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**Official
Languages Centre
of Excellence**

Workplace linguistic security resource kit

Initiatives developed in collaboration with
the Interdepartmental Task Force on Linguistic
Insecurity

The Official Languages Best Practices Forum
Kiosk

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Purpose



The purpose of this **resource kit** is to propose tools and strategies to overcome certain aspects of linguistic insecurity related to the first or second official language, on an individual and organizational basis.

Collaboration

-  Under the leadership of the Centre of Excellence for Official Languages, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, a Task Force of experts from the federal public service and external collaborators, contributed their ideas and experience in developing this document.
-  This collaboration is aimed at:
 1. Increasing understanding of the phenomenon and awareness among all public service employees.
 2. Better identifying the phenomenon of linguistic insecurity (LI) in first (L1) or second (L2) official languages, in order to understand the impact of their use in the workplace, and to propose possible solutions to counter this insecurity.

Concepts (1 of 2)

What

- Fear of not being competent enough in one's first or second official language.
- Feeling of discomfort and anxiety, coupled with fear of making mistakes, being ridiculed and of bothering others.

Who

- Experienced more often in a linguistic minority context and/or by people who learn an official second language and must use it at work.

Concepts (2 of 2)



How



One of the major reasons that limits the effective use of both OLs within federal institutions.



Can lead to loss of acquired knowledge and abandonment of an official language

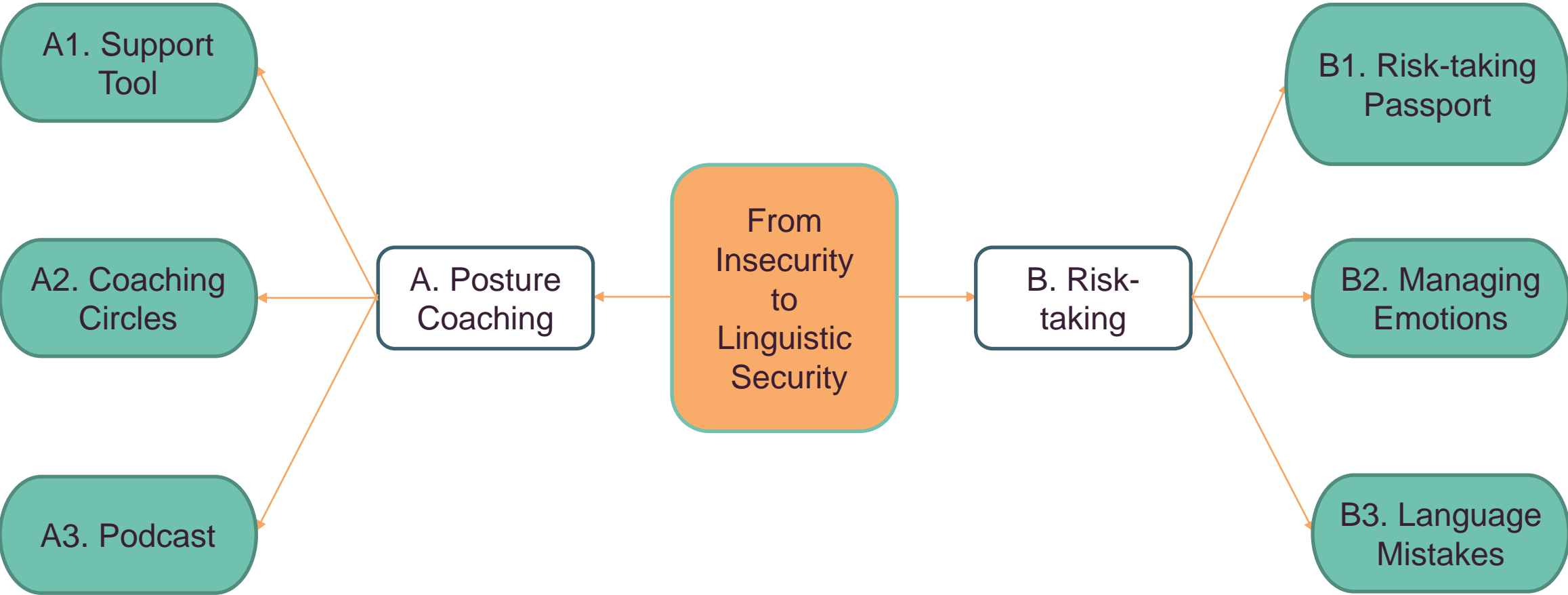


Causes



Varies by individual. They may include personality traits, individual mentalities and beliefs, emotions management, the environment, etc.

Areas and Products






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A. Posture Coaching

A1. Support Tool (1 of 2)

Self-reflection coaching to develop linguistic resilience

Partnership between the OLCE and the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS)

-  Complete a personal mini assessment to determine if you are experiencing linguistic insecurity.
-  Respond individually or as a team to the proposed questions and ideas, to develop your linguistic resilience by changing outlooks.
-  You will find:
 - ❖ A definition of the concept of linguistic resilience, its importance, and the pillars that support it.
 - ❖ A model of support to strengthen and maintain linguistic resilience as an ongoing process.
 - ❖ Thoughts that can be used individually and/or collectively.

Enjoy reflecting about these points!

A1. Support Tool (2 of 2)

Double click on the image to open the PDF document in a new window.

From Linguistic Insecurity to Linguistic Resilience

The purpose of this job aid is to make you aware of how using your first or second official language can lead to linguistic insecurity. It includes exploratory questions designed to promote reflection, initiate constructive conversations, and encourage you to choose practical linguistic resilience strategies.

What is it?

Linguistic resilience is the ability to adapt to stressful situations involving the use of a second language and bouncing back afterwards. This ability contributes to self-confidence and risk taking. Everyone can strengthen their linguistic resilience.

Why is it important?

Linguistic insecurity manifests itself as a feeling of uneasiness, anxiety or fear and can hamper or even block the use of a language. Linguistic resilience gives you the ability to overcome this insecurity by viewing errors as learning opportunities.

How does it work?

The pillars of linguistic resilience

- Self-awareness
- Ability to be vulnerable
- Optimism
- Self-regulation
- Strength of character

Reflecting on your own experiences with the help of the exploratory questions gives you an opportunity to learn and develop these pillars.

Developing linguistic resilience by changing perspectives:
Am I experiencing linguistic insecurity?

Self-Assessment
If you ever experience any of the situations listed below, this tool is for you.

I experience linguistic insecurity when...

- I don't dare take risks because I don't know how to express myself properly.
- I don't dare speak because I've judged.
- I'm convinced I'll never become fully proficient in my second official language.
- My perfectionist nature and anxiety don't allow me to make mistakes.
- I am more concerned with proving rather than improving my linguistic performance.
- Anything else?

Faced with the challenge of expressing myself in my second official language, I adopt a resilient attitude when...

- I name my linguistic challenge and say that I'm still perfecting my second official language.
- I demonstrate leadership by daring to be vulnerable.
- I am patient with myself and give myself time.
- I trust myself by taking risks. I am progressing to a level of comfort.
- I try to ignore my inner negative language by accepting my linguistic insecurity.
- Anything else?

Exploratory questions – Points to Ponder and Discuss

Past

- What linguistic insecurity challenges have you faced?
- What have you learned from your best failures?
- To what extent do you see the positive in your failures?
- How comfortable are you with the unknown?
- What have your experiences taught you about your level of linguistic resilience?

Present

- Why talk about linguistic resilience?
- What steps do you take to calm yourself when you are stressed?
- What support mechanisms do you use to encourage others to take risks?
- To what extent are you willing to be vulnerable when you are experiencing linguistic insecurity?
- How do you help create linguistic security?

Future

- What new daily habit could help you strengthen your linguistic resilience?
- On what challenge would you like to focus your efforts starting today? What approach could help you?
- How will you realize your linguistic resilience on a day-to-day basis?
- What can you do to promote a culture of linguistic resilience in your team?
- How can you celebrate your successes and those of your organization?

Proposed Model

Strengthening and maintaining linguistic resilience is an ongoing process that stems from a personal choice. Individuals who are mindful of both individual and collective linguistic resilience will see a positive impact on well-being, engagement and culture with respect to linguistic duality in the organization.

Self-Awareness
Objectively observe your psychological behaviour and pay attention to your thoughts and emotions.

Self-Regulation
Shape your thoughts, emotions and behaviours according to the results you need to achieve.

Vulnerability
Be open to risks, emotions, and uncertainty.

Optimism
See the positive side of things.

What else would you add?

Strength of Character
Make a commitment to being authentic, being according to your values, and overcoming challenges using your strengths and resources.

This job aid was developed by the Canada School of Public Service in partnership with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

A2. Coaching and Leadership Circles

Thematic peer-to-peer conversation to develop linguistic security through resilience

Partnership between the OLCE and the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS)

 Integrated initiatives within the school's executive development programming:



- ❖ E315: Leadership Reflections Series – “Facilitating the Transition from Language Insecurity to Language Security”
- ❖ E830: Finding solutions through peer coaching – “Overcoming linguistic insecurity with resilience”

Sign up at [GCcampus](#)


Have a productive thinking session!

A3. Podcast

Coaching to develop linguistic security

-  Listen to this podcast recorded in May 2021 at the Federal Public Service Coaching Summit on how coaching can help overcome linguistic insecurity with resilience.
-  The interview was conducted by Louise Varagnolo, a Certified Integral Development Coach and Strategic Advisor at the Treasury Board Secretariat's Official Languages Centre of Excellence.

https://youtube.com/channel/UC5LlivjeFeo_A5BbJULr8qg

-  You will find:
 - ❖ The interviewee's personal experience with linguistic insecurity and why she became interested in the issue.
 - ❖ A brief overview of the problem and why it is important.
 - ❖ A discussion of some of the causes of linguistic insecurity and the personal and organizational impact of the coaching approach.
 - ❖ Suggestions for practices to overcome linguistic insecurity with resilience. **Enjoy the podcast!**

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B. Risk-taking

B1. Risk-taking Passport*

Language tasks and functions

Collaboration between the OLCE, the University of Ottawa and Natural Resources Canada

This is a unique resource consisting of authentic scenarios, varying levels of difficulty, that an employee may encounter in the workplace, in order to practise speaking their first or second official language.



Here you will find ideas to:

- ❖ Empower yourself to find opportunities to use your L1/L2 in a variety of contexts.
- ❖ Feel more at ease in your L1/L2.
- ❖ Get support in maintaining and consolidating your language skills.
- ❖ Promote a bilingual workplace where language risk-taking is encouraged and valued.

* The tool is currently being developed. It is based on a Language Risk-Taking Passport developed by the University of Ottawa.



B2. Managing Emotions for Linguistic Security

Emotional regulation and risk-taking

Are you having trouble understanding the emotions that make you insecure when speaking in a second language? Would you like to better understand your unmet needs in this context of communication? Would you like to replace your negative thoughts with alternative ones? If so, this workshop is for you!

This workshop is adapted from the research of psychiatrist Christophe André, aimed at managing or regulating emotions, and can help foster linguistic security by reducing certain insecurities.

Here you will find information and some exercises to enable you to:

-  Further your understanding of concepts related to linguistic insecurity and emotions management.
-  Use what you have learned to improve your linguistic security to increase your risk-taking and linguistic resilience in the second official language.

[Workshop – Managing Emotions for Linguistic Security](#)

B.3 Language Mistakes

Openness to the vulnerability of taking risks through humour

- Have you made embarrassing mistakes in your second official language?
- Maybe some of them made you feel like you were losing face?
- You have certainly overcome these situations!
- Share it using humour during an LDD event, Forum, team meeting...
- You will find:
 - ❖ People who have experienced the same things as you...
 - ❖ Confirmation that “mistakes don’t kill” ... and is an integral part of learning.

Have fun!



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