

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**A COMPARISON OF COMMUNICATION  
STRATEGIES EMPLOYED  
BY HIGH PROFICIENCY STUDENTS AND  
LOW PROFICIENCY STUDENTS OF  
SMK TAE, SERIAN  
IN COMPLETING THEIR  
ENGLISH SPEAKING TASKS**

**SUSANNA ANAK DALTON DOEL**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**Master of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL)**

**Faculty of Education**

November 2013

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. The topic has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Tekonologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

Name of Candidate : Susanna anak Dalton Doel


Candidate I.D. No : 2011877686

Programme : Master of Education in Teaching English as a Second  
Language

Faculty : Faculty of Education

Thesis Title : A Comparison of Communication Strategies Employed By  
High Proficiency and Low Proficiency Students of SMK  
Tae, Serian in Completing Their English Speaking Tasks

Signature of

Candidate:  .....

Date: November 2013

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, praise the Lord that I am able to complete this journey despite all the challenges along the road.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Baljinder Singh. Thank you very much for your guidance, advice and support in enabling me to complete this study. Without you, I would be lost.

To my precious family; especially my parents; Mr. Dalton Doel Dingon and Mdm. Catherine Enjawa Anggat who were always there for me right from the start of this journey. You believed in me right from the start. I thank you for your love, support and prayers. You are indeed my pillars of strength. To my wonderful nephew and nieces, may this journey of mine be an inspiration to you to do better than me in the future.

To my loving husband, Mr. Manibalan Velu, we started this journey together and never once did you turn your back on me. Thank you dear for your love, words of encouragement and patience. You made this journey easier to bear.

To my friends and course mates, thank you for your friendship and the memories we made. You made my life colorful.

To Aki and Ini, I hope I made you proud.

Susanna, you made it. Way to go girl.

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the communication strategies employed by form six learners of different proficiency levels; high and low at SMK Tae, a rural school in Serian district. This study also looked into the differences or similarities in strategies employed by learners who were grouped according to their proficiency level. Lastly, it also aimed to look at the communication strategies employed by learners of different proficiency levels when placed in mixed-groups of learners. Data elicited through the adapted OCSI questionnaire and an actual MUET speaking question as the English speaking task of choice was used to identify communication strategies used. The questionnaire was administered to 100 learners; meanwhile another 32 learners were identified to complete the speaking task. The results indicate that both, high as well as low proficiency learners perceived that they mostly employ Social Affective strategies in completing speaking task. The speaking task showed that both learners tend to employ similar communication strategies; however they differed in the degree of incorporating the communication strategies. Meanwhile, when placed in mixed-groups of learners, the data showed that low proficiency learners tend to use lesser communication strategies in completing their English speaking task. From these findings, it helped in giving awareness to both the teachers and learners the use of communication strategies and how it may well help ease communication. In addition, teachers would be able to identify ways to assist learners in improving their speaking skills by introducing various communication strategies that they could employ in completing their speaking tasks and in overcoming communication difficulties.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti strategi dalam berkomunikasi yang digunakan oleh pelajar tingkatan enam di SMK Tae, sebuah sekolah luar bandar di daerah Serian yang terdiri daripada tahap kefasihan Bahasa Inggeris yang berbeza, iaitu kefasihan tinggi dan rendah. Selain daripada itu, kajian ini juga melihat pada persamaan dan perbezaan dalam strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh para pelajar ini yang dibahagikan pada kumpulan mengikut tahap kefasihan masing-masing. Akhir sekali, kajian ini turut melihat pada strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh pelajar apabila mereka ditempatkan pada kumpulan yang terdiri daripada kefasihan yang berbeza. Data dikumpul melalui soal-selidik OCSI yang diadaptasi serta soalan sebenar daripada ujian bercakap MUET yang digunakan sebagai tugasan lisan pelajar ini. Soal-selidik tersebut telah diedarkan kepada 100 orang pelajar, manakala 32 orang pelajar dipilih untuk menjalani tugasan lisan. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan para pelajar ini cenderung untuk menggunakan Strategi Sosial Afektif dalam melaksanakan tugas bercakap. Para pelajar juga menggunakan strategi komunikasi yang sama tetapi pada kekerapan yang berbeza semasa menyelesaikan tugas lisan yang diberikan. Apabila ditempatkan pada kumpulan yang berbeza tahap kefasihan, data menunjukkan pelajar yang mempunyai tahap kefasihan Bahasa Inggeris yang rendah kurang menggunakan strategi komunikasi. Dapatan kajian ini membantu memberi kesedaran kepada guru dan pelajar kegunaan strategi komunikasi dan bagaimana ianya boleh membantu dalam berkomunikasi. Tambahan pula, para guru boleh mengenalpasti cara untuk membantu pelajar dalam memperbaiki kemahiran berkomunikasi dengan memperkenalkan mereka dengan strategi komunikasi yang boleh digunakan semasa tugas lisan dan apabila menghadapi masalah berkomunikasi.