English-as-an-Additional-Language Job Interviews:
Pragmatics Training for Candidates
and Analyzing Performance on Both Sides of the Table

by

Nicholas Travers
M.A., University of Victoria, 2011
B.A., University of British Columbia, 1998

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the Department of Linguistics

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Previous job interview studies have found that evaluations of English-as-an-additional language (L+) candidates related less to demonstrated qualifications and more to matches or mismatches in communicative expectations. Candidates’ pragmatic skillfulness can affect interviewers’ perceptions of their competence, and by extension, their hireability.

Despite the importance of pragmatics to interview success, few studies have looked at the efficacy of pragmatics training. To address this gap, a mixed-methods study was carried out with L+ English university students and professional interviewers. Two training types — pragmatics-focused feedback (n = 9) and feedback plus a pragmatics lesson (n = 9) — were compared to a control (n = 9). A second focus was to understand the factors that influenced the nine interviewers’ evaluations. To this end, the interviewers engaged in a video-stimulated recall session. The resulting data were coded thematically. Finally, the interviewers’ communication was analyzed using an Interviewer Actions instrument and qualitative analysis.

Results showed that both experimental groups significantly outperformed the control group, which provides an endorsement of pragmatics training for L+ candidates. A second finding was that language ability themes were most prevalent in interviewer comments. This reveals a self-referential emphasis on the candidates’ talk as the primary source of competency judgments, which disadvantages L+ speakers. The Interviewer Action scores, supported by candidate evaluations and comments, indicated that engaged and supportive interviewer communication was most favourably received by the candidates. However, the qualitative analysis highlighted the challenge for interviewers in engaging with candidates while maintaining neutrality vis-à-vis responses. With increasingly diverse candidate pools, interviewers must upgrade their communication skills to make confident judgments about all interviewees.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This project was motivated by a desire to assist L+ English job seekers in obtaining satisfactory employment in their host countries. In Canada, underemployment of immigrants, with strong education and technical skills in comparison to native-born individuals, remains a social and economic problem (e.g., Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012; Reitz et al., 2014). Job interviews are a focal point for this issue because of their central role in the recruitment process. Organizations continue to rely heavily on job interviews as a means of evaluating hireability (e.g., Macan, 2009), so for immigrant job seekers the interview is a crucial obstacle on the path to securing satisfactory employment.

Job interviews have also attracted attention – particularly in intercultural contexts – because of the uncritical manner in which interviewers have evaluated candidates (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). In many cases, as Roberts and Sayers (1998) observed, judgements are based on a “general and diffuse optimism or pessimism” about candidates (p. 113), rather than on more concrete evidence of suitability. Crone (2000) lamented that managers are overconfident in their “gut instincts” in assessing candidates (p. 1), which has led to eschewing both structured formats and interviewer training. This view is echoed by researchers in Organizational Psychology, who have described a continuing over-reliance on informal (i.e., unstructured) interviews, despite evidence that structured practices are more reliable (e.g., Chapman & Zweig, 2005; Dana, Dawes, & Peterson, 2013). Similarly, studies of job interview interaction have repeatedly described instances where interview success depended less on the relative strength of skills, experience, and qualifications, and more on satisfying interviewers' expectations for appropriate communication (e.g., Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Birkner & Kern, 2008; Gumperz, 1992a; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Lipovsky,
2006; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; Scheuer, 2001). In other words, success often comes down to the way that candidates present themselves as the interaction develops (e.g., Lipovsky, 2006), or more accurately, on the interviewers’ impressions and attributions based on those behaviours. This is not accidental, or the result of a stubborn refusal amongst interviewers to accept structured practices. Candidates who reach the interview stage have likely met threshold requirements for qualifications, so the interviewer tends to focus more on personality characteristics (e.g., Kerekes, 2007; Lipovsky, 2006). To this end, interviewers will seek – indirectly, through the candidate’s responses to conventional questions – a better understanding of how the individual may fit into the culture of the organization (e.g., Rivera, 2012). For this reason, structured interviews may not allow for a satisfactory assessment, for instance, of a candidate’s likeability or mental ability (Huffcutt, 2011), even with open-ended, behavioural questions. Instead, interviewers may go ‘off script’ to ascertain a fuller picture of a candidate. Of course, despite the importance of this profiling work to a candidate’s evaluation, it is inevitably incomplete, since it is based on the information gleaned from a brief interview. The reliability of job interview evaluations is also questionable, since they are chronically susceptible to impression management tactics, the candidate’s attractiveness, similarity in social categories, and other non-relevant factors (e.g., Millar & Gallagher, 1997). More subtly, impressions are also affected by the perceived smoothness of the interaction itself, which translate into judgments of cooperativeness and likeability, even if the interviewer is unaware of it (e.g., Chartrand & Bargh, 1999; Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Sanchez-Burks, Bartel & Blount, 2009; Ylanne, 2008). In short, interviewers’ focus on personality has led to a strong valuation of candidates’ ‘soft skills,’ or their abilities to make positive impressions not only through the content of their responses, but also through their verbal and nonverbal responsiveness as an interlocutor. Given this reality, it is
easy to see how L+ speakers enter job interviews at a disadvantage in comparison to their L1 peers. For L+ candidates, a lack of awareness of the interviewer’s pragmatic norms, combined with the interviewer’s uncertainty in interpreting behaviours that diverge from those norms, can be a recipe for failure (e.g., Roberts & Sayers, 1998). In other words, the ways that the job interview is used as a tool can highlight L+ immigrants’ weaknesses, while underappreciating their strengths.

The burden of improving outcomes for L+ job seekers does not rest solely with the candidates themselves. On the other side of the table, employers may claim an openness to hiring L+ candidates, but in practice fail to do so. The reasons for this may be bias or prejudice (e.g., Krings & Olivares, 2007), concerns related to candidates' cultural “fit” in an organization (e.g., Rivera, 2012; Wong, 2003), or concerns about how language difficulties might affect business relationships (e.g., Travers, 2013). Those attitudes may derail candidates' opportunities before they even reach the interview stage. Yet also in the moment-by-moment interview conversation, interviewers have contributed to L+ candidates' non-successes, through an inability or an unwillingness to facilitate clear communication (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998).

Improving L+ candidates’ opportunities requires training for both sides of the interview. Fortunately, not only candidates but also interviewers have compelling reasons to find common ground. This is because interviewers who fail to achieve mutual understanding with candidates may also be failing to identify high-quality recruits (Manroop, Boekhurst, & Harrison, 2013). This is a serious issue in an era of globalization, where diversity in organizations and their partners is not so much a value as an ever-increasing reality. As a result, L+ candidates are likely to make up a significant proportion of the recruitment pool for many positions. A culturally
diverse organization may also be critical for consolidating and growing international markets (e.g., Gibson, 2003). This means that interviewers need to be able to make confident judgments about all candidates, including those from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As such, the burden of achieving understanding in the interview rests with both parties. L+ candidates are still tasked with the challenge of making a positive impression on their interviewers. However, the onus is equally on recruiters to rethink how job interviews, as an evolving tool, can be better used to identify talent in a diverse market.

From an educational perspective, in order to assist L+ candidates with the communicative demands of job interviews, trainers need a better understanding of how job interview talk relates to evaluations. What aspects of the interaction preoccupy interviewers as they generate judgments? Importantly, those pragmatic factors tend to be under-defined, from an evaluative perspective. Interviewers are likely unaware of the interactional sources of many impressions they form about individuals (e.g., Erickson & Shultz, 1982). For this reason, it is important for researchers to identify the moments that stand out for interviewers as they turn impressions into judgments. This can tap into expectations for what candidates should say and how they should say it. A further step, once this pragmatic information is in place, is to assess if and how job interview pragmatics can be taught. To this end, it is necessary to determine whether training actually facilitates improvements in job interview performance, and if so, how. As much as possible, this project sought answers to these questions.

Looking at the other side of the table, an additional aim was to understand the ways that the interviewers themselves affect ongoing interview talk, and by extension, its outcomes. Because researchers and stakeholders tend to focus on candidate performance, it is easy to overlook the ways that interviewers guide and constrain these interactions. Yet understandings in
talk are always jointly constructed, and there are numerous ways that interviewers can enhance or limit candidates' ability to represent themselves effectively. The reality is that interviewers have a difficult balancing act to carry out, in terms of administering the interview, eliciting relevant information, and simultaneously developing an evaluation, not to mention doing this for multiple candidates and within time constraints. When the additional task of managing linguistic and cultural differences is added to interviewers’ duties, it is not surprising that their evaluations of L+ candidates tend to be less coherent than those for L1 speakers (e.g., de Meijer et al., 2007).

As a result, for the benefit of both interviewers and candidates, it is important to know which features of interviewer talk facilitate clear communication, and which aspects detract from it. That means seeking relationships between communicative features and candidates’ impressions of their interviewers, in terms of understanding and comfort. With this information, it is possible to supplement existing training for interviewers with detailed communicative information, which can help them with the challenge of managing L+ interviews with a greater degree of self-awareness.

This dissertation is organized as follows: The Literature Review (Chapter 2) discusses the most relevant research regarding job interview training (Section 2.1), followed by the most prevalent within-interview factors that have influenced outcomes for candidates (Section 2.2), with special consideration to challenges for L+ speakers (Section 2.2.1). Looking at the other side of the table, Section 2.3 addresses the ways that interviewers can participate in the interview talk, as well as the implications of those interventions. Finally, Section 2.4 discusses the advantages and shortcomings of different methods for analyzing job interview talk.

The Methods section (Chapter 3) begins with a brief overview of the study design (Section 3.1), which introduces the mixed methods used to analyze both the candidates and
interviewers’ performance. This is followed by a section that introduces the various data-collection instruments (Section 3.3), followed by the study’s procedures (3.4) and data analysis methods (3.5).

For the sake of organization and clarity, the Results sections (Chapter 4) combine the quantitative and qualitative findings with relevant discussion, so that pressing issues can be addressed at the moments they arise. In addition, each results section is followed by a Summary and Implications section, which broadens the scope of the discussion to consider the empirical, theoretical, and/or methodological implications of that section’s results. The pedagogical recommendations, both for L+ candidates and interviewers, are brought together in Section 4.5. These are followed by the study’s limitations and directions for future research (Section 4.6) and the Conclusion (Chapter 5).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Job Interview Training

2.1.1 Pragmatics teaching. For this project, job interview training for candidates falls into the broader category of teaching pragmatics. Here, *pragmatics* refers to understanding and using language appropriately in context. For Ishihara and Cohen (2010), pragmatic skillfulness means going beyond linguistic understanding to the ability to communicate and interpret intentions, assumptions, goals, as well as recognizing the type of interaction that is taking place. Similarly, Taguchi (2015) describes pragmatic mastery as a coordination of form, meaning, function, force, and context. Pragmatics is recognized as an essential aspect of communicative competence (e.g., Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972) in that speakers must adapt their talk and interpretations to the types of interaction they are participating in, and based on the micro-dynamics of the talk that is unfolding.

The majority of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) pragmatics research has focused on individual speech acts, such as making requests or giving advice (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Taguchi, 2015). In part, this practice has been motivated by psychometric concerns in that single speech acts allow researchers to better control variables and thus assess the effectiveness of treatments. While meta-analyses and syntheses report favourably on pragmatics instruction (Kasper & Rose, 1999; Taguchi, 2015), the controlled methods may indicate gains in declarative rather than procedural knowledge. For example, Taguchi’s (2015) review of pragmatic instruction studies found that written DCTs (Discourse Completion Tasks) related to better results than role play tasks. This is not surprising, given the processing demands of transferring instructed learning to realistic, goal-oriented interaction. For instructors, however,
limiting pragmatics teaching to controlled practice with limited forms may not equip learners to communicate effectively in authentic settings.

On the other side of the pragmatics research spectrum, situated analyses have focused on particular contexts, and have tended to be descriptive, as with doctor-patient interaction (e.g., Erickson, 1999), immigration interviews (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007), social worker-client talk (e.g., Hall, Sarangi, & Slembrouck, 1999), and language proficiency interviews (e.g., Kim & Suh, 1998). The research is not focused on specific speech acts, but rather on recognized types of institutional talk, which display conventional features and constraints on contributions (Drew & Heritage, 1992). This lens allows for description, categorization, and comparison with other studies. The aims of these studies have not been to assess and improve pedagogical practices, but rather to understand how speakers negotiate meanings and identities within the parameters of allowable talk. Nonetheless, the findings can (and do) inform language instruction, as was the case with the successful ‘Language in the Workplace’ project in New Zealand (Marra, Holmes, & Riddiford, 2009), where analysis of a corpus of workplace talk generated a curriculum for a pragmatics course for new immigrants. With this background in mind, pragmatics in the present study is operationalized not in terms of the appropriate, situated use of individual speech acts, but in terms of the appropriacy of talk within a well-defined institutional genre – in this case, job interviews. Importantly, the recognition and parameters of such types of institutional talk are oriented to by the participants themselves (e.g., Drew & Heritage, 1992). Moreover, the speakers – and the interviewer in particular – can and do express normative assumptions for what comprise appropriate actions in these types of talk (e.g., Yates, 2010). Despite the comparative underrepresentation of institutional talk as a pragmatic domain, in language research, its external and internal coherence as an object of analysis, in addition to its real-world value as a site where
consequential decisions are made about speakers, make it an important object of analysis going forward (e.g., Taguchi, 2015).

Because pragmatics combines linguistic ability with other layers of understanding – of contexts, relationships, and culture – it represents a complex domain for language teachers. While speaking curricula frequently include a multitude of speech acts, simply providing learners with functional phrases to slot in during conversations can result in stilted talk, and when applied in real-life tasks, to misunderstandings and social breakdowns (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). Yet it is no easy feat to enrich language instruction with information about how talk varies in different contexts, and what social and cultural factors affect that variability. A form-focused approach seems inadequate to enhance pragmatic competence when it requires an understanding of the setting, speakers’ relationships, and the social ‘stakes’ of the talk (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). This dilemma of finding a suitable approach to teaching nuanced pragmatics is likely one reason that it is underrepresented in instruction (e.g., Siegel, 2016). Roberts (1998), for example, gave the example of backchanneling as an important feature of conversation that is rarely taught. Yet this omission is not surprising, given how subtle backchannels are, which makes them difficult for learners to notice, let alone integrate into their speech. In assessment-driven institutions, the difficulty in quantifying pragmatics learning and progress also has a negative washback effect on curricular decisions (Liu, 2006).

These challenges can result in leaving pragmatics learning to ‘osmosis,’ or a reliance on immersion in the target language and culture as a necessary and sufficient source of acquisition. Matsumura (2001), for instance, found that without pragmatics-specific instruction, Japanese students who had studied abroad for a year significantly outperformed their study-at-home peers at giving advice in English. Kasper and Rose’s (1999) review of L+ pragmatics research also
indicated that immersion in the target culture, particularly with extended lengths of residence, related to better pragmatic usage than with foreign language students. On the other hand, proponents of teaching pragmatics argue that it is precisely because many features are not salient that they need to be highlighted by instructors (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). Indeed, there is evidence that even highly proficient speakers, with years of residency in their L+ culture, continue to struggle to understand and use pragmatic features (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Encouragingly, however, Kasper and Rose’s (1999) meta-analysis of pragmatics learning studies concluded that “instruction in pragmatic information is generally facilitative and necessary when input is lacking or less salient” (p. 96). Thus, instruction may fast-track what could otherwise take years for learners to acquire. In support of this position, Bouton (1999) found that explicit instruction in implicature (i.e. utterances that are confusing without contextual information) led newly-arrived L+ English speakers to the same degree of understanding as a non-instruction group who had lived in the same culture for 4-7 years.

In terms of how to teach pragmatics, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) stressed awareness raising and analysis over production, at least at early learning stages, with the use of rich, authentic input. This is both because of the need to view the effects of contextual factors on speakers’ talk, and also so that instructors can point out pragmatic features that learners may not otherwise notice. Roberts (1998) cautioned that instructors need to accept the complexities of contextualized language, and avoid oversimplification for the sake of more concrete learning products. Those features include nonverbal and paralinguistic cues that language learners may not encounter in traditional curricula (e.g., Kendon, 2000; McNeill, 2000). Practically, Siegel (2016) suggested analyzing content in terms of speakers’ choices, given the context and stakes of the interaction, and discussing the effects of those choices, as well as alternative ways that the
speakers could approach the same situations. Ishihara and Cohen (2010) stressed the need to take analysis still further and explain relevant socio-pragmatic (i.e. cultural) bases for speakers’ pragmatic choices, which may otherwise be confusing for learners (see also Zegarac & Pennington, 2008). Specifically showing examples of cross-cultural misunderstandings, in service encounters (Bailey, 2007), language speaking tests (Kim & Suh, 1998; Young & Halleck, 1998), and a range of other contexts (Fought, 2006) can highlight how cultural values frequently underpin pragmatic choices. With these issues in mind, reasonable aims for pragmatics instruction are to increase learners’ sensitivity to contextual factors and how they affect communication (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), and ultimately to equip learners with some communicative choices for negotiating pragmatic goals in particular situations (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003).

There is an emphasis in the research literature on using authentic examples of talk-in-context with learners, since intuited content can misrepresent or oversimplify what speakers actually say or do in situations (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Authentic data are not without their pitfalls, however. For one thing, it is challenging to obtain relevant and copyright-free content. An additional issue is the ‘noisiness’ of the data, which can make it difficult to isolate target features for learners. Moreover, even with an instructor’s facilitation, the subtlety of some turn-by-turn features can make them inscrutable for many learners.

For pragmatics production, researchers have endorsed role-play tasks that focus on important contextual variables: participants’ status, goals, social risk, and other factors (Siegel, 2016). Instructors can also adjust those variables (e.g., the social distance of the participants) to push learners to adapt their talk suitably (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). On the “Teaching Pragmatics” website (U.S. Department of State, 2016), all tasks are preceded by awareness-
raising and/or analysis of authentic examples, and the authors encourage instructors to follow up learner practice with further discussion of appropriacy, as well as subtle features like intonation (e.g., Yates, 2003). An additional value of role play in the classroom is the opportunity for learners to experiment with roles in a trusting environment, which is also free of the pressures of high-stakes talk (Sniad, 2007). This is particularly true with face-threatening scenarios and/or when L+ pragmatic norms conflict with a speaker’s beliefs about how he or she should behave in culturally sensitive situations (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009).

2.1.2 **Job interview training resources.** There is a great deal of overlapping advice in job interview guidebooks (e.g., Allen, 2004; Burns, 2009; Kanter, 1995; Powers, 2010). In terms of nonverbal actions, there is a shared emphasis on professional dress and hairstyles, a firm handshake at the beginning of the interview, frequent eye contact, smiling, and avoiding negative facial expressions. In terms of pragmatic considerations, the guidebooks that I reviewed stress that candidates should project confidence and avoid displaying nervousness. Kanter (1995) urged candidates, if possible, to transform nervous energy into enthusiasm. Another shared recommendation is for candidates to take initiative during the interview talk. In the guidebooks’ terms, this means that candidates should take opportunities to share their most favourable qualities. An additional shared recommendation in guidebooks is to prepare thoroughly before job interviews, including developing responses to common questions, researching the company and industry, and doing simulated interviews.

For job seekers, a limitation of guidebooks is that surprisingly little space is taken up with the dynamics of the interview interaction itself. Instead, a large proportion of text deals with pre- and post-interview considerations. For instance, Burns (2009) claimed that by following his recommendations for pre-interview preparation, “it will not be unusual for your interview to
become more of a formality” (p. 137). While this comment helpfully encourages candidates to be well prepared, it grossly undervalues the importance of the interview talk, which is never a 'formality.' Indeed, the comment exposes a disadvantage of the guidebooks that I surveyed, which is a lack of detailed analysis of interview interaction. The books provide a great deal of advice about self-presentation tactics, but the information describes an idealized candidate. What is lacking is a close analysis of actual interviews, which can show readers what certain key concepts -- such as showing confidence or taking initiative -- can actually look like within the interview itself.

The guidebook format is also necessarily limited in terms of its training potential. Guidebooks can and do recommend practice interviews, but there is no built-in opportunity for job seekers to try out interview responses and other behaviours, nor can they receive feedback on them. Job interview training websites do have this potential, and they are seeking to fill this implementation gap (e.g., SIMmersion Inc., 2016; Skillful Communications LLC, 2016; Udemy, Inc., 2016). In addition to providing similar recommendations to guidebooks, some websites offer a degree of simulated interview practice. This practice may be limited to opportunities for candidates to video-record themselves responding to common questions (Skillful Communications, L.L.C., 2016), with instructions for later self- or peer-assessment. Some software can also record responses and provide feedback (e.g., SIMmersion Inc., 2016), though this support involves automated analysis of the input on a limited number of factors, rather than feedback from a live instructor. These options highlight the principal challenge of online training providers, which is to provide a degree of personalized support on a completely automated platform, thereby avoiding the expense of real-time instruction. Thus, the feedback offered by these providers is limited to a pre-programmed “on-screen coach” (SIMmersion, 2016), or a
“guided self-assessment tool” (Skillful Communications, 2016), rather than a trained professional who can analyze responses. It remains to be seen whether this compromise will satisfy users, particularly in terms of the quality of automated feedback.

It is understandable, for the sake of maximizing readership, that the guidebooks that I reviewed tended to generalize about favourable candidate behaviours. Nonetheless, it is important to point out some biases and uncritical assumptions that the authors communicated. The primary concern is that these books oversimplify the interview process by ignoring sources of variability, including job types, demographic attributes, and cultural differences. This results in a one-size-fits-all approach for all job seekers. For the books that I surveyed, advice is based on a North American context and may not be applicable to other cultures or nationalities, though this limitation was not addressed by the authors. This is a relevant concern, since interviewer expectations for candidate behaviour, including the pragmatics of responses and nonverbal actions, can differ widely across cultures (Leri, 2000; Roberts, 1998). Indeed, a number of consensus guidebook recommendations, including taking initiative, ‘selling yourself,’ projecting positivity (and avoiding negativity), and making frequent eye contact, are culturally relative and may be inadvisable in non-North American contexts (Leri, 2000). Nor do the authors consider intra-cultural implications for a one-size-fits-all model, especially how the model reflects dominant-culture norms, which may disadvantage immigrant or minority candidates (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007). For instance, some recommended behaviours may be unfamiliar or may elicit resistance from candidates (e.g., Sniad, 2007). While guidebooks may champion a homogeneous model for the sake of simplicity, an effect is to reinforce dominant-culture norms and ignore other possible self-representations. Moreover, the interviewer practices that the guidebooks describe as typical are not accompanied with any critical reflection on those routines.
For instance, Allen (2004) warns that, for interviewers, “expediency and stereotyping are the order of the day” (p. 24). Similarly, Burns (2009) claims that interviewers make most decisions within sixty seconds, or that “the first look tells me everything” (p. 123). For these authors not to take a critical stance vis-à-vis these practices, but to represent them as unproblematic, implicitly ratifies what are highly dubious evaluative methods.

2.1.3 Descriptions of job interview training courses. The academic literature contains descriptions of job interview training courses, which include practical suggestions (e.g., Bloch, 2011; Hansen et al., 2009; Sniad, 2007). Analyses of job interview communication also tend to be motivated by practical aims, and many of their findings represent useful information for job seekers and trainers (e.g., Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Gumperz, 1992a; Kerekes, 2006, 2007; Lipovsky, 2006; Roberts & Sayers, 1998).

One training suggestion is for candidates to view, analyze, and discuss job interview videos (e.g., Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982; Bloch, 2011). Bloch (2011) reported favourably on a project using job interview clips from television shows. Learners analyzed the clips for appropriate dress, suitability of responses, nonverbal actions, and stereotyping (see also Louw, Derwing, & Abbott, 2010). Alternatively, trainers can present video clips as models of successful or unsuccessful behaviour (Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982), which trainees can analyze and discuss. Similar analysis can be done with the large number of sample job interviews available on video sharing sites like YouTube. A challenge, however, is identifying and selecting quality content. For privacy reasons, authentic job interview videos are difficult to obtain and use, while scripted videos are frequently parodic rather than emulating authentic behaviours. Even when scripted videos recreate serious interviews, they reflect what the writers’ and actors’ beliefs about authentic behaviours, rather than what participants actually do in authentic interaction. It is
difficult, ultimately, to simulate how the pressure of genuine accountability affects speakers (Heritage & Clayman, 2010).

Another endorsed training component is simulated job interviews with peers, instructors, or invited professionals (Hansen et al., 2009; Louw et al. 2010). This task can be extended to include pre- and post-interview components, such as introducing learners to standard questions and developing responses to them, as well as post-interview feedback.

The effectiveness of focusing on common questions depends in part on whether there are frequently-occurring questions across job interviews. This assumption underpins guidebook and online training recommendations to prepare and practice responses to certain questions (e.g., Powers, 2010). However, while there are some questions that cannot be asked, for human rights reasons (Birshtein, 2010), interviewers still have a wide range of choices. Questions are likely to differ depending on the industry (Rivera, 2012), and whether or not the interview is structured, in which case the choice of questions will derive from a careful assessment of a position and its requirements (Kanter, 1995; Simola, Taggar, & Smith, 2007). On the other hand, some overlap can be expected across professions. Huffcutt’s (2011) meta-analysis identified three core evaluative foci across interviews: candidates’ motivation, their applicable skills and experience, and their ability to manage job-specific tasks. Accordingly, questions are likely to reflect those evaluative priorities regardless of job type.

In order to develop responses to anticipated questions, trainers recommend that candidates analyze their professional and non-professional experience to align themselves to the position and its duties, including why points of experience are relevant, and what they learned from them (e.g., Hill, 2005; Schacter, 2011). Kanter (1995) stressed that responses that job seekers develop should be evaluated in terms of their depth and thoughtfulness. In addition,
many responses will take the form of narratives (i.e., elicited by situational questions), and must be chosen with care, according to Akinnaso and Ajirotutu (1982), which means that the stories should be framed within the candidate’s task of self-promotion. For example, Hansen et al.’s (2009) simulated interview project required university students to develop ‘success stories’ from their experience, which taps into the pragmatic value of positive outcomes for interviewers.

When preparing responses, not only the selection but also the delivery is important. In terms of linguistic foci, Burns’ guidebook (2009) stressed that responses should be “direct, clear, concise and complete” (p. 151). Clarity and concision are also emphasized in a training module of Louw et al.’s (2010) study. Instructors in Sniad’s (2007) study cautioned against using slang, while Allen (2004) argued that consciously inserting vocabulary from professional discourse (e.g., “opportunity”, “initiate”) can generate positive impressions (pp. 29-30). In terms of more general attitudinal features, a common recommendation is to project confidence, and conversely to avoid showing nervousness (Allen, 2004; Burns, 2009; Sniad, 2007). Another recurrent theme is that candidates should prioritize positivity (and avoid negativity) as well as show enthusiasm for the interview and position (Kanter, 1995; Powers, 2010).

In terms of feedback, Hansen et al.’s (2009) university students engaged in self-reflection as they rehearsed responses, then exchanged feedback with peers after practicing further. Finally, learners received feedback from a Human Resources professional who interviewed them. An additional layer to this process could be videorecording the simulated interview, so that learners are able to notice aspects of their self-presentations – especially nonverbal actions – that they might be unaware of (Kanter, 1995). The simulated quality of such interviews may limit the relevance of feedback (e.g., Heritage & Clayman, 2010). However, the motivation of an upcoming interview can push learners to take the task seriously, precisely in order to maximize
the relevance of such feedback. Within simulations, participants’ commitment to their roles also affects the value of such practice as a learning tool. For example, instructors and learners may slip out of roles to give suggestions or ask questions, but this then diminishes the interviews as objects for feedback. On the other hand, Sniad (2007) stressed that the lack of consequentiality can allow learners to try out unfamiliar behaviours in a supportive environment. This points to an affective benefit of simulated interviews, which is to raise candidates’ confidence ahead of genuine job interviews (e.g., Latham & Budworth, 2005).

**2.1.4 Effectiveness of job interview training.** There is relatively little empirical evidence supporting the use of job interview training. This is despite widespread demand for training, which has encouraged a multitude of guidebooks, online training programs, and job courses within co-operative education, government, and corporate institutions. Although anecdotal evidence supports the value of training (e.g., Hansen et al., 2009; Marra et al., 2009; Shannon, 2009), few studies have seriously tested its effectiveness. The research that has been carried out has uniformly supported the value of training for job interviews (Cuddy & Wilmuth, 2015; Latham & Budworth, 2006; Louw et al., 2010; Maurer, Solamon, & Lippstreu, 2008).

Some training research has targeted specific factors that can lead to performance gains. Cuddy and Wilmuth (2015) focused on candidates’ self-efficacy (i.e., confidence) through pre-interview high-power posing, which has been found to “boost” individuals’ feelings of power, confidence, and self-esteem, among other benefits, while reducing feelings of fear (p. 1). The 61 participants then gave a five-minute speech to an interviewer on why the hypothetical company should hire them. This speech is clearly not equivalent to a full interview in its complexity. Nonetheless, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control (non-posing) group on performance and hireability dimensions. Furthermore, the ‘nonverbal presence’ item (i.e., the
degree that candidates’ body language projected enthusiasm, confidence, and was captivating) predicted both performance and hireability scores. The results both point to the importance of self-efficacy in enhancing candidates’ self-presentations, and also to the degree that nonverbal actions can affect perceptions of candidates. It should be noted, however, that the validity of a previous ‘power pose’ study (Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2010) has been brought into serious question through a failed replication study (Ranehill et al., 2015). More recently, the principal author of the 2010 study (Carney) recently stated that she herself does not believe in the effects of power posing, and also acknowledged that data collection and analysis manipulations may have inflated the favourable results (Singal, 2016). These revelations also raise concerns about the credibility of Cuddy and Wilmuth’s (2015) findings, though Carney, Cuddy, and Yap (2015) have published a rebuttal to these criticisms that focus on the differences between their methodology and that of Ranehill et al.’s (2015) failed replication. Thus there is an ongoing discussion and conflicting reports on the real value of power posing in relation to interview outcomes.

Latham and Budworth (2005) similarly focused on self-efficacy enhancement with a job interview training program for First Nations high school students in Canada. The study argued that First Nations candidates may be disadvantaged in job interviews due to communication style features that conflicted with dominant culture norms. Specifically, First Nations’ candidates might speak relatively softly, come across as slow in developing responses, hesitate to use the interviewer’s name, and pause a long time before responding to questions. The individuals in the experimental group participated in five 90-minute training sessions that focused on Verbal Self Guidance (Meichenbaum, 1977), or using self-talk while processing and applying suggestions in training tasks, based on the notion that individuals can motivate themselves through positive self
talk. Those tasks included self-promotion skills, nonverbal actions, and anticipating and responding to common questions. All participants then carried out a simulated interview for a hypothetical retail position within a week of the training. Results supported the value of the training, as self-efficacy scores significantly increased in pre-/post-training measures, in comparison to a control group, and self-efficacy correlated significantly with interview performance. Moreover, interview ratings were significantly higher for the individuals who underwent the training.

Other studies have focused on more generalized job interview training. Since job interview research has consistently found that impression management tactics (e.g., self-promotion and ingratiation) positively affect evaluations (e.g., Huffcutt, 2011; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Macan, 2009), Maurer et al. (2008) sought to understand whether those tactics could be enhanced through a training program. From an ethical perspective, the researchers coached candidates in both ‘non-valid’ tactics (i.e., which were not related to interviewers’ evaluative criteria) as well as ‘valid’ tactics (i.e. enhancing self-presentation relating to interviewers’ core evaluative criteria). The study involved 146 participants who were applying for promotion within police or fire departments. Half the participants attended a three-day training program (1.5 to 2 hours per day), then all individuals were interviewed by a panel of four professionals. The training provided an introduction to job interviews, including structured and non-structured types, as well as tips on how to prepare and behave during the interviews. Candidates also focused on relevant knowledge, skills, and attributes for the target job, and then role-played interviews with other candidates. Finally, the candidates received suggestions from individuals who had previously interviewed for the same positions. The study obtained a number of interesting results. The candidates who received training significantly outperformed those who
had not in their evaluations. Moreover, on a delayed measure of performance for the selected
individuals, the interview scores for the trained sample also predicted overall performance on the
job, which was not the case for the non-trained group. Additionally, inter-rater reliability for the
panel of four interviewers was significantly higher for the trained that non-trained group. From
an ethical standpoint, the delayed performance scores suggest that the training succeeded in
assisting well-qualified candidates to represent themselves effectively, but did not allow poorly-
qualified individuals to ‘fake’ their way to the position. The reliability scores also suggest that
training candidates not only helps them but also their interviewers, since practice and familiarity
with procedures can facilitate clear communication and allow interviewers to focus on key
evaluative criteria.

For this project, the most comparable training study is Louw et al.’s (2010) investigation
of training for three L+ English candidates for a hypothetical Engineering position. All three
individuals did pre- and post-training simulated interviews with a panel of three language
instructors. The training consisted of four 90-minute sessions, which included watching and
discussing a video of an L1 speaker’s attempt at the same interview, practice with typical
questions and suggested answers, practice with clear speaking and active listening cues, and
finally feedback and discussion of problematic responses from the pre-training interview. All
three individuals showed improvement in their ‘second’ interviews, as measured by a 21-point
scale that followed the interview chronologically. On the other hand, the small sample limits the
generalizability of the study’s findings, and the authors acknowledged that the participants' low
English oral proficiency made it difficult to assign reliable pragmatics ratings. Moreover, the
candidates differed in the items that showed gains, so while training as a whole seemed
beneficial, there was no clear pattern that indicated which aspects were most effective. Further
research with a greater number of candidates, and individuals with higher oral proficiency is needed to understand if and how pragmatics training can help L+ English speakers with job interview performance.

2.2 Candidate Factors Affecting Job Interview Success

A common thread linking job interview guidebooks and academic research is a focus on the critical question of why candidates did or did not succeed. While acknowledging contextual differences, it is possible to highlight common factors from the literature that have emerged as relevant to evaluations. More specifically, there are enough commonalities in interviewer expectations in Euro-American interviews to make some generalizations (e.g., Dipboye, Macan & Shahani-Denning, 2012). One stable maxim that has emerged across studies is that referential professional criteria (i.e., skills, qualifications, and experience) have not influenced evaluations as much as attitudinal impressions (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Howard & Ferris, 1996; Kerekes, 2006; Lipovsky, 2006; Rivera, 2012). As Campbell and Roberts (2007) observed, there is a pervasive disjunction between interviewers' stated objectivity, in developing evaluations, and their emphasis in practice on candidates' personalities (p. 246). Howard and Ferris (1996) suggested that this phenomenon is partly due to the prevalence of unstructured interviews, in which job-specific skills are not adequately assessed, which leads interviewers to focus more on personality factors (see also Dana et al., 2013). Yet Huffcutt's (2011) meta-analysis found that attitudinal judgments strongly affected judgments even with structured interviews. One practical reason for this is that skills and qualifications are pre-screened to a large extent through resumés and applications (Lipovsky, 2006; Kerekes, 2007). This can result in a greater emphasis on the way that candidates present themselves, rather than the professional content of their responses. Moreover, while candidates' skillfulness at representing themselves effectively is essentially
anchored in their communication skills, interviewers often receive those impressions not in linguistic terms, but in attitudinal ones: as evidence of enthusiasm, cooperation, politeness, or generally evidence of competence (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996; Gumperz, 1992; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; Tannen, 1984).

From a research perspective, it is important to identify the interactional sources of these attitudinal evaluations, in part because interviewers themselves may not be able to relate impressions to concrete evidence from the interview (e.g., Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). In other words, it is crucial to go beyond vague descriptors such as ‘a good fit,’ in order to find out where and why the interviewer arrived as such judgments.

One factor that has frequently influenced evaluations, particularly in North American interviews, is Selling Yourself. This has also been termed 'self promotion' in the Organizational Psychology literature (e.g., Bye et al., 2011). In positive terms, this relates to a perception that the candidate is using his or her talk to explicitly highlight positive professional or personal attributes (e.g., Travers, 2013). The factor is equally visible in negative responses to candidates’ admissions of personal or professional weaknesses. Specific manifestations include interviewer expectations that responses be contextualized as a means of showing candidates' skills and experience (e.g., Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982), and that candidates need to ‘take initiative’ to present themselves positively (e.g., Gumperz, 1992a). This contrasts with candidates who are perceived as overly passive in waiting for interviewer cues before providing relevant information (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990). As Leri (2000) phrased it, an American job interview "is no place for humility and hesitancy" (p. 13). Thus, the exigency to project confidence and positivity is repeatedly emphasized in job interview guidebooks (Allen, 2004; Burns, 2009; Kanter, 1995; Powers, 2010). At the same time, there is evidence that candidates need to
moderate a *Selling Yourself* mode with an awareness of their subordinate status vis-a-vis the interviewer, so as not to come across as aggressive and/or arrogant (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Howard & Ferris, 1996).

Another pragmatic factor that has influenced evaluations in Euro-American settings is *Personalizing Talk*. This category includes positive impressions resulting from candidates referencing non-professional identities, including family and hobbies (e.g., Kerekes, 2006; Rivera, 2012). Tapping into shared interests or co-memberships can generate rapport, which in turn relates closely to impressions of trustworthiness. *Personalizing Talk* also relates to whether or not candidates identify themselves with the propositional content of their talk, through the use of first-person 'I,' and personal opinions and narratives, which have made positive impressions on interviewers (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Louw et al., 2010). In contrast, negative impressions have related to perceived depersonalization in candidates' talk. In their job interview study, Birkner and Kern (2008) identified over-use of impersonal 'one' as a subject, as well as candidates' inability to attach themselves to opinions and narratives, as sources of negative impressions. Similarly, Louw et al. (2010) described negative evaluations of candidates who represented the target job as a 'natural' result of their academic qualifications, rather than explaining their interest in terms of intrinsic (personal) motivation.

An additional factor that has appeared frequently in Euro-American job interview evaluations is *Extended/Sufficient Responses* (e.g., Gumperz, 1992a; Lipovsky, 2006; Scheuer, 2001). This category relates to interviewers’ positive or negative impressions of response completeness. Scheuer's (2001) quantitative amount-of-talk measures found a correlation between longer candidate responses and interview success, though I did not find the same result in a previous study (Travers, 2013). A more accurate generalization may be that interviewers are
likely to hold candidates accountable for needing to prompt them for more information (e.g., Lipovsky, 2006; Scheuer, 2001). Lengthy responses that are perceived as lacking relevance can also generate negative impressions (e.g., Roberts & Sayers, 1998). Moreover, while this category seems to be straightforwardly linguistic, violations of interviewer expectations for response sufficiency have generated impressions of rudeness, obtuseness, or reticence (e.g., Gumperz, 1992; Jensen, 2003; Lipovsky, 2006). Generally speaking, candidates who satisfy expectations for response completeness help to minimize interviewers' work in eliciting information, which enhances feelings of cooperativeness in the shared undertaking of the interview (e.g., Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Scheuer, 2001).

2.2.1 L+ candidates' pragmatic challenges. It is clear that a threshold oral proficiency level is a basic requirement for candidates to negotiate their suitability in a job interview. However, that threshold will vary with the target position’s communicative demands and the interviewer's relative tolerance of L+ speakers' communicative ability (e.g., Kerekes, 2006, 2007). Additionally, the pragmatic skills that candidates need to apply to job interviews are partially independent of oral proficiency (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). This was evident in Kerekes' (2006, 2007) job interview study, in which low-proficiency candidates nonetheless succeeded through establishing rapport with their interviewers. In a previous study with 11 L+ English university students (Travers, 2013), I found that the interviewer’s judgment of candidates’ oral proficiency only predicted evaluations when it was below a threshold level. Above that level, pragmatic factors better accounted for interview success. In that study, for candidates above a threshold level of oral proficiency, the interviewer was primarily sensitive to candidates’ attitudes towards their English. Individuals who represented their English as a
weakness made negative impressions, while candidates who emphasized their fluency in multiple languages made positive impressions.

At the same time, pragmatic knowledge can only be actualized with the linguistic tools that a candidate has at his or her disposal. Moreover, the pragmalinguistic skills that L+ candidates require to negotiate job interviews are significant. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990), for example, succinctly described the linguistic resources that L+ speakers needed to successfully 'sell' themselves to higher-status interviewers, which necessitated an ongoing balancing act of assertiveness and mitigating moves. With the example of Selling Yourself, in addition to identifying suitable moments to take initiative, candidates need to contextualize professional narratives to present themselves in a positive light (e.g., Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982), all while hedging self-promoting moves to avoid impressions of arrogance (e.g., Howard & Ferris, 1996). As mentioned, these tasks are made more difficult by the fact of attempting them from a lower-status position, and by the need to apparently straightforwardly respond to the interviewer's questions. In this way, candidates must sell themselves while the interviewer is simultaneously pursuing his or her own "private goals" (Clark, 1996, p. 34). These goals involve eliciting relevant evaluative information, both personal and professional, and may be 'hidden' behind a disarmingly supportive communication style (Birkner & Kern, 2008).

Preceding the question of pragmalinguistic ability is whether or not candidates recognize important pragmatic tasks. Cultural differences can be obstacles to realizing what constitutes appropriate interviewing behaviour. For the task of Selling Yourself, L+ candidates may downplay professional achievements due to a transfer of cultural interviewing norms (e.g., Gumperz, 1992a; Kerekes, 2007; see also Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990). For Personalizing Talk, candidates from collective-oriented cultures may have difficulty voicing personal opinions,
or placing themselves as protagonists in professional narratives (e.g., Louw et al., 2010; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; see also Birkner & Kern, 2008; Sniad, 2007). Additionally, cultural differences can lead to discomfort at disclosing personal information, due to a combination of the formal context, and the interviewer's non-familiarity and higher status. With regard to _Extending Responses_, minimal responses may reflect cultural expectations not to elaborate on resumé facts (e.g., Leri, 2000; Molinsky, 2005). Minimal responses can also express deference to the higher-status interviewer in some cultures (e.g., Bye et al., 2011; Kim & Suh, 1998; Ross, 1998). Considering these differences, L+ candidates can find themselves facing a double jeopardy. Their assumptions about appropriate behaviour may conflict with those of their interviewers, which are likely to lead to misunderstandings. Yet there is little evidence in the literature that these misunderstandings will be recognized as such, and repaired; instead, the inferencing work of evaluating candidates frequently means that misunderstandings lead to negative attitudinal impressions, with unfavourable consequences for the candidate (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998).

### 2.3 Interviewer Participation in Responses

Interviewers' contributions are easy to ignore, since the candidate is the sole focus of evaluation. However, it is problematic to assume that interviewers are simply neutral administrators who do not affect candidates' performances. Speakers' actions in any interaction are interdependent (e.g., Clark, 1996; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), even in institutional talk like job interviews, where conventions restrict the range of speakers' contributions (e.g., Drew & Heritage, 1992). As such, interviewer actions will variously affect candidates' responses, and by extension, the all-important impressions that those responses make (e.g., Brown, 2003; McNamara, 1997).
One critical issue influencing interviewer talk, especially with L+ candidates, is how to support mutual understanding while maintaining an unbiased stance for evaluative purposes. Providing contextualizing talk around a question can assist a candidate to provide a relevant response, which can reduce misunderstandings. More broadly, interviewer transparency about the procedure and target criteria can improve candidate performance, in terms of evaluations, and also relates to higher fairness ratings from candidates (Macan, 2009; see also Maurer et al., 2008). In this way, communicative support can reduce a sense of the interview's opacity for candidates, and indeed can reframe the conversation as a collaborative enterprise. To the extent that this support increases candidates' comfort, it can encourage them to 'open up' and convey a more complete picture of themselves (Kanter, 1995; Travers, 2013). Yet the interviewer's scaffolding and evaluative responsibilities may conflict, since extensive support can blur the line between clarifying the procedure for candidates and co-producing responses (Brown, 2003). Providing contextualizing talk around a question can assist a candidate to provide a relevant response, but for the sake of reliability the interviewer should be mindful of providing an equivalent degree of support to other candidates (e.g., Brown, 2003). With all of the overlapping demands on the interviewer, achieving an acceptable level of consistency in this regard is by no means an easy task. Arguably, however, avoiding these concerns by restricting interviewers' talk is equally problematic. This limits their capacity to clarify misunderstandings and prompt for more information, which are crucial for their evaluative task.

A number of researchers have been critical of interviewers for not taking satisfactory steps to facilitate candidates' understanding (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Bremer et al., 1996; Button, 1992; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). Bremer et al. (1996) argued that in L1-L+ institutional talk with power asymmetry, the interviewers’ greater familiarity with the
language, as well as their higher status, confer on them a larger share of the responsibility to ensure clear understanding. On the other hand, there are reasons why interviewers may not intervene to clarify misunderstandings. As mentioned, this may occur for fairness reasons, in order to ensure consistent administrations (e.g., Chapman & Zweig, 2005). Non-intervention may also occur simply because interviewers were unaware of a misunderstanding (e.g., Roberts & Sayers, 1998), but instead assumed that their (mis-)interpretation was correct. As Bremer et al. (1996) observed, in L1-L+ institutional talk, speakers are often unsure of each others' intentions, yet in most cases they behave as though do (see also Wagner & Gardner, 2004). In some cases, too, depending on the L+ candidate's speaking and listening ability, there may be too many misunderstandings to address and still maintain a coherent conversation. Elsewhere, interviewers may also ignore misunderstandings for face-saving reasons (Roberts & Sayers, 1998), or they may wait to intervene, in hopes that candidates will clarify the misunderstanding themselves (Wong, 2004). This is not unreasonable, since self-repair has been described as the preferred strategy in English conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). However, as Roberts and Sayers (1998) observed in their job interview study, 'wait-and-see' strategies from interviewers may not result in the candidate clarifying an ambiguous response. Thus, they recommended that interviewers intervene to resolve misunderstandings, since the importance of a clear response outweighs concerns about a loss of face. Indeed, Button (1992) cautioned that interviewers who do not clarify misunderstandings, then negatively evaluate candidates' non-relevant responses, are essentially reducing evaluative criteria to 'response relevance,' rather than the targeted competencies for the position.

Consistent administration and greater validity are at the heart of a strong endorsement of structured interviews within the Organizational Psychology literature (e.g., Chapman & Zweig,
In this line of research, structure typically refers to the following: job analysis-grounded questions (particularly situational or behavioural items, using the same questions for all candidates), limiting divergence from scripts (including prompts, elaboration, and follow-up talk), note taking, and using a single rating scale that is anchored in targeted criteria (e.g., Manroop et. al, 2013). Macan's (2009) review of job interview studies found that structured practices added criterion-related validity to interviews, though their predictive validity (i.e., for future job performance) was less clear. Moreover, unstructured interviews raise the likelihood that extraneous factors will influence interviewers' judgments (Dana et al., 2013). Since a wide range of 'invalid' factors have been found to affect evaluations in job interviews, including perceived similarity, first impressions, and attractiveness (e.g., Millar & Gallagher, 1997), there is a strong argument for limiting these factors through increased structure. From a legal and ethical perspective, too, structured interviews are designed to limit the effects of interviewer bias and ensure fair treatment for all candidates. It is also noteworthy that more standardized processes protect companies from complaints in Human Rights Tribunal cases (Simola et al., 2007).

The advantages of structured interviews are complicated with L+ candidates. On the one hand, basing the questions and rating on the job and its requirements should promote merit-based judgments and reduce similarity biases, which should be advantageous for all minority candidates. However, the ideal of a structured interview amongst researchers clearly conflicts with the reality amongst practitioners. Interviewers may acknowledge the value of greater structure, but to a greater or lesser extent do not employ standardized processes themselves (e.g., Dana et al., 2013; Macan, 2009; Simola et al., 2007). There are many possible reasons for this, including time constraints and a desire to have more control over the process (e.g., Macan,
Beyond these reasons, a highly structured format, with little interaction beyond the fixed script, de-personalizes the interview for both sides. Despite their advocacy of structure, Chapman and Zweig (2005) found that more rapport building is associated with less structure, which was also the preferred format for candidates. Moreover, while structured interviews are grounded in target criteria, many important criteria -- such as mental ability and personality -- are difficult to assess exclusively through responses to questions (Huffcutt, 2011). Instead, interviewers are likely to continue to use all available input to assess candidates, including nonverbal actions, small talk, and the way they respond to questions, in order to determine their hireability.

Based on an assumption that improved understanding will benefit both interviewers and candidates in fulfilling their interview roles, researchers have identified interviewer choices that can either facilitate or undermine effective communication with L+ candidates. These include whether or not interviewers outline the interview procedure, provide clear transitions, and contextualize questions (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Bremer et al., 1996). Other choices relate to intonation, and specifically stressing key words in questions (Gumperz, 1992a), repairing misunderstandings that do occur (Bremer et al., 1996; Roberts & Sayers, 1998), and being active listeners through backchanneling, nodding, and other nonverbal cues (Baptiste & Seig, 2007).

Despite recognizing the benefits of such moves, in terms of moving beyond communication difficulties to learn more about candidates, interviewers may still avoid using them, due to a belief that it remains the candidate's responsibility to achieve mutual understanding, rather than their own (Bremer et al., 1996).

In addition to choices related to misunderstandings, interviewers also prompt for more information about particular topics (e.g., Roberts & Sayers, 1998). However, such prompts are not always straightforward, since concerns exist about 'contaminating' the independent status of a
response by prompting it in a more favourable direction (e.g., Jensen, 2003). Such interventions may come at a cost for candidates, too, since interviewers may assume that candidates share their notion of what constitutes a sufficient response, and so may hold candidates accountable for what they consider unnecessary prompts (e.g., Gumperz, 1992a; Lipovsky, 2006). Additionally, there is variability in the types of prompts that interviewers use; some of these are not 'open' or neutral requests to extend responses (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; Thomas, 1984). Roberts and Sayers (1998) identified instances in their data where interviewers elicited agreement from candidates -- in the form of summaries or rephrasings -- which interpreted responses in favourable or unfavourable terms. In either case, eliciting agreement amounted to speaking for candidates, which limits their scope to develop a response in other directions.

Ultimately, interviewer communicative choices reside in a challenging grey area between these individuals' dual roles of administrator and evaluator. On the one hand, withholding repairs and prompts can greatly inhibit candidates' capacities to show their suitability for the position at hand. Such choices also undermine interviewers' ability to elicit valuable information about a candidate, and thus make confident judgments about suitability. On the other hand, intervening moves invite criticisms that interviewers are compromising tacitly independent candidate self-presentations.

2.4 Analyzing L+ Job Interviews

Interaction-based studies of job interviews have largely employed discourse or conversation analysis involving a limited number of cases (e.g., Button, 1992; Gumperz, 1992; Jensen, 2003; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). Parallel research within Organizational Psychology has relied primarily on survey or controlled experimental data to identify critical factors in
evaluations (e.g., Bye et al., 2011; Chen, Yang, & Lin, 2010; Howard & Ferris, 1996; Krings & Olivares, 2007). A clear advantage of the latter is the psychometric power of results, thanks to the large samples sizes in such research. On the other hand, the analysis and findings derive from data about job interviews, rather than from job interviews themselves. As Dipboye et al. (2012) noted, the interview interaction itself is absent in much Psychology research, and in light of the relevance of impression management tactics, as well as differences in interviewer styles, this distance from the dynamics of the interaction is problematic. In contrast, interaction analysis can get 'inside' the interview to view the effects of moment-by-moment communicative choices on the developing interaction. Yet the generalizability of interaction-based research is often limited by its focus on a small number cases. Moreover, the moments that receive analysis are frequently selected by the researchers themselves, so it is not always clear whether the interviewer shared the researcher's views regarding those moments' importance.

A desirable synthesis is an analysis that focuses on interview interaction itself, with a satisfactory number of participants, but takes the further step of empirically relating interaction to evaluations. For this purpose, it is necessary to ground the analysis in a theoretically grounded model of how interview judgments develop in real time. This model needs to distinguish between an evaluation of the candidate's interview performance, which is the focus of this project, and final hiring decisions, which are affected by backstage discussion and other variables (e.g., Wong, 2003). Dipboye et al. (2012) distinguished between two decision-making models. One is a connectionist model in which interviewers use a limited number of inferences about a candidate, based on a restricted exposure to him or her, to infer a wider range of traits/attributes about that individual. This version is compatible with the oft-mentioned importance of first impressions in job interviews (e.g., Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002),
which can be described as an initial convergence of multiple impressions. These are particularly related to nonverbal features such as attractiveness, smiling, a handshake, and tone of voice. The model is also compatible with ‘sense-making,’ in which interviewers interpret new information in terms of already-formed impressions about an individual (e.g., Dana et al., 2013). The second judgment model mentioned by Dipboye et al. (2012) is a dual process model. This view of decision-making hypothesizes that judgments are based on both a systematic/thoughtful processing of incoming data, and also on rapid/spontaneous impressions that occur during an interview.

The Brunswik Lens Model (see Figure 1), which I employed in this study, has been applied to describe judgment processes in a variety of contexts (e.g., Brunswik, 1952; de Meijer et al., 2007; Hammond, 1990; Karelaia & Hogarth, 2008; Thompson et al., 2005; Wolf, 2005). The model analogizes judgments to an optical lens that imperfectly integrates multiple sensory cues in perceiving an object. Following the model, judgement processes are explained in terms of identifying and interpreting complex cues from an "ecology" (Hammond, 1990, p. 230).

![Figure 1. Adapted Brunswik Lens Model for job interviews](image)

With job interviews, de Meijer et al. (2007) adapted the model to describe the interviewer's process of giving weight to multiple sources of information in order to evaluate a
candidate. In this sense, the lens model is commensurate with both a connectionist and dual process model. While the model allows for the weighting of some cues over others, it does not make assumptions about the type of processing that is going on – whether inductive, deductive, or more direct ‘gut’ feelings about candidates. The model is akin to Dana et al.’s (2013) description of an interviewer sifting through a multitude of “noisy signals” in order to identify valid information on which to base judgments (p. 513). The de Meijer et al. study (2007) found that ethnic majority interviewers used more cues to evaluate ethnic minority than majority candidates, including more cues that were not considered relevant to the position. For de Meijer et al., the ‘cues' (i.e., criteria) were pre-determined rather than emerging from the interviewer's interaction with candidates. Thus, their interest was the choice of cues and the relative weights that the interviewers gave to them. That version of the model does not satisfactorily account for emergent criteria (i.e., not predetermined) in interview interaction. As such, it is worthwhile to look more at the judgment process and avoid determining the cues that the interviewers may focus on. Instead, it is up to the interviewer to decide on the within-interaction moments that are relevant to evaluations. This orientation assumes that such moments closely reflect (and thus tap into) the decision-making process itself. Within this perspective, interviewers continually identify – and also give weight to – evaluative information as the talk progresses. Their judgments regarding the interview are thus represented as an aggregate of moment-by-moment impressions.

Video-stimulated recall with interviewers represents a possible means of accessing those moments and their weighting in the interviewer's mind (e.g., Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Huang, 2013). Among other things, this procedure can reduce the influence of
post-interview talk and cognition (i.e., with a rating scale, and/or talk between raters) on emergent impressions during the interview (Dipboye et al., 2012).

Figure 1 illustrates a Lens Model as it is adapted for job interviews. The decision-maker is the interviewer, the object of evaluation is the candidate, and the assessable cues emerge from the dynamic interaction between the two. What is important is the interviewer's choice of candidate actions or attributions (i.e., cues) to focus on, and the weight that the interviewer gives to those foci. These issues are represented in Figure 1 in the lines attached to cues. The figure shows that the candidate is not a passive object with stable attributes, but can actively promote certain information, in line with impression management tactics. However, the interviewer may or may not notice that information or interpret it in the way the candidate intended. The participants also may diverge on the relevance or weighting of cues that are 'in play.'

With regard to other analytical issues, a limitation of some previous studies is that they have taken a 'one-way' perspective and focused almost exclusively on candidate actions (e.g., Akinnaso & Ajiorotutu, 1982; Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Lipovsky, 2006; Louw et al., 2010). However, ignoring the interviewer's contributions misrepresents the interaction as an independent performance. As such, the approach fails to consider the effects of interviewer actions on candidates and their abilities to negotiate their suitability. In contrast, some L+ studies have focused on interviewer talk (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). These studies have illuminated challenges that L+ candidates face in negotiating their suitability with L1 or near-native L+ interviewers. However, those studies have overwhelmingly focused on non-facilitative interviewer actions and how these undermined mutual understanding and rapport. Gumperz (1992a), for example, acknowledged a one-sided interest in "culturally specific inferential practices, where the difference in interpretive
criteria has a pejorative effect on the outcome” (p. 302). Approaching the data with an interest in unsuccessful communication ignores how and why other L+ candidates have succeeded, and raises concerns about researcher bias in the selection and analysis of excerpts (e.g., Brown & Rodgers, 2002; see also Johnson & Saville-Troike, 1992, p. 604). Moreover, a consistent focus on non-facilitative interviewer actions provides an incomplete understanding of interviewers' challenges in administering interviews, developing evaluations, and also potentially dealing with cultural and linguistic factors. As a counterpoint, a pilot job interview study for this project (Travers, 2013) took a comprehensive look at the interviewer’s actions. The study found that he consistently used active listening features, clearly marked transitions, placed emphasis on key words in questions, and attempted to repair all misunderstandings. Not surprisingly, the candidates’ impressions of the interviewer were overwhelmingly positive. Yet the interviewer’s engaged style also served his purposes as an evaluator, since the candidates spoke frankly and thus provided a great deal of information that the interviewer used to make determinations of suitability. This points to the potential for facilitative interviewer communication to benefit both sides of the conversation.

These concerns are exacerbated by methodological issues, particularly the presentation of a small number of 'representative' examples. Readers have no choice but to assume that the excerpts are indeed representative, but without evidence from a more comprehensive analysis, doubts will remain about the generalizability of conclusions. Why were particular candidates' data selected over others? Were those individuals similar to others in the sample, or were they exceptional? A means of addressing these concerns is through a mixed-methods design that combines close analysis of representative extracts with a broader analysis incorporating all available data. This was the case with Kerekes' (2006) job placement agency interview study (see
also Kerekes, 2007). That study included two complementary analyses. One of them assessed relations between candidates' interview success and social variables (i.e., gender, L1/L+ status, and ethnicity). A second analysis identified emergent themes (e.g., perceived 'trustworthiness' in Kerekes' terms) that differentiated successful and less successful candidates. Kerekes then employed discourse analysis to understand how these themes were negotiated at key moments. The design ensured that the choice of extracts was not based on an imported research agenda, but was "grounded" in data-internal interview results and thematic findings (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 144).

A related methodological concern is that participants' own perspectives on featured examples are often ignored (e.g., Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982; Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a). Thus, the significance of excerpts to interviewers' evaluations has not always been demonstrated or explained. Did focused-on interaction reflect the researcher's imported interests, or was it included because participants identified those moments as relevant to outcomes? More consistently integrating participant perspectives through stimulated recall is an obvious way of addressing the problem (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Lipovsky, 2006; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; Travers, 2013). Such ‘triangulation’ represents a hedge against researcher bias and enriches understandings of events (e.g., Mackey & Gass, 2005; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). In my pilot study (Travers, 2013), for example, the comments that were elicited in the video-stimulated recall process were then used as a guide to the moments to focus on for the discourse analysis.

In interview research with stimulated recall, the procedural details have not always been transparent (e.g., Lipovsky, 2006). Did it involve video? How much time elapsed between the interview and the recall session? Did the interviewer provide general comments or focused
comments that targeted 'critical' moments in evaluations? Did the interviewer select moments to highlight, or did the session take the form of 'member checks' of moments that the researcher had already analyzed (e.g., Sandelowski, 2008)? These variables can all affect the trustworthiness of analysis.

A final question is what constitutes an effective ‘close analysis’ of L+ interview interaction. Two approaches that recognize talk as co-constructed and have been applied to job interview research are conversation analysis (CA) (e.g., Button, 1992; Drew & Heritage, 1992; Sacks et al., 1974; Schegloff, 1992; Wagner & Gardner, 2004), and an Interactional Sociolinguistic (IS) analysis (e.g., Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998), which primarily draws on theoretical work by Gumperz (e.g., 1982, 1992b, 1999, 2001). CA's focus on turn-taking choices allows for a detailed and participant-oriented understanding of communicative choices at consequential moments. However, a CA shortcoming is its reliance upon interactional data alone for analysis (e.g., Birkner & Kern, 2008). That point, along with a closely related concern -- that CA assumes shared conversational conventions between speakers -- is problematic with L+ interaction. Since misunderstandings (and culturally relative norms) are likely in those contexts, an IS approach questions whether conversational assumptions are indeed shared, and considers the implications of shared or unshared interpretive frameworks for communication (e.g., Gumperz, 1999). An IS analysis is grounded in the ways speakers signal context through verbal and nonverbal cues. Gumperz has termed these units 'contextualization cues' (e.g., 1992b, 1999), and they are functional in indexing situated interpretations of talk. As such, these cues are also visible to researchers, who have identified particular cues as sources of
misunderstandings and negative impressions in L1-L+ interviews (e.g., Gumperz, 1982, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998).

Contextualization cues can also signal 'frames' that speakers are working within. The use of 'frame' here derives from Goffman (1974), and describes the fluid definitions of the talk individuals see themselves as engaged in, and also what speakers perceive to be going on at given moments. With interviews, analyses using the layered tools of contextualization cues and frames have explained misunderstandings both in terms of relatively subtle interactional features (e.g., Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Gumperz, 1992a), but also in terms of broader mismatches in speakers' notions of 'what is going on' (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Jensen, 2003; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). A concern with this approach is that frames are not explicit in interaction data, and thus involve a degree of researcher interpretation. For this reason, it is necessary to ground interpretations of frames in evidence from contextualization cues. Participant consultation is also valuable in order to check frames that researchers have posited for particular moments in interviews (e.g., Roberts & Sayers, 1998).

2.5 Research Questions

In summary, a great deal of research has concurred regarding the importance of pragmatic factors in the success or failure of L+ candidates in job interviews. However, this accumulation of evidence has not translated into studies that assess the efficacy of pragmatics training for L+ candidates. In general, pragmatics instruction for L+ learners has proven successful, though most research on the subject has focused on individual speech acts, rather than training that starts with an analysis of a particular type of institutional talk, such as the job interview. Additionally, while job interview analyses have tended to focus on the candidate alone, an important contribution of research with L+ candidates has been to show the failings, in
many cases, of the interviewers as co-participants in the talk. Thus, it is equally important to look at the interviewers, both as a source of factors that influence their evaluations, and also to look at their actions within the talk itself. With this two-way orientation to L+ job interviews in mind, this study proposes the following research questions:

1. Does training in job interview pragmatics facilitate improvement in candidates' job interview performance, in comparison to a control group?

2. Which factors most influence interviewers' evaluations of all candidates?

3. Which factors distinguish more and less successful candidates from both experimental and control groups?

4. To what extent do L1 or near-native L+ interviewers employ actions that facilitate candidates’ understanding?

5. To what extent do L1 or near-native L+ interviewers participate in negotiating candidates’ responses?
3.1 Overall Design

The section provides an overview of the study, which is further elaborated in the following sections. Figure 2 presents the study’s design. The study enlisted a mixed-methods approach to address the research questions. Integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses has the potential to generate a rich, mutually-informing understanding of complex job interview dynamics (e.g., Bazeley, 2015; Dörnyei, 2007; Hashemi, 2012; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Mackey & Gass, 2005), including the interaction between interviewer and candidate, as well as the relationship between interview talk and evaluation. For candidate performance and training, a quantitative (pre-/post-) analysis provided a picture of the efficacy of the training components. Additionally, coding of interviewer comments from a video-stimulated recall process generated groups of themes, which illuminated the interviewers’ preoccupations as they generated evaluations. These themes, in turn, informed a reassessment of the pragmatic items in the training lesson, which can lead to improvements in future training. In this way, the methods created a mutually-illuminating interface (e.g., Hesse-Biber, 2014), with a practical aim of improving future training. On the other side of the table, a quantitative analysis of Interviewer Actions provided a comprehensive view of the interviewers’ use of actions that can facilitate L+ candidates’ comprehension and comfort. A parallel qualitative analysis of key moments in the interaction offered an additional perspective: a situated examination of the talk that precipitated positive or negative impressions. As such, the compensatory – or “synergistic” (Hesse-Biber, 2014) – analyses of interviewer participation allowed for a multifaceted picture of the interviewer’s talk and its implications for candidates’ performances.
The study involved videorecording job interviews for a hypothetical front desk position at a Victoria hotel. All interviews were approximately 15 minutes and used the same questions (Appendix A). The volunteer candidates ($N=27$) were L+ English undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in Co-op programs at UVic (see Appendix B for complete candidate information). Each candidate participated in a ‘first’ interview, which was administered by myself. Within one week, all candidates then did a ‘second’ interview with a hotel manager with extensive interviewing experience ($N=9$) (see Appendix C for complete interviewer information), who each interviewed three candidates.

As Figure 2 shows, there were two training conditions and one control group. One group of candidates ($n=9$) received Feedback + Lesson after their ‘first’ interview. A second group ($n=9$) received Feedback only after the ‘first’ interview. These training sessions were carried out by the researcher (myself). Members of the control group ($n=9$) did not receive their Feedback.
+ Lesson until following the ‘second’ interviews. To assess the efficacy of the training, the unit of measurement was interview performance ratings using a hospitality-specific scale.

With regard to the interviewers, video-stimulated recall sessions generated comments, which were the means of understanding the factors that played a role in interviewer evaluations. Additionally, the video data from the interviews allowed for a quantitative assessment of the interviewers’ ability to communicate effectively with L+ candidates. Finally, a qualitative analysis considered the interviewers’ participation in candidate responses. In particular, the analysis identified the ways that the interviewers participated in the talk. The analysis then looked at the implications of those moves for both participants, in terms of the immediate context of the response and in terms of its broader evaluative status.

### 3.2 Participants

Twenty-seven students in the University of Victoria's Co-operative Education (Co-op) program were recruited for the study (Appendix B) with the assistance of Co-op staff. The conditions for participation were that individuals be L+ English speakers and be enrolled in a university Co-op program. Information about the study and invitations to join were forwarded to coordinators from different faculties, who circulated them via email and social media. I briefly met with interested individuals to explain the study in more detail and ascertain their availability.

The individuals who agreed to participate comprised 16 female and 11 male candidates, with a mean age of 24.1 ($SD = 2.1$). The average length of residency in an English-speaking country was 16.3 months ($SD = 11.9$). The candidates came from a variety of faculties, though the majority ($n = 15$) were Business students. As mentioned, the candidates were divided between Masters' programs ($n = 15$) and Bachelors' programs ($n = 11$), while one individual was a Doctoral student. The most common first language was Mandarin ($n = 14$), followed by
Brazilian Portuguese \((n = 3)\), Hindi \((n = 2)\), Korean \((n = 2)\), and then one speaker each of Bengali, German, Kalabari, Moore, Spanish, and Taiwanese. In terms of interviewing experience, the average number of previous job interviews was 3.2 \( (SD = 2.4) \), which were equally divided between English \((51\%)\) and the candidates' first languages \((49\%)\). In addition, the candidates reported their most recent scores on the TOEFL® (paper-based and iBT®) and IELTS™ English language proficiency tests. Since all of the candidates were currently enrolled in UVic programs, they had met or exceeded the required scores for admission of IELTS 6.5, TOEFL® 575, or TOEFL iBT® 90. Finally, the self-reported English usage categories on the Background Questionnaire were 'During Classes,' 'Friends,' 'Home,' 'Social Media,' and 'TV and Movies.' The highest usage was 'During Classes' \( (All \ the \ Time = 100\%) \), followed by 'TV and Movies' \( (All \ the \ Time/Often = 78\%) \), 'Social Media' and 'Friends' \( (All \ the \ Time/Often = 70\%) \), and then 'Home' \( (All \ the \ Time/Often = 41\%) \).

Nine experienced interviewers were recruited via email (Appendix C). Conditions for participation were that the individuals be experienced interviewers (i.e., more than 25 job interviews), and that they be native or near-native speakers of English. Information and an invitation to join the study were initially sent to managers at sixty Victoria-area hotels. I briefly met interested individuals at their hotels in order to explain the goals and procedures in more detail, and to answer their questions.

The individuals who agreed to participate comprised 5 female and 4 male interviewers. All of the individuals held management-level positions at their respective hotels at the time of the study. Their self-reported interviewing experience was more than the 25+ interviews that were set as a minimum, ranging from approximately 50 to 500 interviews \( (M=303; SD=192) \). In terms of spoken languages, 7 of the 9 interviewers spoke English as a first language, with the
other two identifying French and Swedish as their L1s. Those two individuals were near-native English speakers, with barely detectable accents. Of the seven L1 English speakers, only two of seven reported more than an elementary knowledge of an additional language. Finally, the interviewers reported their frequency of interaction with L+ English speakers, on a 5-point scale from 'None' to 'A Great Deal,' regarding four contexts: 'Family Members,' 'Social Acquaintances,' 'Colleagues at Work,' and 'Business Clients/Partners.' The most frequent interactions were professional. Most interviewers reported regular interaction in the 'Colleagues at Work' and 'Business Clients/Partners' categories (Often/A Great Deal = 78%). Non-professional contact was the opposite; reported social and family interaction was very infrequent (Often/A Great Deal = 22%).

To avoid bias, candidates were placed into the control group or one of the experimental groups in the order that they signed up, as follows:

Candidate 1 → Control Group
Candidate 2 → Feedback Group
Candidate 3 → Feedback + Lesson Group
Candidate 4 → Control Group
...

For logistical reasons, it was not possible to randomly match interviewers to candidates. The interviewers provided possible dates and times to carry out their interviews, plus a post-interview review of each video, which meant an approximately 3-hour commitment. The candidates likewise provided their availabilities, and then were assigned -- in the order that they signed up for the study -- to the first available interview slot.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

3.3.1 Job interview questions. The simulated job interview questions form (Appendix A) provides a frame for the interviewers to follow. The form moves through a common greeting-
body-closing sequence (e.g., Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982; Kanter, 1995). Due to the brevity of the interviews (approximately 15 minutes), the greeting and closing sections are necessarily short (1-2 minutes each). Nonetheless, there is time allotted at the beginning for introductions and small talk, which can have important effects on interviewers' first impressions, often relating to nonverbal actions such as shaking hands and smiling, as well as the initial rapport that the speakers generate (e.g., Burns, 2009). With regard to the body of the interview, I selected the preliminary questions from a list of frequently-asked job interview questions on UVic's Co-op program website¹. The selections balanced items that focused on the candidate, the front desk position, and the candidate's experience. The experience questions are 'behavioural,' which ask candidates to describe experiences in which they displayed target qualities. These types of questions have research support for their strong criterion validities (e.g., Manroop et al., 2013; Millar & Gallagher, 1997). The preliminary questions were then validated with three hotel managers with extensive interviewing experience. Individually, the managers were asked whether they would use the questions, if there were other questions they preferred (i.e., which were not on the list), and about the wording of the questions they were satisfied with. The questions about the candidate and the position met with approval from all three experts. At the same time, all but one question ("Tell me about yourself") was adapted and/or reworded in line with the managers' suggestions. For instance, "What are your skills related to this position?" was changed to "What related skills and experience do you have?" The behavioural questions were also altered, in accordance with the managers' advice, to give them a broader focus. For example, a question that asked about a "stressful" situation was changed to target a "challenging" situation.

¹ The source of the questions is the University of Victoria Co-op website: http://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/assets/docs/coretool/Sample_interview_questions.pdf
Another question about working with a "difficult" colleague was changed to focus on "collaborating" within a team. The question "Where do you see yourself in five years time?" was removed because of time considerations. At the same time, spaces for two 'open' job-related questions were added to the frame, time permitting, if the interviewer had other questions he or she usually asked candidates. This reflected the fact that each of the manager-consultants mentioned idiosyncratic questions that they liked to ask candidates. For example, one manager said she always asked candidates "What are three words that a former supervisor would use to describe you?", though this was not a question the other two managers mentioned. This choice added a degree of inconsistency to the interview administrations, but I felt that this leeway would make the interviews more naturalistic to the interviewers, which would add to the ecological validity of a study using simulated interviews.

3.3.2 Candidate performance scale. An adapted hospitality-specific rating scale was used to assess candidates' performance in their interviews (Appendix D). The scale was publicly available from a hospitality recruiting company's website (Horizon Hospitality, 2010). The instrument rates candidates on a list of criteria using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1= Not Acceptable; 7=Exceptional), with N/A (Not Applicable) available for items that raters felt were not addressed in the interview.

The original instrument was adapted following consultations with three Victoria hotel managers\(^2\) with extensive interviewing experience. I interviewed the managers individually and asked them whether the scale concurred with their priorities when evaluating candidates for a front desk position. This included recommending items that were not on the original scale. Based on the managers' responses, some items were added to the scale, while others were removed. The

\(^2\) One of the three managers also participated in the study (II) as an interviewer.
items that were added were all features that the managers rated highly and felt should be represented. These were 'Approachability,' 'Enthusiasm,' 'Knowledge about the Hotel,' 'Professional Communication,' and 'Question(s) for the Interviewer.' The items that were eliminated were 'Attention to Detail,' 'Integrity,' 'Learning Ability,' 'Relevant Educational Background,' and 'Written Communication Skills.' They were either removed because of their perceived lower importance in comparison to other items (e.g., 'Written Communication Skills'), because there was a perceived overlap with other items (e.g., 'Relevant Educational Background'), or because of reliability concerns in assessing the construct (e.g., 'Integrity'). In addition, two final items that the managers endorsed were eliminated before rating began. These were 'Professional Appearance' and 'Knowledge about the Hotel.' 'Professional Appearance' was removed because some candidates dressed casually (e.g., jeans and t-shirts) to their 'first' interviews, and it was felt this item could skew their ratings as a whole. 'Knowledge about the Hotel' was removed for obvious reasons, since it was not possible for candidates to research the fictitious 'Bayside Hotel and Suites.'

The scale was then individually pilot-tested by myself and two additional raters, using a video of a simulated job interview for a front desk position. To contribute a range of expertise, one of the additional raters was a language teacher with experience as a speaking test examiner, and the other rater was an experienced job interviewer. The raters were asked to watch the video, rate the candidate using the scale, and then comment on the scale's usability. Following this process, one item -- 'Verbal Communication Skills' -- was reworded as 'Clear Understanding and Speaking,' in order to distinguish it from 'Professional Communication.' Additionally, two nonverbal-focused items, 'Professional Appearance' and 'Nonverbal Communication Skills,' were added to the scale. This addition was because the manager consultants had stressed the
importance of nonverbal impressions, yet the raters did not feel that this emphasis was clear or sufficiently represented in the 'Approachability' item. Additionally, the raters agreed that the instrument's usability would be improved if related items were grouped together. Thus, the final 14 items were divided into two sections, 'Attitude and Communication,' and 'Abilities and Experience.'

3.3.3 Candidate training lesson plan. A job interview pragmatics lesson was developed for the study (Appendix E). The one-time lesson was approximately 45 minutes and was designed for a one-on-one setting. The materials consisted of PowerPoint slides (Appendix F), which were supported by short video clips from a previous L+ job interview study (Travers, 2013)³. The focus on pragmatics reflects robust evidence from Organizational Psychology that impression management tactics can and do affect interviewer evaluations in candidates' favour (e.g., Barrick, Shaffer & DeGrassi, 2009; Dipboye et al., 2012; Howard & Ferris, 1996; Huffcutt, 2011; Macan, 2009). This point is also strongly supported by studies of interview interaction, which have consistently found that the way candidates present themselves affects interviewer impressions as much or more than experience and qualifications (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Birkner & Kern, 2008; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Lipovsky, 2006; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). A concern is whether a one-time training session can make a significant impact on candidates' performance. Clearly some attributes, particularly linguistic skills such as pronunciation, lexical knowledge, and listening comprehension, are not amenable to modification in a brief lesson. However, some basic pragmatic information (e.g., nonverbal actions) can be readily explained and demonstrated in

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³ The video clips were used with permission from the participants in that study.
video, within a short time frame. Moreover, Taguchi’s (2015) synthesis of pragmatic instruction studies did not find longer treatments to be significantly more effective than shorter ones. Thus, there is some reason to believe that even a one-time training session can facilitate performance improvements.

The slides focused on pragmatic factors in candidate self-presentations that have been identified in the literature as important for job interview success. These are (a) working within a *Selling Yourself* frame (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Kerekes, 2007; Powers, 2010; (b) personalizing talk (e.g., Birkner & Kern, 2008; Burns, 2009; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Kerekes, 2006; Scheuer, 2001); (c) sufficient responses (Gumperz, 1992; Lipovsky, 2006; Scheuer, 2001); and (d) nonverbal actions (e.g., Allen, 2004; Burns, 2009; Howard & Ferris, 1996).

Specifically, the following points were emphasized:

- **Selling Yourself**
  - Talk about yourself in positive terms, and avoid disclosing negative information unnecessarily.
  - Use answers as opportunities to highlight relevant skills and experience.

- **Sufficient Answers**
  - Come prepared with positive stories that highlight relevant skills and experience.
  - Be sure that answers are sufficient by using the STAR structure (Situation-Task-Action-Result).

- **Personalizing Talk**
  - Be prepared to share information about hobbies, family, and friends, which can create rapport with the interviewer.
  - Talk about career and education choices in terms of personal interests and motivations, rather than as passively undertaken.
  - Put yourself at the centre of professional stories.

- **Nonverbal Actions**
  - Dress should be '+1,' or slightly more formal than people already working in the target job.
  - Give a firm handshake at the beginning (and end) of the interview.
  - Be an 'active listener' in terms of body position, backchannels, nodding, and facial responsiveness.
o Avoid negative actions such as leaning back, body and object touching, and evading eye contact.

Each pragmatic point was supported by video clips that showed successful and unsuccessful realizations of the factors. The combination reflected an emphasis on awareness-raising (i.e., input) over practice in the lesson, which recognizes that these features first need to be noticed before they can be learned (Schmidt, 1990). This is particularly true with subtle pragmatic features that learners may not notice on their own (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kasper & Rose, 1999), in some cases because of cultural differences (e.g., Leri, 2000). The video clips in particular gave learners the opportunity to recognize and analyze the pragmatic 'tasks' in authentic interaction, rather than as abstract concepts, which is why video is broadly recommended in the literature (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005; Bloch, 2011; Kanter, 1995).

3.3.4 Interviewer and candidate comments forms. Two similar forms were developed to record interviewer and candidate comments during video-stimulated recall sessions following job interviews. The Interviewer Comments form (Appendix G) is designed to be completed by the researcher with the interviewer's information. First the interviewer is asked to provide an Interview Score out of 10. The score represents the interviewer's evaluation of the candidate's suitability for the position. Notably, the form asks the interviewer to base that score on the interview. This distinguishes the score from the larger question of whether or not the candidate will be offered the job, which takes into account other information (e.g., resumé, references, backstage discussions with managers, and so on) that is unrelated to job interview performance (Dipboye et al., 2012). The next section on the form provides space for the researcher to write down interviewer comments during the video-stimulated recall session. The instructions ask the
interviewer, during the video review, to comment on moments that made a positive or negative impression on him/her, and to comment on other positive or negative impressions that arise during video review. This method aims to capture, as nearly as possible, the interviewer's evaluative processing as the interview developed. To that end, the form reflects a Lens model of decision-making that was adopted in this study (Brunswik, 1952; de Meijer et al., 2007; Hammond, 1990; Karelaia & Hogarth, 2008; Thompson, et al., 2005). Basically, the model represents judgments in terms of discerning relevant 'cues' (i.e., information) from a large pool of available options, then using the selected cues to make a decision about the object. With job interviews, this translates to identifying attributes or incremental moments as the interaction develops, then using that information to make a judgment about the candidate's suitability. The goal of the form is to record the cues that the interviewers compile for their judgments. In this case, the cues are operationalized as evaluative comments that the interviewer made as he or she reviewed the video, which the researcher writes down on the form. On the form, there is also space to write down the 'weight' that the interviewer ascribes to that moment or attribution. The 'weight' ranges from 1 (“mild impression”) to 3 (“strong impression”), for both positive or negative comments. The weighting also comes from the Lens model, and seeks to capture the differential importance that interviewers will give to some moments or attributions over others. Finally, there is also space for the researcher to write down the time that the comment relates to in the video, which facilitates later analysis. To reduce the amount that the researcher influences the recall process, the form contains open-ended (i.e., non-leading) instructions to report any positive and negative impressions, rather than guiding the process with focused questions and/or researcher comments (Gass & Mackey, 2000). To this end, the instructions also mention that the
researcher will not interfere, such as by asking about particular moments, but will simply record the comments on the form.

The Candidate Comments form (Appendix H) similarly provides space for the researcher to write down candidates' comments during their video-stimulated recall sessions. Instructions ask candidates to explain their communicative choices at moments during the interview, or to comment on other impressions.

In addition to the comments sections on the interviewer and candidate forms, each form has an additional section. On the interviewer's form, that section focuses on the candidate's English ability. The interviewer is instructed to give a Likert-type rating that matches his/her impression of the candidate’s English ability for the job, between 1 (“Not good enough for the position”) and 7 (“Exceeded expectations for the position”). An additional item asks the interviewer to comment on the degree to which the candidate's language ability affected their evaluation. This rating is used at the analysis stage to compare with the candidate's interview performance score. This measure was used in lieu of an independent language assessment, in part due to the ecological validity (i.e., similarity to authentic interview practices) of having the interviewer assess the candidate's English level, which is why the instructions ask the interviewer to consider the candidate's ability for the job. While some organizations and positions may require a minimum score on a generic language proficiency test, there is mixed evidence for the predictive validity of those tests for career performance (e.g., McNamara, 1996). Instead, in many cases, it is the interview itself that serves as a de facto language test (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Kerekes, 2007). The amount that interviewers focus on language ability, and their severity in judging it, may differ a great deal depending on the demands of the target position (Kerekes, 2007). In this case, the front desk position in this study clearly requires a relatively high level of
verbal (and to a lesser extent, written) communication skills, and in fact this requirement was made explicit in the job posting that both candidates and interviewers received (Appendix I). Thus, it was up to the interviewer to determine whether the candidate's language ability, among the other assessment criteria, was adequate for the position. In terms of language competencies, the pragmatic skillfulness involved in this task depends on, but is distinguishable from, linguistic competence (e.g., Kasper & Rose, 1999). For this reason, candidates with limited L+ linguistic skills have succeeded in job interviews due to their pragmatic abilities (e.g., Kerekes, 2006, 2007). In a job interview, then, a candidate's basic oral proficiency is subsumed within the central goal-oriented task of showing his or her suitability for the position.

On the candidate form, a final section asks candidates to describe their impressions of the interviewer. Candidates are asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements focusing on their comfort with the interviewer, their sense that the interviewer tried to facilitate mutual understanding, and their sense of the interviewer's professionalism and fairness. The aim was for the items to target different areas of interviewing performance. The 'comfort' item related to perceptions of the interviewer's friendliness, or fostering a safe and comfortable environment for the candidate to speak openly (e.g., Kanter, 1995); the 'mutual understanding' item targeted the clarity of the interviewer's speech and how he or she negotiated understandings (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Bremer et al., 1996); the 'professionalism' item related to perceptions of the interviewer's competence, such as his or her preparedness and organization (e.g., Dipboye et al., 2012); and the 'fairness' item targeted the perceived equitability of the interview, or giving the candidate a reasonable opportunity to succeed (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; Sniad, 2007). The four items are on a Likert-type scale (1 = ‘completely disagree’; 5 = ‘completely agree’). These items are followed by a question that invites candidates
to share any other comments they have about the interviewer. The scores and comments can then be used as one means of assessing the interviewers' performance.

3.3.5 Interviewer actions form. An Interviewer Actions form was used to assess the interviewers' effectiveness in facilitating L+ candidates' understanding (Appendix J). The instrument was motivated by criticisms of unfavourable interviewer behaviour with L+ candidates (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Bremer et al., 1996; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998), and sought to provide a systematic picture of targeted actions across interviews. The instrument comprises a battery of measures, which were first used in a smaller-scale L+ simulated job interview study (Travers, 2013). The targeted actions reflect recommendations and/or observations from previous L+ interview research (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996; Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Kanter, 1995; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). Specifically, the actions were observed to facilitate candidates' understanding, or were recommended due to their absence in interviews with communication breakdowns.

The instrument's categories are 'Active Listening' (actions: eye contact, nodding, backchanneling), 'Transitions' (actions: transition cues, contextualization, repetition/rephrasing), 'Clear Speech,' (actions: sentence stress, speech rate, lexical complexity), and 'Repair' (action: repairing misunderstandings). The 'Active Listening' measures reflect the value of interviewer engagement with candidates. Surveyed candidates have reported greater comfort with a high-engagement interviewing style (e.g., Dipboye et al., 2012), because it increases openness and

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4 The rationale for including or omitting an action also related to reliable measurement. For reliable coding, it was considered necessary to choose actions that arguably facilitate understanding whenever an interviewer employs them. In other words, it was deemed inadvisable to introduce subcategories. Pausing, for example, is not included, because while interviewers may use pauses to give candidates more time to formulate responses, other pauses (e.g., hesitations) may negatively affect understanding.
rapport between the speakers (e.g., Kanter, 1995). The 'Transitions' actions reflect the value of signposting cues for L+ speakers, who are likely to depend on such contextualization to a greater extent than L1 speakers (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996). Those actions also contrast with abrupt topic switches that are associated with an aggressive interviewing style (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007). The 'Clear Speech' category reflects the value of using intonation to highlight key information words (e.g., Gumperz, 1992), and also reflects potential difficulties for L+ speakers to follow rapid speech (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996; Jones, Berry, & Stevens, 2007; Zhao, 1997). Finally, the 'Repair' measure reflects the value of interviewers intervening to clarify misunderstandings with candidates (e.g., Button, 1992; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). One difference from the pilot study was the addition of ‘lexical complexity’ as a measure, which has been identified as one source of misunderstandings in interviews (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Bremer et al., 1996).

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

3.4.1 ‘First’ interviews. Participants who agreed to join the study then signed voluntary consent forms, which had been approved by UVic's Human Ethics Board, and which included permission to video- and audio-record the interviews for later analysis. The individuals also completed a brief background questionnaire (Appendix K), which included information about previous job interviews and job interview training, as well as details that were relevant to their English proficiency: test scores, length of residency, and everyday English usage. The individuals also received a copy of the Job Posting for the target position (Appendix I). They were instructed to read the posting carefully and to use it to prepare for their 'first' job interview. Following this introductory meeting, I also emailed a basic resume template (Appendix L) to the candidates who had signed up. They were asked to complete an electronic copy of the resume and email it to me prior to the 'first' interview, and to print out a copy to bring to the interview.
All candidates took part in a 'first' simulated job interview, with the same researcher (myself), for the target hotel front-desk position. I had experience administering simulated job interviews (N=11) with L+ speakers for a previous study (Travers, 2013), as well as running simulated job interviews with Business English students on several occasions at a private language school. I also have extensive (7 years) language speaking test interviewing experience as a certified examiner (Cambridge English Language Assessment). In addition, consultations with professional interviewers in the hospitality industry prepared me for the interviewer role.

As mentioned, the candidates had previously completed and sent electronic copies of their resumés, which I brought to the interview. There were simple pre-interview instructions that were emailed to the candidates. First, the candidates were urged to take both the ‘first’ and ‘second’ interviews as seriously as possibly, and specifically to do their best to show their suitability for the front-desk position. The instructions pointed out that giving their best effort would enhance both the value of the practice for them as job seekers, and also the usefulness of the feedback they received from the professional interviewer and myself. The other pre-interview instruction was to dress appropriately for the target position.

The 'first' interviews took approximately 15 minutes and followed the Job Interview Questions frame (Appendix A) for all candidates. While administering the interviews, I also took notes about the candidate's performance, which were the basis of the feedback that the experimental group candidates received. The interviews took place either in a private study room at the UVic university library, or in a study room in the Department of Linguistics.

The interviews were videorecorded using a compact digital video camera, though only the candidate was included in the frame. As a technical back-up, a compact digital audio recorder also recorded the audio for the interview. Each resulting video file was uploaded to the
researcher's laptop computer immediately after the interview, to be used for providing feedback to the candidates. All video files were later used for rating their performance in the interview. At the end of the interviews, the candidates were thanked for their efforts and reminded of their upcoming 'second' interviews with a hotel manager, which was scheduled within one week of the 'first’ interview.

3.4.2 Candidate training. The Control Group candidates received their training session immediately following their 'second' interviews. For the Feedback and Feedback + Lesson candidates, the training session immediately followed the ‘first’ interview. For the Feedback only group, the session lasted approximately 25 to 30 minutes. The training involved watching the interview video on the researcher's laptop computer, and discussing the favourable and unfavourable aspects of the candidate's performance. The session was led by the researcher, but candidates were invited to comment on aspects of their own performance. Specifically, the researcher used his notes from the interview to share his impressions as the video progressed. As with the Lesson, the notes focused on pragmatic issues: 'Selling Yourself,’ personalizing responses, the sufficiency of responses, and nonverbal actions. However, the aim was to provide as much helpful feedback as possible, so the feedback was not limited to those factors. For instance, some notes included favourable or unfavourable word choices, perceptions of the candidate's enthusiasm for the position, the relevance and coherence of responses, and recommendations to keep or remove particular responses, stories, or stances.

For the Feedback + Lesson candidates, the feedback component was immediately followed by the job interview pragmatics lesson (Appendices K and L). The lesson was also on the researcher's laptop computer. For each pragmatic factor, the lesson followed the same procedure: Using the PowerPoint slide(s), I explained the concept(s), checked understanding, and
answered questions. Then the candidate and I viewed and discussed the video clips that showed successful and unsuccessful realizations of each factor. Both components together took approximately sixty minutes.

3.4.3 Second job interviews and video-stimulated recall. Before administering the ‘second’ interviews, the managers who agreed to participate signed a similar voluntary consent form to the one for the candidates. The interviewers also completed a brief Background Questionnaire (Appendix M), which included their interviewing experience, languages spoken, and the frequency of interaction with L+ speakers in personal and professional contexts. The interviewers were offered renumeration for their participation. This was not the case for the candidates, whose incentives for participating were free job interview practice, a job interview training session, and feedback from an experienced interviewer.

All candidates took part in ‘second’ interviews with a hotel manager (Appendix N). These interviews took place within seven days of the first interviews with the researcher. The duration was approximately fifteen minutes and followed the same Job Interview Question frame as the first interviews. Instructions asked the interviewers to take the interviews as seriously as possible, as though they really were assessing candidates for a front-desk position. At the managers’ request, the interviews were conducted either in a boardroom at the manager's hotel, or in a study room at the UVic library. The interviews were also video- and audio-recorded. However, a second compact digital video camera was added for the 'second' interviews, which included both the interviewer and candidate in the frame.  

Appendix N contains a diagram of the

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5 The candidate-only videos were used for candidate performance rating, while the videos showing both participants were used for analysis of the interviewer's contributions to the talk.
layout for the 'second' interviews. After starting the audio and video devices, I left the room until
the interview was finished.

Immediately following each interview, I returned to the room, and began uploading the
video to a laptop computer. The interviewer and I thanked the candidate, and I reminded him/her
about the video-stimulated recall session later in the day. When the candidate had left the room,
the interviewer was first asked to provide a global score out of ten that indicated the candidate's
suitability for the position, based on the candidate's interview performance. The interviewer and I
then began a one-on-one video-stimulated recall session, with the aid of the Interviewer
Comments form (Appendix G). The interviewer was asked to watch the video and comment on
any moments that made a positive or negative impression, as well as their 'weight' for an
evaluation. Instructions also invited the interviewer to provide other evaluative comments about
the candidate (i.e., not related to a particular moment). To maximize reliability, the video review
and form-writing took place immediately after the interview, while the "memory trace" of the
cues remain in short-term memory (Ericsson & Simon, 1993, p. 16). The validity of the reports
was further enhanced by using the video as a stimulus for recall. The combination of the
immediacy and video stimulus reduces the effects on the original cognitions by long-term
memory, biases, or beliefs about what the interviewer thinks he or she should say (Huang, 2014).
A third potential source of modification is the presence and instructions of the researcher (Gass
& Mackey, 2000). To reduce the amount that I influenced the recall process, I explained that I
would not be sharing my own views or asking questions, so as not to influence the review
process. Instead, I simply wrote down the interviewer's comments, their weight, and the time on
the video that the comment referred to. Finally, the interviewer was asked to provide a score out
of ten that rated the candidate’s English ability for the position, and to comment on the degree to which the candidate’s English ability influenced his or her evaluation.

Later in the same day, in a UVic library study room, I carried out a video-stimulated recall session with the candidate. At that time, I also used the Interviewer Comments form to provide feedback to the candidates about their performance, so altogether the session took approximately forty minutes. The delay was not ideal in terms of the reliability of the recall process, but as a single researcher, it was not possible to meet both candidates and interviewers immediately following the interviews. The interviewers’ reports took precedence because they were essential to understand the factors affecting their evaluations. The video-review procedure used the Candidate Comments form (Appendix H), but was otherwise similar to the one with the interviewers, so that I did not intervene during the recall component. The candidates were asked to watch the video and comment on their responses, particularly why they responded in the manner that they did, and to provide any other comments about their performance. After the initial viewing, the candidate was asked to provide his/her impressions of the interviewer. For validity purposes, it was important to do this evaluation before providing the candidate with the manager's feedback. This evaluation involved indicating his or her level of agreement on a Likert-type scale with statements about comfort, fairness, professionalism, and the extent to which the interviewer facilitated clear communication. After that, I provided feedback to the candidate based on the interviewer’s comments. For the experimental group candidates, this was the end of the process. For the Control Group candidates, the pragmatics lesson was then carried out.
3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Candidate performance rating. This analysis targeted the first research question: *Does training in job interview pragmatics facilitate improvement in candidates’ job interview performance, in comparison to a control group?* Both the ‘first’ and ‘second’ simulated job interviews (*N* = 54) were rated by three hospitality professionals with interviewing experience\(^6\). Having multiple raters helps to control for individual biases and other inter-rater variability (e.g., McNamara, 1996). The rating team met eight times for a total of eighteen hours, with each session ranging between ninety minutes and three hours, depending on the raters' availability. The raters were renumerated for their assistance.

The raters did their work together, watching the interview videos at the same time, independently rating them, and then reporting the scores to the researcher. This format facilitated logistics, particularly with training, but more importantly helped with the rating-consultation dynamic, in that score discrepancies could be dealt with immediately after each video, while the interview details were still fresh in the raters' minds. The dynamic also assisted with benchmarking or norming (Sawaki, 2007), as not just one training video but each video created a new opportunity for item clarification and discussion about variance in scores.

The instructions were to rate each interview as though it was an authentic interview for a front desk position. To control for familiarity effects, the raters were not informed about the purpose of the study, or that each candidate had completed two interviews. The ‘first’ and ‘second’ interview videos were randomly assigned to an 'A' (earlier) and a 'B' (later) block using

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\(^6\) Rater A was a Guest Services Supervisor at a Victoria hotel. She reported 13 months of work experience, and had administered or sat in on over 15 job interviews. Rater B was a Front Office Supervisor at a Victoria hotel. He reported 30 months of work experience, and had administered over 20 job interviews. Rater C was Human Resources Supervisor at a Victoria hotel. She reported 36 months of Human Resources experience, and had administered or sat in on between 75 and 100 job interviews.
a web-based randomizing program\textsuperscript{7}. If a candidate's 'first' interview appeared in block A, then his or her 'second' interview appeared in block B. The order of the videos within the two blocks was also randomized. The 'A' videos ($n = 27$) were rated within a two-week period, followed by a three-week break, and the 'B' videos ($n = 27$) were then rated within another two-week period. The aim was for the break between blocks to reduce familiarity effects.

The rating videos showed the candidate alone, which served to partly blind the raters to the 'first' or 'second' condition. However, an attempt to mask the interviewer's voice by modifying the speaker's pitch (F0) was abandoned due to the difficulty of separating the interviewer and candidate's audio tracks. Specifically, this meant that the candidate's voice would also be modified, which undermined reliable rating. Using the original audio tracks meant that the raters were able to distinguish between the researcher's voice ('first' interviews) and the managers' voices ('second' interviews), though this order was not made explicit to the raters.

The raters used the \textit{Candidate Performance Scale} (Appendix D) to assess the candidates, which involved assigning a score between 1 ('Not acceptable') and 7 ('Exceptional') for each of the twelve items. The raters were also provided with electronic and hard copies of the \textit{Job Posting}. Rater training involved familiarization with the scale and its items. The researcher encouraged the raters to use the whole range of scores if they felt that a 1 or a 7 was merited, and to use 'Not Applicable' (N/A) for an item if they felt that the criterion was not adequately addressed in an interview. Due to the large number of items, raters were also encouraged to write tentative scores on their forms as the interviews developed (with the pencil and eraser they were given), while impressions were 'fresh,' and then finalize scores at the end of the interview. They were also encouraged to write notes on their forms.

\textsuperscript{7} random.org
The researcher and raters went through the twelve items on the scale and came up with a consensus definition for each one. Each rater wrote down the definitions on a form containing the items alone (Appendix O), which they kept next to their rating forms. Specific attention was paid to items that could potentially conflate, such as 'Clear Speaking and Understanding' and 'Professional Communication,' and 'Attitude towards the Position' and 'Enthusiasm.' At the beginning of each additional session, the raters were reminded of the guidelines for using the scale, and we reviewed the agreed-upon item definitions.

The raters sat on one side of a table in the study room, watching the videos on the researcher's laptop computer. The researcher sat to the side and did not participate in the rating. The high definition video quality was satisfactory, and with a portable speaker that enhanced the audio, the speakers in all videos were clearly audible. The raters were encouraged to pause the video if necessary (e.g., if they wanted to re-listen to a question or response), but were asked not to make evaluative remarks that might influence other raters' judgments. Each rater independently completed one rating form per interview. At the end of the viewing, the raters finalized their ratings, then the researcher asked for the scores and compiled them on a master form.

Following Yan (2014), a one-score discrepancy across the three raters was considered satisfactory. This allowable variance is realistic given that some pragmatic items (e.g., 'initiative,' 'enthusiasm,' and so on) were rated indirectly, through attitudinal impressions, rather than directly based on of the content of candidates' responses. However, discrepancies of more than one point initiated a discussion with an aim of bringing the scores back within the one-point range. The divergent raters were asked to justify their scores, and then asked whether they were willing to converge towards each other. In some cases, the discussion led to an agreement to
change scores; in other cases, the raters remained convinced that the divergent scores were warranted. In either case, the post-discussion scores were accepted as final. In the case of the divergent scores, the validity of the ratings is largely grounded in the expertise of the raters, so there was no justification for changing scores against the will of the experts. Ultimately, such divergences support the contributions of multiple raters to the process instead of one. Moreover, the final score for each item involved averaging the three interviewers' scores, so convergence did take place regardless of the disagreements on individual items. The same process followed instances where one rater gave an 'N/A' score, while the other two gave numerical scores. The team was asked to justify their selections, which sometimes resulted in a change of score. If two raters chose 'N/A,' the final score for that item was deemed to be 'N/A.'

Inter-rater reliability was assessed using the Spearman correlation coefficient, which is suitable for ordinal (e.g., Likert-type) data (e.g., Lund Research, 2013a). The inputted data were 'pre-discussion' (i.e., independent) scores. Since the test compares two data sets, three correlations were run for the three raters (A-B, A-C, B-C), and the final coefficient was the average of the three results. The coefficient was .643 ($r(52)$, $p < .001$), which falls within Cicchetti's (1994) 'good' range (.6 - .74) for reliability. This is a satisfactory result given the potential ambiguity with some pragmatic items. Looking at the data from another perspective, 81.6% (529/648) of the 'pre-discussion' scores fell within the allowable one-point discrepancy range. Moreover, after discussing the 119 scores that exceeded the one-point range, the raters agreed to converge in 51 cases, so that the final scores fell within a one-point range for 89.5% of the scores.

With the rating scores, it was possible to do a quantitative analysis of the gains (or losses) between the 'first' and 'second' interviews for the three groups of candidates: the control group
and the two experimental groups. The statistical test was the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test, which is suitable for a within-subject (repeated measures) design in which ordinal (e.g., Likert-type) data is used (Lund Research, 2013b). An advantage of a within-subject design is that it mitigates concerns about participant variability between groups, since each participant is compared with himself or herself (Seltman, 2015). This was relevant to the present study, since the logistics of recruitment (i.e., assigning participants to groups as they signed up) meant that it was not possible to ensure a consistent ‘first’-interview performance level across the groups. This analysis made it possible to assess the efficacy of the two training components -- Feedback and Feedback + Lesson -- in comparison to the simulated interview alone, which was the condition for the control group. Additionally, the breakdown of the gains/losses in terms of individual rating scale items (e.g., 'Approachability,' 'Nonverbal Communication’) was considered, which could (indirectly) illuminate some areas that benefited from the training.

3.5.2 Factors affecting candidates' evaluations

This analysis targeted the second and third research questions: Which factors most influence interviewers’ evaluations of all candidates? Which factors distinguish more and less successful candidates from the experimental and control groups? The unit of analysis for the factors that affected evaluations was the interviewers' Evaluative Comments. These were the interviewer comments that the researcher wrote down during the video-stimulated recall sessions after each 'second' interview. The resulting comments (N=344) from the 9 interviewers were coded thematically with the help of NVivo (Version 10), which is a qualitative analysis software package (QSR International, 2015). To avoid researcher bias, it was essential for the categories to be emergent, or data-driven (e.g., Brown & Rodgers, 2002; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989), so the first step was a lexical frequency search (including stems) of the
comments in NVivo. This resulted in 50 high-frequency words. The second step was to do a search for the most frequent strings surrounding these high-frequency words. The results of this search became the initial thematic categories. For example, the highest-frequency word was "Answer," ($n = 60$), and this item generated the sub-categories "Answer concision/length," "Answer relevance," "Answer confidence," and so on, which formed thirteen new categories.

The evaluative comments were then assigned to these initial sub-categories, or if they did not fit a category, then a new category was created. The 74 remaining comments, which had not been captured by the initial word frequency searches, were also assigned to extant categories, or formed new ones. Comments were frequently assigned to multiple categories. For example, one comment (#255) was "Talking about transferable skills, the answer here is long and hard to understand. What's a concise set of skills she has, not this long answer." The comment was assigned to 'Answer Concision/Length,' and 'Answer Understanding,' since both ideas are present. The initial categories were too numerous, so the following step was to merge categories with significant conceptual overlap, while also being careful not to overgeneralize and dilute the categories' distinctiveness. For example, a number of comments focused on the quality of a response, whether they used the term "answer," "response," "example," or "question [for the interviewer]." So these items were brought together into a "General Quality of Answer/Example Choice" category. Similarly, a number of comments focused on affective attributions, whether they used the terms "nice," "positive," "friendly," or a related word. So these comments were combined in a "Friendliness/Niceness/Positivity/Passion" category. In line with recommendations for best practices in qualitative research (e.g., Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005), this process went through multiple iterations until all comments were categorized, all
concepts were represented in the categories, the items in a category were clearly related to the title and each other, and the categories were clearly distinguishable from each other.

An assistant researcher was enlisted to review the categories and check their coherence and distinctiveness from other groups. This was also a critical safeguard against researcher bias in the analysis (e.g., Johnson & Saville-Troike, 1992). The individual had Linguistics training and nine months of professional experience as a Clerical Marker for the IELTS™ exam. The assistant independently reviewed the provisional categories, guided by the following questions: Does the item fit the category? If no, which category/categories (if any) does it fit in? If yes, does it also fit any other categories? The assistant largely ratified the categories and items that had been generated, resulting in an agreement level of 97.4% (452/464 items). Of the twelve flagged items, nine were moved to a different category, and three were ambiguous but were ultimately determined to be best suited to their existing categories. Following the assistant's recommendation, one category -- "Thoughtfulness" -- was renamed "Cognitive Ability," which better reflected its contents.

The review resulted in a final tally of 464 items across 23 categories. The categories were then ranked by the number of items, in order to get a picture of the factors that most influenced the interviewers' evaluations. The robustness of the categories across the nine interviewers was also considered, which meant identifying how many of the interviewers were represented in a category's comments. The average weight of the category's items was also determined. Additionally, the categories were examined in terms of how well they differentiated higher and lower-rated candidates. This involved looking at how the positive and negative comments in a category were distributed among the more and less successful candidates. This provided a useful
indication of a category’s influence on evaluations, which may be distinct from the raw frequency of items.

3.5.3 Interviewer actions

This analysis addressed the fourth research question: To what extent do interviewers employ actions that facilitate candidates’ understanding? The Interviewer Actions instrument generated a series of scores for each interviewer. For most of the items, the unit of measurement was taking or not taking opportunities to use the actions. Higher scores indicated that interviewers consistently took advantage of opportunities to produce the actions. To this end, coding involved (a) identifying opportunities for an action, and (b) determining whether or not the interviewer realized the action at those moments. Results thus took the form of percentage scores, which came from dividing the number of realized actions by the number of opportunities to provide that action.

For 'Active Listening' measures, opportunities were operationalized as candidate utterances, which were defined in terms of intonation groups. Intonation groups are strings of speech containing at least one pitch accent (i.e., the nuclear accent) and divided from surrounding speech by combinations of pausing and/or boundary tones (Pierrehumbert & Hirschberg, 1990; Veilleux, Shattuck-Hufnagel & Brugos, 2006). Intonation groups often correspond to grammatical strings, but are best understood in terms of incremental units of information (e.g., Breen et al., 2010). The researcher transcribed three long candidate turns, from the beginning, middle, and end of the interview, and these were further divided into utterances (intonation groups). The researcher and a second coder then used these transcripts, along with the interview videos, to code each utterance for the presence or absence of the 'Active Listening' actions: backchannels, nodding, and eye contact.
The 'Transitions' and one 'Clear Speech' measure focused on the principal questions for each interview. These were transcribed, including the time in the video that they referred to. Using the video and transcripts, the researcher and an assistant coded the questions for transition cues, repetition/rephrasing, and contextualization. Transition cues were operationalized as verbal signals that a topic was finished (e.g., "Thank you") and/or that a new topic was beginning (e.g., "So," "Okay"). Instances of Repetition/rephrasing occurred when the interviewer repeated all or part of a question, while Contextualization referred to any talk that the interviewer provided around the question. The 'Stress' measure (i.e., emphasizing key information words) involved the two coders independently marking the principal questions for words that they expected would be stressed. The coders then compared transcripts and identified consensus words that they expected to receive stress. Finally, using the video, the coders marked whether or not the interviewer had stressed the consensus words. This meant a perceptible change in pitch, intensity, and/or duration (e.g., Grice & Baumann, 2007).

The two other 'Clear Speech' items -- 'Lexical Complexity' and 'Speech Rate' -- were measured using separate methods. The 'Lexical Complexity' measure employed an online tool -- Compleat Web VP (Cobb, 2013) -- which gives proportions of words from a combination of seven corpora-based lists. This involved transcribing each interviewer's talk and copying it into the program. The program then lists the proportions of words (out of 100%) in the most common 1,000 English words, second most common 1,000 words, and so on, up to 25 levels. To translate this result into a usable score, the proportions were multiplied by the category level, then added together to form a total score. For instance, the proportions for one interviewer in one interview were as follows:

K1-93.9; K2=4.8; K3=1.2; K6=.2
So 93.9% of the words fell into the 1,000 most common words (K1), a further 4.8% fell within the next most common 1,000 words (K2), and so on. To reduce this series to a single score which captured the lists’ increasing complexity, I decided to multiply the percentages by the complexity level, as follows:

\[(93.9 \times 1) + (4.8 \times 2) + (1.2 \times 3) + (0.2 \times 6) = 108.3\]

An interviewer's scores across his or her three interviews were then averaged to produce their total score, with the higher scores representing greater lexical complexity.

The 'Speech Rate' measure was words per minute (wpm), in line with previous L+ research (e.g., Jones, Berry, & Stevens, 2007; Zhao, 1997). The three longest interviewer turns from the first, second, and third 5-minute segments in the 15-minute interviews were transcribed, then timed using the video's clock. The number of words was then divided by the duration, and the three rates were averaged for that interview.

The 'Repair' measure involved the two coders independently watching the interview videos. The coders first identified opportunities for repair, which meant a clear verbal or nonverbal signal from the candidate indicating incomplete understanding (e.g., a clarification request). The coders then determined whether or not the interviewer attempted to repair the misunderstanding.

For most of the actions, the percentage scores were calculated by dividing the number of occurrences by the number of opportunities. The mean percentages of all three interviews from one individual became the final score. The two exceptions were 'Speech Rate' (measured in words per minute) and 'Lexical Complexity' (a score based on the Compleat Web VP result). The results’ meaningfulness came from three sources. First, the theoretical premise underlying the instrument was that taking opportunities to provide the targeted actions (again, with the
exception of ‘Speech Rate’ and ‘Lexical Complexity’) facilitated candidates’ understanding. Therefore, the higher the scores, the better. Secondly, since the measures were developed for this study and were not readily comparable to previous research, it was also valuable to compare the interviewers with each other. Additionally, the Interviewer Actions results were looked at in relation to the candidates' evaluations of the interviewers. Were there any relations between higher and lower-rated interviewers and the Interviewer Actions, and if so, which ones? This question was addressed descriptively, by comparing Actions rankings and evaluations rankings. Correlation analyses were also run, which compared the two sets of scores. Together, these analyses aimed to illuminate how the interviewers' communication styles affected the candidates as they negotiated the interviews.

The researcher and a second coder independently generated a series of Interviewer Actions scores for each interviewer, as a means of assessing whether and how the interviewer facilitated mutual understanding with his or her candidates. The categories were 'Active Listening,' 'Clear Speech,' 'Repair,' and 'Transitions.' The only action that was not included is 'Lexical Complexity,' which did not involve coding, but rather inputting each interviewer's transcript into Compleat Web VP (Cobb, 2013), which calculates a profile of the lexical complexity. The second coder was the same individual who assisted with categorizing the Evaluative Comments. Having a second individual helped to ascertain the reliability of the scores that were generated for the interviewers.

The second coder's rating took place in a UVic library study room, using the interview video files for the 'second' interviews, which were on the researcher's laptop computer. Unlike the videos for the candidate rating, which showed the candidates alone, the video files for the Interviewer Actions analysis showed both the interviewer and the candidate. Training for the
second coder involved going through an instruction handout (Appendix P), explaining the actions and answering any questions that the coder had. This form contains explanations of the categories as well as the individual actions that were measured. Then there are specific instructions for the coding. For example, for 'Active Listening,' there is a brief definition: "Displaying engagement in a speaker's talk." Then for one of the actions -- 'Backchanneling' -- there is a definition ("Verbally signalling receipt of a speaker's utterance") as well as some examples of common backchannels ("Okay," Mm hm," "Yeah). For the coding, the instruction reads: "For each video, there are three sets of approximately ten phrases. During or immediately after each phrase, write 'B' (backchannel), 'N' (nodding), 'E' (eye contact), or nothing." For each new action, the coder and I completed one interview together, to make sure that the instructions were clear and the video playback was satisfactory. Then the coder completed the rest of the data independently. The researcher remained in the room the whole time, so if the coder had any questions or concerns, they could be answered promptly.

Inter-coder reliability was measured in terms of proportional agreement. For 'Stress,' the second coder helped the researcher to determine 'consensus' words for 100% of the data, but then independently coded 41% of the target items. For the other Actions, the second coder covered just under 30% of the data (8/27 randomly selected videos=29.6%). For the 'Active Listening' measures, the level of agreement surpassed 90% for 'Backchanneling' (90.5%), 'Eye Contact' (97.8%), and 'Nodding' (90.1%). For the 'Clear Speech' measures, 'Speech Rate' (96%) was a more straightforward measure than 'Stress' (87.2%), so it is not surprising that the level of agreement was slightly lower for the latter measure. For 'Repair,' the coders agreed on 100% of instances. Finally, for the 'Transitions' measures, there was close agreement for 'Transition Cues' (98.5%), and slightly lower for 'Contextualization' (92.6%) and 'Repetition/Rephrasing' (88.2%).
3.5.4 Interviewer participation in responses. This analysis focused on the fifth research question: *To what extent do interviewers participate in negotiating candidates’ responses?* The *Interviewer Actions* analysis sought a quantitative picture of interviewer communication with candidates, by measuring pre-determined cues to communicative effectiveness. This second, complementary analysis took a qualitative, contextualized approach to the data. Rather than looking for and measuring particular actions, the objective was to obtain an emic perspective of events, and therefore asked what types of interviewer talk actually co-occurred with candidate responses, and what the implications of those contributions were, both in the situated contexts where they took place, and in terms of broader considerations of performance and reliability.

The point of departure for the analysis was the evaluative comments to which the interviewers gave the highest weighting of 3 (\(N=111\)). Of these 111 items, 67 were positive and 44 were negative. This choice fits with a participant-centred orientation to the data and therefore ensured that the referred-to moments were clearly important to the interviewer’s evaluation of a candidate. Moreover, since the moments were unambiguously positive or negative in the interviewer’s mind, it was particularly relevant to consider his or her responses to them during the interaction, with an eye on whether (and how) the interviewer may have participated in shaping that impression.

The next step was to review the video at the time-coded moments that received the comments, and to take notes regarding the interviewers’ participation throughout those moments. These notes were then coded for types of interviewer contributions. The frequency of these types of talk in the sub-set of data, as well as their association with positive or negative evaluative comments, was also recorded.
This information provides an indication of the relative frequency of actions’ occurrences, even though it is not feasible to present excerpts of each action for each interviewer in this report. Nonetheless, for each sub-section, the choice of presented excerpts was driven by a goal of representing the kinds of interviewer contributions that occurred in the data, even if it was not possible to exhaustively illustrate the sameness or variability of all nine interviewers’ communication styles.

The discourse analysis of moments in the interview interaction took an emic approach and sought to ‘triangulate’ participant perspectives with researcher analysis (e.g., Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005), in order to enrich the understandings of those moments, but also to lessen the effects of researcher bias or agendas (Brown & Rodgers, 2002; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). As mentioned, the focused-on moments in the interaction were themselves determined by the interviewers during the video-stimulated recall process. Moreover, where it was relevant, the interviewers’ impressions of those moments, as revealed in their comments, were included in the analysis. Likewise, the candidates’ comments (from their video-review sessions) that addressed moments were also incorporated.

The discourse analysis was guided by Gumperz’s Interactional Sociolinguistic (IS) approach (1992b, 1999, 2001), in conjunction with Goffman’s notion of ‘frames’ (1974, 1981). Specifically, Gumperz employs ‘contextualization cues’ as an analytical tool. In practice, these cues exist as a multitude of verbal and non-verbal signals that speakers use to indicate to each other their situated understandings of ongoing talk. Contextualization cues also signal and reflect higher-level frames, which can be viewed as fluid assumptions about what is going on or what type of talk the speaker is engaged in, which guide communicative choices. An advantage of IS as an approach is that it is participant-centred. Interpretations of actions or intentions are
necessarily grounded in the speakers’ own signals to each other. The approach has also been applied to job interview research in describing critical moments for evaluations, and specifically in identifying subtle, dynamic communicative moves that swayed interviewers’ impressions of candidates (e.g. Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). A limitation of IS as an analytical approach, however, is that, as Gumperz (2001) acknowledged, both contextualization cues and the frames they index may be culturally relative. So even researchers with experience in discourse analysis must be cautious in claiming to understand L+ speakers’ inferential processing. This is another reason that this study’s analysis incorporated participants’ perspectives, which represented a means of avoiding incorrect interpretations of their choices and motivations.
Chapter 4: Results, Discussion, and Implications

4.1 Job Interview Training

This section addresses the first research question: Does training in job interview pragmatics facilitate improvement in candidates’ job interview performance, in comparison to a control group? The three raters each generated 648 scores (12 rating items x 54 videos) between 1 and 7 on the Likert-type scale. For each item on the rating scale, the final score was the average of the three raters’ scores. The scores for the twelve items were then averaged to obtain a final score for each candidate’s ‘first’ and ‘second’ interviews. For the Control group candidates (n = 9), the average scores declined slightly between the ‘first’ (M = 5.74, SD = .49) and ‘second’ (M = 5.44, SD = .88) interviews. For the Feedback group (n = 9), the scores increased between the ‘first’ (M = 5.94, SD = .57) and ‘second’ (M = 6.16, SD = .44) interviews. The Feedback + Lesson group showed similar gains from the ‘first’ interview (M = 5.38, SD = .62) to the ‘second’ (M = 5.71, SD = .76).

The within-participant results supported the value of pragmatics-focused job interview training for L+ candidates. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank test showed that participants in both the Feedback (Z = -1.36, p = .005) and the Feedback + Lesson group (Z = -1.40, p = .005) significantly improved from the ‘first’ to ‘second’ interviews, whereas the Control group participants did significantly worse in their ‘second’ interviews (Z = -1.27, p = .012). The complete rating score tables can be found in Appendix Q.

Looking at these results, it is apparent that for the Control Group candidates, a practice interview alone did not facilitate performance improvements in the ‘second’ interview. As Figure 3 shows, for the 108 scores that raters provided (i.e., 9 candidates x 12 rating categories), the Control Group had 35 gains, 46 losses, and 16 no-change scores; the Feedback Group had 52
gains, 22 losses, and 25 no-change scores; the Feedback + Lesson Group had 44 gains, 28 losses, and 25 no-change scores. Thus, the combination of the simulated interview plus pragmatics-focused training was beneficial to the candidates, in terms of their ‘second’ interviews. This result adds to a small body of research that has found positive effects for job interview training (Cuddy & Wilmuth, 2015; Latham & Budworth, 2005; Maurer et al., 2008), though these studies had different training foci and worked with L1 English candidates. More specifically, the present study’s findings support the use of pragmatics training with L+ candidates. This was first attempted in Louw et al.’s (2010) project, which showed positive trends in follow-up interviews but was limited by the small number of participants (N = 3). The results are encouraging from the perspective of L+ candidates. Previous L+ interview research has demonstrated the importance of candidates’ pragmatic skillfulness to outcomes (e.g., Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Lipovsky, 2006; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). Job interview research in Organizational Psychology has also consistently affirmed the importance of impression management effects on interviewer decision-making (e.g., Dipboye et al., 2012; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Huffcutt, 2011; Macan, 2009). For this study, then, there was a strong impetus to consider whether pragmatics training, based on a synthesis of previous findings, could benefit L+ candidates. While further research in other contexts is necessary, the evidence here is that with relatively high-proficiency speakers, even a one-time pragmatics training session can facilitate performance improvements. Additionally, since the pragmatic tasks in the training session (i.e., ‘Selling Yourself,’ ‘Sufficient Responses,’ ‘Personalizing Talk,’ and ‘Nonverbal Actions’) were not tailored specifically for a hospitality position, but derived from research with a variety of occupations, the training may be effective across professional fields.
Figure 3. Rating score gains and losses for rated items between the ‘first’ and ‘second’ interviews.

Two important sub-findings emerged. The first relates to the type of training that best served the candidates. Specifically, the Lesson for the Feedback + Lesson Group did not facilitate gains over and above the Feedback Group. Indeed, on several measures, the Feedback Group improved more than the Feedback + Lesson Group. This includes both the ratio of gains and losses, as well as the number of rating categories that improved significantly. One plausible interpretation is that, because the lesson provided general awareness-raising about interviewing pragmatics, it did not have the same personalized, job-specific focus as the Feedback session. Additionally, for some individuals in the Feedback + Lesson group, the combination of the two training components may have resulted in a processing overload, especially within the time constraints of a one-time session. This combination could make it difficult for individuals to identify the most relevant information to attend to for their ‘second’ interviews. In contrast, the Feedback-only candidates were encouraged to focus on a limited number of concrete
suggestions, supported by video from the simulated interview, which they could apply to their ‘second’ interviews.

The Feedback group’s advantages do not necessarily discount the value of the lesson. The Feedback + Lesson group significantly outperformed the control group, and the participants all expressed satisfaction that the lesson was useful. Nonetheless, the most effective training type in this study was a combination of a job-specific simulated interview, followed by personalized feedback that focused on pragmatic features of the candidate’s performance. In part this seems to reflect the subtlety of many pragmatic features, so that professional support is helpful in identifying and pointing out successful and problematic aspects of an individual’s performance (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kasper & Rose, 1999). For L+ candidates in particular, the cross-cultural differences in interviewer expectations add to the likelihood that they will not recognize inappropriate behaviours on their own (e.g., Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Leri, 2000). Finally, the success of the Feedback group raises doubts about the sufficiency of training resources – whether guidebooks or online training sites – which do not offer the combination of simulated interviews and personalized feedback. In fairness, simulated interviews are strongly recommended in those very guidebooks (e.g., Burns, 2009; Kanter, 1995); however, with current automated online training resources, the absence of live feedback represents a real limitation for job seekers (e.g., SIMmersion Inc., 2016; Skillful Communications LLC, 2016, Udemy, Inc.). The results here provide an argument for job seekers to go beyond self-study and join an in-person training program that offers realistic interview simulations and professional feedback.

The second notable sub-finding was that the Control Group scores actually declined significantly from the ‘first’ to ‘second’ interview ($p < .05$). This is somewhat surprising, since
even though the candidates did not receive training, they did have the experience of the ‘first’ interview to guide them, including repetitions of the same questions that they heard in their ‘first’ interviews. On the other hand, this result was skewed by one candidate’s (C4) large drop in score (from 5.8/7 to 3.5/7), which affected the mean value for the group. I would also argue that the training received by the two experimental groups equipped with them a degree of confidence going into their ‘second’ interviews, which mitigated the pressure of speaking with an actual hotel manager. This variable was not assessed in the study, but it is reasonable that the Control group participants were less sure of themselves without the feedback that the other groups received. In terms of communicative effects, Gumperz (1992a), for example, argued that due to the high-pressure context of a job interview, L+ speakers may fall back on inappropriate communicative strategies that are transferred from their L1s. From an affective perspective, too, there have been significant positive effects with self-efficacy (i.e., confidence) training on job interview performance (Cuddy & Wilmuth, 2015; Latham & Budworth, 2005). This suggests that a lack of self-assurance going into the ‘second’ interviews could at least partly explain the divergence in scores.
Figure 4. Summary of rating score gains in rated categories for the experimental groups. $F^*$ = significant gain for the Feedback Group ($p < .05$). $FL^*$ = significant gain for the Feedback + Lesson Group ($p < .05$). Only one category ('Cooperation with Coworkers') had a net loss (-0.1) for the two experimental groups.

Another question for the experimental groups was which rating categories had the greatest gains and losses. This can illuminate the areas that benefited most from the training process. As Figure 4 shows, there was a net gain in all but one category for the two experimental groups. For the Feedback Group, three rating categories showed statistically significant gains:

'Approachability' ($Z = -2.23, p = .026$), 'Attitude Towards the Position' ($Z = -2.40, p = .016$), and 'Shows Initiative' ($Z = -2.38, p = .017$). Three other categories approached significance:

'Cooperation with Co-workers' ($Z = -1.48, p = .138$), 'Enthusiasm' ($Z = -1.43, p = .153$), and 'Relevant Skills' ($Z = -1.58, p = .114$). For the Feedback + Lesson Group, one category -- 'Relevant Experience' -- made statistically significant gains ($Z = -2.03, p = .042$). Two other categories approached significance: 'Clear Speaking and Understanding' ($Z = -1.36, p = .173$)
and 'Enthusiasm' \((Z = -1.37, p = .171)\). ‘Questions for the Interviewer’ \((Z = -1.10, p = .273)\) also had a large net gain for the *Feedback + Lesson Group*.  

Notably, the categories with large gains are ones that are expected to benefit from pragmatics instruction. The three categories with significant gains for the *Feedback* candidates -- 'Approachability,' 'Attitude towards the position,' and 'Shows Initiative' -- are attitudinal items that relate to how candidates present themselves. The same applies to 'Enthusiasm.' Even 'Relevant Experience' and 'Relevant Skills' cannot be reduced to referential information. Scores in those categories may also be indirectly influenced by candidates' choices of which stories to share and what information to highlight or downplay. 'Clear Speaking & Understanding' is a more surprising category to show gains. That category, plus 'Professional Communication,' are assumed to reflect more enduring attributes, which are not easily modified by short-term training. For the most part, however, the gains in pragmatic categories support an argument that the pragmatics training, and particularly the *Feedback* session, had a positive impact on ratings for the ‘second’ interviews.

4.1.2 Job interview training: Summary and implications. This study assessed whether a one-time, pragmatics-specific training session could facilitate performance gains for L+ candidates. Statistical results found that this was the case: both training conditions – *Feedback* and *Feedback + Lesson* – facilitated greater second-interview gains that the non-training (control) condition. At the same time, in comparing the two training types, the group that received the pragmatics lesson did not show performance gains over and above the *Feedback* group. Indeed,

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8 For *Questions for the Interviewer*, four candidates were not asked questions by their interviewer and one candidate's score declined, which affected the statistical test. Nonetheless, three candidates made dramatic improvements in their scores for this category.
several descriptive measures indicated the Feedback group performed better than the Feedback + Lesson candidates. Based on these results, in the context of a one-time treatment, the combination of a simulated interview plus pragmatics-focused feedback appeared to be the most effective training type.

Looking at the bigger picture, this study contextualized job interview training within the domain of L+ pragmatics instruction. This was motivated by evidence from naturalistic job interview interaction studies – and by parallel findings in experimental or survey research in Organizational Psychology – that pragmatic factors influence interviewers’ evaluative choices. Within pragmatics research, studies have consistently found that L+ speakers benefit from pragmatics instruction (e.g., Kasper & Rose, 1999; Taguchi, 2015), based predominantly on experimental or pseudo-experimental studies. Notably, this line of research has contributed to understandings of best practices for teaching pragmatics, including the value of explicit instruction for pragmatic forms and their relation to contextual variables (e.g., Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), as well as the value of pushing learners to discover and analyze pragmatic features themselves (Takahashi, 2009), all of which is in line with Schmidt’s (1990) noticing hypothesis.

On the other hand, many experimental studies have been criticized for their lack of authentic data and for their use of controlled measures of learning, including pen and paper discourse completion tasks (DCTs) (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005). Ironically, these tasks control away a large part of what is essential to pragmatics: an authentic (or at least realistic) context in which speakers must use and interpret language appropriately. This compromise is explainable from the perspective of enhancing psychometric validity, which is important for deriving clear conclusions. Yet there is an inevitable tension between satisfying psychometric concerns and realistically assessing the “messy,” layered nature of pragmatic knowledge (Mori,
2009, p. 349). Ultimately, depending on how much pragmatic features are isolated from a realistic context in assessment tasks, the value of those tasks in predicting real-life performance is questionable. Indeed, since contextual appropriacy tends to be the primary criterion for pragmatic assessments (e.g., Liu, 2006; Zegarac & Pennington, 2008), a lack of rich context raises doubts about assessment validity. As a compromise, carefully designed role plays, which can show evidence of learning while satisfying ecological validity concerns, seem to be a good practice.

Similar concerns apply to instruction research with individual speech acts, which predominates in the literature (e.g., Kasper & Rose, 1999; Taguchi, 2015). As Kasper and Ross (2013) pointed out, multiple speech acts typically co-occur in most conversations. As such, there are questions about what discrete speech act results can predict about an individual’s ability to perform in real-life contexts.

Rather than taking an individual speech act as a starting point, the present study approached the issue from a different perspective. The point of departure was a recognized type of interaction – job interviews – with conventional procedures, roles, and types of talk. The question was whether this type of interaction, conceptualized as a pragmatic undertaking, could be taught to L+ candidates. This approach was motivated in part by a degree of convergence in the job interview literature regarding pragmatic factors that influence evaluations. These factors both encouraged the potential of pragmatics-based training and also represented obvious training foci for candidates. At the same time, this approach reflected user needs: to take the findings of conversation and discourse analyses of a crucial gatekeeping interaction and feed those findings back into training for L+ candidates. Marra et al. (2009) took a similar approach with the ‘Language in the Workplace’ project in New Zealand, in which a corpus of workplace talk served as the basis for pragmatics instruction for L+ immigrants.
A concession with this type of research is a lack of certainty regarding the causality between training and assessment. While the experimental groups outperformed the control group, the training sessions’ focus on a wide range of pragmatic features meant that it was not possible to identify clear correspondences between treatment and candidate gains. Specifically, the training did not focus on the discrete items on the Candidate Rating Scale. As a result, the evidence of significant gains (or not) in the experimental groups on particular items can only indirectly be attributed to the training session. This consequently limits an ability to use the results to refine the training elements, even while the results point to their effectiveness.

Nonetheless, this project’s approach chose to subsume those concerns beneath a candidate-oriented goal of improving job interview performance. From a candidate’s point of view, the issue of teasing apart which elements of the training and which pragmatic features enabled performance improvements is likely a moot point: the fact that it worked is what matters. Yet this does not mean that an ongoing process of improving pragmatics training must rely on guesswork. The pragmatic ‘tasks’ that were emphasized in the training sessions were based on a review of interaction-based research. Likewise, a long-term goal of the video-stimulated recall session with interviewers was to identify the factors that influenced evaluations. The most prevalent factors can then feed back into future training, thereby supporting a principled, research-driven process of training development for L+ candidates.

4.2 Factors Affecting Candidates’ Evaluations

This section addresses the second and third research questions: Which factors most influence interviewers' evaluations of all candidates? Which factors distinguish more and less successful candidates from both experimental and control groups? A total of 341 evaluative comments were recorded from the nine interviewers. A number of the comments fit more than
one thematic category, so the total number of comments in all categories was 464 (297 positive (64%), 167 negative (36%)). The coding process resulted in 23 themes (categories). The largest categories (i.e., with the most comments) are presented in Figure 5 (For a complete list, see Appendix R). Importantly, the themes were robust across interviewers. All of the most prevalent themes included comments from at least 7 of 9 interviewers. Even the less frequently occurring categories contained comments from a majority of the interviewers. This thematic overlap suggests that the themes are shared preoccupations among the interviewers, rather than individual idiosyncrasies.

4.2.1 Language ability themes. The most striking result is that a large proportion (39%) of the evaluative comments targeted language abilities, to use Bachman and Palmer’s (1996) term from their model of communicative language assessment (following Bachman’s (1990) original version), with the term encompassing both ‘organizational’ (i.e., grammatical and textual skillfulness) and pragmatic abilities. Figure 5 illustrates this strong emphasis in the evaluative comments. The language ability categories were ‘Ability to Answer’ / ‘Clarity’ / ‘Coherence’ (12.1%), ‘Relating Skills and Experience to Position’ / ‘Highlighting’ / ‘Rhetorical Skillfulness’ (7.1%), ‘Word Choice and Register’ (6.7%), ‘Concision’ / ‘Directness’ (4.1%), ‘Answer Completeness’ (3.2%), ‘Generality or Specificity’ (3.0%), and ‘Relevance of Talk’ (2.8%).
Figure 5. The distribution of interviewers’ evaluative comment themes. ‘Others’ comprises ‘Cognitive Ability’ (2.6%), ‘Cross-cultural Comfort’ (1.9%), ‘Taking Initiative’ (1.7%), ‘Understanding of Position’ (1.7%), ‘Maturity and Character’ (1.3%), ‘Professionalism and Poise’ (1.0%), ‘Career Motivation’ (.6%), ‘Punctuality’ (.2%), and ‘Resumé’ (.2%).

The language abilities categories are described in more detail here:

- ‘Ability to Answer’ / ‘Clarity’ / ‘Coherence’ (22 positive, 34 negative): The majority of the comments focused on "clear/unclear" answers, being able/unable to "understand," and candidates that "struggled" to respond.
- ‘Relating Skills & Experience to Position’ / ‘Highlighting’ / ‘Rhetorical Skillfulness’ (23 positive, 10 negative): Most comments focused on the ability/inability to "tie," "link," and "relate" skills and experience to the hotel position. Additional comments focused on whether or not candidates took advantage of opportunities to highlight qualifications, or their rhetorical ability to turn negatives into positives. Unlike the Ability to Answer category, most comments were positive, which shows that candidates' facility at 'selling' themselves was received as exceptional and impressive.
- ‘Word Choice and Register’ (14 positive, 17 negative): This category focused primarily on the sophistication (positive) or unsuitability (negative) of words that candidates used. In terms of register, three ‘danger’ words that repeatedly stood out for interviewers were "like," "cuz," and "stuff." In addition, assertive (positive) and indecisive (negative) language caught interviewers' attention.
- ‘Concision’ / ‘Directness’ (8 positive, 11 negative): Interviewers favoured candidates who foregrounded the most relevant parts of their responses. Candidates’ relative volubility was also salient for interviewers. The more concise, the better.
- ‘Answer Completeness’ (7 positive, 8 negative): Most negative comments focused on missing parts to multi-part questions. Similarly, candidates were judged based on whether or not interviewers needed to prompt them for more information.
• ‘Generality or Specificity’ (4 positive, 10 negative): The majority of the comments were negative and criticized responses (and examples) that were overly generic.
• ‘Relevance of Talk’ (3 positive, 10 negative): Most comments were negative and focused on responses that (a) strayed off topic, or (b) did not satisfactorily address the question.

The emphasis on language abilities is also borne out in performance ratings. A Spearman Rank Order correlation test was run using the English ratings and interview performance ratings that the interviewers generated for each candidate. The result showed a significant moderate correlation between English ratings and interview performance ratings ($r(25) = .430, p < .05$). Thus, not only in the interviewers’ comments, but also in their overall evaluations, there was a relation between perceptions of candidates’ language ability and determinations of their suitability for the front desk position.

Combining the language ability themes highlights their prominence as a set of related concerns. At the same time, these comments can be separated into two broad types. The most prominent category, ‘Ability to Answer’ / ‘Clarity’ / ‘Coherence’ (12.1%), encompasses basic comprehension and expressive abilities. The pre-eminence of this category indicates that clear and coherent talk was the default expectation, and the relatively high percentage of negative comments (67%) attests to the interviewers’ impatience with communication that did not reach that standard. In comparison, the other related categories reflect pragmatic abilities, or the capacity to use language appropriately in line with interviewers’ expectations. In other words, the comments in these other language categories did not focus on the candidates’ English ability per se, but rather on the ways that the candidates used their linguistic resources to produce interview-appropriate talk. In fact, most of the non-language ability categories (i.e., ‘Body Language,’ ‘Friendliness/ Niceness,’ ‘Confidence/ Nervousness,’ ‘Respect and Enthusiasm for the Position,’ and ‘Genuineness’) similarly focused on issues of appropriacy in relation to a
perceived standard. The difference is that the language ability comments contained a meta-analytic orientation to the candidates’ communicative choices, in terms of what an individual “should” or “should not” say. In contrast, the non-language ability categories frequently contained affective attributions that did not make an explicit connection to language abilities, such as “he came across as very likeable,” or “she seemed genuine.” In both cases, the comments were grounded in the interview communication and were implicit judgments of suitability, whether in terms of communication or personality. By comparison, relatively few comments focused on the referential content of candidates’ responses, in terms of skills, experience, or other attributions. ‘Professional Skills and Experience,’ for example, accounted for only 8% of the interviewers’ comments. The focus on pragmatic factors is in line with a large amount of previous interaction-based research (e.g., Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982; Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Kerekes, 2006; Lipovsky, 2006; Roberts & Sayers, 1998), and arguably with Organizational Psychology research, too (e.g., Dipboye et al., 2012; Huffcutt, 2011; Macan, 2009), where 'impression management' tactics have been found to affect judgments across structured and unstructured interviews. A difference in this study, as mentioned, is that the interviewers displayed a meta-analytic awareness, in their comments, of the linguistic or communicative grounding of their impressions. This is partly attributable to the video-stimulated recall procedure, in which the interviewers were asked to review the video and identify assessable moments. This process necessarily focused interviewers’ attention on the communicative causes of their impressions. In contrast, in some previous studies it was the researchers who identified the communicative basis of impressions, while the interviewers responded to the impressions in affective terms, as evidence of cooperativeness, politeness, or other attributions (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998).
For the independent raters, too, most of these language ability categories separated the higher and lower-rated candidates. Figures 6 and 7 show the distribution of positive and negative comments for the most prevalent themes in terms of the candidates’ ratings. Looking at the figures, it is evident that ‘Ability to Answer’ / ‘Clarity’ / ‘Coherence’, ‘Relating Skills and Experience to Position’ / ‘Highlighting’ / ‘Rhetorical Skillfulness,’ ‘Word Choice and Register,’ ‘Answer Completeness,’ ‘Generality or Specificity,’ ‘Relevance of Talk,’ and for the highest-rated candidates (i.e., Figure 7), ‘Concision’ / ‘Directness,’ all distinguished higher and lower-rated candidates. Thus, a wide range of language ability categories not only occurred frequently in evaluative comments, but also stood out as factors that differentiated successful and less successful candidates.

Looking at this result more closely, the interviewers’ preoccupation was particularly with negative language features. Across all categories, only 36% of items were negative. However, for these language ability categories, the number of negative items jumps to 55%. In other words, there was more of a focus on what candidates were not able to do rather than what they did well. This suggests that concise, clear and coherent talk was the expected norm for candidates, so it tended to be most salient for interviewers – as evaluative objects – when it was absent. To a larger extent than non-language ability categories, then, the interviewers seized upon linguistic and pragmatic details as evidence of candidates’ (non-)suitability.
Figure 6. Distribution of positive and negative evaluative comments for candidates with above-average ratings (↑) and below-average ratings (↓).
Figure 7. Positive and negative comments for the highest and lowest-rated candidates. This means candidates (n=5) with ratings +1 or more standard deviations from the mean (+1), and candidates (n=6) with ratings -1 or lower standard deviations from the mean (-1).

The frequency of mostly negative comments that focused on language ability themes is a discouraging finding for L+ job seekers, especially considering that the candidates in the study are all highly proficient speakers who were enrolled in English-language Bachelor’s or graduate-level degrees. These were not language proficiency interviews. The candidates’ L+ identity was not emphasized in pre-interview instructions to the interviewers. Instead, during the video-
stimulated recall session, the interviewers were asked to comment on moments that made a positive or negative impression; they were not asked about language ability for the position until following the recall session. Nonetheless, among all the assessable factors that the interviewers could attend to, it was the language ability issues that mostly stood out, and relative to other themes, they stood out largely in a negative manner.

One explanation for this finding is that the interviewers, in their evaluative role, are looking for evidence of non-suitability as much as they are looking for evidence of suitability. To the extent that this describes the judgment-making process, linguistic shortcomings are an easy target in comparison with more abstract determinations of ‘initiative,’ ‘cooperativeness,’ and ‘ability to handle stress.’ On the other hand, for the target front desk position, language abilities are highly relevant. For a front desk agent, effective spoken communication is essential to fulfilling the position’s duties, and this expectation was clearly written on the job posting. As such, holding candidates to a high standard was both understandable and ‘fair,’ in terms of criterion validity. In this sense, the interviews were simultaneously operating as language speaking tests, even if the interviewers themselves had no training to assess L+ spoken proficiency. For instance, one interviewer commented that he always tried to imagine himself as a hotel guest, and whether in that role he would be satisfied with the candidate’s verbal and nonverbal communication skills. For other professional fields, depending on their communicative demands, the interviewers' communicative standards are likely to vary, and they may place greater emphasis on other factors (e.g., Kerekes, 2006; Kerekes, 2007). At the same time, Dipboye et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of strong communication skills for evaluations across disciplines, so expectations may not diminish greatly for jobs outside of the customer service field.
While some candidates were unsuccessful due to language abilities, the opposite was also true: the highest-rated candidates succeeded in part due to the interviewers' focus on these communicative details. The results indicate that these individuals succeeded because they made fewer ‘mistakes’ in these categories than their peers. Yet the number of positive comments for the top-rated candidates indicates that they also succeeded because they stood out in the categories where communicative skillfulness was not just taken for granted, but also rewarded. These included foregrounding the most relevant parts of answers. For instance, Candidate 21’s (Score: 6.6/7) interviewer commented: “She gave great examples: specific, concise, and relevant.” The top-rated candidates likewise were successful at addressing all the aspects of multi-part questions. The interviewer for Candidate 12 (Score: 6.2/7) commented: “Liked how he answered the question directly. He stayed on task, explained the scenario, how he handled it, and the outcome.” Most strikingly, the results in Figures 6 and 7 suggest that the top-rated candidates used sophisticated vocabulary, and displayed specific rhetorical moves, such as linking skills and experience to the position. To provide another example, the interviewer for Candidate 3 (Score: 6.5/7) described the candidate as “excellent at relating her direct experience and requirements.” The stronger candidates also were able to turn weaknesses into positives and shift the talk to highlight qualifications. According to her interviewer, Candidate 21 (Score: 6.6/7) “presented her Mandarin as an asset. I like where she took that.” Rewarding pragmatic skillfulness in this way accords with Campbell and Roberts’ (2007) comparison of L1 white, L1 ethnic, and L+ born-abroad UK job interviews. That study found that success rates dropped disproportionately for the L+ immigrant candidates, and the disparity was attributed primarily to a combination of pragmatic knowledge and rhetorical skillfulness. According to Campbell and Roberts, the successful candidates were able to shift smoothly between personal and professional
discourses, and were generally able to contextualize skills and experience within desirable interview frames. That study’s results raise the question of whether the present study’s highly-rated L+ candidates would have maintained their relative success in comparison to an L1 group. Akinnaso and Ajirotutu (1982) and Scheuer (2001) echoed this finding in their own job interview research, concluding that the successful candidates were the ones who skillfully contextualized personal and professional details to maximize positive impressions.

4.2.2 Non-language ability themes. A number of non-language ability categories were also prominent in interviewers’ evaluative comments. These were 'Quality of Body Language' (10.3%), 'Professional Skills and Experience' (8.0%), 'Friendliness’ / ‘Niceness’ / ‘Positivity’ / ‘Passion' (8.0%), 'General Quality of Answer’ / ‘Example Choice' (7.8%), 'Confidence’ / ‘Nervousness' (7.5%), ‘Respect and Enthusiasm for the Position’ (4.3%), and ‘Genuineness’ (3.7%). Below is more information about these seven categories:

- ‘Quality of Body Language’ (31 positive, 17 negative): The most common item in this category was smiling (all positive), followed by eye contact. Negative comments mostly focused on weak handshakes, unsatisfactory gestures, and hair that hid female candidates’ eyes.
- ‘Professional Skills and Experience’ (31 positive, 6 negative): Most positive comments focused on moments when candidates showed or mentioned desirable skills. Other comments (also positive) referred to skills or experience that interviewers recognized candidates as having.
- ‘Friendliness’ / ‘Niceness’ / ‘Positivity’ / ‘Passion’ (33 positive, 4 negative): The most frequent positive words in the comments were “positive,” “friendly,” “warm,” “polite,” and “enthusiastic.”
- ‘General Quality of Answer’ / ‘Example Choice’ (31 positive, 5 negative): The mostly positive comments focused generally on the candidate’s choice of response or example, using words like “good,” “great,” and “strong.” The comments frequently follow by explaining what the interviewer appreciated about the response.
- ‘Confidence / Nervousness’ (15 positive, 20 negative): The positive comments focused on nonverbal or verbal “confidence,” whereas the negative comments most frequently used the terms “nervous” or “shy.”
- ‘Respect and Enthusiasm for the Position’ (13 positive, 7 negative): The positive comments focused on the candidate’s perceived enthusiasm for the position, including terms such as “motivated,” “lit up,” “ambition,” and “initiative.” Other positive
comments focused on the candidate’s perceived willingness to handle all aspects of the hotel business. In contrast, the negative comments focused on a lack of enthusiasm or a patronizing attitude towards the position.

- ‘Genuineness’ (16 positive, 1 negative): The positive comments focused on the degree to which the candidate and his or her responses were received as genuine. They most frequently occurring term was “genuine.”

An important finding here is that some of these categories were ‘red herrings’ (i.e., false leads), in terms of their ability to distinguish between higher and lower-rated candidates. In other words, the prevalence of the category did not match its value in predicting success. This was the case for the three most prominent non-language ability themes: ‘Body Language,’ ‘Friendliness’ / ‘Niceness’ / ‘Positivity’ / ‘Passion,’ and ‘Professional Skills and Experience.’ As Figures 6 and 7 show, the ratio of positive/negative comments for these categories did not differ greatly for more and less successful candidates, which was not the case for the language ability themes. This does not mean that these other categories were not important to interviewers. They occurred frequently, and the weightings that the interviewers gave them were above average. However, for these categories, the comments were overwhelmingly positive. This was true for ‘Friendliness’ / ‘Niceness’ / ‘Positivity’ / ‘Passion’ (33/37 positive), ‘Professional Skills and Experience’ (31/37 positive), and to a lesser extent for ‘Body Language’ (31/48 positive). In effect, these categories lacked an evaluative ‘edge’: they did not contribute a great deal to the evaluative task of discriminating between candidates. Looking at this finding negatively, it is possible to argue that these are vacuous categories that reflect a cultural valuation of positivity, or ‘saying nice things about people,’ so that these categories may serve as counterweights to negative items (e.g., Seedhouse, 1992). On the other hand, if these were vacuous categories, it might be expected that lower-rated candidates have the bulk of their positive comments for these items. This was not the case: positive comments for less successful individuals were spread across a wide range of
themes. Thus, the impression as a whole is ambiguous. On the one hand, these prevalent non-language ability themes are important to interviewers, because they weighted them on par with other categories. This suggests that the majority of candidates should be viewed as successful in fulfilling the interviewers’ expectations for these categories. Yet, at the same time the themes did not contribute to the job of discerning successful from less successful candidates.

In contrast, there were two non-language ability categories that did clearly distinguish between successful and less successful candidates. These were ‘Confidence / Nervousness’ (7.5%) and ‘Respect and Enthusiasm for the Position’ (4.3%). ‘Confidence / Nervousness’ frequently overlapped with other categories, especially ‘Word Choice / Register’ and ‘Body Language.’ For example, interviewers primarily commented on the assertiveness or confidence (or lack thereof) with which candidates delivered responses, including voice quality and intonation. They also commented on visible cues of confidence or nervousness. The ‘Respect and Enthusiasm’ comments revolved around two issues. Most prominently, interviewers wanted to hear enthusiastic interest in the position and its tasks, or in working at a hotel. Negative comments focused on tepid enthusiasm, or self-interested reasons for wanting the job (i.e., gaining experience or language practice). Candidates also had to be careful to avoid projecting dismissiveness towards a front desk job, such as looking past it towards a management position, or referring to it as an “easy” or “basic” job. Since the results show that ‘Confidence / Nervousness’ and ‘Respect and Enthusiasm for the Position’ did distinguish between candidates, it is reasonable to group these categories alongside the language ability themes above as key determinants of candidate success. Indeed, ‘Confidence/Nervousness’ was more prevalent than all but one of the language ability categories (i.e., ‘Ability to Answer/ Clarity/ Coherence’),
while ‘Respect and Enthusiasm for the Position’ was more prevalent than half of the language ability categories.

### 4.2.3 Factors affecting candidates’ evaluations: Summary and implications.

This section discusses the themes that emerged from the interviewers’ general and moment-by-moment comments as they reviewed the interview videos. The coding process resulted in 23 themes, which reflected a large amount of overlap across the 9 interviewers: for the most prevalent themes, at least 7 of 9 interviewers were represented in the comments. Looking at the categories, language abilities emerged, in various aspects, as the most prominent evaluative preoccupation for interviewers. Furthermore, the majority of these comments were negative, which contrasts with the positive orientation of the comments as a whole. Thus, across most of the language ability categories, the interviewers were more likely to criticize perceived faults than to give credit for speaking abilities. Importantly, the language categories were not only the most prevalent, but they also distinguished between the higher and lower-rated candidates. This suggests that the independent raters were equally influenced by language issues. Moreover, a significant correlation emerged between interviewers’ global ratings of candidates and the interviewers’ perception of the candidates’ language ability. At the same time, the language ability categories were not the only ones to differentiate more and less successful candidates. In that respect, ‘Confidence / Nervousness’ and ‘Respect and Enthusiasm for the Position’ also emerged as important themes. In addition to those two themes, then, there is evidence from multiple perspectives that perceived language abilities were a primary influence on evaluations. Generally speaking, the candidates who impressed the interviewers and raters were those who satisfied their expectations across a variety of linguistic and pragmatic factors.
The interviewers’ preoccupation with language abilities aligns closely with previous job interview research, whether with L+ or L1 candidates (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Lipovsky, 2006; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; Scheuer, 2001). Lipovsky (2006) concluded in her study of L+ French candidates: “the way candidates presented information to their interviewers was more important for negotiating their expertise and making a good impression than the information itself” (p. 1172). In the present study, the themes that focused on candidate qualifications beyond the interview performance comprised a very small proportion of the total comments: 8% for ‘Professional Skills and Experience,’ 1.9% for ‘Cross-cultural Comfort,’ and 1.7% for ‘Understanding of Position.’ Otherwise, the comments looked inwards at the interview interaction itself as the self-contained source of assessable material. Attributions of enthusiasm, confidence, nervousness, and friendliness, among other qualities, derived from word choices, nonverbal actions, responsiveness and other cues. In addition, the length, relevance, specificity, comprehensibility, and register of responses were also enlisted as assessable information, and by extension, as evidence of competency. As Button (1992) described in his conversation analysis of a job interview, interviewers transform interactional features into assessable objects, which by a leap of imagination become affective attributions. In other words, the degree to which candidates satisfy interviewers’ expectations for appropriate behaviour becomes the principal evaluative focus, rather than the referential content of candidates’ responses. That content, in contrast, which is the tacit target of the interviewers’ questions, does not preoccupy interviewers a great deal. This may be because candidate claims of experience or skills in an interview response do not persuade interviewers as reliable evidence of suitability. The undervaluing of referential qualifications may also occur because, as Lipovsky (2006) suggested, such information is available elsewhere, in applications or CVs, so they can come
across as redundant in an interview. Either way, there is ample evidence that, in practice, the interview talk is not the means to criterion-related information about the candidate, but is itself the principal and self-contained object of evaluation for interviews. Among other issues, this raises questions about criterion validity. Button (1992), for instance, found in his study that ‘Answer Relevance,’ rather than target criteria, emerged as the principal reason for the case-study candidate’s unsuccessful outcome. As mentioned, the situation is not this clear-cut for the front desk position, since an explicit requirement on the job posting was ‘Strong communication skills.’ Arguably, then, criterion validity – and thus, fairness – concerns were satisfied by the interviewers’ emphasis on language abilities. Nonetheless, interviewers’ intentional or unintentional preoccupation with communicative features as a source of predictive attributions about candidates raises concerns about whether other target-position criteria are being ignored in the evaluative process.

To the extent that interviewers extrapolate from a candidate’s communicative performance to his or her job suitability, L+ candidates are disadvantaged in comparison to their L1 peers. In Thomas’ (1984) terms, the sociopragmatic knowledge that is required to negotiate L+ interviewing norms is considerable and not easily accessible. On top of that, the pragmalinguistic skillfulness that is required to activate that knowledge – to say and do the right things in the interview in real time – further add to the challenge. The disproportionate number of unsuccessful L+ candidates in Campbell and Roberts’ job interview study (2007) was not surprising in light of the authors’ analysis that a highly sophisticated professional discourse was expected of interviewees, whether or not the interviewers were aware of the importance of this standard in forming evaluative impressions. As long as interviewers continue to make the leap
from communicative sophistication to affective and competency attributions, it is predictable that Campbell and Roberts’ results will be replicated with L+ candidates in many other contexts.

In terms of methodology, the interviewer comments were obtained using a video-stimulated recall process, which took place immediately following the ‘second’ interviews. The interviewer was asked to comment on general or momentary impressions that the candidate made during their talk. The process sought to tap into both summative impressions and also those impressions that emerged as by-products of the moment-by-moment interaction. As noted, previous L+ job interview research has shown that untargeted or non-criterion impressions do emerge as a by-product of the interview talk, and these impressions are influential in terms of outcomes (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Jensen, 2003; Kerekes, 2006, 2007; Lipovsky, 2006; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). A methodological question for researchers is how to tap into this full range of assessables, since a standardized rubric may not capture subtle, interaction-based impressions. One first step is to ask the interviewer for his or her impressions, though Gumperz (1992b) has previously argued that ongoing interpretive processes are unconsciously made and are therefore “not readily accessible to recall” (p. 232). Instead, Gumperz called for a turn-by-turn analysis that can reveal – through speakers’ responsiveness to each other – the interpretive frames that they are working within. Yet the process of identifying frames via interaction features still involves a degree of researcher interpretation. Researchers must also be careful not to ignore participants’ perspectives and then make claims themselves to understand what was ‘really going on.’ Moreover, even if the analysis relies assiduously on the participants’ own talk and nonverbal actions, researcher bias can still emerge in the selection of moments to focus on (e.g., Brown & Rodgers, 2002).
To forestall these concerns, an alternate approach is to combine close analysis with triangulation methods (e.g., Mackey & Gass, 2005), such as participant checks (e.g., Sandelowski, 2008) or debriefings (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Kerekes, 2006), which can enrich the data while also serving as a hedge against a researcher-centred version of events. Yet even post-interview debriefings can vary widely in their ability to capture participants’ thought processes from a task. As Gumperz (1992b) pointed out, the subtle and fluid links between talk and interpretation may not be accessible via recall. One reason for this is the delay between interview and debriefing, which raises the risk of losing valuable information from short-term memory (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). A delayed debriefing can also allow moderating filters to creep into the interviewer’s thinking about the candidate (Ericsson & Simon, 1993), such as overlaying rating rubric categories over those memories. Such data is valuable in its own right, but it lessens researchers’ ability to link developing evaluations to the interactional source. In contrast, the video-stimulated recall process in this study followed recommendations to begin immediately after the interview, employ non-leading questions and thereafter not interfere with the comments, as well as using the video as a memory stimulus (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Gass & Mackey, 2000; Huang, 2013, 2014). The resulting comments clearly do not exactly replicate the interviewers’ thought processes as the interviews unfolded. At an empirical endpoint, that would require functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data (e.g., Huang, 2013). Nonetheless, video-stimulated recall can generate a satisfactory representation of the interviewer’s evaluation-making process. This method is valuable precisely because of the evidence that subtle features in job interview interaction can affect developing impressions of candidates. This creates an urgency to get inside the interaction with the interviewer to ascertain where and why those impressions emerged. Without stimulated recall, interviewers themselves
may not be able to trace this chain of connections back to the interaction. This was an issue in Roberts and Sayers’ (1998) study, where interviewers showed an inability to ground evaluative comments in interactional evidence until they were shown the interview videos. From a candidate training perspective, then, stimulated recall can help to tap into the “hidden code” of expectation, communication, and interpretation that emerges from the interview talk (Yates, 2010, p. 288). For L+ candidates, such detailed information, which connects impressions to moments in the interaction, may be able to help them make favourable choices as they negotiate their suitability in job interviews.

4.3 Features in Interviewers’ Talk

This section focuses on the interviewers (N = 9), and the degree to which they facilitated clear communication with the candidates. This addresses the fourth research question: To what extent do L1 or near-native L+ interviewers employ actions that facilitate candidates’ understanding? Table 1 shows the results of ten Interviewer Actions measures in four categories (Active Listening, Clear Speech, Repair, and Transitions), which provide a picture of the interviewers’ performance. For the majority of measures, higher percentages are favourable, since this means that the interviewer employed facilitative actions when given the opportunity.

With the Active Listening measures, the most frequent action was ‘Eye Contact’ (M = 76%, SD = 7.4%), followed by ‘Nodding’ (M = 63, SD = 11.5%), while ‘Backchannels’ occurred relatively infrequently (M = 20.3%, SD = 9.6%). Moreover, during a large proportion of candidates’ utterances, interviewers provided at least one of these three Active Listening cues (M = 85.8%, SD = 4.6%). For Clear Speech, the ‘Stress’ measure showed that the interviewers placed emphasis on a large majority of consensus key words (M = 81.1%, SD = 11.5%). With Repair, the interviewers attempted to repair 100% of misunderstandings in response to explicit
signals from the candidates, though there were only 19 instances across the interviews. Finally, with *Transitions*, the interviewers as a group provided contextualizing talk (‘Contextualizing’) for over half of the main questions ($M = 55.7\%$, $SD = 15.4\%$), which was more frequent than ‘Repetition/Rephrasing’ ($M = 39.7\%$, $SD = 17.2\%$). The interviewers also nearly always clearly signalled transitions (‘Transitions’) to new questions ($M = 93.1\%$, $SD = 11\%$). For the other two measures, ‘Lexical Complexity’ and ‘Speech Rate,’ lower scores were preferable. For ‘Lexical Complexity,’ a high percentage (87.8% to 93.9%) of the interviewers’ words came from the 1,000 most common English lexical items. The interviewers’ ‘Speech Rate’ varied notably both between and within interviewers, from an average of 148.3 to 211.8 words per minute ($M = 175.8$, $SD = 22.5$).

Looking at the interviewers as a group, some generalizations are possible. First, while certain features occurred more consistently than others, the interviewers were active communicators across all four measured categories (opportunities for *Repair*, or clarifying misunderstandings, did not occur often in the interviews). Notably, the interviewers used at least one *Active Listening* cue during 85.8% of candidate utterances. That included either providing eye contact or nodding at over 50% of candidate utterances. The interviewers also provided transition cues to mark the end/beginning of topics 93.1% of the time. In terms of ‘Lexical Complexity,’ the results from running the interviewers’ transcripts through the *Compleat WebVP* program showed a large proportion of high-frequency words. Specifically, an average of over 90% of all lexical items came from the first list (i.e., the 1,000 most common words), and 95% of items were drawn from the first two lists (i.e., the 2,000 most common words). Very few items were likely to be unfamiliar to candidates. Additionally, while asking their principal questions, the interviewers placed emphasis on 81.1% of the consensus key words in those questions. Also,
the interviewers did not refrain from repairing misunderstanding. Each time a candidate explicitly signaled confusion, the interviewers initiated a repair sequence. Finally, the interviewers provided some contextualization (i.e., surrounding talk) for 55% of their main questions. As a group, then, the interviewers consistently employed features that can facilitate clear communication with L+ speakers. Moreover, this effort was apparent across all categories of measurement.
A second finding is that there were notable communication style differences among the interviewers, in terms of certain features. For example, while eight of nine interviewers consistently used *Active Listening* cues, they varied in the particular cues that they relied on. Additionally, all interviewers had features that they did not use as frequently as other individuals, and those 'neglected' features also varied. For instance, interviewer I8 provided 100% eye contact.

Table 1
Interviewer Actions*

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Rate (words/minute)</td>
<td>201.1</td>
<td>164.4</td>
<td>160.5</td>
<td>204.4</td>
<td>211.8</td>
<td>174.8</td>
<td>163.2</td>
<td>148.3</td>
<td>153.6</td>
<td><strong>175.8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(25.6)</td>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>(25.3)</td>
<td>(32.9)</td>
<td>(22.7)</td>
<td>(20.5)</td>
<td>(17.7)</td>
<td>(28.3)</td>
<td>(12.5)</td>
<td>(22.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress (%)</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td><strong>81.1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13.1)</td>
<td>(7.9)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(6.2)</td>
<td>(6.6)</td>
<td>(4.7)</td>
<td>(9.4)</td>
<td>(1.5)</td>
<td>(2.9)</td>
<td>(11.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair % (Instances)</td>
<td>-- (0)</td>
<td>-- (0)</td>
<td>-- (0)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualizing</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td><strong>55.7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31.7)</td>
<td>(7.9)</td>
<td>(9.6)</td>
<td>(21.4)</td>
<td>(21.8)</td>
<td>(3.2)</td>
<td>(13.4)</td>
<td>(23.9)</td>
<td>(5.8)</td>
<td>(15.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition/Rephrasing</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td><strong>39.7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(37.9)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(25.5)</td>
<td>(19.7)</td>
<td>(14.3)</td>
<td>(10.5)</td>
<td>(10.5)</td>
<td>(24.6)</td>
<td>(5.8)</td>
<td>(17.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Cues</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td><strong>93.1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16.5)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(37.9)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(17.3)</td>
<td>(7.2)</td>
<td>(12.8)</td>
<td>(7.2)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Standard Deviations are included in parentheses ( ), with the exception of ‘Repair’ (instances).

*a* With the exception of ‘Clear Speech,’ the percentage scores represent the number of times an interviewer produced an action divided by the numbers of opportunities to do so.

*b* ‘Lexical Complexity’ was measured using the Compleat Lexical Tutor program (Cobb, T., 2013). Higher scores represent greater complexity.

*c* ‘Stress’ was calculated in the following manner: The number of perceptibly stressed words divided by the number of consensus words that coders predicted would be stressed.
during candidate turns, but very infrequently provided backchannels (2.8%). I8 also spoke the most slowly ($M = 148$ wpm), yet used more complex vocabulary ($M = 116.2$) than seven of eight other interviewers. To the extent that the Interviewer Actions instrument can describe effective communication with L+ speakers, all nine interviewers had favourable results in some areas, but all equally displayed some communicative shortcomings in terms of the targeted features.

Table 2
Interviewer Rankings for Interviewer Actions Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewers</th>
<th>Evaluation Score$^a$/5</th>
<th>+ / - Comments$^b$</th>
<th>Active Listening$^c$</th>
<th>Lexical Complexity</th>
<th>Speech Rate</th>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>Mean Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4 / 0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4 / 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1 / 0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4 / 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3 / 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3 / 0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0 / 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0 / 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0 / 5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The rankings (1=most favourable; 9=least favourable) are based on the Interviewer Actions scores.

$^a$ The Evaluation Scores are averages of the ratings generated by the candidates.

$^b$ The candidates' comments about the interviewers were also coded 'positive' (+) or 'negative' (-).

$^c$ Three measures ('Backchannels', 'Eye Contact', and 'Nodding') made up the 'Active Listening' scores.

$^d$ Three measures ('Contextualizing', 'Rephrasing/Repeating', and 'Transition Cues') made up the 'Transitions' scores.

The variability in the interviewers’ communication styles is illustrated in Table 2, which shows the rankings of the interviewers, in relation to their peers, across categories or individual measures (Repair was not included due to its infrequency). As mentioned, none of the interviewers stood out with a high ranking in all categories. However, some individuals earned higher scores across the measured categories than others. Interviewer I5, for instance, had predominantly low rankings. These differences in communication features raise the question of whether and how this variability impacted the candidates. To address this question, the
interviewers in Table 2 are ordered according to the post-interview evaluation scores provided by candidates. Those evaluations covered four areas: (a) candidate comfort; (b) perceived fairness; (c) perceived professionalism; and (d) a perception that the interviewer helped the candidate to understand. Overall, the evaluations were high \((M = 4.4/5, SD = .7)\), with only slight differences between the four categories (4.3/5 for ‘The interviewer tried to help us understand each other’ to 4.6/5 for ‘I feel that the interviewer treated me fairly’). This suggests that the candidates were generally satisfied with the interviewers. On the other hand, the evaluations did vary, from 3.8 for interviewer I5, to 4.8 for interviewers I1 and I9. This led to another question, which was whether those evaluations aligned with the Interviewer Actions rankings. Looking at Table 2, there does not appear to be a clear correspondence between the two sets of rankings. However, the joint-highest rated interviewer (I9) shared the highest Interviewer Actions ranking \((M = 4)\), and the lowest-rated interviewer (I5) also had the lowest Interviewer Actions ranking \((M = 6.6)\). Indeed, the three lowest evaluations (for I2, I5, and I8) corresponded to three of the four lowest Interviewer Actions rankings.

To test the strength of the relations between Interviewer Actions and evaluations of interviewers, correlation analyses were run, using the Spearman Rank-order test. The correlation results showed a moderate positive relation \((r(7) = .450, p = .224)\) between overall Interviewer Actions scores and evaluations, though this did not reach significance. Similarly, most individual measures did not reach significance in the correlation analysis. There were moderate positive correlations for ‘Backchannels’ \((r(7) = .483, p = .187)\), ‘Repetition/Rephrasing’ \((r(7) = .467, p = .205)\), and ‘Contextualizing’ \((r(7) = .417, p = .265)\), though these also did not reach significance. There were not many moderate or strong correlations between the Interviewer Actions and the sub-categories of the candidate evaluations. For ‘Comfort,’ only ‘Stress’ (i.e., emphasizing key
words) had a strong positive relation ($r(7) = .604$, $p = .085$), which approached significance. For ‘Helps me to Understand,’ only ‘Backchannels’ ($r(7) = .729$, $p = .026$) and ‘Nodding’ ($r(7) = .571$, $p = .108$) indicated moderate-to-strong relations. For ‘Treats me Fairly,’ three categories had strong relations: ‘Backchannels’ ($r(7) = .613$, $p = .080$), ‘Contextualizing’ ($r(7) = .596$, $p = .090$), and ‘Repetition/Rephrasing’ ($r(7) = .596$, $p = .090$).

Since the majority of the moderate-to-strong correlation results did not reach statistical significance, those outputs must be interpreted with caution. At the same time, a trend that emerged from the correlation results is that particular actions – ‘Backchannels,’ ‘Repetition/Rephrasing,’ and ‘Contextualizing’ – repeatedly appeared with moderate-to-strong correlations. Thus, these actions may serve to differentiate the interviewers with the highest and lowest evaluations. The link between the three actions is that they express augmented levels of active listening (‘Backchannels’) and scaffolding support (‘Repetition/Rephrasing’ and ‘Contextualizing’). Looking at the Interviewer Actions results (Table 2), the three lowest-rated interviewers (I2, I5, and I8) stand out with nearly all of the lowest scores for these measures. What this suggests is that these three interviewers provided a minimum of engagement and support, but little more than that, and this minimal style was received with some criticism by their candidates. For analysis, the results suggest that these actions (‘Backchannels,’ 'Repetition/Rephrasing,’ and 'Contextualizing') may be indices of a higher degree of positive engagement with candidates. Since nearly all interviewers consistently provided eye contact, nodded, stressed key words, avoided overly complex vocabulary, used transition cues, and tried to repair misunderstandings, those actions – in effect – expressed a baseline level of interviewer supportiveness. In contrast, the presence of extra actions, such as verbalizing interest or understanding (‘Backchannels’), and clarifying questions with extra information
('Contextualizing'; 'Repetition/Rephrasing'), may be perceived favourably as an exceptional degree of support and engagement. These actions are positively “effortful,” as Cassell, Gill, and Tepper (2008) described the overlapping verbal and nonverbal actions of stranger dyads tasked with ensuring mutual understanding (p. 7). While these actions on their own do not appear to describe striking communication style differences, they may be relevant markers of a perceptively facilitative style of interviewing.

It is also noteworthy that two Interviewer Actions that seem highly implicated in candidates’ comprehension -- 'Speech Rate' and 'Lexical Complexity' -- did not correlate strongly with candidate ratings of interviewers. Given that the candidates are all highly proficient English speakers, this result may not be surprising. For 'Speech Rate,' 150 to 175 wpm has been identified as a satisfactory rate for L+ English speakers' comprehension (e.g. Jones et al., 2007; Zhao, 1997), so some interviewers (i.e., I1, I3, and I4) did speak comparatively fast. However, only 1 of 27 candidate comments mentioned speech rate. This suggests either that the faster-speaking interviewers did not adversely affect the candidates, or that the candidates did not interpret a fast speech rate as a criticism of the interviewer, but rather as a limitation in their own comprehension. Baptiste and Seig (2007) observed that interviewers may be susceptible to a fast speech rate when the interview routine becomes highly familiar. With less proficient L+ candidates, then, speech rate remains an important feature for assessing interviewers’ facilitative actions. Moreover, the power asymmetry in interviews may deter candidates from asking interviewers to slow down or to use less complex language. This means that for speech rate and other features, interviewers generally need to self-regulate, since candidates may be concerned about the evaluative repercussions if they admit to non-understanding (Bremer et al., 1996; Roberts, 1998).
To provide an additional perspective on the interviewers' performance, the candidates were also invited to make comments about their interviewers. This resulted in 30 comments, which were then coded as positive \((n = 18)\) or negative \((n = 12)\) items (Appendix S). The number of positive or negative comments that an interviewer received are also included in Table 2. The total number \((N = 30)\) is small, particularly from 27 interviews; indeed, six of those 27 debriefings elicited no comments. This suggests that the candidates attended more to their own performance than that of the interviewer, and/or that the interviewers’ behaviour generally conformed with the candidates’ expectations. Nonetheless, the distribution of the positive and negative comments closely aligns with the interviewers’ rankings from the candidates’ evaluations. In addition, the themes of the comments tend to support the interpretation of the correlation results above. The positive comments predominantly focused on *affect*: that the interviewer made the candidate feel comfortable, and that the interviewer came across as “friendly,” “nice,” or “not scary.” Conversely, some negative comments focused on feeling uncomfortable with the interviewer, that the interviewer seemed impatient, or feeling the interview contrasted with the candidate’s expectations. One candidate commented that the interviewer was "too nice" and so the interview did not feel authentic. Taken together, the comment-evaluation correspondences tend to support the trend that emerged from the correlation analysis: the candidates were primarily moved by the interviewers' perceived engagement and supportiveness (or lack thereof). The more that the interviewers were perceived as participating actively and supportively in the interview talk, the better, from the candidates' point of view.

### 4.3.1 Features in interviewers' talk: Summary and implications

The *Interviewer Actions* analysis focused on the interviewer side of the table, and specifically on actions that can facilitate clear communication with L+ speakers. The scores indicated that the interviewers, as a
group, were active and facilitative communicators across the four targeted areas: Active Listening, Clear Speech, Repair, and Transitions. At the same time, the measures revealed notable communication style differences between the interviewers. This is a useful reminder that interviewer talk, regardless of how restricted it may seem to be, is rarely as consistent and homogeneous as stakeholders might imagine (e.g., Brown, 2003; Dipboye et al., 2012; McNamara, 1997). Additionally, in terms of the Interviewer Action scores, and relative to their peers, even the highest-rated interviewers displayed at least one communicative shortcoming. As such, there seems to be room for improvement in one or more aspects of each interviewer's communication with L+ candidates.

In terms of methodology, the Interviewer Actions instrument was developed for this project, and the target features were based on recommendations, criticisms, and observations from previous L+ interview research (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996; Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Kanter, 1995; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). Its purpose was to provide a detailed and comprehensive picture of those features for each interviewer, as a means of assessing the degree to which the interviewers communicated in a facilitative manner with the candidates. The instrument’s development responded to a number of issues. The most basic one is that the interviewer is an active participant in the talk, and communicative choices that he or she makes can affect ongoing talk, and by extension, interview outcomes (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). At the same time, a focus on the interviewer in Organizational Psychology has focused on demographic and personality variables, as well as interviewers’ reports about their typical practice, rather than data from the interviewer’s actual communication (e.g., Chen et al., 2010; Dipboye et al., 2012; Macan, 2009; Simola et al., 2007). Secondly, the interaction research that has turned its attention
to interviewer talk has focused for the most part on negative interviewer actions (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). Gumperz (1992a), for example, explicitly stated that his interview study was interested in misunderstandings that have a “pejorative effect on the outcome” (p. 302). As illuminating as this lens has been for understanding how moment-by-moment interviewer choices can negatively affect L+ candidates’ outcomes, it has led to an unbalanced picture of interviewers in these contexts. It is equally important to understand how other interviewer actions can positively affect communication (e.g., Travers, 2013), and to understand the implications of those actions from an evaluative perspective. The research literature has not yet provided a satisfactory model of effective interviewing with L+ candidates. A final concern was with a case-study approach that focused on interviewer actions at a limited number of moments within interviews (e.g., Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Jensen, 2003; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). A limitation of this approach is that it is not clear whether the interviewer’s actions at the focused-on moments were typical of his or her behaviours throughout the interview. In the interest of representing interviewer contributions in a fair and comprehensive manner, it was necessary to consider the interviewer’s actions across the whole interview, and over multiple interviews, rather than simply at selected moments.

Because the Interviewer Actions instrument and its measures were developed for this project, the individual results (with the exception of 'Speech Rate') are not easily comparable to previously established baselines. However, for future research on interviewer performance with L+ candidates, the Interviewer Actions results represent a point of comparison by which that performance can be assessed. At the same time, the meaningfulness of the instruments’ scores is grounded in three sources:
The validity of the individual measures themselves, which derived from recommendations and observations from previous L+ interview research. Thus, for the proportional scores (with the exception of ‘Speech Rate’ and ‘Lexical Complexity,’ which had their own calculations), the analysis assumed that the more frequently an action occurred, the better, from the point of view of L+ candidates’ comfort and understanding.

In relation to the other 8 interviewers’ scores, which is to say, in terms of the interviewers’ rankings overall and for individual measures, or in comparison to a mean score for the other 8 interviewers.

In relation to the candidates’ evaluations of their interviewers. These evaluations are susceptible to candidate variability. However, the relevance of the evaluations is to ground the Interviewer Actions analysis in the candidates’ own perceptions of their understanding and comfort, which reflect the purpose of the instrument. This relationship places value in the candidates speaking for themselves about their experience with their interviewer.

With regard to the correlation analysis, it is likely that the importance of some actions was mitigated by the candidates' high spoken English ability. For instance, with lower-proficiency speakers, evaluations of interviewers may be more influenced by 'Speech Rate' and 'Lexical Complexity' than was the case here. Similarly, the limited number of ‘Repair’ opportunities here means that this action was not a factor in this study. Elsewhere, however, the question of what interviewers should do with frequent communication breakdowns has important ramifications for L+ candidates (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; Wagner & Gardner, 2004). In this way, the actions that best tap into candidates’ comfort and understanding may differ based on their spoken English ability.

The mutually reinforcing correlation results and candidate comments pointed to an engaged, supportive interviewing style as preferable from the candidates’ perspective. The lowest-rated interviewers did consistently produce a number of features, including nodding, eye contact, and providing transition cues. Yet those 'basic' features apparently did not project exceptional engagement and support in the candidates’ minds. Indeed, not providing more than those minimal features may make a negative impression on candidates. This result is relevant because it largely conflicts with structured interviewing recommendations. A 'minimal'
interviewing style fits within a structured practice, which prioritizes consistent communication across candidates (e.g., Dana et al., 2013; Huffcutt, 2011; Millar & Gallagher, 1997). Within this perspective, extra interviewer talk is disfavoured because it undermines reliable administrations across candidates, which in turn affects the fairness of the procedure for job seekers (Chapman & Zweig, 2005). From this point of view, the relatively minimal styles of I2, I5, and I8 constitute desirable performances. In this study, however, the results indicate that the candidates received those interviewers less favourably precisely because of that minimal style, which projected a lack of friendliness or interest. The tentative findings here indicate that the candidates themselves prefer more interviewer interaction, as supportive and attentive interlocutors, rather than less.

From the interviewers' perspective, too, it is desirable to provide the conditions for candidates to produce their best performances, which includes issues of comfort and transparency. However, this raises concerns about making interviews 'easier' for candidates (e.g., Brown, 2003). Interviewers who are relatively active communicators must be skillful to avoid 'contaminating' candidate responses (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007). At the same time, interviewer support and engagement is not only candidate-focused; it can aid the evaluation process as well. More interviewer support can pre-empt or clarify misunderstandings (e.g., Roberts & Sayers, 1998). Furthermore, the trust that interviewers build through engagement and interactional support increases the likelihood that candidates will 'open up' and provide a richer picture of themselves, which helps interviewers to make confident judgments (e.g., Kanter, 1995). Cultural and linguistic differences with L+ candidates make the evaluative job more difficult for interviewers, who are less likely to be sure of their judgments (e.g., de Meijer et al., 2007). For this reason, interviewers who are active in the conversation, especially by prompting for more information, making clarification requests, checking understandings, and repairing
misunderstandings, may enhance the reliability of their judgments (e.g., Manroop et al., 2013). With increasingly diverse candidate pools for most jobs, it is counterproductive to prohibit interviewers from using these communicative tools. Otherwise, interviewers may be obliged to base their evaluations on what candidates did not say, rather than what they did say (e.g., Button, 1992), or on misunderstandings that might have been resolved. Proponents of a minimal interviewing style may argue that restricting interviewer participation increases fairness across candidates (e.g. Chapman & Zweig, 2005). Ironically, with L+ candidates, the opposite may well be the case. Less interviewer interaction is more likely to favour candidates who are linguistic and cultural insiders, who share the interviewer's assumptions of appropriate roles and talk, while disfavouring candidates from divergent linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

4.4 Interviewer Participation in Responses

This section addresses the fifth research question: to what extent do L1 or near-native L+ interviewers participate in negotiating candidate responses? The question reflects a two-way orientation to analyzing interviews. Communication and meaning-making are joint undertakings, including within interviews, where the interviewer's contributions to the talk are limited but still variable (e.g., Bremer et al. 1996; Dipboye et al., 2012; McNamara, 1997). In this study, in addition to the interviewers’ roles in administering the interview, they participated in candidates' responses to a greater or lesser extent. As a result, looking only at the candidate's side of the interaction is not sufficient to understand evaluative moments and the interviewer's interpretation of them.

In the data, the interviewer's contributions to the talk went beyond asking questions. They also included various interventions during responses. Thus, this section describes frequent types of interviewer moves, and discusses their implications in terms of the particular contexts where
they occurred, but also within a broader understanding of the interviewer’s roles as administrator and evaluator.

As mentioned, the analysis focused on moments associated with evaluative comments that interviewers weighted ‘3,’ which indicated that they were clearly influential in the interviewer’s developing evaluation. These moments \((n = 111; 67 \text{ positive}, 44 \text{ negative})\) were coded for types of interviewer contributions, and this process resulted in six initial categories:

- Asking questions
- End of response comments
- Follow-up questions
- Responsiveness/ Active listening
- Summaries/ Rephrasings
- Taking the floor

For the sake of greater coherence, these initial categories were combined into three larger groupings, based on their chronology in a candidate's response: Question Variability, Mid-response Actions (Responsiveness/ Active listening; Follow-up questions), and Summary Responses (End of turn responses; Summaries/ Rephrasings; Taking the floor). The following sections present analyses of a number of excerpts that were considered representative of these categories, including a discussion of the implications of those behaviours for the participants. To provide some context for the contributions, I have noted the categories’ proportional frequency within the subset of the data that was analyzed, as well as their association with positive or negative evaluative comments. For each excerpt, too, the evaluations and ratings that the interviewer and candidate received are reported.

4.4.1 Asking questions. This section looks at variability in the interviewers' questions for candidates (i.e., from the Job Interview Questions frame). The Interviewer Actions analysis generated quantitative information regarding the interviewers' questioning styles, specifically
stressing information words, topic transitions, and contextualizing or repeating the main questions. This section extends that analysis to look at question variability in context.

The introductory talk that preceded the initial question ("Tell me about yourself") varied from interviewer to interviewer. Initial introductions took place outside the interview rooms, but the majority of the interviews (19/27) began with the interviewers introducing themselves again, and in all cases (27/27), the interviewers used the candidate's name during the introductory talk. Frequently, this took the form of checking for correct pronunciation. However, nearly half of the interviewers (4/9) were inconsistent in regard to self-introductions, sometimes introducing themselves and sometimes not.

Slightly less than half (13/27) of the interviews began with the interviewer outlining the procedure. One individual (I1) outlined the procedure to one candidate but not the other two. An even smaller proportion (10/27) included small talk before moving to the first main question. Furthermore, just under half the interviewers (4/9) were inconsistent in engaging in small talk or not within their three interviews. The following two excerpts\(^9\) illustrate this variability:

(1) \((I2 \text{ Evaluation}=4.3/5; \ C9 \text{ Rating}=5.2/7)\)
\begin{itemize}
  \item \(I2: \text{[Smiling]} \uparrow(\text{Name}), \text{thank you very much for }\text{joining} \uparrow\text{me. I'm (Name), and I'm the }\text{recruiter} \text{here at the Bayview }\uparrow\text{Hotel}\)
  \item \(C9: \text{Yeah}\)
  \item \(I2: \text{[Smiling]} \text{And I've worked here for }\text{sixteen }\uparrow\text{years}\)
  \item \(C9: \text{↑Nice [big smile]}\)
  \item \(I2: \text{[Smiling]} \uparrow\text{Yeah, yes, it's been an an a }\uparrow\text{mazing place to work for }\downarrow\text{me}\)
  \item \(C9: \text{[smiling]} \uparrow\text{im}↑\text{pressive}\)
  \item \(I2: \text{Yeah}:\)
  \item \(C9: \text{Oh, }\uparrow\text{this is my }\text{resume}↑\)
  \item \(I2: \text{Okay thank you very }\uparrow\text{much (1) }\uparrow\text{thank you: }\uparrow\text{so (↑Name) can you }\text{tell me about your }↑\text{self?}\)
\end{itemize}

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\(^9\) Transcription notations: I: interviewer turn; CX: candidate X's turn; \(\uparrow\downarrow\): pitch movement on following syllable; bold: stressed syllables; [ ]: nonverbal actions; ': the start of overlapping speech; :: colon indicates syllable lengthening; (=): equal mark indicates latching turns; (1): numeral inside parentheses indicates pause in seconds; (hhh): laughter; "\text{talk}": speech uttered at low volume; (name): a name that was omitted for confidentiality reasons.
Excerpt (1) contains a minimum of preliminary talk, which was limited to the interviewer's self-introduction. I2's lengthened "Yeah:" near the end of the exchange effectively declined an
opportunity to further the introductory talk, and C9 apparently identified the moment as a shift to the ‘business’ phase of the interview, since she took the opportunity to hand over her resumé. Notably, I2's other two interviews included similarly brief introductions before launching into the first main question.

In contrast, the interviewer in excerpt (2) prolonged the small talk with multiple questions. C10 also did her part to contribute to the small talk by adding incremental utterances about the weather and a place she had visited. Indeed, she took those opportunities to praise Victoria over Vancouver, to mention family connections on the West Coast, and to point out her "adaptability" vis-a-vis the weather, with all of these moves having the potential to make positive impressions. Moreover, unlike I2, I4 provided an outline of the interview procedure, including preparing C9 that she will be taking frequent notes. This is not something that I2 mentioned at the beginning of his interviews, even though he took notes throughout.

The variability in the two excerpts is striking, in terms of the length and content of the introductory talk. Practically, the relatively short time allotted for the interviews (15 minutes) may have affected the interviewers' choices in this regard. Nonetheless, the small talk in excerpt (2) provided C10 with opportunities to develop rapport with I4, which can be advantageous in relation to evaluations (e.g., Allen, 2004; Burns, 2009; Kerekes, 2006). To her credit, C10 made the most of the opportunity by participating comfortably in the exchange, both verbally and nonverbally (e.g., smiling and laughing). The same degree of opportunity was not available to C9 in excerpt (1), though for her part, too, C9's smiles and ingratiating responses ("Nice;" "Impressive") made the most of the limited introductory talk. In any case, interviewer inconsistency in incorporating or not incorporating small talk creates unequal opportunities to develop rapport with interviewers. Beyond this, small talk can ease candidates into the interview
and thereby reduce nervousness and intimidation. From an affective standpoint, it is not only the candidates that benefit from such preliminary talk, since greater comfort can lead candidates to be less guarded in their responses (Kanter, 1995). In addition, outlining the interview procedure, which occurred in excerpt (2) but not (1), can preempt communication difficulties with all candidates, though particularly with L+ speakers (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007), who are more likely to depend both on broad and moment-by-moment contextual information than L1 speakers. The same consideration applies to preparing candidates for note-taking, which I4 incorporated into her introduction, but which I2 did not. To the extent that these moves increase perceptions of interviewer transparency, they are likely to be well received by candidates, in terms of fairness judgements (Macan, 2009).

This is not to say that extended preliminary talk uniformly benefits candidates. The importance of first impressions to interview outcomes (e.g., Miller & Gallagher, 1997) is a reminder that the small-talk portion of the interview can make negative as well as positive impressions. As Birkner and Kern (2008) noted, candidates are always being scrutinized, regardless of whether the talk is informal and apparently incidental to the body of the interview. Indeed, effectively negotiating a small-talk stage is not straightforward, in large part due to the contrast between that phase's informal tone, the formal genre, and the speakers' status differences (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007). For L+ speakers, perceptively awkward small talk may not be simply attributable to linguistic differences. A lack of comfort may also relate to a cultural conflict, in terms of norms that disfavour speaking casually with a higher-status individual, and/or a negative perception of sharing personal information in a formal interview with a stranger (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996; Leri, 2000). For interviewers, the advantages of including small talk and outlining the interview procedure seem to outweigh the disadvantages. Such talk
can assist in putting candidates at ease, as well as pre-empting misunderstandings during the body of the interview. However, the evidence in this data suggests a lack of procedural norms among experienced interviewers with regard to small talk, outlining the procedure, and informing candidates about note-taking.

There was also variability in the delivery of the questions from the *Job Interview Questions* frame. In this data set, 81 of 111 evaluative comments focused on the response as a whole, so it was relevant to look at how those questions were asked. The quantitative results from Table 1 (Section 4.3) showed variability not only between interviewers but in many cases within interviewers, in particular with 'Repetition/Rephrasing' and 'Contextualizing.' Of interest is how those actions related to positive or negative evaluations for the 81 items in this subset. There were 29 instances when the interviewer asked the question only, with no contextualization or repetition. Of these, 41% of responses (12/29) received negative comments. In comparison, 52 questions incorporated some contextualization and/or repetition. Of these types, 33% (17/52) were associated with negative comments. Thus, there was a marginal positive correspondence between contextualizing talk around questions and favourably evaluated responses, though the disparity between positive and negative evaluative comments was not great.

One example of question variability was the 'Challenging Situation' item, which was a multi-part question and appeared on the frame as follows: "Describe a challenging situation that you have faced. How did you deal with this situation and what was the outcome? What did you learn from the experience?" Here are some versions of the question as it was actually delivered by the interviewers:

(3) *(I5 Evaluation=3.8/5; C1 Rating=6/7)*

C1: ... *that* experience really helped me [to *communicate with guests* and *give* them some good [smiling] *impressions* about (1) the hotel.*

I5: [noding] of course
[Looking down at notes] Great.  

I5: [Looking down at notes] Great. Uh, de↑scribe a cha↑llenging situation that you ↑faced, and how did you deal with ↑that.  

C1: Mmm, I would like to talk about...
question, and for I7 the wording on the frame was barely recognizable. In excerpt (6), I7 contextualized the question by reminding C14 of a previous challenge that he had mentioned. Then I7 proposed a number of contextual sources -- both academic and professional -- to draw from, and even cued C17 to provide a narrative with a *positive* outcome, which was not specified in the frame. Further, I7 asked C17 to provide "specifics" and to explain how *he* resolved the situation, both of which were not part of the original question. Altogether, I7's modifications contextualized the question in a highly favourable manner for C17, not only in terms of possible content, but also pragmatically: to be positive, to be specific, and to personalize the response to show how he resolved the situation. In contrast, with excerpt (3), I5 not only provided no repetition/rephrasing or contextualization, he actually provided *less* information to C1 than was specified in the frame. This is relevant in terms of the importance of response completeness to evaluations, and the potentially negative impact when interviewers need to prompt for extra information (e.g., Gumperz, 1992a; Lipovsky, 2006; Scheuer, 2001). The contrast between the questions in excerpts (3) and (6) is dramatic, and not just in terms of wording, but in terms of the amount of information and its helpfulness in framing a satisfactory response.

In 10 of 81 questions in this data set, an interviewer repeated or rephrased a principal question in response to a signal from the candidate. Four of those instances resulted in a negative evaluative comment, though the focus of the criticism was not the repetition. In several instances, the request for repetition came across as a holding strategy while the candidate formulated a response. In one case, this was how the interviewer (I9) interpreted the move (i.e., as a stalling tactic), yet she viewed it positively, as an intelligent strategy to employ. In this data set, then, the interviewers were tolerant of requests to repeat a question. In other studies, however, the extra interviewer work that such requests entail has been identified as
disadvantageous to candidates (e.g., Lipovsky, 2006; Scheuer, 2001). An additional issue, as with excerpts (3) to (6), is that interviewers who repeated questions in these situations were in danger of providing too much helpful information to candidates:

(7) (I1 Evaluation=4.8/5; C21 Rating=6.6/7)
   C21: ...and for my \textit{weak}ness, (1) are you \textit{asking} about my person\textit{ali\textadDED{ty}} \textit{traits}, or
   {just}
   I1: \{Anything that \textit{you} see as being \textit{areas} that you need to improve \textit{upon}, whether
   it's, um, [shaking head, looking up] in the \textit{work}place or \textit{person}ally (2) or in terms of,
   um, um \textit{personal} attributes, such as, um, time \textit{management}, things like that. \textit{Any} \textit{thing}
   that you can \textit{think} of that you need to improve \textit{upon}.
   C21: \{um, uh
   (2) I would say I'm a really...

In this example, C21 did more than simply ask for repetition. She sought a narrower focus for the 'weakness' question, which is a hazardous item for candidates because it tends to conflict with the pragmatic task of 'Selling Yourself,' including representing yourself positively. In reply, I1 suggested a convenient topic ("time management") for C21 to discuss. More subtly, I1 also offered C21 a more favourable pragmatic frame to work within, namely something that she can "improve upon," which shifts the focus from a negative (weakness) to a positive (improvement). Notably, there was also an early moment in the excerpt when C21 displayed her willingness to begin her response ("um, uh"). Yet rather than end her explanation at that point, I1 continued to elaborate and provide C21 with more information to help shape her response. In her post-interview comments, C21 was surprised that I1 had "guided" her in this manner, and she acknowledged that the support had helped her to respond in a better way.

Returning to excerpt (4), there is a similar example when I9 repeated/rephrased a question for C27:

(4) (I9 Evaluation=4.8/5; C27 Rating=6/7)
   I9: ... [Writing notes; smiling] You take on too \textit{much}. [Writing notes] (3) \textit{Okay}, can you \textit{tell} me about \textit{when} you were \textit{faced} with a \textit{challenging situ\textadDED{ation}} [C27 nodding].
at work or outside of work. How did you deal with the situation [C27 nodding], and how was the outcome?
C27: (1) Um (1)
I9: Can you think of one particular time, or (1)
C27: [Looking up] Um (1)
I9: One challenging situation?
C27: Yes. (1) When I worked at [Name], the Japanese restaurant,...

The issue here was whether C27's brief hesitation (1-second pause, "Um," 1-second pause) constituted a clear signal of non-understanding, which necessitated repetition, or whether the hesitation was an acceptable planning pause before responding. It is true that the question was complex, with three distinct parts, so I9 may have assumed that it required repetition. However, it is relevant that I9's post-interview English ability score for C27 (3.5/7) was the second lowest amongst all 27 candidates, and a number of I9's evaluative comments focused on C27's perceived struggles in responding, as well as with unsuitable word choices. Given this information, in excerpt (4), it is reasonable to interpret I9's quick repetitions within a She-needs-extra-help frame. On the other hand, C27's nods during the initial question, and her facial expression during and after the question indicated that she was following the interviewer's talk and was able to reply. Moreover, although a 1-second pause is enough to mark disfluency or uncertainty in conversation (e.g., Clark 1996), this is surely not the case at the beginning of an interview response, where a longer pause is reasonable (e.g., Kanter, 1995). As a result, a reasonable interpretation is that excerpt (4) was a case of the interviewer scaffolding a question for the candidate when no support was needed. In another context, this support may be seen as beneficial to the candidate. In this case, however, the extra support reflected an assumption that C27 would not be able to understand the question, and so expressed a lack of confidence in C27's English ability in general, which could only have negative consequences for the evaluation (e.g., Gumperz, 1992a). From the candidate's perspective, however, by not receiving the time to show
that she could process and respond to the question without support, C27 had no opportunity to revise a negative perception of her language ability.

4.4.2 Mid-response actions. An additional source of variability with the nine interviewers was note-taking. Several individuals (4 of 9) were assiduous note takers throughout the interviews, while the others took very few notes or none at all. I4 explained to her three candidates, during introductory talk, that she would be taking notes in order to remember responses. The same was true of I9. This move served to preempt potential disorientation, since the note-taking deprived them of a more engaged interlocutor. In contrast, the interviewers who did not take notes were able to be more responsive listeners during candidate turns. What is important, however, is that interviewer engagement did not correspond simply to the presence or absence of note-taking. The two interviewers with the highest candidate evaluations (I1 and I9) were both frequent note takers, yet they remained highly engaged with the candidates as listeners. Looking at the quantitative results in Table 1 (Section 4.3), I1 provided at least one active listening cue for 90.3% of candidate utterances, while for I9, it was 81.7% ($M = 85.8\%$). This was not the case for I2, who was also a consistent note taker, but showed limited engagement with the candidates. In I2's case, only 35.9% of candidate utterances were accompanied by an active listening signal. This contrast is a plausible explanation for I2's lower evaluation (4.2/5) than either I1 or I9 (4.8/5).

The following excerpts illustrate the divergence in levels of engagement. To highlight the interaction between the interviewer's responsiveness and the candidate's speech, the interviewer's nonverbal actions (i.e., eye contact, nodding, backchannels, and note-taking) are shaded, and the candidate speech that overlaps with eye contact is underlined.
12: And looking at C4 can you please describe um the most difficult Boss or a co-worker that you've ever worked with, and how you resolved the situation?

C4: Okay, so um I looks down, note-taking when I worked in um, so it's during the MBA program, I have different of working style with my uh team member. Um he is the last-minute person [I2 looks up, nods], he likes to put everything at the end, and I like to um finish stuff as soon as possible, since there will be some unexpected situation (2) prompting uh a later, so: (2) uh in this situation, we have conflicts with each other when during a meeting, for the delivering, reporting - oh, I mean the time schedule [I2 looks down, note-taking] of delivering reporting or delivering conducting [I2 looks down, note-taking] a meeting with clients. So: uh, first I I opened this, uh, I communicated with this person to uh (1) to: uh (1) to uh (2) to explain our current situation, and to let him know um we have really urgent deadline uh time line of this project [I2 looks up] and uh, and also present the statement of work, (2) which is uh developed in at at the beginning of the project, to let him know our, uh, our required time line. So:, when he understand that, and, [I2 looks up, smiling], uh, (1) I also asked him about the reason [I2 looks down, note-taking] why he - uh, his concerns about the the the schedule. (1) So after the conversation, we have [I2 looks up, nods] a mutual understanding of each other, [I2 looks down, note-taking] and we will come uh make some compromise, and, uh, make a strict deadline, detailed deadline. We will uh follow this deadline in in future.

12: (13) [I2 looks up, smiles] uh, thank you. [I2 looks down at notes] And can you tell me...

This excerpt is representative of I2's interviewing style across his three candidates. He spent a great deal of time note-taking, and this was accompanied by very few signals of verbal or non-verbal engagement. Of the 165 seconds of C4's speech here, only 14 seconds (8%) coincided with I2 looking at the speaker. During the other 151 seconds, C4 was essentially on her own.

There is no doubt that note-taking is an expected and justifiable behaviour within an interview context. Some researchers have recommended it to enhance the reliability of judgments and as insurance against post-hoc grievances (e.g., Simola et al., 2007). However, active listening represents an expected feature of conversations where there is a goal of mutual understanding (e.g., Cassell et al., 2008; Farley et al., 2010; Kellerman, 1992), so even in interviews, it is predictable that its absence will be salient for speakers. In other words, the conventionality of note-taking in interviews does not remove the disaffiliating effects of I2 repeatedly ignoring...
what Muller (1996) calls "acknowledgeable points" in C4's talk (p. 144). To put it another way, the absence of listening cues from I2 were equivalent to the signals that a speaker would use to signal a lack of interest or even frustration with the speaker (e.g., Kendon, 1992; Muller, 1996). Kellerman (1992) pointed out that withholding listening cues can be disturbing for speakers, to the point where it affects their fluency. Although C4 gamely continued with the story of conflict with a co-worker, the response was perceptibly 'flat' without the interviewer's participation as a listener. In fairness, this was exacerbated by a degree of incoherence in C4's response. Moreover, it must be noted that C4 herself did not specifically criticize I2's notetaking; her post-interview comments focused (critically) on her own performance. Nonetheless, it is worth asking whether the perceptible flatness, or lack of dynamism, is attributable to the candidate alone, or whether it is affected by I2's outward lack of attentiveness to the response. To the extent that listening cues signal understanding, encourage continuation, and express affiliation, C4 received little of the support that other candidates received in their interviews.

Reviewing the videorecording during the response in excerpt (8), a frequent impression is that C4 did not know what to do with her eyes. She looked at I2 and away again 30 times during the excerpt, as well as regularly looking down at his notebook, which was the principal focus of his attention. Furthermore, the few instances when I2 did look up from his notes did not consistently link with the information focus of C4's speech. In other words, there is typically a rhythmic synchrony between the speaker's information focus and the listener's responsiveness (e.g., Auer, 1996; Erickson & Shultz, 1982). Using intonation cues, the speaker provides momentary opportunities for the listener to ratify the production and continuation of the discourse (e.g., Muller, 1996). This did occur near the beginning of C4's response, when I2's looking up from his notes coincided with the information focus of C4's utterance. The stress,
rising pitch and brief pause following "last-minute per↑son" invited a response, and I2 suitably responded with eye contact and a nod. Later in the excerpt, however, I2's looking up from his notes occurred in the middle of an utterance and did not coincide with the information focus of C4's speech: "So after the conversation, we have [I2 looks up, nods, then looks down and continues note-taking] a mutual understand↑ding of each other, and we..." I2's eye contact and nod here actually preceded the information focus of the utterance, which was the noun phrase "a mutual understanding of each other." Thus, there was an perceptible asynchrony between the candidate's talk and the timing of I2's responsiveness to it. This was noticeable in I2's talk with all three of his candidates: the timing of his eye contact in particular did not align with the candidate's talk, but rather was determined by breaks in his note-taking. This necessarily lessens their supportive value as signals of understanding and interest. Insofar as those cues contribute rhythmically to the talk (e.g., Erickson & Shultz, 1982), as a mutually constructed object, this value was also absent in the response.

In contrast, I1 also took frequent notes, but was able to strike a balance between note-taking and engaging with the candidate as an active listener. Again, I have used shading to highlight the rhythm of I1's notetaking and nonverbal actions, and the underlined text indicates the overlap of I1's eye contact with C3's talk:

(9) (I1 Evaluation=4.8/5; C3 Rating=6.5/7)

I1: ... [Looking at C3, smiling] and may↑be you can start off by telling me a little bit about yourself.
C3: Okay. So my name is (Name), and you can -- I'm not (1) I'm not uh (1) uh, my you can call me ↑(Name).
I1: [Smiling] O↑kay.
C3: And I'm a [I1 looks down, note-taking] first-year Master's student in studying Economics in U↑Vic. [I1 looks up, nods] And uh I used [I1 looks down, note-taking] to be work in Canada, before, [I1 looks up, smiling] and it is in (Name), which is a tax compa↑ny.
I1: Uh huh
C3: And I uh my [I1 looks down, note-taking] position is a tax preparer. And [I1 looks up, smiling, nodding] this is a position that is very need the communication to the clients, because we need to get some information from them to [I1 looks down, note-taking] doing -- uh for preparing their tax return. And um, besides that, and [I1 looks up] we need to do some prime client callings. [I1 looks down, note-taking] through the phone, when [I1 looks up, smiling] it is not enough busy time, [I1 looks down, note-taking] and this [I1 looks up, smiling] is uh a very [I1 looks down, note-taking] interesting job, and uh I learned a lot [I1 looks up] from it, and also this job gives me [I1 looks down, note-taking] some impression of how [I1 looks up] the work looks like in Canada.

I1: {Okay.}

C3: {Because this is totally different from the Canada and in uh China. I used to work in China too. I used to be a uh lobby manager assistant in a bank, and we are dealing with a lot of clients one time, in the bank, cuz the not like Canada, there are a lot a large population in China}

I1: Mm hm

C3: So every day there are really full of the customers going to the bank to doing the deposit and withdrawal {and things}

I1: {yes}

C3: ↑So um we need to we need uh some skills to handling some maybe [makes quotation marks with fingers] difficult some difficulty customers, so um [I1 looks down, smiling, note-taking] also I learned something from it, because that is that is considered as is my um first [I1 looks up] job to um communicate with the customers [I1 looks down, note-taking] face to face.

I1: (2) Great (2) Wonderful. What uh [I1 looks up] achievements are you particularly proud of?

In this excerpt, even though the instances of note-taking (9) were slightly more frequent than with I2 (7), I1 was only disengaged from the speaker for 39 of the 128 seconds (30%) of C3’s response. The difference was that I1 was both efficient in her note-taking and also able to multi-task and simultaneously participate in the response as an active listener, providing backchannels and smiles at regular intervals. In contrast, I2 offered no backchannels to punctuate C4’s speech in excerpt (8). With I1, there were few if any long stretches of C3’s response when I1 was not engaged with the candidate. Considering that the two highest-rated interviewers (I1 and I9) were note takers, it is arguable that the note-taking itself was not problematic for the candidates.

However, I1 and I9 distinguished themselves from I2 by the efficiency in their note-taking style,
which meant that they did not neglect their supportive role as listeners. This role has important affiliative effects, in terms of encouraging (or discouraging) candidates (e.g., Muller, 1996). For her part, C3 commented that I1 was "very nice," and that she felt that I1 was "a good listener for her stories." More intangible but no less relevant, candidates' responses are not monologues but jointly constructed events whose mutual coordination (or lack thereof) can relate to affective impressions of cooperation or awkwardness (e.g., Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Farley et al., 2010; Gumperz, 1992a).

Another aspect of interviewers’ participation was how they reacted to positive and negative responses. In the majority of cases, particularly with responses that received negative comments, there were no overt indications that the interviewers were displeased with the response. This is not surprising: an expected aspect of interviewer professionalism is to take unbiased stances towards ongoing candidate talk. Yet this is not always the case in practice. Researchers have noted changes in interviewers' communication style that overtly expressed their displeasure with candidates' responses (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Jensen, 2003). With this data, I will consider negative word choices, which are tests of interviewers' neutrality since their impact is sharply focused. The following excerpt provides an example of this, in C11's response to I7's question about where he would like to be in five years' time:

(10) (I7 Evaluation=4.7/5; C14 Rating=5.6/7)
C14: [I7 looking at C11, frequently nodding] ...and after about six ↑months of internship, I would like to find an official job here in Canada, and start building my um work experience and um uh work experience. (1) And if I can uh, maybe in a -- of course I will start with a [C11 pointing at the table] very basic job like this one I7: Mm hm
C14: And after then, I hope I can be promoted to some kind of uh management position...
There was no change in I7's facial expression throughout this response, even after C11's description of the target front desk position as a "basic job." Yet I7 (in her post-interview comments) succinctly noted that the word choice “killed him.” C14 (in his post-interview comments) also focused on "basic job" as a word choice mistake. Across the nine interviewers, this neutrality -- vis-a-vis dispreferred responses -- was overwhelmingly the default stance. In only 3 of 44 (7%) negative comments did the target of the comment elicit a verbal or (overt) nonverbal response from the interviewer. In all three of those cases, the response was not an explicit censure, but rather a repetition of the dispreferred utterance, as when I6 asked C26 about his availability to work late-night or early-morning shifts:

(11) (I6 \textit{Evaluation}=4.5/5; C3 \textit{Rating}=6.5/7)

\begin{quote}
I6: So \textit{working} in a hotel is \textbf{twenty} four hours per day, \textit{seven} days a \textbf{week}. Are you able to \textbf{work} from \textit{seven} am to \textit{eleven} pm every \textit{day} -- [I6 raises hands in ‘stop’ gesture] I \textit{know} this is a \textbf{job} part that you don't quite know about, but \textbf{would} you -- are you \textit{available} to \textbf{work} those \textit{times}.

C26: I think so.

I6: [laughing] \textbf{You think} so. (1) \textbf{Yes}, it's \textbf{kind} of \textbf{hard} when you don't know \textbf{what} the \textbf{job} \textbf{hours} \textbf{are} and I \textbf{read} when you were \textbf{applying} to \textbf{work}, I \textbf{just} didn't see the \textbf{details}.

C26: \textbf{Yes}
\end{quote}

I6's post-interview comment about this moment was that C26 showed "uncertainty" and that in his view, C26 "wasn't really listening" to the question. While C26 did not comment on this moment, in a previous study (Travers, 2013), the L+ candidates frequently interpreted (in post-interview comments) their use of "I think so" as positive responses, not recognizing that a more strongly affirmative reply was expected. In excerpt (11), the fast pace of the question and all of the contextual talk that surrounded it may have confused C26, leading to an indecisive response. Nonetheless, I6's laughing repetition of the response marked it as unexpected, if not dispreferred, during the talk itself.
The two other interviewer reactions to negative word choices replicated this one. For instance, a question about computer proficiency elicited "I think so" from a candidate (C19), which the interviewer then repeated back to her "You think so," again implying that the candidate’s response was unexpected and likely unfavourable. Given the overall infrequency of interviewer reactions to negative word choices, the similarity of these moments points to a strong preference for unambiguous affirmations when interviewers ask about basic job requirements.

Moments that generated positive evaluative comments also coincided with neutral responsiveness from the interviewers. Similar to the responses to negative word choices, there was no pattern of enhanced cues (i.e., smiling, nodding, or backchanneling) in conjunction with positive word choice comments. Again, this neutrality is to be expected from professional interviewers, though studies have described increases in a number of actions in successful interviews: latching, rhythmic synchrony between the talk and listening cues, and positive evaluative comments (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Erickson & Shultz, 1982; Gumperz, 1992a). Keeping the overall trend of neutrality in mind, there were individual instances \( n = 18 \) where impactful positive word choices did elicit overtly positive reactions. Not surprisingly, those moments nearly always coincided with positive evaluations. Out of 18 instances of positive reactions to word choices, 16 of those responses \( (89\%) \) earned positive evaluative comments. An example is C10’s response to a tricky question about where she would like to be in 5 years’ time. During the post-interview review, the interviewer commented that she neither wants to hear that a candidate would like to stay at the front desk her whole career, nor that the candidate is dismissive of the position. C10 skillfully negotiated this dilemma with some well-chosen words:

\[
(12) \quad (I4 \text{ Evaluation}=4.7/5; \ C10 \text{ Rating}=5.5/7)
\]

C10: ...And my second step, I do want to deepen uh deepen my career path. Actually, I (2) uh: my goal is a career about the management analysis.

I4: [Smiling] Yeah.
In her post-interview comments, the interviewer praised the effectiveness of C8's phrase, "I do need [to] understand the market first." However, during the interview as well, her strongly positive reaction ("Absolutely"), in conjunction with a nod, made her satisfaction with the choice apparent to the candidate.

A similar effect was visible in C11's interview with I3, in response to the 'Achievement' question. C11 chose to describe a part-time job that she had developed for herself during her undergraduate degree in China:

(13) \textit{(I3 Evaluation}=4.4/5; C11 Rating=6.6/7)
C11: The accomplishment I have during I was the marketing team leader.
I3: [Looking at C9's resumé]. Is that marketing and recruitment team leader?
C11: Exactly.
I3: Okay.
C11: That one um I did for the my four years undergrad.
I3: Mm hm
C11: As a part-time job.
I3: Yes
C11: And the achievement I got made me feel uh very proud of myself.
I3: [Looking at resumé] Okay.
C11: The I started from scratch the first year of my undergrad [I3 nodding and smiling] without any marketing experience.
I3: [Nodding and laughing] Okay
C11: And only as the lucky to be one of the representatives of recruitment...

In this excerpt, C11's use of "I started from scratch" elicited a nonverbal reaction (nodding and smiling) from I3, followed soon after by more expressive laughter. In his post-interview comments, I3 focused his praise on the fact that C11 had created the job for herself, rather than on her choice of words. However, there is further evidence from the interaction that C11's word
choice enhanced this positive impression. At the end of the response, I3 summarized C11’s accomplishment, then asked her to wrap it up in terms of a tangible result:

(14)  
I3: So you’ve explained, by picking that experience, what it’s like to start something from ↑scratch, do the ↑research, figure out the ↑strategy, implement the strategy, and achieve the result. Could ↑you summarize for me what the result was, uh, in terms of -- you started with ↑zero, and you ended up [hands out to C9 in ‘offering’ gesture] with (2) how many students did you uh re ↑cruit?

It is likely here that I3 took up C11’s term "start from scratch" in his summary of her response, which suggests that the phrase made an impact on him. That repetition, plus I3’s nonverbal response to C9's initial use of the term, indicated that her word choice contributed to an overall positive effect. For her part, C9 did not comment on her word choice, but did mention that she had prepared her response in anticipation of an 'achievement' question. In sum, for both positive and negative impressions, the interaction contained very few reactions that openly expressed approval or disapproval. At the same time, the few instances where interviewers did react point to the potential impact of word choice in an interview, since the interviewers were elsewhere neutral in their responsiveness.

There were numerous examples of follow-up questions that prompted candidates for more information. Such prompts occurred in 42 of 111 responses (38%) in the sub-set of the data that I examined. Looking at these moves in more detail, it is evident that they served different functions for the interviewers. In some instances, they were a means of clarifying specific pieces of information, such as which job a candidate was speaking about, or how long a job lasted. At other times, the extra questions focused on missing or incomplete information. This tended to occur when a candidate did not answer all the parts of a multi-part question, or when a response was noticeably brief. In other instances, the follow-up questions sought to elicit a richer picture
of the individual, such as when a interviewer asked for the candidate's feelings about a particular experience. Similarly, a number of questions served to challenge candidates about a particular topic, including asking them to summarize or quantify a response, or to be more specific. Finally, two interviewers (I4 and I9) acknowledged in their post-interview comments that some of their follow-up prompts served as 'bait' questions to see what type of stance a candidate would take towards an individual or situation.

Responses in which follow-up questions occurred earned roughly the same number of positive (55%) and negative (45%) evaluative comments. This nearly even split points to the prompts' tentative, open-ended status. The interviewer was postponing judgment about a response (or topic) until he or she had elicited more information. An initially negative impression was sometimes too tenacious to be 'rescued' by the candidates' follow-up talk. Conversely, an initially positive impression was occasionally undermined by the candidate's unsatisfactory response to the follow-up question.

While the majority of follow-up questions were 'open,' in Thomas' (1984) sense of not projecting an already positive or negative judgment, there were some exceptions. One of these was I8's question to C19, after the candidate did not provide relevant professional experience for the front desk position: "So because of your lack of job experience, what are the skills you learned in life that can be transferred to the front desk position?" In this case, the question itself already contained a censure of the candidate’s qualifications. The associated evaluative comment was negative, which aligns with Thomas' (1984) conclusion that such negative questions -- in status-asymmetrical interviews -- are very difficult for respondents to negotiate around.

Elsewhere, extra prompts provided opportunities for candidates to improve upon a response. However, the prompts varied in their degree of openness, or to put it another way, in
the degree to which they cued positive or negative frames for the candidates. Excerpt (15) provides an example of this:

(15) (*I9 Evaluation* = 4.8/5; *C25 Rating* = 6.1/7)

**I9:** Um what about speaking on the phone? (1.5) um [Looks at candidate; raising eyebrows]

**C25:** [head tilted = 'uncertain'] Ye:ah, (1) I can **speak** on the ↑phone [laughing]

**I9:** [laughing] ↑ye:s?

**C25:** [Smiling] Um, I have um never taken services over the ↑phone, like --

**I9:** [Nodding] Okay okay

**C25:** People asking you ↑things, and I have to give them (1) replies over the phone.

**I9:** Okay

**C25:** [Shaking his head] So I have never done this before

**I9:** [taking notes] (2.5) But you feel ↑confident that you could do ↑that?

**C25:** I could I could do that, yeah.

There were numerous points here where I9 could have finished the topic and (presumably) interpreted C25's response negatively. I9 hesitated for long enough before answering that I9 added a prompt to push him ("um," plus eye contact and raised eyebrows). His elongated "Ye:ah" and self-conscious laughter at his coyly literal reply, "I can speak on the phone," all point to an unwillingness to respond, or worse, an implicit acknowledgement that this is a professional duty that he struggles with. Indeed, in his post-interview comments, C25 acknowledged that speaking on the phone in English did make him uncomfortable, so he was not sure how to negotiate the line between honesty and presenting himself in a positive light. I9 prompted C25 again ("Yes?"), and he then shifted the frame slightly, offering a practical explanation for his initial hesitation: that he simply did not have previous telephone experience. Arguably, indicating a professional gap is preferable to admitting to shyness, or worse, a fear of using the phone. At that point, I9 again could have wrapped up the topic, but instead asked a leading question ("But you feel confident that you could do that?"), which essentially supplied the second part to a favourable script: that C25 did not have previous telephone experience but was confident that he could fulfill that requirement. Following the interviewer's lead, C25
responded quickly and affirmatively. However, the form of the question required only agreement from the candidate, which he was highly unlikely to withhold. As such, the independence of C25’s self-representation is suspect: the words and the favourable frame they belong to were provided by the interviewer. Ultimately, I9 evaluated the response positively, though this was unlikely, minimally, if the interviewer had not extended the topic with backchannels and prompts, and more so, if I9 had not re-framed the topic favourably for the candidate.

A similarly negotiated response with I9 and C27 ended with a negative evaluation. The main question was about a challenging situation that C27 had faced. She described the difficulty of learning the menu at the restaurant she worked at, including the orders of regular customers. To solve the problem, C27 explained how she memorized the menu items and kept a notebook with the names and orders of the regulars. Up to that point, the response had been coherent and had represented C27 in a positive light, but then I9 asked a follow-up question:

(16) (I9 Evaluation=4.8/5; C27 Rating=6/7)
   C27: So finally I memorized everything, and I could (uh) provide requirements without asking them.
   I9: [Smiling; taking notes] (2) That's wonderful. [I9 looks up] How did you feel when that was accomplished?
   C27: [Smiling] ↑Oh, (1) it was really difficult to recognized them, because I little bit can't recognize the foreigner.
   I9: [Smiling] Yeah.
   C27: [Smiling] But finally I can recognize them, yeah.
   I9: Yeah
   C27: They were really [imitating customer's voice] ↑thank you.
   I9: [Leaning forward; smiling; hand over her heart] And you felt good?
   C27: [Big smile] "I felt good" pleased for me. [Laughing]
   C9: [Smiling] Yeah, you were very [puts hand over her heart] happy?
   C27: [Smiling] Yeah

The misunderstanding here pivoted on the word “accomplished.” C27’s answer to the question indicated that she understood it as referring to how she felt during the challenging situation, rather than afterwards. C27 then carried on within this divergent frame, until I9 prompted her
again in simpler terms ("And you felt good?"). Even then, however, C27's softly spoken reply ("I felt good"), followed by the non-grammatical "pleased for me," did not satisfy I9 that C27 had understood her, so she repeated the question a third time, at which point C27's "Yeah" provided closure to the topic. As with excerpt (15), however, the third prompt was a closed question, supported by a gesture, that required only affirmation from C27. So even though C27 finally provided a satisfactory response, its status as an independent contribution was untenable, and the response was negatively evaluated by I9. In the interviewer's post-interview comments, it was not the initial response to the challenge question that stood out, but rather C27's apparent inability to understand the follow-up questions: "In the end, I had to just give it to her." In order to wrap up the topic, I9 added increasing support to the candidate, but that scaffolding reached a point where the linguistic breakdown outweighed any positive impression from the original response.

In some cases, follow-up questions challenged candidates to elaborate on shorter answers, or to provide greater detail. In the following excerpt, C17 was giving a self-introduction to I4, who asked her to provide more detail about some Hospitality courses that she had mentioned.

(17) (I4 Evaluation=4.7/5; C17 Rating=6.3/7)

C17: ...[I4 taking notes] And I also did um Hospitality cour↑ses [I4 looks up; smiling] on my under↑grad
I4: "Oh"
C17: As an elect↑ive, which I really liked
I4: [Smiling] ↑Ah: [writing notes] um [looks up] do ↑you remember what type of Hosp↑itality cour↑ses, what they focused ↑on?
C17: Yes. I took Introduction to Hospitality, which was general hospitality. Also took Hospitality ↑Law
I4: ↑Oh: kay
C17: Yes. That talk a little bit about liabilities. And I also took Human Resources Hospitality
I4: So ah:. ↑those are very good ones to take
C17: Mm hm
Applying for a front desk position, the fact that C17 had taken several Hospitality courses was strongly in her favour. On the other hand, in her post-interview comments, I4 noted that she did not want to take for granted that C17 had actually taken the courses. Thus the question served to check the credibility of the claim. C17’s rapid confirmation ("Yes"), followed by the course names, provided some validation. I4’s subsequent backchannel ("Okay") did not close the topic, but allowed for further elaboration, and C17 obliged with additional details. I4’s next turn ("So ah those are very good ones to take") suggests that she was now satisfied, and indeed was impressed by the courses in the context of the front desk position. I4 ultimately evaluated this moment positively.

At another moment, I4 challenged C17 to elaborate upon a brief answer to a question about what she would like to be doing in five years' time. After C17 replied that she would like to be a hotel manager, I4 prompted her for more detail about that goal. In this case, the additional information did not satisfy the interviewer, who evaluated it negatively.

(18) (I4 Evaluation=4.7/5; C17 Rating=6.3/7)
C17: Uh I see myself working as a a hotel manager.
I4: [Smiling] ↑Yeah? [Taking notes]
C17: Yeah, that's what I wanna do.
I4: [Taking notes] (2) Um and what ↑type of hotel do you want to manage? Do you want to manage a really ↑big hotel, or a ↑little hotel, a boutique hotel? Do you have something in ↑mind?
C17: I'd uh I would I think a small hotel.
I4: [Nodding; smiling] Mm hm
C17: [Smiling] Yeah (2) Like here in Victoria would be really nice.
I4: Yeah [taking notes] Um (5) ↑What steps do you think you'll have to take, to ↑get to be a hotel manager?
C17: I ↑think I would need to uh know ↑each department of the hotel (1.5) [I4 looks down; taking notes] Um, ↑make sure that not only the receptionist part but also (1) um (1) let's say the (1.5) the restaurant part also. [I4 looks up] Try to know each department ↑well.
I4: [Nodding] ↑Yeah hm
C17: (1) Yeah, I ↑think that's important.
I4: Would you learn housekeeping as ↑well?
C17: [Smiling] ↑Yeah, sure. [Laughing]
I4: [Laughing; looks down; taking notes] It's actually very important to know that one.
C17: [Smiling] “Oh yeah” [I4 taking notes]
I4: [Taking notes] You'd be surprised at what all you can learn, [looks up; smiling] if you know how housekeeping works.
C17: Works, ↑ah:
I4: ↑Yeah: [Taking notes] it's a↑mazing, that main↑nance
C17: ↑Hmm

In this sequence, there were in fact multiple follow-up questions, each of which gave C17 opportunities to provide more detail about her goal to be a hotel manager. Problematically for the candidate, I4's backchannels ("Yeah?" Mm hm," "Yeah hm"), which effectively served as open-ended prompts to add to the response, elicited no elaboration. This was doubly negative for C17, since it suggested that she had not fully considered this career path, and because it forced I4 to do the work of eliciting a more complete description. Indeed, C17 concurred in her post-interview comments that her response here was incomplete. Furthermore, her slightly indecisive wording ("I see myself working as a hotel manager") did not suggest a clear determination. Likewise, C17's hesitation in explaining the type of hotel she preferred ("I'd uh I would think a small hotel") suggested that she had not considered this detail either. In line with this impression, I4's post-interview comments received the aggregate response as evidence that the candidate had no clear sense of what becoming a hotel manager entailed. The one turn where C17 added some substantial content was framed by I4's request to explain the "steps" to becoming a manager.

Thus, it required more focused questions from I4 to elicit concrete details from the candidate, rather than C17's taking the initiative to provide them without prompting. In this way, both the content and responsiveness combined to generate a negative impression for the interviewer. Yet this outcome was not due to a lack of opportunity to elaborate upon the topic. Indeed, I4 showed her skillfulness as a questioner by this movement from optimally open-ended prompts (i.e.,
backchannels), which implicated her as little as possible in the response, to more leading prompts as C17 showed that she was unable to develop the topic in a satisfactory manner. It is worth noting that I4 acknowledged in her post-interview comments that her final follow-up question ("Would you learn housekeeping as well?") was a 'bait' question, designed to see whether C17 showed any dismissiveness towards a department that might be viewed as menial for a management-level professional. While C17's reply ("Yeah, sure") did not explicitly disregard housekeeping, its casualness and indecisiveness did not satisfy I4 that C27 recognized the importance of housekeeping to a hotel’s success. In this light, I4's final two turns, in which she affirmed the value of housekeeping, came across as censure, even if they were delivered with laughter.

4.4.3 Summary responses. The interviewers wrapped up candidates’ responses in various ways. These included brief evaluative comments, which almost always took a positive form when they occurred (e.g., "Good," "Great," and so on). Another action was for the interviewer to summarize or rephrase a response in his or her words. Most of these actions took place at the end of responses, though some came at intermediary points. Finally, the interviewers occasionally slipped out of their roles as administrators and evaluators, in order to take the floor themselves to share their views on a topic.

In 98 instances where the evaluative comment focused on the response as a whole, the interviewer provided an explicitly positive end comment in 55 cases (56%). Not surprisingly, explicitly negative comments did not occur; the other 43 cases (44%) featured a neutral comment ("Okay," "Thank you") or a transition with no comment. The most frequent positive tokens were "Good," "Very good," "Great," and "Wonderful." On the surface, these comments appear as evaluators for the preceding response, which conflicts with the interviewers’ tacitly neutral role.
In context, however, the end comments mostly functioned as end-of-topic markers, based on their timing and by the accompaniment of other transition cues, such as shifts in body position and looking down at notes (e.g., Erickson & Shultz, 1982). This neutral, transitioning interpretation is also supported by the fact that positive end comments were frequently associated with negatively evaluated responses. For example, I1 wrapped up C21’s self-introduction with "Okay, great, okay, fantastic," yet she evaluated the introduction negatively, commenting that C21 "came across as very shy." Similarly, I7 negatively evaluated C13's response about her greatest achievement, saying that she really "didn't know where she was going." Yet I7's end-of-response comment was "Good, that's great, that's good, that's really good."

Interestingly, not all the end-of-response tokens are equally interpretable as simply end-of-topic markers. Looking at the data set, when a response was negatively evaluated, it was only accompanied by a positive comment in 12 of 34 instances (35%). In contrast, positively evaluated responses coincided with positive end comments in 43 of 64 cases (67%). Thus, neutral or no end comments implicitly (or inadvertently) expressed a degree of censure, though not with such regularity that generalizations can be made. A more clear-cut evaluative cue was 'extreme' positive end comments (e.g., "Wonderful," "Fantastic," "Great"). In those cases, 31 of 34 evaluations were positive (91%). Thus, when interviewers were effusively positive in their end comments, candidates could safely interpret them as laudatory of the response, in addition to being transitional cues for the next topic.

An additional end-of-response action was to summarize or rephrase candidates' responses. These moves occurred in 21 of the 111 responses (19%) that I examined, and were associated more-or-less evenly with positive (48%) and negative (52%) evaluative comments. In some cases, the rephrasings seemed to be for the interviewer's benefit. In other words, the talk
was self-directed and verbalized an understanding of the candidate's response. In other instances, the action was candidate-directed and acted as a confirmation check, or implicit clarification request, to aid in negotiating understanding of a response. Elsewhere, the move contributed to a response, or negatively, cut a response short. When the rephrasings interrupted lengthy responses, they served as implicit censures of candidates' lack of concision. Yet some rephrasings were advantageous to the candidate, in terms of reframing a response in a felicitous manner. In all cases, however, the interviewer was translating a response into his or her words. Regardless of the positive or negative understanding, the status asymmetry of the interviews meant that rephrasings effectively limited the negotiation of meanings (Thomas, 1984). In this way, the candidates had little choice but to affirm the interviewer’s interpretation.

One instance of positive summarizing occurred in I5’s interview with C1. In response to a question about his greatest achievement, C1 described his challenges and perseverance in setting up the first-ever soccer club at his high school. The narrative was a success story, in that C1 and his peers eventually succeeded in getting his school's permission. However, C1 diminished that positivity with a coda at the end of the narrative:

(19) (I5 Evaluation=3.8/5; C1 Rating=6/7)
   C1: ...And, like several weeks later, [Smiling] we we successfully set up my our own soccer team.
   I5: [Smiling; shifting position] That's [good, that's good.
   C1: [But um well] several months later I transferred to another [school, so the that soccer team didn't really have the president or leader, so maybe the it just (1) [hands out, 'what can you do'] disappeared. [slight laugh]
   I5: [Smiling; raised eyebrows] But it was still successful for you.
   C1: [Smiling; nodding] Yeah.
   I5: Yeah, [Looking down at notes; shifting body position] that's great. (1) Um: [what questions do you have...]

The pragmatic valuation of success stories in job interviews suggests that C1 was better served to finish his story on a positive note, with "we successfully set up our own soccer team." The
subsequent addendum complicated its reception within that frame, though C1 in his post-interview comments noted that he intended the story to be positive, but that he felt compelled to acknowledge that the club had disbanded. The interviewer, however, rather than allow the story to finish on a negative note, stepped in to re-frame the narrative as an overall positive (“But it was still successful for you”), which also personalized the story as C1’s accomplishment, rather than a collective achievement of the soccer club. In this way, I5’s turn did more than simply summarize the preceding narrative. The move subtly re-framed the narrative in a more favourable manner. From a theoretical perspective, too, I5’s rephrasing was interesting in that it implicitly affirmed the interviewer’s expectation and valuation of a success story, even though objectively, the positive aspects of C1’s story (i.e., his resourcefulness and determination) were clearly not diminished by the demise of the soccer club. When C1’s story veered from this expected script, I5 could not resist stepping in to align it with a more preferable frame.

In another excerpt, I8 summarized C12’s explanation of skills that he could apply to the front desk position. The response was coherent but long, and I8 evaluated it negatively because C12 had not foregrounded the skills before describing them in detail.

(20) (I8 Evaluation=4/5; C12 Rating=6.2/7)

C12: ...So ↑that's something that I think I can apply to this ↑job. So ↑say that some ↑times if the customers are an ↑gry
I8: [Smiling] Mm hm
C12: And they direct that anger at you, and then you learn to be not take it personali ↑ly, and then you start to to calm them down and start trying to figure out the problem (1) with them.
I8: (2) [Smiling; nodding] Ve ↑ry good. So ↑patience, communica ↑tion, and not taking things personali ↑ly.
C12: Yes.

As with excerpt (19), the interviewer added what -- to her -- should have been part of the candidate's response. With C12, that meant explicitly re-stating the three skills that he could
apply to the front desk position. The negative comment shows that I8 held C12 accountable for having to do this ‘signposting’ work herself. In other cases, too, including excerpt (18), the more that the interviewers needed (or felt they needed) to intervene to help shape candidates’ responses, the more likely that they received those responses negatively. In other words, instances where the interviewers were not simply rephrasing responses, but lending coherence to them within favourable frames, tended to be sanctioned. I1’s reception of C18’s ‘Weakness’ question was a further example of that:

(21) (I1 Evaluation=4.8/5; C18 Rating=4.7/7)

C18: ...Umm uh for I think it's my time management.
I1: [Taking notes] Okay
C18: Um: in the past I usually not to be on time, but now I’m always trying to be on time
I1: Okay:
C18: Because now I'm in Canada, where everything [I1 slight laugh] -- where every people where everything is on time
I1: Okay:
C18: So I try to respect them and adjust them
I1: [Taking notes] “Okay great” (1) So that's an area [looks up] in the past that you (1) you were not on time, and now you’ve worked hard
C18: Yeah
I1: For that, and so [hand out in 'offering' gesture] today you were early
C18: Yeah
I1: So thank you for that. (2) Now....

I1’s summary here departed quite radically from the source material of C18’s answer. Yet as with the previous two excerpts, I1 shaped the response within a more favourable frame of recognizing a previous weakness and improving it. Furthermore, given the status difference and the form of the prompts (i.e., confirmation checks), it was hardly likely that the candidate would do anything but affirm I1’s summary. To her credit, C18 ratified I1’s felicitous summary enthusiastically and without hesitation. Unlike excerpts (19) and (20), however, I1’s version of events left out the dispreferred implication of C18’s response: that she had adapted her punctuality to suit Canadian standards, rather than improving it as a rule. Moreover, I1 added content of her own to the
response, namely that C18 had worked hard to improve this weakness, which C18 herself had not mentioned. As with excerpt (20), then, I1's contributions inadvertently revealed her expectation for a suitable response: that it would fit a favourable frame of recognizing a weakness and working to improve it. Indeed, to an even greater extent than excerpt (20), the ‘pull’ of that frame on I1’s contributions is evident, which included not only re-organizing the candidate’s talk, but actually modifying it to a preferred shape. In the end, I1 evaluated the response negatively, because she felt that C18 had not described the trajectory of improving her weakness as coherently as was necessary.

In a limited number of moments (16 of 111 instances = 14%), the interviewers took the floor themselves to make comments about a topic. In most cases (13 of 16 = 81%), this move was associated with a positive evaluative comment. This reflects the fact that in most instances, the interviewers' contributions latched on to the candidates' ideas, and thus displayed agreement with them. To the extent that such coordination both reflects and consolidates rapport between the speakers, it is a strongly positive indicator for candidates (e.g., Gumperz, 1992a). In a limited number of cases, however, this action was unfavourable for the candidate. To go back to excerpt (18), for example, I4's explanation of the importance of the housekeeping department came across as a censure of C17's response. In most instances (81%), however, occasions of taking the floor were strongly approbatory. In one example, I8 asked C22 about a challenging situation, and I8 chose to describe her struggle and subsequent self-discovery following a parent's death. This choice of narrative may be viewed as overly personal in an interview context. Fortuitously for the candidate, she had tapped into a shared experience with I8, who contributed her own perspective on the topic:
...But after that I started to face the facts, and I started to do volunteer work, um at the private school. [I8 nodding] (1) And I think that I um I felt better after that, because I think that when you give people that you wanted most, it helps inside. [I8 nodding]. Um: (1) I don't know why, but you know I um you know stopped being [I8 nodding] that cynical or angry any more. (2) Because I think I need help I needed help most, and when I give I give my help to others, I um felt better. [I8 nodding] (2) Yeah.

I8: [smiling; nodding] "Very good" C22: Mm hm
I8: Yeah, that's a challenging time, to lose a parent.
C22: Yeah
I8: It's never easy.
C22: [Smiling] Yup
I8: All of us have to go -- all of us have to go through it, and how we handle it can really pave our way of what our life is going to look like. [C22 nodding] (1) Cuz it's easy to be cynical and angry
C22: Yeah
I8: But really that doesn't -- the world keeps on going and
C22: [Nodding] Mm hm
I8: People still have expectations, and there are still things we have to get done, and it doesn't stop because [leaning forward] we get stuck.
C22: Yeah
I8: On anger and cynicism. Right?
C22: No
I8: (1) "Yeah, [Looking down at notes] you know it. Well I'm glad, I mean -- it sounds like you told me what you learnt from that experience, uh huh as well. That's very good. (1) "So: um: let's see. (1) "What a achievement..."

It is evident here that I8 temporarily slipped out of her interviewer role in order to share her own views about dealing with a parent's death. From I8's first turn ("It’s a challenging time, to lose a parent") onwards, the typical interview roles were suspended and C22 became the listener, offering backchannels and other active listening cues to the incremental additions to I8's commentary. Interestingly, not only I8's role but also her register slipped towards the end of this excerpt, when she sought agreement with "Right?" followed by a highly informal "Yeah, you know it." At that point, I8 expressly shifted back into a more formal mode, cutting herself off midway through the empathetic utterance "Well I'm glad, I mean--" and reframing the response
as an object for evaluation, then adding a positive evaluative comment (“It sounds like you told me what you learnt from that experience, uh huh as well. That’s very good.”). Both additions expressed a more impersonal stance, and so shifted the talk away from the exchange that preceded it. Not surprisingly, the response was evaluated positively, yet the shift at the end of the excerpt back to an impersonal stance illuminates the interviewer’s need to frame that positive impression in evaluative, objective terms, rather than in terms of rapport and affect.

Elsewhere, interviewers who took the floor to share their own comments tended to be brief. In other words, the slippage from an interviewer role to a more empathetic one was fleeting. Regardless of the brevity, however, the affiliative implication of the comments was clear, which expressed supportive rather than skeptical listening. These moments also related to positive evaluations for those responses. Excerpts (23) and (24) provide examples of briefer injections of interviewer commentary. In the first one (23), I4 responded to C5's explanation of his interest in sales.

(23) (I4 Evaluation=4.7/5; C5 Rating=6.7/7)

C5: ...Um:, [I4 taking notes] there are ↑two things that attracts me to this uh career. It's um (1) I ↑always love meeting people, talking to new people, um: and I think people are the most interesting part of out of of ↑life. (2) Ah um and ↑also ↑traveling, as opposed to uh to um jobs that are um that let me stay in one place, uh I always want to move around, and then talk to peo↑ple, and uh ↑sales is not typically just selling ↑products, it's actually about, more about [leans forward] providing solutions. And uh [I4 and C5 smiling] I ↑love doing ↑that, yes.

I4: [Taking notes] (1) You ↑know [Looks up] I think you're ↑very correct, that it's ↑not about just ↑selling something, it's ↑there's a lot about finding ↑answers for ↑people, and I think there's a lot about re↑lationshi↑p building, that people [shaking head]↑do not understand about ↑sales.

C5: [Nodding] Very true.

As with excerpt (22), the candidate successfully tapped into a shared experience with I4, in this case relating to work in sales. More than this, I4 explicitly agreed with both of C5’s points about the rewards of a sales profession, and even aligned herself with C5 over and against posited
outsiders to the field. It is not possible to quantify the value of the response to C5's evaluation as a whole, but it clearly transcended the moment itself, since it elicited both overt agreement and an expression of co-membership from the interviewer. As with coordinating talk, which can be viewed as interactional rapport, successfully tapping into shared identities is highly favourable for candidates (e.g., Kerekes, 2006; Rivera, 2012). In terms of the interview, where divergent goals and even deception can set up the speakers as adversaries, achieving rapport repositions the speakers as working together on a cooperative enterprise. Also, in terms of affective impressions, rapport indexes shared identities and thus enhances perceptions of similarity, which is a consistent factor in affecting interviewer judgments (e.g., Howard & Ferris, 1996; Huffcutt, 2011; Rivera, 2012).

In excerpt (24), C25 explained why working in a board game pub was his favourite previous position:

(24) (I9 Evaluation=4.8/5; C25 Rating=6.1/7)

C25: [I9 taking notes] And I ↑really enjoyed it because it's related to my area of study, that is game develop↑ment, so the board games, that kind of ↑stuff. And I really enjoyed serving people, because they always said, [smiling] ↑oh! This was an ↑awesome um services and uh I'm happy to pay for your ↑tip, and that kind of thing--

I9: Yeah

C25: [Smiling] And that makes me happy, like I can be useful for people, and (1)

I9: [Looks up]↑Yeah?

C25: [Smiling] Make them happy.

I9: [Smiling] Make them happy.

C25: [laughing] Yeah, that's--

I9: [Smiling] That's ↑all that it's a↑bout.

C25: [Smiling] Yes, that is impor↑tant.

In this case, I9 repeated C25's somewhat mundane comment ("Make them happy"). This repetition was initially ambiguous. C25 may have interpreted it as a mild criticism of his unsophisticated description of the position, and in fact he began to expand in his next turn ("Yeah, that's--") before I9 clarified her repetition with "That's all that it's about." That statement
in conjunction with I9's smile acted to clarify her position: that this was a simple but nonetheless important truism about the service industry. In fact, then, I9's repetition expressed agreement, and indeed a shared value with C25 in regard to the primary aim of service positions. As such, I9's response implicitly ratified the response as a whole, but as with excerpt (23), the comment also indexed a shared identity as service professionals, and this represented connection was felicitous for C25 in its own right.

In the previous two examples, the interviewers briefly took the floor to voice their agreement with the candidates' values. However, these actions took place at the end of the responses, as addenda, so arguably there was minimal collusion in cueing candidates to favourable frames, or participating in co-constructing the responses. The interventions were also short, so there was little slippage in regards to interviewer roles. The same was not the case in some instances, however, where the interviewer's comments came in the midst of a candidate's response. In the following excerpt, in response to the 'Achievement' question, C23 described to I3 a student organization that he and some peers developed:

(25) (I3 Evaluation=4.4/5; C23 Rating=6.4/7)

C23: So I'm very proud of a accomplishment that we have done called (Name).
I3: Okay. Explain that to me, please.
C23: Yes, that is a workshop that we students invite companies
I3: [Raised eyebrows] Oh
C23: To come
I3: Okay.
C23: To our university
I3: [Smiling; nodding] Yes.
C23: And give some (1) workshops and also some speeches [I3 nodding] about
companies. So we invite students to know about the companies
I3: Okay
C23: And also offer some internships [I3 pursed lips, raised eyebrows = 'impressed'], or--
I3: And of course [Smiling; hands out, 'offering'] the companies get to know the
students, and [if they're looking for employees, they] know where to look
C23: [Smiling] Of course
Yeah that's our idea. It's a connection between the university, and a company.

I3: [Nodding] Very good idea.

C23: This is, we think about like a bridge, that--

In this case, I3 evaluated the response positively. His enthusiasm for the student's topic was evident in the frequency of his active listening signals. These cues were readily visible, and so they would be strong indications to C23 that the response was going well. However, I3's enthusiasm led him actually to interrupt C23 at one point, in order to share his ideas about other projected benefits for C23's student organization. During this comment, there were indications that C23 sought to regain the floor at two transition points, in order to continue his description, although his nonverbal actions (i.e., smiling) may equally suggest that he was happy to collaborate with I3 in shaping the response. The outcome was positive for C23, but from the interviewer's perspective, there is clear collusion here in contributing to a response that was properly C23's to deliver. Unlike in previous excerpts, the interviewer did not wait until the end of the response to share his views, but instead (a) clearly signalled that the response was going well, and (b) spoke for the candidate in adding to the response, both of which compromised its tacit independence.

4.4.4 Interviewer participation in responses: Summary and implications. The preceding qualitative analysis sought to illustrate the variety of ways that the interviewers in the study participated in candidates' responses. In addition, a goal was to consider the implications of those contributions, both in the immediate context of the developing response, and also in terms of the interviewer’s evaluative task. The subset of the interaction data that I looked at was moments that the interviewers weighted a '3,' which indicated both a moment's importance to the evaluation and an unambiguously positive or negative impression.
The variety of interviewer contributions throughout candidates’ responses supports the view that those responses are not, objectively, independent objects, even if the participants orient to them in that way. Instead, despite conventional restrictions, there is a substantial amount of interviewer participation beyond the questions themselves. Therefore, it is more accurate to think of candidate responses as complex events whose understandings and evaluative status are negotiated between the speakers.

One finding that emerged from the analysis was that there was a degree of inconsistency between the nine interviewers in their basic tasks of opening the interview and delivering the main questions from the Job Interview Questions frame. For instance, an outline of the procedure featured in the interviewer’s introductory talk in approximately half of the interviews (13 of 27), but was absent in the others. Similarly, the interviewers initiated small talk at the beginning of some but not all interviews (10 of 27), while four of nine interviewers were inconsistent in their use or omission of small talk. Excerpts (3) to (6) also illustrated the variability in asking the principal questions, in terms of their completeness and amount of contextualizing talk. This variability occurred despite the amount of experience that the interviewers reported (i.e., from approximately 50 to 600 previous interviews), and despite instructions to the interviewers to follow the question frame. On the other hand, this issue is commonly reported in the literature as part of the criticisms directed as unstructured practices, which continue to prevail over structured ones (e.g., Dana et al., 2013; Howard & Ferris, 1996; Macan, 2009; Simola et al., 2007). The implications of this inconsistency include concerns about the reliability of the interview administrations, which affect the comparability and thus the validity of the evaluations. From a candidate’s perspective, too, the presence or absence of outlining, small talk, and contextualizing
information around questions has implications for interview fairness, as well as what constitutes acceptable conditions for candidates to produce their best performance.

Variability was also evident in the interviewers’ note-taking. While Simola et al. (2007) advocated note-taking to improve recall, as well as to protect recruiters against candidate grievances, there are valid reasons not to take notes. Primarily, this allows interviewers to engage more fully with the candidate, which facilitates smooth communication (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007), while also permitting interviewers to observe the candidate’s nonverbal actions, which can be revealing in terms of developing evaluations. In this analysis, the primary concern was not between note takers and non-note takers, but rather the differences between the four note-taking interviewers, and specifically between I2 and the other three. While I1, I4, and I9 all took notes throughout their interviews, they were able to balance this practice with active listening work. This was not the case with I2, whose note-taking effectively cut him off from his candidates as a cooperative interlocutor. Given I2’s lack of engagement with candidates, it may not be surprising that his rating (4.3/5) was also lower than those for his note-taking peers. While the candidates did not mention I2's disengagement in their post-interview comments, there is evidence that speakers are not consciously aware of the coordinating work that listeners do, but that those cues nonetheless relate to perceptions of liking and conversational smoothness (e.g., Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). The affiliative benefits for candidates of interviewers' listening cues, in addition to their rhythmic and structuring function in punctuating responses (e.g., Bjorge, 2010; Kellerman, 1992; Muller, 1996), reinforce their importance in supporting candidates' performances. In my view, the absence of these cues is not justifiable as a means of minimizing interviewer involvement in candidate responses. This is because the absence of listening cues can negatively affect speakers' rhythm and thus important perceptions of cooperation (e.g., Erickson
Moreover, to the extent that conversational norms transfer to an interview context, withholding cues can express disinterest, or even "doubt, skepticism or hostility" (Muller, 1996, p. 133). These implications for active listening moves represent a strong justification for interviewers maintaining an engaged stance with candidates, even if this work renders their evaluative role more difficult.

The interviewers used a variety of actions to negotiate understandings with candidates, including follow-up questions and summaries/rephrasings. This negotiation work largely conflicts with structured interviewing recommendations, which include minimizing interviewer talk beyond the basic question frame (e.g., Manroop et al., 2013). At their extreme, these limits may constitute "no prompting or follow-up questions" (Millar & Gallagher, 1997, p. 390). There are legitimate reasons for limiting interview talk. One is psychological: that greater interaction with the candidate raises the interviewer's susceptibility to be influenced by factors outside of target criteria, such as first impressions, similarity, and attractiveness (e.g., Howard & Ferris, 1996; Millar & Gallagher, 1997; Rivera, 2012). Another reason relates to the reliability of the assessment. The comparability of multiple interviews, as well as their fairness for candidates, are compromised when administrations differ widely from each other (e.g., Chapman & Zweig, 2005).

In a limited number of instances, the interviewers showed difficulty in maintaining neutrality when asking follow-up questions, summarizing, or rephrasing candidates’ responses, and elsewhere in taking the floor to provide their views on a topic. Follow-up questions sometimes cued favourable frames for candidates, just as summaries/rephrasings occasionally reshaped responses within desirable frames. When they occurred, those moments illuminated the power of favourable frames in shaping interviewers’ expectations of response suitability, to the
point where interviewers intervened to align responses to those expectations. In the limited number of occasions when this ‘slippage’ occurred, the interviewers arguably contaminated tacitly independent responses. This necessarily complicates the question of what the candidates could accomplish on their own. These instances are illuminating from a theoretical perspective, though in the large majority of cases, the interviewers did maintain neutrality during candidate responses. Indeed, this neutrality often extended throughout negotiations of particular responses, by the use of open-ended prompts that did not cue a positive or negative stance towards the developing response.

This discussion leads to questions about whether and how even highly experienced interviewers can consistently participate in responses without compromising the responses’ status as independent objects of evaluation. In practice, it is necessary for interviewers to wade into the interaction if they are expected to clarify understandings and prompt for more complete responses, which enhance their ability to make confident judgments about candidates. Without this flexibility, judgments may be distorted by misunderstandings (Manroop et al., 2013), or may be forced to rely on insufficient information (e.g., Button, 1992). In practice, too, a goal of maximal detachment from an independent candidate performance is essentially unattainable. Even at the detached end of a continuum of interviewer behaviour, subtle forms of interviewer variability, including nonverbal actions and degrees of accommodation, are probably unavoidable (e.g., Brown, 2003; Dipboye et al., 2013; McNamara, 1997). Interviewers' evaluative focus on non-target criteria, such as similarity and nonverbal actions, also appears to continue regardless of structure (e.g., de Groot & Gooty, 2009; Huffcutt, 2011). Furthermore, professional interviewers themselves have consistently resisted structured practices in favour of less structured approaches, in part due to a desire for more control over the process, as well as to
personalize the talk in order to get to know the candidate as an individual (Macan, 2009). Indeed, this personalization is closely linked to interviewers’ consistent emphasis on personality and ‘fit,’ which reflects an understandable concern with how a candidate will function interpersonally as a future colleague (Manroop et al., 2013; Rivera, 2012) and/or with business clients (Travers, 2013). As such, interviewers feel compelled to go off-script to elicit a richer picture of the individual (e.g., Huffcutt, 2011). At the same time, candidates also seem to favour greater engagement and transparency from their interviewers (e.g., Chapman & Zweig, 2005; Dipboye et al., 2013; Macan, 2009).

In line with those findings, the interviewers in this study who engaged with candidates beyond predictable active listening cues received the most favourable evaluations. Critics may argue that it is not surprising that candidates favour interviewers who participate actively and supportively, because they make the interview easier for them. Yet in this study at least, the results do not support that argument. As previously reported, Spearman Rank correlations comparing the evaluations that interviewers received and those that the candidates received (i.e., from the independent raters) did not indicate a clear relationship ($r(7) = .217, p = .576$). A push to restrain interviewer participation for psychometric concerns is unrealistic, in terms of the less structured approaches that predominate (e.g., Crone, 2000; Dana et al., 2013; Dipboye et al., 2012; Howard & Ferris, 1996; Macan, 2009). Moreover, a minimal style also tends to run counter to candidates’ (Chapman & Zweig, 2005) and interviewers’ (Dipboye et al., 2012) preferences. A push for increasing structure is understandably critical of cavalier interviewing approaches that rely on ‘gut’ feelings and a reliance on non-criterion information (e.g., Crone, 2000; Dana et al., 2013). Indeed, for the sake of consistency and criterion validity, aspects of a structured approach, such as standardized, analysis-based questions, and a standardized,
criterion-focused rubric, are reasonable requirements for job interviews (e.g., Macan, 2009; Manroop et al., 2013). On the other hand, limiting interviewer talk outside of principal questions ironically threatens to undermine the interviewer's ability to fulfill his or her goal of satisfactorily determining a candidate's suitability for a position.

4.5 Training Recommendations for Candidates and Interviewers

Based on this study's results, optimal short-term training for candidates consists of a target-position simulated interview (or interviews), followed by personalized, pragmatics-focused feedback in conjunction with reviewing the interview video. Feedback that focuses on pragmatic features is able to get ‘inside’ the interview, targeting choices that affect all-important impressions of candidates' approachability, enthusiasm, confidence, and initiative. During ‘first’ interviews, my notes targeted Selling Yourself, Sufficient Answers, Personalizing Talk, and Nonverbal Actions. Specifically, these tasks manifested themselves in the selection, presentation/tone, and completeness of stories and other responses; word choice/register; and nonverbal items such as body position, eye contact, handshake, smiling, gestures, and self touching. The usefulness of the video data to reinforce and supplement the feedback also should be emphasized. Video can add meaningfulness to feedback that might otherwise seem abstract or disconnected from the candidate’s performance. It can also highlight subtle features, particularly nonverbal actions, that the candidate may otherwise not be aware of (e.g., Kanter, 1995).

The findings here suggest that even a one-time training session can facilitate tangible improvements in a candidate's performance. This is encouraging for candidates who seek out short-term training before an upcoming interview, or who are unable to invest a great deal of time and/or money in their job interview preparation. Indeed, a short-term, focused session has some advantages over longer, more generalized training. In a high-stress interview, with so many
possible behaviours for candidates to be conscious of, it may be advisable to limit targeted feedback to a small number of influential points. Ideally, the interviewer for the simulation should have knowledge of the candidate's employment area, which can help the candidate match their self-presentation to the position, the company, and industry-specific expectations (e.g., Maurer et al., 2008).

Additionally, based on my experience in administering the ‘first’ interviews, it is advisable for trainers to develop a form to facilitate note taking. This can both enhance the resultant feedback and lessen the multitasking load of simultaneously administering the interview and generating feedback notes. A prototype form could have a section for each question, with sub-sections (or checklists) for pragmatic categories. Based on this study’s results, it is also highly advisable to include a section on the form for assessing language abilities.

Beyond identifying factors that influenced interviewer evaluations, a pedagogical objective of the video-stimulated recall process was for results to feed back into job interview training. Based on the results from that process, a broad recommendation for L+ job seekers, including those with high-level oral communication abilities, is to continue to develop their spoken English skills, and in particular the pragmatic skills that are necessary to make positive impressions in job interviews. While this recommendation may be disheartening to individuals who are already proficient speakers, there are some concrete, interview-specific items to focus on: the ability to contextualize talk, or link it to the position at hand; the ability to recognize and produce impactful and situationally appropriate language; concision; producing complete responses; staying on topic; and being specific. These are considerable pragma-linguistic challenges, and not only for L+ speakers. Nonetheless, this study’s findings point to the value of teaching and assessing these items in training programs. Indeed, instruction can focus still further
on these language abilities within the context of a specific position and developing effective responses to common interview questions. This focus has the advantage of grounding linguistic issues in the real-life task of the interview, which also reinforces the importance of the simulated interview as a training tool. The positive results of the training component of this project demonstrated that even short-term training, in conjunction with a simulated interview, can facilitate performance gains. Moreover, even rating categories that seem to reflect enduring features of a candidate’s L+ may be modifiable with training, at least in terms of interviewer/rater perceptions.

Starting with a job posting, candidates can take the following steps:

- Identify common and job-specific questions
- Reflect on their professional/academic/personal experience to develop effective answers (including stories) to those questions
- Practice those answers before and during simulated interviews.

With instructors’ help, these steps can form a feedback loop that refines candidates’ performances. Based on the results here, the feedback should attend to key linguistic features: the coherence, clarity, concision, and relevance of responses, as well as unsuitable words that can generate negative impressions. Additionally, feedback should attend to confidence and nervousness cues, as well as expressions of respect and enthusiasm for the position and company, since those categories also discriminated between candidates. Body language, professional skills and experience, and affective impressions (i.e., kindness, friendliness, and so on) also occurred frequently in evaluative comments, and were weighted heavily by interviewers, so instructors should also consider those items when giving feedback.

On the other side of the table, the findings in this study also point to the value of interviewer training for communication with L+ candidates. While this training can be framed within general strategies for effective cross-cultural communication (e.g., Byram, 1997; Spencer-
Oatey & Franklin, 2009), those inventories do not provide specific within-interview guidance. Even where interviewers tacitly support and claim openness to equitable hiring practices, they need to be made aware of the linkages between moment-by-moment communication and developing evaluations (Roberts & Sayers, 1998). The focus needs to be on improving interviewers’ communicative and interpretive practices within the interview, with a goal of adding clarity to both sides of the table. The results in this study, in conjunction with previous research (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Roberts & Sayers, 1998), point to the importance of interviewer transparency with L+ candidates, pre-empting communicative difficulties where possible, and participating as an engaged and active interlocutor for the candidate, both for empathetic reasons and as a communicative support. An ‘engaged style’ here meant going beyond minimal active listening cues and question delivery. The combination of engagement and support features was favoured by candidates in this study, as well as in other previous research (e.g., Collins, Lincoln & Frank, 2012). Moreover, this style can pay dividends for interviewers, in terms of eliciting more – and less guarded – information from candidates (e.g., Kanter, 1995; Travers, 2013). For interviewers, the findings here point to the need for a compromise between prioritizing reliable and neutral administration and the need for interviewer participation in responses. Ultimately, the goal should not be to restrict interviewer talk, which undermines the interview’s usefulness as a recruitment tool, but rather to encourage interviewers to make principled choices about where and how to participate in the interaction. It is important to update the interviewer’s skillfulness as a practitioner in order to accommodate an increasingly diverse pool of candidates. To this end, interviewers need to be mindful of the challenges that the interview routine presents for L+ and/or ethnic minority candidates. They also need to be aware of the implications of their actions for reliability and fairness considerations. The preceding
analysis has pointed to areas where even experienced interviewers could benefit from training. First and foremost, interviewers need to recognize the ‘cost-benefit’ implications of their participation in responses, where prompts for further information or clarification may be necessary but may also undermine the integrity of those responses as assessable objects. To intervene without contaminating responses, an effective strategy is to offer minimal and neutral prompts. Excerpt (18), in which I4 prompted C17 for more information about her goal of becoming a hotel manager, models a highly effective method for achieving this balance. On two occasions, I4 used optimally minimal and open-ended prompts to elicit greater detail, and it was only after C17 displayed an inability to provide more concrete information that the interviewer scaffolded the responses with more focused questions. In this way, I4 was able both to elicit a more substantial response, but also to gauge C17’s independent capacity to provide that response.

This movement from open to focused prompts is characteristic of Vygotskian (or Sociocultural) approaches to assessment (e.g., Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002; Rieber & Carton, 1993), and specifically Dynamic Assessment (DA) (e.g., Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; Poehner, 2007, 2008; Travers, 2013). DA conceptualizes test performance not as independent but as a cooperative enterprise, and therefore stresses that interviewer participation is desirable rather than problematic. Within this model, assessor intervention can generate a more detailed picture of what a candidate can or cannot do, in terms of the assessment parameters. Proponents argue that -- in practice -- carefully graded prompts can elicit a richer picture of a candidate’s ability to perform independently (e.g., Campione et al., 1984). At the same time, a disciplined approach in using more-to-less open prompts can be replicable across administrations, which can satisfy reliability concerns. In excerpt (19) in this study, the ease with which I4 used neutral, open-
ended prompts to signal an incomplete response suggests that this mode of interviewer participation is feasible in the context of job interviews. The conflict between the importance of consistency and neutrality, on the one hand, and the importance of negotiating meanings on the other, is not necessary unresolvable. A Vygotskian approach offers a model within which both concerns can be addressed.

4.6 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

One limitation of the present study relates to the candidates’ individual variability. In order to obtain an acceptable sample size for the study, recruitment was open to both undergraduate and graduate students, as well as individuals with differing amounts of previous job interview training and job interview experience. An advantage of the study’s within-participant design and analysis was that each participant served as a de facto control group for himself or herself, which meant that a lack of homogeneity between the three experimental groups (in terms of individual variables) did not undermine the analysis. Nonetheless, as the three groups were randomly populated, it is important to consider whether level of post-secondary education or previous job interview training or experience inadvertently moderated the ratings. A post-hoc Spearman Rank Order test did not find statistically significant correlations between years of post-secondary education ($r(26) = .149, p = .457$) or previous job interview experience ($r(26) = .201, p = .315$). Previous job interview training did approach significance with a weak correlation ($r(26) = .324, p = .100$). In future training studies, it is worthwhile to collect information about previous interview experience to discern whether and to what extent the training treatment is effective in its own right, or whether it taps into latent knowledge from previous training.
The same was true for cultural background: the 27 candidates came from ten different nationalities and therefore brought disparate cultural and linguistic backgrounds to their training and interviews. Despite Diboye et al.’s (2012) claim that Euro-American job interviews have more similarities than differences, there are undoubtedly important cross-cultural differences, particularly with regard to norms of appropriate interviewing behaviour (e.g., Leri, 2000). The pragmatic tasks included in the training lesson — ‘Selling Yourself,’ ‘Sufficient Responses,’ ‘Personalizing Talk,’ and ‘Nonverbal Actions’ — may have been more straightforward for some candidates to understand and use than other individuals. Though the candidates did not express discomfort or unwillingness to apply the tasks in their talk, they do touch on areas of cross-cultural variability, such as self-promotion or self-effacement (e.g., Bye et al., 2011; Gumperz, 1992a; Kerekes, 2007), verbosity or minimal talk (e.g., He and Young, 1998; Ross, 1998), personal or impersonal talk with a higher-status stranger (e.g., Roberts & Sayers, 1998), and active listening features, including eye contact (e.g., Bailey, 1997; Latham & Budworth, 2005). While it is difficult to analyze the effects of these cultural variables on candidates’ self-presentations, there is little doubt that cultural differences do affect candidates’ abilities to adapt to L+ interviewing norms. As a result, there are questions about the degree to which culture may have enabled or challenged individuals in applying the feedback and/or pragmatic tasks from the training sessions.

An argument exists that simulated interview research cannot adequately replicate the conditions of a genuine interview. Heritage and Clayman (2010), in their discussion of institutional talk, posited that role-play data, as an object of analysis, is inherently "compromised" in terms of "the range and authenticity of the conduct that emerges within them,” particularly with regard to the lack of “consequentiality” in comparison to authentic talk (p. 13).
There is no question that it is difficult to simulate the pressure of a real job interview for candidates; the interviewer, likewise, is not faced with the accountability of a genuine evaluation and selection. On the other hand, the argument for inadequate “range” and “authenticity” of conduct in simulated job interviews is less convincing. Heritage and Clayman’s position is grounded in Conversation Analysis, and its reliance on unscripted talk in order to understand the structure of everyday conversation (e.g., Sacks et al., 1974). Job interviews, in comparison, represent an interesting challenge to a binary view of authentic and staged talk, to the extent that authentic talk is viewed as unselfconscious or spontaneous. The line between authenticity and simulation becomes somewhat blurred in the context of the job interview “game” (Kanter, 1995, xvii), where impression management tactics and rehearsed responses are prevalent. Interviewers, too, are not immune to assuming deceptive stances in order to elicit candid responses from candidates (e.g., Clark, 1996; Goffman, 1981; Kanter, 1995; Travers, 2013). In this way, there is a performative aspect to job interview talk, whether authentic or simulated, in comparison to everyday conversation. This includes adjusting talk and behaviours to fit expected roles. It also includes the interviewer’s typical neutrality and the candidate adopting stances that he or she hopes will impress the interviewer. As a result, it is not convincing to argue for a paucity in the range and authenticity of the interview talk, just because an interview is simulated.

The argument that simulated interview interaction is a legitimate object of analysis is tempered by the issue of consequentiality and its effects on participants’ behaviours. For overlapping ethical and methodological reasons, it was not feasible in this study to collect authentic job interview data. The central importance of video for close analysis of the interview talk, and for video-stimulated recall with participants, conflicted with privacy and fairness concerns for participants in genuine job interviews. In addition, a degree of consistency was
requested in the ‘second’ interviews, including the length and questions asked, in order to satisfactorily assess the effects of the training components. Requiring this consistency from managers who are conducting real interviews generated an ethical impasse. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct simulated interviews, but with a goal of enhancing the verisimilitude of the interviews as much as possible. To that end, candidates and interviewers worked with a job posting that followed authentic examples, candidates were asked to bring resumés to their interviews, and the interview frame was developed with the assistance of hospitality professionals. Additionally, the ‘second’ interviews were run by hotel managers, and both candidates and interviewers were strongly encouraged to treat the interviews as though they were real. Job interview role plays can differ greatly in their degree of verisimilitude, in terms of preparation, setting, length, and who takes the interviewer role (e.g., Hansen et al., 2009). This attention to authenticating detail in role-play design can result in noticeable improvements in participants’ commitment to the task (Siegel, 2016), and I would argue that a commiserate increase in perceived consequentiality can also result. In brief, given the necessity of simulated interviews for this study, the optimal compromise was to employ conditions that replicated authentic interviews to the greatest possible extent.

A second limitation in this study related to the design. For the sake of enhanced validity, it is preferable to minimize differences between the interviews that served to measure the effects of the training conditions. For a number of variables, steps were taken to ensure consistency in the two tasks, including the instructions and materials (i.e., job posting) given to candidates and interviewers, the questions asked, the time gap between interviews, and the length of the interview. One aspect that could not be controlled was the interviewers, who differed from the ‘first’ to ‘second’ interviews. The fact that I administered all ‘first’ interviews provided a
comparable baseline for measuring gains and losses. However, in order to address interviewer-focused questions in the study (i.e., the factors that preoccupied them; the effectiveness of communicative choices with L+ candidates; their degree of participation in responses), it was important to recruit a number of interviewers. This meant that the candidates’ ‘second’ interviews were administered by nine different individuals. At the same time, it is worth noting that all ‘second’ interviewers were managers at Victoria hotels with a minimum of 50 job interviews’ experience. They were also all native or native-like English speakers. Moreover, as mentioned, Spearman Rank correlation tests did not find a significant correlation between the ratings that candidates gave to their interviewers and the ratings that the candidates received. In other words, the interviewers that the candidates favoured did not empirically help them to obtain higher scores. Thus, the nine interviewers formed a satisfactorily homogeneous group, in terms of assuaging concerns about the comparability of their interviews.

A further limitation with this study’s design is that it did not provide a comparison of L1 and L+ candidates. In the context of immigrant underemployment in Canada (Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012; Reitz et al., 2014, as well as previous research that showed interviewer biases and communicative choices that disfavoured L+ speakers (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998), the L1 - L+ comparison is highly relevant. Considering that language abilities emerged as influential in interviewer evaluations in this study, this comparison is particularly intriguing: would the top-rated L+ candidates in this study receive positive language ability comments if the interviewers were comparing them with L1 candidates? For this project, the addition of an L1 group would have pushed the bounds of feasibility for a single researcher, so the comparison was – regrettably – not incorporated into the study. Looking ahead, a valuable follow-up project will be to replicate this study’s procedures
with an L1 group, which can address a number of core questions: How do second-interview performance scores for an L+ training group compare with scores for L1 peers? Do interviewers communicate differently with L1 and L+ speakers? Do the factors that influence evaluations differ between the L1 and L+ group? There is some evidence in the literature that interviewers base their evaluations on fewer and more criterion-relevant factors with L1 candidates than with L+ candidates (de Meijer et al., 2007). However, it is necessary to extend the question of evaluative processing to additional candidates, interviewers, and target positions. Given the reality of mixed L1 and L+ candidate pools for most jobs, this follow-up will help to put the challenges facing L+ candidates into a clearer context.

Similar questions regarding linguistic background emerged for the interviewers. The two interviewers who received the highest candidate evaluation scores (I1 and I9) are both L+ speakers themselves (L1 French and L1 Swedish), though both possess native-like fluency in English. Not surprisingly, both interviewers reported ‘a great deal’ of contact with L+ speakers in personal and professional contexts. Both individuals were also highly engaged interlocutors, which likely contributed to their high ratings from candidates. Notwithstanding the small sample, the efficacy of the two interviewers raises questions about whether interviewers who themselves are L+ speakers are more effective communicators with L+ candidates than interviewers who are using their L1s. This question is relevant in light of Manroop et al.’s (2013) argument that greater diversity among interviewers themselves – including in panel interviews – is necessary to ensure fairer evaluative practices with multicultural candidate pools. As such, assessing whether and in what ways L+ interviewers communicate effectively with L+ candidates can not only improve training for interviewers, but can also support policy initiatives to diversify those who are making hireability decisions.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

This project looked at L+ job interviews from a two-way perspective, based on an understanding of interview talk and its meanings as jointly constructed by the candidate and interviewer. Increased awareness of how interview talk develops and relates to evaluations has practical relevance to a wide variety of gatekeeping interactions. In the Canadian context, however, this awareness is particularly relevant in the context of ongoing underemployment of immigrants (e.g., Guerrero & Rothstein, 2012; Reitz et al., 2014). Arguably, the communicative challenges that L+ candidates face in job interviews represent a microcosm of the challenges they face in their broader search for satisfactory employment. A crucial commonality observed by both L+ job interview researchers and recruiters is that unsuccessful L+ candidates tend to lack pragmatic skillfulness (i.e., ‘soft skills’) in comparison to their L1 peers (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Jensen, 2003; Kerekes, 2006, 2007; Lipovsky, 2006; Louw et al., 2010; Marra et al., 2009; Reitz et al., 2014; Roberts & Sayers, 1998; Shannon, 2009). Furthermore, two related issues work to exacerbate candidates’ pragmatic shortfalls. The first is that interviewers are likely to extrapolate from pragmatic misunderstandings to attributions of candidates’ likeability and/or professional competence, rather than recognizing those misunderstandings as linguistic deficits (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996; Gumperz, 1992a; Yates, 2010). The second is that interviewers’ valuation of personality over other target criteria disadvantages candidates who lack the pragmatic awareness to shape responses in ways that maximize positive impressions (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007). In short, adopting a two-way perspective not only satisfies theoretical models of how understandings in talk are negotiated. It also acknowledges that rendering interview practices more equitable for L+ candidates requires convergence from both sides of the table: candidates
need to improve their ability to represent themselves effectively in the recruitment process. Equally, interviewers need to increase their awareness of how their practices – both communicative and evaluative – may reduce L+ candidates’ opportunities to succeed. From an organizational standpoint, these limitations also mean that interviewers may fall short in their task of identifying talent from diverse backgrounds.

With this context in mind, the present study looked at simulated job interviews in which the candidates were L+ English speakers enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs at the University of Victoria in Canada. The candidates were seeking to show their suitability for a hypothetical front desk position at a Victoria hotel. Each candidate took part in a ‘first’ interview with the researcher and a ‘second’ interview with a hotel manager.

Specifically, this study sought answers to questions that can support a training and feedback loop for both L+ candidates and interviewers. While candidate training is an established practice in college and university co-operative education programs, government work-placement agencies, and private companies, among other organizations, empirical research on its effectiveness has been surprisingly limited (Cuddy & Wilmuth, 2015; Latham & Budworth, 2005; Louw et al., 2010; Maurer et al., 2008). Moreover, only one of these preceding studies (Louw et al., 2010) focused on L+ speakers. To this end, this study assessed two types of pragmatics training, which were used in conjunction with a simulated job interview: (a) a video-supported awareness-raising lesson that focused on four pragmatic tasks, ‘Selling Yourself,’ ‘Personalizing Talk,’ ‘Sufficient Answers,’ and ‘Nonverbal Actions;’ and (b) a personalized, pragmatics-focused feedback session that offered suggestions to candidates based on their ‘first’ interviews.
Additionally, video-stimulated recall with professional interviewers, immediately following the candidates’ ‘second’ interviews, generated a rich picture of the evaluative themes that preoccupied the interviewers as they considered the candidates’ suitability for the front desk position. A follow-up analysis also identified which themes differentiated higher- and lower-rated candidates, and which were therefore most crucial to success in the ‘second’ interviews. The video-stimulated recall process, which was designed to tap into emergent and often-subtle sources of impressions about candidates, provided information that can ultimately feed back into future training for candidates, by modifying and/or supplementing existing curricula.

In terms of the interviewers, one goal was to assess their consistency in using actions that can facilitate clear communication with L+ candidates. To this end, an Interviewer Actions instrument was developed, based on recommendations from previous L+ interview studies (Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Bremer et al., 1996; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Gumperz, 1992a; Roberts & Sayers, 1998). The instrument’s categories include ‘Active Listening,’ ‘Clear Speech,’ ‘Repair,’ and ‘Transitions’ features. The interviewers’ scores in these categories were then correlated with candidates’ evaluations and comments regarding their interviewers, in order to understand whether and how interviewer actions affected candidates’ comfort and understanding. To extend the assessment of interviewer participation, discourse analysis was also used to consider how the interviewers contributed to candidates’ responses, and what the implications of those contributions were for developing evaluations.

The most important results were as follows:

- Both training groups, the Feedback + Lesson group and the Feedback Only group, significantly outperformed the control group, as measured by ‘first’ and ‘second’ interview ratings by three hotel professionals. Moreover, the rating categories that
improved significantly from the ‘first’ to ‘second’ interviews are items that are susceptible to pragmatics-focused training: ‘Approachability,’ ‘Attitude towards the Position,’ and ‘Shows Initiative.’ Thus, the findings support the value of pragmatics training for job seekers, including relatively short training sessions, in order to improve their job interview performance.

- While both experimental groups outperformed the control group, the *Feedback Only* group results were superior to the *Feedback + Lesson* group on several descriptive measures. Based on this finding, a practical recommendation is that pragmatics-focused, job-targeted, personalized feedback, in conjunction with a simulated interview, represents an effective job interview training approach.

- Among the interviewers’ evaluative comments, the most common themes (39%) reflected *language abilities*. These categories focused on candidates’ basic ability to understand questions and respond; their ability to link responses to the position and highlight qualifications; word choice; concision; the completeness of answers; the generality/specificity of responses; and response relevance. The language ability categories also distinguished between the higher and lower-rated candidates. In these categories, the higher-rated candidates received fewer negative comments; they also received more positive comments in areas that rewarded sophisticated language tasks, such as linking, highlighting, and selecting suitable and impactful words. This heightened focus on language abilities is understandable in light of the communicative requirements of a front desk position. Nonetheless, spoken communication is critical for all jobs, so it is predictable that interviewers for most positions will place heavy emphasis on the candidate’s language abilities, using the interview as a *de facto* speaking
test to predict future performance on the job. As a result, it is recommended that instructors incorporate these concrete communicative foci into future training with L+ candidates, as a guide for feedback during interview practice.

- For the Interviewer Actions measures, all nine interviewers employed actions that can facilitate L+ candidates’ understanding. However, correlation analysis with candidates’ evaluations of interviewers suggested that a minimal level of interviewer engagement and support was not sufficient to make a positive impression on candidates. In fact, high-engagement actions, including ‘Backchanneling’ (i.e., verbal listening cues) and extra talk around questions (‘Repetition/Rephrasing’ and ‘Contextualizing’), occurred least frequently in the lowest-rated interviewers’ talk. The candidates’ comments about their interviewers largely ratified this valuation of engagement and support. While the highest-rated interviewers were labeled ‘nice,’ ‘friendly,’ and credited with creating a comfortable atmosphere, the negative comments tended to focus on the interviewers being ‘in a hurry,’ or not showing interest in the candidate’s responses. This finding raises doubts about a ‘minimal’ interviewing style advocated by a number of researchers in Organizational Psychology (e.g., Chapman & Zweig, 2005; Dana et al., 2013; Simola et al., 2007). As part of a structured interviewing approach, a minimal style usefully emphasizes consistency – and thus, fairness – across candidates. However, this study’s results indicate that this style can negatively impact L+ candidates’ sense of comfort, and thus the conditions for a candidate’s best performance. A minimal style is also questionable when cultural and linguistic differences may impede clear communication, since in those cases interviewers will need to actively negotiate understandings, in order to ascertain a satisfactory picture of a candidate for evaluative purposes. On the other
hand, the qualitative analysis in this study revealed notable variability among the
interviewers in the way they delivered questions, prompted for more information, and
otherwise responded to candidates. At times, these choices raised reliability and validity
concerns. An effective compromise is to take a Vygotskian – and specifically a Dynamic
Assessment – approach to interviewer communication (e.g., Rieber & Carton, 1993;
Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002). This approach endorses carefully regulated interviewer
participation in the interaction, which can generate a rich picture of candidate
capabilities while avoiding contaminating their responses.

Ultimately, the training results in this study provide some empirical support for
instruction that already exists in employment programs. At the same time, the emphasis of the
training components on pragmatic features suggests that this aspect is particularly valuable to L+
speakers. Cross-cultural differences in behavioural norms for job interviews (Leri, 2000), in
conjunction with the difficulty of recognizing pragmatic features without instruction (e.g.,
Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Bilbow & Yeung, 1998; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), as
well as the influence of pragmatic expectations on evaluations, point to the necessity of
equipping L+ candidates with pragmatic information. Encouragingly, this study’s one-time
training session showed the potential for job seekers to become aware of pragmatic tasks and
apply that knowledge to enhance their self presentations.

Interviewer training is equally necessary to equitably accommodate all candidates. The
prevalence of language ability themes in the interviewers’ evaluative comments, which only
partly aligned with the target criteria for the position, points to the easy leap that interviewers can
make between discursive sophistication and suitability judgments (e.g., Campbell & Roberts,
2007; Scheuer, 2001). Interviewers need to be made aware of this self-reflexive weighting of
communicative impressions over other criteria, and encouraged to take a critical stance towards their developing impressions. However, a push to increase interview structure, and specifically a minimization of interviewer talk (e.g., Chapman & Zweig, 2005; Crone, 2000; Dana et al., 2013; Simola et al., 2007) only seems to make the process fairer for L+ candidates. The persistent valuation of personality and ‘fit,’ regardless of target criteria and structure (e.g., Dipboye et al., 2012), suggests that L1 candidates with an implicit understanding of pragmatic norms are most likely to thrive with minimal interviewer participation. Meanwhile, L+ candidates, who may rely heavily on procedural transparency and clarification work (e.g., Baptiste & Seig, 2007; Bremer et al., 1996), can be expected to struggle without interviewer support. Given this state of affairs, model interviewers for diverse candidates are those who can successfully “negotiate the boundaries between assisting and assessing” (Baptiste & Seig, 2007, p. 1921), through carefully eliciting relevant information while maintaining responses’ integrity as independent objects. A disciplined approach by interviewers that recognizes the implications of their actions is not equivalent to unstructured attempts to get to know candidates and make vague estimations of ‘fit’ (e.g., Crone, 2000; Dana et al., 2013). Stripping down interview formats for reliability purposes ultimately limits their capacity as evaluative instruments, especially with linguistically heterogeneous candidate pools. However, the privileged position of interviewers as gatekeepers means there is limited incentive to enhance their communicative and interpretive skillfulness (e.g., Bremer et al., 1996), not to mention other formal checks against bias, such as panel interviewers that are themselves diverse (Manroop et al., 2013). In the end, organizational leadership needs to recognize that improving the sophistication of their interviewing practices does not solely benefit candidates, but also helps to refine their capacity to recruit high-quality personnel.
References


Kim, K., & Suh, K. (1998). Confirmation sequences as interactional resources in Korean


Taguchi, N. (2015). Instructed pragmatics at a glance: Where instructional studies were, are, and should be going. *Language Teaching, 48*, 1-50.


### Job Interview Questions
Length: 15 minutes

#### Part 1: Greeting (1-2 minutes)
- Interviewer greets candidate.
- Exchange introductions.
- Exchange small-talk.

#### Part 2: Body (10-12 minutes)

**Questions about the candidate**
- Tell me about yourself.
- What achievement are you particularly proud of?
- What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses?

**Job-related questions**
- Why were you interested in this position?
- What related skills and experience do you have?
- [Job-specific question]
- [Job-specific question]

**Experience-related questions**
- Describe a challenging situation that you have faced. How did you deal with this situation and what was the outcome? What did you learn from the experience?
- Can you tell me about a time when you had to collaborate with others? What part did you play, and what was the outcome?

#### Part 3: Closing (1-2 minutes)
- Interviewer invites candidate to ask one or two questions (optional)
- Interviewer thanks candidate.
- Exchange farewells.
### Control Group Candidates (n=9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Group Candidates (n=9)</th>
<th>Candidates (M = Male; F = Female)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>P1 (M)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Residence (Months)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Major (Degree / Year)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Previous Interviews (English / Other)</strong></td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Additional Languages (Self-reported Level)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>English Test Score</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Use</strong></td>
<td>All the Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media</strong></td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TV / Movies</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends</strong></td>
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<td>English Use</td>
<td>Homeroom</td>
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Note: Elem. = Elementary; Int. = Intermediate; Adv. = Advanced; Nat. = Native-like
<table>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Major (Degree/ Year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Classes</td>
<td>All the Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV/ Movies</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Elem. = Elementary; Int. = Intermediate; Adv. = Advanced; Nat. = Native-like
### Professional Interviewers' Information

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I1</th>
<th>I2</th>
<th>I3</th>
<th>I4</th>
<th>I5</th>
<th>I6</th>
<th>I7</th>
<th>I8</th>
<th>I9</th>
</tr>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position at Hotel</strong></td>
<td>Assistant Human Resources Manager</td>
<td>Human Resources Advisor</td>
<td>Human Resources Manager</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>Manager of Operations</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>Guest Services Manager</td>
<td>Human Resources Director</td>
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<td><strong>Interviewing Experience</strong> (Stated number of interviews)</td>
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<td>More than 150</td>
<td>More than 500</td>
<td>More than 125</td>
<td>More than 200</td>
<td>More than 600</td>
<td>More than 300</td>
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<td>English</td>
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<td>Swedish</td>
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<td>French (Elem.)</td>
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<td>French (Elem.)</td>
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<td>French (Elem.)</td>
<td>English (Nat.)</td>
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<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
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<td>Very seldom</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Very seldom</td>
<td>Very seldom</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Very seldom</td>
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<td>Work Colleagues</td>
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<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Very seldom</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* All interviewers were management-level professionals from local hotels.
Appendix D: Candidate Rating Scale

**Candidate Performance Scale**

Candidate Name: _____________________  Rater Name: _____________________

Please review the candidate's interview video. For each item, circle the appropriate rating on the scale:

1= Not Acceptable  7= Exceptional  N/A= Not applicable (not covered by the interview)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude &amp; Communication</th>
<th>Approachability</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<td>Attitude towards the position</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear Speaking &amp; Understanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonverbal Communication Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Appearance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shows Initiative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abilities &amp; Experience</th>
<th>Ability to Handle Stress</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperation with Co-workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge about the hotel</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question(s) for Interviewer</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevant Experience</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevant Skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* 'Professional Appearance' was not used as a category, because some candidates did not wear interview-suitable clothes for the 'First' interviews. 'Knowledge about the hotel' was not used because the candidates were interviewing for a fictitious hotel.
**Appendix E: Candidate Training Lesson Plan**

**Job Interview Pragmatics Lesson Plan**

Time: Approximately 40 minutes  
Materials: Laptop Computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Researcher Action</th>
<th>Candidate Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Working within a 'Selling Yourself' frame (10 mins.) | (a) Explain 'Selling Yourself' frame:  
- Taking opportunities to highlight experience & skills.  
- Avoiding saying negative things about yourself. | (a) Listen to explanation (ask questions) |
|                                      | (b) Watch video clip of successful 'Selling Yourself' frame.  
- Discuss positive aspects | (b) Watch video, discuss positive aspects (ask questions) |
|                                      | (c) Watch video clip of unsuccessful 'Selling Yourself' frame.  
- Discuss negative aspects and how to improve response | (c) Watch video, discuss negative aspects, suggest what candidate could do better. |
| Developing a sufficient response (10 mins.) | (a) Explain 'Sufficient Response':  
- Including *situation-action-result* components  
- Relevant to the question  
- Presenting yourself in a positive light. | (a) Listen to explanation (ask questions) |
|                                      | (b) Watch video clip of sufficient response by an L+ candidate.  
- Discuss positive aspects | (b) Watch video, discuss positive aspects (ask questions) |
|                                      | (c) Watch video clip of insufficient response by an L+ candidate.  
- Discuss negative aspects and how to improve response | (c) Watch video, discuss negative aspects, suggest what candidate could do better. |
| Personalizing Talk (10 mins.)        | (a) Explain ‘Personalizing Talk’:  
- Referencing family, interests, etc.  
- Describing career choices in terms of interests, goals, values  
- Using first-person ‘I,’ personal opinions, narratives about self | (a) Listen to explanation (ask questions) |
|                                      | (b) Watch video clip of successful personalization.  
- Discuss positive aspects | (b) Watch video, discuss positive aspects (ask questions) |
<p>|                                      | (c) Watch video clip of unsuccessful personalization. | (c) Watch video, discuss negative aspects, suggest what candidate could do better |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonverbal Actions (10 mins.)</th>
<th>-Discuss negative aspects and how to improve response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (a) Describe ‘active listening’ nonverbal actions:  
  - eye contact, nodding,  
  backchanneling, body position | (a) Listen to description (ask questions) |
| (b) Watch video clip of successful active listening  
- Discuss positive aspects | (b) Watch video, discuss positive aspects (ask questions) |
| (c) Watch video clip of unsuccessful ‘active listening’  
- Discuss negative aspects and how to improve nonverbal actions | (c) Watch video, discuss negative aspects, suggest what candidate could do better. |
Personalizing Talk

- Sharing information about family, friends, hobbies, etc., can create rapport with interviewers.
- Personalize your career choices and professional interests.
- Put yourself at the centre of professional stories.

Nonverbal Actions

- Dress should be ‘+1’
- Give a firm handshake at the beginning/end of the interview.
- ‘Active listening’ is important: eye contact, nodding, smiling, leaning a little forward, backchannels. They show your interest/enthusiasm.
- Avoid negative actions: leaning back, avoiding eye contact, touching object, body touching
Appendix G -- Interviewer Comments Form

**Interviewer Comments Form**

*Part A*

*Instructions*: Based on the interview, on a scale of 1 to 10 (1= highly unsuitable; 10= outstanding), how would you rate the candidate’s suitability for the job?

*Part B*

*Instructions*: We are going to review the video together. I want to know your impressions of the candidate as the interview was happening. So please tell me moments that made a positive or negative impression on you. Also please tell me general positive or negative impressions that the candidate made on you. You can push the <space> bar to pause the video to make your comment. I will write down your comments on this form. I’ll also ask you for the ‘weight’ the impression made on you, between 1 (“Mild Impression”) to 3 (“Strong Impression”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</table>

*Instructions*: Based on the interview, choose a number from 1 to 7 to describe your degree of satisfaction with the candidate's English ability for the position. (1 = not good enough for the position; 7 = exceeded your expectations for the position):

To what extent did the candidate's English proficiency affect your evaluation?
Appendix H: Candidate Comments Form

Candidate Comments Form

The form will be completed by the researcher using the candidate’s responses.

Part A

<Instructions>: We are going to review the video together. I want to know what you were thinking while the interview was happening. In particular, please tell me why you chose your responses at different moments. As we watch, also please tell me your general impressions of your performance. You can push the <space> bar to pause the video to make your comments. I will write down your comments on this form. While we're watching the video, I won't interrupt with my questions or comments, because I want to know your thoughts about the interview. After you're finished, I might ask you about some moments that you didn't talk about. Are you ready?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Comment:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Comment:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Comment:</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part B

<Instructions>: I want you to tell me your impressions of the interviewer during the job interview. Please choose a number between 1 and 5 that describes your impressions. (1 = completely disagree; 5 = completely agree)

a) The interviewer made me feel comfortable. ___
b) The interviewer tried to help us understand each other. ___
c) The interviewer behaved in a professional way. ___
d) I feel that the interviewer treated me fairly. ___
e) Do you have any other comments about the interviewer?
Appendix I: Job Posting

Job Posting

**Job Title:** Front Desk Agent  
**Company:** Victoria Bayside Hotel & Suites  
**Salary:** $15.50/hour  
**Job Type:** Full time (40 hours/wk). Shift work is involved, including weekends & early mornings  
**Start Date:** Immediately  
**Minimum Education:** High School Diploma

**Hotel Description:** Victoria Bayside Hotel & Suites is a locally-owned hotel close to Victoria's Inner Harbour. The Bayside has been providing exceptional guest comfort in Victoria for over 30 years.

**Position Responsibilities:**
- Greet guests and check them into the hotel in a courteous and efficient manner
- Take responsibility for guest inquiries and problems during their stay
- Process payment at the end of guests' stay. Make sure that their stay was satisfactory
- Deal with telephone inquiries
- Other duties as assigned

**Qualifications:**
We are seeking a dynamic individual to fill a vacant position of a front desk agent. The successful candidate should possess the following qualifications, education, and skills:
- Practical working experience (1 year or more) within the hospitality or service industry, preferably as a front desk agent, is an asset. Previous experience with processing cash/debit/credit card transactions is preferred.
- Computer skills (required) with a good working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook. Strong keyboarding skills are an asset.
- A passion for providing outstanding service, excellent time management skills, a self starter, and a willingness to go the extra mile for guests.
- Strong communication skills, written and spoken, both in-person and on the telephone.

Victoria Bayside Hotel & Suites is an equal opportunity employer. Full-time employees are eligible for competitive health and pension benefits following a 3-month probationary period.
Appendix J: Interviewer Actions Measures

Interviewer Actions Measures

**Active Listening:** displaying engagement in a speaker's talk.

i. **Backchannels:** verbally signalling receipt of a speaker's utterance, without taking a turn. Exemplars are "okay," "mm hm," and "yeah" (e.g., Benus, Gravano, & Hirschberg, 2007).

ii. **Nodding:** a common nonverbal backchannel (e.g., Bjorge, 2010) that acknowledges receipt of an utterance, without taking a turn.

iii. **Eye contact:** regularly gazing at the speaker to show attention to their talk (e.g., Bjorge, 2010).

*Measurement:* Three long candidate responses, near the beginning, middle, and end of the interview, will be transcribed and coded for the three actions. The responses will be transcribed into intonation units, and each clause will be coded for backchannels ('B'), nods ('N'), and eye contact ('E').

**Transitions:** clearly marking topic boundaries, and enhancing candidates' comprehension of interview procedures and individual questions.

i. **Transition Cues:** verbally signalling that a topic is finished (e.g., "Thank you"), and/or verbally signalling that a new topic has started (e.g., "So:," "Okay").

ii. **Contextualization** can be (a) outlining the interview as a whole; or (b) providing information around a question that links it to previous talk or clarifies what constitutes a relevant response.

iii. **Repetition/Rephrasing:** repeating or rephrasing all or part of a question in order to enhance its comprehensibility.

*Measurement:* Principal interviewer questions will be identified and coded for transition cues ('T'), contextualization('C'), and repetition or rephrasing ('R').

**Clear Speech:** using intonation to highlight key information, speaking at a reasonable speech rate, and avoiding lexical complexity.

i. **Stress:** perceptibly stressing key information words.

ii. **Speech Rate:** avoiding speaking at a fast rate.

iii. **Lexical Diversity:** proportion of high and low frequency words.

*Measurement:* (a) **Stress:** With transcripts of principal interviewer questions, two coders will identify consensus lexical items that they expect will receive stress. The coders will then listen and determine whether or not the interviewer stressed those lexical items. (b) **Speech Rate:** Three long interviewer turns, at the beginning, middle, and end of the interview, will be used to measure Speech Rate. The unit of measurement is words per minute (WPM). (c) **Lexical Diversity:** The transcript of the interviewer's speech will be analyzed using Web VocabProfile (Cobb, 2013). The program generates proportions of words from four lists: (i) 1000 most frequent words; (ii) 2000 most frequent words; (iii) Academic Word List; (iv) Other words.

**Repair:** intervening to repair misunderstandings that arise.

i. **Repair:** attempting to repair a misunderstanding that was signalled by the candidate.

*Measurement:* coding whether or not the interviewer attempts to repair a misunderstanding that was signalled, either verbally or nonverbally, by the candidate.
Appendix K: Candidate Background Questionnaire

Candidate Background Questionnaire

The form will be completed by the candidate.

1. Name:

2. Birthplace:

3. Length of Residence in Canada (Months):

4. Undergraduate Major and level (e.g., 4th year):

5. First Language (Mother Tongue):

6. Most recent score on TOEFL®, IELTS™, or another English Proficiency Test:

7. Additional Languages:
   Please list (a) any other languages you have learned, (b) the age that each was learned, and (c) indicate (by circling one of the levels provided below) how well you can speak these languages now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Language</th>
<th>Age Learned</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary / Intermediate / Advanced / Native-like</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Elementary / Intermediate / Advanced / Native-like</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary / Intermediate / Advanced / Native-like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Describe how often you use your English in these situations. Check (✓) one box for each category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>all the time</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using social media</td>
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<tr>
<td>During classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watching TV, movies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanging out with friends</td>
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</table>

9. How many job interviews have you had, (a) in English, and (b) in your first language?:

10. Describe the job interview training that you have completed:
Appendix L: Candidate Résumé Template

Participant Resume

Name: ________________

Objective
To obtain full-time employment as a Front Desk Agent at the Victoria Bayside Hotel.

Work/Volunteer Experience *(List 2 recent work or volunteer positions)*

Education *(List your major)*

Skills *(List 3 skills relevant to the advertised position)*

Hobbies *(List 2 hobbies)*
Appendix M: Interviewer Background Questionnaire

**Interviewer Background Questionnaire**

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Interviewing Experience (Approximate number of interviews):
5. First Language (Mother Tongue):
6. Additional Languages:
   Please list (a) up to three other languages you have learned, (b) the age that each was learned, and (c) indicate (by circling one of the levels provided below) how well you can speak these languages now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Language</th>
<th>Age Learned</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary / Intermediate / Advanced / Native-like</td>
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<td>Elementary / Intermediate / Advanced / Native-like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary / Intermediate / Advanced / Native-like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Please indicate (by checking one box for each category) the frequency that you interact with English-as-an-additional-language speakers in your day-to-day activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Very Seldom</th>
<th>Occasional</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Members</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Acquaintances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues at Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Clients/ Partners</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix N – 'Second' Interview Procedures

'Second' Interview Procedures

1. Physical layout:

The digital video cameras are small and sit on small (~10 cm) tripods. Camera 1 will frame both speakers for later analysis of the interaction (done by Nick alone). Camera 2 will frame only the candidate, for later candidate rating. The digital audio recorder is also small. The audio track will be manipulated to disguise voices and will be synched to Camera 2 for later candidate rating.

2. Simulated Interview:
Nick will set up the equipment and then wait outside the room. Try to keep the interview to around 15 minutes, and to follow the Interview Questions, if possible. To the best of your ability, please treat the interview as though it were real, so that you are trying to determine the candidate's suitability for the position. Please summon Nick after the interview is finished, and he will turn off the recording devices.

3. Video Review:
We will go through the video-recording of the interview, for approximately 20 minutes. I will ask you to point out moments that made a positive or negative impression on you. You can also comment on general positive or negative impressions that the candidate made. I will also ask you to tell me the 'weight' of those impressions in your mind (1= mild impression; 3= strong impression).

4. Participation Time:
I am budgeting approximately 45 minutes per candidate, including the set-up, interview, and video review. If you would like to take a longer break between individuals, of course that is completely fine!

Thanks again so much for your help with this project!!
Candidate Performance Scale Definitions

Attitude and Communication Items

- APPROACHABILITY
- ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE POSITION
- CLEAR UNDERSTANDING & SPEAKING
- ENTHUSIASM
- NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
- SHOWS INITIATIVE

Abilities and Experience Items

- ABILITY TO HANDLE STRESS
- COOPERATION WITH CO-WORKERS
- QUESTION(S) FOR THE INTERVIEWER
- RELEVANT EXPERIENCE
- RELEVANT SKILLS
Appendix P -- Interviewer Actions Instructions for Coder

Interviewer Actions Coding

(1) **Active Listening**: Displaying engagement in a speaker's talk.
- **Backchannel**: Verbally signaling receipt of a speaker's utterance. Examples: "Okay", "Mm hm", "Yeah"
- **Nodding**: A common nonverbal backchannel.
- **Eye Contact**: Gazing at the speaker to show attention.

CODING: For each video, there are 3 sets of ~10 phrases. During or immediately after each phrase, write 'B' (backchannel), 'N' (nodding), or 'E' (eye contact). Or nothing.

*Eye contact does not have to be constant. A single glance is OK.*

(2) **Transitions**: Clearly marking topic boundaries, and enhancing candidates' understanding of individual questions.
- **Transition Cue**: Verbally signalling that a topic is finished (e.g., "Thanks", "Great," "Wonderful") and/or verbally signalling that a new topic is starting (e.g., "So", "Okay", "Umm").
- **Contextualization**: Giving extra talk around a question that links it to previous talk or clarifies what constitutes a relevant response.
- **Repetition/Rephrasing**: Repeating or rephrasing all or part of a question to enhance its comprehensibility.

CODING: Watch the video around the transcribed questions. For each question, write 'T' (transition cue(s)), 'C' (contextualization), or 'R' (repetition/rephrasing). Or nothing.

(3) **Intonation**: Using volume/pitch/duration to emphasize key words in questions

CODING: (1) We will read the interview questions together and mark key words we expect to be emphasized. (2) We will listen together and mark if the interviewer DID (✔) or DID NOT (x) emphasize those key words.

(4) **Speech Rate**: The speed of speech (in Words per Minute)

CODING: (1) For each video, watch three long interviewer turns. Begin at the indicated time. Count the number of words from that point until the end of the turn. At the end of the turn, check the video clock. (2) Divide the number of words by the time (in minutes -- it may be a fraction).

(5) **Repair**: Attempting to repair a misunderstanding, when the candidate explicitly indicates that he or she did not understand.

CODING: (1) For each video, make a note of each instance when a candidate explicitly indicates (by words and/or gestures) that s/he did not understand. For each instance, write 'R' (attempt to repair), or nothing.
Appendix Q: Candidate Rating Scores by Group

Control Group Candidate Rating Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Items</th>
<th>Candidates (English rating from Interviewer / Rating from Interviewer)</th>
<th>Mean Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachability</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Towards the Position</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Speaking &amp; Understanding</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal Communication Skills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Appearance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Communication</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows Initiative</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Handle Stress</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation with Co-workers</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about the Hotel</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question(s) for the Interviewer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Experience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Skills</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Scores</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 'A' and 'B' refer to the 'first' and 'second' interviews. The scores were on a scale from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 7 (exceptional) for each category ('N/A' indicates that the raters did not feel they had sufficient information to make a rating for that category).
Feedback Group Candidate Rating Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Items</th>
<th>Candidates (English rating from Interviewer / Rating from Interviewer)</th>
<th>Mean Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.5 / 10</td>
<td>6 / 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachability</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Towards the Position</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Speaking &amp; Understanding</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal Communication Skills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Appearance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Communication</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows Initiative</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Handle Stress</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation with Co-workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about the Hotel</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question(s) for the Interviewer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant Experience</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Relevant Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean Scores</td>
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<td>6</td>
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</table>

Note. ‘A’ and ‘B’ refer to the ‘first’ and ‘second’ interviews. The scores were on a scale from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 7 (exceptional) for each category (‘N/A’ indicates that the raters did not feel they had sufficient information to make a rating for that category).
Feedback + Lesson Group Candidate Rating Scores

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<th>C9</th>
<th>C12</th>
<th>C15</th>
<th>C18</th>
<th>C21</th>
<th>C24</th>
<th>C27</th>
<th>Mean Scores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Towards the Position</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Speaking &amp; Understanding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4</td>
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Note. ‘A’ and ‘B’ refer to the ‘first’ and ‘second’ interviews. The scores were on a scale from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 7 (exceptional) for each category (‘N/A’ indicates that the raters did not feel they had sufficient information to make a rating for that category).
### Appendix R – Complete Interviewer Evaluative Comment Themes

#### Evaluative comment themes (\(N = 464\))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number (% of total) and +/-</th>
<th>Mean weight of comments*</th>
<th>Interviewers included</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number (% of total) and +/-</th>
<th>Mean weight of comments</th>
<th>Interviewers included</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Answer/Clarity/Coherence</td>
<td>56 (12.1%) 22+/34-</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Generality or Specificity</td>
<td>14 (3.0%) 4+/10-</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Body Language</td>
<td>48 (10.3%) 31+/17-</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Relevance of Talk</td>
<td>13 (2.8%) 3+/10-</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>6/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness/Niceness/Positivity/Passion</td>
<td>37 (8.0%) 33+/4-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>Cognitive Ability</td>
<td>12 (2.6%) 12+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Skills and Experience</td>
<td>37 (8.0%) 31+/6-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Cross-cultural Comfort</td>
<td>9 (1.9%) 8+/1-</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>6/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Quality of Answer/Example Choice</td>
<td>36 (7.8%) 31+/5-</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>Taking Initiative</td>
<td>8 (1.7%) 8+</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>7/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence/Nervousness</td>
<td>35 (7.5%) 15+/20-</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Understanding of Position</td>
<td>8 (1.7%) 5+/3-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating Skills and Experience to Position/Highlighting/Rhetorical Skillfulness</td>
<td>33 (7.1%) 23+/10-</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>Maturity and Character</td>
<td>6 (1.3%) 6+</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Choice and Register</td>
<td>31 (6.7%) 14+/17-</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>Professionalism and Poise</td>
<td>5 (1.0%) 5+/1-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and Enthusiasm for Position</td>
<td>20 (4.3%) 13+/7-</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>Career Motivation</td>
<td>3 (.6%) 2+/1-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concision or Length/Directness</td>
<td>19 (4.1%) 8+/11-</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>Punctuality</td>
<td>1 (.2%) 1-</td>
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<td>1/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genuineness</td>
<td>17 (3.7%) 16+/1-</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>Resumé</td>
<td>1 (.2%) 1-</td>
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<td>1/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answer Completeness</td>
<td>15 (3.2%) 7+/8-</td>
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* Interviewers weighted each comment (1=minor importance; moderate importance; 3=major importance).
## Appendix S: Candidate Comments

### Candidate Comments about Interviewers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Candidate A</th>
<th>Candidate B</th>
<th>Candidate C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>C18: -Good, everything is positive (+).</td>
<td>C21: -She likes to help (+).</td>
<td>C3: -She’s very nice (+). -She’s a good listener for her stories (+).</td>
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<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>C2: (No comment)</td>
<td>C9: -He didn’t ask why she was qualified or look at her resumé, so she didn’t have the opportunity to talk about that stuff (-).</td>
<td>C4: -He was too nice (-).</td>
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<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>C16: (No comment)</td>
<td>C23: -He wasn’t a scary interviewer, so it was like a conversation (+). -He tried to understand me and the situation (+).</td>
<td>C11: -He was very friendly (+).</td>
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<tr>
<td>I4</td>
<td>C10: -Maybe didn’t introduce the hotel – usually give a short sentence about their hotel and position (-).</td>
<td>C17: -She made her feel relaxed (+). -She was less stressed than at the beginning (+).</td>
<td>C6: -Made him feel comfortable (+). -He could be himself, which helped him to answer (+).</td>
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<td>I5</td>
<td>C7: -He didn’t do small talk or respond to her small talk (-). -Didn’t think he was rude, but maybe short of time (-).</td>
<td>C8: -Felt very uncomfortable – his facial expression didn’t encourage her to speak (-). -Felt he didn’t like her answers (-).</td>
<td>C1: - Didn’t feel like he was interested (-).</td>
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<tr>
<td>I6</td>
<td>C26: -He was very professional (+). -Sometimes felt a little weird about his attitude – don’t know how to describe it (-).</td>
<td>C20: -It was pretty OK (+).</td>
<td>C15: -He was talking fast (-). -But he did slow down and rephrase what he was saying, which made it better to understand. (+).</td>
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<tr>
<td>I7</td>
<td>C6: -Everything good (+).</td>
<td>C14: (No comment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I8</td>
<td>C12: (No comment)</td>
<td>C19: (No comment)</td>
<td>C22: -She checked her watch twice during the interview, which made her feel uncomfortable (-).</td>
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<tr>
<td>I9</td>
<td>C24: -She is kind (+). -Sometimes felt that she was in a hurry (-).</td>
<td>C27: -Felt comfortable and friendly (+). -Really thankful for her (+).</td>
<td>C25: -She made him feel comfortable (+).</td>
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