One of the challenges that graduates faced at job interviews is their inability to communicate competently in English, the language most often used especially at the multinational companies and government-linked companies (GLCs) job interviews. This inability to communicate competently at job interviews is one of the reasons of unemployment among graduates. This study aimed to determine the factors affecting job interview communication competence of unemployed graduates in Malaysia. The present study employed the mixed method research design using questionnaires followed by a semi-structured interview with thirteen respondents. The population sample comprised unemployed graduates participating in the SL1M program (Skim Latihan 1 Malaysia) launched by the government to address the unemployment problem among Malaysian graduates. Questionnaires were distributed to 506 unemployed graduates at three participating GLCs in the Klang Valley of which a total of 337 questionnaires were finally used for data analyses. The Job Interview Communication Competence Scale (quantitative instrument) consisted of items on the five factors of communication competence and also those of the dependent variable job interview communication competence. Overall, findings revealed moderate to low levels of general communication skills, context knowledge, English language knowledge and attitude towards the use of English language. Meanwhile, results indicated a moderate to high level of communication apprehension. Findings from qualitative data were found to be congruent with the quantitative data and further affirmed these results. A notable finding in this study seemed to be that general communication skills were very closely and negatively related to communication apprehension as revealed throughout the study in both quantitative as well as qualitative findings. Scores on general communication skills and communication apprehension showed significant relationship with job interview communication competence. The influence of general communication skills and communication apprehension on job interview communication competence was further validated in the final model of the multiple regression analysis where the two factors showed to be the predictors of job interview communication competence. The regression model was used to develop the Five Levels of Job Interview Communication Competence Descriptors to describe job interview communication competence in two ways – as a summary of performance at job interviews and secondly as an overall assessment of abilities in communication. The findings suggested students at the tertiary level may benefit from reinforcement and enrichment of language proficiency and communication skills that can be achieved in English language classes as well as subject area classes designed to facilitate general communication skills and in tandem promotes confidence in students when using the language.

This qualitative study focuses on cross-cultural communication experiences among international sojourners (IS) in Malaysian universities. Four research objectives were addressed: 1) to identify the transition shock symptoms in cross-culture communication faced by the international sojourners in Malaysian universities, 2) to determine the building blocks faced by international sojourners in cross-cultural transition, 3) to identify the aspects of perceived similarities or differences by international sojourners in their manifestations of culture 4) to ascertain the adaptation strategies embraced by international sojourners in overcoming cross-cultural communication challenges. Salient discoveries were obtained through in-depth interview with fifteen IS residing in Malaysian universities. The findings painted a vivid picture of the sojourning experiences. Firstly, the symptoms of transition shock were highly characterized by initial sojournings experiences, home separation struggles, emotional distress, initial communication-related stress and acclimatizing to surrounding. Initial sojourning anticipations contributed to themes of: i) unexpected encounters ii) felt differences iii) influences of past experiences. Home separation verify various struggles along the themes of: i) homesickness, ii) attachment need and iii) nostalgic feeling. Indications of emotional distress derived to themes of: i) affective upheavals, ii) yearning to leave and iii) challenged by strangeness. Initial communication-related symptom were salient in themes of: i) initial engagement challenges ii) interaction gap, and iii) withdrawal. Acclimatizing to the surroundings contributed to themes of: i) weather condition, and ii) food acceptance. Secondly, findings warranted the building blocks in cross-cultural transition were associated to communication tribulations, language barriers and cross-cultural disputes. Communication tribulations contributed to themes of: i) predicaments in forming relationships, ii) arousing suspicion iii) nonverbal cues. Language barriers derived to themes of: i) interaction difficulties, ii) code substitute and iii) differences in the representation of meanings and pronunciation. Cross-cultural disputes persists in themes of: i) adapting to differences, ii) treatment against IS, iii) socially inappropriate behavior. Thirdly, aspects of perceived similarities or differences were manifested in value orientation and, cultural norms and rules. The themes were associated with: i) familial attachment, ii) society conformity and iii) interpersonal engagement. Likewise, cultural norms and rules subscribed to themes of i) appropriate standards of behavior and ii) attitude towards time and work commitment. Fourth, the strategies to overcome cross-cultural communication challenges were adjustment approach, cross-cultural resilience approach and passive-defensive approach. The adjustment approach uncovered four emerging themes: i) seek balance while preserving cultural identity, ii) negotiating cultural differences, iii) building relationships through communication and iv) local language acquisition. Cross-cultural resilience approach contributed to themes of: i) receptive personality, ii) managing cross-cultural adversities and iii) avoid being judgmental. Passive-defensive approach revealed two salient themes of: i) submission to circumstance and ii) seeking shared-group support. In conclusion, across the nexus of cultural diversity lies the challenge to fathom the nuances between home and host culture. Nonetheless, regardless of various ramifications, making adjustments to attain cross-cultural liberation demonstrated a life-changing journey and a rewarding experience.