

Chatterbox #31 – Katie the language learner

Transcript



Katie (left) and Maura (right)

Maura: Hello everyone! This is Maura with your Culips podcast.

And today we're bringing you our Chatterbox podcast, where we chat about all different kinds of things related to Canada and North America, and sometimes we even interview people, which we're doing today. If you want to see the transcript for this episode or our more detailed explanation, you can go to our website, Culips.com, that's CULIPS.com, and there you can become a member and get access to our extra learning resources. OK, now, today we're going to interview a friend of mine named Katie. Hi Katie.

Katie: Hi.

Maura: Thank you so much for letting us interview you.

Katie: I'm actually very happy to be here so thank you.

Maura: OK great. So, Katie is a friend of mine that I met in university. And Katie has moved around quite a bit. She is Canadian, like most of us at Culips, and she grew up in **Prince Edward Island** and she moved around a little bit, she studied in Spain for a semester and now she just moved to Montreal. So how are you liking Montreal so far?

Katie: Well, I love Montreal so far actually. It's a great city and it's beautiful. I love the architecture and I'm lucky to have friends that already live here, so I've gotten to spend a lot of time with them as well.

Maura: OK great. And you speak French also, correct? So you've had some chance to practice your French while you're here.

Katie: Yes, I have. I just actually moved here from Ottawa, and in Ottawa it is a **bilingual** city, but I found that I didn't use my French as much as I could have because most people in Ottawa speak English, so coming here I find that I'm forcing myself to use the language a lot more and I'm definitely improving even though it can be a little frustrating sometimes.

Maura: Yup, **for sure**. So, let's start at the beginning. You grew up in **Prince Edward Island**, which if you haven't heard of that, it's a province in Canada. It's the smallest province, it's an island, it's on the East Coast, and it's really a unique place in Canada. One more thing I have to tell you is that the full name of this province is **Prince Edward Island**, but most people call it **PEI**. So when you listen

to this interview, we'll be calling it **PEI** too. So Katie, what was it like growing up in **Prince Edward Island** or **PEI**?

Katie: Well, actually I really enjoyed growing up in **Prince Edward Island**, because it's very small on the island. And I grew up in Charlottetown, which is the capital, so the largest city in **Prince Edward Island**, but still quite small. So a lot of people know each other, and I was lucky to start grade 1 there, we were moving there from **Newfoundland**, so I grew up, started grade 1 and went all the way to grade 12 there, so I really made some great friends and had some great connections along the way.

Maura: Wow! And I know I've told you this before, but I'll tell everybody listening that, also, some of my family on my father's side is from **Prince Edward Island** and so I visited **Prince Edward Island** a couple times, and I find it such a unique place because, like it said, it's very small and rural, so even a big city—the capital of **Prince Edward Island** is Charlottetown—even a big city like that is small compared to the other big cities in Canada.

Katie: **For sure**, it's definitely not, I wouldn't call it a bit city. I would just call it a bigger city in **PEI**.

Maura: So what do you think makes **PEI** such a unique place when you compare it to the other Canadian provinces?

Katie: Well, I would definitely say the people are very, very, very friendly. You can't walk anywhere without somebody saying hello to you. Everybody says hello on the street, everybody asks how you're doing, and so if you're not very open or you're a little bit shy, then maybe **PEI** isn't for you. But I definitely like to talk a lot, so I really, really like all the people on the island.

Maura: It sounds, really, so nice, people saying hi to each other all the time, because that doesn't normally happen in regular Canadian cities.

Katie: No actually. Well, I should say, I'm a runner and I've been running for quite a long time and always when I go running in **PEI** everybody says hi to each other, **'specially** the runners, and then when I came to Ottawa, I found that nobody even looked at me, so I couldn't even wave. It was just a lot more **closed**. But I guess people just like their privacy a little bit more.

Maura: Yeah, I guess so. And one more thing, of course, we have to talk about **Anne of Green Gables**, because when you think of **Prince Edward Island**, you often think of **Anne of Green Gables**.

Katie: Yes.

Maura: And if you know what **Anne of Green Gables** is, then you know what Katie and I are talking about. But if you've never heard of **Anne of Green Gables**, it's a **novel**, actually a series of **novels**, written Lucy Maud Montgomery. And the story takes place in **Prince Edward Island** and it's very famous all over the world, it's a really **classic historical Canadian novel**.

Katie: A lot of people on the island actually have started to **resent Anne of Green Gables**, because people make such a big deal about her. But I really like **Anne Green Gables**, and I do like going to see the play that gets put on every year at the Confederation Centre, because it's really quite magical and quite interesting. So, if you ever do go to **PEI**, you do need to check out the **Anne of Green Gables** play.

Maura: Yeah, when I went there when I was younger, I remember I visited the house and **Green Gables**. It's really nice.

Katie: Yeah, that's another quite interesting thing to see. One other unique thing about **PEI** that we haven't mentioned yet is that the sand is red, and most people find that very shocking when they go to **PEI**. So it's actually quite beautiful, especially in the late summer months when everything is green and then contrasting with the red sand.

Maura: Yeah, actually I was just thinking about that, because the first time I visited **PEI** I was 10 years old and I remember that I got a little glass jar and I filled it with red sand to bring back with me. And we should also mention that the red sand is good for growing...

Katie: Potatoes!

Maura: Yeah.

Katie: The reason the sand is red is because there is a high content of iron in the sand, so it really helps us grow potatoes and that is what **PEI** is known for: its potatoes.

Maura: Yes, and also lobster.

Katie: Lobster, fishing, lots of different foods and stuff like that. It's great.

Maura: Yeah, I remember also, when I was in **PEI**, walking along the shore and just finding so many interesting treasures that were **washed up**. Including pieces of crab and things like that.

Katie: Yes, **for sure**.

Maura: Yeah. It's a really, really great place.

Katie: Yeah, I quite like it.

Maura: But you left it, and you went to school in Ottawa. OK, and while you were in Ottawa, you were studying Spanish.

Katie: Yes. Well, my program in Ottawa was French and with that I had a lot of electives, and that means I had a lot of choices in my courses. So I decided instead of just taking random classes, I could take a language and actually develop it. So I decided to take Spanish.

Maura: Oh wow. So did you find it difficult? Because you really started learning Spanish when you were already a bit older.

Katie: I did find it quite difficult, but French really did help me, because both are Latin languages, so some of the grammar rules are quite similar. It also wasn't very frustrating at the beginning, because we were all learning together and we were all at the same level.

Maura: And you mentioned French. So how did you become interested in French?

Katie: Well I grew up doing French immersion, and for those of you that don't know, French immersion is something we have in Canada, where you start in grade 1 and everything is in French all the way through school. It was something I was always quite interested in, quite good at, because I find sometimes it's almost like a game, learning languages and opening up to new cultures. I don't think that that's why I started to like French, but that's why I like it today, is because it has **opened so many doors** to different cultures and travelling as well.

Maura: So when you were doing your bachelor's degree, you decided to travel and do a semester abroad.

Katie: Yes I did. Well, there's actually two times that I left the country while I was doing my undergrad. The first time was after my second year of university, and I decided to be an **au pair**, which is basically a **nanny** that works in another country and lives with the family and helps take care of the children. And I had decided to go to France to help practice my French a little bit more. I ended up in Corsica, which is an island off the coast of France, it's part of France. And so I was there for two months and that was a great experience. But I also kind of wanted to travel again, so I decided to do a semester abroad near the end of my studies and go to Spain to practice my Spanish, because, as we all know, it's a lot harder to practice Spanish in Canada than it is to practice French in Canada.

Maura: So did you notice that studying in Spain helped improve your Spanish?

Katie: Absolutely. Actually, it's quite funny, because by the time I went to Spain I thought that my Spanish was quite good, because I had already taken six grammar courses at university and always had done so well. **Mind you**, when I got there, I realized that my level was not nearly as good as it could have been, and it was quite difficult starting out and quite stressful and frustrating for the first few months.

Maura: How long were you there?

Katie: I was there for six months.

Maura: OK. So after the first few months you started to feel more comfortable and more confident in your skills.

Katie: Yes, and through classes you meet people who are also on exchanges from other countries in Europe or other countries in the world. So you're all learning together, but you also have classes with people that are from Spain, so you are forced to speak in Spanish all the time.

Maura: Cool. So what was one of your favourite things about your time in Spain?

Katie: I have several favourite things about being in Spain, actually. First of all, I got to meet so many interesting people from all over the world and it **opened doors** to not only the Spanish culture but also different cultures that I wouldn't normally have been introduced to. So that was one thing. And I still have great relationships with all these people. Also, I happened to be in the capital of Spain, which is Madrid. So because it was a larger city, there was lots of easy travelling to do within Europe. So I got to go to a lot of countries that I didn't get to see when I was working in Corsica, including Ireland, which is where my family heritage is from.

Maura: Cool, cool. OK, so I have one more thing I want to ask you about, which is about teaching English as a second language, which I know you did this summer. So I was wondering how you enjoyed the experience.

Katie: I really loved it, and I'll give a little background as to the situation. I was teaching English in Ottawa in a program called Destination Canada. In this program students come from all over the world and learn English in a camp. So I was teaching students about 14/15 years old. And because my classroom was so diverse, we had to speak English all the time. So I found that quite interesting and we did some great activities and I found that the progress was actually quite great.

Maura: So because it was like a camp, did you get to do a lot of physical outdoor activities with your group?

Katie: The way the day was set up was that they would go to classes from about 9am until 3pm, which is just like a normal school day. And we would do reading and writing and oral and listening activities, just like you would do in a regular ESL classroom. In the evenings and on the weekends, the students would get to go on excursions in Ottawa and do different activities. There was a different staff and group of people that worked with that, but we also went on the weekend excursions as teachers.

Maura: So can you give any advice to those listening about some of the best ways are to practice a new language?

Katie: Well, really immersing yourself in the language is the first step. But most importantly, you have to take risks. You can't learn a language without **stepping a little bit outside your boundaries** and not being afraid to make a few mistakes. Because there will definitely be quite a few mistakes when you're starting out. So all you **perfectionists** out there, you might have to put that aside when you're learning another language.

Maura: Yup, that's really, really true. At the beginning, a lot of people feel shy or not confident, but you really have to push yourself and not be afraid to make mistakes. I think that's good advice.

Katie: Yup.

Maura: I think that's about it. Thanks a lot for sharing your diverse experiences with us.

Katie: Well thank you for having me!

Maura: No problem! OK, so remember, if you want to get some more information about this episode, or any episode, you can always go to our website, Culips.com. So this has been Maura.

Katie: And Katie.

Maura: With your Chatterbox episode. We'll talk to you soon. Bye!

Detailed Explanation

Bilingual

Canada is officially a **bilingual** country, which means that we have two official languages. This means that everyone here should be able to have government services in English and French across the country. Quebec is our French-speaking province, the rest are English except for New Brunswick, which is an officially **bilingual** province. French and English are almost equally spoken there.

Around Canada, in many different provinces, there are **bilingual** cities, which have lots of English and French speakers. Ottawa is a **bilingual** city; it is beside Quebec and it is where our federal government does its business. Montreal is also a **bilingual** city, where French and English are both widely spoken. In Ottawa, English is more popular, and in Montreal, French.



Panoramic view of New Glasgow, Prince Edward Island Photo: Chensiyuan

Prince Edward Island/PEI

Prince Edward Island is the smallest province in Canada, and, as we say in this episode, it is a very unique place in Canada.

Here are some interesting facts about **Prince Edward Island**:

The sand is red.
The island produces 1/3 of Canada's potatoes.
Green Gables is there.
The population is about 150,000.
It's beautiful!



Source: Klaus M

Newfoundland

This is another province in Canada that Katie mentions only quickly. **Newfoundland** is also on the East Coast of Canada. It is also known as “The Rock.” **Newfoundland** is an island like Prince Edward Island. People from this province are sometimes called Newfies.

For sure

This is another way that English speakers say yes. It is one of the many ways that we can agree with what someone has just said.

Here are a couple of examples:

Do you like cake?

For sure!

I'll see you tomorrow night.

For sure.

'Specially

Like many of the words that we discuss in Lipservice, **'specially** is not a real word. We've written it in the transcript as it sounds when native English speakers say the word **especially** very quickly. **Especially** is used to talk about something in particular, to get more specific. We cut out the **e**, the first syllable often when we speak, but never in writing.

(There is an actual word **specially** too, but the meaning is different.)

Here are a couple more examples of **'specially** used when speaking:

Donna: Do you like the bags I made?

Matt: Yeah, I **'specially** like the red one.

Mila: He **'specially** said that he wanted you there.

Jamie: Oh, that's so nice of him.

Closed

We can use the words *open* and **closed** to talk about people. An open person is someone who likes to meet new people, especially people who are different from them. An open person enjoys new food, new cultures, and new languages. This kind of person is open to many new experiences.

So a **closed** person is the opposite of open. Someone who is **closed** is not open to meeting new people or having new and different experiences. We can also use **closed** to talk about cities, cultures and general groups of people. Katie says that runners in Ottawa were more **closed**, because they did not say hello or make any contact as she passed them. She was comparing this experience to her more open experiences in Prince Edward Island.

People are often friendlier to strangers in smaller places and less friendly in larger cities.

Anne of Green Gables

This is one of Canada's biggest literary treasures. **Anne of Green Gables**, by Lucy Maud Montgomery, is the first in a series of novels written about a red-haired orphan girl named **Anne** who has a lot of spirit. She is sent to an older brother and sister living together by mistake and they decide to keep her anyway. It has been made into movies, translated into many languages, and is taught in classrooms around the world. Do you know **Anne**?

Novel

A **novel** is a type of book. It is a long story that is not actually true (it's fiction), with characters and actions created by the author. A book that is true or actually happened (it's nonfiction) is not a **novel**; it is called a nonfiction book. You can also have a book of short stories. There are picture books and storybooks for children. There are also comic books. *Anne of Green Gables* and the rest of the books that follow in the Anne series are **novels**.

Adjective order: classic historical Canadian

When speaking about *Anne of Green Gables*, Maura describes it using three adjectives in a row: "a **classic historical Canadian** novel."

Did you know that there is a certain order to adjectives? It is NOT correct to say, for example, "**Canadian classic historical**."

Here is the order in which adjectives should be used if you're using more than one at a time:

Opinion	Size	Age	Shape	Colour	Origin	Material	Purpose
Classic		Historical			Canadian		

To resent

To resent something means to feel insulted or to dislike something. If you **resent** someone or something, you feel personally bothered by it. Katie says that some people in PEI **resent** *Anne of Green Gables*. The reason that people in PEI feel bothered by Green Gables is that it creates a lot of tourism in the summer. And tourism means that the Island gets busy and crowded. This is why some people on PEI might **resent** Green Gables being there. Every year new people come to visit.

The **s** in this verb is pronounced like a z. Listen again to this episode to hear Katie say this word.

If you sent an email in the past and then sent it again, you can say that you resent (re-sent) the letter. In this case, the **s** is pronounced with a soft s. The difference is in the pronunciation and meaning, not the spelling.

Here are a couple of examples with **resent**:

Ivan: I really **resent** what Sally said to me at the party last night.

Lucy: I can understand that. She wasn't very nice to you.

Leon: She **resents** that her parents never encouraged her to learn Spanish.

Oliver: Yeah, it would have been good for her to know, since she's moving to Spain!

To wash up on the shore

To wash up can have different meanings, but in this case Maura uses it to talk about the ocean **shore**. Something that is **washed up on shore** has been in the ocean, or other body of water, and eventually gets pushed to the **shore**, the edge of the water and land. Things that often **wash up** include old glass, rope, pieces of wood, and parts of plants or fish that live in the water.

A person who is **washed up** has a ruined reputation with no promising career ahead, like some old movie stars. **To wash up** can also mean to do the dishes.

To open doors

When one door closes another opens! This is a positive English expression about opportunities, where the doors represent the opportunities. Katie says that learning other languages helps **to open doors**! This means that knowing other languages helps to create more opportunities for a person.

A **door** could **open** in the job market for a person who knows other languages. A **door** could also **open** to another culture and way of life if a person speaks the language of that culture.

Au pair/nanny

Au pair is a French term, which is sometimes used in English too, that means **nanny**. An **au pair** or a **nanny** is a person who lives with a family and takes care of the children. People especially use the word **au pair** to talk about doing this kind of work in Europe. The word **nanny** is more popular in North American. Katie was an **au pair** when she lived in Corsica for a couple of months.

Mind you

Katie uses this expression, **mind you**, to draw attention to her next point. When someone says **mind you** in a sentence, it's used to show that the sentence is particularly important. In Katie's example, she says that she had thought her level of Spanish was pretty good. **Mind you**, when she arrived in Spain, she realized that she still had a lot more to learn.

She says **mind you** because her next sentence contradicts her previous sentence. You can use **mind you** at the beginning, the middle, or the end of your sentence. Here are examples of each:

Whitney: Was the party fun?

Bob: Yes, it was. **Mind you**, there weren't many people there.

Mel: Did everyone have fun at the movies last night?

Jasmine: Yes. My aunt Judy, **mind you**, fell asleep.

Saul: Wow, you finished the book in one day!

Miles: Yes, but it's a great book, **mind you**.

The expression **mind you** is more popular in the UK than in North America. But you can also hear it in North American, as Katie used it quite naturally.

To step outside your boundaries

What are your **boundaries**? The answer is different for every person. Each person has things that they feel comfortable doing and things that they don't feel completely comfortable doing. Your **boundaries** are the things you feel comfortable with. When you **step outside your boundaries**, you do something new that you're not familiar with. **Stepping outside your boundaries** can be a good thing if you experience something new and exciting. It can also be dangerous if you find yourself in a bad situation.

Boundaries can also be physical. In this expression, the **boundaries** we speak about are not physical, but mental or emotional. **To step outside your boundaries** is not a fixed expression.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Freda: How did you enjoy the workshop?

Kevin: It was good. It really got me to **step outside my boundaries**.

Manuel: I feel so tired after meeting with my counsellor.

Jack: Really? Why?

Manuel: He got me to **step outside my boundaries**, and I talked about some difficult things from my past.

You might also hear *to step outside of your comfort zone*, which has a similar meaning.

Perfectionist

A **perfectionist** is a type of person who wants to be perfect! A **perfectionist** likes to take care of every detail when working on a project, and often likes things very clean and organized. When you are learning a new language you can't be perfect right away, but this might be difficult for a **perfectionist** to accept!

Quiz (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)

1. Where did Katie grow up?

- a) Prince Edward Island
- b) The Isle of Prince Edward
- c) Ottawa
- d) Green Gables

2. What colour is the sand in PEI?

- a) purple
- b) black
- c) red
- d) blue

3. 'Specially' is which word pronounced quickly by native English speakers?

- a) specialty
- b) especially
- c) today's special
- d) specialization

4. What are closed people like?

- a) friendly
- b) open to new experiences
- c) closed to new experiences
- d) athletic

5. What kind of book is *Anne of Green Gables*?

- a) a picture book
- b) a nonfiction book
- c) a book on tape
- d) a novel

6. Which adjectives are in the right order?

- a) a classic historical Canadian story
- b) a historical classic Canadian story
- c) a Canadian historical classic story
- d) a Canadian classic historical story

7. What can learning different languages do for you?

Please fill in the blank.

- a) close doors
- b) make doors
- c) open doors
- d) destroy doors

8. What is the English word for *au pair* that means a person who lives with a family and takes care of the children as their job?

- a. manny
- b. nanny
- c. nana
- d. nancy

9. Which is the British expression that draws attention to an important sentence?

- a. mind your business
- b. mind you
- c. never mind
- d) on my mind

Answers: 1.a 2.c 3.b 4.c 5.d 6.a 7.c 8.b 9.b