

Final Report:

Mapping Language Use and Communication Challenges to the Canadian Language Benchmarks and CELP-IP-General LS within Workplace Contexts for Canadian New Immigrants

Paragon Testing Enterprises

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



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OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The study examined language use and communication challenges among Canadian immigrants working in typical workplace settings for newcomers. The participants included in the analysis for this report are new immigrants, i.e., they came to Canada within the past five years. In this study, we examined how new Canadian immigrants' perceived language use and challenges mapped onto the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and the CELPIP-General LS levels of test performance. This mapping provided actual indicators of language use and communication challenges in relation to what new Canadian immigrants working in entry-level-type workplace positions can do, and how well they do in reference against two commonly used benchmark (CLB) and proficiency criteria (CELPIP-General LS) in Canada.

The study focused on entry-level workplace positions because there is very limited empirical research examining language use and communicative challenges among new Canadian immigrants who work in positions that are not regulated by professional organizations (Derwing & Munro, 2009). In this study, we identified key competencies, perceived and actual, associated with language use and communication challenges in the workplace. Such findings can directly inform test design as the basis for measuring language proficiency within workplace contexts.

Goal of the Study

In order to examine the language use and communication challenges of new Canadian immigrants working positions typically filled by newcomers, we established a two-fold goal for the study:

- 1) To investigate the types of interactions in entry-level workplace contexts; and
- 2) To examine the meaning of participants' scores as they relate to the CLB.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Context

Between 2006 and 2011, immigrants comprised almost two-thirds of Canada's population growth. In fact, immigration is largely responsible for Canada's economic growth (Statistics Canada, 2017a). By the year 2031, it is expected that one in three workers will be born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011a). As a public policy, multiculturalism also seeks to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians (Uberoi, 2009). A majority of immigrants in Canada (80 %) report a mother tongue other than English or French, with Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish, Arabic, and Tagalog making up the majority of languages spoken at home (Statistics Canada, 2011b). The term

“**newcomer**” is used in this paper to refer to individuals who immigrated to Canada in the five-year period immediately preceding this study. Although a number of newcomers have described being conversational in English or French (Statistics Canada, 2017b), many continue to experience workplace communication challenges.

The focus of this study is on newcomers in entry-level positions, which are defined as jobs that does not require previous work experience (Statistics Canada, 2017c). For the purposes of this study and report, we have defined entry-level workplace positions as positions that would be open to new entrants or re-entrants to the workforce, such as recent graduates, and those wishing to change careers or jobs. These positions typically do not require any formal training and are not regulated by professional governing bodies. In light of this definition, it is important to note that entry-level workplace positions are broad and transcend multiple job sectors, from the service industry to office jobs. Changes to the immigration programs, such as the introduction of the Provincial nominee programs, have increased the number of newcomers settling in the Prairies and other areas, over the more traditional immigrant destination of greater Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Entry-level and/or low-wage positions are typically occupied by Canadians and newcomers from a range of diverse ethnic backgrounds (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2014).

Newcomers in Entry-level Positions

SKILL VERSUS POSITION

Though the language used to describe entry-level jobs is wide-ranging and has shifted over time, jobs are predominantly distinguished based on the skill level of the person occupying the job, which can be problematic when this skill level focuses on a newcomer’s perceived deficits and does not necessarily reflect the reality of newcomers taking part in the Canadian workplace. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) focuses on the skill of the person (OECD, 2011), rather than the job, and defines low-skilled people as those whose education is less than upper-secondary. Researchers such as Colic-Peisker & Tilbury (2006) refer to a “**secondary labour market**” composed of “**low-status**” workers, while Man (2004) classified workers as skilled, semi-skilled, low or unskilled, based on the level of education, or in the case of newcomers, “**skill-based immigrant**” with “**low human capital**” (Clifton, 2010); “**less-skilled laborers**” (Perrera, 2011); “**low-skilled foreign workers**” (Anderson, 2012; Weedon & Tett, 2013); non-skilled or semi-skilled (Wong, Tsoh, Tong, Hom, Cooper, & Chow, 2008). These labels, or conceptualizations of immigrants in entry-level jobs as being “**low-skilled,**” are problematic, as noted by Lowell & Kemper (2004):

...immigrants are often resourceful, risk-takers, highly motivated, and have good social networks. Even low-skilled immigrants become self-employed, opening retail outlets, restaurants, and other small businesses. A broader notion of skills would

consequently better reflect the socio-economic value of immigration for a society, thereby improving public attitudes toward immigrants. (p. 124).

The training or education for entry-level positions may be referred to as “**soft skills courses**” and “**learning for work**” (Weedon & Tett, 2013). It should be noted, when researchers describe these types of jobs, the text often refers back to the education and skill level of the person. Maxwell (2006) remarks that such jobs require workers to have a high school education and a year or less of work experience.

GENDER AND FAMILY MIGRATION DYNAMICS

Skilled migrant women are predominantly employed in the social welfare sector, which occupies the lowest level in the hierarchy of skilled work (Kofman, 2000). A growing body of research has highlighted the male bias inherent in the conceptualization of skill (Guo, 2015). The “**family investment hypothesis**” assumes that primary workers (usually men) within the family invest in acquiring specific skills in order to further their careers in their host country, while female partners support their families by finding low-skill, low-wage, and often precarious employment (Duleep & Dowhan, 2002). Since males possess more formally recognised human capital globally as a result of the gendered division of labour, it is assumed that males will be primary earners and, therefore, more likely to invest in upgrading in the host country (Bielby & Bielby, 1992). Many newly arrived immigrant women defer their own career aspirations in order to provide for their families in the short term (Cobb-Clark, Connolly, & Worswick 2005; Cobb-Clark & Crossley, 2004). In traditional households, women are socialised to prioritise the needs of their family over their own, regardless of their skills and earning potential (Ho, 2006).

In Canada, immigrant women continue to earn less than their male counterparts in most occupations. Gender dynamics within relationships have been found to change as a result of migration, and women often sacrifice their own employment for family wellbeing (Findlay & Li, 1999). This is especially true for immigrant women with young children (Purkayastha, 2005). Childcare responsibility has a negative impact for **women’s** career prospects in their new host country (Kofman & Raghuram, 2006; Ho 2006; Liversage, 2009). The negative effect of child-bearing on women’s labour market outcomes is referred to as the “**family gap**” (see, for example, Waldfogel, 1998). The family gap is largest in countries with weak childcare policies (Harkness & Waldfogel, 2003). Therefore, in the past, migrating “**dependents**” have been constructed as an economic burden, rather than asset (see Satzewich, 1993). More recently, research has shown that dependents within the economic migrating family unit often play a critical role in the successful integration of the family as a whole (Creese, Dyck, & McLaren, 2008).

In sum, new immigrants are faced with the intersecting challenges of adapting to a new labour market that undervalues their human capital, and gendered social systems that place expectations on them which may not have operated in the same ways in their country of origin.

IN CANADA

There are a number of ways to immigrate to Canada: express entry (skilled workers), Quebec-selected skilled workers, start-up visa (job creation), investor, self-employment, family sponsorship, provincial nominee, Atlantic immigration project, caregiver, or refugee (Government of Canada, 2017). The target population in this study likely immigrated to Canada through the family sponsorship, caregiver, or refugee classes. The shift in Canadian policy in 2001 to attract high-skilled labour neglected the growing shortage of low-skilled and manual trades workers. The resulting move toward foreign and migrant worker programs who come on temporary work visas has created a large and growing, but vulnerable labour force in many countries of the global north, and these workers have limited access to rights and services. This has essentially created a class of what Clifton (2010) terms “**fragmented citizenship.**”

Navigation among various Canadian immigration streams may be particularly challenging for workers with lower language proficiency and limited access to the tools necessary to collect and process information about multiple federal/provincial streams. In addition, while most can speak English or French (Statistics Canada, 2017b), they face more significant language and cultural challenges than a worker from an English-speaking country.

Communication in the Workplace

Workplaces in English-speaking countries such as Canada have become increasingly multicultural and multilingual (Vertovec, 2007), while at the same time, the people in the workplace experience pressure to use English as a lingua franca. In addition, English is used internationally for electronic communication among users of English as an additional language (EAL). These trends, along with an increasingly globally mobile workforce across all sectors of the economy, ensure a growing need for successful English language communication in the workplace (Kleckner & Marshall, 2014). However, speakers using EAL may face several workplace communication challenges.

CHALLENGES

Linguistic issues are often related to the speed the language is spoken, different accents, grammar, and idiomatic language use. Studies examining English usage in the tourism and hospitality industry reveal that EAL speakers struggle to understand international tourists who speak quickly and have a wide variety of accents (e.g., Blue & Harun, 2003; Prachanant, 2012). Fast-paced work environments, such as cafés (Riley & Douglas, 2016), exemplify the challenges people from EAL backgrounds might have following fast-paced speech (Myles, 2009; Riley & Douglas, 2016) and quick changes in topic (Myles, 2009). In such situations, having to converse in and understand English may be particularly challenging. Speakers from EAL backgrounds may also experience challenges related to pronunciation, using appropriate words, phrases, and sentence structure, and

grammar (Aldohon, 2014; Prachanant, 2012). Studies in the business sector reveal similar challenges, as well as issues related to understanding colloquial language and idioms during casual conversation, and to following and joining in on conversations when several people are speaking at once (Chan, 2014).

Familiarity with cultural norms appears to play a vital role in workplace communication. For instance, communication may break down when newcomers from EAL backgrounds are unfamiliar with workplace communication customs (Derwing & Munro, 2009). They may have high-level technical abilities, but difficulties maintaining conversations, understanding accents, and knowing what is culturally appropriate (Myles 2009). EAL speakers may struggle to find the most appropriate vocabulary, leading to misunderstandings. They may find challenges with attitudinal and emotional language, which is typically culturally bound. For instance, a study by Dahm and Yates (2013) noted that physicians face challenges related to culturally bound practices such as giving reassurance and expressing empathy without sounding too direct. Further, it can be difficult to provide detailed explanations (Dahm & Yates, 2013; Riley & Douglas, 2016) and understand what people are saying (Riley & Douglas, 2016).

THE ROLE OF THE INTERLOCUTOR

Workplace communication issues are often seen as the newcomers' responsibility (Kang, Rubin, & Lindemann, 2015; Subtirelu & Lindemann, 2016). However, interlocutors who speak English fluently with high levels of competence also are important for successful workplace communication. One possible reason for breakdowns in communication is that interlocutors may make decisions as to whether or not they are going to contribute to and assist in making meaning when speaking with newcomers who use EAL. Overall, the interlocutor's attitude seems to impact successful workplace communication.

Attitudes

It seems that discrimination and prejudice can detrimentally influence workplace communication. In some cases, perceived levels of English language proficiency is an apparently permissible excuse for discrimination against people from linguistically diverse backgrounds because of the important role language plays in the workplace. Some people may be tempted to maintain language differences to avoid increased competition for jobs, thus increasing their own opportunities to find and keep good jobs (McAll, 2003). Feelings of ignorance, prejudice, and superiority may cause some workers not to accept their colleagues from linguistically diverse backgrounds (Gardner & Liu, 2010), and also possibly lead to criticism of their colleagues' speech for reasons other than simply levels of English language proficiency (Kang, Rubin, & Lindemann, 2015). A perceived difference and othering of an EAL speaker can result in misunderstandings, even when communication is comprehensible (Kachru, 1995; Lindemann, 2002). People can, knowingly or unknowingly, contribute to the success of

interactions with people from language backgrounds other than English through their attitudes and communication skills (Subtirelu & Lindemann, 2016).

When interlocutors do not accept responsibility for successful communication and have negative views of another speaker's accent, communication problems occur (Lippi-Green, 1997). Accent discrimination is defined as discrimination based on language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Akomolafe (2013) differentiates between two kinds of accents, based on comprehensibility: low-status accents would be seen as more difficult to understand, and high-status accents would be thought of as easier to understand and reflective of language competence. People tend to favour accents that are perceived to be less difficult to understand (Derwing & Munro, 2009), and interlocutors from English speaking backgrounds are not typically expected adjust to, or work to understand people from backgrounds other than English (Kang, Rubin, & Lindemann, 2015).

Discrimination and prejudice can hinder communication. Because of the vital role language plays in the workplace, perceptions about an immigrant's level of English language proficiency can be the basis of workplace discrimination. **Interlocutors'** negative attitudes impact speakers of EAL in a variety of ways. For instance, conversations can be halted when people hear different accents, uncommon vocabulary, or unfamiliar speech patterns (Myles, 2009). Sometimes, people may avoid speakers of EAL who look confused, neglecting to be supportive. In fact, Gardner and Liu (2010) observed that participants from language backgrounds other than English in their study were sometimes ridiculed when they tried to speak English, and that customers questioned their right to work when it appeared that they were unable to speak English fluently.

Assessing Language Use

Assessment of newcomers' language ability in the host country's language has a long history. It is widely assumed that the ability of a recent immigrant to integrate and become employed is strongly dependent on the person's competency in the dominant language(s) of the host country (Banerjee, 2009; Chiswick & Miller, 2013). In response to increases in migration and in the diversity of language backgrounds of migrants, governments have developed regional and national frameworks to standardize and describe language competence (e.g., North, 2014; Pawlikowska-Smith, 2000). The language framework in Canada, the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), was initially developed as a placement tool for English language programs for newcomers to Canada (Jezak & Piccardo, 2017). The CLB has become a key framework to describe newcomers' language ability for important decisions related to settlement, professional qualifications and citizenship. The CELPIP-General LS is calibrated against the CLB and is accepted as an official test for documenting English language proficiency in speaking and listening for citizenship purposes (Paragon Testing Enterprises, 2017).

CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

The CLB is the pivotal framework used to describe language ability in Canada across various adult EAL settings. The CLB is a scale of 12 benchmarks that are separated in three levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced), and that represent the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing). Each benchmark describes the key features of language use for each language skill and are independent; in other words, someone can be assessed at level 4 for speaking and level 5 for listening (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012). Each language skill includes four broad competency areas, such as, *Interacting with Others*, *Getting Things Done*, and *Comprehending Information* (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks). The language model informing the development of the current version of the CLB is based on the models from Bachman and Palmer (2010) and Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) (See Bournot-Trites, 2017).

The benchmarks adopt a learner-centred approach through the emphasis placed on ability to complete various tasks, compared to knowledge of the language (Bournot-Trites, 2017). Moreover, the 12 benchmarks are highly contextualized to allow for usability by a range of stakeholders, from language teachers to assessment professionals, to make a variety of decisions about language ability (Jezak, & Piccardo, 2017). Jezak and Piccardo describe the benchmarks as a reflection of Canadian identity, through their contextualized descriptions with examples of language tasks. In this sense, the CLB is the ideal framework to describe the various tasks newcomers should be expected to perform in entry-level jobs.

CELP-GENERAL LS

The CELPIP-General LS is a language proficiency test that assesses listening and speaking and is aligned with the CLB. The scores represent minimal proficiency to advanced proficiency in English and correspond to the CLB levels.

Storytelling Research

Little research has been carried out related to the communication challenges (and successes) that newcomers encounter in non-professional positions. Narrative inquiry, specifically storytelling research, lends itself well to investigate these communication challenges and successes. The essence of such research is to identify stories that are personal, cognitive processes in making meaning about past experiences (Lewis, 2011). Furthermore, storytelling research is known to give voice to marginalized communities. In the case of newcomers working in non-professional jobs, these individuals may be confronted with interlocutors who are uncooperative, and perhaps, in a position of power. By allowing newcomers to share stories about their communication experiences, their perspective and the details about the challenges and successes can be shared. Storytelling research is a form of narrative inquiry that has a rich history in organizational behaviour, and nursing and health-based research (e.g., Bailey & Tilley, 2002; Rosile, Boje, Carlon, Downs, & Saylor, 2013). In applied linguistics, Kasper and Prior (2015) drew on conversational analysis to analyze a story from autobiographic interview data to demonstrate the value of storytelling research to the field. In their

research, the single story is richly grounded in the *emic*¹ perspective. In our study, we adopted an interpretivist view (Rosile et al., 2013) to detect stories at the *etic* level from multiple participants to identify salient features about communication challenges and successes for newcomers in non-professional workplaces. The salient features of communication in Canada can be related to the CLB benchmarks. Therefore, it was important to map the stories onto the CLB framework. It was also important that the features of the context were not lost through the analysis process. This loss may have been possible through traditional coding approaches (Mello, 2002).

Therefore, part of the focus of this study was to explore the storytelling method as a means to identify the self-reported communicative abilities of newcomers working in entry-level positions, and to explore whether these stories of communication events could be meaningfully mapped onto the CLB framework. This framework, in turn, has been aligned to their English language proficiency as measured by the CELPIP-General LS.

Specifically, two research questions were addressed in the study:

1. What are **newcomers'** language use, and communication challenges and successes in their workplace settings?
2. How do the **newcomers'** stories of language use, and communication challenges and successes map onto the CLB and CELPIP-General LS levels of performance?

METHODS

This study drew on multiple methods to 1) explore the functional language uses and communicative challenges that newcomers face in their workplace contexts, and 2) map these perceived uses and challenges onto given CLB levels and the CELPIP-General LS proficiency levels. Data collection took place at the three research sites: Central Nova Scotia; Okanagan, BC; and South Eastern Ontario. We collected data through two sequential interviews, and obtained the CELPIP-General LS scores to examine identified language uses and communication challenges in the workplace.

Participants

After consultation with Paragon Testing Enterprises, the original research proposal had proposed to recruit participants whose proficiency levels were between CLB levels 3 and 6. This focused range of proficiency levels was in response to the fact that immigrants in non-profession positions, classified as Class C and D by the government of Canada, only need to achieve a CELPIP-General LS level 4 or 5

¹ *Emic* refers to an approach where study of a cultural phenomena includes the perspective of someone who participates in the culture being studied. This is in contrast to an *etic* perspective, where a cultural phenomena is analyzed from the perspective of someone who is outside the culture being studied (Merriam-Webster, 2019a, 2019b).

for Canadian citizenship (Government of Canada, 2018a, 2018b). When we started recruiting participants, we realized that newcomers working in non-professional positions were difficult to identify and were often working two jobs, and had limited time to participate in research projects of this nature. To ensure that we were able to recruit participants across the three research sites, the proficiency levels were expanded beyond CLB levels 3 and 6.

Across the three research sites, we initially recruited 49 participants in total, with 35 completing the two interviews and taking the CELPIP-General LS test. For purposes of analysis for this report, we have included participants who, at the time of the data collection, had been in Canada for fewer than five years. In addition, only the interviews that had been transcribed at the time of writing this report were included in the analysis. Thus, for this report, there were 23 participants: 13 in Central Nova Scotia, 6 in Okanagan, and 4 in Southern Ontario. Overall there were 14 females and 9 males. There was a wide range of proficiency levels, as measured by the CELPIP-General LS, with scores ranging from M to 11 for listening, and 3 to 8 for speaking. The participants in Central Nova Scotia and Okanagan choose their pseudonyms, and the participants in Southern Ontario were assigned pseudonyms.

Overall, the participants were employed in eight different job sectors in Canada, namely, food-service, hospitality, retail, healthcare, office work, janitorial, service, and volunteering. See Appendix A for participant profile tables for the three research sites. Below is the key demographic information for each research site.

CENTRAL NOVA SCOTIA

At the Central Nova Scotia site, of the 13 participants included in the analysis, 8 identified as females and 5 identified as males. The participants reported speaking 12 different languages other than English; 8 participants reported speaking 2 or more languages. The two most commonly reported languages were Arabic and Massalit. **Participants'** time in Canada ranged from 0 to 3 years.

Compared to the participants in the South Eastern Ontario and Okanagan sites, the Central Nova Scotia participants who took the CELPIP-General LS had lower proficiency levels in English, as measured by the CELPIP-General LS, ranging from M to 7 for listening, and 3 to 6 for speaking. The mean and median of the CELPIP-General LS were calculated by excluding any M levels: listening scores (Mean = 3.8; Median = 3), and speaking scores (Mean = 4.7; Median = 5). It should be noted that when a test taker receives an "M" in speaking or listening, it refers to "Minimal proficiency or insufficient information to assess." (Paragon Testing Enterprises, 2017).

OKANAGAN, BC

At the Okanagan site, out of the 6 participants included in the analysis, 4 identified as females and 2 identified as males. Two of the participants spoke Spanish and the remainder each spoke a different

first language. Their time in Canada ranged from 1 to 5 years. Each of the Okanagan participants had a different type of job: translator, farm worker at a winery, grocery store clerk, research assistant, office assistant, and hotel worker. The range of CELPIP-General LS scores was 6 to 11 for listening (Mean = 8; Median = 7), and 5 to 8 for speaking (Mean = 6.3; Median = 6).

SOUTH EASTERN ONTARIO

In South Eastern Ontario, of the 4 participants included in the analysis 2 identified as females and 2 identified as males. Two of the participants spoke Korean, one spoke Chinese, and one spoke Arabic. Their time in Canada ranged from 1 to 3 years. Two participants worked as restaurant servers, one as a church pastor, and one as a hairstylist. The range of CELPIP-General LS scores was 5 to 6 for listening (Mean = 5.75; Median = 6), and 5 to 6 for speaking (Mean = 5.5; Median = 5.5).

Instruments

Three instruments were used in this study: a) two semi-structured interview protocols (see Appendix B), and b) the CELPIP-General LS. Initially, we were going to use an adapted version of the Canadian Language Benchmark-Online Self-Assessment (CLB-OSA) (<https://clb-osa.ca/home>). However, we did not anticipate the difficulty in recruiting participants working in non-professional positions. When we expanded the participant pool, the higher proficiency level of some of the participants led to some of the data being truncated.

INTERVIEW 1

Interview 1 gathered participant demographic information and initial information about the participants' experiences in English at their workplace and in life in general. In total, there were 14 questions. Four of the questions (11, 12, 13, and 14) from Interview protocol 1 were not included in the data analysis. For question 11, asking if the participants had attended a LINC program, there was a mixed response, and it did not seem to impact the results related to the larger research questions. For question 12, some the participants had not been assessed for the CLB yet, or could not remember their level. We did not include question 13, the CLB self-assessment, because the data was truncated. For question 14, we decided to not include the data because it did not relate to the larger research questions. See Appendix B for the complete Interview 1 interview protocol.

INTERVIEW 2

Interview 2 asked participants to provide examples of listening or speaking in English in their workplace. The questions asked the participants to describe as many details as they could remember, such as who they were speaking with and what about. See Appendix B for the complete Interview 2 interview protocol.

CELP-GENERAL LS

The format and score levels of the CELPIP-General LS are referenced to the CLB levels (Paragon Testing Enterprises, 2017). When a test taker receives an “M” in speaking or listening, it is listed as an M for “**Minimal** proficiency or insufficient information to **assess**.” The purpose of the CELPIP-General LS is to assess functional listening and speaking skills across a variety of everyday situations.

Data Collection

Data collection at the three research sites was conducted in a similar manner. Two sequential interviews were conducted with the participants. In the first interview, we asked participants questions about their language learning experiences, workplace experiences using English, and their CLB levels. At the end of the first interview, the participants were told to think about stories of communication in the workplace that they could talk about in the second interview. In the second interview, we asked in-depth questions about the challenges and successes the participants have experienced using English in the workplace. Once the second interview took place, the participants were registered for and took the CELPIP-General LS.

Data Analysis

We took a matrix coding approach to analyze the identified stories (communication events) from the interview data, the CELPIP-General LS test scores, and the CLB benchmark descriptors. A matrix is set up as columns and rows, using Excel in this study, to condense the data in a meaningful way, while at the same time retaining key information attached the communication events, such as CELPIP-General LS scores, participant location, and job. With extended communication events, the matrix analysis allowed for what Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) referred to as “**selective stacking**” (p. 108). As a result of our storytelling approach to the data collection and analysis, it was necessary to retain as much contextual information about the communication events as possible.

The data analysis was conducted in six major steps. In the first step, the interview data was transcribed for the 23 participants included in the analysis. The transcription process was in two parts: (a) the interview data was transcribed by a professional transcriber, and (b) verified by the researcher who conducted the interviews.

In the second step, the matrix was set up and the communication events were identified from the interview data. Interview 1 questions 8, 9, and 10 and Interview 2 questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 were the main source for the communication events identified. A communication event (CE) refers to an experience the participants described where they were speaking or listening, typically, with one or more people. In some instances, CEs were identified where the participant was not communicating with another person, but was listening to a YouTube video or a TED talk. Most of the CEs referred to

a time that the participants were communicating with employers/supervisors, co-workers, or customers at their workplace. Some of the CEs were about interactions the participants had in their daily lives with family or other people, such as at the doctor's office, as a way to understand how a certain participant communicated outside of their workplace. The CEs also needed to include enough information to provide context for the "story." The context needed to include a CE in the analysis was location, information about whom the participant was speaking or listening to, and the purpose and topic of the CE. The CE text length varied from a couple of lines to a few paragraphs. To organize the data, an excel spreadsheet was created: a CE was entered for every row and labelled by research site, participant pseudonym, speaking or listening interaction, etc. See Appendix C for an example of the coding matrix. It was at this second step that the data analysis process was separated by region. The Central Nova Scotia interview data was coded first to identify initial codes and themes, and this coding system was then applied to the Okanagan data, followed by the South Eastern Ontario data.

In the third step, the CEs were coded by successes/challenges, description of task, CLB level, and CLB Competency Area. A CE was coded as a success when the participants indicated that the communication goal was achieved, namely, that they were understood by the interlocutor, or they understood what was being said. Conversely, a CE was coded as a challenge when there was a breakdown in communication. In some CEs, the participants would concurrently describe challenges and successes. We coded the CE as a success or challenge based on the features of the quotation that the CLB level was assigned to, which is discussed below. Simultaneously, the CEs were also coded with a description of the task.

As described previously, the Central Nova Scotia data was identified and coded first; this was particularly important for the description of task category. In the Central Nova Scotia data, there were 169 codes initially identified. This initial set of codes were reviewed and identified as fitting in the three themes of general, life, and work; this list was then further reduced to the 11 codes through three iterations of reviewing the data by two researchers. See Appendix D for the final list of themes and codes for task description with example CEs. In this third step, the initial CLB levels and CLB competency areas were assigned to each CE. A CLB level and competency area was assigned to the person who functioned within the task situation. For instance, if a participant described a situation of listening to co-workers talk about television shows but could not understand what was being said, the CE would be labelled as CLB 4, interacting with others. If the participant had understood the conversation, the CE would have been labelled with a CLB 5. Once the CEs were identified and coded for every participant, they were reread by a second researcher to confirm the CLB levels and descriptors, provide alternative suggestions, or identify any discrepancies in the coding. In some instances, CEs were coded with more than one competency area when the language use described, for example, interacting with others as well as getting things done. A third researcher reviewed any discrepancies to clean the coding matrix before moving onto the fourth step in the data analysis process.

In the fourth step, the CEs and CLB levels and Competency Areas were then reviewed by a CLB expert rater, who was independent from the research team. The CLB expert rater, at the time of the analysis, had taught Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) courses for more than 20 years and worked as a CLB assessor in the Central Nova Scotia region. The rater is recognized by the Canadian Language Benchmarks as an “**expert rater**” and is listed in their registry of CLB experts. The Central Nova Scotia data was reviewed first, followed by the Okanagan data, and then the South Eastern Ontario data. Of the 301 CEs initially identified, the CLB expert rater disagreed with 22% (65) of the original CLB levels and/or Competency Areas assigned and provided either alternative scores and/or benchmark descriptors. To review the CLB levels assigned, the CLB expert rater indicated Y (Yes) or N (No), whether there was agreement or disagreement with the levels. If the expert rater disagreed with the CLB levels, the rater provided a new score and CLB Competency Area or did not provide a new score and descriptor to indicate the CE could not be scored. The rater also hid the columns in the excel sheet displaying the **participants’** CELPIP-General LS scores, so the rater would not be influenced by the participants’ official language proficiency scores. Any additional notes were also included: for instance, if the communication event included features of a higher CLB level, but did not satisfy enough of the descriptors.

In the fifth step, we finalized the coding matrix once the ratings from the CLB expert rater were complete. To do so, we reviewed the discrepancies from the CLB expert rater and adopted the CLB score and descriptor of the CEs that was assigned by the CLB expert rater, and deleted any CEs that could not be scored with a CLB level. Initially 301 CEs were identified from the interview data; 22 were deleted to result in the final 279. The CEs were deleted if they did not contain enough information to be scored using the CLB levels, or could not be classified as a success or challenge. As a result of the final cleaning, the complete coding matrix contained information in each cell for the 279 CEs.

In the sixth step, we analyzed the data for patterns. Using the pivot table function in excel, we looked for numerical patterns across the data generally by communication event, types of communication events, successes and challenges, CLB levels and Competency Areas, and Comparison between CELPIP-General LS scores and CLB levels. When the totals were uneven, such as successes and challenges, we inserted the percentages to look for trends. We further analyzed the CEs related to workplace communication qualitatively for a richer description and understanding of challenges and successes as they related to the most commonly applied CLB Competency Areas.

RESULTS

Communication Events

In total, there were 279 communication events identified for the 23 participants across all the research sites, with more speaking communication events (159) than listening ones (120). The average number of events per participants was 12, with the lowest being 7 and the highest being 21. Across the three research sites, the participants' language ability as measured by their CELPIP-General LS scores did not seem to impact the number of communication events identified. Indeed, two Central Nova Scotia participants, Mohammed and Khaled, who had 18 and 19 communication events, respectively, each had a CELPIP-General LS score of 3 or lower, the lowest of all of the participants in the study. In contrast, Okanagan Participant Beatrice, with CELPIP-General LS speaking and listening scores of 8 and 7, respectively, had the lowest number of communication events at 7.

Types of Communication Events

When the CEs were coded for task type, the majority were classified as an interaction at work between the participant and a supervisor/employer, a co-worker/other, or a client/customer (Table 1). The emphasis on workplace communication is not surprising, considering the types of questions that were asked in the interviews. It is interesting that when looking at the task type and skill domain together, the interactions between the participant and co-workers and were balanced as speaking and listening CEs. However, for the interactions between the participants and customers/clients, there was a higher percentage that were categorized as listening CEs, while the opposite was true when the participant was communicating with their employer/supervisor.

Table 1: Percentage and count of listening and speaking communication events coded as task type

Theme	Code	Listening	Speaking	Total
General	Communication	4 (3%)	7 (4%)	11 (4%)
	Strategies			
	Practice English	12 (10%)	4 (3%)	16 (6%)

Life	Daily Tasks	10 (8%)	26 (16%)	36 (13%)
	Essential Tasks	3 (3%)	14 (9%)	17 (6%)
	Family	3 (3%)	5 (3%)	8 (3%)
	Social	10 (8%)	10 (6%)	20 (7%)
	School/Immigration	7 (6%)	4 (3%)	11 (4%)
	Support			
Work	Co-workers	26 (22%)	36 (23%)	62 (22%)
	Customers/Clients	25 (21%)	15 (9%)	40 (14%)
	Employer/Supervisor	14 (12%)	32 (20%)	46 (16%)
	Task	6 (5%)	6 (4%)	12 (4%)
Total		120 (100%)	159 (100%)	279 (100%)

Successes and Challenges

Overall, more CEs were identified as successes than challenges. Of the CEs labelled as successes, more events were classified as speaking, versus listening (Table 2). In contrast, the CEs coded as challenges were relatively balanced between speaking and listening.

Table 2: Frequency of speaking and listening communication events labelled as challenges and successes

Challenge	Success
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Speaking	49 (48%)	110 (62%)
Listening	53 (52%)	67 (38%)
Total	121 (100%)	219 (100%)

When the CEs labelled as successes and challenges were further categorized by task type, there were some interesting patterns related to workplace communication (Table 3). Of the CEs identified as challenges, a higher percentage was coded as an interaction between the participant and customers/clients, compared to the same category for the CEs labelled as successes. The reverse was true for interactions with the employer/supervisor coded within the CEs and classified as successes. However, the CEs coded as an interaction between the participant and a co-worker/other received similar percentages in the challenges and successes categories.

CLB Levels and Descriptors

Almost 50% of the CEs were assigned a CLB level of 4 or 5 (See Table 4). When separated by skill domain, over 60% of the speaking CEs were assigned a CLB level of 4, 5 or 6.

Table 3: Frequency of communication events labelled as challenges and successes, and by task type

Task Type	Challenge	Success
General: Communication Strategies	7 (7%)	4 (7%)
General: Practice English	3 (3%)	13 (12%)
Life: Daily Tasks	14 (14%)	22 (5%)
Life: Essential tasks	8 (8%)	9 (4%)
Life: Family	1 (1%)	7 (4%)
Life: Social	5 (5%)	15 (8%)
School/Immigration Support	5 (5%)	6 (3%)
Work: Co-workers	18 (18%)	44 (25%)
Work: Customers/Clients	27 (26%)	13 (7%)
Work: Employer/Supervisor	8 (8%)	38 (21%)
Work: Task	6 (6%)	6 (3%)
Total	102 (100%)	177 (100%)

Table 4: The number of communication events classified as speaking or listening and the assigned CLB levels

CLB Level	Listening	Speaking	Total
1	3 (3%)	8 (5%)	11 (4%)
2	13 (11%)	10 (6%)	23 (8%)
3	12 (10%)	17 (11%)	29 (10%)
4	29 (24%)	30 (19%)	59 (21%)
5	36 (30%)	42 (26%)	78 (28%)
6	7 (6%)	30 (19%)	37 (13%)
7	11 (9%)	10 (6%)	21 (8%)
8	8 (7%)	8 (5%)	16 (6%)
9	1 (1%)	4 (3%)	5 (2%)
Total	120 (100%)	159 (100%)	279 (100%)

When the task type and the CLB levels were compared, the majority of the CEs coded for one of the four task types were assigned a CLB level 4 or 5 (Table 5). It is interesting to note that the CEs coded for task-related items for work, which typically involved giving a presentation, started at a CLB 4.

Table 5: The number of CEs coded for the work related task types and CLB levels

Work Task Type	CLB levels								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Co-workers	1	7	5	15	21	7	3	3	
Customers/ Clients		1		6	23	6		4	
Employer/ Supervisor		2	4	9	10	12	6	3	
Task				2	3	2	1	1	3
Total	1	10	9	32	57	27	10	11	3

When the frequency of the CLB competency areas was analyzed, *Interacting with Others* was the most commonly applied CLB competency area for the communication events across all participants (See Table 6). Table 7 lists the five most commonly applied CLB competency areas. What is interesting to note is the large gap between the descriptor *Interacting with Others* and the next most frequent descriptor used, *Getting Things Done*.

Table 6: Counts of the five most commonly applied CLB competency areas

CLB Competency Areas	Count
Interacting with Others	122
Getting Things Done	36
Sharing Information	32
Comprehending Information	28
Comprehending Instructions	29
Total	294

Not included in the table above is a combination of CLB Competency Areas that accounted for 46 CEs. In total, seven in the list of descriptors and combinations contained *Interacting with Others* as another CLB Competency Area, highlighting that it was a fundamental CLB Competency Area that emerged from the data. Below is a list of the Competency Areas and/or combinations that had 7 events or less:

- Interacting with Others; Comprehending Instructions
- Interacting with Others; Comprehending Information
- Giving Instructions
- Needs Assistance
- Getting Things Done; Sharing Information
- Interacting with Others; Getting Things Done; Sharing Information
- Interacting with Others; Getting Things Done; Sharing Information
- Interacting with Others; Getting Things Done
- Interacting with Others; Sharing Information
- Interacting with Others; Giving Instructions
- Interacting with Others; Comprehending Information; Sharing Information
- Interacting with Others; Comprehending Information; Comprehending Instructions
- Interacting with Others; Comprehending Instructions; Getting Things Done

- Getting Things Done; Giving Instructions
- Getting Things Done; Comprehending Information

CELP-IP-General LS and CLB Alignment

When the CEs were categorized into whether they were assigned a CLB level above (+), below (-), or equal (=) to the corresponding speaking or listening CELPIP-General scores for the participant, some interesting patterns emerged. Overall, the majority of the CEs were given a CLB level lower than the participants’ CELPIP-General LS listening or speaking score (Table 7). However, the number of CEs that had a CLB equivalent to or higher than the participants’ CELPIP-General LS scores was balanced.

When examined by skill domain, the majority of the CEs received a CLB level below the participants’ corresponding speaking or listening CELPIP-General LS scores, while the number of CEs scored with a CLB level equal or above the CELPIP General LS were balanced by skill domain (Table 8). The CEs that were assigned a CLB level lower than the CELPIP General LS score were balanced as challenges and successes. For the CEs that were assigned a CLB level that was equal or higher, considerably more were identified as successes.

Table 7: Comparison of CLB levels and the participants CELPIP-General LS scores for all communication events

Comparison between CLB levels and CELPIP-General LS scores	Count of Communication Event
(-)	123
(+)	76
(=)	80
Total	279

Table 8: Comparison of CLB levels and the participants CELPIP-General LS scores for listening and speaking communication events

Comparison between CLB levels and CELPIP-General LS scores			
	(-)	(+)	(=)
Listening	57 (46%)	32 (42%)	31 (39%)
Speaking	66 (54%)	44 (58%)	49 (61%)
Total	123 (100%)	76 (100%)	80 (100%)

Table 9: Comparison of CLB levels and the participants CELPIP-General LS scores for communication events classified as challenges or successes

Comparison between CLB levels and CELPIP-General LS scores			
	(-)	(+)	(=)
Challenge	65 (53%)	13 (17%)	24 (30%)
Success	58 (47%)	63 (83%)	56 (70%)
Total	123 (100%)	76 (100%)	80 (100%)

Considering It All Together

Examining the CEs for CLB descriptors and levels, task type, and challenges/successes expanded onto some distinct patterns of language communication. First, we looked at the top five CLB descriptors assigned to the CEs and further classified by task type (Table 10).

Table 10: Communication events by task type and the most frequently used CLB descriptors

Task Type		CLB Broad Descriptor				
Theme	Code	Interacting with Others	Getting Things Done	Sharing Information	Comprehending Information	Comprehending Instructions
General	Communication Strategies	8 (7%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)		
	Practice English	3 (2%)	19 (53%)	1 (3%)	10 (30%)	1 (3%)
Life	Daily Tasks	5 (4%)		4 (13%)	1 (3%)	4 (14%)
	Essential tasks	7 (6%)		8 (25%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)
	Family	2 (1%)			1 (3%)	
	Social	13 (11%)			6 (18%)	1 (3%)
	School/Immigration Support	6 (5%)		2 (6%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)
Work	Co-workers	35 (29%)	4 (11%)	6 (19%)	5 (15%)	7 (24%)
	Customers/Clients	14 (11%)	5 (14%)	3 (9%)	2 (6%)	7 (24%)
	Employer/Supervisor	23 (19%)	6 (17%)	4 (13%)	3 (9%)	7 (24%)
	Task	6 (5%)	1 (3%)	3 (9%)	1 (3%)	

Total	122	36	32	33	29
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The next section examines the relationship between the CLB descriptors, task type, and how the CEs further map onto challenges and successes.

INTERACTING WITH OTHERS

Challenges

Certain topics and vocabulary are difficult.

Certain topics and vocabulary proved difficult for all speaking and listening interactions between the participants and their employer/supervisor, co-workers, or customers/clients. The assigned CLB levels ranged from 2 to 4 for this subset of CEs. When given an orientation by his employer, Khaled didn't understand what was being said. Instead he just listened and said, "okay, no problem, if I know I didn't know, yes. [laugh]." The full listening CE was assigned a CLB level 2.

Everyday topics were also noted as being difficult by Melissa, who actually had higher CELPIP-General LS scores than Khaled. In the quotation below, Melissa recounted a time when she struggled to understand an interaction between her manager and supervisor. In assigning a CLB level, the CLB expert rater noted that if Melissa had understood the interaction, it would have been a CLB 5, but because she didn't it was rated as a CLB 4 for *Interacting with Others*:

P: Yes, I felt very difficult when again my manager and another woman, she was supervisor in and when she um, came in the room, it was almost every day though they started to speak between them and they Canadian, so for me it was very difficult to understand what they speak about and I felt very difficult to start, to interrupt to the conversation, you know, because they spoke not about the job but everything about the TV shows, about hockey or you know, really I felt that I, I don't understand anything.

(Melissa, Speaking CE, Assigned CLB 4)

Some of the participants had different strategies when faced with difficult topics. Indeed, some participants did not seem to care if they didn't completely understand what was being said. Other participants would ask customers to repeat themselves, or to show the participant what the customer was trying communicate.

Speed, speaking over the phone, or negative interactions

Listening to others on the phone and interlocutors speaking too fast were identified as major listening challenges that participants encountered with customers and clients. Speaking on the phone proved

to be challenging for Beatrice. She described how it was easier to speak with customers face-to-face rather than over the phone. For the participant, her experiences would vary in how receptive customers were to her learning English as an additional language. Some would get angry, while others would support the conversation by speaking slowly:

P: When it's over the phone you don't know maybe they are upset, something upset them before, or I don't know, you don't see them

I: And they don't seem to be as friendly over the phone

P: Exactly, exactly, but sometimes too they are nice, I don't get them, so "sorry I didn't get it you can you say it again, my first language isn't English, I'm sorry" "okk!! How are you, it is ok" "What do you want me to say can you talk slowly" then, then we start laughing and then it is ok

(Beatrice, Listening CE, Assigned CLB 4)

Shelby described a time when she had a negative experience at her job because some words that she needed to translate were not "gentle" and upset the other person: "Yeah, I think she was frustrated or upset or angry with something that I'm doing, but I didn't know, right? It's better explain me, um, instead of just upset, you know and say blast, so um, for example, I have to tell you the truth."

Distracting Setting

The setting seemed to influence why a participant found communicating difficult. Ambient noise or other factors made it difficult for the participants to listen to customers at work. For instance, Alison noted a time that was "very stressful" for her. She had to wear an ear piece, and music playing would interfere when trying to listen to a customer face-to-face:

P: When a customer ask me about something and it's very noisy and yeah, probably is difficult to understand, yeah. And I remember in [clothing store], when I work last winter, uh, was yeah, very stressful because I need to use something in my [ear]..the music is ..is playing and many customer and probably, they, they say me something, I couldn't understand, yeah.

(Alison, Listening CE, Assigned CLB 6)

Successes

Everyday topics

Participants reported having successful conversations with co-workers when the topics were generally related to topics like their family. In this partial CE, Cindy describes how she discusses

everyday topics with a fellow colleague: “My chef is from Thailand. So, we talk about family that ‘I miss my wife’, life thing, everyday conversation. This is **routine**.” (Assigned CLB 5). Jackson described that, because he cleaned many buildings, he got to speak with the people who work in the spaces he cleans. But when he did, the topics of conversation were usually quite general:

P: I’m in work so, in many places I’m working in different offices in the same building, in different offices there, some people they appreciate my job, they say ...so since, even leaders they come sometime, they talking to me, say what is your name, how long have you been to Canada, I say I have been to Canada here just I have one year, or by the time I’m starting working just I said I have two months, three months, they said, what? You have two months in good job here, I said yes, they are surprised and say he’s a good guy, so they appreciate it, so I understand completely, if someone said something, but little bit words (Jackson, Listening CE, Assigned CLB 5).

Obtaining a job

Different participants indicated that some of their communication with a supervisor/employer was when they were hired. Adrian shared his experience of how he obtained his job:

And I came interview, told me how you work, how you conversation with people, if happens something bad or if you’re angry something, how can you speak to the people, and I was told in like you know, if I’m angry or you know, mm, piss me, you know, I can take like uh, easy that’s the reason, I can’t do anything, so okay, “I will accept for you and you can start **tomorrow**,” he told me like that. And I start. (Adrian, Listening CE, Assigned CLB 5)

Administration

Depending on the type of job that the participant had, some of the tasks were quite administrative in nature and involved communicating those details with superiors. Sharon describes how she was in contact with her boss every day about scheduling, and any issues that may arise with a client’s file:

P: Yeah, we will talk about every day, she’s my boss and she’s my, she do office and coordinator, employment relationship coordinator, and we, every moment we have to keep in touch with her, regarding scheduling, regarding any client’s problem, regarding any timing, regarding everything, we have to text and we have to send her messages, and they will respond. ” (Sharon, Speaking CE, Assigned CLB 6)

GETTING THINGS DONE

Vocabulary and Pronunciation

All of the listening CEs assigned the *Getting Things Done* CLB descriptor related to the participant responding to a range of requests and were assigned a range of CLB levels from 4 to 6. Interactions between the participant and the customer/client that were identified as challenges, were similar to the vocabulary challenges for the *Interacting with Others* or issues related to pronunciation. For instance, Karen struggled to ask customers if they wanted their bill because she would say “**getyou**” as one word:

M: I think my pronunciation is [not] that good, especially for Canadians. So, when I worked at a restaurant, you know, about the time the customers finished their food, I should go to them and give them a bill. Usually I asked them “Can I get your **bill?**” ...**They** always answered me by saying “**Pardon?**” “**Sorry?**” Last week, I asked my Canadian friend what the problem is. She told me not to say “**getyou**”, but said “**get-you**” that there should be a break between “**get**” and “**you**”. Since I said “**get**” “**you**”. I think it works. (Karen, Speaking CE, Assigned a CLB 4)

For vocabulary-related challenges, Victor noted that customers would use slang or shorten words when asking for what they wanted on their sandwich:

J: So I have a little bit difficulties in hearing because pronunciation is totally different. Because it's like when I started to work in [restaurant], it is simple veggies its lettuce, tomato, cucumber, and pickles and olives I know all words, but sometimes when customer say something I am able to get that because its different **pronunciation...Yeah**, it is different I say, it's like here is a short phrase they use, like a cucumber two cubs something like that, they use different kind of short forms as well. Yeah, it is total different. [...] We say mayonese, but it is mayonnaise [miyoneze] something like that, then for lettuce there is two kind, it is salad and lettuce, both. If I am new, and somebody, lettuce is a usual word, somebody says me salad, I have a thing. What is salad, salad means everything in it. (Victor, Speaking CE, Assigned CLB 8)

SHARING INFORMATION

Small group discussions

All of the CEs assigned the *Sharing Information* CLB descriptor related to the participant being in a small group discussion or meeting at work, and were assigned a CLB level of 5 or 6. It should be noted that all of the CEs for this subset were successes. Sharon notes that when she speaks with co-workers, it is when they have a “**team talk**” to discuss a client's case:

P: Yeah, that is group discussion and also whenever I am very busy with my work, another co-worker also busy with her work, and they will come together and work for the, help the clients. For example nurse, nurse will be there. If clients needed any medication, they will go and tell them and she will come and give a diagnose. And we will identify the problem so that we will take the problem, issues to the nursing staff, so nursing staff will give a diagnose and, which is a coordination interaction and with co-workers. (Sharon, speaking CE, Assigned CLB 5)

COMPREHENDING INSTRUCTIONS

Most of the CEs identified as a challenge and having the CLB descriptor *Comprehending Instructions* were assigned a CLB level 5, and often related to taking orders on the phone or in a restaurant. It is also interesting to note that within this particular subset of CEs, they were all given a CLB level lower than the participants' CELPIP-General LS scores. There were range of factors that seemed to influence why the participants had challenges in the CEs that were identified as *Comprehending Instructions*, which included angry customers yelling, the participant's shy personality, vocabulary, and perceived weak English language ability.

Although Karen finds the menu at the restaurant she works at simple, she struggles to take orders from Canadians because she is a nervous person:

P: You know **that...most** of the customers at the restaurant are Canadians. It is easier for me to understand the Asian people's English, you know what I mean. I am more comfortable with Asian people, even though their English is not that high as Canadians. I just feel comfortable with them. When western people like Canadians come in, I am very very nervous because I can make mistakes. I am not finally aware of western culture, so I cannot be **rude...**

I: Give us examples. If I go into restaurant and I said I want No. 3, and I do not know really what it is and I am going to ask a lot of questions, so how would you answer it? How would you answer?

P: Our menu is simpler than many other stores. So it is not the confusing thing, so you know that in my personality, I really hate to make mistakes. So whenever I take an order, I will double-check the order. And you know, Canadian people are very patient. They are very nice, so there is not a problem for that.
(Karen, Listening CE, Assigned CLB 5)

The successes for this CLB descriptor of *Comprehending Instructions* related to an orientation for job or task. In a listening CE, Melissa described a situation where she was given an orientation to her job that required instructions for a technical task:

I: Can you just, off top of your head, give me an example of what kind of conversation you had with your manager.

P: It was just explanation about the program. He taught me again about the program, what they do at the company, and I, I would ask a question.

(Melissa, Listening CE, Assigned CLB 8)

In another listening CE, John related an experience he had when his supervisor was describing his duties; he noted that he understood what was being said because he was also given a paper that had the instructions, as well what was being spoken:

I: Okay so when he was explaining you the rules that would be applied at the workplace, and when he was describing to you the kind of activities, the kind of things you gonna be doing there, did you feel that you were understanding everything he was explaining to you?

P: Yeah, because I had the paper, before he explain me, he gave me a paper..so you know, this the bathroom, he show me in the paper, ...**and** then after, you gonna work here, and then you gonna put the cart here, and then he took some chemical and he spray here, and yeah, he was showing me on that paper.

I: Okay, so you feel that having the instructions and everything on paper in front of you was helpful for you to understand?

P: Yeah, it was helpful, yeah. After that I got the training and then in the third week, I did it, yeah.

(John, Listening CE, Assigned CLB 4)

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The participants included in this study represented a range of language abilities from minimal proficiency in speaking and/or listening to 11, as measured by the CELPIP-General LS, and occupied a variety of entry-level jobs in the healthcare, janitorial, customer service, and academic sectors. The participants reported a variety of communication events (CEs) at their workplaces and in their lives. Overall, a majority of the CEs were identified as successes in communicating in English.

Research Question 1

What are newcomers' language use and communication challenges and successes in their workplace settings?

A range of task types were identified as they related to communication at the participants' workplaces and in their day-to-day lives. In the workplace, there were three key types of interactions identified between the participants and their a) employers/supervisors, b) co-workers, and c) customers/clients. When skill domain was considered in the interactions between participants and the customers/clients, the predominant category was for listening. This occurrence of more listening CEs as customer/client interactions highlights how communication may differ for newcomers in a work situation with customers/clients, compared to communication with co-workers and employers/supervisors, which had more speaking CEs. It is also important to note that the highest percentage of CEs identified as challenges was for workplace communication with customers/clients. There are a number of possibilities for this increase in challenges with this type of interlocutor. As was seen in the more qualitative analysis of the data, some participants experienced negative interactions with interlocutors, and could be seen as not supporting the participant. Other participants indicated that they thought "Canadian" customers were nice, but they felt nervous speaking with them. Other challenges arose when customers spoke too quickly or the interaction took place on the phone. The findings do suggest that the context and type of interlocutor may influence whether a newcomer is successful in their communication or experiences a breakdown in communication.

Overall, speaking was the predominant skill for the CEs labelled as successes, while the CEs coded as challenges were balanced between speaking and listening. There are a number of possible reasons why. First, the participants may be able to better articulate speaking CEs, resulting in the higher number identified. Further research is needed to investigate the relationship between speaking skill and newcomers' perception of how successful they are using English.

Research Question 2

How do the newcomers' stories of language use and communication challenges and successes map onto the CLB and CELPIP-General LS levels of performance?

The majority of the participants' perceived workplace communication challenges and successes were given a CLB level 4 or 5 for listening, and 4 to 6 for speaking. In fact, the CEs involving a workplace task, such as giving a presentation, started at a CLB level 4. Taken together, this suggests that the types of tasks that the participants are required to perform in entry-level positions are typically at a CLB level 4 to 6, which is also CELPIP-General LS levels of performance level 4 to 6.

There were five CLB descriptors commonly assigned the most for workplace communication: *Interacting with Others*, *Getting Things Done*, *Sharing Information*, *Comprehending Information*, and *Comprehending Instructions*. The *Interacting With Others* descriptor was the most prominent descriptor assigned to the participant stories. The challenges identified for this descriptor related to the interlocutors, the newcomers' level of comfort, unfamiliar vocabulary and topics, and distracting settings. The successes related to discussing everyday topics, obtaining a job, and communicating administrative tasks. The successes for CEs with the *Sharing Information* CLB descriptor involved participants who took part in meetings or small group discussions.

The challenges and successes for the other two frequently applied CLB descriptors seem to match the type of task outlined in the CLB. For instance, the challenges encountered for the listening CEs with the *Getting Things Done* descriptor related to unfamiliar vocabulary and misunderstanding due to pronunciation. The CEs labelled with this descriptor were about responding to requests. Breakdowns in communication resulted when there were key words or phrases misunderstood, and the request (or taking a food order) was incomplete or stressful for the participant. Similarly, for the CEs with the *Comprehending Instructions*, a lot of challenges related to taking an order, while the successes related to following instructions from an employer/supervisor when receiving training.

Regarding score alignment between the CELPIP-General LS and the CLB levels, there were some key differences, depending on whether the CEs were classified as a success or challenge. Overall, the challenges received lower CLB levels than the participants' CELPIP-General LS scores. By the nature of how the challenges were identified, a breakdown in communication may have focused the rating of the CEs to lower CLB levels. The CLB expert rater noted that one participant would have received a higher CLB level if she had understood what was said. More research is needed to further investigate how successes and challenges influence newcomer's perceptions of their language ability and how it influences their workplace communication.

Limitations

As with any study, there are limitations with the methodology, as well as the interpretations that can be made from the findings. The very nature of self-reported data is complex. In this study, the participants were asked to recall and describe communication events that happened while they were at work and during their day-to-day interactions in their lives. We drew on storytelling research methodology, which values the biases influencing the stories told. How a person recalls events is shaped by their personal perspective. In addition, the stories relayed are what the participants remembered most about the event and will likely include details that may not have happened, or gloss over information. Irrespectively, these self-reported experiences play an important role in our understanding. While we do not claim "truth" about the communication events, we do claim that the details describing the events were important to the participants and representative of their perspectives and how they viewed communication in the workplace.

Indeed, a strength of the study was gathering first-hand accounts from newcomers working in entry-level workplace positions. This important sub-population of newcomers to Canada comprises of valuable contributors to society, but their stories and perspectives of workplace communication are often absent in the research literature. Giving the participants the opportunity to tell their version of workplace communication is rewarding for the participants, and contributes to them being citizens of their new country of residence. They were able to describe the events in their own words and focus on the details that mattered the most to them. This opportunity to share a personal story seemed to be particularly important for some participants, who, from their perspective, had frustrating workplace communication experiences. Further, the approach of gathering “**stories**” from speakers of EAL allows for the identification of communication activities that may have been previously overlooked, but are essential to defining workplace communication for newcomers, and in turn, the Canadian Language Benchmarks and test constructs used to define language ability in Canada.

A limitation of the study was the potential timeline of the stories told. The dates of when the stories actually happened for the participants is unknown. Some of the stories may have been from when the participants first arrived in Canada. While some of the stories told may have been about an event that occurred years ago, it is likely that most of the stories were more recent, which reflects how people often process and retain information. Indeed, majority of the participants, 21 out of 23, had been in Canada for fewer than 3 years at the time of the interviews. As a result of the unknown timeline for the stories, the CLB levels assigned to the stories may not be an accurate representation of the participants’ language ability. With this in mind, the comparison to the CELPIP-General LS scores was at an aggregated level to see if there were any patterns. Future research on gathering newcomer stories of workplace communication would need to ask participants to narrow their identification of stories to a time span that would be closer to the test dates. One way to do this would be to have the participants take a language proficiency test, and then interview the participants a short time later and have them relate some stories about workplace communication that had happened since they took the test.

There were discrepancies in CLB levels for individual participants. This is to be expected since some of the tasks may be well above or below the participants’ proficiency level and not be able to accurately capture the profile of their language proficiency. The goal of the study was to identify key communication challenges and successes that occur for newcomers in non-professional positions. For instance, some of the contexts described by the participants were simple and well below their proficiency level. In this type of situation, the task described would not be the best showcase of their language ability, but it was perhaps a common communication task that they needed to complete as part of their job. Other communication events were perhaps above their language ability, but involved a task they completed often. If the participants were describing a communication event that they needed to complete multiple times a day, they well would become quite skilled at communicating in such predictable situations, even if these situations are above their ability level.

An additional limitation in interpreting the results is that the expert rater could have been influenced by the CLB levels assigned to the stories by the research team. Future research could look at the influence of preassigned benchmark levels and competency areas on the stories.

The data analysis was overrepresented by the Central Nova Scotia participants. This resulted in the overrepresentation by one geographic location and language ability, as the Central Nova Scotia participants had the lowest levels of language ability as measured by the CELPIP-General LS, which may have influenced the results. Part of the overrepresentation was due to the fact that more participants were identified in the Central Nova Scotia Area, compared to the other areas. This easier identification is understandable, considering that the area has a larger recent immigrant population. More research is needed to expand the participant pool to further investigate the relationship between language ability and successes and challenges in workplace contexts across Canada.

The CLB descriptor *Interacting with Others* was the most commonly applied descriptor and overlapped with other descriptors. Further studies should investigate the tasks in workplace communication labelled as *Interacting with Others* and the potential overlap with other CLB descriptors. Furthermore, the process of how the CLB level descriptors were applied to the CEs in this study is outside the normal practice of how the CLB framework is used in assessing language ability. Typically, test takers will need to be assessed across a number of tasks to provide a complete picture of their language ability in relation to the CLB. Further, the classification of the speaking and listening events into distinct categories is not reflective of reality.

Given that typical workplace communication for newcomers in entry-level positions may be at a CLB level 4 to 6, language training can be targeted to these levels. In addition, more research is needed to unpack the complexities of workplace communication as it relates to the interlocutor, successes and challenges, skill domain, and language proficiency.

Conclusion

The findings from this study only begin to examine the complex relationship between newcomers' language test scores, the CLB, and the workplace context for newcomers. More research is needed to further investigate the link between score meaning from language tests, a language framework, and the target language domain. For instance, the interview data allows us to examine communicative competence in the workplace in order to expand our understanding of the construct of communicative competence from the point of view of the participants, and the role interlocutors play. Additionally, an approach to data collection that better locates the language stories in relation to the CELPIP-General-LS could offer insights into how well the test captures the targeted CLB levels. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the interview data potentially offers insights into additional

language acquisition and communication in workplace contexts.

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APPENDIX A – PARTICIPANT PROFILE TABLES

Central Nova Scotia

Participant	Country of origin	Language Background	Gender Identity	Years in Canada	Previous job	Current job	CELP Listening Score	CELP Speaking Score
Melissa	Russia	Russian, Hebrew	Female	1	Accountant in an insurance company	Data Entry	7	6
Alison	Uruguay	Spanish	Female	2	Human Resources Manager in a Cooperative	Hotel	3	6
Sharon	India	Telugu	Female	3	Supervisor at Women and Children Welfare Services	Patient Attendant	4	4
Jane	Uganda	Kiganda	Female	3	Hotel Receptionist	Patient Attendant	3	4
Choukaje	Sudan	Arabic, Massalit, Dajou	Female	2	High School graduate	Kitchen	5	6

Participant	Country of origin	Language Background	Gender Identity	Years in Canada	Previous job	Current job	CELP Listening Score	CELP Speaking Score
Mary	Congo, came from Uganda	French, Swahili	Female	3	Homemaker	Volunteer	3	4
Victoria	South Korea	Korean, Japanese	Female	3	High School teacher	Community volunteer	5	4
Sophie	Iraq	Arabic	Female	2	Homemaker	Volunteer family resource centre, mosque	3	6
Adrian	Eritrea	Tigrignai, Hebrew	Male	0	Trainer in the army in Eritrea; Kitchen helper/dishwasher in Israel	Restaurant – Kitchen (cook line) and cleaning	3	5

Participant	Country of origin	Language Background	Gender Identity	Years in Canada	Previous job	Current job	CELP Listening Score	CELP Speaking Score
Khaled	Sudan	Arabic	Male	3	Market sales supervisor, Cashier	Dishwasher	3	3
Mohamed	Sudan	Massalit, Arabic, Hebrew	Male	2	Farm worker and helping family raise cattle	Kitchen helper	M	3
Jackson	Sudan	Massalit, Twi	Male	1	Farm worker and helping family raise cattle	Janitor	3	5
John	Congo	Swahili, Luganda	Male	2	Student	Recreation Centre	3	5

Okanagan, BC

Participant	Country of origin	Gender Identity	Language Background	Year of arrival	Previous job	Current job	CELP Listening score	CELP Speaking score
Shelby	South Korea	Female	Korean	5	Systems engineer	Translator	7	5
Juan	Mexico	Male	Spanish	1	Photographer	Farm worker - winery	7	6
Lauren	Mexico	Female	Spanish	2	Dietician	Grocery store clerk	6	6
Jason	Tunisia	Male	Arabic	0	Student (engineering)	Research assistant	10	6
Michelle	Philippines	Female	Tagalog	4	Student (linguistics)	Office assistant	11	7
Beatrice	Cameroon	Female	French	3	Spanish teacher	Hotel Industry	7	8

South Eastern Ontario

Participant	Country of origin	Gender Identity	Language Background	Year of arrival	Previous job	Current job	CELP Listening score	CELP Speaking score
Cindy	China	Female	Chinese	3	Nurse	Server & kitchen helper	5	5
Karen	Korea	Female	Korean	1	English Teacher	Server	6	6
Sam	Korea	Male	Korean	3	Pastor at Church	Pastor at Church	6	5
Victor	Syria	Male	Arabic	1	Hair stylist	Hair stylist	6	6

APPENDIX B - INSTRUMENTS

Interview 1 Protocol

1. When did you come to Canada?
2. What country are you from?
3. What is your first language?
4. What did you do in your own country?
5. Did you come with your family?
6. Have you taken a language test prior to coming to this country? What is your language proficiency level?
7. Where do you work right now? What type of work do you do?
8. Is this your first job? Does the job require the use of English to communicate with
 - a. co-workers, topics?
 - b. supervisors, and/or
 - c. customers? Topics?Could you give us some examples?
9. Do you speak English outside the work place? What kind of English are you going to use? Please give us examples.
10. Do you speak English with your family members? Please give us examples.
11. Have you been to a LINC program?
12. Have you been assessed by CLB? Do you have your language CLB? If so, what language level are you assigned to?
13. Go through the CLB online self-assessment. When looking at the CLB online self-assessment,
 - a. Ask participants to self-identify where they see their language ability
 - b. Give examples of language use for the CLB levels.
14. Do you also read and write in English? What kind of things do you read and write? Please give use some examples.

Semi-Structured Interview 2 Protocol

Based on the findings of the first semi-structured interview, a series of questions will be developed to focus on language use and communication challenges when completing the various language use tasks at his or her workplace. For this interview, we want to focus on the strengths and communication challenges faced in the workplace setting.

In the last interview, we asked you to look over the CLB self-assessment that we did and think about the examples of using English at work.

- 1) Describe stories that you can think of where you were successful speaking English at work.
 - a) What was the situation/occasion/reason?
 - b) Who were you speaking with?
 - c) Why do you think you were successful?
 - d) Is there a time where you were not successful in a similar situation? If so, what did you do differently this time?
 - e) Did you ever practice what you were going to say beforehand?

- 2) Describe stories that you can think of where you had a hard time speaking English at work.
 - a) What was the situation/occasion/reason?
 - b) Who were you speaking with?
 - c) Why do you think it was difficult?
 - d) What made it difficult?
 - e) In the end, what happened? (Was the communication goal achieved?)
 - f) If you were in the same situation today, what would you do differently?

- 3) Describe any situation where you felt you could not speak English at work, but wanted to.
 - a) What was the situation/occasion/reason?
 - b) Who were you trying/wanting to speak with?
 - c) What made it difficult?
 - d) In the end, what happened? (Alternative strategies used?)
 - e) If you have to do it again, what would you do differently?

- 4) Describe stories that you can think of where you were successful listening to English at work.
 - f) What was the situation/occasion/reason?
 - g) Who or what were you listening to?
 - h) Why do you think you were successful?
 - i) Is there a time when you were not successful in a similar situation? If so, what did you do differently this time?

- 5) Describe stories that you can think of where you had a hard time listening to English at work.

- g) What was the situation/occasion/reason?
- h) Who or what were you listening to?
- i) Why do you think it was difficult?
- j) What made it difficult?
- k) In the end, what happened? (Were they able to ultimately understand the main points?)
- l) If you were in the same situation today, what would you do differently?
- m) Probe -- if there are any situations/stories where he/she felt they did not understand anything that was being said at work.

Where do you feel confident when you are using English? What do you feel that you can do well?

What language challenges do you face the most when:

- you are greeting customers?
- you are completing a typical transaction with a customer?
- you are interacting with your supervisors?
- you are chatting socially with your co-workers?
- you are working on a work-related task with your co-workers?
- you are on the phone at work with a customer or a supplier?
- you are dealing with a difficult customer?
- you are dealing with outside contractors, such as plumbers, fridge maintenance

Please provide as much detail for the above questions, and use concrete examples and wording where possible.

Is there anything else you would like to share with the researchers? *(This is an important point to keep in mind, as well as allowing participants as much time as needed to reflect and provide as much information as possible, before moving onto the next question.)*

APPENDIX C – EXAMPLE SECTION OF CODING MATRIX

Area	Name	Role	Interview	Speaking/ Listening	CELP/IP	CLB	CLB level via CELPIP (-/=/+)	Description of task	CLB Competency Area	Quote - Communication Event	CLB specific descriptors	Challenge/ Success
Halifax	Adrian	Restaurant – Kitchen (cook line) and cleaning	1	Speaking	M	3	(+)	Work: Co-workers/ Others	Giving Instructions	<p>I: [. . . .] Now when, give me one example of something that you will ask someone in the kitchen.</p> <p>P: Yeah, for example, sometimes I need to help working there on [inaudible] grill, everything, if I need for example, you know, can I have, give me, bring me from the freezer something, meat, Shawarma, or like that, you know, and sometimes, can you clean the dishwasher, dishwasher working with those in the kitchen, we don't have like dishwasher, so I ask like that if it's too much because the boss is looking at me, so I speak like that.</p> <p>I: Okay, so when you speak, do you feel like your coworker understand you?</p> <p>P: Oh yeah, yeah.</p>	<p>Speaking Benchmark 3</p> <p>II. Giving Instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give simple, common, routine instructions and directions to a familiar person. <p>[Instructions are 2 to 3 steps.]</p>	Success

Area	Name	Role	Interview	Speaking/ Listening	CEPIP	CLB	CLB level via CELPIP (-/=/+)	Description of task	CLB Competency Area	Quote - Communication Event	CLB specific descriptors	Challenge/ Success
Halifax	Adrian	Restaurant – Kitchen (cook line) and cleaning	1	Speaking	M	7	(+)	Work: Employer/ Supervisor	Interacting with Others	<p>I: Okay, okay. Now how about your boss? Do you have conversation with your boss sometime on the job?</p> <p>P: I had one time, let's see, I had conversation about hours, because the hours was, is few hour, and I told him if he have more hour I can continue because I need more hour. I told him like that and he told okay, no problem, now it will be slow but in summer maybe I will give you more hour, he told me like that and everything.</p> <p>I: So when you were having that conversation about increasing your hours, did you feel that he understood what you were trying to tell him?</p> <p>P: Oh yeah, oh yeah.</p> <p>I: Okay, and when he explained to you, did you understand everything?</p> <p>P: I understand him, yeah, because you know, he is right. Sometimes the restaurant is too slow, you know, and it feels no good because if you don't have anything to, work, you can't continue there so, right but there some people take too much hour.</p>	<p>Speaking Benchmark 7</p> <p>I. Interacting with Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in less routine social conversations for many everyday purposes (such as expressing and responding to appreciation, complaints, satisfaction, dissatisfaction and hope). 	Success

Area	Name	Role	Interview	Speaking/ Listening	CELP	CLB	CLB level via CELPIP (-/=/+)	Description of task	CLB Competency Area	Quote - Communication Event	CLB specific descriptors	Challenge/ Success
Halifax	Adrian	Restaurant – Kitchen (cook line) and cleaning	2	Listening	3	3	(=)	Life: Daily Tasks	Comprehending Instructions	<p>I: [. . . .] So now when you look back and you can think of the time you first came to Canada, can you share with me one example, one story where it was difficult for you to communicate with someone? Maybe the first time you went on your job?</p> <p>P: Yeah, it was in Toronto when I come from Israel, so um, I was meeting with the people, you know to transfer to another airplane, so was hard you know, and I ask people, 'so how can I get to Halifax, because I'm coming from', I said like that. And people says, 'maybe go there,' like, you know, another place, maybe but little hard but after that, and some people help me where to find it, how can I go, you know, they say, how find it the first time, you know the other terminal and uh, and after that, I don't remember, it was hard.</p>	<p>Listening Benchmark 3 II. Comprehending Instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand instructions and directions related to familiar, everyday situations of immediate personal relevance. [Instructions are about 2 to 4 steps.] <p>– Identifies words and phrases that indicate movement, location, measurement, weight, amount and size.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs some assistance (such as repetition and paraphrasing, speech modification, explanation, demonstration or occasional translation) 	Challenge

APPENDIX D – CODING FRAMEWORK (THEMES AND CODES)

Theme	Code	Example
General	Communication Strategies	<p>I: The thing I find most difficult in English is that people keep talking. The thing I find most difficult is to chip in. So sometimes I were running of methods, so sometimes I just used a gesture or something. So what strategy do you use?</p> <p>P: I would try to interrupt like, trying to give my opinion. Sometimes I have to jump in like to...would you allow me...so something like an interruption...so...</p>
	Practice English	<p>P: What kind of English, do you outside of home? L: I have a Canadian friend. I like talking with her. I learned a lot from her. She was a masters students at Queen's. In the morning, for 5 or 10 minutes we talk about things, dress, life, shopping, weather, culture and everything. I talk a lot about Canadian politics.</p>
Life	Daily Tasks	<p>P: And some of, some places when I go, like shopping, shopping is like, just like two or three words, just yeah, how are you doing today, I'm good, yeah, that's it. So it's like,</p> <p>I: You mean when you get to the cashier.</p> <p>P: Yeah, the cashier, that's it.</p>

Theme	Code	Example
	Essential Tasks	<p>I: Okay, now when, before they send the translator, the yeah, someone to help with translation, was the doctor trying to explain something to you, and did you understand what the doctor was trying to ask you?</p> <p>P: No, because, yes she did, but I couldn't understand because t'was, new, something new. Everything was new.</p> <p>I: Okay.</p> <p>P: So yeah, I couldn't understand what she's want to say and it was hard [augh].</p>
	Family	<p>I: So with your family members you use English, you don't use Telugu?</p> <p>P: Yeah with the children we speak in English sometimes [laugh]. Husband and me, sometimes Hindi, sometimes Telugu, sometimes English.</p> <p>I: Okay, but the kids understand Telugu.</p> <p>P: Pardon me?</p> <p>I: The kids, your kids.</p> <p>P: They can't write, but they can speak.</p> <p>I: They can speak it, okay, all right. So when you are speaking with kids, your kid, and you're using English, what kind of thing do you talk about?</p> <p>P: Mm, because hi, Nana, how are you? So I am doing good. Then what did you study today, what happened in the school? Then if it's my son's kids, what did you do, what you're going to do, and what's the program, please let us know, then tidy your room and things.</p> <p>I: Things like that, okay, so mostly about the school.</p> <p>P: [25:40 both talking at once] for them, and my daughter, she is very busy with computer, and soon after coming from the home, I will just text her, did you eat [nicely?] and did you, are you studying, are you [playing/praying? 25:53], just, just one sentence I will text whenever I am at the office so she will be in the home, so that she will see the text and she will respond, that type of conversations with her, yeah.</p>

Theme	Code	Example
	Social	<p>I Okay, and what about on the listening side, there, do you think we?</p> <p>P: I think for the listening I'm more comfortable, and I think the only difficulty will be in the speaking. The listening, as I said, it's only they're using some very technical or specific words, I will not get that word, but I will get the subject he is talking.</p> <p>I Overall meaning.</p> <p>P: Yeah, yeah. I mean I will understand that he's talking about two kind of vegetable, but then I either need to see the picture of it or to identify it.</p> <p>I Yeah, I think that's, yeah, that makes sense. Um, well, okay so I think, I think we've kind of gone through all of those.</p>
	School/Immigration Support	<p>I: Okay, that's good. Now outside the work placement, do you use the English language.</p> <p>P: At workplace?</p> <p>I: Outside the workplace, like at home or in town.</p> <p>P: No, at home unfortunately no, but I visit English classes at [immigration centre], so the library sometimes I meet with some teacher.</p> <p>I: So if you were to meet a teacher and have a conversation, what will you say, for example?</p> <p>P: What I spoke about? We speak about the weather for the beginning, and then little bit about my country and what I did, um about yesterday, for example, spoke about American politic [laugh], so.</p> <p>I: So current event and you're fluent talking about those issues?</p> <p>P: About politica, it's very difficult to speak, you know, but yes I'm feel very comfortable.</p>

Theme	Code	Example
	Co-workers	<p>M Great. Um, so now could you think of stories where you were successful listening. So the last ones were about speaking, so could you think of a time where you were successful listening to English at work?</p> <p>P Yeah, like I have coworkers that speak really fast and, be like guys, this is what we need to do with the LMIAS, or like the work permits, and then they just like crowd the office like what we need to do, it's like okay, and then they're really fast, but then I still get them.</p> <p>M Oh, okay. And are they, and they're native English speakers?</p> <p>P One of them I think is not, but he speaks really fast but I still get it, um, and then yeah, the other ones are native um, English speakers too and they also speak, not really fast, but yeah like pretty fast.</p> <p>M So speed is a, is a big issue.</p> <p>P Uh-huh</p>
Work	Customers/Clients	<p>Now when you meet your customers, you go to deliver the food, can you give me an example of the kind of conversation you have with your customers when you went to deliver –</p> <p>P: Okay [laugh]. Usually, uh, I, uh, usually I phone customer. If my delay the food, something, I call the customer first, restaurant busy, I'm so sorry.</p> <p>I: Okay, so you apologize.</p>

Theme	Code	Example
	Employer/Supervisor	<p>I: Once they [supervisor] start showing things physically, like they'll say, this is the mop to mop the floor and they do the sign, okay, was that helpful for you to understand what they say, when they do that.</p> <p>P: When they speak, I didn't understand well, that's true, but when he show with finger, this is a mop, I take it. Then I know this name is, this was a –</p> <p>I: A mop, okay.</p> <p>P: And if they say, take this dishes a square he show me this one, take this one and a square. I see a finger going this dishes, is it's a square. If it say circle, take this one, I'm gonna know it's a circle, I'm gonna take the circle, if you said just go take the circle I'm confused, where's the circle, this is a square. But if he shows the girl this way I'm going to take it.</p>
	Task	<p>I: Okay. Um, so these were about speaking, how about listening? Uh, when you go to um, conferences for example, could you think of a time where uh, a specific one maybe, where you were really good and successful at listening in English too?</p> <p>P: Yeah, I really, I mean I attended in the last five years as I said, a lot of international conference. If it is in my topic, if it is in my area of research, I really can understand exactly the topic and can understand the problems and the challenges, uh, the speaker is raising and it's usually, especially if it is from a real good expert who can formulate exactly the subject and present the challenges very well.</p> <p>I: So it's, it's important that um, you're all using the same vocabulary and ideas, basically.</p> <p>P: Yes, yes, and, and also I think it depend on the speaker also, if the speaker can, I mean can formulate very well his problem and can,</p> <p>I: Yeah, because in any language uh, there's a variety of levels, right?</p> <p>P: Yeah, yeah, that's, and the skill of presentation, that will deter a lot.</p>

