English for Professional Purposes

Overview of English Training for FBI Language Professionals

Joseph Pimentel and Kimberly Krulikowski

FBI Language Professionals

- 95% native speakers of foreign language

- Test in both languages

- Accents impact perception

- English writing

ACCENT REDUCTION

Accent Reduction: Effective?

- Early stages

- Resource intensive

Accent Reduction: Set Up

- Funded by ODNI

- Selected self-guided training software: Carnegie Speech

- Canvassed onboard language professionals

- Set minimum training time of 30 hours

- Purchased and distributed headsets

Accent Reduction: Lessons Learned

- Technical issues
  - Network connection
  - Hardware
  - Add-on updates
  - Headset selection error

- Limited admin portal
  - Student progress in learning path?
  - Reports are too general

- Linguist commitment

WRITING

Writing: Effective?

- Great need to improve writing

- Language professionals & supervisors reported that the training was useful

- Resource intensive

Writing: Set Up

- Canvassed onboard language professionals

- Information requested

- Contract with local Berlitz schools

Writing: Classes

- 1-3 students per class

- Location, language, area of improvement

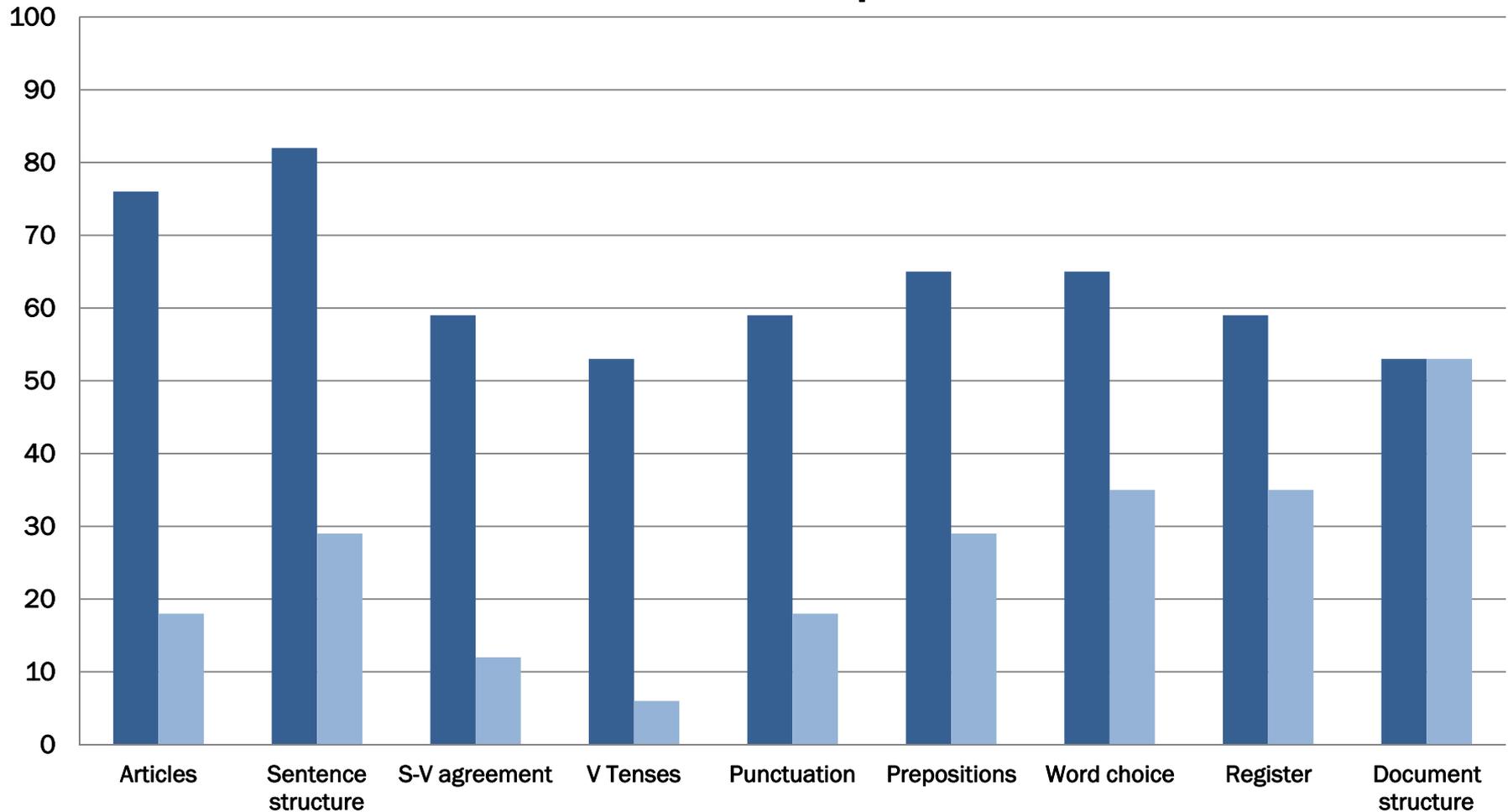- Total of 60 or 80 hrs (1 or 2x/wk)

- Homework given weekly

Writing: Observations

- Berlitz struggled with high initial writing skills

- Quality depends on instructor more than school

- Constant communication required between student & school to meet training goals

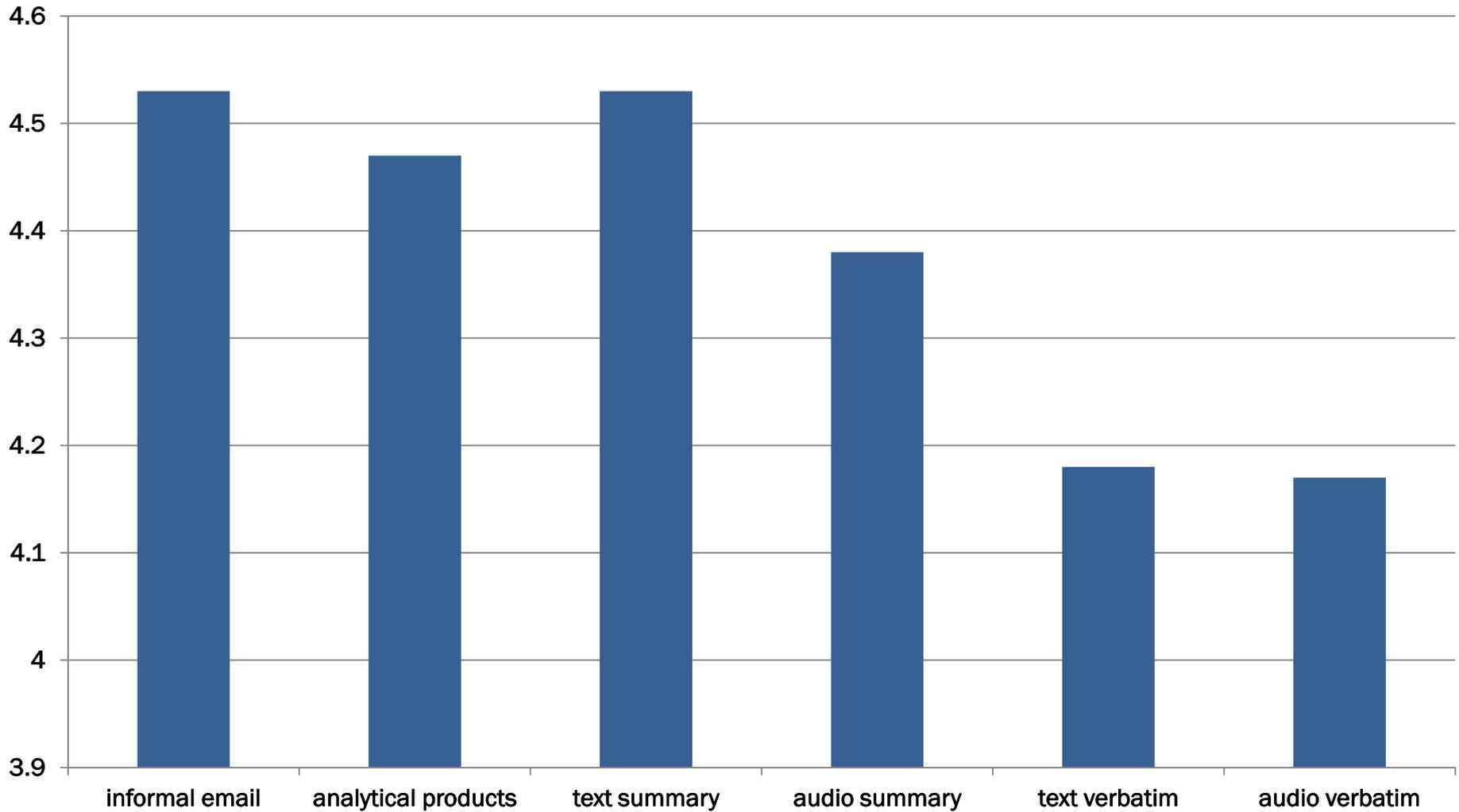- Several expressed need for translation training into English

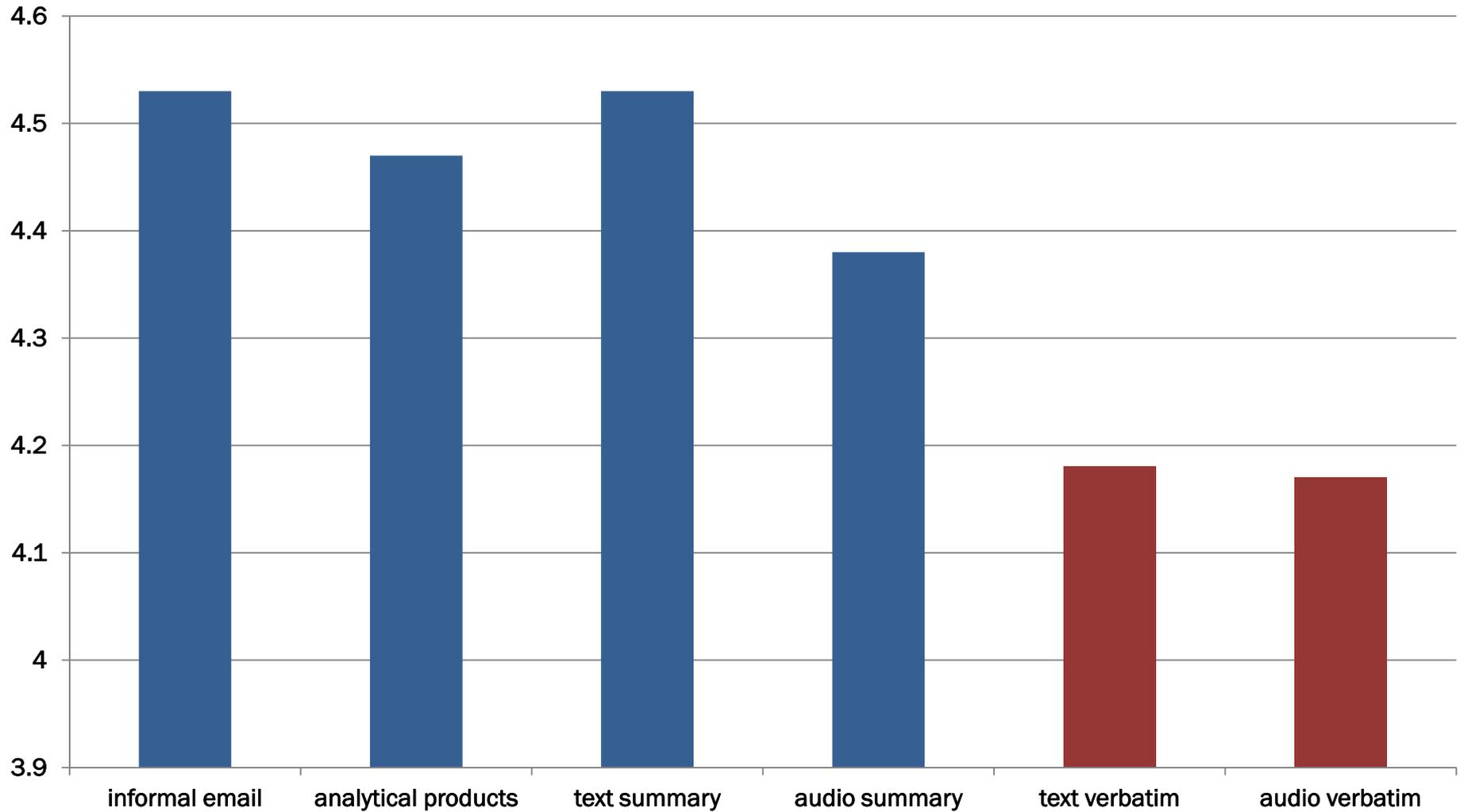# Perceived Improvement vs. Needs More Improvement

Perceived Rate of Improvement Across Genres

Perceived Rate of Improvement Across Genres

Conclusions

- Out-of-the-box ≠ admin-free

- Technical issues pose challenges

- Value in writing training

- Writing vs. translation skills