefits to all members.
Being and interpreter and translator is a very important job	k	i. (n) a situation where there is no war or conflict between countries. Countries in the region are friendly with each other.
a mission for supporting peace and stability	m	j. (v) to talk with someone
peace and stability in the region	i	k. (n) someone who uses a foreign language to help someone talk to another person who does not speak the same language
to build relationships with foreign countries	h	l. (n) the way somebody pronounces words in their language or a foreign language. For example, American and Australian accents are quite different.
A point of contact (POC**) for future communications	g	m. (n) an important military role/job/task

** In the acronym "POC", each letter must be pronounced "P. O. C." (Pee Oh See); however, in the written form, you will most often see it written as "POC".

- 6)  Now let's practise saying the words from exercise 5. Listen and repeat. **TN →** In the final activity, Ss will do an interpreting task, so it is a good idea to practice translating these words now so Ss are ready. Range movements; point of contact; build relationships; daily brief; accent; confident; posted; in-country training; mission; interpreter. If you speak the same language as your students, you could see which student can guess your word first. Say the word in the Ss' language and students can say back the word in English. If you do not speak the same language as the students, you could translate the words with Google Translate and the students could discuss whether they agree or ask Ss to interpret one-by-one and ask other Ss whether there are any other ways to say this.
- 7) Try to use some of the words from exercise 5 correctly in the sentences below.
- The **military linguist** helped the soldiers understand and communicate in a foreign language.
 - Practising **range movements** with other countries' military forces during exercises is an important way of learning how to safely move troops and equipment in real combat situations.
 - The Commanding Officer (CO) started the meeting with a **daily brief** to update all personnel on progress for the combined exercise.
 - Australia wants to **build relationships** with countries in the Asia Pacific region to reduce conflict and maintain **peace and stability** in the region.
 - Their French **accent** was so strong that sometimes it was difficult to understand what they said.
 - The **interpreter/translator** helped people who spoke different languages to understand each other at the UN meeting.
 - If you have any questions about your application, your Administration Officer will be your **point of contact (POC)**.
 - If we want to learn how the ADF conducts operations in Australia, it is necessary to join some **in-country training** during combined exercises.

Practice

TN → Allow a few minutes for Ss to have the discussion below. Just be careful with your time management! If you want to do the interpreting activity, you will likely need at least 20 minutes.

8) Discuss these questions with a partner:

- a. Does your defence force have interpreters? What kinds of things do you see them doing?
- b. What skills do you need to be one?
- c. Would you like the job on being an interpreter? Why (not)?

Interpreting task (Consecutive Interpreting) – Role Play

9) Read the instructions below and then practice your interpreting skills!

TN → This is a fun activity but takes a while to set up and run. Allocate around 20 to 30 mins.

- 1) Go over the instructions as a class. Ask instruction checking questions. If you think students might not understand the activity, you could show a minute of the example on [the video](#) the DITC website. N.b. There are extra notes about note taking and seeking clarification on your teacher's notes, but it is probably better to just mention these as you are monitoring and giving feedback.
- 2) Put Ss in groups of 3 to run the activity. Having the strongest student in each group go first may help.
- 3) When Ss have finished, bring the class back together. Ask Ss if there was more than one way to interpret some of the parts of the conversation. Encourage Ss to notice that there are often multiple "correct" ways.
- 4) Especially if Ss struggled, you might like to show them the suggested translations in the teachers copy. However, it should be stressed to students that this is only one possibility, and there are many "correct" answers when it comes to translating and interpreting.
- 5) Watch the [video](#) on the DITC website as a class.

Situation: You are a military interpreter during a combined military exercise between your country and the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Your role is to interpret dialogue between your commander and the ADF commander. The ADF Commander is meeting your Commander for the first time in Australia. At the meeting they will talk about preparations and planning for the exercise. Work in groups of 3 in the following roles.

Roles:

Student A: ADF Commander (speak **English** – use the transcript)

Student B: Your country's Commander (speak your **first language** – use the transcript)

Student C: Interpreter (**interpret** dialogue between Person A and Person B– use your interpreting skills!)

Interpreting skills:

- Always translate dialogue using the 'first person' – for example: "I welcome you to Australia..." Not "He said he welcomes you to Australia...". As the interpreter, you are the voice of the person speaking. You must use the 'first person' pronoun (I, my, me) in both languages in both directions of the conversation.

- If you did not catch the meaning of a word, do not pretend to know, or guess the meaning. Always ask for an explanation of the meaning from the person speaking. The person speaking will usually use different words to help you understand.
- When you ask for an explanation from a speaker, always politely tell the other speaker what you are doing. Always include the other speaker. Repeat the information back to the other speaker quickly and efficiently. **TN → Seeking Clarification:** Interpreters cannot be expected to know every word of a foreign language. Therefore, seeking clarification for unknown or less familiar words and meanings is an important skill for interpreters. When seeking clarification, it is also important to maintain control and flow of the dialogue between interlocutors to minimise any disruption to communications. Seeking clarification is a perfectly acceptable and natural part of consecutive interpreting. To minimise disruption and seek clarification at the same time, it is therefore important to keep both interlocutors informed of what is happening. For example, we can use phrases like: “Excuse me ma’am/sir, I just need to seek clarification for the meaning of a word” (in English or your language depending on who you are addressing). Then engage the other speaker as follows: “Excuse me sir, **would you mind** explaining the meaning of ...[word]... – I am not familiar with this term”. Then, thank the speaker for this further explanation and indicate that you will translate this for the other person (This is about maintaining control of the dialogue between both speakers without too much disruption and so that both speakers know what is happening, as well as feel comfortable with the dialogue and confident in your ability). Then, quickly return to the other speaker and provide the appropriate translation, allowing the dialogue to continue. An example of ‘seeking clarification’ has been provided in the example video for the word “range movements (see video timestamp 2.05) – Please note that this example of seeking clarification by the interpreter is not scripted in the dialogue below. Using the guidelines, seeking clarification should be done as required for unfamiliar words, expressions and meanings.
- Interpreters can take notes if they want – but not too many! You don’t want to distract the people from their conversation. A and B should be able to see the notes. You could keep the paper on the table if you have one. **TN → Note taking:** It is acceptable to take notes during consecutive interpreting. Always keep your notes visible to both speakers. If seated, just place your note book conveniently on your knee but in view. If at a table, notes should be placed on top of the table, not out of sight on your knee. Note taking should be quick and efficient, and not distracting for two speakers. Never try to write full sentences or try to copy down everything said. This is too distracting for both you as the interpreter and the interlocutors. If you are writing too much, you are not listening effectively. Only use quick short hand symbols and abbreviations – for Example, “AU” for Australia. Only use short hand notes to prompt your memory of what was said, and for any difficult words that need clarification.

B Foreign country Commander:
speaks foreign language only

Use the transcript to help you.

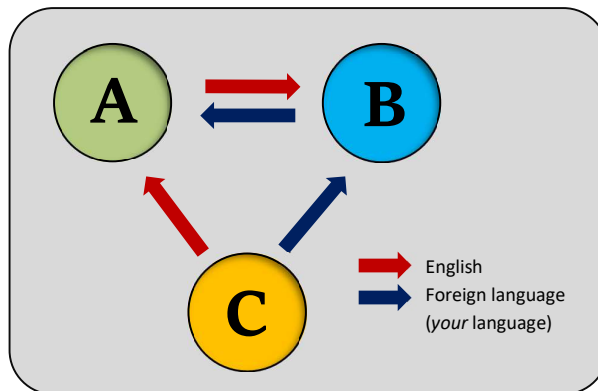


C Interpreter:
speaks English and foreign language

Don't use the transcript.
Listen and interpret.

A ADF Commander:
speaks English only

Use the transcript to help you.



Vietnamese

The student copy has “A” and “B”, but not the suggested translation “C”. However, the suggested translations are just one possibility. There are likely many different ways to get the same idea across!

Speaker	Transcript
A	Good afternoon. How are you?
C	Translation: Chào ông/bà. Ông/bà có khỏe không?
B	Chào bà /ông, tôi vẫn khỏe, cảm ơn bà /ông. Bà /ông có khỏe không?
C	Translation: Good afternoon, Ma’am/Sir. I am well thank you. How are you?
A	I’m fine too, thanks. Are you enjoying Australia?
C	Translation: Tôi khỏe, cảm ơn ông/bà. Ông/bà ở Úc có vui không?
B	Có chứ, cảm ơn bà /ông. Tôi rất vui khi được chuyển công tác đến Úc và làm việc cùng với các bà /ông.
C	Translation: Yes, thank you. I am very happy to be posted to Australia and to work together.
A	That’s good to hear. Well, let’s start with our daily brief .
C	Translation: Tốt rồi. Bây giờ chúng ta sẽ bắt đầu buổi giao ban nhé.
B	Đầu tiên, ông/bà có thể nói cho tôi biết nội dung của buổi giao ban không?
C	Translation: Firstly, can you explain what we will talk about in this meeting?
A	The aim is to discuss plans for both our forces during the exercise. Also, we can build relationships with officers from each country.
C	Translation: Mục tiêu là thảo luận kế hoạch của hai bên trong buổi diễn tập. Chúng ta cũng có thể xây dựng mối quan hệ giữa các sĩ quan của hai nước.
B	Ồ, thật tuyệt. Tôi rất vui vì chúng tôi có một phiên dịch viên quân sự ở đây vì tôi gặp đôi chút khó khăn trong việc nghe hiểu giọng Úc.
C	Translation: Ok that’s good. I am glad we have a Military Linguist with us. I have trouble understanding the Australian accent.
A	No worries Ma’am/ Sir! Our interpreter from Headquarters can help us. This will also help us communicate during our range movements.
C	Translation: Không vấn đề gì, thưa ông/bà. Đã có phiên dịch viên từ cơ quan trung tâm của chúng tôi đến làm nhiệm vụ. Điều này cũng giúp chúng ta liên lạc trong các hoạt động di chuyển.
B	Vậy, buổi diễn tập và các hoạt động di chuyển được diễn ra ở đâu?
C	Translation: So, where will the exercise and range movements be?
A	At the defence training area in Queensland.
C	Translation: Tại trung tâm huấn luyện quốc phòng ở Queensland.
B	Có bao nhiêu quốc gia sẽ tham gia cuộc diễn tập lần này?

C	Translation: How many countries will be participating in the exercise?
A	There'll be eight countries altogether, including your country.
C	Translation: Sẽ có tám quốc gia, bao gồm quốc gia của ông/bà.
B	Có vẻ đây là một cuộc diễn tập quy mô lớn.
C	Translation: It sounds like a big exercise.
A	Yes, it is. It's a good chance for all countries' armed forces to interact and train together.
C	Translation: Đúng vậy. Đây là cơ hội tốt cho lực lượng vũ trang của các nước tương tác và huấn luyện cùng nhau.
B	Vâng, đây là cơ hội tốt để phục vụ cho hoạt động huấn luyện trong nước. Vậy trọng tâm của nhiệm vụ huấn luyện lần này là gì ?
C	Translation: Yes, this is a good opportunity for in-country training. So, what is the focus of the training mission?
A	That's a good question. The main focus is on deploying military personnel and equipment for Humanitarian Assistance in a natural disaster.
C	Translation: Đây là một câu hỏi rất hay. Trọng tâm chính là triển khai quân đội và thiết bị để hỗ trợ nhân đạo trong trường hợp thiên tai.
B	Ừm, tôi đã hiểu. Đây là cơ hội tốt để các nước thêm tự tin khi hợp tác cùng nhau trong các tình huống thực tế.
C	Translation: Hmmmm, I understand. This is a good way for all countries to become more confident when cooperating in real situations.
A	Yes, that's right. When there are real humanitarian disasters in our region, we hope to reduce the time for deploying military personnel and equipment.
C	Translation: Vâng, đúng vậy. Khi có thảm họa nhân đạo thực sự xảy ra trong khu vực của chúng tôi, chúng tôi hy vọng có thể rút ngắn thời gian triển khai quân đội và thiết bị.
B	Vâng, cảm ơn bà /ông. Đó là tất cả những gì tôi muốn hỏi lúc này. Buổi giao ban hôm nay rất có hiệu quả.
C	Translation: Well, thank you Ma'am / Sir. That's all my questions for now. This has been a useful daily brief.
A	No worries. I will be your Point of Contact for the exercise. Please feel free to contact me at any time. See you next time. Bye!
C	Translation: Không vấn đề gì. Tôi sẽ là đầu mối liên lạc trực tiếp cho buổi diễn tập. Hãy gọi cho tôi bất cứ khi nào ông/bà cần. Hẹn gặp lại ông/bà. Chào tạm biệt!

- Read this article about military linguist for more information: www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2022-12-22/linguists-vital-relationship-building

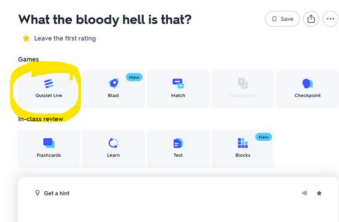
-  Watch the video clip about being a military linguist for the Australian Defence Force. Type on YouTube [How Australian Military Linguists Learn Languages Fast](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q64qTBfk0iE) or scan the QR Code to the right.



- For more practice with the words you've learned here, scan the QR code.



- **TN →** If you have time left over, and your Ss have phones with internet play Quizlet live to consolidate the lesson. You will need to be logged into Quizlet for you to start the game as a teacher. Otherwise, you **cannot** see the icon. Here is a video on how the game works - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q64qTBfk0iE>



- **TN →** If you don't want to play Quizlet live (or if you don't have the internet) there are many other games you could play to round off the lesson such as back to the board.

Instructions for back to the board [here](#)

Instructions for charades [here](#)

Instructions for Pictionary [here](#)

- This lesson links with → Lesson – Military Exercises
Lesson – Humanitarian Aid

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