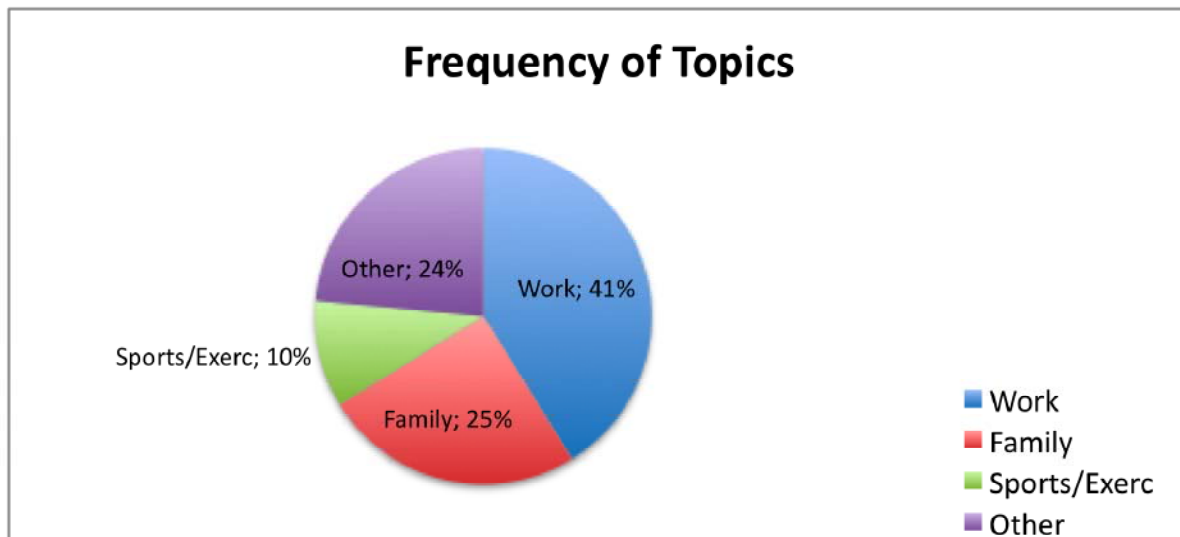


Self Observation Study

- Contextual Information
 - Description:
 - The most important context to me is the conversation I have with my mom, after dinner, via speech. I do not live at home, but I usually visit my parents nightly after dinner at around 8:00 or 9:00pm. We chat for about an hour or so. We usually sit at the dining table and discuss our day (work, family), as well as, random events (sports, cooking, exercise, the economy, etc.). For each interaction, I observed about 30 minutes of conversation.
 - Topics Discussed:
 - Family
 - Work
 - Sports/Exercise
 - Other

Chart 1:



*Pie Chart shows the frequency of topics discussed throughout the observed days of conversation (total).

Data Table 1: Frequency of Topics

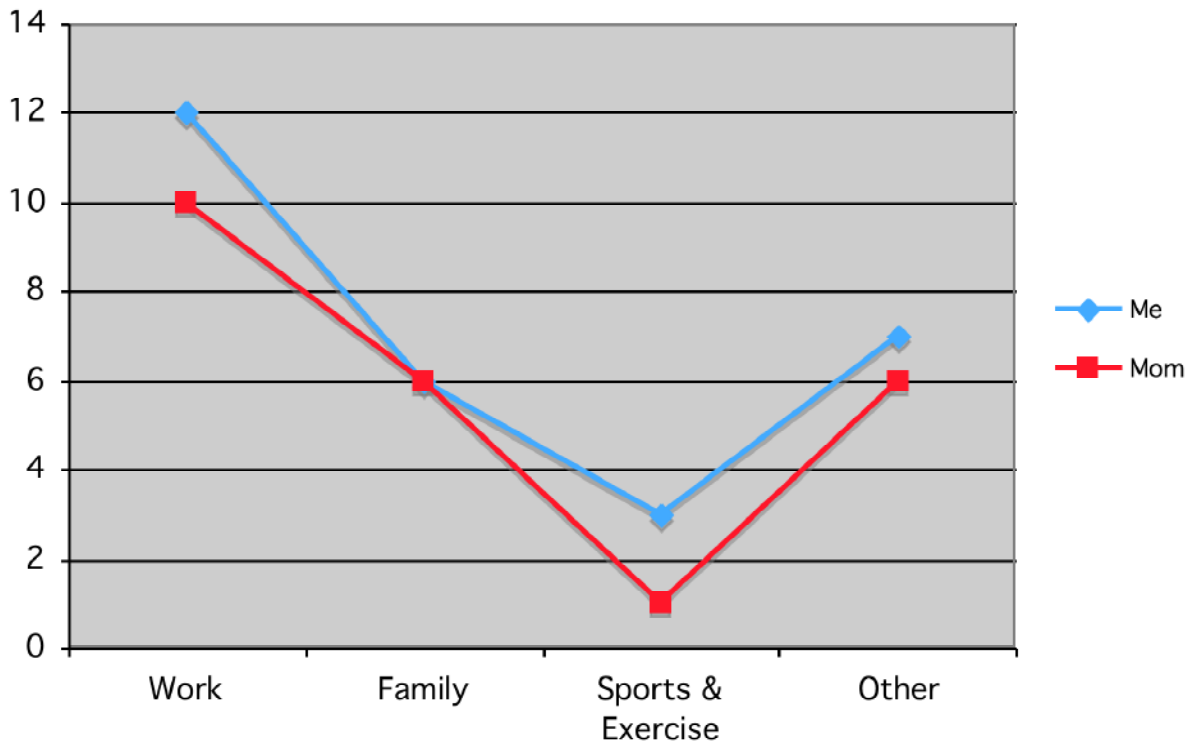
<u>Date</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Sports & Exercise</u>	<u>Other</u>
1/25/10	5	2	0	1
1/26/10	3	1	0	1
1/27/10	4	1	0	1
1/29/10	3	1	3	1
1/30/10	0	3	2	2

2/9/10	2	2	0	2
2/10/10	3	2	1	2
2/11/10	2	1	1	1
2/12/10	0	2	0	3
2/15/10	2	1	0	0
2/16/10	2	0	0	1
2/18/10	2	1	0	1
Total	28	17	7	16

*Data Table shows the frequency of topics discussed during each conversation observed.

- Language Assessment Information
 - I have listed (CBs) in order from most serious to least serious. The communication breakdowns often have a chain reaction leading to further breakdowns.
 - CBs listed from most to least severe
 - **Misunderstanding** (confused by what is being said): This happens after a new topic has been established by one person, but not realized by the other. I often change the topic of conversation when I feel the topic at hand has become dry. My mom has trouble following what I am saying as she sometimes is still on the previous topic.
 - **Interruption** (another person interrupts our conversation): This often happens when my dad is passing through or wants/needs something (help turning on the computer or t.v., help searching for something, etc) or is vocal while watching something on t.v. When my dad yells out or cheers while watching t.v., our conversation is interrupted because I usually look at him to see what the excitement is about. My mom is used to this so she continues talking. When this happens, I look towards my dad, while still talking to my mom, so I am always saying, “Huh?” or “What?” without looking at her or while “half” listening.
 - **Distraction** (phone rings, something exciting/interesting is happening on t.v., lack of interest, tired, etc.): When a distraction occurs, it obviously interrupts our conversation, and when the distraction passes, we usually never return to the same topic right away. I will usually wait to regain my mom’s attention. I then lean forward, look at her, and ask who was on the phone and what did they want? I will also do things like, lean forward, tap on the table, raise my eyebrows and say something like, “Mom, are you listening to me?”

Chart 2: Frequency of Communication Breakdowns by Topic



*Line Graph shows the frequency of my mom's and my communication breakdowns by topic during all conversations observed (total).

Data Table 2: Frequency of **My** Communication Breakdowns

Date	Work	Family	Sports & Exercise	Other
1/25/10	3	1	0	1
1/26/10	1	1	0	0
1/27/10	2	0	0	0
1/29/10	1	0	2	0
1/30/10	0	2	0	1
2/9/10	1	1	0	1
2/10/10	1	0	0	1
2/11/10	0	0	1	1
2/12/10	0	0	0	2
2/15/10	1	0	0	0
2/16/10	1	0	0	0
2/18/10	1	1	0	0
Total	12	6	3	7

*Data Table shows the frequency of my communication breakdowns during each conversation observed.

Data Table 3: Frequency of **my mom's** Communication Breakdowns

<u>Date</u>	<u>Work</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Sports & Exercise</u>	<u>Other</u>
1/25/10	2	1	0	1
1/26/10	1	1	0	0
1/27/10	1	1	0	0
1/29/10	0	0	1	1
1/30/10	0	1	0	1
2/9/10	2	1	0	0
2/10/10	1	0	0	1
2/11/10	0	0	0	1
2/12/10	0	0	0	1
2/15/10	1	0	0	0
2/16/10	1	0	0	0
2/18/10	1	1	0	0
Total	10	6	1	6

*Data Table shows the frequency of my mom's communication breakdowns during each conversation observed.

- CB Causes
 - Abrupt change in topic¹
 - Frequent interruptions by outside sources
 - Failure to regain attention
- CB Impact
 - At times a completely different topic “pops” into either party’s head randomly or due to something previously said when discussing the topic of work. This causes a severe communication breakdown, which frequently results in a misunderstanding of what is being said.
 - This is what the CB looks like:
 - My mom tilts her head to the side, squints one eye, says, “Wait, what are we talking about?” and juts head forward as she is saying this (Mom’s CB).
 - Often times, a word or phrase I say triggers my mom to remember something she has been thinking about previously. At this point, I lean forward, my brows become furrowed, my voice sounds irritated, and I say, “Huh? MOM, what are you talking about?” or something similar to this (my CB).

¹ Both parties fail to complete task #6 (recognize and repair communication breakdown) of Johnson’s Conversational Model.

Ideas to Reduce Severity and Frequency of CB Cause #1 (Abrupt change in topic):

- When a misunderstanding occurs due to an abrupt change in topic, I will clarify what is being discussed by asking clarifying questions such as, “Are we talking about X or Y?”
- I will put more effort into making sure it is clear that I am changing the topic before moving on by starting my statement with, “I am changing the topic,” “This is something off topic,” or “This is something different now, . . .”

If I am able to employ these ideas, we will be able to better complete task #6 of Johnson’s Conversational Model. (Did not have time to implement Language Intervention)

- Reflections (What I know NOW vs. what I knew before study)
 - Language Competence
 - Before I started this self-observation study, I literally took communication and language for granted. I never thought I had a problem communicating my thoughts, needs, or wants, and likewise, understanding other people’s thoughts, needs, or wants.
 - Now that I have completed this study, I realize my understanding of what I was relaying or receiving was not entirely clear.
 - I also learned that communication is highly contextual and without context, chances of communication breakdowns are high.
 - Language Problems
 - Before this study, I never really thought I had any language problems. When having conversations with my mom, I never really thought our disagreements, misunderstandings, or distractions were actually communication breakdowns. There would just be a misunderstanding and we would move on. I also realized that my communication with my mom is not as smooth as I always thought it was.
 - I now realize that these misunderstandings or distractions were huge communication breakdowns. When observing our conversation, it surprised me how many times a CB occurred in one conversation.
 - I have a clearer understanding of the communication-language connection. To have a language problem does not simply mean the inability to string a sentence together or to know/use complex vocabulary, but also not be able to use language to effectively communicate in everyday situations.
 - Language Assessment
 - Before starting this study I did not clearly understand what a language assessment was. When I heard the term language assessment, I thought formal assessment (something a speech language pathologist might perform).
 - I now know that even a language assessment an SLP performs does not need to be in a formal setting. Assessments are most helpful when done in a person’s natural environment, through everyday

conversations/interactions. Without this, language assessments are restrictive and the observer is not able to witness the person's entire abilities or inabilities. When assessments are done in a person's natural environment, using topics of interest to them, it is much easier to grasp the entirety of the problem.

- I now understand this concept because I realized that if I did not do my observation in the casual environment it was done in, I probably would not have seen the same kind of communication breakdowns I did see. Therefore, I would not have seen the severity of the breakdowns.