

May I take your order?

The interface between non-professionally regulated workplace contexts and two English language testing constructs

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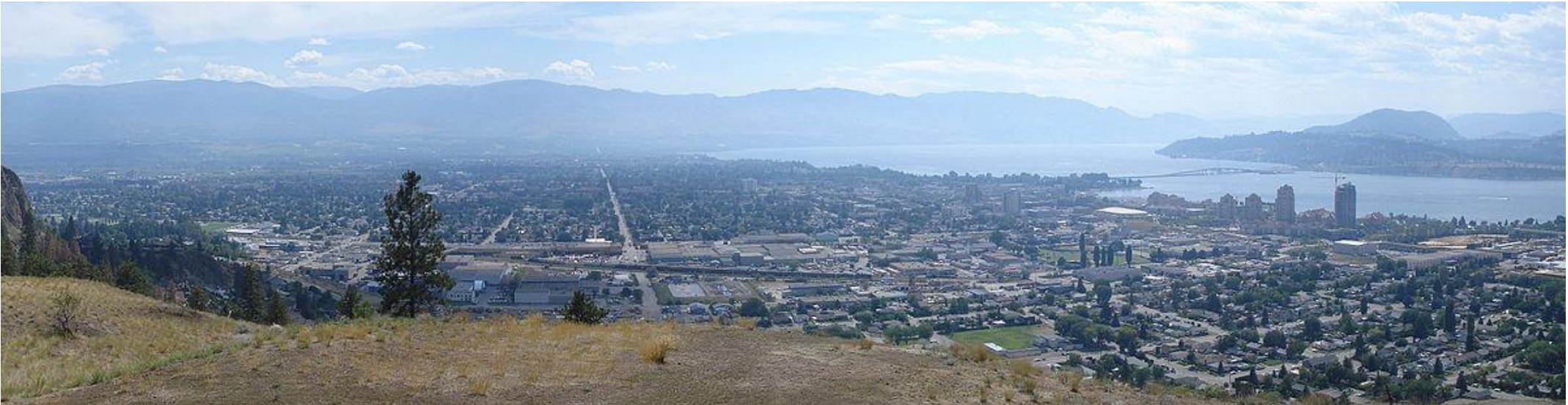
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The Okanagan



Context

- The USA and Canada are two of the largest immigrant destinations in the world (Kaushal & Lu, 2015)
- Today, seven in 10 immigrants to Canada come from Asia and the Middle East. It is estimated that one in three workers will be internationally born by the year 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2011)
- New immigrants aged 14 to 65 must document language proficiency to apply for citizenship at a CLB 4 (IRCC, 2015)

Background

- Language constructs have been well developed and theorized in relation to what a language learner is expected to demonstrate in predictable and structured contexts. These constructs have been mapped onto theories of communicative competence (Bachman and Palmer, 2010; Chapelle, Enright, Jamieson, 2008)
- Contexts are typically socially bound; theoretical constructs of communicative competence should be reimagined to reflect the intricacies of everyday, real-life modern communication (Harding, 2014)
- Examination of real-life tasks and authentic contexts has been documented in professionally-regulated workplace sectors (Artemeva & Fox, 2014; Farris, 2016; Issacs, Laurier, Turner, Segalowitz, 2011)

Theoretical Framework

The study is contextualized within:

- Second (additional) language socialization understanding of language acquisition

Exploring the process, in relation to community, by which newcomers develop:

- language competence
- Community membership
- Legitimacy
- Participation in the community is an important part of the learning process

(Duff, 2007; Duff & Kobayashi, 2010; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998)

Communicative Competence and the CLB

Language Knowledge

Organizational Knowledge

- Grammar
- Text

Pragmatic Knowledge

- Functional
- Sociolinguistic

Strategic Knowledge

(Bachman, 1990; Bachman and Palmer, 1996; 2010)

Communicative Competence: Dynamic and Interlocking

- Discourse competence (how words are put together)
- Sociocultural competence (how messages are appropriately conveyed)
- Linguistic competence (phonology, vocabulary, morphology, and syntax)
- Formulaic competence (fixed and prefabricated chunks of language)
- Interactional competence (how to do speech acts and have conversation)
- Strategic competence (how to learn and maintain language use)

(Celce-Murcia, 2007)

Guiding Research Questions

1. What are the communication challenges and successes for newcomers in entry-level positions?
2. How do the challenges and successes map onto the CLB and the CELPIP Levels of Performance?

Qualitative Methods: Data Collection

12 Participants through all stages (Halifax)

6 Participants through all stages (Okanagan)

- 8 Participant data examined across both sites for preliminary exploration
- Lived in Canada less than 3 years
- Canadian Language Benchmark between 3 to 6
- Working more than 12 hours/week

Data Collection

- 2 Sequential Interviews
- CELPIP-General Listening and Speaking (CELPIP-General LS)

Assessing Spoken English: The CELPIP-General LS

Assesses functional listening and speaking proficiency

Each component given a separate CELPIP Level

Accepted by IRCC as proof of English language proficiency for citizenship

(Paragon Testing Enterprises, 2017)

The CELPIP-General LS

SPEAKING SECTION = 15 – 20 MINUTES

Practice task + 8 tasks

1. Giving advice
2. Talking about a personal experience
3. Describing a scene
4. Making predictions
5. Comparing and persuading
6. Dealing with a difficult situation
7. Expression opinions
8. Describing an unusual situation

LISTENING SECTION = 47-55 MINUTES

Practice task + 6 Tasks

1. Listening to problem solving
2. Listening to a daily life conversation
3. Listening for information
4. Listening to a news item
5. listening to a discussion
6. Listening to viewpoints

(Paragon Testing Enterprises, 2017)


Sample CELPIP-General LS Speaking and Listening Tasks

Speaking Task 5: Comparing and Persuading

Preparation: 60 seconds


1 Your family is relocating to another area, and you are looking for a new home there. You found two suitable options. Using the pictures and information below, choose the option that you prefer. In the next section, you will need to persuade a family member that your choice is the better choice.

If you do not choose an option, the computer will choose one for you. You do not need to speak for this part.



New Downtown Townhouse

- \$250,000
- 3 bedrooms and 1 bathroom
- 1,850 square feet
- close to public transportation and shopping malls



Detached Home in Quiet Neighbourhood

- \$300,000
- 3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms
- 2,800 square feet
- 30 minutes from downtown; 5 minutes from shops

BACK

Listening Part 1: Listening to Problem Solving

1 Instructions:

You will hear a conversation between a woman and a man. The man is a bus driver and the woman is a passenger trying to get somewhere.



BACK

(Paragon Testing Enterprises, 2017)

Calibrated to the Canadian Language Benchmarks

CELP Level	CELP Descriptor	CLB Level
12	Advanced proficiency in workplace and community contexts	12
11	Advanced proficiency in workplace and community contexts	11
10	Highly effective proficiency in workplace and community contexts	10
9	Effective proficiency in workplace and community contexts	9
8	Good proficiency in workplace and community contexts	8
7	Adequate proficiency in workplace and community contexts	7
6	Developing proficiency in workplace and community contexts	6
5	Acquiring proficiency in workplace and community contexts	5
4	Adequate proficiency for daily life activities	4
3	Some proficiency in limited contexts	3
M	Minimal proficiency or insufficient information to assess	0, 1, 2

(Paragon Testing Enterprises, 2017)

CLB 3: Adequate Basic Ability – Speaking

The speaker can:

Communicate basic information using **simple sentences** about **immediate needs** and **personal experiences**.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face or via digital media
- Supported by gestures and visual cues
- Informal
- With one person at a time
- Encouraged to a moderate degree by questions and prompts from a supportive listener
- In non-demanding contexts

CLB 3: Adequate Basic Ability – Listening

The listener can:

Understand a **limited number** of individual words, simple phrases and short, **simple sentences** related to immediate personal needs.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a slow rate
- Strongly supported by visuals or non-verbal communication (pictures, gestures)
- Face-to-face with a highly supportive speaker or via digital media (usually one-on-one)
- Related to immediate personal needs
- Short
- In non-demanding contexts

(CLB, 2012, p. 50; CLB, 2012, p. 2)

CLB 6: Developing Intermediate Ability - Speaking

The speaker can:

Communicate with some confidence in **routine** social situations, and present **concrete** information in some detail about **familiar** topics of **personal** relevance.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media
- Informal to somewhat formal
- In mostly familiar small groups
- In **moderately demanding** contexts

CLB 6: Developing Intermediate Ability - Listening

The listener can:

Understand most moderately **complex formal** and **informal** communication, including some **abstract concepts** and ideas **related to life experience**.

When the communication is:

- Spoken clearly at a slow to normal rate
- Face-to-face, on the phone or via digital media (one-on-one or in small groups)
- Related to relevant topics and life experience
- Moderate in length
- In **moderately demanding** contexts

(CLB, 2012, p. 50; CLB, 2012, p. 14)

Preliminary Participants

EASTERN CANADA (NOVA SCOTIA)

WESTERN CANADA (BRITISH COLUMBIA)

	Melissa	Alison	Choukaje	Sharon	Juan	Lauren	Michelle	Beatrice
Gender	F	F	M	F	M	F	F	F
Arrival	2015	2014	2015	2013	2015	2014	2012	2013
Origin	Israel	Uruguay	Sudan	India	Mexico	Mexico	Philippines	Cameroon
Language	Russian	Spanish	Arabic, Massalit, Dajou	Telugu	Spanish	Spanish	Tagalog	French
Job	Data Entry	Cashier/Hotel	Dishwasher	Nursing Home	Farm/Retail	Grocery	Office	Hotel
Previous	Accountant	Human Resources	High School	Social Work	Photography	Dietician	Student	Teacher
Lang. Prog.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
CELP S/L	6/7	3/6	6/5	4/4	6/7	6/6	7/11	8/7

Qualitative Data Analysis

1. Communication events broadly coded into successes and challenges
2. Coding framework developed inductively based on data and then deductively based on an additional language socialization framework (Saldana, 2015)
3. Codes gathered together to illustrate emergent themes relating to varying levels of spoken ELP
4. The communication events further mapped onto the CLB and CELPIP-General LS

Coding Framework—Six Themes

1 *Communication Strategies*

- Accommodation
- Asking for repetition
- Avoidance
- Changing topics
- Multi-modal
- Practice
- Face-to-face *Accents*

2 *Content Knowledge*

- Conversation topics
- Workplace expression

3 *Linguistic Competencies*

- Canadian accents
- Different English accents
- Difficulty receiving calls
- Predictable patterns
- Nervousness
- Pronunciation /personal accent
- Speaking
- too fast
- Vocabularies
- Workplace expressions

4 *Cultural competencies*

- Canadian culture
- Workplace environment

5 *Language Use*

- Communication means
- Grammar
- Language use situation

6 *Language Socialization*

- Silence
- Speaking with other language learners
- Speaking with supportive interlocutors
- Non-supportive Interlocutor
- Starting conversation

Preliminary Findings – Listening

RQ1: What are the communication challenges and successes for newcomers in entry-level positions?

Challenges: Alison (CELPIP Level Speaking 3 & Listening 6)

But probably when a customer ask me about something and **it's very noisy** and yeah, probably is **difficult to understand**, yeah. And I remember in Victoria Secret, when I work last winter, uh, was yeah, very stressful because I need to use something in my [Ear].

Successes: Alison (CELPIP Level Speaking 3 & Listening 6)

I was working with my supervisor and um, other [employee] come[s] to the kitchen and he needs to [use], my microwave, for example, and I saw he, he has a very big tattoo here, and I say oh, you have a tattoo. 'Yes, I have one here and I have two more' and my supervisor start to talking with, with him about the tattoo and I mean it, I say okay, **I need only listen**.

Preliminary Findings - Listening

RQ1: What are the communication challenges and successes for newcomers in entry-level positions?

CHALLENGES

Linguistic Competencies

- Difficulty receiving calls
- Speaking too fast
- Canadian accents

Cultural competencies

- Canadian culture

Language Use

- Language use situation

SUCCESSSES

Strategies

- Avoidance

Linguistic Competencies

- Predictable patterns
- Workplace expressions

Language Socialization

- Silence
- Starting conversation

Preliminary Findings - Speaking

RQ1: What are the communication challenges and successes for newcomers in entry-level positions?

Challenges: Juan (CELPIP Level Speaking 6 & Listening 7)

You know basically it's more about the customer service, no in the technical language about the photography...but the **trouble is when you try to explain, for a while, plainly the idea**, sometimes is when, when comes the trouble.

Successes: Melissa (CELPIP Level Speaking 6 & Listening 7)

I worked with my manager, production manager, I spoke with him in English and also I put information in the computer, it was in English...

...it was like about the program. I talked about the Quickbooks, so I just asked questions what I should, when I should do, what I should open.

CLB 6: Developing Intermediate Ability

The speaker can:

- Communicate with some confidence in **routine** social situations, and present **concrete** information in some detail about **familiar** topics of **personal** relevance.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media
- Informal to somewhat formal
- In mostly familiar small groups
- In **moderately demanding** contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Clear evidence of **connected** discourse
- Reasonably fluent for some moderately demanding contexts; speech rate is **slow to normal** with a few hesitations
- A range of **everyday vocabulary**, which may include some idioms and a few common cultural references
- Some variety of grammatical structures, with **developing control** of more complex structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties may **sometimes impede** communication
- Developing use of **appropriate non-verbal** cues and signals
- **Adapts** speech to reflect some degrees of formality appropriate to the group

Language Success: Juan (CELPPIP Speaking 6)

Oh, well, sometimes ... it's hard to me to understand properly what he want to say ... first you try to, to figure what he wants, and then you, I try to explain him to what we can do it with the work. **You repeat in different way what he ask you**, so you repeat, okay you want this, this, and this in short terms, I mean short phrases to, to explain him, if I understand right. I just try to repeat and figure out if I understand all that he wants to, to do. Normally, they **react by the good way because, they understand you try to keep a good customer service**, right, so it's better repeat the things than forget something, right?

Language Challenge: Juan (CELPPIP Speaking 6)

Sometimes when you try to explain very specifically, sometimes you have problems or when you try to put together two ideas to want to explain, sometimes it's hard. It's difficult, not too hard, but a little bit difficult. You know basically it's more about the customer service, no in the technical language about the photography. It's not too hard for me because you know, **my boss, luckily, she knows all about the technical language of photography** so I can, I can speak with her appropriately about the, the terms. But with the people it's sometimes they didn't understand the terms, but the trouble is **when you try to explain, for a while, plainly the idea, sometimes is when, when comes the trouble.**

Language Challenge: Juan (CELPPIP Speaking 6)

You know today, the guy bought the diesel ... it's a company to fill the, the tank from fuel. They give us diesel. It's a metal container in the property and for sure they come to fill the tank with diesel and today I feel a little bit confused or I have trouble to speak properly with the guy. **I feel uncomfortable** because, you know, I want to speak with the guy, but I can't answer, I can't reply his answer properly. The guy ask me this tank, this container is just for diesel or gas? Oh man, I don't know ... **I had troubles to explain him about I was newer in the vineyard** and I didn't know if his, that container just contain diesel or diesel and gas. I feel a little bit **uncomfortable**.

Language Success: Lauren (CELPPI Speaking 6)

I remember one time that a lady arrive with me and she asked me why my fermented protein is better than another kind of proteins, and then I need to say, explain to her why the fermented products aren't good for your digestion. And was a really big answer I could say because I was talking with her how the fermented products were in your intestine and it was difficult for me to explain a little bit because I have the vocabulary in Spanish but then when I want to speak that in English, it's little challenging, but **when I was with her she really understand the point**, she really understand what, why fermented products are better, and, and then **she decided to buy the protein**. She had already one for to buy and then she decide just to change it. Yeah, it's successful.

Language Challenge: Lauren (CELPPIP Speaking 6)

Sometimes the **people arrive with a short bit of time**, I mean they just are walking and doing things pretty fast and they don't have time for a lot of explanation about things, and they just say 'yes' or 'no'. Yeah, so **harder to, to convince somebody when they don't have the time to listen.**

CLB 7: Intermediate Ability

The speaker can:

- Communicate **with some confidence in many daily routine** social, educational, and work situations, and present **concrete and some abstract** information on an expanding range of **familiar** topics.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media
- Informal to formal
- In **somewhat** familiar groups
- In **moderately demanding** contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Clear evidence of **connected discourse**
- Reasonably fluent for moderately demanding contexts; speech rate is slow to normal with **few hesitations**
- An **expanding range of concrete and idiomatic language**, which may include some **common cultural references**
- Increasing variety of grammatical structures, with developing control of complex structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties may **occasionally impede** communication
- Adequate use of appropriate non-verbal cues and signals
- **Adapts** speech style and register to different audiences and situations

Language Success: Michelle (CELPPIP Speaking 7)

I had to find out if a client has to apply in the Los Angeles visa office, and my boss told me to **call the office** to ask them for that information, and so I did, and then I had a **good conversation** with a person there, and yeah, I understood what he was saying, I told him what we needed to know. I would think he is **Latino**. Also his name was Jose, so ... whenever I, I call people, actually know, that particular, instance, right, when I called him and I heard that his, he was Jose from Los Angeles, I was like yes, I can mess up my English and it **won't seem nervous** about it. I was like **yes! A brown person**. Like I feel like it's **easier to talk to**, like people who **didn't have English as a first** language as well. I guess it's easier cause I have to talk slowly anyway for them, and yeah, so I'm not too worried about it. And yeah, like, native English speakers, they talk fast so you have to think about like what they're saying. It's a speed issue, and also like you know what **I'm feeling, we don't know this language we're both speaking** [laugh], yeah.

Language Challenge: Michelle (CELPPIP Speaking 7)

Like at work, this happened earlier today cause like one of the websites that we usually use was down and so we would be like, **hey, is it up yet** and then things like that, and then I think one of my coworkers asked me if, if I would try logging into the site yet to see if it was working, and then **I didn't really hear what she said**, and it happens quite a bit I think, like were you asking me if I logged on the site or did you ask me, or are you telling me that you logged in the site already? Maybe when I hear sentences, I hear the main words and then like the smaller words. Like if it was a question, like if it was a why or like how, **I usually don't pick it up unless I'm really paying attention ... then like, wait, what was the sentence you said again?**

Language Challenge: Michelle (CELPPIP Speaking 7)

Whenever I **try to explain myself** or something, like this is a client, this was the problem with the client, and then if I like, um, **just say it quickly** or something, they usually don't get me. Maybe I **didn't really think of what to say before** saying the sentence, and so it's, it comes out funny, or I probably say it like, remember um, like the spouse back there, and then they were like what, what are you trying to say? Cause I should have said it in a full sentence or something like that.

Language Challenge: Michelle (CELPPIP Speaking 7)

Like when, like for example you just be like doing your work, and then **some co-worker start talking about something random** and then you just aren't coming yet, like the idea's there. I was like, **I wanna make this joke but I don't know how to say it in English**. Especially while I'm working, I'm like the work mode and then someone kind of like says a joke, and it's like, ah, **I want to joke too, but ...**

Language Challenge: Melissa (CELPPIP Speaking 7)

- **Melissa (CELPPIP Level Speaking 6 & Listening 7)**
- P: I think with that woman, she spoke very quickly, very quickly, and I really, I really felt uncomfortable with her. [Speaking with a non-supportive interlocutor]
- I: So did you end up joining the conversation though or –
- P: Yes, a little bit but still I felt uncomfortable and maybe afraid to tell something, maybe it will be not you know, not the same as them talking, not the same talking and maybe I, I thought maybe I didn't understand something correctly, so I, you know, try to be in silence. [Silence]

CLB 8: Fluent Intermediate Ability

The speaker can:

- Communicate with **confidence** in most daily routine social, educational and work situations, and present **concrete** and some **abstract** information on an **expanded** range of familiar topics.

When the communication is:

- Face-to-face, on the phone, or via digital media
- Informal to formal
- In unfamiliar groups
- In **moderately** demanding contexts

Demonstrating these strengths and limitations:

- Clear evidence of connected discourse
- Fluent for moderately demanding contexts; **speech is often at a normal rate**
- An expanded range **of concrete, abstract and idiomatic language**, which may include some common **cultural** references
- **Adequate** variety of grammatical structures, with **adequate** control of complex structures
- Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties **seldom impede** communication
- Good use of appropriate non-verbal cues and signals
- **Adapts** speech style and register to a range of different audiences and situations

Language Success: Beatrice (CELPPIP Speaking 8)

I went back to work this morning for example I was speaking with two ladies from, one from Saskatchewan who came to Kelowna just to relax the beach, not used to Kelowna and she was **very happy because of the weather** and I **started talking to her** and I knew that she was from Saskatchewan is willing to move because of the weather and she's inviting me to go to Saskatchewan, but I, not in winter, because it's too cold in winter. So this **morning was perfect for me because I interact** with, interacting ...

Language Challenge: Beatrice (CELPPIP Speaking 8)

One of my colleagues she asked me she gave me some food and then **she said can you wrap this for the guests**, because the guests would like to take this home. So what I heard was can you, **I went straight and I dump everything in the trash** because, I, that was what she wanted me to do she was speaking so fast, I just **guessed**. I didn't get what you were saying and I **didn't want to ask her what can you say it again**, because at that moment it wasn't easy for me to say please can you say it again, so I just went and I dump everything in the trash. I said what, what did you ask me to do!? Then we had to make another meal for the guests. Yeah, then **it wasn't funny**, because I said oh my goodness, **what am I going to tell the guests** . Then we call the leader, one of the leaders on the floor and say **ok this happened**. They say, ok let's make another.

Language Challenge: Beatrice (CELPIP Speaking 8)

A lady who phoned, she was so **fast**. Please can you say that again because I didn't get that. "**Which** kind of customer service is this? You don't get me, **where** are you from?" I said ok I cannot serve you if I don't get what you are saying. Can you **slow** down? That's the only way for me. Then she said, "Can I **talk to someone else**?" Once in the room, my name is Beatrice I'm at your service, may I come in? Maybe she **forgot my name**. She didn't even get my name. She didn't remember because she say just that **the woman down there maybe she's a Chinese**. I say I am the one you spoke to. She said ohhhh. That's she only thing she said. She was embarrassed because she was talking like she didn't know that I was the one. **Over the phone, I struggle a lot with the guests**. They don't get me because most of the time because of my **accent**. That's what they tell me. When they **see me it change everything** because you can read the body language. And sometime I have to go to the room, to take the order, and one is completely different. Then they speak and I get what they say, **but over the phone they are fast** and there are some words that they don't pronounce.

Language Challenge: Beatrice (CELPPIP Speaking 8)

One day I was at the end of my, no my colleague was at the end of her shift. I was starting at two and she was leaving at two, so **she gave the phone**—the in room service phone to take orders from guests. So the guests phone at the moment she was leaving so I answer the phone. I took the order but **I wasn't quite sure** so I called her. Please just a minute before you leave I will need your help, so she came back, there was a word, I wanted to make sure that I was doing the right thing. I don't know what she heard but she say, maybe I think she heard popcorn, and then she ask me, **you don't know what is popcorn?** Yes she was **mean!** Do, you don't know what is popcorn? I said ok I don't know what is popcorn. You don't know, so I say good, I didn't even let her. So I say I'm going to take care of everything so I went back to the order. So things like that you are just going to shut up. No **I don't want her to behave the way she behaved with me ...**

Preliminary Findings - Speaking

RQ1: What are the communication challenges and successes for newcomers in entry-level positions?

CHALLENGES

Strategies

- Avoidance

Content Knowledge

- Conversation topics
- Pronunciation/personal accent
- Speaking too fast

Cultural competencies

- Canadian culture

Language Socialization

- Silence
- Non-supportive interlocutor

SUCCESSES

Strategies

- Multi-modal
- Practice
- Accents
- Accommodation
- Face-to-face

Language Socialization

- Starting conversation
- Speaking with other language learners
- Speaking with supportive interlocutors

RQ 2: How do the challenges and successes map into the CLB and the CELPIP?

Challenge - Listening

- Linguistic Competencies [Speaking too fast]

But for me to understand what they say, cause people speak really fast. It was really, really challenging. And then, I was really honest with them, I spoke with my boss, telling him I can't work. I even remember saying I can't work in this type of situations.

So, I was working 6 days a week, and then he put me only 2 days, sometimes 3 days a week, sometimes to have enough time to take my English courses. And then I went back to school.

Choukjae CELPIP Speaking 5

CLB - 5

- Spoken clearly at a slow to normal rate
- Face-to-face .. (one-on-one or in small groups)
- Moderately complex, concrete formal and informal communication

RQ 2: How do the challenges and successes map into the CLB and the CELPIP?

Success - Speaking

- Linguistic Competencies [Vocabulary]
- Content knowledge [Workplace expression]

I remember one time that a lady arrive with me and she asked me why my fermented protein is better than another kind of proteins, and then I need to say, explain to her why the fermented products aren't good for your digestion. And was a really big answer I could say because I was talking with her how the fermented products were in your intestine and it was difficult for me to explain a little bit because I have the vocabulary in Spanish but then when I want to speak that in English, it's little challenging, but **when I was with her she really understand the point**, she really understand what, why fermented products are better, and, and then **she decided to buy the protein**. She had already one for to buy and then she decide just to change it. Yeah, it's successful.

Lauren CELPIP Speaking 6

CLB - 6

- Sharing Information: provides necessary information, summarizes information and ideas to clarify and confirm understanding

CLB - 7

- Sharing Information: **addresses relevant questions,**

Preliminary Conclusions

- Language use in non-professional working contexts is dynamic and socially situated
- Point to newcomers being creative communicators in the workplace, maximizing their linguistic resources to achieve multiple and shifting workplace goals.
- Success is influenced by strategy use, face-to-face encounters, affective filter, identity, perceived legitimacy
- Challenge is influenced by affective issues, unsympathetic interlocutors, misunderstandings, social situations, perceptions, phone usage, vocabulary

Limitations

- Analysis presented is preliminary and not on the complete data set (80+ interviews)
- Communication events based on self-reported, interview data
- Longitudinal data would better inform the linguistic profiles of participants from a language socialization perspective
- Not major urban areas (i.e. not Vancouver or Toronto), but interesting insights can be gleaned from the findings.

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a place of mind

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THANK YOU...

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