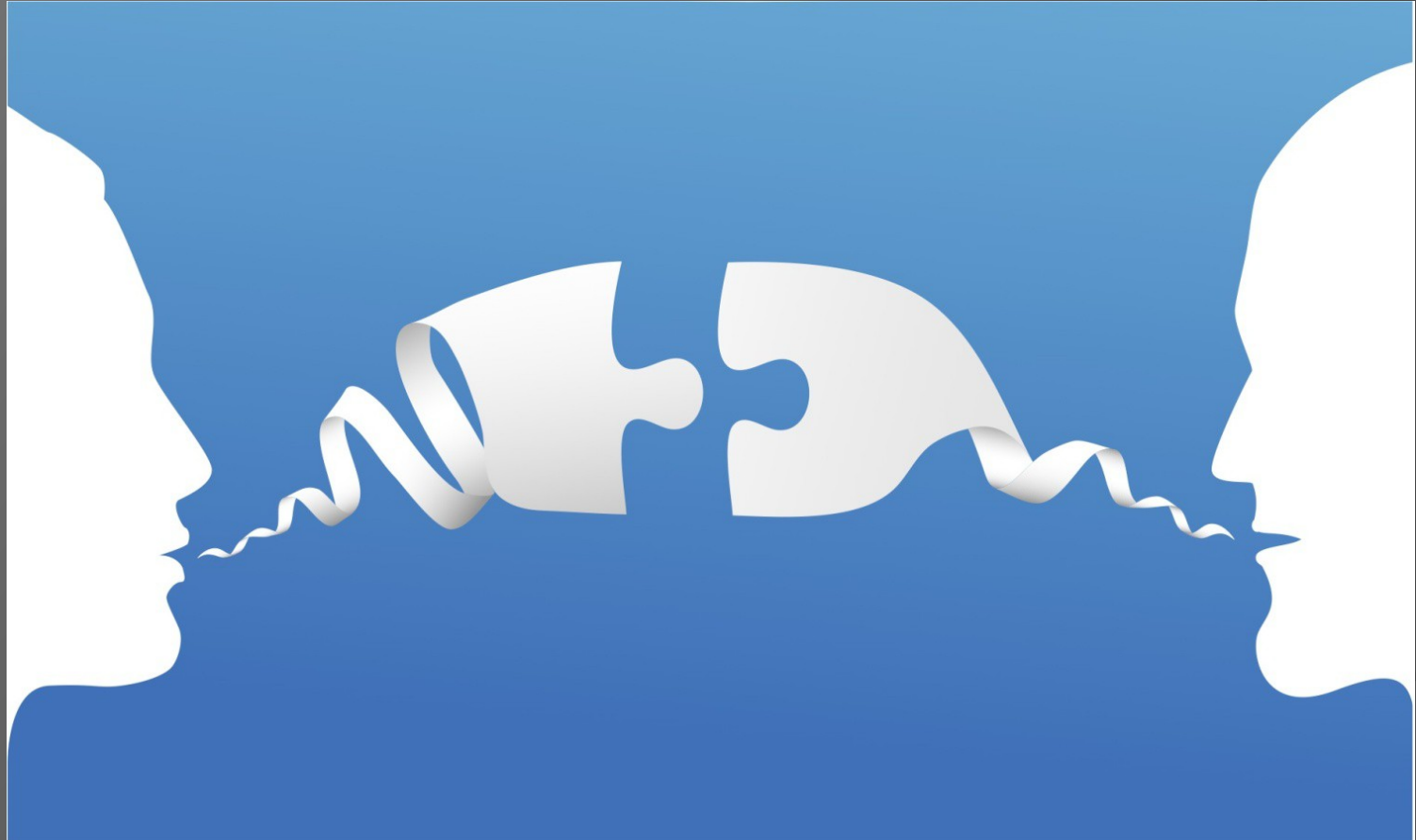


# SPOKEN FLUENCY REVISITED



Michael McCarthy

fluent

✓ PRONUNCIATION

✓ SPELLINGS

✓ ETYMOLOGY

✓ QUOTATIONS

Find

fluent, *a.* and *n.*fluential, *a.*fluently, *adv.*

fluentness

fluey, *a.*<sup>1</sup>fluey, *a.*<sup>2</sup>fluff, *n.*<sup>1</sup>fluff, *n.*<sup>2</sup>fluff, *v.*<sup>1</sup>fluff, *v.*<sup>2</sup>fluffed, *ppl. a.*

fluffer

fluffer, *n.*<sup>2</sup>fluffily, *adv.*

fluffiness

fluffing, *vbl. n.*

fluffment

fluffy, *a.*

flügelhorn

flugelman, flight

**5.** Of speech, style, etc.: Flowing easily and readily from the tongue or pen.

**1625** BACON *Ess., Youth & Age* (Arb.) 263 Such as is a fluent and Luxuriant Speech. **1660** WOOD *Life* (Oxf. Hist. Soc.) I. 360 Their fluent praying and preaching. **1670-1** NARBOROUGH *Jrnl. in Acc. Sev. Late Voy.* I. (1711) 70 Their Language is much in the Throat, and not very fluent, but uttered with good deliberation. **1728** POPE *Dunc.* III. 197 How fluent nonsense trickles from his tongue! **1828** D'ISRAELI *Chas. I.* I. ii. 21 The pain which conversation occasions him whose speech is not fluent. **1866** GEO. ELIOT *F. Holt* (1868) 63 A soft voice with a clear fluent utterance.

**b.** Of a speaker, etc.: Ready in the use of words, able to express oneself readily and easily in speech or writing.

**1589** WARNER *Alb. Eng.* v. xxvii. 119 Rhetoricall I am not with a fluent tongue to ster. **1610** HEYWOOD *Gold. Age* I. i. Wks. (1874) III. 5 Fluent Mercury Speakes from my tongue. **1737** POPE *Hor. Epist.* II. i. 279 Fluent Shakespear scarce effac'd a line. **1784** COWPER *Task* IV. 19 His fluent quill. **1832** H. MARTINEAU *Ireland* I. 6 Fluent story-tellers. **1882** FARRAR in *Contemp. Rev.* 807 As a speaker..Dean Stanley was by no means fluent.

X SORTED BY DATE

Back

Lost for words

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↑

↓

# Why fluency matters

- Examinations / the CEFR, e.g. B2: the learner ideally can 'interact with a degree of *fluency* and *spontaneity* that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible *without strain for either party*' (Council of Europe, 2001: 24).
- Professional/academic life, society in general, e.g. Chiswick and Miller (1998) suggest that immigrants who become fluent in the language of their new country achieve greater economic success.

# Conventional criteria for spoken fluency

- Speed of delivery
- Pauses
- Automaticity

# Three further criteria for spoken fluency

- **Using chunks accurately and automatically**
- *I think, sort of*
- *I don't know, at the moment*
- *and things like that*
- *you know what I mean*
- *at the end of the day*

# 5-word chunks (CANC 5m)

	Chunk	Freq.
1	YOU KNOW WHAT I	680
2	KNOW WHAT I MEAN	674
3	I DON'T KNOW WHAT	513
4	THE END OF THE	512
5	AT THE END OF	508
6	DO YOU WANT TO	483
7	A BIT OF A	457
8	DO YOU KNOW WHAT	393
9	I DON'T KNOW IF	390
10	I THINK IT WAS	372

11	A LOT OF PEOPLE	350
12	THANK YOU VERY MUCH	343
13	I DON'T KNOW WHETHER	335
14	AND THINGS LIKE THAT	329
15	OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT	328
16	WHAT DO YOU THINK	312
17	I THOUGHT IT WAS	303
18	I DON'T WANT TO	296
19	THAT SORT OF THING	294
20	YOU KNOW I MEAN	294

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## Three further criteria for spoken fluency

- Using chunks accurately and automatically
- Using a repertoire of small interactive words (e.g. *just*, *so*, *actually*, *then*, etc.)



## **Actually** AT THE START OF A SPEAKER TURN Chinese female B2

<E1> Okay. Are you a big fashion person yourself?

<S> **Um, actually** yes but however you know I'm a student now so I don't have a lot of money and uh but I think in the near future when I have a job I can have a job I can afford myself a lot of luxury things.

<E2> Uh-huh. And who's your favourite? Is Chanel your favourite designer?

<S> Yeah.

<E1> And who else would you like?

<S> **Um, actually** I like Coco Chanel very much.

# *Actually: learners vs NSs*

- *Actually* emerges as turn-initial at FCE (B2)
- By C1, 10% of uses of *actually* are turn-initial (w1 or w2)
- 11% of uses of *actually* are turn-initial in a 1m wd NS conversation corpus

# Three further criteria for spoken fluency

- Using chunks accurately and automatically
- Using a repertoire of small interactive words (e.g. *just, I mean, actually, etc.*)
- **Linking one's turn smoothly to the previous speaker's, using linking words and phrases, to create 'flow'**

# Creating and maintaining 'flow'

- Fluency includes the ability to construct a good turn ...
- ... and to link it smoothly to other people's turns (creating 'confluence')
- How you *start* your turn is important
- The first word(s) show your reaction to what you hear

## Turn-openings - a corpus example

<\$2> See these are all like thirteen, fourteen nights.

<\$1> It doesn't say what they do does it?

<\$2> Well self-drive tours but-

<\$1> Oh right so they don't know how many nights. Oh yeah they do, look.

<\$2> Well it tells you how-

## Turn-openings - a corpus example

<\$2> **See** these are all like thirteen, fourteen nights.

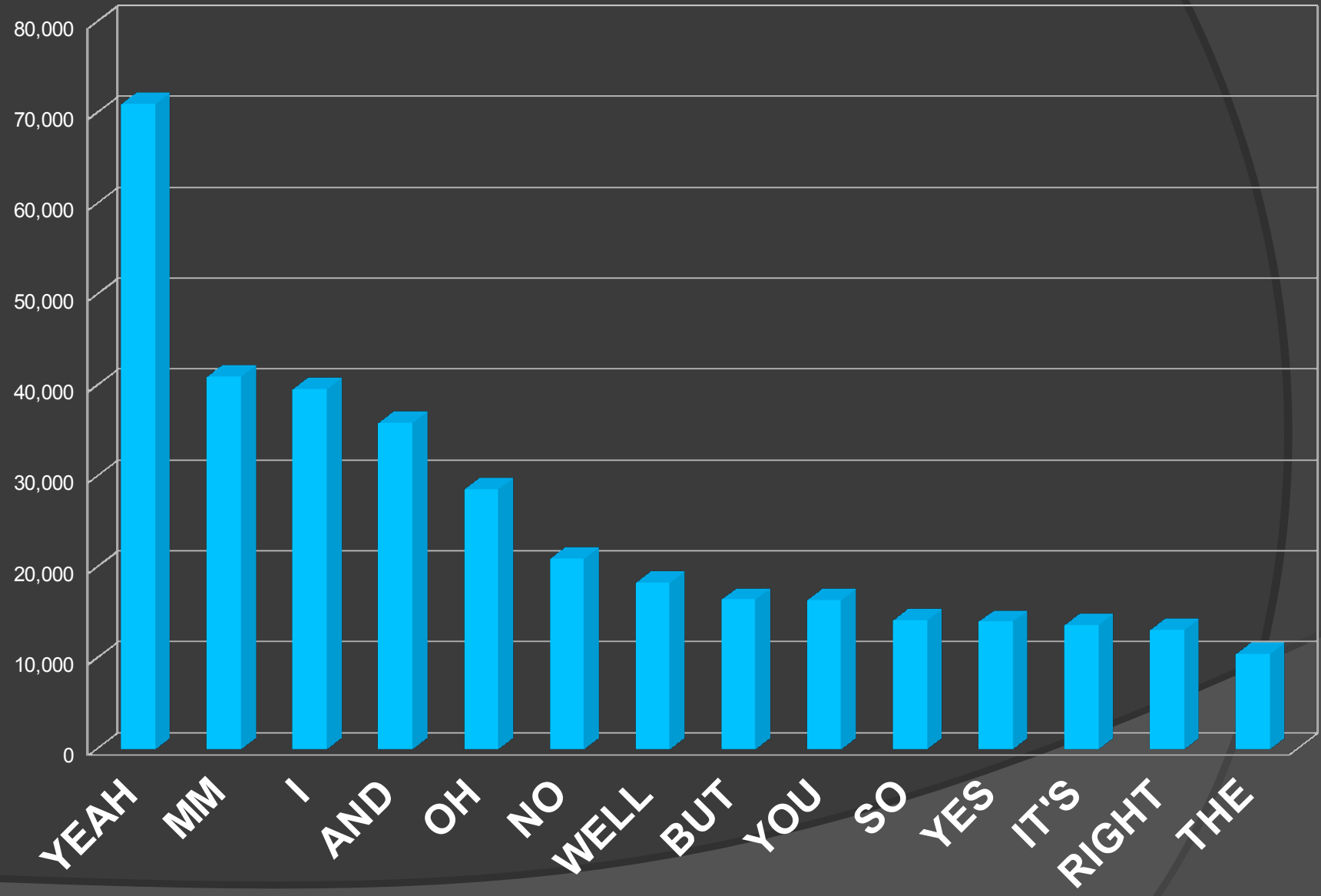
<\$1> It doesn't say what they do does it?

<\$2> **Well** self-drive tours but-

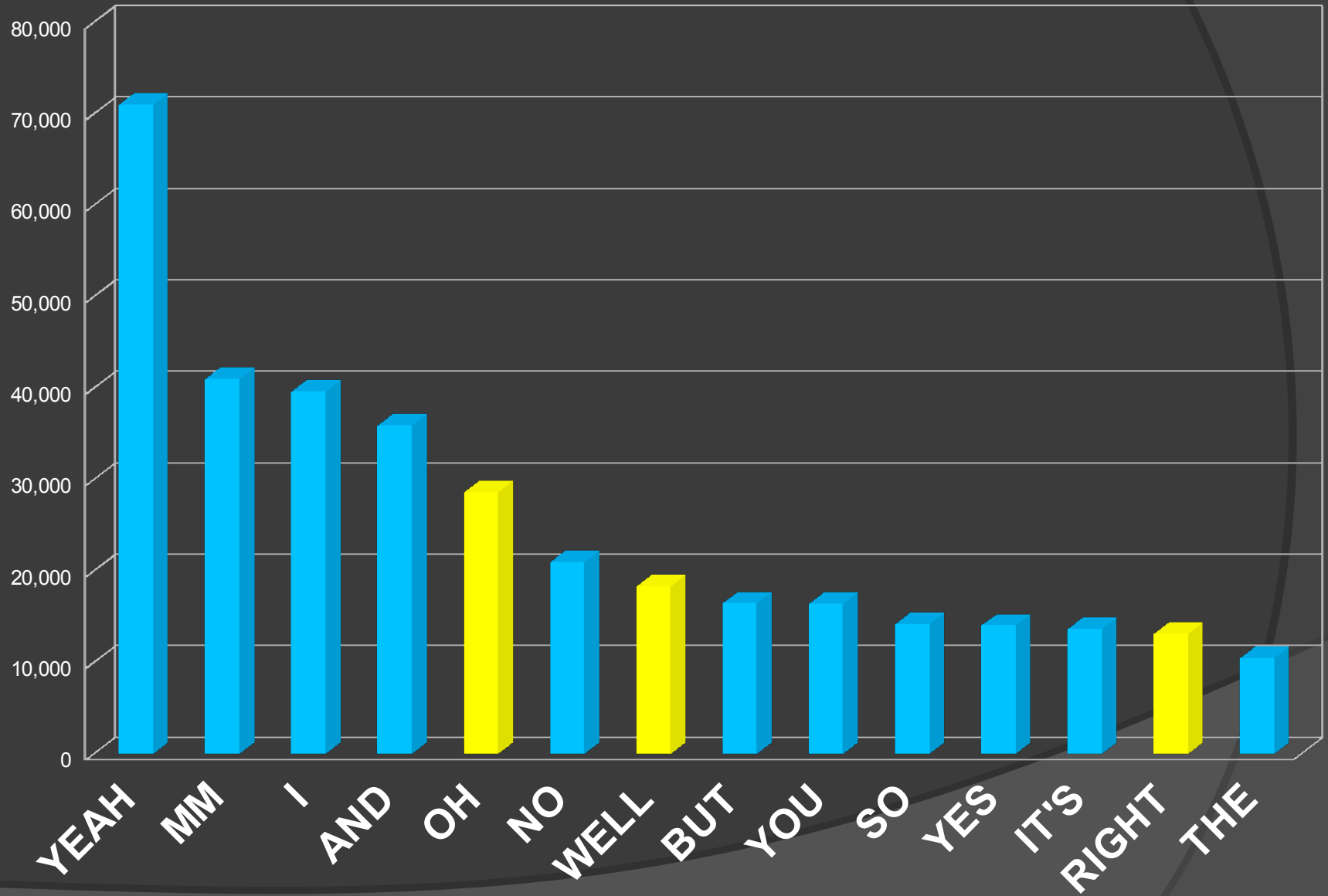
<\$1> **Oh right** so they don't know how many nights. Oh yeah they do, look.

<\$2> **Well** it tells you how-

# Tum-openers: NS (Canc 5m )

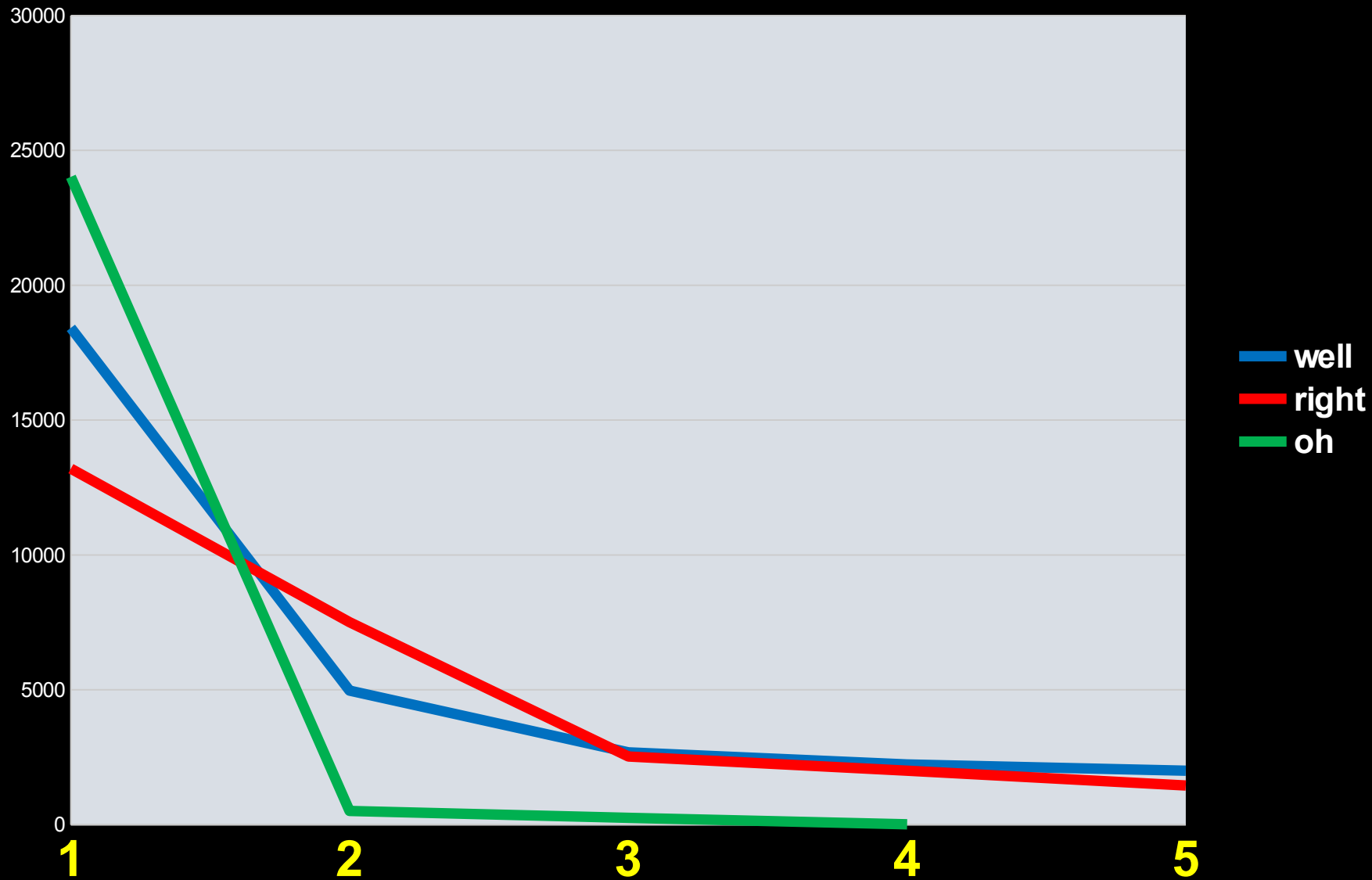


# Tum-openers: NS (Canc 5m )

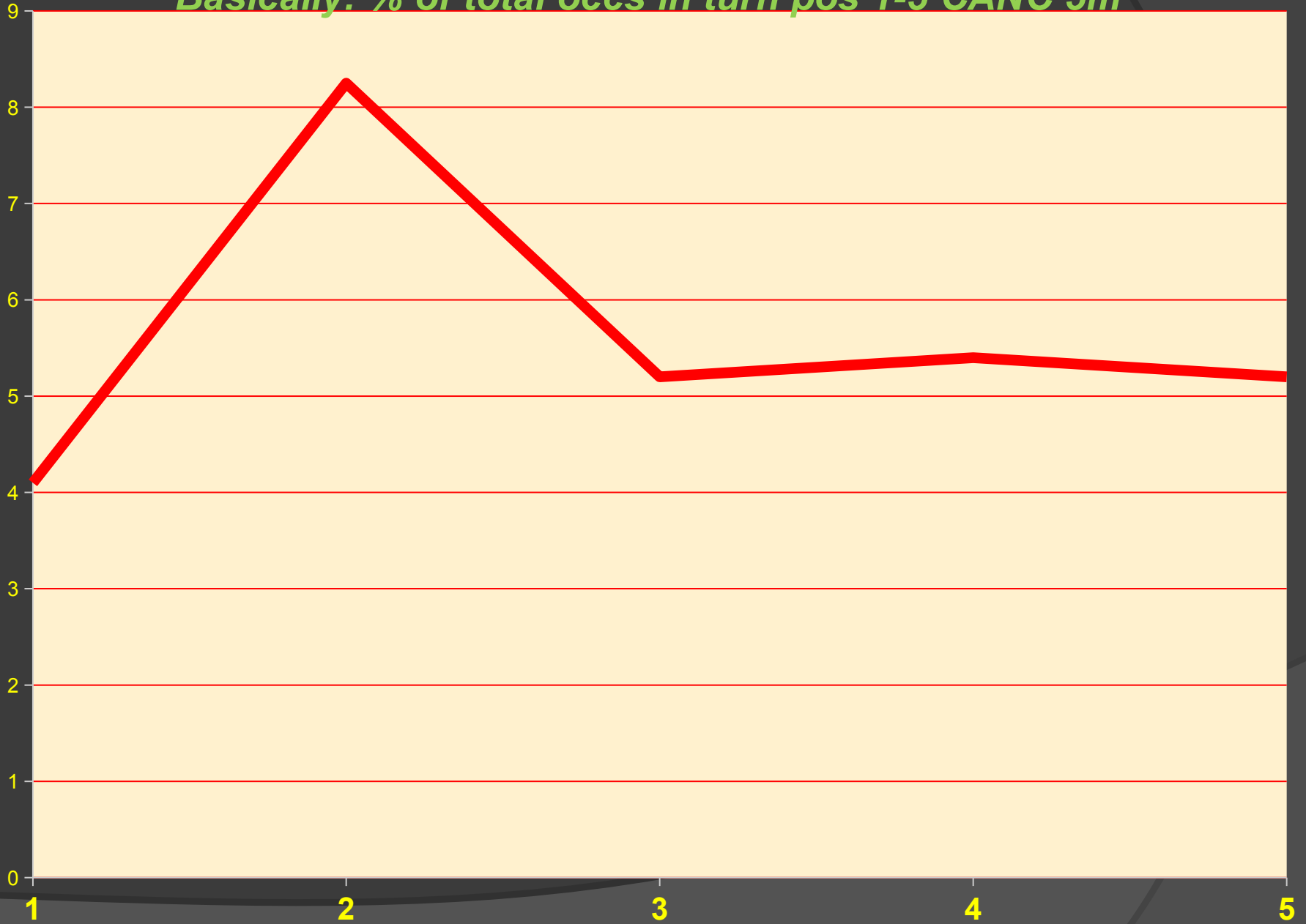




## Well, right & oh CANC 5m

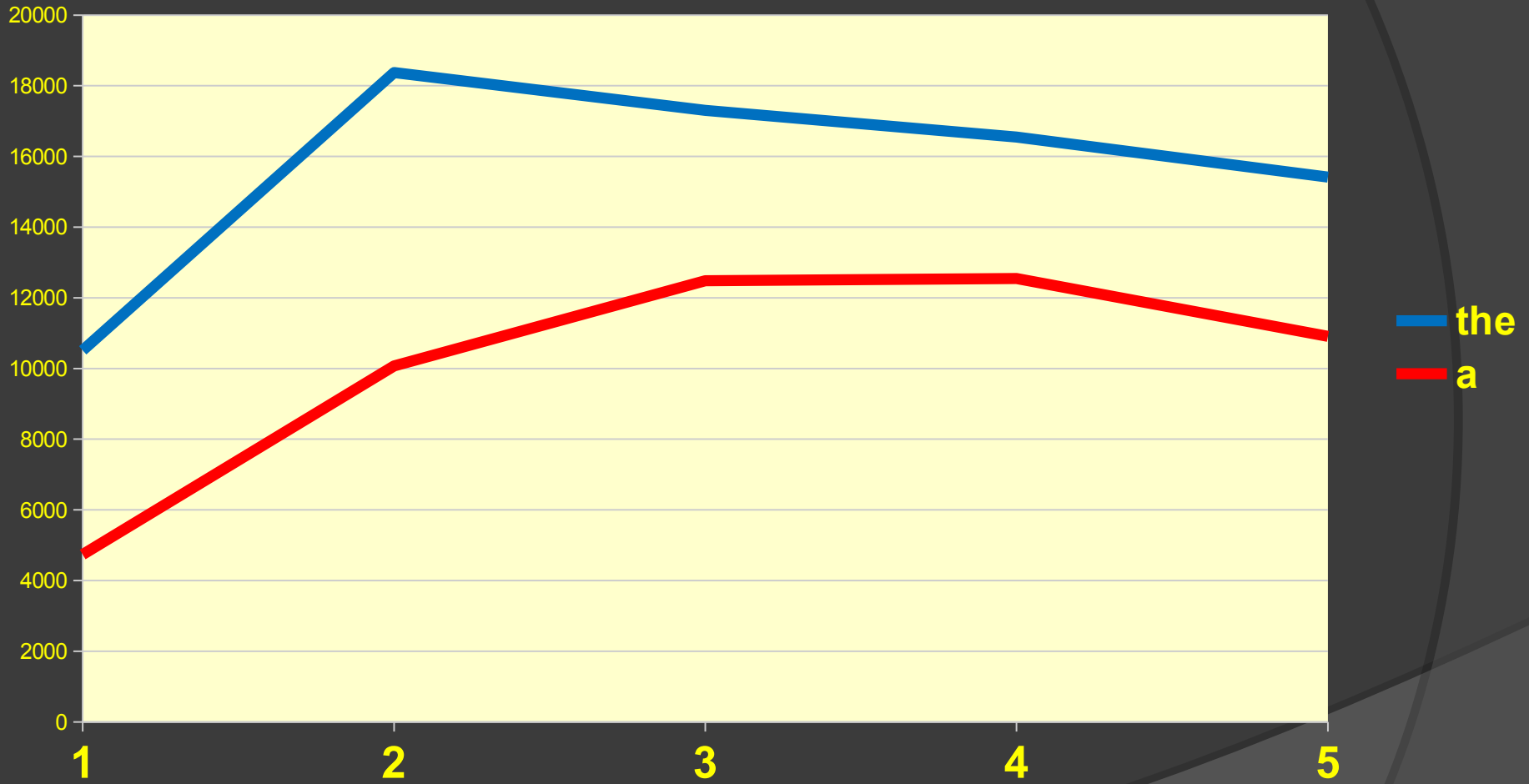


*Basically: % of total occs in turn pos 1-5 CANC 5m*



nth to do it or... <2> Right. <1> **Basically** it doesn't matter. You do wha  
arily just money. <2> Right. <1> **Basically** I'm saying successful people are  
<2> Right. <1> +moving along. <2> **Basically** start looking for a different  
much main stream. <1> Uh-huh. <2> **Basically**. <-> I guess. <1> Well like  
might not have. <1> Uh-huh. <2> And **basically** that's the story with a  
everything's changed. <1> Yeah. <2> Everybody's **basically** gone country now and  
Canada once <->. <1> Really? <2> I'm **basically** a California girl. <1>  
color? <2> Uh <->. I mean... <1> So **basically** the flag of Italy is your  
don't like history too much so... <1> So **basically** math. <2> <E> laughing  
moved round a lot+ <1> Uh-huh. <2> +so **basically** when I was about five till  
the scenic homes. <3> Yeah? <2> Uh **basically** we enjoyed visiting relatives  
se? These long stretch things? <2> Uh **basically** they're the same as a regular  
When you were a teenager say? <2> Um **basically** it it was just when I was  
you buy clothing on the internet? <2> Well **basically** gift type clothing. <1>  
do you work on? Big rigs or... <3> Well **basically** I'm a diesel mechanic but  
did someone introduce you or... <1> Yeah. **Basically**. <2> Huh. <1> Yeah. I  
sferred out here or something? <2> Yeah. **Basically**. <1> Really? <2> Uh-huh.  
raised in the same family. <2> Yeah. **Basically** because of dad.

## *The and a: preferred turn-positions CANCODE 5m*



# Teaching the language of fluency

- Requires naturalistic models
- Calls for a noticing / awareness methodology
- Needs extensive, meaningful practice and recycling

# Summary

- A corpus provides robust evidence of fluency in conversational language.
- The linguistic repertoire of fluency can be taught successfully from elementary level.
- Teaching fluency requires shifts of emphasis in methodology.

**Thank you for listening!**