# ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL BARRIERS OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED IMMIGRANT PROFESSIONALS IN WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA

**by**

**Lei Wang**

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of**
**The University of Manitoba**
**in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of**

**Master of Education**

**Department of Curriculum, Teaching & Learning**
**University of Manitoba**
**Winnipeg, Manitoba**

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

*****

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

# ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL BARRIERS OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED IMMIGRANT PROFESSIONALS IN WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA

BY

Lei Wang

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of

Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree

OF

Master of Education

Table of Contents

Page

Acknowledgement....i

Dedication....ii

Abstract....iii

Chapter One: Literature Review of Selected Topic

Introduction....1

Social and Economic Significance of Immigrants....3

The Employment Situation for Well-Educated Immigrants....6

Negative Effects of Access Problems....7

For the Individual....7

For the Canadian Society and Economy....8

Barriers for Immigrants Re-Entry....9

First Major Milestone....9

Discrimination....10

Lack of Canadian Work Experience....11

Systemic Barriers....12

Communication/Language Barrier....13

Communication Barriers Entering a New Environment in Second Language Acquisition....14

Statement of Research Problem....18

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

What is Language Socialization (LS)....21

Language Socialization in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)....22

LS for Adult Newcomers........................................................................23

Competency Goals in Specific Communities.............................................24

Community of Practice Model (COP)........................................................28

Community of Practice..............................................................29

Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP).....................................32

Mentors and Apprentices...........................................................33

Applying COP in This Study........................................................................35

Language and Culture Competence..............................................................36

Academic and Practical Significance..........................................................38

Chapter Three: Methodology

Types of Research Methods in Education......................................................40

Methods Applied in Previous Studies...........................................................42

What is Case Study Research.......................................................................44

Using Case Study for My Inquiry..................................................................44

Data Sources..................................................................................................46

Study Context and sampling..........................................................................46

The Initial Negotiation of Entry......................................................46

Study Context..................................................................................47

Sampling..........................................................................................47

The Interview Sessions....................................................................48

Data Analysis.................................................................................................49

Chapter Four: Summaries of Each Participant's Re-entry Story

Engineering....................................................................................................50

Hammed (From Afghanistan, 25-35 yrs)............................................51

Ling (From Mainland China, 30-40 yrs)........53

Medicine........56

Anita (From Argentina, 34 yrs)........57

Sylvia (From Iraq, 39 yrs)........58

Banking........59

Bo (From Mainland China, 33 yrs)........59

Paulo (From Peru, 36 yrs)........61

Chapter Five: Communication and Cultural Challenges in Re-entry

How to Enter their Target Professional System........66

The effect of English communication and cultural understanding on re-entry path design........66

English communication challenges mentioned........68

Cultural knowledge and re-entry path design........70

Preparation for Entering the Canadian Labour Market........74

Job searching: entering Canadian job market........75

Resume writing........76

Job interview........79

Networking in Canada........82

Working in Canada........84

Spontaneous interaction........84

Different practices in the Canadian professional community of practice (COP)........91

Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) Opportunities and Mentors........96

Chapter Six: Professional Language (Re)socialization Provided in Enhanced Language Training (ELT) Programs

General Information about the Three ELT Programs....................................101

Language (Re)socialization Provided by the Three ELT Programs..............102

Re-entry and the target professional COP....................................102

Communication and different practices in the target profession in Canada....................................................................105

Professional job preparation....................................................111

Legitimate Peripheral Participation and mentors..............................112

Chapter Seven: Improvement on Communication and Culture for Re-entry Purposes

Roles and Impacts of ELT on the Participants' Re-entry..........................116

Chapter Eight: Final Discussion

Conclusion and Discussion.......................................................125

Implication and Suggestions.....................................................132

Limitations..............................................................................134

Future Research Directions.......................................................135

References.....................................................................................136

Appendices

Appendix A. Description of the research and invitation for immigrant professionals...................................................................................142

Appendix B. Immigrant professional consent form...................................145

Appendix C. Description of the research and invitation for ELT instructors/directors.....................................................................148

Appendix D. ELT programs instructors/directors consent form...................151

Appendix E. Interview guiding questions for immigrant professionals..........154

Appendix F. Interview guiding questions for ELT instructors/directors.........156

List of Tables

Table 1. CLB five components of communicative competency.............................37
Table 2. Views of language and culture learning competence..............................38
Table 3. Summary of the three ELT programs...................................................47
Table 4. Background information on study participants......................................63
Table 5. Canadian work experience...............................................................84
Table 6. Current re-entry progress and employment situation..............................116

List of Figures

Figure 1. Three Enhanced Language Training programs......................................47
Figure 2. Cited "Flowchart for planning an engineering or engineering-related career in Manitoba". A resource guide for internationally-educated engineers: information to help you plan an engineering-related career in Manitoba. (2004) Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Settlement and Labour Market Services Branch.................................................................................................55
Figure 3. Aspects of communication and culture challenges in re-entry...................64
Figure 4. Defining communication and cultural challenges in re-entry.....................65
Figure 5. Professional language re-socialization categories.................................101

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep appreciation to all the individuals who assisted me throughout this journey. I want to thank my thesis advisor Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson for believing in me when I doubted myself, and for inspiring and nurturing me all along. My gratitude also goes to all my advisory committee members: my advisor, Dr. Clea Schmidt, & Dr. Charlotte Enns for their valuable guidance, insightful feedback and warm encouragements.

I also owe my deepest appreciation to all my research participants. I thank all of you for giving me your time, opening your hearts to me, and giving me your trust. Your stories and insights made this project possible.

I want to also thank all my family members for unconditional and never-ending support, love, and trust in me. I could have never traveled this far without you.

Finally, I would like to sincerely acknowledge the generosity of the Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration (PCERII), for their financial support of this research project and their trust in and encouragement of a novice graduate researcher like me.

## Dedication

*To my mom, and my dear Danny, I love you both so much*

&

To all those who have come in search of a better life for themselves and their families

## Abstract

Immigrants have been recruited to Canada for their societal and economic importance. Yet it is well documented that skilled workers encounter many barriers re-entering their internationally trained fields in Canada. Among others, the communication and cultural barriers, although recognized as major ones, have more often been mentioned than studied in depth. A case study has been designed to explore this topic from the re-entry experiences of six immigrant professionals in three different fields: engineering, medicine, and banking. This study also examined the professional language re-socialization support provided by a new type of higher-level, occupational specific language training program (Enhanced Language Training) in the three mentioned professional fields.

# Chapter One

## Literature Review of Selected Topic

### *Introduction*

When I first arrived in Canada, I met an immigrant from Turkey at a restaurant in which he worked at the time who was in possession of both a bachelor's degree in economics from a university in Russia, and a diploma in early childhood education from Turkey. Despite his education, he had to take a survival job as a baker in a restaurant, where he has been working for the past 10 years. I do not know his entire story, but one question has resurfaced repeatedly since I met him: Why is he not working in his profession? He could have achieved so much more!

I've since met many more people with similar situations. I met a brilliant man with a Master's degree who held an upper management position in his home country. Now, in Canada, he was demonstrating products in a grocery store. I met another man who worked as a senior mechanical engineer in China for 20 years before arriving in Canada; now he washes dishes in a Chinese restaurant. The more people I encounter in these circumstances, the more clearly I recognize the Turkish economist/baker's situation is a common social problem rather than a single sad story of a man's bad luck. Why couldn't these people find employment in the fields for which they were trained? Why couldn't they achieve as they had at home? What are the barriers they face? As a person who works in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), I could not help but wonder if language plays a part.

Although I have not been in the same situation as those immigrants, as a second language speaker myself, I know how hard it can be trying to integrate into a new society.

I studied English in China since the seventh grade. After I earned my bachelor's degree in China, majoring in English and education, I became an EFL teacher. I passed TOEFL with just less than full marks, and GRE with a high score as well. Yet, no matter how proficient my English was considered in China, it was not good enough here. Almost everything was different. I had to live and struggle to learn in two communities: my partner's social circle, (himself, his family and friends all native English speakers) and the local Canadian academic community of TESOL. Neither community was familiar to me. As an outsider, I see these two communities very differently. For me, entering both proved challenging.

I realize that to fit in and be recognized as a community member, I have to exhibit the expected and appropriate behaviours common and normal to that community. It is those expected behaviours that are the most difficult to learn, for you can find little guidance from textbooks. For example, I arranged to go on a shopping trip with a local woman. The initial excitement soon soured when we both realized we had no idea of how to interact with each other or what to talk about. I remember trying hard to think of something to say; then when I finally said something, she responded briefly and we both went quiet again. The rest of the trip became nothing but awkward and embarrassing. That is when I realized that in order to function in a new society, speaking the new language, important and difficult as it is, is insufficient to guarantee success. Indeed, much more has to be learned than language. I relived my childhood again, observing and learning the different rules of the locals, trying to match my conduct to theirs so I would be accepted as a member in all different contexts. I had to learn their ways of talking, their logic of thinking, their sense of humor, and even their dress code.

No matter how challenging my experiences, they have only affected my life to the point where I have occasionally felt shut out as an outsider. As yet, my difficulties have had no direct influence on my employment as I am still in the process of completing my Master's program. In contrast, for many immigrant professionals, barriers to employment can present major obstacles. Could language skills and the lack of sociocultural knowledge in any way affect their re-entry into their professions? More importantly, if so, then how? Through investigating the way language and cultural competence interact and affect immigrants' abilities to access their professions in Canada, we can gain better insight and understanding into their language and cultural needs.

***Social and Economic Significance of Immigrants***

In Canada, immigration has long been acknowledged as a means to mitigate problems brought about by economic and demographic trends. Blair (2003) writes that as Canada is now facing both a declining birthrate and an aging population, the country will depend on "continued immigration to support the shrinking population, to grow the labour force, and to maintain economic sustainability" (Internet source). Blair notes that in the 21st century, Canada's "knowledge-based" economy relies heavily on skilled labour, which its own population cannot supply. Thus, Canada looks beyond its borders to recruit those with the skills it most needs. In addition, the aging population implies higher workforce attrition rates than ever before. According to Dolin and Young (2004), using a 2001 Statistics Canada census, there was a 36 percent increase in the work-age population between the ages of 45 and 64 from 1991 to 2001. They also note that within the next four to nine years, the 10 million-strong baby boomer generation will be entering retirement. Immigration, therefore, has already played an important role in coping with the corresponding pressures. A 2002 HRDC report reveals that more than 70 percent of the net growth in the labour force was attributed to immigration to Canada. Of the 608,000 individuals added to work force between 1991 and 1996, 431,000 were immigrants. The report further predicts that by 2011, immigrants will constitute 100 percent of net labour force growth, and 100 percent of net population growth by 2031.

Among all classes of immigrants (Skilled Workers, Business, Family, and Refugees)[1], the skilled workers/economic or independent class of immigrant was already the focus of immigration policy as early as 1999. As Brouwer (1999) reported, skilled workers were the "largest single group of immigrants" (p. 3) among all classes of immigrants. Using the statistics of Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1999, Brouwer pointed out that nearly half of the permanent residents were skilled workers/independent immigrants, totalling 81,146 out of 174,100. By 2002, this proportion grew to almost 70% of all immigration (Alboim, 2002). According to Reitz (2005), this immigration trend fits into the historical government policies in response to Canadian economic development. Unskilled labourers were recruited when agriculture was the economic priority. In response to the industrialization of Canada's economy, immigrants were recruited for manufacturing and construction. As the economy now shifts towards a "postindustrial or knowledge economy" (p.5), the immigration policies has begun to focus on skilled workers.

The skilled worker category of immigrant is accepted into Canada for their high credentials in certain fields, their working experiences, and their level of training and language abilities. They are granted points for possessing different attributes, and when

[1] Skilled worker class is also referred to as Economic or Independent immigrants. They are further divided into professionals and skilled trades people.

they exceed a minimum number of points, they qualify for a visa. According to JobStart and Skills for Change (2001), the point system is built on "an occupational demand model" (p. 26) that can be traced back to 1967. The number of points an applicant receives in each of the categories depends on how valuable Canada determines their skills to be at the time. Those with skills and experience in high-demand areas are granted more points than those whose skills are already in high supply. Brouwer (1999) pointed out that they have to get at least 70 points to be considered. Since then, there has been some policy alteration reflecting new trends in the Canadian labour market. For example, the current pass mark has been reduced from 75 to 67 (Citizenship and Immigration, 2005).

Major strains are placed on certain sectors of the labour market from the "brain drain" phenomenon, whereby highly trained Canadians are lured out of Canada by superior salaries or growth opportunities. Torjman (2000) mentioned that each year about 10,000 highly skilled workers leave Canada for the U.S. and a similar amount leave for other parts of the world. Immigration to Canada then can be seen as a means of balancing the net outflow of talent. According to Murray (2000), "In the highly qualified sector, we are gaining four university-qualified people from around the world for every one lost to the US" (p.6). In addition, the number of post-secondary educated people lost to the U.S. is actually surpassed by the number of immigrants with Masters and Doctoral degrees. Yet, it is exactly this category of immigrant, those whose talents and skills are recognized by Canada, who, after actually arriving in Canada, soon find the reality is not as they were led to believe.

***The Employment Situation for Well-Educated Immigrants***

The handbook “Making a Change Together” by Skills for Change and the Centre for Research and Education in Human Services (2001) states that although the Canadian government expects these types of new immigrants to immediately contribute to the economy in the capacity for which they were chosen, in reality, most of them have trouble finding work in their trained professions. Despite the fact that finding jobs is equally beneficial for both the individuals and the country, this tremendous opportunity for brain gain goes largely unrealized. In fact, many studies, as demonstrated below, have shown that access to trained professions and trades is a big problem faced by skilled immigrant workers in Canada.

Brouwer (1999), using data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, found that of all foreign trained engineers arriving in Canada between 1991 and 1994, only about half were able to find work in their field by 1996. He notes the severity of the problem and goes further to describe the phenomenon of “doctors driving taxis” and “chemists delivering pizza” as “well-worn clichés and part of our cultural consciousness” (p.3). Reitz (2005) also pointed out that the Canadian labour market underutilizes or even wastes the skills of highly qualified immigrant workers. Based on Canadian census data on the labour-force, Reitz calculated that immigrants, due to the fact that they were working at occupations below their skill level, earned \$2.4 billion less than their native-born counterparts with comparable skills. By his calculations, he also revealed the two-thirds of these unused skills could in fact be used in the Canadian context, and, if so, would have a productive value of about \$1.6 billion. The underlying problem, according to Reitz, is not the level of skills brought into the country, but rather the degree to which the skills of these immigrants are effectively utilized in Canada.

In a similar case, Aycan & Berry (1996) studied one hundred and ten highly-educated Turkish immigrants in Montreal, two-thirds of whom reported they were either unemployed or underemployed. This and the studies discussed above demonstrate that the skills of internationally-educated, highly trained immigrants have not reached their full potential here in the Canada, which results in many negative effects. This issue impacts not just the immigrants themselves but the whole Canadian economy.

***Negative Effects of Access Problems***

When skilled immigrants encounter difficulty re-entering their fields in Canada, many negative effects occur. The individuals themselves suffer many ill-effects, as does the economy and society.

***For the individual.*** When faced with so many barriers, immigrants experience frustration. JobStart and Skills For Change (2001) reported that many immigrants in the IT field are confused as to why they were accepted to come in the first place, since once they arrived they were left alone to find employment in their field. Similarly, Azuh (1998) reported incidences of emotional trauma caused by employment-related difficulties such as unemployment or underemployment, and the lowering or loss of social status. Stress management services may offer short-term relief, but the problem could be more effectively solved by confronting the actual causes. Aycan and Berry's (1996) study created a model to demonstrate how an immigrant's psychological well-being and adaptation can be partially predicted by their employment experiences after immigrating. The model was able to demonstrate a relationship between the high stresses of acculturation and the gap in the Turkish immigrants' social status before and after immigrating. Those whose social status was the most reduced were least happy with their lives in Canada, and considered themselves economically unsuccessful. Aycan and Berry found that the amount of time spent unemployed was directly related to immigrants' well-being, self-image, and adaptation.

***For the Canadian society and economy.*** Aside from the obvious economic inefficiencies resulting from rampant underutilization of workforce talent, the individual impact can itself create social and economic problems. When immigrant skilled workers can not integrate successfully into Canadian labour market, it causes a waste of human capital that could otherwise benefit the Canadian economy, fulfilling the Canadian immigration policy's intentions in the first place. Nixon (2005) pointed out, based on calculation, that if the skills of immigrants were in fact fully utilized, and their earnings equivalent to someone born in Canada, the increase to personal income would be to the tune of $13 billion annually. By making full use of what is already present, the country could realize a one-time gain of around 400,000 workers. Nixon illustrated the irony of the underutilization with the analogy of driving a high-end sports car at 20 kilometres an hour.

Reitz (2005) also identified the increasing burden on Canada's social safety net as higher poverty rates result in additional "social-service take-up" (p. 11). Furthermore, he acknowledged the potential for the public's perception of immigrants to shift from positive and welcoming to viewing them as a social problem or "liability" if the underutilization of skills persists or worsens. Reitz also insightfully pointed out another scenario in which the immigrants themselves begin to react politically to their situations.

Having discussed the current situation for internationally trained skilled workers in Canada, it is now necessary to examine causative factors for their challenges, so a foundation for working out solutions may be established. We need to find out: what are the reasons behind this chronic underutilization? What are the barriers these highly qualified professionals are facing when they are looking for employment in their trained fields?

***Barriers for Immigrants Re-Entry***

***First major milestone.*** As early as 1989, research has attempted to identify barriers limiting or restricting new immigrants' re-entry to their chosen professions. The first major work in this area was the final report based on a study by the Task Force on Access to Professions and Trades, commissioned by the Ontario government. The report became Ontario's first major milestone towards advancing this issue. Cumming, Lee and Oreopoulos (1989) identified many barriers skilled immigrant workers face, focusing on institutional structures and practices in force when foreign-trained immigrants try to re-enter their professions and trades. The study concluded that immigrants faced barriers with assessing and having their academic credentials recognized in Canada, and navigating the existing complicated licensing procedures in their respective fields. They also lacked adequate language training, nor were current language testing methods appropriately designed to predict their occupational-specific language performance. The lack of retraining guidance and support to bridge internationally-trained skills with their respective Canadian standards was also identified.

Many subsequent studies across Canada to identify barriers revealed various problems, similar and otherwise. I will discuss the various barriers under the following categorizations: discrimination, systemic barriers, lack of Canadian work experience and communication/language.

***Discrimination.*** Teelucksingh & Galabuzi (2005) pointed out that, as Canada's racial diversity expands due to immigration, discrimination based on race in employment settings is becoming even more of a critical issue. Using census data from 1996 to 2001, the authors pointed out whereas Canada's overall population grew 3.9 percent in this period, the percentage of the racialized population grew by 24.6 percent. By 2016, the authors calculate the total racialized group population to account for 20% of the total population in Canada. Teelucksingh & Galabuzi described two major forms of racial discrimination in the workplace: economic and exclusive. Economic discrimination occurs when employers generalize about a certain racial group's economic value when making employment decisions, whereas exclusive discrimination occurs when members of racialized groups are not treated equally in terms of employment, compensation, and promotion opportunities.

Azuh's (1998) study demonstrated immigrant professionals in several fields felt their unfavourable employment situations were attributed to discrimination. For instance, some teachers felt that ethnic discrimination was the reason that they were unable to obtain permanent teaching positions after years of working as substitute teachers. Some female immigrants in technical and engineering professions reported gender discrimination. Another type of discrimination was exemplified by two nursing professionals. They were required to have English fluency forms filled out by native English speaking past employers in order to be granted their nursing license. Their past employers, because they were not themselves native English speakers, could not meet this particular criteria.

***Lack of Canadian work experience.*** Lack of Canadian work experience is another barrier repeatedly identified by many studies. This is the area in which the frustrating *Catch 22* phenomenon commonly exists, where immigrant professionals need Canadian working experiences in order to be considered by employers for open positions. Harding (2003) illustrated this predicament using the experience of a civil engineer from Iran who came to Canada in 1994. The engineer, upon arriving in Canada, was told his previous work experience would not be counted towards his required experience for licensing purposes, even though he used American and European codes in Iran, which are similar to Canadian ones.

A summary report (2002) based on a focus group of eighteen immigrant professional engineers in Ontario organized by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) examined the issues that internationally trained engineers face integrating into their trained fields in Canada. Among others, difficulty in gaining Canadian working experiences is a major one. Not only do most employers require at least twelve months of Canadian work experience, but the provincial regulatory body also requires it before granting a Professional Engineering (P.Eng) license.

A study conducted by Public Policy Forum (2004) brought employers' perspectives into the discussion of the issues of integrating immigrant skilled workers into the Canadian labour market. The nation-wide study was comprised of 2,091 employer surveys, and focus group discussions. The results of the study found that about

25 percent of Canadian employers do not consider foreign work experience to be equivalent to local experience, but would still consider it. Another 25 percent of Canadian employers would not hire immigrants unless they possess Canadian work experience. Several employers who participated in the focus groups conceded they believed it to be easier and less risky to hire employees with previous Canadian work experience.

***Systemic barriers.*** Some researchers have taken a different perspective, going so far as to say that all the barriers exist because of problems with the system itself. Brouwer (1999), though he also recognized the problems identified in the above cited studies, argued that the barriers, as serious as they are, could not be understood without looking into the interests of the broader stakeholders at different levels within the system. His report examined the interests of the federal and provincial governments, occupational regulatory bodies, educational institutions, employers, unions, and nongovernmental organizations. Brouwer demonstrated it is the lack of efforts, inconsistency in the system, and competing interests that make the problems both persistent and difficult to solve.

In their handbook "Making a Change Together" (2001), Skills for Change went further, directly claiming that all the problems and barriers skilled immigrants face are "systemic", meaning they arise through no fault of the individual. Rather, they are the product of missing components within the system. In fact, they even claim that the goal of the handbook is not to assist individuals in navigating their way through the system, but instead to modify the system itself to more appropriately accommodate the diverse needs of the individuals.

Reitz (2005) also pointed out some weaknesses that exist in the institutional model Canada applies that need to be modified according to new trends in the labour market and the knowledge-based economy. Unlike many other scholars, however, he challenged the widely accepted assumption that licensing plays the major role in the underutilization of immigrants' skills. He argued getting a licence does not guarantee getting into the desired profession. There are other factors at work: for instance, employers' inability to assess the value foreign training will bring to their firm; their reluctance to risk hiring immigrants; or required Canadian work experience. He suggested that the *mentoring* model, popular in Germany, might have value in the Canadian context, because it allows for the more experienced employees to impart occupation-specific knowledge of local practices to newcomers.

***Communication/ language barrier.*** Azuh's (1998) study looked at different barriers for immigrant professionals, and provided many recommendations. The language barrier, according to Azuh, is often the first barrier with which immigrant professionals are confronted. Some immigrant professionals who participated in the study noted that the language requirements were usually based on a minimum TOEFL score, which emphasized technical linguistic abilities beyond what they would actually need in the workplace. Therefore, some immigrants even suspected that the hidden intention behind these high requirements is the deliberate control of the amount of people entering into the professions and trades.

Prefontaine & Benson's (1999) study on possible barriers to immigrants' economic integration in Canada considered language as the greatest barrier to overcome. Using data from the Landed Immigrant Data System, they demonstrated the proportion of immigrants who speak one or both of the official languages (English/French) as their mother tongue has decreased from 1980 to 1998: from over 30% to only 12%, due to the shift of immigration source countries. The authors suggested that this trend could affect immigrants' labour market integration since performance in today's labour market depends on language ability; better language communicative abilities are rewarded with greater success.

Seevaratnam (1994) conducted a study on South Asian immigrant teachers' barriers accessing their profession in Toronto, Canada. The participants in the study learned to speak English as their first language when they began school. Despite their relative proficiency, they still experienced problems of non-verbal communication, such as understanding facial expressions at interviews. Their accents and different speech patterns also made it difficult to find employment. In addition, the participants felt the hiring boards of institutions lacked cross-cultural communication proficiency.

***Communication Barriers Entering a New Environment in Second Language Acquisition***

After reviewing the literature on the re-entry of immigrant professionals, it is apparent that communication has indeed been recognized as one of the barriers they face. Studies I have found discussing barriers faced by immigrant professionals have tended to attempt to identify all possible barriers. Thus, I believe description and explanation focusing on the communicative barrier has not been conducted with a sufficient degree of depth. For instance, how does communicative competence affect re-entry, and what type of communication challenges do immigrant professionals in different fields face? In addition, culture is a concept which I believe to be inseparable from this issue, yet among the literature I reviewed, I find no instance where it even enters the discussion. In this section I will look at a different body of literature in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), discussing the perceptions of newcomers (as language learners) regarding their learning experiences in the target language communities and their language needs. I will focus on the aspects of what language and culture problems newcomers have and how the problems affect their integration in the new environment.

The classic study conducted by Heath (1983) demonstrated how the "gap" between the types of communities into which children were socialized through language and mainstream school communities affected their academic success. In the study, she traced the children's language socialization processes for 10 years through their daily activities in two separate communities in the U.S.: a black community (in Trackton) and a white community (in Roadville). She noted that because the types of discourse characteristic of their specific communities were not aligned with that of the mainstream school community, children from both communities experienced academic difficulties, though different in nature, at school. Similarly, Delpit (1988) concluded that unfamiliarity with expected norms and behaviours accounted for black American children's failure at school. In contrast, children from white middle class families, because of their exposure to congruent "norms" at home, were more likely to succeed academically. She considered these norms as *culture of power.* "There are codes or rules for participating in power…The codes or rules…relate to linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and presentation of self; that is, ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting" (p. 328). As an example, she discussed one phenomenon where some children from black families were considered to be misbehaving and disobedient in the classrooms of white teachers. Yet the reason behind the perceived disobedient behaviour was that the black children were not accustomed their white teachers' indirect style of directions and orders. The indirectness of the white teachers' instructions was misperceived by the black children a lack of authority on their behalf, and also as offering the children the freedom to choose whether to obey or not.

Arguably, newcomers from a different culture and speaking a different language would experience a similar situation to that of the African Americans in Delpit's (1988) study, possibly even more severe. Newcomers face many challenges while trying to achieve successful integration into their new environment. Duff (2001) conducted a two-year ethnographic study in a high school with high proportion of Asian ESL[2] students. Through observation of two social studies classes, interviews with ESL students themselves, their native-speaking classroom counterparts and their teachers, she examined the challenges the ESL students face in the mainstream class communities. Duff considered the ESL students newcomers to an unfamiliar academic environment where English was the mainstream language (content-based Grade 10 Social Studies classes) and she found their challenges to be multi-dimensional.

For the ESL students, their lack of sociocultural knowledge of the local community proved at least as challenging as linguistic proficiency. For instance, a major classroom activity known as "current event discussions" is very demanding, as the

[2] ESL stands for English as a Second Language, which has traditionally been used to describe non-native English speakers or the English training they receive. An emerging trend in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the use of the acronym EAL (English as an Additional Language) in place of ESL, since many non-native English speakers speak multiple languages, and English is not their second. However, out of respect to the literature reviewed, in this project I still follow the traditional means of reference.

students are required to discuss topics such as "White House scandals" or the "Columbine High School shooting." Activities of this nature require students not only to be familiar with latest news, but also the all the particulars (names, locations, etc) in English. The ESL students could hardly know what was being talked about, not to mention actively engage in discussion. Instead, they participated only as passive onlookers.

Another crucial factor for them to integrate themselves successfully into the Social Studies classroom and become a competent member is the acquisition of necessary Social Studies discourses skills, which were characteristic of the local academic discourse community and the discipline area. Duff (2001) noted that various discourse skills are required, such as being able to engage in "quick-paced, highly intertextual interactions", the ability to express opinions on different perspectives, and the confidence to publicly express one's views. Yet the ESL students in her study were found to be weak in all these areas. Therefore, they produced very little English in the classroom; and even when they did speak, they spoke so softly their voices could barely be heard.

The challenges faced by the students are essentially the factors of competency in the mainstream classroom community. According to language socialization theory, these newcomer ESL students need to be re-socialized into the new type of classroom environment. Duff indicated that if the re-socialization is hindered or otherwise unsuccessful, poor academic performance and achievements at school can result.

Kanno and Applebaum (1995) investigated how ESL students themselves perceive and understand their experiences with the ESL curriculum. Their study revealed that current ESL curriculum in that school may not have been providing the students with sufficient support to allow them to integrate into the mainstream school environment, as it tended to focus on the development of academic language skills. Interestingly, what the focal students reported as the more challenging barriers for their successful integration into the local community falls more under "basic interpersonal communicational skills" (BICS) than their academic language and cognitive skills. These focal high school students' academic knowledge and related skills were quite well developed in their first language. Kanno and Applebaum (1995) also emphasized that ESL students' perspectives were usually left out in research.

***Statement of Research Problem***

Different groups of people entering different communities encounter different language and culture problems. For instance, immigrant ESL high school students' language and culture problems associated with the local Social Studies classes would be quite different from those of immigrant professionals looking for employment. Therefore, I am interested to examine this aspect of the barriers that immigrant professionals face in their re-entry process when they attempt to integrate into the Canadian labour market. It is also crucial to gain a greater understanding on this topic since some studies, as demonstrated below, have already revealed a gap between the existing traditional English language training services available for immigrant professionals and their higher learning needs.

Burnaby's (1992) article was one of the first to attempt to address and describe the range of types and scope of adult ESL training in Canada. She discussed the trend of existing immigrant training programs as being typically focused on improving general conversational ability and not on addressing the occupational-specific communicative needs of particular groups of students. Although in rare cases there were some specialized language training programs, Burnaby observed that they tended to aim at preparing potential students (immigrants or foreign students) for future academic studies in post-secondary institutions instead of preparing them for functioning in their professions. Furthermore, no initiative or assistance from neither employers nor regulatory bodies had yet been taken. Similarly, in an assessment project on the needs of Mandarin-speaking immigrants in Canada, George, Tsang, Man, & Da's (2001) participants suggested their ESL programs should be amended with "practical information, as well as knowledge regarding political, cultural, and social processes in Canada" (p. 55). Participants also said that the ESL training programs were too simple for the purpose of professional employment. As one participant claimed, the class was only good to "go shopping and get around" (p. 23-24). They felt that they would like to see ESL classes designed for more specific purposes, such as an engineering-specific ESL class with profession-oriented curriculum. Similarly, Goldberg (2000) also mentioned that immigrant professionals have higher language needs and require "occupation-specific language training at an advanced level" (p. 65).

Realizing this issue, the federal government initiated a new type of language training program in 2003-2004 to fill this gap: Enhanced Language Training (ELT) programs. ELT programs were designed to provide "higher levels of language training, including job-specific language training, to help immigrants and refugees find and keep work commensurate with their experience and skills" (ELT backgrounder, CIC, 2006). $20 million was allocated to ELT initiatives to assist those in need of higher-level, labour market oriented language training, in addition to the $140 million per year the

Government of Canada already spends on basic language training for about 50,000 immigrants annually (excluding Quebec).

According to a report based on an ELT research project conducted by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmark (CCLB), there are four criteria for a program to be recognized as an ELT program:

- The program/service targets adult immigrants;
- There is a language training component to the program/service;
- This language training component is labour market focused;
- The language training component targets CLB 7-10 (2004, p. 38).

As an example, in Manitoba, the ELT funding in the fiscal year 2004-2005 covers eleven professional groups and trades including: teachers, doctors, hairdressers, engineers, accountants, nurses, and so on (CIC, ELT funded projects fiscal year 2004/05). These programs show great potential and represent a significant step forward for alleviating re-entry issues for foreign-trained professionals; however, the effectiveness of these new initiatives has yet to be established.

I am very interested to look into the experiences and perceptions of immigrant professionals regarding the challenges they encountered during re-entry in terms of communication and culture, and also their experiences of participating ELT programs. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand: what are the experiences and perceptions of new immigrant professionals enrolled in ELT programs of the communication and cultural challenges when trying to re-enter their professions in Canada? And what are the perceived roles the ELT programs played in their re-entry?

# Chapter Two

## Theoretical Framework

In the previous chapter, I discussed communication barriers newcomers face when joining an environment different from their own, of which a more detailed and in-depth discussion can be found in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). *Language socialization* (LS) theory has proven useful in understanding this type of phenomena. In this section I will review in more detail how this theory has been used and in what contexts. More particularly, I will discuss the language socialization (LS) theory and the *communities of practice* (COP) theory, as well as some studies using these two theories looking at newcomers in a new context. Furthermore, I will discuss how I will integrate these two theories to form the theoretical framework to examine my research topic.

### *What is Language Socialization (LS)?*

Language socialization is a concept originally used to examine the socialization process of children towards becoming competent members in their own communities or societies through language learning in a particular socio-cultural context. Under this approach, scholars emphasize the acquisition of both linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge (Heath, 1983; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Ochs, 1996). According to Ochs (1996), the acquisition of language and "the acquisition of social and cultural competence" are co-dependent developmental processes. The two aspects of learning mutually facilitate one another. Under this perspective, language is considered a "socially organized" practice; thus, "as novices recurrently engage in these practices with more expert members of society, they develop an understanding of social actions, events, emotions, aesthetics, knowledgeablity, statuses, relationships, and other socio-cultural phenomena" (p. 407-408). In other words, through learning from and using the language with more competent members, novice members learn socio-cultural norms and thus learn how to be competent socio-cultural beings themselves in that specific environment.

***Language Socialization in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)***

Language socialization has emerged as a new trend in Second Language Acquisition as researchers and theorists call for more attention to the socio-cultural contexts of language learning. Many theories and theorists have criticized the traditional practice of separating the investigation of individual language learners from situated contexts. Instead, researchers have begun to treat language acquisition as a social process rather than just physiological or cognitive processes confined to the learner's brain (Duff, 1995; Norton and Toohey, 2002; Hall, 1995; Firth &Wagner, 1997; Willet, 1995).

To incorporate socio-cultural dimensions in language learning, the perspective of Language Socialization was brought into L2 learning research. Norton (1995, 2000), for example, explored the relationship between individual language learners and their situated social contexts in relation to more expert members with reference to the concept of *identity,* and in particular how identity affects a learner's opportunities to practice English. Toohey (2000) investigated the socio-politically constructed learning contexts within which ESL kindergarten children were situated and how that construction affects learners' access to learning resources.

Language Socialization theory is appropriate in the field of SLA for another reason. It conceptualizes the language learning process for novice members as that of reaching the goal of becoming competent members in a particular socio-cultural group.

Since second language learners are newcomers to a target context/environment, just as children are to their situated society, Language Socialization theory can also be applied to their second language acquisition process. Though comparable, this process is very different in several ways.

***Language Socialization for Adult Newcomers***

In a study conducted by Jupp, Roberts and Gumperz (1982), they compared the differences in language socialization between the first language (L1) socialization of children and unrelated South Asian immigrant workers' second language (L2) socialization. While parents provide "explicit teaching and correcting" and create "social contexts in which learning will naturally take place," immigrants "are expected to learn and behave appropriately without any of the conditions offered to children." In fact, their opportunities to communicate with the majority of native English speaking co-workers are rare. While children are tolerated for their "unacceptable" language behaviours against the social norms, immigrants are judged by demonstrated differences which reinforce the stereotype. Their language and social behaviours developed in their L1 are not recognized as legitimate or recognizable by the mainstream social norms. While the learning environment in which children acquire the norms of the "particular shared cultural group" is "in small group interaction with family and peers...in an encouraging and relaxed environment," the immigrant adult learners are forced to learn in an environment of survival (and all associated stresses and pressures) instead (p. 246-247).

In summary, many of the conditions favourable for language socialization are not necessarily available to adult immigrant learners. I will return to the discussion of the learning conditions for L2 learners in the section where I examine the conditions crucial for learning to happen, including interaction with competent members. However challenging the learning conditions might be for immigrants who face English challenges, I would argue for at least those who wish to get into their professions in a new society, it is quite necessary for them to go through the language socialization process to meet the expected standards of the target environment. As Canagarajah (2004) put it: "What motivates the learning of a language is the construction of the identities we desire and the communities we want to join in order to engage in communication and social life. How we resolve these conflicts is at the heart of becoming a successful language learner" (p. 117).

Then what are the standards? As I mentioned in chapter one, according to different target environments, newcomers have different communication problems and needs. In the following section, I will discuss some studies on this issue in more detail, under the theoretical orientation of language socialization. What newcomers need to learn is in accordance with their different respective target environments. That is to say, it is usually the socio-cultural environment that depicts the boundaries and contents for what newcomers need to learn in order to become competent members. Understanding these standards is important. It provides the basis to investigate newcomers' communication barriers, since it is the lack of the required competence that creates those barriers.

***Competency goals in Specific Communities***

The studies discussed in this section all concern the phenomenon in which a group of newcomers who are also non-native English speakers enter a different socio-cultural context from their own. Discussions focus on the understanding of English communication challenges, and how they influence the non-native speaking newcomers' integration into the various types of environments. The sources of data on these issues can come from two ends: people who are experts in the target community (e.g. university professors) or gatekeepers of the community (journal editors), and people who are novice members and are learning to be accepted (students). Data from the top end provides insight on what the required norms are in the target community (Gosdon, 1992; Ferris & Tagg, 1996 a & b). Data drawn from the other end (novice members) is also very important, since they hold the insight into what struggles they encountered in their own experiences.

Gosdon (1992) explored the academic discourse norms as criteria for judging whether non-native English speakers' (NNS') research articles can be published in international academic journals in English. The author surveyed a group of mainstream academic journal editors (from both North America and the U.K.) in several science fields to look at issues like "linguistic and sociopragmatic skills required for effective international research reporting" (p. 123). Gaining an understanding of these requirements can definitely be useful because they may provide a clearer picture of the target competency that NNS researchers need to achieve in order to be accepted as competent members in the academic writing communities. In the author's words, "Familiarity with these underlying criteria may assist the individual writer to gain greater control over both the writing process and subsequent review procedures" (p. 134).

Farris & Tagg (1996 a & b) conducted a study trying to identify the tasks expected and required of students by university subject instructors across disciplines, as well as their understanding of English as Second Language (ESL) students' listening and speaking difficulties when undertaking such tasks. They surveyed 900 professors in four universities and in terms of the required tasks, they came up with the following six general categories: 1. In class note-taking was an important task; 2. Necessary interaction in the classroom varies depending on different disciplines; 3. Debates, discussions and assignments which required interaction with native English speakers were not as common as the researchers had originally expected; 4. Class size affects discussion and interaction; 5. Formal speaking activities were not as common as the researchers had imagined; 6. Oral presentations in class tended to be conducted in groups, rather than individually (Farris & Tagg, 1996 a).

Regarding the university professors' perception of their ESL students' lack of language abilities, Farris & Tagg (1996 b) found professors to be very concerned with the abilities of their non-native English speaking students to interact with other students in the classroom. The lack of such abilities manifested itself in a perceived inability or apprehensiveness to ask or answer questions and contribute to class discussions. Also of concern were the non-native English speaking students' listening comprehension and note taking ability. Some of the professors in the study who did not provide supplemental lecture material to aid students commented that they felt the ESL students' abilities to comprehend the lectures were fairly strong compared to skills such as reading, speaking and writing. The study also showed that only professors of business classes were concerned with the students' presentation skills, presumably, according to the authors, due to the importance of this particular ability in this field. Accents were not found to be particularly concerning, but the ability to clearly express one's self and respond coherently to questions was.

Kim (2005) studied the largest student group amongst all international students attending higher-level education in U.S, East Asian graduate students. She investigated their own perceptions of both the expected academic oral communication skills and their own difficulties in reaching these goals. This group of people is traditionally considered silent in classrooms. Kim also chose her participants so as to exclude those from science and engineering fields, which she considered to be fields in which oral communication is required to a lesser degree than in other areas. Kim's study found that the students themselves were the least concerned with their pronunciation and note-taking abilities, and most concerned with leading and participating in whole-class discussions. The four most frequently reported concerns to the students included participating in class discussions, effective listening, asking questions in class, and participating in small group discussions with peers.

Bosher & Smalkoski (2002) conducted a needs analysis to examine the reasons why some immigrant students enrolled in a nursing degree program in the U.S. were not performing successfully. They found the biggest challenge faced by immigrant students in the program was speaking with clients and co-workers in the clinical context. Based on this information, they designed a communication course with the aim of helping these students to fill-in the skills gap previously identified. The new course was proven very helpful.

In summary, language socialization theory is useful in investigating non-native English speaking newcomers' learning when joining a socio-cultural group, and what they need to learn to become competent members of the target local community. This community, more recently, could be defined and conceptualized as a *community of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

***Community of Practice Model***

Recently, the target local environment to which newcomers are trying to adapt in order to enter has been depicted using a very interesting concept: *community of practice* (COP). Some language socialization studies in the second language acquisition field, as I will discuss in this section, have also incorporated this concept. The COP concept is a central construct under a learning model first introduced by Lave and Wenger in 1991.[3] Learners are considered to be *apprentices* trying to enter their desired community. Learning is understood as participation in the shared practices in the target community. The learners participate in practices first on the periphery of the community, implying fewer responsibilities and less complicated tasks than expert members- *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP). Through co-participation with expert members, as *mentors,* novice members, as *apprentices*, become increasingly competent in the practices of that community and are able to participate more fully. Through limited engagement in community practices, novices acquire the knowledge and skills required for "full participation in the sociocultural practices" in that community (p.29). The goal, of course, is to join (as members themselves) the group of people who share sociocultural practices, otherwise known as the *community of practice* (COP). I will first exemplify this model by discussing two studies, and then discuss in detail the three key components: communities of practice, legitimate peripheral participation (LPP), and apprenticeship and mentors.

[3] Learning under COP model is informal learning, different from the formal in-class instruction. For more detail, see Lave and Wenger's (1991) book, and Flowerdew's (2000) discussion.

This COP model has proven to be useful in second language acquisition for understanding just how non-native English speakers (NNS) enter a target community of practice through learning. Cho (2004) investigated four NNS doctoral students' experiences of trying to get their research papers published in academic refereed journals. Adopting a COP model, the author conceptualized the refereed journals as the target community of practice, and the NNS doctoral students as novice members. Their attempts to access the target COP through writing and publishing research papers were considered as participation at the periphery in the sense that they were both non-native English speakers and still in graduate studies. Similarly, Morita (2004) studied six female graduate students' language socialization experiences in a Canadian university also applying a COP model as a framework. In her study, local second language (L2) graduate classrooms were conceptualized as the target COP, and the six Japanese first year Master students were regarded as novice members. She explored their language socialization process of becoming competent members through their participation of in-class oral discussions. Both of these studies focused on the discourse aspects (writing and speaking) of how newcomers learn to become competent members in a target COP.

***Community of Practice.*** Adopting the concept COP originally introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991), Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992) provided their own definition of a COP, which provides more details and thus I find it more useful for guiding my inquiry. According to them, a community of practice is "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour" (p. 464). Holmes & Meyerhoff (1999) pointed out that COP model is very useful because the central concept *practice* provides a way of discussing "what members do", which is also what novice members need to learn in order to enter a target COP. After the original introduction of the model (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Wenger (1998) conceptualized the term *practice* in a COP as "a way of talking about the shared historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action" (p. 5). In other words, the practices of the target COP represent the *knowledge* newcomers need to learn to be a member. Knowledge is defined by Wenger as "a matter of competence with respect to valued enterprises- such as singing in tune…fixing machines, writing poetry…etc." (p. 4). Though the knowledge or practices in a COP that newcomers need to learn may set a very broad boundary. For guidance more directly related to the focal interest of this study, I will just focus on the discourse aspect of the practices by discussing the following study which is in accordance with my interest.

Morita (2000) conducted a study on the academic discourse socialization process of a group of graduate students through one activity- oral academic presentation (OAP). She looked at how the students gradually appropriated the necessary knowledge and skills and became competent members through participation in the activity. In her study, she attempted to locate and define what it means to be a competent member in the local TESL community by interviewing professors for the academic skills and intellectual values they promoted. According to her, competent members are expected to be "critical and analytical" and have the ability to "relate issues in the field to one's own interests"; to "work independently and collaboratively"; to make "meaningful connections between theory and practice"; "to extract main points from the literature and synthesize them in a meaningful way"; "to articulate opinions in spoken and written communication," and "to contribute to the academic community" (p. 286-287).

With the knowledge of what competency means in this community, Morita (2000) then set about analyzing the goals and nature of the OAP discourse activity and argued that they in fact match the goal of being competent in the TESL community. Thus, through engaging in OAP, the graduate students as novice members (apprentices) of this community were being socialized into more capable and skilful members of the "oral academic discourses". During the process, the students "not only were involved with content knowledge and cognitive skills but also cultural knowledge of and skill in expressing epistemic stance, engaging others, and collaboratively constructing knowledge" (p. 294). Her study also discussed the challenges they encountered in the process, as well as their coping and learning strategies. The focal graduates could not be recognized as members of the TESOL discourse community until they acquired the requisite skills and abilities and otherwise met the expectations of that community.

The above discussion on what novice members need to learn can be carried over to the area of immigrant professionals' learning needs. Yet, limited research has been done utilizing the above theories in the context of immigrant employment to better understand what non-native English speaking immigrant professionals need to learn, as well as if and how the lack of sociocultural knowledge and communication skills interact with the re-entry problem.

Originally, I had intended to gather this component of my research data by interviewing employers in specific professions about what they require immigrants to have in order to enter this profession in Canada. To my knowledge, not enough studies of needs analysis from either perspective (employers and immigrants) have been conducted for the social phenomenon of immigrant professionals' re-entry. Upon further consideration, as a foreign second language speaker myself, I am concerned that genuine and unbiased data may not be easily obtained. As a novice researcher, I have yet to accumulate enough experience to gather good data in sensitive situations, although I will still pursue that course of inquiry when my skills have developed. Therefore, data on the general communicative competence was collected from two different perspectives for this study:

- from the immigrant professionals- for the reason that they are the people ELT programs are serving
- from ELT program directors/instructors, for the reason that they are the people who are supposed to help in bridging the gap between the two ends (the employers and the immigrant professionals)

***Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP).*** LPP provides a method of discussing the notion of learning by participating in the activities of the target community of practice. In Cho's (2004) study with NNS doctoral students as novice members accessing the refereed journal community, their experiences of trying to get their articles published were framed as legitimate peripheral participation. Through that activity, the novice members of the specific academic publishing community learned the required practices within it, and could gradually join in by becoming competent in the practices.

Similarly, Flowerdew (2000) conducted a study of an American-educated non-native English speaker (NNS) PhD's (Oliver) experiences trying to publish his work in an internationally refereed journal after returning to Hong Kong. The author followed the publication process, identifying and analyzing all the difficulties Oliver encountered until finally achieving publication. The origins of these difficulties, how he was able to overcome them, and what he learned about academic publishing practice with each submission of his work were analyzed. Flowerdew (2000) noted how his focal participant Oliver benefited a lot from *legitimate peripheral participation* while pursuing his PhD in the United States. Flowerdew (2000) pointed out:

> graduate students learn as much through the various opportunities for peripheral participation they are exposed to—working as members of research teams, interacting with their academic supervisors (who may act as mentors), submitting papers for publication, and communicating with journal editors and reviewers—as they do in the more formal, taught part of their courses, if not more than they do there (p. 131).

He actually conceptualized graduate education as "the facilitation of legitimate peripheral participation for young scholars" (p. 131), because it was in this manner that novice members could familiarize themselves with the conventions and practices of academic publishing. Although Oliver's past knowledge of the conventions and rules of the publishing "game" played an important role for him to overcome some of the difficulties he experienced, Oliver was deprived of the benefits when he returned to Hong Kong. Flowerdew demonstrated that some of Oliver's challenges can be explained by his "geographic" and "linguistic" isolation from both the discourse community and from legitimate peripheral participation.

***Mentors and Apprentices.*** According to both language socialization theory and community of practice theory, co-participation with more expert members in the activities and common practices of a target community is a crucial success contingency for novice members learning to become more competent and to participate more fully in the target community. Cho (2004) discovered in the study on NNS doctoral students' trying to get their research papers published that co-participation with expert members already within the target COP, (their professors), was very beneficial for the focal participants to learn about their desired community and how to be recognized as competent members. For example, after one focal participant's first attempt to publish by herself failed, she worked together with her professor in a manner consistent with the relationship between an apprentice and a mentor. She was assigned less demanding work. Through co-authoring, she not only benefited linguistically, but she also had the opportunity to learn the practices of getting works published in the target community, which in this study referred to "how to approach research systematically, the level of quality required, and how much effort was needed to get published" (p. 58). Yet some studies on this issue, as I will review below, have revealed that access to co-participation opportunities with more expert members is not necessarily a given. In another words, the learning conditions are not always as optimal as they should be for effective learning to take place.

Norton (1995, 2000) conducted a well-known 12-month study of five adult immigrant women's English learning experiences in Canada using social identity theory and the concept of *investment*. She studied their social interactions in their everyday workplaces. Norton found these women's poor communicative competence and their marginalized social status effectively blocked them from communicative opportunities with their Anglo-Canadian counterparts (native English speakers). She further argued that the denied access put these learners in a Catch-22 situation. They needed this crucial resource to improve their communication abilities, yet to get the communication opportunities required them to have sufficient communicative abilities and a recognized, somewhat balanced power relation.

Duff, Wong & Early's (2002) study of linguistic socialization among immigrants in Health Care Aid programs also found that immigrant students have difficulties accessing communication opportunities with local native English speakers "before, during, and after language and skills programs, thus preventing them from becoming integrated more fully into English-speaking society" (p. 398).

Miller (2000) conducted longitudinal studies on Chinese immigrant ESL students in mainstream high schools in Australia. She traced these students from their ESL programs to mainstream classes. Examining the social-cultural contexts in which the students were situated, she found the students faced a significant barrier in terms of social interaction. Although those ESL students were in the same physical context with their mainstream peers, they barely communicated. This scenario caused a problem, since mainstream peers of the ESL students, being competent members of the local mainstream community of practice, could have functioned as mentors and involved ESL students in the community activities.

***Applying COP in This Study***

Combining the language socialization theory and the Community of Practice model offers an effective theoretical framework for investigating the experiences of non-native English learners' language socialization in a new socio-cultural environment. Under this framework, I consider immigrant professionals' internationally trained professions into which they are trying to re-enter to be their respective target communities of practice. They might be competent members of the corresponding professional communities in their home country, but when they come to Canada, they need to re-socialize into that professional community of practice in the Canadian context, which will require learning new local practices. I will focus on the communicative and cultural competence aspects of the re-socialization.

### *Language and Culture Competence*

Because my study is concerned with immigrant adult ESL learners' communicative barriers, it is necessary to discuss what communicative and cultural competence means in the field of Second Language Acquisition so that I can have a basis for analysing what type of communicative competency problems may be affecting their re-entry. One way of determining and measuring different types of communicative competencies can be found in the theoretical framework on which the *Canadian Language Benchmarks* (CLB) was developed. The CLB is a descriptive scale based on reference points against which a NNS's communicative proficiency in English as a second language is compared. There are 12 levels which represent a hierarchy of communicative competence. The 12 levels are grouped into 3 stages (4 levels per stage), representing basic, intermediate and advanced proficiency. The CLB provides a national standard for assessing a learner's competence and planning for language instruction. Pawlikowska (2002) discussed the theoretical foundations for the measuring tools of the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000. She first defined what *communicative competence* means:

> Communicative proficiency is language use, or performance. It is the ability to communicate: to interact, to express, to interpret and to negotiate meaning, and to create discourse in a variety of social contexts and situations (p. 6).

She then divided communicative competency into its five different components (table 1).

*Table 1.* CLB Five Components of Communicative Competency

| | |
|---|---|
| **1. Linguistic competence** | The knowledge of grammar and vocabulary at a sentence level. It enables the building and recognition of well-formed, grammatically accurate utterances, according to the rules of syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology/graphology. |
| **2. Textual competence** | The knowledge and application of cohesion and coherence rules and devices in building larger texts/discourse. It enables the connection of utterances and sentences into cohesive, logical and functionally coherent texts and/or discourse. |
| **3. Functional competence** | The competence to convey and interpret communicative intent (or function) behind a sentence, utterance or text. It encompasses macro-functions of language use (e.g., transmission of information, social interaction and getting things done/persuading others, learning and thinking, creation and enjoyment) and micro-functions, or speech acts (e.g., requests, threats, warnings, pleas, etc.), and the conventions of use. |
| **4. Socio-cultural competence** | Focuses on appropriateness in producing and understanding utterances. These include rules of politeness; sensitivity to register, dialect or variety; norms of stylistic appropriateness; sensitivity to "naturalness"; knowledge of idioms and figurative language; knowledge of culture, custom and institutions; knowledge of cultural references; and uses of language through interactional skills to establish and maintain social relationships. |
| **5. Strategic competence** | Manages the integration and application of all the other language competence components to the specific context and situation of language use. It involves planning and assessing communication, avoiding potential or repairing actual difficulties in communication, coping with communication breakdown, and using affective devices. Most of all, its function is to ensure effectiveness of communication "transactions". |

Pawlikowska (2002) *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: Theoretical Framework* (p. 7).

Moran (2001), outlined in the following table (see table 2), has a more extended way of describing competency of both language learning and cultural learning. He very effectively summarized different kinds of competence in fields from "language education" to "intercultural communication" by exploring existing models defining and explaining referred competence. Data analysis concerning communication and cultural competence or abilities is guided by the combination of CLB communication competence theoretical framework, the communities of practice model and Moran's cultural learning aspect (for more detail, see findings in chapter 5).

*Table 2.* Views of Language and Culture Learning Competence

| Competence | Emphasis | Proponent |
|---|---|---|
| **Language proficiency** | Developing fluency and accuracy In a second language in listening, speaking, reading and writing. An emphasis on using language for communicative purposes, with the educated native speaker as the goal. | ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (Omaggio-Hadley, 1993) |
| **Communicative competence** | Developing language abilities for effective and appropriate communication within cultural contexts of the target language-and-culture. Includes other specific language competencies: grammatical, sociolinguistics, discourse, strategic. | Canale and Swain (1980)<br>Savignon (1983) |
| **Cultural competence** | Developing the ability to act appropriately (alongside communicating appropriately) in the target culture. Gestures, body movements, action sequences such as nonverbal greetings, table manners, manipulation of cultural products. | Steele and Suozzo (1994)<br>Damen (1987)<br>Stern (1983) |
| **Intercultural competence** | Developing the ability to interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, regardless of the cultures involved. | Lustig and Koester (1999)<br>Samovar, Porter, and Stenia (1998)<br>Fantini (1999) |
| **Intercultural communicative competence** | Developing intercultural competence and communicative competence | Byram (1997) |

Moran (2001) *Teaching Culture: Perspectives in practice* (p. 111).

***Academic and Practical Significance***

To summarize chapters 1 and 2, my study will have both academic and practical relevance. It will provide insights regarding immigrant professionals' language socialization into their trained professional communities. To the academic audience, the research findings may provide more information on adult non-native English learners, especially highly-skilled immigrant professionals, and their second language socialization in the process of entering professional community of practice. To my knowledge, language socialization theory has rarely been used in workplace settings; the community of practice model, while applied frequently in academic settings, has not been used to investigate language socialization for professional work purposes. Therefore, this study will extend language socialization theory and community of practice theory from their main academic settings into the employment setting.

At the same time, the study will present the lived experiences of newcomers' communicative and cultural needs and challenges, and how they might affect their re-entry. Interestingly enough, as important as this is, studies in the field of immigration have not provided enough detailed data, and studies focusing on these issues in the second language acquisition field have mainly been conducted in academic settings. The information gathered by this study can be used for designing future interventions for language training and settlement services for highly-skilled immigrant professionals.

Since the first attempt to describe and analyze the adult ESL training for immigrants was conducted in 1992 (Burnaby & Cumming), new initiatives known as Enhanced Language Training have been launched in the last 2 or 3 years, but very limited follow up studies have been done to look at the results of these programs. This study will provide some intriguing insights on existing programs of this category in Manitoba. Additionally, this study may have policy-related relevance. The results generated may be useful for designing future training-orientation policy and its implementation.

# Chapter Three

# Methodology

## *Types of Research Methods in Education*

McMillan and Wergin (2002) described three general approaches to educational research: analytical, quantitative, and qualitative. Analytical research simply refers to the analysis of data contained in documents or objects. Quantitative research methods are used to explore relationships between variables, usually numerically. Quantitative research, considered to be a synonym of the term *positivist research* (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003), is described as the process of "collecting numerical data on observable behaviours on samples and then subjecting these data to numerical analysis" (p. 23). Qualitative research, on the other hand, does not focus on statistical data and analysis. Instead, qualitative methods produce rich, descriptive data that are "not easily handled by statistical procedures" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Quantitative researchers study samples of a population and attempt to confirm or disprove a theory about the population. Researchers take an "objective, detached stance toward research participants and their setting" (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). In contrast, qualitative researchers study individual cases to uncover themes or relationships. Studies are conducted in a natural setting "to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003), researchers are more involved with their participants, making it possible to share perspectives. Another important distinction between the two approaches is that, while qualitative research incorporates the context in which social action takes place, thereby achieving a more holistic perspective, quantitative research seeks to describe or explain phenomena by understanding relationships between variables, separate from context.

In terms of the capabilities and limitations of each approach, researchers would opt for a quantitative approach if the goal is to discover relationships and make statistically reliable inferences about populations. Researchers would choose qualitative research methods if they are interested in pursuing a deeper understanding of social phenomena (Silverman, 2005). Based on the discussion above, since the purpose of my study is to explore and look for a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon within its natural context through collecting verbal data, a qualitative method was more appropriate.

Under the broad category of qualitative approaches, McMillan and Wergin (2002) describe five different types of qualitative studies: ethnographic, phenomenological, grounded theory, critical and case studies. An ethnographic study is one in which the researcher is engaged directly with the participant and the participant's environment for extended periods of time to understand some phenomenon in great detail, from the participant's perspective. In a phenomenological study, the researcher investigates a phenomenon by examining the experiences and perceptions of several participants. The purpose of a grounded theory study is to create a new theory "grounded" in data gathered in the field of interest. Critical studies are carried out by researchers who wish to present other perspectives or points of view on problems in society, with purpose of producing positive change. Finally, a case study is an in-depth study of one or more cases (events, programs, communities, settings, schools, individuals, and societal groups) with a focus on a specific aspect of the case.

***Methods Applied in Previous Studies***

I reviewed the studies in chapter one concerning barriers immigrants face in re-entry. In this field, there is a tendency for studies to apply quantitative methods, conducting investigations by analyzing available data sources (e.g., census data). Among studies using qualitative approaches, many tended to focus on identifying and categorizing any and all possible barriers affecting immigrant professionals' re-entry, rather than exploring one type of barrier in depth. In regards to the communication barrier, the qualitative studies I reviewed acknowledge its existance as a major barrier, yet few studies went beyond that to report in detail the process by which it affects the re-entry, and what specific problems and needs immigrant professionals have. In addition, none of the studies I reviewed discussed the cultural factor in re-entry.

In contrast, the studies I have reviewed in the field of second language acquisition in both chapters one and two on the topic of newcomers' communication barriers and socialization in a new environment tended to use qualitative inquiry for the detailed reporting and exploration of their experiences. For example, Duff's (2001) study used ethnography to investigate English as a second language (ESL) high school students' communication barriers in one type of mainstream high school environment: Social Studies classes. Kanno and Applebaum's (1995) study of ESL high school students' perceptions of what their needs are, and whether or not ESL curriculum helped to meet those needs in the mainstream school environment, applied an in-depth, free-conversation style interview method. Both studies generated deep insights for the audience on what language and culture barriers the focal participants have and how the problems described interfere with their school life.

More specifically, studies I reviewed discussing the language socialization process for the purpose of entering a target community of practice tended to use qualitative in-depth research or longitudinal ethnography as a research method. For instance, to emphasize the intention of hearing the voices of novice members themselves, Cho (2004) applied an in-depth interview case study design to investigate in detail the communicative challenges and coping strategies of four doctoral students in the process of trying to enter their target community (academic journals) through writing for publishing. Using longitudinal ethnography as a research method, researchers observed the novice members in the target community for a period of time to understand how the language socialization process occurred and what issues were involved in the process. Similarly, Morita (2004) observed and interviewed six female Japanese graduate students and ten instructors in a Canadian university for an academic year to explore the process of how these novice members entered the local academic community. Flowerdew (2000) used an ethnographic single case study to look at how a doctoral graduate student negotiated entrance to the target community through peripheral participation.

Since the purpose of my own study is to investigate the communicative and cultural challenges immigrant professionals encounter and how those challenges as barriers might have affected their process of entering their target professional community of practice, I believe an in-depth understanding is needed. Thus, building on the studies I reviewed in second language acquisition, I used the in-depth qualitative case study method for my inquiry. By doing so, I also intended to extend the scope of the studies performed in SLA from mostly academic settings to practical settings in which immigrant professionals seek professional jobs.

### *What is Case Study Research?*

According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003), *case study research* is "the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (p. 436). This form of research is conducted for the purpose of gaining a deep understanding of a phenomenon, which could be "the processes, events, persons or things of interest of the researcher" ( 2003, p 436). Usually, a phenomenon has more than one aspect, of which researchers only choose one, also called the *focus*. Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) also described four characteristics of case study research. First, case study research involves the study of a phenomenon by examining one or more instances or cases. Second, it involves the thorough examination of each case. Third, the examination of the instance takes place in its "natural context." Fourth, the data collected are from the perspective of the participants.

Stake (2000) identified three types of case studies. An intrinsic case study is one in which an unusual instance of some phenomenon is analyzed, without intentions of generalizing the findings. It is simply performed to understand some particular instance of a phenomenon. An instrumental case study is where one case is examined with the intentions of trying to understand an issue or modify a theory or generalization. Finally, a collective case study, like an instrumental case study, has the intention of shedding light on some general phenomenon, but several similar or related cases are studied instead of just one.

### *Using Case Study for This Inquiry*

Based on what has been discussed above about case study research, I believe this method fits my research agenda very well. As I mentioned in chapter one, the area I intended to investigate is a social phenomenon in Canada, namely that of foreign trained immigrant professionals' re-entry into their professions in Winnipeg, Canada, with communicative and cultural barriers being the focal aspect of this phenomenon, as well as the perceived roles the ELT programs played in their re-entry. My research questions were also developed under the guidance of the theoretical constructs/aspects of language socialization and community of practice theories discussed in chapter 2. More specifically the research questions are the following:

1. How do the NNS immigrant professionals perceive their ability to re-enter their professions is affected by having to use an additional language (English) in Canada?
2. What are their perceptions of the communication and cultural challenges to professional re-entry based on their job searching experiences in Canada?
3. What professional language socialization is provided in ELT programs, and what strategies are used to facilitate such second language socialization?
4. What do immigrant professionals perceive to be the roles played by the ELT programs in their re-entry?

In my study, I elicited answers to these questions from the perspectives of both immigrant professionals and ELT program directors/instructors. My intent was to gain an in-depth understanding of several immigrant professionals' experiences on the communication and cultural challenges they encountered accessing their trained professions in Canada. Since these are the lived experiences of the immigrants themselves, they happen in natural contexts as opposed to experimental settings. Furthermore, I intended to hear their own voices, based on their understanding of the challenges and struggles they might have had, and whether and how those interact with their entering their desired professions. Bringing in the perspectives of ELT program directors/instructors was for the purpose of *triangulation.* As Bogdan & Biklen (2003) explained, triangulation in qualitative research means the use of multiple data sources to enhance the understanding of a phenomenon. At the same time, since I collected the experiences from several immigrants (see "sampling"), the type of inquiry I conducted can be called a collective case study.

***Data Sources***

When conducting a qualitative case study, data can be collected through observation, description of context, interviews and document review (Stake, 1995). In my study, data was collected from two sources: a) semi-structured in-depth interviews with both immigrant professionals and ELT program instructors, and b) available documentations concerning the three ELT programs (course outline, course materials, and internet resources).

***Study Context and Sampling***

***The initial negotiation of entry.*** At a TESL Manitoba conference in February, 2005, I was introduced to the coordinator of Adult ESL Curriculum Development & Implementation of the Adult Language Training Branch at Manitoba Labour and Immigration. She is one of the people who are in charge of the enhanced language training for immigrant professionals in several professional areas in Manitoba. She kindly offered me assistance in providing program information and identifying potential candidates for the interviews. After the initial correspondence, she and her colleagues provided some of the following information of the enhanced language training programs.

***Study context.*** The following programs provide the context in which my study took place. In Manitoba, enhanced English training programs for different professions were launched in collaboration between federal and provincial governments (CIC). Due to the resource constraints of being a novice researcher, I chose three programs in three professional fields on which to focus: Engineering, Medicine and Banking (Figure 1). For ethical reasons, I refer to them in this study respectively as: ELT Engineering, ELT Medicine, and ELT Banking. Table 3 below provides a brief summary of the basic information for the three programs, whereas a detailed description and discussion of each and the language re-socialization help they provide are reported in chapter six.

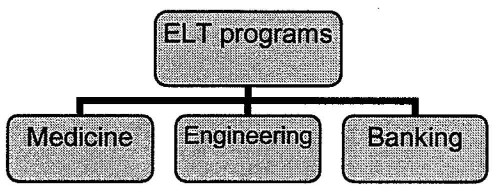


*Figure 1.* Three Enhanced Language Training Programs

*Table 3.* Summary of the Three ELT Programs

| | **ELT Engineering** | **ELT Medicine** | **ELT Banking** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Length | 20 weeks 7 hrs/wk part-time | 300 hours part-time | 5 week (Mon - Fri) Full-days (10 am - 4 pm) |
| Involved body | - Federal Gov. ELT<br>- MB Labour & Immigration | - Federal Gov. ELT<br>- MB Labour & Immigration<br>- Red River College's Language Training Centre<br>- University of Manitoba | - Federal Gov. ELT<br>- MB Labour & Immigration<br>- Local immigrant serving employment providers<br>- 5 local banks (originally 2) |
| Contents | Specialized professional language training | Medical communication & health system knowledge in Canadian context | Business language, culture related to working as tellers in Canadian context |
| Anticipated goal | Improved English skills for further academic & professional participation | Improved English medical communication (e.g. interviewing patients) and health system knowledge for practising in Ca & taking licensure exams | Prepared business communication and cultural skills working as tellers in a Canadian banking environment |
| Work placement | None | None | 3 months |

(Sources: three ELT programs' course outline; course materials; on-line CIC ELT program information.)

***Sampling.*** As I mentioned before, I collected data from two perspectives for the purpose of triangulation. The two perspectives are those of the six immigrant professionals, with two from each of the three professional areas, and three ELT program instructors, with one from each area. In order to obtain the best possible understanding of the professional areas, of which I am also an outsider, I tried to select one participant of the two from each areas who was originally from China so that our shared language could help to reduce possible misunderstandings or loss of meaning in our interviews. Except for the field of medicine, I was able to find a candidate from China in each of the other two fields. The graduates were chosen to participate in this study because they met the following criteria:

1. The participants must have had working experiences as a professional in their field before coming to Canada.
2. The participant has to be a graduate of one of the three ELT programs or near the end of his or her program.
3. The participant must have had local experiences of looking for a job in the profession for which he or she was trained abroad.
4. English should not be an official language of his or her country of origin.

The three ELT program directors or instructors I interviewed (one from each program) were selected based on who I had access to at the time of the study.

***The interview sessions.*** I interviewed each of the six immigrant professional participants twice, with each session lasting one and a half to two and a half hours. The first interview focused on gathering background information and helping the participant to develop a good understanding of my questions. The consent form was also explained and signed during this session. All responses were tape-recorded. After the initial interview, the recordings were transcribed immediately and reviewed to identify areas where more information or clarification was needed. The second interview focused on the issues requiring clarification and/or further inquiry. Again, all responses were recorded and later transcribed. I interviewed each of the three ELT program directors/instructors once each, with each interview lasting two to three hours. Some participants were contacted afterward when clarification of certain details was required.

### *Data Analysis*

I conducted my data analysis in the manner consistent with how Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) explained one of Tesch's classifications of case study data analysis called *interpretational analysis*. This type of analysis is conducted "in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon being studied" (p. 453). Therefore, the data was analyzed in the following steps:

1. Transcription of all interview recordings and organization of notes I took during interviews;
2. Thorough examination of the transcripts, gaining a holistic understanding of each participant's re-entry experiences, and looking for patterns that emerge;
3. Categorization of all emergent patterns;
4. Examination of recurrent patterns related to my research questions;
5. Construction of the final findings, based on those recurrent patterns which answered my research questions.

# Chapter Four

## Summaries of Each Participant's Re-entry Story

This project is intended to examine how immigrant professionals' re-entry into their trained profession can be affected by communication and cultural barriers they encounter in the process. To that end, it is important to first describe their re-entry experiences, so that readers can be provided a holistic and contextual picture of each individual's path. With this foundation, it will then be possible to discuss and analyze in depth what these barriers actually are and how these barriers can affect re-entry.

The information presented in this section will include a brief but thorough background summary of each participant in the form of a chronological narrative. I describe each person's professional educational background and work experiences in their fields prior to immigrating to Canada, their immigration stories, and, most importantly, the path they took in their professional re-entry in Canada. All the participants in this study will be referred to using pseudonyms. The next chapter will unpack each participant's story more thoroughly, analysing the communication and culture challenges they encountered in each step of re-entry. Please see table 3 for basic background information on all participants.

### *Engineering*

In Manitoba, a publication has been produced called "A Resource Guide for Internationally-Educated Engineers: Information to help you plan an engineering or engineering-related career in Manitoba" (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Settlement and Labour Market Services Branch, 2004). I will borrow the flowchart from this book (presented in Figure 2) which demonstrates possible re-entry routes in order to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the steps involved in the process so that they may position the following two participants within the re-entry process. I will refer to this book in greater detail in the section where I discuss the help provided by the three ELT programs.

***Hammed (From Afghanistan, 25-35 yrs).*** Originally from Afghanistan, Hammed went to Azerbaijan to receive his undergraduate university education. After studying the Russian language for seven months, he began an Engineering program. He received his Bachelor of Engineering in 1999, and began searching for employment. Unexpected levels of competition ensuing from the economic collapse of the region combined with the fact that he was not a citizen of that country made finding a job in his field almost impossible. He eventually opened his own small business supplying fashion materials. In search of better opportunities, he began trying to immigrate to Canada in 2001 through a United Nations sponsorship program. He came first to Winnipeg in June 2002, but as he did not know anyone in the city aside from his sponsor, he moved to Toronto shortly thereafter where he had some friends from Afghanistan.

Shortly after arriving, Hammed realized that his English language level was insufficient to get a job in his profession immediately: "I realized that I need to improve my English levels therefore I didn't immediately try to look for a job in engineering" (Hammed interview I, November 3, 2005). Immediately he registered for a federally-funded ESL program called LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). At the same time, he began looking for any job that would provide him with interaction opportunities with native English speakers on a daily basis. He believed strongly that English lessons alone would not be sufficient for his language learning needs, and he wanted additional opportunities to practise what he learned in class. Through a friend he was able to find a job as a cashier in a local grocery store working the midnight shift. He worked the entire night and left for his ESL class in the morning.

The second year he was in Toronto, he thought he was ready and started to look for jobs in Engineering. Despite his initial efforts, his search was unsuccessful. Feeling frustrated, he went back home to Afghanistan to take a break and to think over his future. He came back to Canada, this time deciding to return to Winnipeg because the lower cost of living would help offset the high costs of re-entry. He took several courses and workshops provided by various immigration agencies to learn about job searching, resume writing and job interviews. While searching for an engineering position, he accepted a job as a cashier. Still he was unsuccessful. Again he became frustrated and started to question his decision to immigrate to Canada. He came for a better future, but somehow the only job he could get was a labour job. "I can't be just a labourer in Canada; if it's just to make money, I might as well go back home. All my brothers have business in my home country. It won't be a problem for me to get a good job" (Hammed interview I, November 3, 2005). In the end, his admiration for the Canadian society, its stability and the prospect of better opportunities for his children prompted him to remain on his course to becoming a professional Engineer.

In 2005 he found out about the ELT Engineering program and joined it immediately. At the time of our interviews, he had already finished this program, and had gone on to the IEEQ[4] program, which is to assist internationally educated engineers in obtaining their licenses. "My next step I see myself doing is to get my engineering

---

[4] IEEQ (Internationally Educated Engineers Qualification Pilot Program) is to help internationally educated engineers to go through the process of qualification recognition in the Province of Manitoba. More information will be provided in the next section.

license, that's why I am taking this IEEQ program" (Hammed interview II, November 10, 2005). After a period of full-time study and examination the program will help him to get internship opportunities with a local engineering company.

***Ling (From Mainland China, 30-40 yrs).*** Prior to immigrating to Canada, Ling earned a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering and had worked for ten years at an Engineering firm in China. Her most recent position was in a Chinese firm as a project leader. She immigrated in 2000 with her husband, who was at the time pursuing his postgraduate degree in a Canadian university. She wanted to get a job immediately on arrival, but she was not confident in her English. She did not expect to re-enter the engineering field, nor did she even know how to go about getting a job in Canada. According to her understanding at that point, the quickest way to get a job was to find one that few others would want to do. The first job she was able to find was a line position in a garment factory.

Ling then decided that the only way to get a good job in Canada was through education. To that end, she decided to go back to university. Unfortunately, she was not accepted into her first choice, a Master of Science degree in engineering. She was forced to re-think her employment plan, and ultimately chose to do a second undergraduate degree in Computer Science. She had no strong preference into which field she should go, as her purpose was merely to get a local Canadian education. She considered Computer Science to be a field in which there were good job opportunities, and would at the same time require less sophisticated English language skills. In 2003, she finished her degree after three years of studies, and, to alleviate the family financial situation, immediately began looking for work. Still unfamiliar with the strategies for finding employment in the Canadian job market, she went back to the garment factory where she continued to work until her family moved to Winnipeg in 2004.

She started attending job preparation workshops and taking various kinds of English programs. "Since English is so important and is forever a problem that I can't run away from, I'd better just overcome it" (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).[5] She also became friends with another Chinese immigrant who had been in Canada for a long time and was working as a licensed engineer. Her new friend encouraged her to reconsider looking for work in her original field because of her extensive past experience. She then started searching for engineering jobs, had more than ten interviews, but was never hired.

In the fall of 2004, she joined the ELT Engineering program. At the time of our interviews, she had finished this program and had secured a contract position in a local company, coordinating the introduction of an engineering system within the firm.

[5] The two Chinese participants (Ling and Bo) were interviewed in Chinese. All the quoted excerpts are my translations of the original conversations in Mandarin.

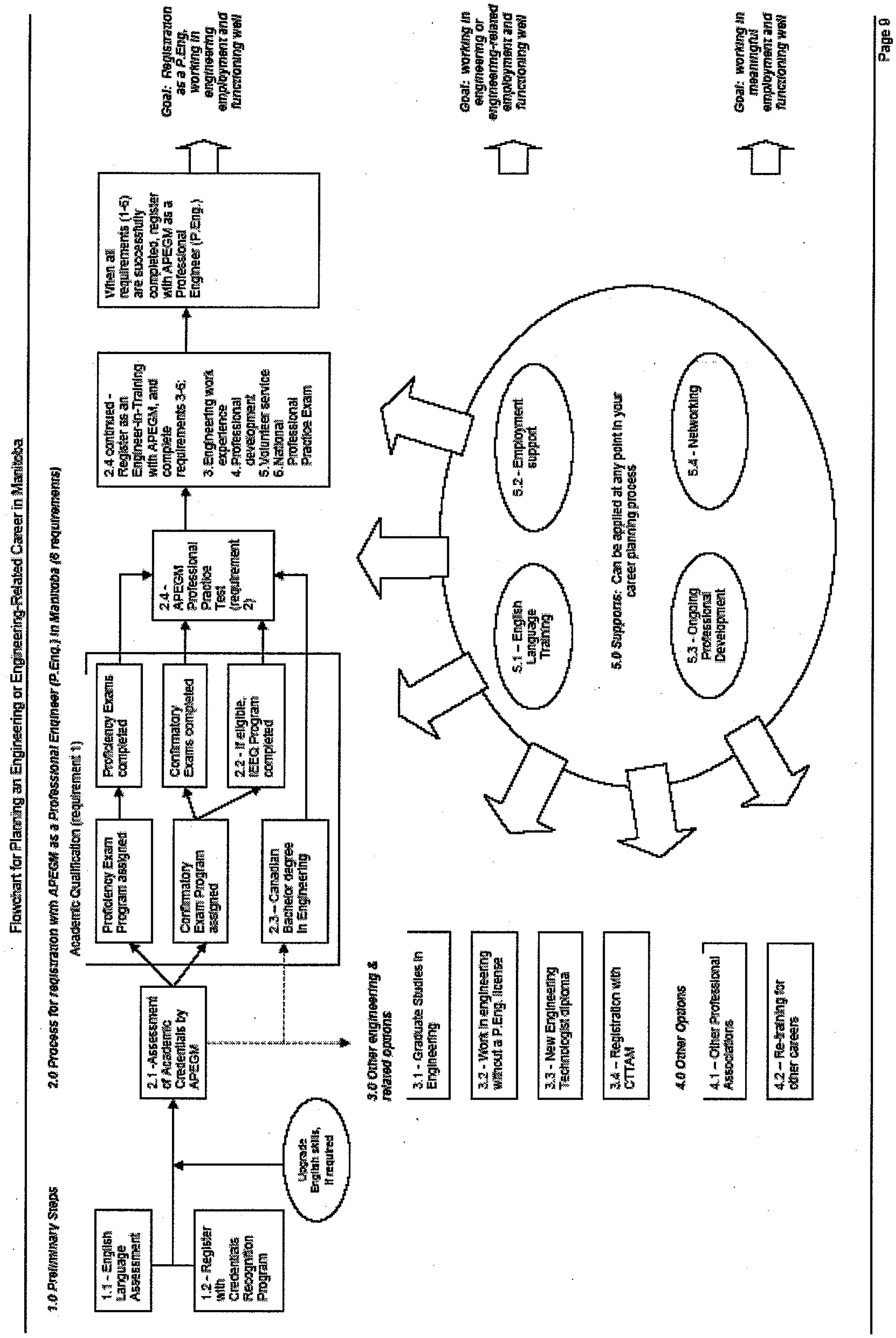


*Figure 2.* Cited "Flowchart for planning an engineering or engineering-related career in Manitoba". *A resource guide for internationally-educated engineers: information to help you plan an engineering-related career in Manitoba.* (2004, p.9) Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Settlement and Labour Market Services Branch.

*Medicine*

Due to the relative complexity of the re-entry process for the next two participants, I feel it necessary to insert here a description of the steps involved and the tests they are required to complete. The following information can be found in more details on the following two websites:

Medical Council of Canada website: www.mcc.ca

Canadian information centre for international medical graduates (IMG): www.img-canada.ca

Internationally educated doctors are usually referred to as IMGs (International Medical Graduates). To re-enter their trained fields, they first must be granted medical license in Canada. There might be many different ways to achieve this, according to location and the particular field of the IMG. Here I only discuss the routes that were taken by the two participants I am about to discuss. Upon arrival, any IMG has to take an equivalency exam called MCCEE (Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination) given by Medical Council of Canada, which is to test the general knowledge of the main fields of medicine and medical sciences. There will then be a two-part exam called MCCQE (Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination). MCCQE part I is to test a candidate's competence and their understanding of the legal, ethical and organizational aspects of the practice of medicine (CLEO Objectives documents produced by MCC) in Canada, clinical knowledge, and skills and attitudes for residency programs. MCCQE part II is to assess a candidate's competence in applying their clinical knowledge and skills, and their attitudes when treating patients in the Canadian context (using standardized patients as opposed to actual patients). The national postgraduate training programs/residency programs, called CaRMS (Canadian Resident Matching Service), has limited openings for IMGs. In Manitoba, to address the limited licensure openings for IMGs, the province has its own program called MLPIMG (the Medical Licensure Program for International Medical Graduates). Each year, there are up to 12 openings for people selected for the MLPIMG program to enter the CAPE (Clinicians Assessment and Professional Enhancement) assessment. After successful completion of the MLPIMG program, IMGs will be given conditional medical registration and can start working in their sponsoring regions (usually in under-serviced rural regions).

***Anita (From Argentina, 34 yrs).*** Anita worked as a physician in Argentina for eight years (five years in residence, three years as specialist) before she decided to come to Canada. She chose Winnipeg because she had a friend living here who also worked in Medicine, and was in the process of re-entering the field. She arrived in March of 2004, and right away started taking the necessary exams to get her license to practice medicine in Canada. She took the MCCEE in May, and part I of the MCCQE in November. When she started her matching program to get residency training through CaRMS, she was not admitted. She then began trying out the provincial licensure program, MLPIMG. It was at this point she also took the ELT Medicine program to learn the Canadian communication and culture of being a physician. In her first year in the MLPIMG (2004), she was not selected to be among the 12 persons accepted for the CAPE assessment. The same year, after working in a daycare centre as a survival job for four months, she received an offer to work in a research centre as a research assistant. Her second year in the MLPIMG (2005) she was selected to go through the CAPE assessment, and received several offers from regional health authorities outside Winnipeg. When I interviewed her, she was still working in this research facility and in the process of deciding which offer she should take.

***Sylvia (From Iraq, 39 yrs).*** Sylvia received her MD in her home country of Iraq. After her two years of residency, she practised in rural areas, after which she returned to school for two years to pursue her post graduate studies. Unfortunately, she couldn't complete her program due to war in her country, and was forced to leave for the sake of her safety and that of her family. She and her family relocated to Libya, where she worked as a physician for six years.

She arrived in Canada the end of 1999, locating at first in Vancouver, British Columbia. When she decided to re-enter the medical system here, nobody gave her any orientation as to how to go about doing so. After searching for information on her own, she found a man from Iraq who was in the re-entry process himself. She obtained from him her first piece of information regarding re-entry: the address of the Medical Council of Canada (MCC). Following that, it took her an additional seven months to retrieve all the documents needed by the MCC in order to begin the process. It was a real challenge for her family back home to collect all the necessary papers and send them over to Canada because of the political situation in her home country.

Sylvia started doing all the required exams for IMGs in the year 2000. First was the MCCEE, then MCCQE part I, and part II. She managed to finish all the exams within two years, but she could not find a sponsor through which she could do her postgraduate training/residency through CaRMS. A friend introduced her to a program for IMGs who have finished all the MCC exams to get clinical training with a practising physician as a sponsor, where she could actually go to a hospital in the sponsor's jurisdiction to observe and perform some small tasks under supervision (e.g. interacting with patients, taking medical histories). Doctors, however, are quite busy, and it still proved difficult to find a sponsor. She found a list of practicing physicians in the phone book and just started calling. "It's lucky if you get anybody reply" (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005). She found one, fortunately, and began her training. She considered the training very helpful. Not only did it give her the opportunity to work in a real Canadian hospital environment where she can be in contact with that which she was not familiar with, it also gave an enormous boost to her self-esteem. "You would be yourself again. You would feel that you are a physician again. You can do it. It gives you that much confidence" (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

In 2004, she decided to come to Winnipeg in search of more opportunity. In B.C. at the time, there were only six licensure openings for IMGs in her field, for which there were more than 50 people competing. In Manitoba, the MLPIMG licensure program for IMGs has 12 openings each year. For that reason, her whole family moved to Winnipeg. The same year, she took the ELT Medicine program which is intended to prepare IMGs with the Canadian Physician's communication and cultural skills necessary to pass the CAPE assessment, which she did successfully in 2005. At the time of our interviews, she had started her residency, sponsored by a rural health authority outside Winnipeg. After the residency, she intends to work in that region for the duration of her contract time.

***Banking***

***Bo (From Mainland China, 33 yrs).*** After Bo graduated from a Chinese university with a Bachelor of Commerce in Finance, he started working as a teller in one of the biggest national banks in China. He moved into Human Resources after two years.

Realizing this was not in line with his career aspirations, he quit his job and found employment with a different company, this time doing business finance. After working in the Chinese local market for two years, he was promoted to the position of Senior Financial Manager and sent by his firm to Southeast Asian to conduct international business finance. After working in that position for a year and a half, he decided to immigrate to Canada. His decision to do so was based partly on the fact that he was interested in the North American market and in the society in general, and partly so he could improve his English. "I realized English is very important for working in Southeast Asia. A lot of business is possible if your English ability is good" (Bo interview I, December 14, 2005). Also influencing his decision to immigrate was his motivation to provide a better environment in which to raise his future children.

In the summer of 2004, Bo and his wife landed in Winnipeg, Canada after a four year-long immigration process. Prior to arriving, he conducted some research on choosing which Canadian city he should select as his new home. Despite the greater number of opportunities, he decided against the larger cities around which immigrants tend to cluster, since the competition would be greater as well. Furthermore, he felt cities with a smaller immigrant population may present him with more opportunities to practice and improve English with native English speakers. Finally, the lower cost of living in smaller cities appealed to him.

Rather than start looking for employment immediately after arrival, Bo spent several months enjoying the summer and making friends with the local people. Later that year, rather than trying to get a professional job in Finance right away, he started looking for jobs in places like local food stores, supermarkets, and so-forth in order to give himself a sense of the Canadian workplace. He found a job in a supermarket stocking products through a local friend he met during the summer.

When he went to get his Canadian Language Benchmark assessment, the assessor noticed his banking background and told him about a new ELT program in Banking (for tellers) under construction, and advised him to sign-up for it when it is launched. He was chosen to be in the first group, which began classes in October 2004. After he finished the first five weeks of pre-training, he worked as a paid intern teller for three months at one of the participating banks. Right after the internship concluded, he was offered a part-time job as a teller, and promoted three months later to Personal Account Officer & Customer Service Officer.

***Paulo (From Peru, 36 yrs).*** Originally from Peru, Paulo received his degree in Business Administration and worked in a bank as a teller. He was promoted into the business sector where he became a supervisor and assistant to the manager of commercial accounts. He came to Canada because he wanted a change in his life, and he felt his salary at his current job was not high enough. He chose to come to Winnipeg because his brother is also here. He arrived in the fall 2004.

In the period immediately following his arrival, he wanted to improve his English so as to increase his chances of getting a job. "When I came to Canada the first thing I was worried about my English because I don't have good enough English I cannot find a good job" (Paulo interview I, December 12, 2005). He signed up for many English programs, while at the same time looking for jobs in areas like business administrative assistant, financial assistant or in the business sector of a bank. Unfortunately, there were very few replies to his application efforts. He almost got a job as a customer service representative, but the job required him to speak only Spanish. He rejected the offer, even though he was promised a good salary and good hours. His priority back then was improving his English. To accept that job would mean being led away from his main focus.

He heard about the ELT Banking program when the first session had just been launched and students were being recruited. He applied, but was not accepted, since at his CLB levels at the time were only 6-7. His career counsellor suggested that he should continue improving his English and try out for the second program session. The next time he applied, he was accepted. At the time of our interviews, he had already finished both the five week pre-training component and the paid internship, and had been hired as a teller at one of the involved banks.

*Table 4.* Background Information on Study Participants

| | **Engineering** | | **Medicine** | | **Banking** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ling | Hammed | Anita | Sylvia | Paulo | Bo |
| Country of Origin | China | Afghanistan | Argentina | Iraq | Peru | China |
| Age/Age Range | 30-40 | 25-35 | 34 | 39 | 36 | 33 |
| Gender | F | M | F | F | M | M |
| Native Language | Chinese | Arabic | Spanish | Arabic | Spanish | Chinese |
| CLB level | 7-8 | 7-8 | 7-8 | 7-8 | 6-7 | 7-8 |
| Time in Canada | 6 years | 3.5 years | 1.5 years | 6 years | 14 months | 2 years |
| Professional Education . Background | Bachelor's Degree in Engineering (China) Bachelor of Computer Science (Canada) | Bachelor's Degree in Engineering (Azerbaijan) | Degree in Medicine (Argentina) | Degree in Medicine (Iraq) | Bachelor of Commerce in Business Administration (Peru) | Bachelor of Commerce in Finance (China) |
| Prior Professional Work Experience before coming to Canada | Professional Engineer for 10 years | Opened small firm, selling fashion material to dressmakers | Resident for 5 years, specialist for 3 years | Resident for 2 years, Rural practice, physician in Libya for 6 years | Teller for 8 years, Bank supervisor / business banking assistant | Worked in Chinese banking system 8 years, business finance |

## Chapter Five

## Communication and Cultural Challenges in Re-entry

In the following section, I will focus on the communication and cultural challenges immigrant professionals (IP) encountered in their re-entry, with respect to how these challenges affect their re-entry, and what these challenges are. Demonstrated by my data, there are four major aspects of the re-entry process in which communication and culture can cause challenges: (a) how to enter the target professional system, (b) preparing to enter the Canadian labour market, (c) working in Canada, and (d) *legitimate peripheral participation (*LPP) opportunities (see figure 3).

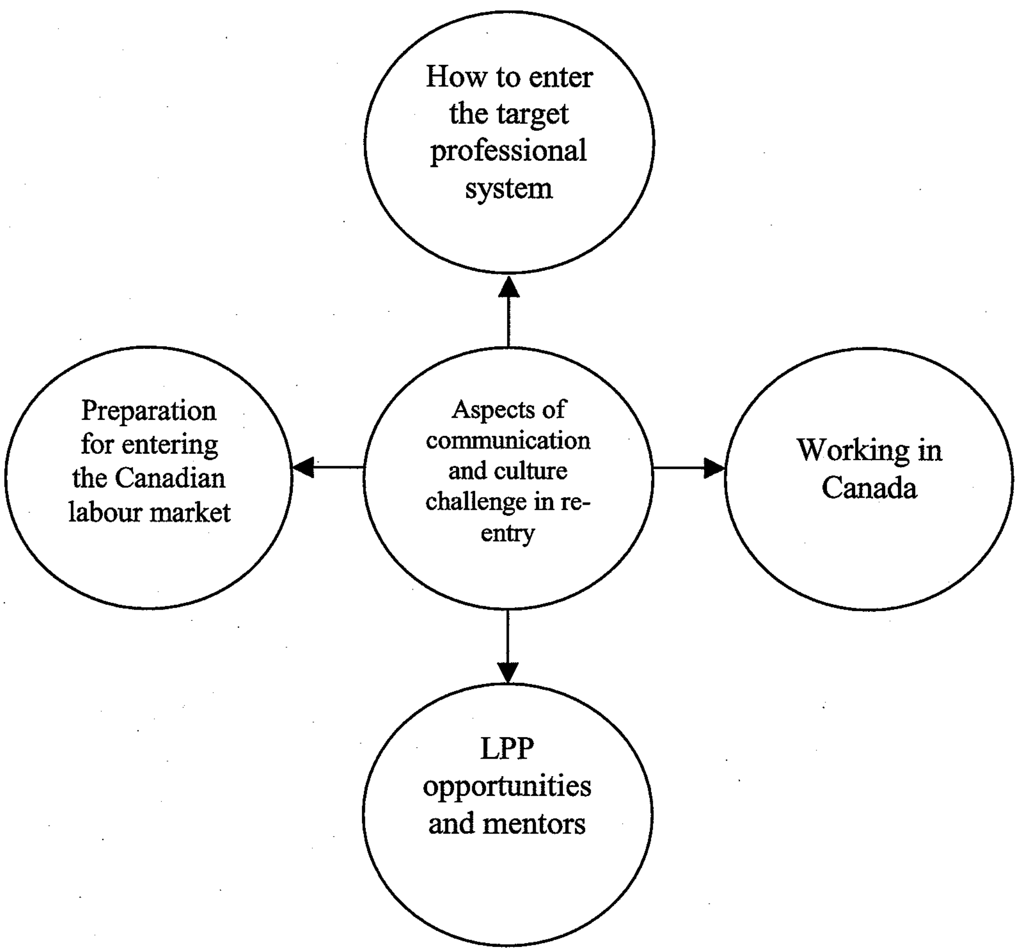


*Figure 3.* Aspects of Communication and Culture Challenges in Re-entry

In all the above-mentioned areas, immigrant professionals discussed the challenges they encountered and their need to appropriate their *practice* for re-entry purposes. For the convenience of organizing my data, I borrow the concept of *Different Practice*[6] from the *Communities of Practice* theoretical model (Lave & Wenger, 1991; & McConnell-Ginet, 1992) as an overlapping/umbrella concept to discuss the challenges. Communication challenges[7], also following the Canadian Language Benchmark theoretical framework, refer to English use or performance, including both oral and written. The challenges of culture refer to the parts of  that do not necessarily directly relate to English language use or performance, which in my study is considered the different *ways of doing* between their old professional COP and the target local COP here in Canada (Moran, 2001) (See figure 4).

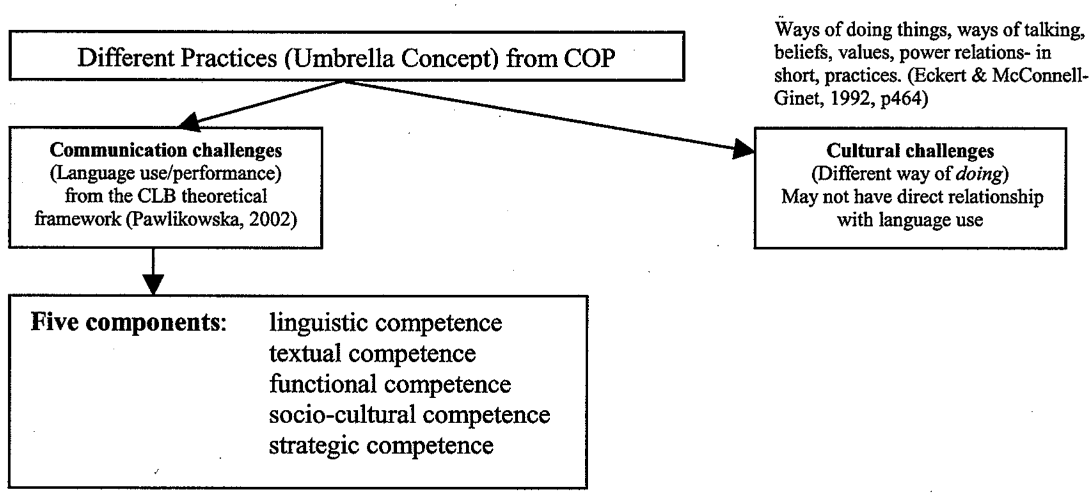


*Figure 4.* Defining Communication and Cultural Challenges in Re-entry

---

[6] In my study I use Eckert & McConnell-Ginet's adapted description of Lave & Wenger's concept *Practices*: "Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations- in short, practices." (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p464)

[7] According to Canadian Language Benchmark theoretical framework (Pawlikowska, 2002), communicative competence has five components: linguistic competence, textual competence, functional competence, socio-cultural competence, strategic competence. In my study, I will not focus on analyzing which specific competence my participants are lacking for two reasons: (1) I want to focus on a holistic picture of various aspects that communication/language use & culture may cause challenges, and thus affect their whole re-entry process; (2) since the data of this study are in the form of individuals' accounts rather than actual discourses, it is rather hard to make an accurate judgment based on that.

*How to Enter their Target Professional System*

***The effect of English communication and cultural understanding on re-entry path design.*** Demonstrated by my data[8], communication skills and a cultural understanding of the Canadian workplace can be the first hurdle in immigrant professionals' re-entry. Their plans for re-entry are made based on their own assessment of their language proficiency and whether they are familiar enough with the cultural aspects of the Canadian working environment. Hammed talked about how he didn't even attempt re-entering his field immediately upon arrival in Canada because he realized his English level was not good enough to do so:

> The very first day when I went to Toronto after only ten days in staying in Canada I went to Immigration Office to talk to them… in terms of my documentation and because I didn't have my language right . One of my friends went with me...But…the second (time) in a week, my friend was very busy so he was not able to go with me. I went there alone. I knew that I am going to face difficulties in terms of language but still I went there because I thought somehow I will make them understand me or somehow I could understand them. I asked a lot of questions of them and asked them to repeat and explain in more broader. I saw that I would have problems just with a simple conversation…at the same moment I realized that if I want to go towards my own profession which requires a high degree of language because it is much more professional and technical. This level of language I would not be able at all to get anywhere…I can tell you that certainly the language barriers prevented me from thinking about applying for any jobs related to my own profession (Hammed interview II, November 29, 2005).

Not only did Hammed join the LINC program in Toronto, a federal government sponsored ESL program for new immigrants, he also had the awareness that the class itself would not be sufficient or effective in improving his language ability, and therefore also tried to speak to local native English speakers by getting a job which would give him access to talk to native English speakers daily:

---

[8] The two Chinese participants were interviewed in Chinese. All the quoted excerpts are my translations of the original conversations in mandarin.

> So I realized that with my language I would...not be successful in getting a job related to my own profession. So quickly I realized this problem and I started taking some English courses. I did that, and along with that I thought that those courses would not be very effective without having a direct relationship with people, without talking to people daily. So I started looking for a job at the same time. I find a job as a cashier in the [convenience store] and it was through my friends (Hammed interview I, November 3, 2005).

Similarly, Paulo (an immigrant professional in Banking) chose to upgrade his English full-time upon arrival because he felt it was the best path to lead him toward decent positions:

> When I came to Canada the first thing I was worried about my English because I don't have good enough English I cannot find a good job. Then I started studying English...I was taking courses during the day, I was taking courses at night and going to the gym. I was oh so busy man. (laugh) I thought that if I study more I will learn more quickly and properly (Paulo interview I, December 12, 2005).

He considered learning English such a priority at the time that he even turned down a job offer that required him to speak Spanish all day. Even though such a job would definitely have helped relieve his financial situation at the time, it would not have been helpful in improving his English:

> I was looking for one [a job in a bank], but I didn't think I knew the job. I was almost hired for a job in customer service but it was to talk in Spanish for eight hours and I was studying English. I didn't think that would be good for me. They said "oh it is good, it is going to be a good salary. The schedule is okay, so what do you think?"...I almost got the job but I didn't do it [at the end] because it was like going...Like if you get a job in Spanish it is not going to help me... I don't want to sacrifice my study for a survival job (Paulo interview I, December 12, 2005).

Ling decided to go back to university to get a degree, which she considered the best way to upgrade her communication skills and cultural understanding in order to integrate herself into the Canadian job market:

> You have to get some sort of Canadian education, no matter what, university degree, community college, or even just high school diploma, at least your English ability will improve, and you will learn about Canada as a society, its

> ideology and values system, etc. I think this part can be even more important in helping you integrate into Canadian society and its job market than the technical professional skill itself sometimes (Ling interview I, September 15, 2005).

However, she was still somewhat intimidated by the thought of having to use English in the workplace, and chose Computer Science, the field in which she though she would need to use English the least, as a way to avoid this barrier.

Bo spent the entire summer familiarizing himself with English by spending time enjoying the summer with his new local Canadian friends. In addition, when he finally decided to start looking for a job in autumn, he decided to try out working in a lower-end, non-professional area just to get a sense of what the Canadian workplace was like before making any attempt to re-enter the banking field:

> When I started looking for jobs, I didn't immediately try applying for any professional jobs in any banks; rather I applied jobs in places like Subway, McDonalds, etc. Not because that I'm not confident in my professional skills, rather I want to learn about Canadian work environment, the language they use, the workplace culture and appropriate ways of dealing with people; otherwise, even if you have an interview opportunity or even a professional job opportunity, you might lose it if you lack the understanding of some of those mentioned stuff (Bo interview I, December 14, 2005).

***English communication challenges mentioned.*** When I interviewed these six immigrant professionals, their assessed Canadian Language Benchmark levels were all around seven to eight, with one exception who was at six to seven. Therefore, their communication levels were quite high. But upon arrival some of them had lower levels than at present, and the "English challenges" they discussed were their self-perceived problems on which they would like to improve.

They each discussed various kinds of "English problems" such as lack of vocabulary, lack of competency in expressing ideas and convey meaning fluently or with the appropriate manners, unable to speak as intelligently as they can in their first language, fear of speaking to native English speakers, lack of listening skills, general daily talks as opposed to professional English use. An interesting theme raised by almost every participant was that oral communication, including listening and speaking, was a big challenge. One participant, Ling, even commented that although her CLB level was assessed at 7-8, she still felt that her speaking level was not high enough to meet the required level in the actual working environment. When I interviewed her, she was working as a term contractor for a company coordinating a project. She commented:

> I don't think my speaking ability is enough. It might be satisfactory to meet the requirement of the CLB assessment. But to live here in Canada, especially to work in a professional job, you have to have a certain level of ability to express yourself. You need to speak about things clearly and logically (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

This issue might have something to do with the way English education was conducted in the home countries of some immigrant professionals. For example, at the time Ling was studying English in China, the doors to the country were not as open as they are nowadays. Consequently, English was taught by second language speakers using textbooks, whereas other more authentic and effective resources for language learning such as native English speakers, authentic audio and video curriculum, and so on were difficult resources to access. Lack of exposure to these authentic resources and opportunities for language use can result in more developed reading and writing skills as opposed to listening and speaking skills.

> My oral communication skills are comparatively the weakest because it was so many years ago when I was learning English. At that time the emphasis was on reading and writing. China just adopted the "Open Door" policy. The materials we have access to are books. All the things we learned are from books. But when you are actually using English in oral communication, you don't know how to use the things from the books (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

Hammed expressed a similar sentiment regarding the consequences of the way in which he had learned English back home: "But I was able to understanding but in speaking matters I had difficulties but not in my country the system is designed much more that you teach you more writing than speaking" (Hammed interview I, November 3, 2005).

***Cultural knowledge and re-entry path design.*** Not only can a lack of English communication skills and cultural understanding of the Canadian workplace affect an immigrant professional's re-entry plan, but some also demonstrated challenges with designing the right path for the re-entry itself. One important issue is that some immigrants, when planning their re-entry, still rely on knowledge they acquired in their home country, which might cause a detour and waste time in their re-entry journey. In discussing this issue with the instructor of ELT Engineering, she mentioned one popular misconception of her students:

> "If I get a masters degree I will get a job right away." That seems to be a prevailing attitude in a lot of people, and in one particular student that was the prevailing attitude. What this person failed to recognize was the professional association does not recognize the master's degree- they only recognize your undergraduate training. So masters degree or PHD really wouldn't make a difference to becoming registered in your field. So getting a masters degree wouldn't help him get his professional registration. What he also didn't realize was that he might be putting himself out of the job market by getting a masters degree, because he's overqualified (ELT Engineering Instructor interview, December 7, 2005).

Although I am running the risk of generalizing, growing up in China myself and now reflecting back, education is given a lot of value in my culture. I was constantly immersed in beliefs like "Education is the only way towards a better future", and "the higher education you have, the better job you will get". It is understandable that people who are from a background with similar attitudes in society might carry this old expectation to Canada, and design their re-entry upgrading path accordingly. I am not saying education is not important or cannot help with reaching one's goal in Canada, but there might be other ways in Canada towards a "better future." For instance, getting a professional license might require less time and serve a more practical purpose in looking for a job than obtaining additional degrees.

Tracing my participant Ling's re-entry trajectory indicates that she carried with her some old understandings from her home country. Additionally, a lack of guidance at some of the crucial moments of her re-entry may have also contributed to the detour she experienced. Ling had ten years of engineering work experience in China before coming to Canada. Upon arrival, she had the understanding that there was no way that she could go back to her field. One of the main reasons she felt this way was "because I didn't have any education here in Canada" (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005). Her self-doubt was compounded by her lack of confidence in her English communication/language abilities. She concluded that only by getting some education here in Canada could her situation improve. "My purpose back then was just to get some sort of education, it doesn't matter in which field" (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

Ling did try to get into a Master of Science in engineering program, but was denied entrance. When making her decision of what to do next, she thought she should get a second degree in a different field, since she already had a Bachelor's degree in engineering from China. When choosing which field she should go into, her language abilities guided her decision:

> At that time I wanted to go around the language barrier. I thought computer science is a field that would not require me using a lot of my language abilities. Now it seems not to be the case either. No matter what you do, as long as you have to contact with people, you can't avoid using language (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

It took her three years to finish this second Bachelor degree. After graduation, she realized that the additional Canadian education didn't really assist her in the job market:

> There are many reasons: first of all I didn't go into IT field because I truly love it, I just wanted to avoid language. Second of all, the market cooled down, not as hot as before. Furthermore, I was not in position to compete with those people who already had working experiences in this field for many years (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

It was at this point she realized "since English is so important and is forever a problem that I can't run away from, I'd better just overcome it. I went to all kinds of English classes" (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005). Then she met a friend whose husband is an engineer here in Canada, who told her that she should not waste her past ten years of working experience in engineering and should consider getting a job related to her field. She started trying, but because she hadn't undergone any upgrading in engineering since her arrival, and due to the long period of time spent outside the field, she encountered a lot of challenges getting a job. During our last conversation she told me that she'd given up trying to go back to re-entering as a professional engineer.

I cannot say that Ling's re-entry demonstrated a whole series of bad decisions, since some of her decisions were made for family reasons. Neither is my purpose here to identify and analyze all causal factors for each decision she made. What I can say, though, was if she had been given better guidance at an earlier time, things could have been different now. For instance, if somebody could have told her earlier that there were possibilities for her to re-enter the field of engineering and use the skills she accumulated for ten years in her home country, and if she had undergone the necessary upgrading and built her social network in that circle, could her career trajectory in Canada have been different?

Another example demonstrates the opposite of Ling's case. Paulo took to seeking out mid-level positions in his field immediately upon arrival.

> Yes, [I was looking for jobs like] administrative assistant or financial assistant but probably for that I didn't have enough experience because one thing I hear is that "you just arrived here and already you want that kind of job already. People have more qualifications than you do for this kind of job no" (Paulo interview I, December 12, 2005).

I am also not making the claim that there is a formulaic path to pursue professional career re-entry. Yet it can be argued that, since the local Canadian professionals have been socialized into their fields for a longer period of time through formal education and work experience, they are more intuitively aware of the structures and issues in the field and the ways to navigate the system. Newcomer immigrant professionals from different socio-cultural backgrounds need some guidance as to how the field is arranged and structured in Canada, where to find a place for themselves in the system, and how to design a path to reach to their goal.

Another aspect of the cultural challenges to consider in designing the appropriate re-entry path has to do with the regulation of certain professions. In the first chapter, I reviewed literature discussing the systemic re-entry barrier, which is considered one of the major barriers for immigrant professionals. The systemic barrier refers to the way certain professional systems are designed in a complex way, making advancement for newcomers difficult, complicated, and time-consuming. In my study the focus is not on this barrier itself, (for which the solution should arise from better-designed policy) but is rather to get a clear picture of how the system works and locating resources to help immigrants manoeuvre through it. Sylvia, for example, when talking about the process of getting back into to the medical system in Canada, said:

> I was looking for anybody to help me to find out how I can go back to the system and that was the real challenge. There are no resources. You don't know who you are going to talk. There are no special people who can orient you right away from the beginning. It was just hard, really hard. I start looking for friends, people who are assistants...but there is no real orientation for it. There is no session that they tell you what you are going to face. What you have to study. You have to find out your resources and your books. Nobody is going to tell you and this is not an easy job (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

For immigrants wanting to re-enter engineering, however, the Province of Manitoba has worked out a resource book in which a detailed step-to-step explanation of the process they are required to go through for provincial licensing is presented. The help extends beyond showing immigrants one way of re-entry through the official licensing process; it also provides a picture of other possible routes internationally trained engineers who wish to work in the field can take, with or without a license. With each re-entry possibility, the book also tries to describe the necessary steps to take in order to reach the goal (for more detail, refer to Figure 2).

***Preparation for Entering the Canadian Labour Market***

Not only do immigrant professionals need to gain a cultural understanding when designing the path for re-entry into their professional field here in Canada, they also experience challenges understanding how the Canadian job market works here. Because of the differing social, political, and economic ideologies and structures, entering the labour market can be very different from the process in an immigrant's home country.[9] Therefore, immigrants need to learn many new skills on this matter. The challenges mentioned by my participants in this area include: (1) professional job searching skills;

---

[9] Immigrant professionals, when discussing the different ways in their home country, tend to generalize by saying "In my country, it's different..." But, their remarks should not be considered as THE way that it is in that country, because doing so runs the risk of cultural stereotyping and overgeneralization. Rather, those accounts of the differences should be considered as the way that that particular individual perceives and experienced from his or her own historical, political and economical backgrounds.

(2) job preparation skills (resume writing, job interviews); and (3) networking skills. I will discuss each of them in detail below.

***Job searching: entering Canadian job market.*** According to my data, it can be very confusing for newcomers to find out where they fit into the Canadian labor market. For instance, Ling discussed her confusion as to how she could go about finding a position with her existing skills. As mentioned in the previous section, initially she presumed it would not be possible to re-enter her profession in Canada. Also, she didn't have the necessary skills to secure a job. Consequently, she started looking for jobs at the lower end of the social ladder here:

> When I was first looking for a job. I didn't know how I could get one. Now I learned many strategies… it's really a type of skill in itself that needs learning…but back then I didn't have it. I looked for information in the newspaper, and also talked with my Chinese friends. But they mostly work in hotels or restaurants themselves. The kind of jobs I heard about was like, baby sitters, waitresses, etc…since I didn't know anything at all about getting jobs in the western world, I figured the fastest way should be getting a job that the least people would want to do. My first job was in a garment factory. When I went there, I didn't even know what western interviews were like. Luckily they hired me because they needed people at that time (interview I, September 10, 2005).

Ling's case can be explained in part by the way she was used to finding employment in her home country. When she graduated from university, the Chinese government was still helping university graduates to get employment, though not through direct workplace assignment. She did not have to market her skills and try to sell herself to potential employers by various strategies. That ability, however, is crucial for getting into the job market here. Ling is not the only such case. A few of my other participants mentioned that in their home countries they need not apply for jobs in their field at all. Sylvia also mentioned:

> When you graduated back home, we didn't have that much problem because it is a central, kind of thing that you get the job right away. You don't have to go to interview, you don't have to prepare resume or anything or a CV or… It's just, it's there. Your name will be on the list. You go and ask "What is my next step?" You'll take your luggage and you will go to the hospital and start your job. So it wasn't really a challenge. It was a very easy way to get your job, after graduation. (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006)

Hammed commented similarly on the different system of getting employment in his home country:

> Those are the things that I can tell you that don't exist back home in my country. Back home in my country when you graduate from university most of the time there is a job for you as an engineer because there is a lack of engineers in our country. Or if there is not, you are not going to write a resume or cover letter or you are not going to look for an opening or position in companies through the internet, you don't need that. You don't need those. In Canada you have to know the system in how to look for a job. It is a totally different system. (Hammed interview II, November 29, 2005)

***Resume writing.*** Resume writing is a form of written communication between job-seekers and employers, in which the writer conveys their skills and experiences in order to be considered for employment. The skills needed to do so successfully and in a manner acceptable and persuasive to the reader are culturally embedded. This can present a challenge to newcomers, who can be considered cultural outsiders. Many of my participants mentioned that for resuming writing, they had to learn from the very beginning either because they never had to write a resume for employment purposes, or because the way of writing in Canada is different from their home country. In terms of its cultural aspect, the challenges of resume writing discussed by my participants include issues such as a lack of understanding of what is important and appropriate to include as content, the structure used to organize their experiences and skills, and the knowledge of what makes a resume to stand out from a Canadian perspective. Hammed talked about uncertainty of what type of information he should include to impress employers:

> I didn't know about a resume. The very first time I was wondering "what is the system." Later I realized that I needed a resume to talk about your job experience, your abilities and all this. I thought that was not a problem, but (when) I think about the matters and issues that I (need to) put in there I lost myself because I was not familiar at all. How should I do it? How (do) I... put all those issues in order? How (do) I...impress them (employers) when they read it? I didn't know that (Hammed interview I, November 3rd, 2005).

Similarly, Ling also talked about how not knowing what was supposed to be included in her resume had a negative effect. In her resume, the contents she selected to include represented only one year of her professional working experience rather than the full ten years:

> Even the career counselor can't help you on that. They don't know about your field, they can only help you with what you can tell them you did in the past, or have written down in your résumé. They don't know what you are capable of doing and have done. And then I met this friend whose husband works as an engineer here in a field similar to mine. He took a look at my résumé for me and told me that I've only written down one year's worth of work experience. He told me I needed to go back to think about all the details, like the projects that I've done, and that kind of stuff. So I did that, I re-wrote so many times, and then showed it to him. He commented that "now, you have written out your professional qualities" (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

Sylvia compared the differences between what she did for resume in that past and the requirements here:

> You don't have to prepare resume or anything or a CV or... It's just, it's there. Your name will be on the list. You go and ask "What is my next step?"...We didn't have that much emphasis on CV's back home, basically we did not use it. Like nobody would ask you where is your CV? And that's one of the points. When you don't use that, you don't think about it. And I remember only the one time that I went, you know because I left Iraq and then I have to put all my experience in a CV but it was only just a brief one, and I went to practice in Libya right away...here it's more complicated, it's more detailed, like I would write my residency from this time to this time. But you have to highlight what exactly you did, like we don't have to do that back home we just need to say residency in this rural area, and the time you spent in each area" (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

Bo also mentioned that the organizational structures used to present one's past experiences are different between his home country and here in Canada:

> Yes, they are completely different. A résumé back home was chronologically organized. You've got to write every bit of your experience down, otherwise people reading it might think you are hiding something…here there is more…you just need to present the part of your skills that match the position you are applying for (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

In addition, some of my participants also mentioned difficulties with resume language itself. In terms of the linguistic aspect of the challenges of writing a résumé, some mentioned difficulties regarding the inclusion and use of certain technical terms related to one's field. As Bo stated:

> As for the technical words in your field, you can't try to figure out the English translations yourself, not even through looking up the translation in the dictionary because it might not be the common words used here locally. My strategy is going onto the web page of the company where you are applying for your position and use the words they use (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

Ling also discussed that since she learned everything in her field in her native Chinese, she had to switch everything into English. Many technical terms, if translated in ways that are not common in the profession here, would be assumed to demonstrate a lack of professionalism on the part of the resume writer:

> All the things, I have them, just not in English, I have to translate them from Chinese. For instance, when I have to say a machine which adds chemicals, if I say "chemical adding machine", people who read it would think that I am a professional outsider, the correct term should be "chemical feeding machine". Another example is a one-way valve, for which the professional word is check valve. It is to say, if you are in this context, you will have to adjust to the accustoms here, otherwise, it will be considered as lack of abilities, or an outsider. My problem is not that I do not have the abilities, it is just I don't know the right words. And when you don't use the right words, they lower down your levels instantly (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

Some of my participants also mentioned that producing the proper grammar and forms of language in a resume cover letter can be a challenge. For example, Sylvia said:

> For me it was a cover letter actually that I wrote and I wanted [somebody] to review it with me and just make sure it's grammatically and properly done and if there's any suggestions, or for changes that I could do (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

***Job interview.*** In a job interview, immigrant professionals were faced with not only language challenges, but also with difficulties resulting from a lack of socio-cultural knowledge. The missing socio-cultural knowledge would normally guide their interview performance in both their communication and behaviour, such as responding to questions in the expected way and choosing to "sell" the "correct" qualities valued by the local culture to impress employers.

Job interviews require a high level of communication skills. It appears that oral communication abilities tend to be used as one of the major measurements of the professional skills and potential of the job applicant, which can put immigrant professionals who are second language speakers at great disadvantage vis-à-vis their native English-speaking counterparts. Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz (1982) pointed out that communication skills have been given so much emphasis in modern industrial societies that not only do people depend on communication skills to get things done, but also that these skills become important resources, adding much to an individual's symbolic and social capital. In a job interview, one of the "speech events" where communication skills are highly emphasized, evaluators/interviewers tend to make judgments based on, among other things:

> the individual's ability to talk well and to make a good presentation of him/herself…(also) what counts is the ability to conform to the principles of rhetoric by which performance is judged in bureaucratic systems…since appeals require rhetorical sophistication, including acquaintance with often unstated assumptions specific to the dominant culture or to the organization doing the judging, the weaker participant, who lacks the requisite verbal knowledge, is always at a disadvantage (p4, p9).

In my study, when talking about how oral communication skills can affect one's performance in job interviews, Ling discussed the feeling of being blocked by her language skills from demonstrating her actual professional skills. In a sense, unsophisticated language abilities could easily be confused with insufficient professional qualities:

> It feels like a bottleneck...interviewers do not know how much you really know if you cannot express or demonstrate through using English. No matter how great your true skills are, if you cannot speak out your skills, they would assume you do not have them. They won't think "oh, you can't express your skills because you are using a second language." They would just think "oh, you don't have the skills that we need" (Ling interview II, October 13, 2005).

Another challenge she mentioned during job interviews is, since she is using a second language, the speed of her response to questions is not as fast as expected. This, she feels, could leave a poor impression on employers:

> ...another thing is that I felt sometimes is that I did not react fast enough. That's because not only do I need to think about how to answer the question, but I also have to think about how I should phrase my responses in English...sometimes I feel that the impressions I leave to interviewers is that I am almost like I am made of wood (Ling interview II, October 13, 2005).

Paulo expressed his concern that poor communication abilities can mean poor performance during an interview, which can affect his chances of getting employment:

> When applying for a job in a Canadian bank...my English would be one of the barriers... because [to get a job] you have to have an interview. If you don't have a good interview, then...like if someone is asking you something and you say "what"? "Could you repeat that? I didn't get that. Please repeat it again."...they [the interviewers] might become upset because of that (Paulo interview I, December 12, 2005).

Language skills are also accompanied by a socio-cultural understanding of the interviewer's expectations of the directions in which the interview responses should go. Such expectations are highly culturally embedded, and are defined by local value systems. Not understanding these expectations can cause challenges for immigrant professionals when responding to interviewers. Ling described one such instance:

> At the beginning I was really naïve as to how to answer the employer/ interviewer's questions... once I was asked how I would deal with working under pressure. I thought it was a personal question, so I said: "my way of dealing with that is to listen to some music." Now I know the interviewers have certain expectations behind their questions, and if your answer falls outside of the intended scope, you will fail the interview. It's hard for newcomers to know what the employer has in mind… It's like a game; you have to play by their rules (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

Hammed discussed that he too had to learn the Canadian ways of performing in a job interview, which only makes sense here:

> But I have learned many tricks as to how to answer some crazy questions and how should your external appearance look like. How a businessman shake hands. That in Canada it makes sense. All of these things don't make sense in my country. But in Canada it is considered [a must] when you go to an interview (Hammed interview II, November 10, 2005).

Not only do immigrant professionals need to learn about the socio-culturally appropriate ways of interacting (speaking and behaving) during interviews, they also need to learn about the socio-culturally defined resources/capitals considered valuable by employers. For instance, in order to gain favor in the interview, Anita resorted to emphasizing her "youth," which carries with it a high degree of social capital in her home country but conveyed the "wrong" image here:

> I was demonstrating "being young" which is highly valued in my home country, rather than focusing on "being experienced" which is the more promoted professional quality here in Canada…When I was in the interview, all the time I tried to give them the impression that I was younger because I knew my competition at that moment, but it was wrong because here they want somebody experienced for the residency (Anita interview I, November 21, 2005).

Paulo also talked about how "age" carries a lot of value in his home country. For instance, he mentioned that age could be a limiting factor for job opportunities. A common understanding exists among both employers and job-seekers that certain jobs are out of reach for job-seekers beyond the age of 29 (Paulo interview I, December 12 2005).

***Networking in Canada.*** Most immigrant professionals perceive networking to be important in helping them re-enter their field in Canada. But they also pointed out that networking means different things and functions differently than it does in their respective home countries. Newcomers need to learn the local networking practices and adjust themselves accordingly. The following excerpts from three of my participants describe the differences between what networking means and how it functions in their home countries and here in Canada:

> Bo: Friends or connections in China pretty much means a guarantee of your entry into your desired field when you are qualified. In getting a job, connections are the most important thing. They are the guarantee for you to first get in the door, sometimes even for promotions. But here, having connections doesn't mean everything; but not having them means you've got nothing. They can't guarantee you'll be handed a job, but they can provide you with useful information (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

> Sylvia: Sure. The more resources, the more help, the more support, yes. That is absolutely a great thing, definitely… But back home it is completely different, because networking means, you know how many people you know. And how many people who really have the power to do something for you (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

> Hammed: I expanded my network. I talked to many people…to any person that I saw who…could be a professional that could help me. I kept in touch with them and talked about this issue [re-entry]. They would give me directions on to how to go and they were talking to friends to help me…But they couldn't help me by taking my hand into their company. In Canada that is not possible. It's about your resume and your abilities (Hammed interview I, November 3, 2005).

Even though it means different things and functions differently in facilitating employment opportunities, networking was acknowledged by my participants as a valuable resource. One challenge, though, is that a lack of communication skills can affect the building of networks, and thus indirectly affect immigrants' re-entry. Hammed commented on the relationship between language using abilities, networking, and finding employment:

> Definitely because of the language. If you don't have the language then you don't have the network and that is based on communication. If you don't have language you don't have network and if you don't have network, you don't have job (Hammed interview I, November 3, 2005).

I believe a lack familiarity with the socio-cultural norms of building one's social network in Canada could also cause challenges for immigrant professionals to build networks in their target professional communities. First of all, it requires social skills to understand where and how to locate people who are established and more expert members of the community, and then it requires certain knowledge and skills to build the relationship needed to obtain assistance and support. Although I did not get direct comments from my participants on this issue, it could be demonstrated from the fact that those to whom my participants first turned for help were usually from their countries of origin. Anita received assistance in the medical licensing process from a friend who was also from Argentina. Sylvia got her first break-though information about licensing through a man from Iraq who was also in the process. Ling, when looking for her first job, consulted her Chinese friends, most of whom were unfortunately in service industries. She also commented about how getting into the engineering circle here is hard because, from her point of view, it is "shut tightly" (Ling interview II, October 13, 2005). As for Hammed, though his first stop after arriving in Canada was Winnipeg, he left shortly after for Toronto because he had some friends from his country there. This kind of social network was easy for my participants to build and access because they have both the language and the necessary social skills.

***Working in Canada***

The six immigrant professionals I interviewed had different Canadian work experiences. Their work experience ranged from unrelated, indirectly related, to directly related to their target professional field (see table 4).

*Table 5.* Canadian Work Experience

| | Engineering | | Medicine | | Banking | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ling | Hammed | Anita | Sylvia | Paulo | Bo |
| Professional Field Unrelated | Garment Factory<br><br>Short-term office jobs | Convenience Store | Day Care Centre | Home Care Giver | | Supermarket |
| Professional Field Relevant | Engineering-related project coordinator | | Medical Research Assistant | Medical Research Assistant | | |
| Internships in Profession | | | | Hospital Internship | ELT Banking Internship | ELT Banking Internship |
| Working in Profession | | | | Started Medical Residency | Teller | Teller, Personal Acct. Officer, Customer Service Officer |

The English communication (language use) and cultural challenges[10] they mentioned during my interviews were based on their own work experiences, either within their targeted field or not. I discuss these challenges below.

***Spontaneous interaction.*** Compared to routine interaction, Jupp, Roberts, and Cook-Gumperz (1982, p.249) indicated these types of *speech events* involve a lot more meaning negotiations, spontaneous responses and decision making requiring a socio-cultural understanding of how to act in a manner culturally appropriate to the moment. It

[10] The cultural aspect challenges in this section fall within communicative challenges, which is the understanding that directs and guides the actual language performance. (See CLB theoretical framework table for the five competence aspects.) In next section, the cultural challenges refer to different practices between contexts, which may not be directly related to communication. However, there is no clear-cut delineation in real life. Choosing to write in this way is only for the convenience of organizing my data.

is for those reasons that spontaneous interaction can be very complicated and can require a great deal of experience and communication skills.

Workplace tasks in which spontaneous interactions are involved were discussed most frequently by my participants. The tasks they mentioned include such things as telephone conversations, attending meetings, communicating with clients (in banking) or patients (in medicine), and so on. Some mentioned that idioms and phrases used by Canadian people are difficult to understand; some mentioned difficulty understanding fast conversation; some mentioned general speaking accuracy and fluency as a challenge; others mentioned the socio-cultural challenge in dealing with difficult situations. The following are some examples.

Ling, working as a project coordinator for a company, commented that she has trouble speaking in English. She had trouble making herself understood very easily, and sometimes she would use her writing ability to compensate for her lack of oral communication competence:

> I don't think my speaking ability is enough…to live here in Canada, especially to work in a professional job, you have to have a certain level of ability to express yourself. You need to speak about things clearly and logically. For instance, in my current job, it mainly uses my English reading and writing abilities. In terms of speaking, I still have big problems. I can tell that my colleagues have to make special efforts to try to understand me. It seems that I can't make others understand me easily… for important matters, I'd write an email afterwards, that way I have more time to think about what I want to say and organize my words first (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

Some specific tasks involved in Ling's job that require speaking and in which she had trouble are in the following areas: talking on the telephone, teleconference, and attending meetings. On the telephone, she mentioned that "it always seems like people don't understand what I'm trying to tell them" (Ling interview I, September 10, 2005).

She mentioned an incident where she was trying to explain her project to someone on the phone, but the person became frustrated and asked to speak to someone else instead, which made her feel quite sad. Towards the end of her contract, the office assistant was on temporary leave, and Ling was filling-in. "I could do anything very well and fast, except answering the telephone," she said, "for that part of the job, my other colleagues will have to do it for me" (Ling interview II, October 13, 2005).

Her job also involved an occasional multi-participant teleconference, which she also found very challenging. Since she had such trouble talking on the phone to but a single person, it is understandable that multiple conversation participants would only make the task more challenging. Interestingly enough, delivering oral presentations was not considered particularly difficult for her. From her description of this task, it is possible the relative ease with which she performs is due to the fact that it requires less spontaneity than teleconferences or meetings. Sometimes she could use up to several hours to prepare in advance what to say in the presentation. "The way I do it is I usually write out everything I want to say first, then memorize every sentence." More difficult, she found, is "the spontaneous interaction during meetings" (Ling interview II, October 13, 2005). Similarly Paulo, who works as a bank teller, also discussed having trouble talking on the telephone:

> Sometimes people talk really fast. And I say "what?" I have to ask "could you repeat that?" ... sometimes people don't understand me very well and at the same time I am trying to tell them...and I think I am working on that. I am starting to use the phone now. In the beginning, it was "oh no, the phone!"... I [would] ask one of my [co-] workers to help me in that and I find a lot of assistant and help in that way. So [now] I am working on that (Paulo interview I, December 12, 2005).

Paulo related an incident to me in which he was on the phone talking with a client. This client was not satisfied with Paulo's responses to his questions, and demanded to speak to someone else. Paulo complied, and connected him with someone else, but noticed in the process that the person on the phone had a Spanish last name. He was fairly certain the client might also be of Spanish origin, but had no way to know for sure whether the man was Canadian born or not, since "his English was good," (Paulo interview I, December 12, 2005). Paulo felt quite upset by the man's lack of patience with his English, especially considering the client may have been an immigrant of Spanish background himself.

Also working in a Canadian bank, Bo's language challenge originates from the different practices between the two banking systems he had experienced. As a teller in Canada, common practice not only requires him to perform money transactions, but also to engage in social communicative- "small talk," with clients. Bo found this requirement extremely difficult to meet, especially at the beginning of his employment. This is in part because small talk tended to extend far beyond his professional field. The conversational topics he encountered could cover any possible area, and were also highly culturally-embedded. This task was something that his Canadian peers might have considered the easiest part of the job, yet for him it was the opposite:

> To do this job, you have to focus on several things at the same time, you have to count the cash, operate the computer system, and one more difficult task, for immigrants, is the small talk. Here they want you to do the banking part, but at the same time, they want you to build a good rapport with your customers by chatting friendly with them. And doing that put a great deal of pressure on me. The first month, everyday I went home with splitting headaches (Bo interview I, December 14, 2005).

He also described what it was about small talk that specifically gave him trouble:

> Most Canadian people are very friendly, they like having a little chat with you. The easiest one is as simple as "How are you?" or "How are you doing today?" But some people want to know you a little better, they would ask "Where are you from?" and questions about your backgrounds. I don't have as many problems

> answering questions about myself as I do when people want to talk about themselves. They use slang, and very local and colloquial ways to talk about very local stuff. That was the hardest to understand and talk back to them. In the end, I developed a strategy where I would just say "Really? That's awesome" (laugh) (Bo interview I, December 14, 2005).

After he was promoted from teller to personal account officer/customer service officer, a lot more talking was required of him. He was also charged with the responsibility of dealing with more complicated and more unpredictable situations, which required a lot higher communication and socio-cultural skills than his former position. For instance, he mentioned that as a customer service officer, he spends a lot of time answering people's questions. He found this task challenging for two reasons. Firstly, his new positions required him to have thorough knowledge of all the services provided by his bank, with which at the time he was not completely familiar:

> I do these two positions. When I do my customer service officer's job, I stand right here, the very front of the bank. When customers come in, they first see you, they would just grab you and ask you ALL kinds of questions, it could be anything. The scope of topics are way wider than just being a teller. My job is to provide answers, but at the first several months, it was really tough. I was not really a question solver. I had to go consult with my supervisor a lot, get the answer from her first then reply to the customers. I almost felt I was useless at that time (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

Secondly, it required him to have higher communication abilities than being a teller. People often used slang, spoke very quickly, and perhaps the most challenging aspect was that people did not always use professional banking terms. They phrased their questions and used terms in the way that made sense to them, and "you really have to try hard to figure out what they mean" (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

Another challenging aspect he mentioned was that he had to deal with sensitive and difficult situations that, to handle properly, required not only good language skills but also sophisticated socio-cultural skills. He told me this story:

> Once a man ran into the bank and said, "I'm a customer here, and I have to use the bathroom." According to the bank's regulations, it is not allowed because the bathroom is located in a secured area of the bank, which is off limits to any non-banking employees. I explained that to him. But that made him very angry, he kept saying that he is a customer here, and he has some kind of disease and kept demanding to use the washroom. I told him that there was a public washroom in this neighborhood, just a couple of blocks away, and he could use that one. He saw I was still insisting on not letting him use the bank's bathroom. He then said, "Do you understand me? Do you understand English?" I told him, "Yes, sir. I DO understand English. I Do understand you, and that's why I'm working here" (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

Following this incident, the man filed a formal complaint with the bank's head office. Before the complaint had been filed, Bo consulted with his supervisor, who confirmed the manner in which he handled this delicate situation. Bo handled the situation correctly and appropriately. Situations like this can be very challenging for immigrants, new to the environment here in every way. In a concluding comment, Bo said:

> No matter how great an education you had received in your home country, if you don't have enough understanding of the language and culture here, even if somebody just hands you a high-level position, you won't be ale to handle it. Let's say, immediately after I arrived in Canada, if you gave me the bank manager's job right away, I won't be able to do it. Even for the position that I'm working at right now, it took me so much effort to learn and adjust… Maybe immigrant professionals who are in more technical fields and not needing to use English too much, like computer programmer or something, can find a high-level position similar to their old ones right away. But if your profession involves using English and dealing with people, then you will have to start from the bottom. There are lots of things that you need to learn from scratch, unless your English is already perfect (Bo interview I, December 14, 2005).

In the medical field, my two participants discussed challenges in dealing with both patients and other physician colleagues. The interactions involved also required high communication skills, and a good grasp of local behavioural expectations. Anita commented that physicians are expected to speak at a high level of fluency, especially when talking with colleagues who are also doctors. She thinks the language she uses should be at the same professional level as her colleagues in order to be recognized as their equal. She currently works as a research assistant in a medical research facility where there is also a clinic. One of her duties is to report her research project to other working doctors or researchers by doing presentations. On this task, she commented:

> English is not your language. So with the doctors I was very nervous with my language. Not because of teaching [doing the presentation] but because of my language, it was terrible. I was afraid that I could not understand them, not understand the questions, the pronunciation. It was hard. When you are [considered] a doctor you have to speak well and if you are in a position as a doctor you have to be fluently speaking to them [other doctors]. Sometimes you don't understand what they are telling you, because there are expressions that you don't understand (Anita interview I, November 21, 2005).

She described the areas in which she wanted to improve. In order to convey her meaning, she sometimes depends on paraphrasing or describing things; a skill she wants to improve:

> The fluency, more vocabulary. Perhaps I change what I would say [to]...make people to understand me. Particularly the words I want to say. I try to manage and explain that but it isn't exactly what I want to say (Anita interview II, November 29, 2005).

For Sylvia, how to interact with patients in a culturally appropriate way created more of a challenge than just getting her meanings across. Having said that, she still mentioned that regular daily conversations are more challenging than those involving medical language, especially when slang is incorporated. The following excerpts demonstrate her points:

> The challenge actually for me it was, you know, the public language. It is not the medical language. Dealing with daily issues, words which aren't familiar to me or you. This is the challenge. And still but it is good that you will learn (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

> Still, I have a problem sometimes with slang terminology. It just pops up there and, then "uh-oh, what does that mean?" (Laugh) Yes, some things I will ask. I will ask...It's just that, sometimes, I got the meeting, but I just want to clarify that

> I got it right, or that was what really he or she means... Just to be sure that I got it right (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

> I'll give you an example. Like sometimes, we validate the patient's feelings, like we can feel if he is upset or he is sad, But we don't know how to react at that point...how to validate the patient's feelings, and how to interact in a proper way, at that point. It's just an example, you know. Because you might say "Oh, I understand how you're feeling.", and this way you are minimizing the actual feeling of the patient, while you didn't mean it, basically. It's just, you know, the way that you don't know the proper things to tell the patient at this point. Again basically because of the language, language problem. If it's in my language I don't have problem with that, I know how to deal and I know how to tell the patient and how to interact (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

***Different practices in the Canadian professional COP.*** In this section, I will talk about the cultural aspect of the challenges newcomers face that can be attributed to different *practices* in local Canadian professional contexts, which may not be directly related to language use. Data used in this section are mostly from those participants who have either worked directly in their professional fields, or in areas related to their professional fields in Canada before doing interviews with me. Without work experience in their fields in Canada, it difficult for newcomers to understand the differences that may exist between professional contexts here and in their home countries, nor the significance of such differences. For example, Hammed commented that prior to taking classes on professional practices in Canada, he had not considered that the different practical contexts could affect his re-entry:

> [In our class] we talk about cultural differences for professional engineers. It has given me many ideas. I didn't know many of these issues and other stuff that can happen in the work environment and since I have taken this subject I realize that there are many issues in order to get a job (Hammed interview II, November 10, 2005).

After taking professional communication classes, both from ELT Engineering program and IEEQ program,[11] he was inspired to see the differences that could exist between the two working environments. He demonstrated some of his current understandings on this issue during our interview. One significant thing he realized is that it is important to adjust one's behavior to fit into the Canadian working environment:

> Sometimes if you want to keep your job you have to neglect some differences or make yourself as similar as the other. In my culture when you see [each other in the] morning...every day you shake hands. But in Canada you don't see that. [you see] "Hi, how are you." That is it. That is all they talk about. But in order to get the job and keep the job. Try and be similar to them. [say] "Hi. How are you." Even though it feels somewhat foreign to you. That is the way it is (Hammed interview II, November 10, 2005).

In addition, he realized differing communication styles between his home country and the local style might misguide one's interpretation of the speech one encounters during an interaction. Sometimes the underlying meaning of a statement is not recognized or interpreted properly by a newcomer. In Hammed's example, an employer's constructive criticism could easily be misunderstood by someone unfamiliar with its delivery as a compliment:

> There are other things too, for example, feedback. Employers give you feedback in Canada. In Canada, they have that attitude that if this is not that good, so improve it and you are the person in charge of things so maybe they don't tell you directly. Like they [don't] write it down or things like, example: "If you had such a problem maybe you could improve it in that way." They don't tell you like this. They tell you "oh, you wrapped it up very nice, you did good but a little improvement is necessary." You don't understand in our cultural background as to his cultural idea what he was talking about. You are thinking he gave some compliment of my job; instead he might have been criticizing me. That is the cultural differences. (Hammed interview II, November 10, 2005).

The participants who worked in Canada discussed how different practices may cause challenges to re-entry. Many of them mentioned the need to learn how the local

[11] IEEQ program is to help internationally educated engineers to go through the process of qualification recognition in the Province of Manitoba. More information will be provided in next section.

Canadian system functions in their respective fields here and also to adjust themselves and adopt the "Canadian ways" of doing their jobs. On trying to apply one's previously-acquired skills in a new working environment, Bo said:

> If bring my professional skills back to China, I can guarantee I get any good jobs in my field if I apply. But bringing my skills to Canada, for one thing, it would be up to the tests to see whether these skills could be applicable in this different system; the second, it would unrealistic to hope that all the skills can just fit into this new, and in some aspects even opposite system and environment. It has been proven true through my own working experience here: if I didn't take that training course, didn't learn and adjust to the new ways and new environment, the skills I brought from China would be like the old Chinese idiom "To boil dumplings in a teapot- though they are ready, you can't get them out." That's how I feel (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

Bo's comments can be reiterated by looking at his re-entry path. Before he came to Canada, he was already working at a high level position in international business finance. He was working in the Southeast Asian market as the Senior Financial Manager of a big Chinese company. He was familiar with that system and it would be easy for him to find good employment elsewhere in that field. After arriving in Canada, he came across the ELT banking program, applied, and successfully made it through the screening process. He acknowledged learning all the "basic knowledge" about working as a Canadian teller in the five week training program, and said "the learning carried on" (Bo interview II, January 14, 2005) when he began the three-month paid internship (three months), and continued further during his actual employment as a teller afterwards.

After working as a teller for six months, he was promoted to personal account officer and customer service officer, and with the increased job responsibilities came a corresponding increased in the demand on his communication abilities and cultural knowledge, followed by another round of learning and adjusting. He described the stress that accompanied this period of time: "I didn't even know how I lived through that time. (laugh)" (Bo interview I, December 14, 2005).

In the field of medicine, similarly, to be accepted by one's colleagues as a recognized member, immigrant professionals also need to appropriate their practices to match the local norms. Sylvia talked about how not being fully aware of the culturally expected behaviours can cause trouble in practising as a physician. As described earlier, for a physician to receive medical licensure from the MCC (Medical Council of Canada), he or she must demonstrate a readiness to perform properly as a physician in accordance with all guidelines. This test is called MCCQE (Medical Council of Canada Qualification Examination) Part II. Standardized patients (trained actors) are used to examine a candidate's actual performance in dealing with patients. Each patient's case includes both medical problems and ethical or legal issues that the doctor has to deal with properly, in accordance with the Canadian standards. In one case, Sylvia did not perform accordingly because she was not aware of what was acceptable and how far she should go at that time; so, she failed the exam:

> I went to the exam [MCCEE Part two]. I studied on my own and I remember it was really stressful and at the same time I didn't know what to do. I had a case because I didn't know…I have to examine a young patient. I think he was nineteen or twenty for a hip joint and I was physically uncomfortable to uncover him. I have to uncover him but I didn't know that was the proper thing to do or not. These issues sometimes very stressful but you have to realize that what to do. This is the proper step to do. This is what is proper in Canada. This is the cultural difference. I had to uncover the joint; I had to uncover the area; I had to examine him. I examined him over his shirt so it was improper. I mean he was a man. I failed that exam the first time…but again it wasn't easy because if you failed in a trial of the exam it would cost you more than fourteen hundred. The fees. So it is a lot of money and you are going to juggle the whole year to collect that much money to apply again (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

The ELT Medicine instructor also told an anecdote in which an immigrant doctor treated nurses inappropriately in Canada:

> ...what he was doing...was like a physician's assistant I believe, and what happened was he started treating the nurses like his secretary. "Nurse go get me a coffee, nurse do this, and do that." She was saying, "well I am busier than you." And he would also say "It is tea time." I guess in [his own country] tea time is very important so he would say "well I am going". And all the doctors and everybody else would say "No, you are not." And he would say "Yes I am, it is tea time!" So he was very stuck in his world. And was not open to how things are done here (Jessica interview, October 25, 2005).

On top of the problems arising from a lack of knowledge regarding acceptable practices in the various target professions in Canadian contexts, it can also be hard for immigrant professionals to locate resources and to learn what they are missing. Sylvia talked about how hard it was to find resources to learn about the cultural practices of physicians in Canada, in terms of both the actual locating of such materials and the challenge of accessing it:

> Nobody is going to tell you, and this is not an easy job. I remember I was looking for any ethics papers, any books. It was again a challenge. There was no certain book that you could look into and you are fine. I studied many books but then I found out that this is American ethics which is basically different from the Canadian system. There is a real problem. This it the Canadian approach and this is the American approach. You have [to] know. For me now I am okay and I am well oriented after many years but in the beginning it was really hard (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

> I asked and again I went to the library in B.C. at the University of British Columbia and I was struggling to find resources for ethics issues. It just by chance I knew that it is not in the regular medical library. There is nothing there. It is all under law in the legal section. I went there and she [the librarian] said you can't get any of the resources out because you are not a student. So you are allowed to study here for two hours and we can renew that but you cannot take any books out. Again I had to drive more than one hour from my home to the U.B.C. It was again a challenge. The gas, parking. I mean it was a challenge. Every single day was a challenge. You have to pay either a money issues or a time issue or a chance issue (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

Another challenge stems from that fact that some issues do not exist in immigrant professionals' home countries at all. Having to deal with them now in the Canadian system can cause difficulties. Sylvia talked about never having had to deal with insurance issues as a physician back home, and was therefore confused sometimes as to how she should handle them here in Canada:

> Like insurance, we don't have insurance in Iraq. So I'm not familiar with how to deal with, you know, insurance company, and legal aspects that the patient has... That was one of the questions in, it was for me in part two, like, the female she is asking me not to release the medical information for the insurance company. And at that point I was confused, because if she is a client, they should have authority, you know, to get access to her records. So it's like, a little confusing for us because we are not familiar with ... (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

Work-related paperwork is another issue in which Sylvia experienced cultural challenges because of the different ways it is done here. Interestingly, when she consulted a local nurse for assistance, it caused some puzzlement on the part of the nurse. For the nurse, Sylvia was a physician and is thus (even in training) expected to be fully knowledgeable of her duties. From Sylvia's perspective, the nurse was a cultural insider, who therefore a legitimate expert with whom she could consult on paperwork matters:

> First when I went to clinical training and I was asking the nursing. And even that was a challenge. "You are a doctor you are supposed to know these things." Okay I was fine. People sometimes they don't feel fine and when you ask. A physician will ask a nurse what is this paper all about?! But for me it was fine. "Okay I didn't work with that [paperwork], what is wrong?! Just show me what it is all about and the paper work and the files." Some of the nurses there they cannot tolerate even a single question (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

***Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) Opportunities and Mentors***

Under the language socialization theory, when adult immigrants learn a new language, the conditions needed for learning may not be as preferable as those of when they are children learning their first language. As discussed in Chapter 2, Cook-Gumperz

(1982) noted the adult immigrants may not have access to be involved in all kinds of social interactions with expert language speakers, which are necessary for acquiring both the language and the shared knowledge and experience. According to Cook-Gumperz (1982):

> ...here the discussion of how shared knowledge and experience is created in interaction returns us to... L1 acquisition. As already noted, the conditions under which L1 acquisition takes place are in marked contrast to the conditions under which South Asian workers are expected to develop a second language (p. 246).

According to Communities of Practice Theory, novice members also need to engage in the shared practices of the target Communities of Practice (COP). Immigrant professionals, who are both English language learners, and novice members of their target professional COP need to be exposed to shared practises so that they can re-socialize themselves into both the new language and the locally appropriate ways of performing in their professions. This engagement, as discussed in the theory chapter, is framed as *Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP).* Similar to the issue of unfavourable language learning conditions for adult immigrant learners (Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Norton, 1995, 2000), my study shows immigrant professionals have challenges gaining access to LPP opportunities where they can be exposed, with the assistance of mentors, to the shared practices in their target professional COP.

Some of my participants sought opportunities to be involved in their target profession. Finding such opportunities on their own proved very difficult. For instance, Hammed said:

> It doesn't matter what kind of job or what position or it didn't matter...Even I suggested to them that I don't even care about wage or the situation or the office if it is with a lot of people. I would even start as a junior and you can start using my knowledge and experience. Even if you don't have any openings I can work with you until I get the necessary experience so you can be satisfied with my

> performance and then I could get a job. But no one accepted that. And that is what happened...I sent my resume, I called many companies. I talked about my history, that I wanted to talk to them in a coffee shop and talk about a position not just for employment but just to talk to them To introduce myself and get some advice from them. They promise me. But you hardly ever get the action. Despite many of them promise to do that very soon I never get any calls from them and despite my calls I didn't hear from them. Also I waited for the calls. "Very soon" they would say. There again, I was not successful (Hammed interview I, November 3, 2005).

Sylvia also commented on this challenge. First, it took her more than two years to discover that opportunities exist to help IMGs (International Medical Graduates) who have finished certain MCC (Medical Council of Canada) exams get practical experience in a Canadian hospital or a clinic where they can observe and participate in some work, under the supervision of a practising physician:

> But I haven't heard about the clinical training until it was about, I think, more than two years I was in Vancouver. Until I knew about there is something like this. I never heard about it. So I guess the time, the time is challenging, and if you don't know, you're going to miss that opportunity (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

But that is not the only challenge. After she found out about this opportunity, she realized that it was also hard to locate a practising physician who would be willing to work as a mentor or sponsor:

> ...this is going on in B.C. They call it an Educational License. It is clinical training that gives the people who did the exam to go to the hospital and observe. Of course under supervision of a specialist, people who are in the system. They are wiling to observe you. It is not that easy to find one. Because they are busy they have so many things but I was lucky I found you know...You have to do it by yourself. Go to hospitals. You know, just find a list of phone numbers and phone the people. Leave messages. You are lucky if you get any reply. Just to see that there is someone who is willing to help you it is really great and there are not so many (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

As difficult as it may be, participants also showed an awareness of how important it is to get opportunities to work with expert mentors. For instance, Sylvia discussed how, as a trainee in a Canadian hospital, she can actually be a part of what is going on there.

She can be in contact with real Canadian doctors on a daily basis and observe how they treat and interact with patients, learn to deal with real clinical scenarios in the hospital, and familiarize herself with the hospital systems and paperwork. Perhaps more importantly, this opportunity helped give her a much-needed confidence boost by making her feel like a doctor again:

> That was really helpful because it would allow you to be in a hospital. To deal with the patient directly and the supervisor will allow you to take history, examine and you would be yourself again. You would feel that you are a physician again. You can do it. It gives you that much confidence and more relaxed and be familiar with the patient. You will meet different kinds of people. Different levels of education. How to deal with each one. The area that maybe you are not familiar with. In my culture we don't ask about sexual history or drinking or alcohol that is just not allowed so here so will be familiar just with the system. Just how far you can go with your patient. All these actually and this is a real clinical scenario. You are then in a hospital. You can look here and you can see what is going on in the emergency. If you would be allowed to just have a look and see what is going on... [And] it would give me a chance to deal with the paperwork to deal with the system and to find out how the system is working (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).

> Like when you're in the system, and you're in contact on a daily basis with cases, it's a huge difference, like you are going to face it, and you are going to, you know, see how the doctor would manage the case, and the ethical dilemma, you know, there is. There is. On an everyday basis, there is a case where you think it's an ethical, issue and it is a good learning experience (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

# Chapter Six

## Professional Language (Re)socialization Provided in Enhanced Language Training Programs

In this section I discuss the kind of professional language socialization help provided in the three Enhanced Language Training (ELT) programs. My understanding of this topic and the forthcoming discussion[12] comes from my interviews with the three program instructors, three program course outlines, parts of some programs' actual course materials (provided by the instructors), and information about the programs available on the internet.[13]

I will first briefly describe each of the three programs. Then I will discuss the contents of each program and the help each provides regarding professional re-socialization in three general categories: (a) information about re-entry and the target professional field, (b) communication and different *practices* in the target profession in Canada, and (c) professional job preparation. Following that is a discussion on the different ways in which all three programs facilitate legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) opportunities in the target COPs for the immigrant professionals.[14] Information from each individual program pertaining to the above mentioned categories will be separately discussed in order (figure 5).

[12] The discussion in this section does not attempt to analyze or evaluate the three programs, but rather provides some information about the assistance provided to my participants to help the reader to better understand the experiences of my participants in the programs. All the information presented in this section is *my own interpretation* of the data available to me at the time of my data collection, and does not include any direct observational data. The reason for this study design will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8.
[13] This section is not for the purpose of comparing the three programs.
[14] All three programs have evolving and dynamic contents to varying degrees, adjusted according to needs and characteristics of each group of students.

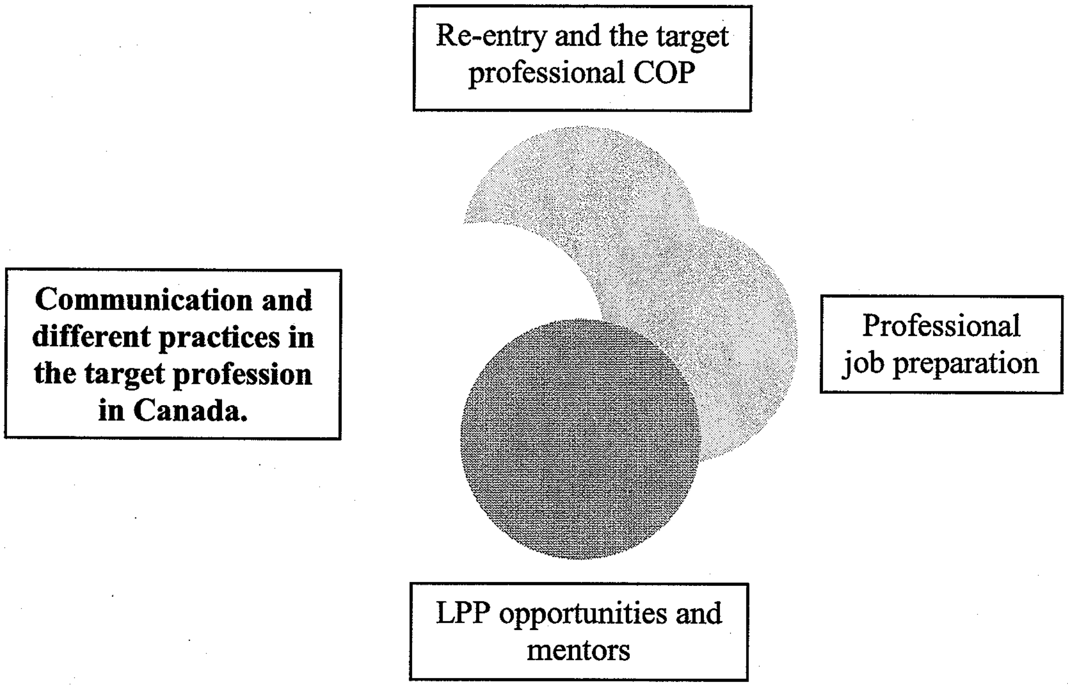


*Figure 5.* Professional Language Re-socialization Categories

***General Information about the Three ELT Programs***

<u>ELT Engineering</u> is a twenty-week part-time program consisting of seven classroom hours per week. This program helps internationally educated engineers to improve their field-specific language and socio-cultural knowledge and skills, to prepare for re-entry into the field of engineering or further academic upgrading in Canada. Engineering is a regulated profession. The provincial regulatory body for engineering is called APEGM (the Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of Manitoba).

<u>ELT Medicine</u> is a 300-hour, part-time program designed to help internationally educated doctors in the process of qualification recognition and medical licensure in Manitoba. The licensure process, MLPIMG (the Medical Licensure Program for International Medical Graduates), is Manitoba's provincial licensure program, established to meet the challenge in the area of limited openings for internationally educated medical doctors. Upon completion, the IMGs (International Medial Graduates) will be given

conditional medical registration to practice as family physicians within the province. The assessment process for MLPIMG is called CAPE (the Clinicians Assessment and Professional Enhancement). The ELT Medicine program exists to meet the IMGs communication and culture needs for the purpose of the corresponding part of the CAPE assessment and for actually practicing in the future[15]

ELT Banking was initiated in collaboration with Manitoba Labour and Immigration and certain bank employers. It is designed to bridge the gap for immigrant banking professionals between the communication and culture skills they possess and those needed to work in the involved Canadian bank as a teller. Because of the active involvement from the employers' side, the program also includes a paid internship component for participants. After the initial five-week, full-time bridging session on the communication and culture of working in a Canadian bank (as a teller), the students will train with one of the involved banks as tellers for three months.

***Professional Language (Re)socialization Provided by the ELT Programs***

***Re-entry and the target professional COP.*** The bridging assistance discussed in this section and provided by the three ELT programs ranges from information on how to *re-enter* the target community of practice, to background information related to the target community of practice itself. Each program has its own focus, depending on the characteristics of the individual area for which it was designed to serve.

ELT Engineering Jill, the instructor of the program, talked about using the resource book *A Resource Guide for Internationally-Educated Engineer: Information to*

[15] This part of CAPE assessment is a Clinical Comprehensive Encounter/CCE using standardized patients, which is similar to : MCCQE (Medical Council of Canada Qualification Examination) part II, where standardized patients (trained acting patients as opposed to actual patients) are used to test candidates' medical treating patients' skills, communication, attitudes, ethical awareness, etc. in Canadian contexts.

*help you plan an engineering or engineering-related career in Manitoba* (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Settlement and Labour Market Services Branch, 2004). Throughout the course, she goes though the book with the students, explaining the steps needed to go though the licensing process through the APEGM and become a professional engineer (P. Eng.). She also explores together with them the various possible routes they could take to re-enter the engineering field, either with or without the license. In the interview, Jill mentioned:

> Because there are some steps... there are many ways to work as an engineer in your field. One way is to become certified as a professional engineer, or registered as a professional engineer. And that means going through the professional association. Lots of engineers work as engineers without that stamp, without that registration. So we explore different ways that they can work, up to the level they've been trained to work at, not have to start at the beginning, and either work slowly at getting their registration with the association, or go around that and not have to get it at all. So we explore the various ways of that (ELT Engineering Instructor, December 7, 2005).

In addition to clarifying the various re-entry options available to internationally trained engineers, Jill also uses the book to introduce some of the services available in the Province of Manitoba for immigrant engineers' re-entry. For instance, a unique IEEQ (Internationally Educated Engineers Qualification Pilot Program[16]), starting at the end of 2003, was designed to help with the qualification recognition process in cooperation with the regulatory body APEGM and the University of Manitoba Faculty of Engineering. Instead of preparing and taking the required exams assigned by APEGM after their assessment, internationally educated engineers can take the equivalent full-time university courses for eight months. Following that, they will be given placement opportunities to work for a local engineering company for four months as part of the

---

[16] More information about this program can be found in the resource book: "A resource guide for internationally-educated engineers: Information to help you plan an engineering or engineering-related career in Manitoba", or the University of Manitoba website.

engineering work experiences required for the P. Eng (Professional Engineer) license. At the same time, Jill brought in an immigrant guest speaker who had successfully gone though the re-entry process to describe to the class the path taken.

*ELT Medicine* This program was initiated to bridge the medical communication and culture gap for the MLPIMG licensure program and the CAPE assessment process. This program provides information about the CAPE process, healthcare system knowledge, and crucial issues that IMGs should be aware of in order to become a practising physician in the Province of Manitoba. The instructor of this program also invited guest speakers to cover issues like the principle of "patient-centred medical practice", and "the CAPE process, Aboriginal history and health, women's health, public health, the role of nurses in Manitoba, persons with disabilities, domestic violence and child abuse, and working with interpreters"(ELT Medicine Course outline), and more.

*ELT Banking* Because the specific purpose of the program is to prepare immigrant professionals to work in a Canadian bank as a teller, and also because the field itself is not regulated, help in this section mainly focuses on the banking system of the involved banks. The instructors talked about principles, policies, and procedures in the involved banks. She brought to the class the actual bank pamphlets and invited guest speakers from the bank into the class. At the same time, the students can access the internal networks of the involved banks, where they can access and read information (except client data) all about the above mentioned topics and activities going on in the banks.

***Communication and different practices in the target profession in Canada.*** This category is naturally the primary focus of each ELT program. All three programs not only incorporate components that deal with field-specific English communication skills, they also cover the socio-cultural knowledge and skills needed to practice in an immigrant professional's targeted professional COP in Canada.

*ELT engineering* The focus of this program is to help internationally educated engineers to improve their field-specific English language and socio-cultural knowledge and skills needed to successfully function in a Canadian professional work and academic environment. As mentioned by the instructor:

> The socio-cultural piece is a huge difference. We focus a lot of our time on that, and uh, our connecting with the profession … we're more than just the grammar and the listening and the speaking components of language. It's the whole social and cultural aspect (ELT Engineering Instructor interview, December 7, 2005).

The two core areas in this section are: (a) language skills and the intercultural knowledge and skills, and (b) global communication competence (ELT Engineering Instructor interview, December 7, 2005). She also mentioned a session with a different focus, tailored to the different individual needs of the students and their specific areas in engineering. My understanding of the course contents comes only from my interview with the instructor and the program brochure.

Some examples the instructor mentioned regarding the program's language and intercultural components include analyzing cases on workplace communication or culture (not necessarily specific to engineering), having the students determine what went wrong in terms of communication and what could have been done differently to avoid it, and showing engineering videos that demonstrate the workplace communication styles of professional engineers. The program also includes activities aimed at helping to improve listening, speaking, interaction, and behavioural skills needed in the workplace, (i.e. coming to the point quickly, demonstrating being critical and creative, being an active listener, etc.) improving students' engineering related reading and writing, and using newspaper articles to make students aware of socially significant issues and topics, which also serves the purpose of providing students the basis for common ground when having a social conversation in the workplace.

Global communication skills, the second core area of the program, covers the kind of standardized skills needed to work as an engineer in North America. The following excerpt from the instructor demonstrates this component of the program:

> The global communication skills, they also involve intercultural competence and language, but they would be things that would be standard in a profession, globally. So if a particular style of writing, for writing technical reports is what is standard in north America, wherever you work as an engineer, this kind of report is what is expected of you: this kind of writing style, this kind of layout. So that would be a global standard. Global communication skills could also involve, presentation skills, giving a PowerPoint presentation or giving a technical analysis of something. So different kinds of presentation skills. So we focus on workplace skills, or sector specific kinds of skills in the engineering sector (ELT Engineering Instructor interview, December 7, 2005).

<u>*ELT Medicine*</u> The program shifted its focus from language support at the very beginning to the socio-cultural aspects that direct and guide the medical communication needed for practising as a doctor in Canada, specifically in Manitoba. A demonstration of the kind of support provided can be seen in this simple example from the instructor of the program of having to learn the accepted way of delivering news related to death to the patient: "...because you are dealing with doctor/patient and laws and ethics. Having to tell people that you are dying. There is so much beyond language." (ELT Medicine Instructor interview, October 25, 2005). Jessica, the instructor, mentioned that in some cultures, doctors do not deliver bad news to the patient at all, but rather to the patient's

family members, as it is considered more humane and appropriate. But in Canada, local law binds the proper practice. It is the patient's right to know the truth. "But there are also ways to find out whether that person does want to know or not. Then the communication skills to tell the patient delicately" (ELT Medicine Instructor interview, October 25, 2005).

Another example has to do with family violence, which in some cultures does not carry the strong social stigma it does here in Canada. Therefore, when caring for patients, the physician is required to possess not only a high level of linguistic skill, but also socio-cultural understandings and communicative skills. Her class targets issues such as these in order to bridge the gap between IMGs skills and experiences and that which they require to function well as physicians in Canada.

According to our interview and the course materials provided to me, contents of the program relevant to this section can be arranged in the following two general categories:

(1) Effective interviewing and medical communication, and

(2) Medical ethics (course outline, curriculum resources[17], provided by the instructor)

In the component of the course dealing with medical interviews and communication, the goal is to familiarize IMGs with the patient-centred principle and the actual practices related to communicating with patients. The topics covered include: "Review of history taking, the patient-centred approach, interpersonal skills, therapeutic knowledge, general English, note taking and listening practice, and employing the

[17] The curriculum resource book for ELT Medicine program is written by the instructor and is in the process of being published. Due to guidelines of research ethics, I do not quote the actual name in this study, but rather refer to it as "curriculum resource."

medical record: writing SOAP (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan) notes" (ELT Medicine program course outline, provided by the instructor).

In the Medical Ethics component of the course, the instructor uses the CLEO document (Objectives of the Considerations of the Legal, Ethical and Organizational aspects of the Practice of Medicine), which is produced by the MCC (Medical Council of Canada) regarding the ethical issues in the areas above IMGs need to be aware of. The instructor helps the students understand the vocabulary, terms and concepts so that they can gain insights into making ethical decisions. She applied various kinds of activities to help students familiarize with this document, for instance: she uses OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Exams) ethics training videos depicting standardized patient scenarios with the above mentioned issues. And she also brought in a practising physician/ethicist as guest speaker addressing these issues using clinical cases.

At the same time, the instructor brings in trained, standardized patients to further familiarize the students with what they've learned in the two categories by actually interviewing and caring for patients. The invited standardized patients are the same as those used by Canadian medical students to train in the above mentioned skills.

*ELT Banking* This program is to help immigrant professionals in banking to successfully function in a Canadian bank as a teller. The program mainly aims to fill the gaps between the skills immigrant professionals arrive with and what they require to work as a teller, but by doing so, the program can also help to build a basic understanding of the Canadian banking system and the socio-cultural skills needed to work in a Canadian banking environment. And, considering the paid internship component of the program, it is like opening the first door for immigrant banking professionals who want to re-enter this field in Canada. The instructor spoke about the program in this regard:

> This program is like a bridge so that they [immigrant professionals] don't have to suffer...The bar is there. What you have to do to be a [teller] is there. Any group that is not there, the job of [everybody involved in this program] is to help them [to] get there so they can be successful. There has to be a certain standard and it has to be there so the [program] wants to give them what they need to bring them up to the bar. The [program] will prepare them (ELT Banking Instructor interview, December 2, 2005).

She also, however, emphasized that her program was not intended to change people, rather it is to provide the things that immigrant professionals need to be aware of if they want to be successful working in a Canadian banking environment:

> I don't want to change you I just want to let you know how we do things in Canada and then you decide or you work on them what you want to work at. Who you are is great and that is why you are in the program but you will experience difficulty if you don't know things in the workplace (ELT Banking Instructor interview, December 2, 2005).

More specifically, the topics covered in the first five weeks of pre-training on communication and culture to be a teller includes four main topics. The first topic involves the mathematical aspects of being a teller and the expected ways of handing money and financial documents. The second topic is about the oral communication knowledge and skills needed in a banking setting, such as appropriately greeting customers, explaining banking procedures and services, and asking questions and clarifications. The third topic is about the social aspect of working in a Canadian bank environment, such as social small talk, the principle of team work, and cultural diversity. The last topic covered includes the many important aspects and issues of being a teller, such as risk management, dealing with reporting, different kinds of forms and documents, and navigating the bank's data base (ELT Banking Instructor interview, December 2, 2005; ELT Banking course notes).

In addition to providing re-socialization assistance for immigrant professionals so that they can appropriate their practices and make full use of their skills in the Canadian banking context, Ellen mentioned that the involved banks also take initiative to educate from the other direction. The involved banks recognized that there is the need to learn from their end as well so that their own workforce can be more sensitive and aware of the challenges immigrant professionals face, and organized intercultural training workshops for their own employees:

> The [involved banks] are working on that...They recognize that they also have a lot of learning to do. I have just been so impressed when they can say that "we too are learning" and they have taken advantage of some cultural training and for their management. I don't know if they have gone from branch to branch but they certainly have started with the supervisors and the mangers so they will be more open and educated about this [ELT Banking] program and about the [immigrant professionals'] barriers and how they can be helpful and all that. So I think that is so pro active. Right from the beginning, I think during or just after the very first program I think [these banks] already had cultural training workshops for their management to try and prepare their people for the fact that it is going to be a more diverse workplace (ELT Banking Instructor interview, December 2, 2005).

She also mentioned the attitudes of the banks when sensitive issues arise in the workplace:

> If issues come up, they don't attack their workforce and they don't defend them. They say I am really sorry this happened and we are still learning. We are trying to educate our workforce as well as train you. Stuff like that. It is so unusual, like you have people just saying "well this is the way that it is. Just accept it." "She didn't mean anything." Denying the person's feeling or defending. Or "I am going to talk to this person right now, she can't say those things." It isn't fair because that person doesn't know. It is not that there are that many bad people in the world it is just that people don't know. That is what I have found anyway. People who haven't learned something, but they know that the workforce has some growing to do too (ELT Banking Instructor interview, December 2, 2005).

***Professional job preparation.*** This section presents the professional job preparation components in each of the programs in my study. All three programs deliver some form of assistance with job searching skills in Canada, resume writing and job interviews, though in varying proportions.

ELT Engineering This instructor of this program discusses important job searching skills in class, while at the same time requires the students to attend programs or workshops given by immigrant service providers. Students can then work with councillors to develop resumes and skills for interviews. She also helps students to work on the linguistic skills for interviews, for instance, describing previous work experiences and technical skills at a professional level without being overly technical, and leaving a good impression of one's English with employers. Finally, she discusses the socio-cultural expectations of interviews by holding discussion sessions with students about interviews they went through and analyzing together what might have gone wrong along with what the employers' expectations are so that they could learn from the past mistakes and improve.

Jill also brought to the classroom the employer's side of the story, inviting an employer to talk about his experiences with hiring and working with immigrant engineers. His story provided the newcomers in the class with a sense of what aspects of English use can be a turn-off for employers, such as an accent on the phone, mistakes in the resume, and the valued qualities (e.g. persistence, a sense of humour) that employers are looking for.

ELT Medicine This program also includes a job preparation component, presented to students in a section called "Professional Preparation" (ELT Medicine course outline).

It includes information on resume and C.V. preparation, interview preparation and applying for jobs. The instructor spends time with the students to help them work on their resumes, cover letters, and C.V.'s to make them appropriate by Canadian standards.

ELT Banking This program's instructor invited an expert on interviews to come to the class as guest speaker for the students' benefit. Job preparation skills, however, are not a specific focus of this program. Its participants have already successfully made it through the program's selection process, for which they would have already participated in several interviews. Furthermore, the purpose of the program is to prepare them to work for the involved banks, though employment is not necessarily guaranteed upon completion of both sessions of the program due to the unpredictability of job openings.

***Legitimate peripheral participation and mentors.*** Flowerdew (2000) considers graduate education as facilitation of young scholars' LPP in their targeted fields. He listed many kinds of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) opportunities graduate students have while in their programs apart from the formal learning in the classroom, for instance "working as members of research teams, interacting with their academic supervisors (who may act as mentors), submitting papers for publication, and communicating with journal editors and reviewers" (p. 131). Similarly, one way or another, the three ELT programs all try to facilitate LPP opportunities for immigrant professionals trying to re-enter their targeted fields.

ELT Engineering The instructor made use of real examples to show students the value and methods of seeking out and obtaining opportunities to participate in the activities of their Canadian peers in the same fields. She demonstrated her point by describing the experience of an immigrant engineer in the field of factory safety. This novice member found a Canadian association in his field, went to their meetings, and met many engineers who were also involved in this area. One of those people, a Canadian engineer whom he had befriended, offered to go into business together with him:

> I encourage them. I tell them the story of the safety guy, and I say, " if there's a chapter association or an organization that's related to your field, search it out, GOOGLE it, look in up in the phone book, ask people, join it as an associate member, Ask if you can come to a meeting or go to one of their workshops as an observer, become involved. And when you're there, speak English. Ask people questions. Even if you already know the answer. Just so that you are having a conversation." I encourage the students to find ways to practice being in their profession in English as much as possible (ELT Engineering Instructor interview, December 7, 2005).

At the same time, the instructor also teaches strategies of how to learn by participating in the activities once the students found them:

> The whole culture of that particular aspect of the profession of engineering. So let's go with that safety guy again. How do safety guys interact with each other? What are the buzz words? What's the technical language they use? Are they realized bunch of guys that just go out for a beer all the time? Or are they very professional, wearing suits and talking in very professional ways? What is the culture of this profession? Observe, observe, observe, what can you learn about this? But you can't observe then make judgments unless you know how to observe, so that's what I teach in my class, is how to observe. How to notice what they're doing, how are they dressed, what kind of phrases are they using? (ELT Engineering Instructor interview, December 7, 2005).

Furthermore, the program collaborates with a "mentoring program"[18] and encourages the students to join it. The mentoring program will help students to pair up with a Canadian engineer in fields related to their own from whom they can obtain guidance and assistance. At the end of the program, a networking event is held to which government sponsors for the program and local employers are invited.

<u>ELT Medicine</u> The instructor brings to the class professional insiders as mentors to talk about crucial issues in areas like medical communication, culture, ethics, and

---

[18] This mentoring program is provided though an immigrant service agency in Manitoba.

legalities of which practising physicians should be aware. In addition, as an important part of the program, students are given the opportunities to practice and polish their knowledge of treating patients with the same standardized/trained patients used by universities to train local medical students:[19]

> I bring in standard patients into my course, who are fake patients. Who act real. So we get everything. People who are not compliant... They will complain about having headaches and the doctor will discover that the patient is not taking the medicine that he gave the week before. And we deal with domestic violence. We have to deal with people that are dying. We have to deal with psychiatric cases. Everything. So these are patients trained by the University, that the University [medical] students get as well...[and the ways to interact with patients]... just taking the time to elicit what the patient has to say as opposed to "do you have a sore throat" "do you have diarrhea?" how about nausea. Instead of the doing the list thing. Can you tell me more. So just those kinds of attitudinal things. Bringing them down to a bilateral relationship (ELT Medicine Instructor interview, October 25, 2005).

*ELT banking* ELT banking brings the facilitation of LPP opportunities to another level because of the active collaboration on the part of the involved banks. First of all, the students have exposure to as many aspects of being a Canadian bank teller as possible during the period of pre-training, including guest speakers from the bank, access to the bank's internal network and simulated data base for practising money transaction, and even opportunities to do job-shadowing onsite (after signing the confidentiality agreement). Secondly, the instructor herself is a professional insider with more than ten years' experience as a teller, who can act as a mentor to her students. Finally, the students (after the final selection) are given actual internships in the bank for three months as the second component of the program, in which bank employees are assigned to each student as mentors.

[19] This is also to help students with this kind of assessment- like: MCCQE (Medical Council of Canada Qualification Examination) part II and this part in CAPE (a Clinical Comprehensive Encounter/CCE suing standardized patients), where standardized patients (trained actors as opposed to actual patients) are used to test a candidate's treatment skills, communication, attitudes, ethical awareness, etc. in Canadian contexts.

At the beginning of their internship with the bank, each student will be assigned to a supervisor who works with the new teller as a mentor.[20] First, the new teller engages in job shadowing to watch their mentors work and to ask questions. Then they begin serving customers themselves at a wicket of their own, while the mentor stands right beside them to provide help when needed until they are ready to be on their own:

> … one person would be assigned to be like a resource for that [new] person…First they stand beside the [mentors] and watch them work and ask questions, do pieces of it. And then they are given a wicket but [the mentor] stands beside you and works with you so you don't make any mistakes…They do that until they feel comfortable until the new [tellers] are ready to be on their own. But they should never really be on their own (ELT Banking Instructor interview, December 2, 2005).

In summary, the three ELT programs each provided some form of assistance with the areas of re-entry identified by my six participants as challenging in terms of communication and culture: how to enter the system, professional job market preparation, and different practices in the target COP. The three programs also tried to facilitate LPP opportunities for students in one way or another.

---

[20] The current one-on-one arrangement evolved from the first group where different mentors take turns to help the immigrant student. Starting from the second group, each student gets one mentor only. The reason was to avoid too many different versions of doing things, which can cause confusion for novice members who should just focus on one way to start with.

# Chapter Seven

## Improvements on Communication and Culture for Re-entry Purposes

In this chapter I will discuss the comments of my participants regarding their improvement and their understanding of the role of the ELT programs in their re-entry process. Data will be their own comments and what happened in their re-entry after finishing ELT programs.

*Table 6.* Current Re-entry Progress and Employment Situation

| | **Engineering** | | **Medicine** | | **Banking** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ling | Hammed | Anita | Sylvia | Paulo | Bo |
| Began ELT prog. | Fall 2004 | Spring 2005 | Sept 2004 | Sept 2004 | Feb. 2005 | Oct 2004 |
| Re-entry Status | Pursuing alternative re-entry (non-license) in administration, relevant or not | Attending Cred. RecogProg. (IEEQ) Working towards P.Eng registration with APEGM | Completed CAPE assessment, receiving offers from rural health authorities | Completed CAPE assessment, found residency sponsor in rural area, began residency | Back in system | Back in system |
| Employment Situation | Finishing contract coordinating engineering project, temporary office assistant | Full-time student | Research Assistant | Contracted with a regional health authority to do residency | Bank Teller | Bank teller, Personal Account Officer. / Customer Service Officer |
| Career Plan | Wants office / administration position, any sector | Get P.Eng license, become registered Engineer | Become a family physician or specialist. | Family Physician | Commercial Sector in a bank | Commercial Sector in a bank |

### *Roles and Impacts of ELT on the IP in Their Re-entry*

<u>*Engineering*</u> After Ling completed the ELT Engineering program, she found a contract position requiring her to set up some kind of engineering system for a company. While she was not personally handling the technical engineering-related portion of the project, she did oversee it as the project coordinator. At the time of our interviews, she was nearing the end of her contract, and she was also doing some office assistance work for the company. In our last conversation she mentioned that she no longer wants to

pursue her technical engineering jobs in the future, but would rather look for work of the same nature as her current employment, such as the coordinator of other kinds of engineering projects, or office or administrative assistant in fields related or not to engineering. For that reason, she would like to improve her English communication and interaction skills in business settings even more.

She considered the ELT program helpful. In her example, she made good use of many of the writing skills she learned during the program at her current employment, for which she constantly needs to write reports to her superiors:

> In my current job, I need to source new equipment or products and justify my decisions in comprehensive reports to my boss. In my report I can summarize all important elements in a concise way, and only show my boss more detailed information if needed. This skill I learned by practising in the ELT program. I also use it in my resume writing too, to summarize and focus only on important skills, thus making it more interesting and easy for employers to read, and more likely for me to get interview opportunities (Ling interview II, October 13, 2005).

Another thing she mentioned about the benefits of taking the ELT Engineering program was the general attitude of the program. To contrast the attitude of an immigrant employment counsellor she had met prior to enrolling in the program, Ling described her impression as, "since you don't have a job, no matter what I can find you, you should be satisfied and happy" (Ling interview II, October 13, 2005). In the ELT programs, the attitudes she experienced were more like, "we will do what we can to help you go back to your original position. You have the technical skills. Let's work on your English language and help you understand the working culture here so that you can do it again, what you are good at" (Ling interview II, October 13, 2005). This type of support really encouraged her, especially after having struggled for so long.

Hammed, after completing the ELT Engineering program, applied to and was accepted by the IEEQ program. He has since begun the process of getting his professional engineering license (P. Eng) from APEGM. At the time of our interviews, he was in the first part of the program, which consisted of eight months of full-time university study. Following that, the program will assist him to find a local engineering company for which to work for four months. He discussed how the ELT program helped him with building the social network he needed, and how he considers the whole class an important network. Through conversation, everybody gets to learn lessons from each other's re-entry path, including both the challenges and success stories. The program also helped him to determine the appropriate steps he should take next (i.e. to take the IEEQ program) in his pursuit of becoming a licensed professional engineer in Canada:

> ...the environment is such that you get that kind of information [on re-entry]. When you see the other participants [in this program]. Each of us have a story. Each of us are our own experiences or successes or failures. So each time they talk about that you learn something, how to succeed, where did he go...A few of us [my classmates in the class] got jobs in their own profession which was an encouragement for me. Actually I saw that maybe I can get a job so I should not be frustrated that much...everyone themselves have something to tell you about why they were rejected or how they were not accepted. So I was getting some ideas on how to make the push for some companies. It was some good points. If you put those points together it makes a bridge for you (Hammed interview I, November 3, 2005).

> She [the ELT instructor] talks to you for example about an organization in Manitoba that helps new immigrants in terms of the profession, this IEEQ program. I didn't know about it but I learned about this program (IEEQ) in this course (ELT Engineering). I had looked at it (IEEQ) earlier but I didn't have any idea. In that course (ELT Engineering) I got a clear idea of the program (IEEQ) and that is why I joined that program (IEEQ) now. I spend a good time in that class (Hammed interview II, November 10, 2005).

Finally, the ELT Engineering program connected him with the mentoring program, with which he signed up and was matched with a Canadian engineer in his field. Hammed considered this an import which is considered important as part of his re-entry path. "I attended that and I got a mentor…so that was another important step for me" (Hammed interview II, November 10, 2005).

*Medicine* Since the ELT Medicine program, Anita has completed the CAPE assessment and has received many offers from rural areas to act as her sponsor. She is very interested in one particular position, and is considering accepting the offer.

She thinks the program improved her abilities to communicate with patients in English. The program gave her the opportunity to practice interacting with standardized patients in Canadian contexts using English. Not only did the program activities help develop various aspects of communication and cultural knowledge as a local physician, but also helped her with assessments like MCCQE part II and CAPE:

> Well before doing that course…it give me the possibility of being with patients. To deal with patients because at the end of the course we had a lot of patients. Before that, I had never been in an interview in English with patients for that. I wanted to improve my English. I didn't know how I was going to manage in my interviews with patients (Anita interview I, November 21, 2005).

> [The program helped to] improve how you manage a conversation with a patient, an interview. And for me it was excellent to know how. It is completely different from that in Argentina. In Argentina you have to earn money. You don't have enough time with each patient. You don't have all that time like Jessica said to ask. Sometimes when a patient came and was crying. Well in Argentina I would ask the patient if something was wrong yes, and I had to [just treat the] burn and left …here we had to ask the patient what was wrong and tried to understand that patient. That for me was completely different (Anita interview I, November 21, 2005).

Anita mentioned that she considers the ethical and legal components of the program very valuable. In addition, she appreciated the opportunity to meet with other IMGs in similar situations as her own:

> That course it was really for… to [help] the second exam for the qualifying [exam part] II [MCCQE part II]. I never thought to take it [the exam] before the

> residency; because you can do it during the residency. I thought it was wise to be in contact with doctors. To be with Immigrant Doctor. Yes...to be talking and speaking [that was what I wanted to improve]. And I read about that they were going to teach us about Canadian interview and Canadian all the legal parts and ethical parts. Well all the ethical part it was excellent, and also to do an [medical] interview [with patients] (Anita interview I, November 21, 2005).

Sylvia, after taking the ELT program, has also completed the CAPE assessment and has now en route to getting her enhanced training (residency). She received a sponsorship offer from a rural health authority, with which she signed a contract for two years. Following her residency, she will work as a physician in that region.

Sylvia had a lot to discuss about the help she received from the ELT Medicine program. Unlike most of her classmates in the program, she had already completed the MCCQE part II twice, which is similar to the part of the CAPE assessment in which the treatment abilities, communication skills, attitudes, and ethical awareness of IMGs are tested in Canadian contexts. The first time she failed the exam because she treated a patient in a way inappropriate by standards of Canadian practice. Instead of uncovering the young male patient's private area to his complaint, she performed the examination through his clothing. "You simply didn't know how far you can go" (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005). With the help of the ELT program, she was able to improve her skills and knowledge in the areas of medical communication, ethical and legal issues in Canada and the other crucial regional issues (e.g. Aboriginal issues):

> I told them [my classmates]: you guys are lucky. You have this communication class (ELT medicine) before you do the part two. (MCCQE part II) I went to the exam. I studied on my own and I remember it was really stressful and at the same time I didn't know what to do...Communication, being familiar with the system, it was very fortunate to hear. It is really helpful it is (Sylvia interview I, December 16, 2005).
>
> Overall, it was a very good experience. So communication wise, it was really useful. And it really helped us in the CAPE assessment. When we went through

> the CAPE assessment, it was more easy, I found it more easy and less stressful than it was in part two (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

> Structure kind of things about knowing the medical system, and how it works, and we had many speakers from different areas, [such as] about aboriginal people, and the kind of challenges that, you know, facing their medical care. All these issues were covered in the course. (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

She also discussed learning the locally appropriate ways of communicating with patients, which she was able to practice through interacting with standardized patients brought into the class:

> ...That's what we learned in Jessica's class. How to deal with things, in let's say a psychologically proper way. Dealing with a patient, whether the patient is angered, patient is satisfaction, or many aspects that we cover in the class, really. And some of the techniques that we are not familiar with (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

> It's the ways that we have to interact with the patient, like, in the Canadian system, you know. And the cases that we did in the class, like every week we had a standardized patient, and one of the candidates will interact and then we'll give feedback, and the patient will give us the feedback. I'll give you an example. Like sometimes, we validate the patient's feelings, like we can feel if he is upset or he is sad, But we don't know how to react at that point. That's what the class shows us, how to validate the patient's feelings, and how to interact in a proper way, at that point. It's just an example, you know. Because you might say "Oh, I understand how you're feeling.", and this way you are minimizing the actual feeling of the patient, while you didn't mean it, basically. It's just, you know, the way that you don't know the proper things to tell the patient at this point Again basically because of the language, language problem. If it's in my language I don't have problem with that, I know how to deal and I know how to tell the patient and how to interact (Sylvia interview II, January 23, 2006).

<u>Banking</u> Paulo, after finishing the two components of the ELT Banking program, was hired at one of the involved banks as a teller. At the time of our interviews, he was also taking additional English upgrading classes on the side. His career direction lies either in the commercial sector of the bank, or in assistance to administration or financial personnel in the business banking. For that reason, he needs to continue improving his English communication skills.

When discussing the help provided by the ELT Banking program, he mentioned learning the appropriate ways of performing as a teller in the involved banks, including dealing with cash (count out-loud in front the customers) and interacting with Canadian customers:

> Count the money. Don't ask personal things. What is polite and what is not polite. Like it is not polite to talk about the age. What more. It is not polite to talk about. It depends on the situation. You have to be careful not to offend someone or to respect someone's opinion. I think it is a good tendency. I am aware of that. I am aware of what is polite and what is not polite. Because you could be considered rude or do not have enough respect for somebody if you trespass over certain limits (Paulo interview III, December 23, 2005).

Paulo also commented on the helpfulness of the second part of the program, where he gets to work under the supervision of a mentor who is a more senior employee of the bank:

> ...everything is based on the system...because you have to do transactions on the system [the bank's computer system] and we have to do one transaction and ones are for information, loans, is more financial... But you have to learn a lot at the beginning it was a lot of stuff to learn and [my mentor] was so patient with me. He teach me a lot" (Paulo interview II, December 19, 2005).

Bo finished the two components of the ELT Banking program and was hired afterwards as a teller, again in one of the involved banks. He was promoted after only six months to do two positions at once: customer service officer, and personal account officer. At the time of our interview, he had been performing those duties for about one year. During that time, he was also in the process of obtaining his Chartered Financial Analyst designation, because he wanted to return to commercial banking, the sector in which he had worked in the past. He mentioned the ELT Banking program provided him with a basic understanding of the involved banks' workplace systems and culture:

> It gave me this basic understanding of how to work in a Canadian bank. Many things, like how to interact with customers, operate the computer system, the

> proper way to treat customers, how to greet them, all these things. They are very important to learn. When I just got here, I had no clue at all. It's very useful to learn and practise from the beginning (Bo interview I, December 14, 2005).

> What I learned in Ellen's [ELT Banking Instructor] class I pretty much used them all when I worked in the bank as a teller, both during the internship and my first employment as a teller there. Even since my promotion, doing the two jobs, many things are still relevant, like the way you interact and treat customers are still the same, only more complicated. I learnt a lot in her class, even some really small things, like how to address people. These are the most basic things, but for a newcomer, it could be a challenge (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

Bo also mentioned that for some of the abilities he required, the ELT Banking program provided him a basic foundation, upon which he could only build by himself through actual practice in the banking context:

> Another thing is "social small talk", I have to do that in all the jobs I have done here, it has been a challenge. I learned the idea in Ellen's class, and we practise it through role-play. But the topics can be so extensive: weather, houses, cars, pets, movies, anything. The class can't cover them all, for that you will have to work on yourself (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

He spoke highly of the paid work experience portion of the program provided by the involved banks, referring to it as the "breakthrough opportunity to get his foot in the door"(Bo interview II, January 14, 2006). It provided him the opportunity to work with the close supervision of a mentor standing right behind him, providing constant guidance and assistance. One area in which Bo noticed he could have been given more guidance was with correcting his English. He felt that his local colleagues were far too nice to correct his oral mistakes, which was something he really hoped they would do:

> I wanted them to correct my mistakes whenever. I truly did. It would be really helpful. The interesting thing is my Canadian colleagues are really nice and they consider doing that very rude. (laugh) when I started as a teller, my mentor gave me a lot of help in terms of banking operations and procedure, but only corrected me once on my English. She told me that instead of asking my customer "what do you want for today?" I should say "what would you like today?" (Bo interview II, January 14, 2006).

To compensate for this phenomenon, Bo paid particular attention to the ways in which observed his local colleagues behaved with customers, and tried to adopt their language and behaviours.

# Chapter Eight

## Final Discussion

### *Conclusion and Discussion*

With one exception, all six immigrant participants were well established professionals in their fields, at high level positions and with rich working experience of as much as ten years in their home countries. All possessed at least a bachelor degree in their respective fields. After arriving in Canada, none of them went back to their field immediately, and none to their old leveled positions. Re-entry is a very complicated process, and researchers from various disciplines have been identifying and exploring barriers in order to produce strategies and suggestions to make this process less complex. This study focused on developing a better understanding of one type of barrier: different *practices* of communication and culture. By conducting this study, my primary focus was to investigate how communication and culture may cause challenges for foreign-trained immigrant professionals in their re-entry into their targeted professional communities of practice (COP) here in Canada. At the same time, the study could also help to provide a picture of the kinds of language socialization efforts provided by the new type of higher-level, occupation specific language training, ELT, to help bridge the skills gaps of immigrant professionals for re-entry.

Guided by the theoretical framework of both Language Socialization and Communities of Practice (COP), this study explored and examined various aspects of the re-entry process for which communication and culture could cause challenges, and how. Immigrant professionals encounter challenges trying to re-enter their trained professional COP here in Canada because of the different *practices* - "ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, p. 464) which exist in the various aspects of re-entry. For immigrant professionals, the different *practices* thus include both using English as a second or additional language, and performing various tasks in a locally appropriate manner.

This study found that having to use English as an additional language for communication and professionally relevant cultural differences can block immigrant professionals from demonstrating and performing their actual professional qualities, abilities and skills. These challenges exist throughout an immigrant professional's re-entry process, from designing their initial re-entry plan or path, to preparing to enter the Canadian job market by putting together their resume and performing in job interviews, to participating appropriately and in the accepted ways of their targeted professions in Canada.

English communication abilities and a lack of understanding of the Canadian workplace culture can influence an immigrant professional's design of their re-entry path. For instance, most of my participants chose to first upgrade themselves by various means before starting their re-entry process. One participant, Paulo, even gave up a job opportunity requiring him to speak his native Spanish, as improving his English was a greater priority for him. A lack of understanding of the target professional field, its structure, and what is required to enter it can misguide immigrant professionals toward inaccurate perceptions, which can lead to poor re-entry path design. Such was the case for Ling, whose initial belief was that it would be impossible to re-enter the field of engineering in Canada, and Paulo, who applied for higher-level positions in his field immediately upon arrival.

The home countries of my participants have differing social, political, and economical ideologies and structures, and the way to enter the labor market can differ in terms of job searching, resume writing, job interviewing, and networking. In these respects, only through demonstrating the socio-culturally recognized ways and locally promoted values, or as Delpit (1988) put it *the culture of power*, can immigrant job seekers achieve favorable results. Unfortunately, the systems of access to the local Canadian labor market can be so different from those of an immigrant professional's home country, and hence they are unfamiliar with them. Those who are unable to demonstrate the locally recognized ways are left unequipped of the powerful tools that will allow them to convey their actual professional qualities and skills to win over potential employers.

Using English as a non-native language and having to adjust to the locally appropriate ways of their respective professions also cause challenges for immigrant professionals. Tasks involving spontaneous interactions in the Canadian workplace, such as talking on the telephone, attending meetings, and dealing with customers, patients, and colleagues were among the most mentioned language challenges. Performing job-related tasks in a locally accepted manner was also an often-mentioned challenge, exemplified most effectively by Sylvia's examination faux pas or the stress Bo experienced adjusting to his new roles in a Canadian bank.

In discussing the relationship between expert members and novices, Morita (2000) challenged the traditional understanding that the relationship was simple and apparent, finding it rather to be dynamic and under constant negotiation. Although the graduate students in the field of TESL in her study, both native and non-native English speakers, considered themselves novice members in the targeted TESL academic COP, they were also experienced professional teachers and thus presenters. By the same logic, the instructors were not always experts during class presentations. Interestingly, the complicated nature of expert/novice members was demonstrated in this project as well, only not in exactly the same way. The internationally trained immigrant professionals demonstrated expertise in one sense and naïveté in another at the same time. Sylvia (an immigrant medical physician from Iraq) for example, illustrated this phenomenon of being a competent member in her trained profession, yet being a novice in terms of using English as an additional language and functioning in a new socio-cultural environment. When the doctor who sponsored her to be an intern in a Canadian hospital asked her "can you do suturing?" (Sylvia Interview I, December 16, 2005) She responded "Of course." Commenting on this experience, she said:

> It is easy for me to do that…he was happy with my performance there. He was really happy. Suture or laceration or stitches, it is a simple thing for me…and it was a help for them because they were really loaded. He was happy with that and I was really happy with this. It would give me a chance to deal with the paperwork to deal with the system and to find out how the system is working (Sylvia Interview I, December 16, 2005).

Another aspect of the challenges immigrant professionals encountered in their re-entry is getting opportunities to be part of the target professional practices, which, in Communities of Practice Theory is framed as *Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP).* These kinds of opportunities are important because they expose novice members, as apprentices, to the shared practices of the community by which they can learn and re-socialize. At the same time, since the shared professional practices are conducted in English, my participants, as language learners, can benefit from it as well. Unfortunately, of the six participants in my study, only the two in the ELT Banking program were able to benefit from such opportunities by being given paid internships (a result of active involvement on the part of the employers). Others had to mostly depend on their own efforts, and found it challenging to locate such opportunities even though they are aware of their importance.

As discussed in the first chapter, some studies (Goldberg, 2001; George, Tsang, Man & Da, 2001) indicated that immigrant professionals find the existing ESL (English for second language) programs too simple and general to meet the higher needs of professionals' occupational specific language and culture needs. These new types of Enhanced Language Training (ELT) programs were designed to fill this gap. The three ELT programs in this study, though they vary in terms of course contents and the kind of help provided, all try to bridge the gaps between what immigrant professionals know already and the various parts of Canadian practices they need in order to be re-socialized for their re-entry into the targeted professional COP in Canada. In addition to English language help, all three programs also focus on introducing and exposing newcomers to the different Canadian *practices* for the purpose of re-entry.

All three of the programs in my study try to facilitate LPP opportunities for their students. ELT Engineering teaches strategies to obtain opportunities for immigrant professional novice members to participate in the shared practices of their target COP, and also collaborates with mentoring program to help immigrant professionals connect with more expert members in the field. ELT Medicine uses classroom activates to simulate the shared practice of the target COP for immigrant newcomers by bringing in the same standardized patients used by Canadian medical students in universities. But a more preferable and effective form of LPP is provided in ELT banking[21], due to the active initiative on the side of the employers to start and collaborate with the program by providing paid internship in the involved banks for the immigrant professionals enrolled in the program. This kind of arrangement falls well in line with the learning condition considered necessary according to Communities of Practice theory. The immigrant novice members, as apprentices, each have access to a more expert member (experienced employee of the bank) from their target COP to assist them by participating together with them in the actual shared practices of the bank (how to work as tellers). Through observation (job-shadowing to their mentors) at the beginning, to gradually being involved in more tasks (from doing small tasks with the mentors to have their own wicket with mentors standing right behind them), immigrant novice members can learn the practices required to be recognized as a member.

The workplace training component of the ELT Banking program has made this training model most effective. Even though it is designed to bring immigrants into the Canadian banking system at the lowest level (as tellers), it provides the participants their first breakthrough involvement with their target communities of practice. In doing so, it interrupts the vicious "Catch-22" cycle of requiring Canadian work experience before being considered for employment. It is very important to understand the reasons behind the banks' active initiative with this program so employers from other professional fields may also follow suit. According to the available information I have collected, the five local Winnipeg banks (originally two) involved themselves by collaborating with

[21] Again, this claim is not for the comparison of the three ELT programs in this research project. It is for many reasons that only ELT banking has this arrangement of LPP opportunities/working experiences in the target professional communities, such as employers' initiatives, field not under professional regulation, etc. It is only through the data in this study that this type of arrangement is most favourably considered by the participants.

Manitoba Labour and Immigration to initiate this program upon receiving information pertinent to the issue of employment of immigrant professionals. Human resource management recognized the importance of tapping this great source of talented employees and saw the value such a diverse group could bring to the bank's workforce. In addition, by reaching out to immigrants with underutilized skills, the banks could make a contribution towards alleviating the social issue of immigrant skilled workers' labour market integration. However, the ease with which this training model was set up may also be due to the relatively less-complicated system of re-entry in the banking field; engineering and medicine, on the other hand, are both under heavy entrance regulation.

The three programs have proven helpful for the six immigrant participants, based on what has occurred with their re-entry process upon completion of the programs. The two banking professionals both successfully re-entered their field, both entering as tellers. One has even since been promoted, and both are in the process of upgrading towards their original levels in the commercial sector of banking. The two medical professionals both successfully finished their provincial licensure assessment and are in the process of going back to the practice. Of the two engineering professionals, one decided to keep on pursuing his professional license by enrolling in a credentials recognition program. The other decided to locate alternative employment, preferably in a related field, but without requiring a license.

To find a place in the Canadian job market, newcomers make efforts to adjust and re-socialize their *practices* to fit into the norms of the target professions. What the ELT Banking program helped inspire is very valuable in terms introducing intercultural education from the other side. In addition to providing bridging assistance to immigrant professionals, the involved banks invest in training their existing Canadian staff so that they can be more aware and sensitive of the challenges immigrant professionals have to face. By doing so, the banks participate in preparing both sides to move towards the target of a more diverse workplace.

***Implication and Suggestions***

This study proved that the new type of ELT programs are helpful with equipping immigrant professionals with the language and culturally recognized tools needed to make full use of their professional skills and talents in Canada, which would be otherwise blocked by the new language and culture. These types of programs therefore should be further developed and continued, while at the same time made more accessible in order to expedite the professional re-entry process for more immigrants, and ultimately benefit the Canadian economy by increasing the integration and utilization of these highly qualified skilled people.

Also suggested in the study is that helping newcomers to re-socialize into the target professions' recognized practices requires exposing newcomers to the authentic shared practices of that profession. There are various ways by which to facilitate this. What the instructors of all three programs have been doing in the classrooms has been demonstrated to be useful, however a more effective method of doing so is to actually help newcomers to get access to participation opportunities (LPP) in the actual practices of their target COP. This will allow newcomers to be part of the real practices (as apprentices), and at the same time improve their professional language in order to communicate and interact with the major counterparts of their profession effectively. To create these kinds of opportunities cannot just depend on the efforts of the immigrants and the program instructors. Instead, a model similar to ELT Banking should be promoted across all other ELT fields, in which pre-training in the classroom is followed by a paid internship in the working environment, and with assigned *mentors* to each student. Employing this model across other ELT fields would require the active involvement of the respective employers for delivery. Perhaps it could begin by identifying the motivation behind the initiatives and investment on the part of the involved banks, then creating ways to foster similar enthusiasm amongst employers in other fields, adapted according to the individual nature of each field.

Another important aspect regarding the facilitation of immigrants' re-entry should be the efforts from the other side. True, it is significant for immigrants to learn a new language and adjust themselves to fit into the local Canadian work environment, but it is also crucial to engage the Canadian workforce. Employers in various fields should be made aware of the initial efforts made by the involved banks in the ELT Banking programs, and encouraged to follow-suit by educating their existing staff and increasing their cross-cultural awareness. In a similar attempt, Jupp, Roberts & Cook-Gumperz (1982) created training programs to break the negative cycle of poor language abilities bringing a negative social image and corresponding social position to immigrants in Britain. Through collecting real workplace data and then recreating realistic scenarios, they tried to raise the awareness that there was a dangerous tendency for people to "interpret and evaluate an interaction…just on the basis of their own language and social conventions, which may be markedly different" (p, 247) for people with different ethnic backgrounds. But it is exactly for that reason that miscommunication, misunderstanding, and even conflict can occur. Therefore, efforts in this direction, such as providing training programs and creating training materials, are very valuable and should be promoted. Only through mutual efforts from both sides will an environment be created in which professionals from various socio-cultural backgrounds can thrive together.

***Limitations***

The data collection in my study depends mainly on interviews with the immigrant professionals, interviews with the program instructors themselves, and documentation about the ELT programs (course outlines, course materials made available to me, and program information available on the internet). To focus on immigrant participants' own narrative accounts of their whole re-entry experiences, rather than arbitrarily choosing several aspects of the process to observe, allowed me to get a full picture of their whole re-entry experience, which is consistent with the focus of my thesis. It has proven effective in exposing the various areas in which communication and culture can cause challenges in re-entry, from designing re-entry plan to preparing and packaging themselves for the purpose of entering into Canadian labor market, and to actually working in a Canadian work environment. This type of study method has limits, however, as discussed by Duff, Wong, and Early (2002). First, ethnographic-natured methods, by comparison, can collect more detailed, first hand data through observation. Second, depending solely on narrative accounts from the immigrants themselves sometimes can run the risk of missing or losing a portion of the full picture, because immigrants are not always fully aware of the problems they encounter. Finally, due to the small sample size of this study, generalizations about the investigated phenomena cannot be made across whole populations.

***Future Research Directions***

As mentioned before, very little research using the Language Socialization and Communities of Practice theories has been conducted outside academic settings. But, the two theories have proven very useful in this study in examining the challenges stemming from having to use English as a non-native language and different practices across professional contexts. Therefore, these two theories are applicable in the area of immigrant professionals' integration into Canadian labor market. There is a lot of room in this area that calls for more investigation, especially by incorporating ethnographic investigation with field observations on all aspects of the re-entry process. By doing so, such investigations could provide a deeper understanding on issues of integrating highly skilled, internationally trained professional into the Canadian labor market, and can also extend the use of these two theories into more diverse fields.

**References:**

Alboim, N. & the Maytree Foundation. (2002). *Fulfilling the promise: integrating immigrant skills into the Canadian economy.* Abridged version of Alboim, N., & The Maytree Foundation. (2002) Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Aycan, Z. & Berry, J. (1996). *Impact of employment related experiences on immigrants' psychological well-being and adaptation to Canada.* Queens University.

Azuh, M. (1998). *Foreign-trained professionals: facilitating their contribution to the Canadian economy.* Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women and Status of Women Canada.

Blair, K. (2003). Integrating Immigrants into the Canadian Labour Market. Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. Retrieved February 10, 2005, from http://www.ocasi.org/sys/report_detail.asp?ReportID=138.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S.K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bosher, S. & Smalkoski, K. (2002). From needs analysis to curriculum development: designing a course in health-care communication for immigrant students in the USA *English for Specific Purposes,* 21, 59-79.

Brouwer, A. (1999). *Immigrants need not apply.* Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Burnaby, B. (1992). Official language training for adult immigrants in Canada: Features and issues. In B. Burnaby & A. Cumming (Ed.), *Socio-political aspects of ESL,* (pp. 3-34). Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Canagarajah, S. (2004). Subversive identities, pedagogical safe houses, and critical learning. In Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (Ed.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (pp. 116-137).

Centre for Canadian language Benchmark (CCLB) (2004). ELT Research Project Final Report. Retrieved May 2005, from http://www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=440

Cho, S. (2004). Challenges of entering discourse communities. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education,* 3, 47-72.

Citizenship and Immigration. (2005). Retrieved February, 10, from http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/skilled/assess/index.html. Accessed 10/02/2005.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) Integration-Net (2004/05) ELT Funded Projects Fiscal Year 2004/05 Project (By Province-Territory). Retrieved April 2006, from http://integration-net.cic.gc.ca/inet/english/elt-clna/proj02.htm

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2002) Focus Group summary. March 7, 2002. Retrieved April 2006, from http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/CIC-HRDC_Client_Focus_Group_summary_report.pdf

Cumming, P.A., Lee, E.L.D. & Oreopoulos, D.G. (1989).*Access! Report of the task force on access to professions and trades in Ontario.* Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Citizenship

Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, 280-298.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Introduction. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Ed.). *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, (pp. 1-17).

Dolin, B. & Young, M. (2004). Canada's immigration program. Law and government division. Parliamentary information and research service. Retrieved, April 2006, from http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/bp190-e.htm#9txt

Duff, P. (1995). An ethnography of communication in immersion classrooms in Hungary. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 505-537.

Duff, P. (2001). Language, literacy, content, and (pop) culture: Challenges for ESL students in mainstream courses. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 59, 103-132.*

Duff, P., Early, M., & Wong, P. (2002). Learning language for work and life: The linguistic socialization of immigrant Canadians seeking careers in healthcare. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86, 397-422.

Eckert, P. & McConnell-Ginet, S. (1992). Think practically and look locally: Language and gender as community-based practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 21, 461-490.

Firth, A., & Wagner, J. (1997). On Discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research. *Modern Language Review*, 81, 285-300.

Ferris, D., & Tagg, T. (1996a). Academic oral communication needs of EAP learners: What subject-matter instructors actually require. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 31-58.

Ferris, D., & Tagg, T. (1996b). Academic listening/speaking tasks for ESL students: Problems, suggestions, and implications. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 297-317.

Flowerdew, J. (2000). Discourse community, legitimate peripheral participation, and the nonnative-English-speaking scholar. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 127-150.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction.* Boston : Allyn and Bacon.

George, U., Tsang, K. T., Man, G., & Da, W. W. (2001). *Needs assessment of Mandarin-speaking newcomers.* South East Asian Service Centre.

Goldberg, M. (2001) The facts are in: Newcomers' Experiences in accessing regulated professions in Ontario. *TESL Ontario Special Research Symposium Issue*, 27, 61-66.

Gosdon, H. (1992). Research writing and NNSs: From the editors. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1, 123-139.

Hall, J. K. (1995). (Re)creating our worlds with words: A sociohistorical perspective of face-to-face interaction. *Applied Linguistics*, 16, 206-232.

Harding, M. (2003) Catch 22: Canadian experience. Many employers won't take a chance on new arrivals, even though they need to work here before getting a licence. *The Globe and Mail.* January 8, 2003.

Harklau, L. (1994). ESL versus mainstream classes: Contrasting L2 learning environments. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 241-272.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holmes, J., & Meyerhoff, M. (1999). The community of practice: theories and methodologies in language and gender research. *Language in Society*, 28, 173-183.

HRDC. (2002). Knowledge Matters -- Skills and Learning for Canadians. Retrieved, April 2006, from http://www11.sdc.gc.ca/sl-ca/home.shtml

HRSDC. Backgrounder of Enhanced Language Training. Retrieved April 2006, from http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/hrsd/news/2005/050425ba.shtml

JobStart and Skills for Change, (2001). *Access for foreign-trained IT professionals: An exploration of systemic barriers to employment.* Ontario: Department of Canadian Heritage: Multicultural Program

Jupp, T. C., C. Roberts, and J. Cook-Gumperz. (1982). Language and the disadvantage: The hidden process. In J. Gumperz. (Ed.), *Language and Social Identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (pp. 232-256).

Kanno, Y., & Applebaum, S. D. (1995). ESL students speak up: Their stories of how we are doing. *TESL Canada Journal*, 12, 32-49.

Kim, S. (2005). (In press) Academic oral communication needs of East Asian international graduate students in non-science and non-engineering fields. *English for Specific Purposes.*

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McMillan, J. H., & Wergin, J. W. (2002). *Understanding and evaluating educational research.* New Jersey: Pearson/ Merrill Prentice Hall.

Miller, J. M. (2000). Language use, identity, and social interaction: Migrant students in Australia. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 33, 69-100.

Moran, P. R. (2001) *Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice.* Heinle & Heinle, Thomson Learning.

Morita, N. (2000). Discourse socialization through oral classroom activities in a TESL graduate program. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 279-310.

Morita, N. (2004). Negotiating participation and identity in second language academic communities. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38, 573-602.

Murray, S. (2000) Torjman, S. (2000) *Brain drain, brain gain session proceedings.* Hosted by St. Lawrence Centre Forum, sponsored by the Maytree Foundation. May 25, 2000.

Naomi, A. (2002). Fulfilling the promise: Integrating immigrant skills into the Canadian economy. The Maytree Foundation.

Nixon, G. (2005) The Diversity Advantage. 10th International Metropolis Conference. President & CEO of RBC Financial Group. Toronto, Canada October 20, 2005.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2002). Identity and language learning. In R. Kaplan (Ed.), *The oxford handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 115-123). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: gender, ethnicity, and educational change.* England: Longman/Pearson Education.

Ochs, E. (1996). Linguistic resources for socializing humanity. In J. Gumperz & S. Levinson (Eds.), *Rethinking linguistic relativity* (pp. 407-437). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pawlikowska, G. (2002). Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: Theoretical framework. http://www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=257

Peirce, B. N. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL*

*Quarterly*, 29, 9–31.

Prefontaine, J. P., & Benson, A. (1999). *Barriers to Canadian immigrants' economic integration: Government responses to market failure.* British Columbia: Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism, Human Rights, and Immigration.

Reitz, J. G. (2005). *Tapping immigrants' skills: New directions for Canadian immigration policy in the knowledge economy*, IRPP Choices 11, 1-18.

Schieffelin, B. B., & Ochs, E. (1986). *Language socialization across cultures.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Seevaratnam, P. (1994). *Barriers faced by foreign trained South Asian teachers in accessing teaching employment in Metro Toronto.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook.* Great Britain: Sage.

Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research.* Great Britain: Sage.

Skills for Change & Centre for Research and Education in Human Services. (2001). *Making a change together: A resource handbook for promoting access to professions and trades for foreign-trained people in Ontario*. Queen's Printer for Ontario, Access to Professions and Trades Unit, Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, Skills for Change, and Centre for Research and Education in Human Services.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stake, R. (2000). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Ed.). *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, (pp. 435-454).

Teelucksingh, C. & Galabuzi, G.E. (2001). *Impact of race and immigrants status on employment opportunities and outcomes in the Canadian labour market.* Toronto: Policy Matters, Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS)

Toohey, K. (2000). *Learning English at school: Identity, social relations and classroom practice.* Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Torjman, S. (2000) *Brain drain, brain gain session proceedings.* Hosted by St. Lawrence Centre Forum, sponsored by the Maytree Foundation. May 25, 2000.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Willett, J. (1995). Becoming first graders in an L2: An ethnographic study of L2 socialization. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 473–503.

Yin, R, K. (2003) *Case study research: Design and methods.* London, Sage Publication, Ins.

# Appendix A

## DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH AND INVITATION FOR IMMIGRANT PROFESSIONALS

### Who am I and what am I pursuing?

My name is Lei Wang. I am a master student in Education at the University of Manitoba. I am currently conducting a study for the completion of my thesis about the communication challenges experienced by immigrant professionals while job searching in Canada, and how these difficulties are helped and changed (if any) by taking ELT (Enhanced Language Training) programs. As a suitable candidate, I would like to invite you to participate.

### Purpose of the Study.

Immigrants have been taken in to Canada for their importance to Canadian society and economy. Yet after arrival, many foreign trained immigrant professionals are not able to find jobs in their professions. Many reasons have been recognized, for instance, discrimination, lack of Canadian experiences, systemic barriers, and English communication. This study is to report and examine the English communication difficulties non-native English speaking immigrant professionals experienced while job searching in Canada, and also how these difficulties are helped and changed (if any) by taking ELT programs.

### What does Participation in the Study Involve?

I would like to interview you about the communication/language challenges you experienced while job searching in Canada, and how you feel about the changes in your communication/language skills for the purpose of employment in your profession by taking the ELT (Enhanced Language Training) programs. If you agree, I would like to interview you twice.

***First interview:*** (lasting for one hour to 1.5 hours). In this interview, I will provide you with a detailed explanation and invitation for my study, a consent form and a copy of the interview questions. I will explain the places where you are unclear. If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form. Then I will invite you talk about some of your background (please see the interview questions for details), and your job searching experiences in Canada before you took the ELT program, focusing on the communication/language challenges you might have experienced.

***Second interview:*** (lasting for one hour to 1.5 hours). In this interview, I will invite you to talk abut your experiences during and after ELT programs, focusing on what you think you have learned form the program and how your communication skills may have changed for the purpose of employment in your profession.

The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed afterwards. I will also take some notes to help myself remember my thoughts and feelings concerning our interview.

You and I will decide together the mutually convenient time and location to carry out the interviews. To avoid confusion and **misunderstanding**, I might get back to you for some clarification of the information I get from you if necessary.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:**

I am obligated to follow the rules and regulations set forth by the Research Ethics Board. As research participants, I will respect all your privacy and confidentiality. Your real name will not appear on any of my notes, audio recordings, transcripts or in my final reports. Instead, pseudonyms will be used. Any information about you obtained as a result of my research will be kept in a locked file until it is destroyed. I will only share the transcribed information (with pseudonyms) with my thesis advisor, Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson, and my two other thesis committee members, Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Charlotte Evans. Each of these people mentioned are also bound by the Research Ethics Board to respect the privacy and confidentiality of you. All audio tapes **and transcripts** will be destroyed immediately after the study is completed.

In case I want to publish my study, I will **remove any data and/or change some details** that can be used to connect to you directly.

**Risks and Benefits:**

There are no risks or discomfort expected from participating in this study. This study is not expected to be of direct benefit to the participants, but the knowledge gained may be of benefit to others.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this research at ay time without penalty. The researcher will not be in a position of authority over any participant. You will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and will receive answers concerning areas you do not understand.

**Compensation and Feedback:**

There will not be any compensation for the participation. Instead, refreshment and drinks will be provided at each interview. A copy of the summary of the findings will be available to all participants after the completion of the research if requested.

**Contact Persons:**

For more information about this research, please contact me at or via email at . My thesis advisor Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson can be reached at 474-9481 or via email at macpher2@Ms.UManitoba.CA. My two other committee members Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Charlotte Evans can be contacted at 474 9314 or via email at schmidtc@cc.umanitoba.ca and at 474-6393 or via email at evansc@ms.umanitoba.ca respectively.

I thank you very much for participating in my study.
Sincerely,

Lei Wang
June 18, 2005

## Appendix B

## IMMIGRANT PROFESSIONAL CONSENT FORM

**Research Project Title:** Access to professional communities of practice: communication and cultural barriers of highly qualified immigrant professionals in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

**Researcher:** Lei Wang

---

*This consent form, a copy of which will be left for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is all about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.*

---

**Purposes of the Study:** I understand the research is being conducted for the completion of the researcher's thesis. The focus of the study is to investigate the communication challenges immigrant professionals experienced while job searching in Canada, and how these difficulties are helped and changed (if any) by taking ELT (Enhanced Language Training) programs.

**Procedure of the study:** I've read and understood the information about the study on the above mentioned topic. I understand the research procedures. I know that I will be participating two interview sessions, with each session lasting for one hour or 1.5 hours. In the first session, I will be provided with a detailed explanation and invitation for the study, a consent form and a copy of the interview questions. I can ask questions and I will be explained the places where I am unclear. If I agree to participate, I will sign the consent form. Then I will discuss with the researcher some of my background information relevant to the study, and my job searching experiences in Canada before taking ELT programs, focusing on the communication/language challenges I have experienced. In the second session, I will discuss with the researcher about my experiences during and after ELT programs, focusing on what I think I have learned form the program and how my communication skills may have changed for the purpose of employment in my profession.

I understand that the interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed afterwards. I know that the researcher will also take some notes during the interview to help her remember the thoughts and feelings concerning the interview. And I realise that the researcher might get back to me for some clarification of the information to avoid confusion and understanding if necessary.

**Risks and Discomforts:** I understand there are no risks expected from participating in this study.

**Alternative:** I understand that I do not have to participate in this study.

**Benefits and Feedbacks:** I understand that this study is not expected to be of direct benefit to me, but the knowledge gained may be of benefit to others. And I'm aware that I'll receive a copy of the summary of the findings after the completion of the research if I request it.

**Compensation:** I understand that there will not be any compensation for the participation. Instead, refreshments and drinks will be provided at each interview.

**Confidentiality:** I understand that The Research Ethics Board dictates that the researcher must respect the confidentiality of research participants. Any information about me obtained as a result of this research will be kept in a locked file until it is destroyed. Pseudonyms will be used to identify me in the notes, transcripts and final reports.

Both the original recordings and the transcripts will be kept by the researcher for the duration of the study. The transcribed information (with pseudonyms) will only be shared with the researcher's thesis advisor, Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson, and her two other thesis committee members, Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Charlotte Evans. Each of these people mentioned are also bound by the Research Ethics Board to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. When the research is complete, the recordings **and transcripts** will be destroyed and disposed of properly so that the data will not be available to anyone. In case the researcher wants to publish the study, she will **remove any data and/or change some details** that can be used to connect to me directly.

**Voluntary Participation:** I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in this study at any time. I know that the researcher is not in anyway in a position of authority over me. I can ask questions about the research and will receive answers concerning areas I do not understand.

**Contact Persons:** I'm aware that for more information about this research, I can contact the researcher at or via email at . Her thesis advisor, Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson can be reached at 474-9481 or via email at macpher2@Ms.UManitoba.CA. Her two other committee members, Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Charlotte Evans can be contacted at 474 9314 or via email at schmidtc@cc.umanitoba.ca and at 474-6393 or via email at evansc@ms.umanitoba.ca respectively.

I willingly consent to participate in this research.

I would like a copy of the summary of the findings. YES / NO
If *yes*, please choose the way you prefer to receive it (via e-mail ***or*** mail) and the address:

- ☐ Via email: ______________________________
- ☐ Via mail: ______________________________
  ______________________________
  ______________________________

---

*This research has been approved by the Education/nursing* ***Research Ethics Board****. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122.*

---

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Signature of participant | Date | Time |
| Signature of Researcher | Date | Time |

initial date

## Appendix C

## DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH AND INVITATION FOR ELT INSTRUCTORS/DIRECTORS

### Who am I and what am I pursuing?

My name is Lei Wang. I am a master student in Education at the University of Manitoba. I am currently conducting a study for the completion of my thesis about the communication challenges experienced by immigrant professionals while job searching in Canada, and how these difficulties are helped and changed by taking ELT (Enhanced Language Training) programs. This study is not for evaluating individual programs or instructors. Names of the individual programs and instructors will be changed to mask their real identity. As a suitable candidate, I would like to invite you to participate.

### Purpose of the Study.

Immigrants have been taken in to Canada for their importance to Canadian society and economy. Yet after arrival, many foreign trained immigrant professionals are not able to find jobs in their professions. Many reasons have been recognized, for instance, discrimination, lack of Canadian experiences, systemic barriers, and English communication. This study is to report and examine the English communication difficulties non-native English speaking immigrant professionals experienced while job searching in Canada, and also how these difficulties are helped by taking ELT programs.

### What does Participation in the Study Involve?

I would like to interview you about your general perception on the communication/language challenges immigrant professionals (in the field that you are in charge of) have trying to re-enter their trained fields. Comments specific to particular graduates from the three programs will NOT be pursued, but anonymous examples of students' experiences will be welcomed. I would also like to invite you to talk about the contents and objectives of the program, as well as the strategies used to help improving the immigrant professionals' communication/language skills for the purpose of future employment in their professions. If you agree, I would like to interview you one time.

***Interview Session:*** (lasting for one hour to 1.5 hours). In this interview, I will provide you with a detailed explanation and invitation for my study, a consent form and a copy of the interview questions. I will explain the places where you are unclear. If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form. Then I will invite you talk about the above mentioned two areas:

a.) your general perception on the communication/language challenges immigrant professionals (in the field that you are in charge of) have trying to re-enter their trained fields; and b.) the contents and objectives of the program, as well as the strategies used to help improving the immigrant professionals' communication/language skills for the purpose of future employment in their professions.

***Documentation:*** I would also like to collect some documentation about the program that you are willing to share with me. They can be course description, or course materials, etc.

The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed afterwards. I will also take some notes to help myself remember my thoughts and feelings concerning our interview.

You and I will decide together the mutually convenient time and location to carry out the interview. To avoid confusion and understanding, I might get back to you for some clarification of the information I get from you if it's necessary.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:**

I am obligated to follow the rules and regulations set forth by the Research Ethics Board. As research participants, I will respect all your privacy and confidentiality. Your real name will not appear on any of my notes, audio recordings, transcripts or in my final reports. Instead, pseudonyms will be used. Any information about you obtained as a result of my research will be kept in a locked file until it is destroyed. I will only share the transcribed information (with pseudonyms) with my thesis advisor Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson, and my two other thesis committee members, Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Charlotte Evans. Each of these people mentioned are also bound by the Research Ethics Board to respect your privacy and confidentiality. All audio tapes **and transcripts** will be destroyed immediately after the study is completed.

In case I want to publish my study, I will **remove any data and/or change some details** that can be used to connect to you directly.

**Risks and Benefits:**

There are no risks or discomfort expected from participating in this study. This study is not expected to be of direct benefit to the participants, but the knowledge gained may be of benefit to others.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this research at ay time without penalty. The researcher will not be in a position of authority over any participant. You will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and will receive answers concerning areas you do not understand.

**Compensation and Feedback:**

There will not be any compensation for the participation. Instead, refreshments and drinks will be provided at each interview. A copy of the summary of the findings will be available to all participants after the completion of the research if requested.

**Contact Persons:**

For more information about this research, please contact me at or via email at My thesis advisor Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson can be reached at 474-9481 or via email at macpher2@Ms.UManitoba.CA. My two other committee members Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Charlotte Evans can be contacted at 474 9314 or via email at schmidtc@cc.umanitoba.ca and at 474-6393 or via email at evansc@ms.umanitoba.ca respectively.

I thank you very much for participating in my study.
Sincerely,

Lei Wang
June 18, 2005

## Appendix D

## ELT PROGRAMS INSTRUCTORS/DIRECTORS CONSENT FORM

**Research Project Title:** Access to professional communities of practice: communication and cultural barriers of highly qualified immigrant professionals in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

**Researcher:** Lei Wang

---

*This consent form, a copy of which will be left for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is all about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.*

---

**Purposes of the Study:** I understand the research is being conducted for the completion of the researcher's thesis. The focus of the study is to investigate the communication challenges immigrant professionals experienced while job searching in Canada, and how these difficulties are helped and changed by taking ELT (Enhanced Language Training) programs. I understand that this study is not for evaluating individual programs or instructors. Names of the individual programs and instructors will be changed to mask real identities.

**Procedure of the study:** I've read and understood the information about the study on the above mentioned topic. I understand the research procedures. I know that I will be participating for one session of the interview lasting for one hour or 1.5 hours. In the interview, I will be provided with a detailed explanation and invitation for the study, a consent form and a copy of the interview questions. I can ask questions and I will be explained the places where I am unclear. If I agree to participate, I will sign the consent form. Then I will discuss with the researcher two areas: 1) my general perception on the communication/language challenges immigrant professionals (in the field that I am in charge of) have trying to re-enter their trained fields. Comments specific to particular graduates from the three programs will NOT be pursued, but anonymous examples of students' experiences will be welcomed. 2) the contents and objectives of the program, as well as the strategies used to help improving the immigrant professionals' communication/language skills for the purpose of future employment in their professions. I can choose whether or not to share some documentation about the program (including course description, or course materials, etc).

I understand that the interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed afterwards. I know that the researcher will also take some notes during the interview to help her remember the thoughts and feelings concerning the interview. And I realize that the researcher might get back to me for some clarification of the information to avoid confusion and understanding if necessary.

**Risks and Discomforts:** I understand there are no risks expected from participating in this study.

**Alternative:** I understand that I do not have to participate in this study.

**Benefits and Feedbacks:** I understand that this study is not expected to be of direct benefit to me, but the knowledge gained may be of benefit to others. And I'm aware that I'll receive a copy of the summary of the findings after the completion of the research if I prefer.

**Compensation:** I understand that there will not be any compensation for the participation. Instead, refreshments and drinks will be provided at each interview.

**Confidentiality:** I understand that The Research Ethics Board dictates that the researcher must respect the confidentiality of research participants. Any information about me obtained as a result of this research will be kept in a locked file until it is destroyed. Pseudonyms will be used to identify me in the notes, transcripts and final reports.

Both the original recordings and the transcripts will be kept by the researcher for the duration of the study. The transcribed information (with pseudonyms) will only be shared with the researcher's thesis advisor, Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson, and her two other thesis committee members, Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Charlotte Evans. Each of these people mentioned are also bound by the Research Ethics Board to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. When the research is complete, the recordings and transcripts will be destroyed and disposed of properly so that the data will not be available to anyone. In case the researcher wants to publish the study, she will remove any data and/or change some details that can be used to connect to me directly.

**Voluntary Participation:** I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in this study at any time. I know that the researcher is not in anyway in a position of authority over me. I can ask questions about the research and will receive answers concerning areas I do not understand.

**Contact Persons:** I'm aware that for more information about this research, I can contact the researcher at or via email at Her thesis advisor, Dr. Seonaigh MacPherson can be reached at 474-9481 or via email at macpher2@Ms.UManitoba.CA. Her two other committee members, Dr. Clea Schmidt and Dr. Charlotte Evans can be contacted at 474 9314 or via email at schmidtc@cc.umanitoba.ca and at 474-6393 or via email at evansc@ms.umanitoba.ca respectively.

I willingly consent to participate in this research.

I would like a copy of the summary of the findings. YES / NO
If *yes*, please choose the way you prefer to receive it (via e-mail ***or*** mail) and the address:

- ☐ Via email: ______________________________
- ☐ Via mail: ______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

---

*This research has been approved by the Education/nursing* ***Research Ethics Board****. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122.*

---

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Signature of participant | Date | Time |
| Signature of Researcher | Date | Time |

initial date

# Appendix E

## Interview Guiding Questions for Immigrant Professionals

### Interview I

*Background questions*

The country of origin,
Native language,
CLB level if known,
Educational background,
Professional credentials,
Working experiences in the trained professions in home country,
Reasons to come to Canada,
Age range,
The length of staying in Canada since arrival.

*Pre-ELT programs*

1. Could you tell me your experiences of looking for a job in your profession using English here in Canada? (Please describe the process like you are telling a story.)
2. Do you think the need to use a second language affects your success in getting a job in your profession? If so, in what way (How)?
3. Using English, what English difficulties have you experienced in your job searching experiences in Canada? (Please describe them to me by telling me some examples/stories.)
    - In the process of looking for a professional job?
    - Also, working in a Canadian workplace?
4. In terms of your English, do you think it is "good enough" for you now to practice in your profession here in Canada?

- How good do you consider is enough?
- Can you describe your goals in improving your English?

5. Is it different to work in your profession in Canada than in your home country?
6. Think about the English difficulties you experienced job-searching (and working in your field) before ELT program; what would you want to improve?
7. Have you done anything to improve your English? In what ways? And what were you trying to achieve through each way?

**Interview II**

***During and after ELT program***

1. How did you find out about this program, and what are the reasons that you decide to attend this program? (what do you want to improve?)
2. What is the program like, can you describe it?
3. What do you think you learned in your ELT program?
4. How do you think your professional English communication skills have changed by participating in the program?
5. Has it helped you to find employment here in Canada in your profession? In what way?
6. What do you consider to be the role of the ELT program in your process of re-entry?
7. Do you have any suggestions for the program? Think about your experience, what could have been done differently to make it more effective to help you achieve your goals?
8. Could you tell me your current employment situation and your future plan?

## Appendix F

## Interview Guiding Questions for ELT Instructors/Directors

***Nature and characteristics of the ELT program.***

1. What are the differences between this program and other existing English language training programs for immigrants?

2. How was the program started?

***Immigrant professional students' English communication challenges (language & culture) in the process of re-entering their profession in Canada.***

3. Compared to immigrant professionals' Canadian-born peers with similar skills, how do you think they are affected by having to use a second language when accessing the labour market here?

4. What kind of English communication (language & culture) challenges do you think they have? Could you use some real stories as examples to elaborate?

5. How does the program obtain an understanding of their English communication difficulties? (from teaching, research in the literature, etc.)

***Objectives and intended outcomes of the program.***

6. What are the expected results after immigrant professionals finish the program?

7. Do you think your students have trouble meeting the expected results?

***Contents of the Program.***

8. What does this program try to teach immigrant professionals to facilitate their re-entry into their professions more easily in Canada?

9. What strategies does the program use to help them to learn the intended contents?

10. Is there other assistance in the program to help immigrant professionals access the Canadian labour market?