

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**INTERVIEWERS' PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE USE OF COMMUNICATION  
STRATEGIES BY ENGLISH SECOND  
LANGUAGE SPEAKERS DURING  
JOB INTERVIEW SESSIONS**

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## ABSTRACT

Communication strategies (CS) have generally been used to overcome oral communication problems in delivering speakers' intended messages. This qualitative study was set to identify the types of CS used by candidates of actual job interviews. It also aimed to examine the interview panellists' perceptions on the use of such strategies and how it affected the candidates' performances. To achieve these objectives, interview sessions involving a total of 19 interview candidates and eight panellists were observed and video-recorded. With the help of NVivo software (version 12), the researcher analysed the data by identifying the types of CS based on Dörnyei and Scott (1997) and Clennell's (1995) perspectives (top-down analysis). In addition, the emergence of any CS that was absent in both taxonomies was also noted (bottom-up analysis). The results revealed that the candidates resorted to 20 out of the 47 types of CS indicated by both taxonomies. The most frequently used CS stipulated in Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) taxonomy was the use of fillers while tonicity was the most frequently used CS for Clennell's perspective (1995). Meanwhile, from bottom-up analysis, "laughter" is taken as 'an indirect ice-breaking strategy' which can promote social bonding. On whether the candidates' use of CS was favoured by the panellists, the latter reported that too frequent use of fillers was distracting, and hence, was not favoured. It also negatively impacted the candidates' performances during the interviews. It is therefore imperative for the candidates to consider appropriateness and context of interactions when choosing the types of CS. Finally, the findings of the current study were integrated into Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) taxonomy, resulting in a revised version of CS taxonomy that fits the context of job interviews.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>AUTHOR'S DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.2.1 Communication Skills Among Malaysians	3
1.2.2 The Role and Status of English in the Malaysian Education System	4
1.2.3 Deterioration of English Language Among the Malays	5
1.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach in Teaching English	6
1.2.5 Communication Skills in Interviews	7
1.2.6 Communication Strategies Used in Interviews	9
1.2.7 Problem Statement	11
1.2.8 Purpose of the Study	12
1.3 Research Objectives	13
1.4 Research Questions	13
1.5 Significance of the Study	13
1.6 Scope of the Study	15
1.7 Limitations of the Study	16
1.8 Definition of Terms	17
1.8.1 Communication Skills	17
1.8.2 Oral Communicative Competence	17
1.8.3 Language Competence	18

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

In this introductory chapter, the researcher's motivation in exploring the use of communication strategies by Malay ESL speakers in job interviews is discussed. The problem statement is then explained, followed by the research objectives and research questions which guided and motivated this scholarly inquiry. Next, explanations on the significance, the scope, and limitations of the study are given. This is followed by definition of terms used in this study.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

The core of the language is oral communication, and oral communication is the most essential skill among humans. Akilandeswari et al. (2015) defined communication as the mechanism by which concepts, information, thoughts, and emotions are transmitted to understand and be understood. Moss's 2015 study (as cited in Thompson, 2018) quoted that,

*“Being human means being able to communicate. Whether we realise it or not, we are always sending out messages to others about ourselves, whether explicitly or inadvertently. We all send messages to each other all the time, from the way we dress to the motions we make; from the style and choice of language, we use to the company we keep. Sometimes we are heard; other times, we are misunderstood; and on rare occasions, we are entirely wrong. Communication's complexity and curiosity are part of what makes being human so enjoyable*

*Moss (2015, p. xiv)*

Undoubtedly, the power to communicate effectively is one of the foremost important set of skills that an individual needs. If the message is clearly transmitted and interpreted by the recipient in the same way as the sender intends, then the communication is said to be effective. Meanwhile, in a study by Rana (2015), she found that nonverbal communication, attentive listening, and the capacity to recognise and understand your own emotions as well as those with whom you are communicating with, are some characteristics of effective communication. The most essential aspect of