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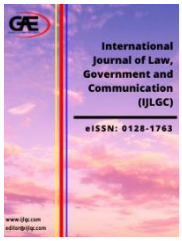


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# USE OF FAVOURABLE AND LESS FAVOURABLE TYPES OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN JOB INTERVIEWS: INTERVIEWERS' PERSPECTIVES ON CANDIDATES

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**Abstract:**

Communication strategies (CS), commonly referred to as efforts made to overcome various oral communication problems and facilitate oral communication, are expected to occur among second language (L2) speakers. Examples of CS are code-switching and asking for clarifications. In high-stakes communication contexts such as job interviews where English is widely used, the candidates' use of CS can result in some perceptions among interviewers that contribute to their perspectives on the candidates' communicative competence. Realising that positive perspectives are important for interview candidates, this qualitative study was set up to examine the types of CS employed by them and further, to investigate interviewers' perspectives on such use of CS in terms of whether it was favourable by the latter or otherwise. The data were collected in two stages: recorded observations of 19 candidates from one public university in Malaysia, attending real academic staff recruitment interviews, and semi-structured interviews with five interviewers involved. Based on Dörnyei and Scott's taxonomy of CS, the data analysis revealed two important findings. First, the interviewers favoured certain types of CS which include 'self-rephrasing', 'self-repair', 'self-repetition' and 'asking for clarifications' while 'asking for help' and 'asking for confirmation' are less favoured by them. Second, the types of CS employed should consider the context of interactions with some types (e.g. asking for repetitions) ought to be employed properly. These findings are

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significant as they can be used as guidelines for candidates attending similar interviews in the future.

**Keywords:**

Communication Strategies (CS), Interviews, L2 Speakers, Oral Interactions, Second Language Learning.

## Introduction

The term 'communication strategies' (CS) is part of the notion 'communicative competence' which gained its popularity among scholars in the 1970s. At that time, people started to realize the importance of knowing the rules of language and how to use it appropriately depending on the context of interaction; the two components that make up the notion of 'communicative competence'.

Being the sub-component of 'communicative competence', CS was initially proposed by Selinker (1972) and was traditionally referred to as strategies used to tackle insufficient language resources in the speakers. For instance, the speakers might switch to the words in their mother tongue when the right word in the target language does not come across their minds. While this type of CS is called 'code switching', other types include repetitions, asking for clarifications, and restructuring sentences.

As the notion progressed among language scholars, they started to realize that the traditional definition of CS was insufficient to capture its meaning since there could be other reasons for the use of such strategies. For instance, a speaker could employ lexicalized fillers (e.g. 'actually', 'you know') or non-lexicalized fillers (e.g. 'err', 'hmm') to sustain the conversation while the speaker searching for the right word to utter; the condition that does not reflect the second language (L2) speaker's inadequacies of the L2 linguistic knowledge. Following this, new perspectives of CS have emerged: psychological and interactional. While the former views CS as potentially conscious plans for solving speakers' perceived problems in reaching their communicative goals (Faerch & Kasper, 1983), the latter sees CS as "mutual attempt[s] of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures (include both linguistic structures and sociolinguistic rule structures) do not seem to be shared" (Tarone, 1981: 288). Other CS scholars include Bialystok (1983), Corder (1983), Poulisse (1990), and Dörnyei and Scott (1997).

Due to its significant role in oral communication, the use of CS should be seen as part of communication skills and is relevant to all, particularly second-language speakers. Public and private universities in Malaysia have offered a wide range of English courses in the curriculum, primarily in upskilling communication skills along with English proficiency to keep abreast with the current job interview requirements. Despite all these initiatives, many complained about the deterioration of English proficiency among Malaysian university graduates (Park & Spolsky, 2017). It was recently revealed by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) that a close proximate 60,000 graduates are unemployed, due to their less experience in work and poor English communication skills (Hassan, 2018). On the same note, Clokie and Faurie (2016) posit that communication skills are needed for graduates and recognized as one of the contributing factors to a better chance of employability, both by academics and practitioners. As highlighted by Clement and Murugavel (2018), knowing how to communicate in English

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transcends the ability to have grammatically correct sentences as it also requires both speakers and interlocutors to be able to get the meaning across and utilise other interpersonal skills for effective communication. This echoes with Podamari (2020) as this ability also hold a prominent position in connecting individuals and bridging differences to achieve mutual understanding. However, having a conversation with new colleagues in a new workplace is incomparable to a job interview session. The latter can be a nerve-wracking experience, especially to those with poor proficiency in English as they need to have a smooth exchange of ideas with the interviewers, their future employers. Harvard Business Review notes that interviews can reveal a lot about a candidate's personality, communication style, and cultural fit (Tarki & Massey, 2022). This is so because interview candidates are not only expected to respond to the interviewers' questions but also to demonstrate their ability to communicate their intended messages. This situation further amplifies the apprehension that would affect the interview process. Hence, to mitigate this, job applicants ought to employ CS in this high-stake interaction context as it allows for a smoother conversation between the speakers (Tappoon, 2022). This especially helps job applicants who have speaking difficulties, to stay in the conversation during job interviews, although some of the questions are tricky to be answered. With CS, they can deal with communication problems as they can rely on the strategies to effectively get the meaning across. Acknowledging the importance of meeting interviewers' expectations, the current study was therefore set to meet the following objectives:

1. to examine the use of CS by the candidates of job interviews
2. to examine interviewers' perceptions on the types of CS employed by the candidates in terms of whether they were favourable or less favourable to the former.

The scope of this study revolves around communication strategies (CS) by Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) taxonomy of CS that are employed to ease L2 oral communication and avoid any unforeseen communication problems. This study further specifies the types of CS into two categories; favourable and less favourable types of CS, to provide in-depth insight into the subject matter and hence contribute to the literature. It is hoped that the findings could be used as guidelines for future job seekers in acing their job interview.

## *Definitions Of Terms*

Below are some key terms related to the current study.

### *Second Language Speakers*

In Malaysia, English holds the position as a second language (L2). Hence, with some exceptions (those who treat English as their mother tongue), speakers of this language are considered second-language speakers.

### *Communication Strategies*

While different scholars and researchers might view CS from their perspectives, the current study defines CS as strategies that are used to overcome various problems in L2 communication as well as to facilitate oral communication between the speakers and the interlocutors.

### *Favourable Types of CS*

These refer to the types of CS that are deemed appropriate by the interviewers in the context of job interviews.

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***Less Favourable Types of CS***

These refer to the types of CS that are deemed less appropriate by the interviewers in the context of job interviews.

## Literature Review

Among the prominent CS scholars, Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) perspective of CS was found to be the most 'holistic' and comprehensive since it integrates both psychological and interactional perspectives of CS. According to Dörnyei and Scott (1997, p. 179), CS refers to "every potentially intentional attempt to cope with any language-related problem of which the speaker is aware during the course of communication". Appendix 1 illustrates Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) taxonomy of CS detail.

Referring to Appendix 1, CS is divided into three main categories: direct, interactional, and indirect. Each of these categories is then separated into sub-categories based on the types of communication problems, namely Resource deficit-related (gaps in speakers' knowledge that prohibit them successfully from verbalising their messages), Own performance problem-related (the realisation that what has been said by the speakers is incorrect or partly correct), Other performance problem-related (refer to something in the interlocutors' speech that is deemed problematic), and Processing time pressure-related (relate to the situation in which a speaker needs additional time to process and prepare L2 speech).

Being relevant to second language teaching and learning, CS has attracted researchers at both international and local levels. In Thailand for instance, Suraprajit (2020) analysed CS used by senior Thai university students who took part in an English- language simulation job interviews to train them for actual job interviews after graduation. The students' performance was evaluated through an in-depth job interview using unstructured open-ended questions to collect qualitative data revolving around the issues related to candidates' backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses as well as the relevant topics related to their job application. Based on the descriptive statistical analysis, the findings revealed the three most commonly used strategies are code-switching, asking for repetition, and message abandonment which are in line with the findings reported by Binhayeearong (2009).

In Indonesia, Azfa Adid (2020) examined the use of CS in interpersonal discourse among members of the English Club (MEC) at the Faculty of Mathematics and Science at Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia. The research aims were to determine how MEC members dealt with communication difficulties and the use of CS to solve such difficulties. The data were obtained from observations on spontaneous role-play performance and interviews which were later analysed using Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) classifications of CS. The results revealed that the most common types are processing time pressure-related strategies, namely, usage of fillers (e.g. 'actually', 'well') with 26.25% to allow them some time to think and look for suitable words and structures (Bavelas et al., 2002; Clark & Wasow, 1998; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997) followed by repetition (22.25%.)

In the earlier study, also conducted in Indonesia, Gusti Komang Permana, Sofyan, and Kasmaini (2019) researched the use of CS by the fourth-semester students of the English Study Program at the University of Bengkulu. The data were collected from observations of students' presentations based on a checklist that was adapted from Dörnyei (1995) to categorise the types

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of CS employed. The presentation sessions were video recorded to help the researchers to analyse the students' conversations.

The findings of this research showed that almost all types of CS were employed by the students namely message replacement, topic avoidance, message abandonment, circumlocution, approximation, word coinage, non-verbal signal, literal translation, foreignising, code switching, time gaining strategy, and appeal for help. Among all these, the dominant type of CS employed was fillers with 135 occurrences (47.87%) while the least used CS was foreignising with 1 utterance (0.35%). Apparently, this indicated that despite being reasonably proficient in the English language (since they were fourth-semester students of the English Study Program), the students needed time to reflect and gain some time to think about the required words, hence, supporting Dörnyei's (1995) claim that the use of fillers, as a time gaining strategy worked differently from the other strategies. While most other strategies were used to compensate for inadequacies of L2 linguistic knowledge, fillers were employed to gain time and to preserve the communication channel open at times of trouble. Additionally, the results of this study are parallel with the study of Azfa Adid (2020) where fillers were employed more frequently than other types of strategies.

While the above studies have shown on the common types of CS employed by second language (L2) learners, it should be noted that CS were also studied concerning L2 learners' language proficiency (Idrus, 2016; Kaizhu, 2016) and its teachability (Kuen, Shameem & Heng et al., 2017). An analysis of data based on the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) developed by Nakatani (2005), Idrus (2016) reported that there was a statistically significant relationship between oral CS used with the participants' oral proficiency and presentation ability. A similar finding was also revealed by Kaizhu (2016). Both reported that good presenters used more oral CS compared to average presenters. While the former used more social affective, fluency-oriented, and non-verbal strategies, the latter used socially effective and non-verbal strategies to a considerably smaller extent.

On the teachability of CS, Kuen et al. (2017) examined the effects of oral CS instruction on oral communicative performance and strategic competence of 88 Malay ESL speakers from two polytechnics in the central and southern zones of Malaysia. The treatment for the experimental group was a 12-week training using oral communication strategies, such as clarification request, circumlocution, appeal for help, fillers, comprehension check, confirmation checks, self-repair, and topic avoidance among the two groups. The data were gathered from oral proficiency test, oral communication test, transcripts of oral communication test, unstructured interview, and self-report. The findings revealed that the training has resulted in the experimental group outperforming the control group significantly.

While the above studies indicate that CS are widely employed by L2 learners, it would be interesting to find out how their use of CS was perceived by the interlocutors. This is because, in the context of job interviews, the interviewers' perceptions on the candidates' performance, including their use of CS, can greatly influence the interview results. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to find an association between candidates' use of CS and the interview results, obtaining interviewers' perceptions on the candidates' use of CS could shed light on the interviewers' expectations of the candidates and hence, could serve as guidelines for the latter to perform well in interviews. Driven by this notion, the current study was set to examine the interviewers' favourable and less favourable types of CS as they were utilized by candidates

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of job interviews. While favourable types of CS are expected to positively impact communication, less favourable types should be avoided.

## Methodology

As stated earlier, this qualitative study aimed to examine the types of CS employed by the candidates of job interviews and the interviewers' perceptions on such use of CS in terms of whether they were favourable or less favourable to them.

The study was conducted at one public university in the east coast of Malaysia involving 19 Malay ESL speakers as respondents. The data came from two sources; the first was from observations made on real interactions between the candidates and the interviewers during interviews conducted to select permanent and part-time lecturers at the university which took place on 31st Jan 2021 and 1st Feb 2021. Meanwhile, the second data source was from input gaining session with the interviewers (this simply means 'interviewing the interviewers') to obtain their feedback on the candidates' use of CS. The session was conducted on 10-11th May 2021.

The selections were made for three faculties namely the Faculty of Art and Design (FSSR), the Faculty of Information Management (IM), and the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS). Due to some technical reasons, the interviews were conducted physically and online. One FSSR candidate attended a face-to-face interview, while the other five joined online interviews. All five IM candidates joined online interviews. As for ACIS candidates, five of them attended face-to-face interviews and another three joined online interviews.

The source of data in this study and the dates of data collection are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Breakdown of Data**

| No. | Data Source | Data Collection Date | Mode of Data Collection | No. of Respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Interview with the Faculty of Art and Design (FSSR) | 31 Jan 2021 | 1 face-to-face<br>5 online | 6 candidates |
| 2. | Interview with the Faculty of Information Management (IM) | 31 Jan 2021 | 5 face-to-face | 5 candidates |
| 3. | Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS) | 1 Feb 2021 | 5 face-to-face<br>3 online | 8 candidates |
| 4. | Input Gaining Session from Interview Panelists | 10-11th May 2021 | 5 face-to-face | 5 interview panelists |

Based on the breakdown of data given in Table 1, there were a total of 19 candidates and five interview panelists were involved in data collection. The interviewers involved in this study comprised the Rector of the university campus, the Deputy Rector of Academic Affairs, and the Heads of the three faculties mentioned earlier who were physically placed in a meeting room. Meanwhile, the three Deans from the faculties involved joined the interview sessions virtually, giving a total of eight panelists.

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***Data Collection Procedure***

After approvals were obtained from the Research Ethics Committee and the Rector of the university campus, the researchers made the necessary arrangements with the Assistant Registrar of the university to enable observations to be made on all interview sessions on the dates determined by the campus. The sessions were also video recorded to help the researchers with the data analysis later on. Before the interview sessions, written consent to participate in the research was obtained from the interview candidates and the interviewers.

***Analysis of Data***

In total, eight video recordings captured all 19 candidates with a different number of candidates in each video. The data analysis started by identifying the parts of interactions that contained the use of CS before they were transcribed verbatim to ensure nothing was missing from the data. Focusing on the use of CS, the data analysis was managed using NVivo software (version 12). This software enabled the researchers to identify and classify the types of CS used by the candidates more systematically based on Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) perspective of CS. After the video data were imported into the NVivo software, the video recordings were viewed to identify any occurrences of CS in candidates' utterances. Once the use of CS was identified, the oral data were transcribed for thematic analysis based on Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) taxonomy of CS (refer Appendix 1).

While the above procedures helped to meet the first objective of the study, the second objective which was to examine interviewers' perceptions of the candidates' use of CS required the researchers to obtain input from the interviewers. In individual interview sessions with five (5) interviewers, (the three Deans who joined the interviews virtually were excluded because it was inconvenient to interview them) they were asked to indicate whether the use of such strategies was acceptable to them. In order to ensure that the interviewers understood the notions of CS and 'communicative competence', they were briefed on the notions prior to the interview sessions with them and shown the videos in which they could see the use of CS by the candidates. Next, they were asked to give their feedback on the aspect of whether such use of CS was 'favourable' or 'less favourable' to them. Here, the term 'favourable' and 'less favourable' refer to the types of CS that were deemed appropriate and less appropriate by the interviewers, respectively.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of the research respondents, all the 19 candidates and eight interviewers involved in interviewing candidates were assigned pseudonyms. Respondent 1 was labelled as "(R1)" followed by other candidates up until the last candidate who was labelled as "(R19)". Similarly, the first interviewer was labelled as "IP1" (to indicate Interview Panellist 1) and the number continued until "IP8" for the eighth panellist.

The whole study process is illustrated in Figure 1. With Dornyei & Scott's Taxonomy of CS (1997) as its underpinning theory, the research focus is on the candidates' use of CS during their interactions with the interview panelists. After examining the video recordings of the interview sessions, the researchers categorized the types of CS employed by the candidates based on Dornyei & Scott's Taxonomy of CS (1997). The results were then shared with the interview panelists who then shared their opinion of whether such use of CS strategies was favourable or unfavourable by them.

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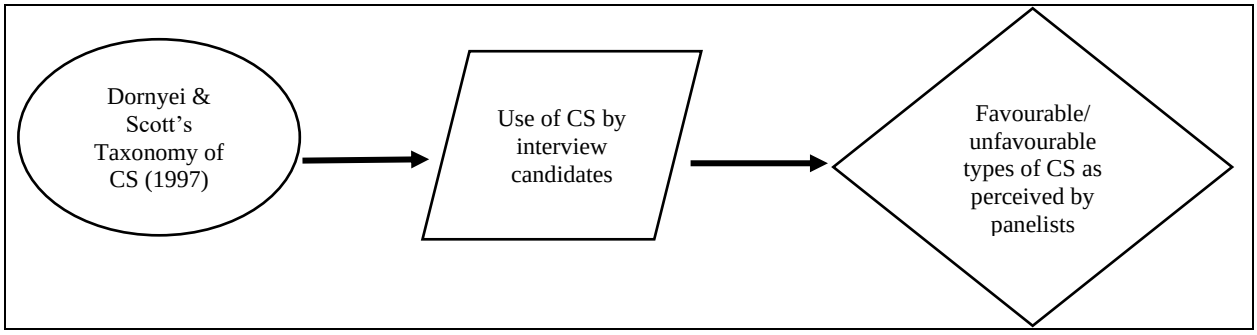


**Figure 1: Research Flow Chart**

Despite the success of this study, its data collection process came with a few challenges to the researchers related to two main reasons. Firstly, the interview process itself was confidential. Hence, the data obtained from the interview sessions must be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Additionally, to safeguard the researchers from any unexpected issues, approvals were obtained from the Research Ethics Committee as well as the Rector of the university campus. Secondly, being conducted in post Covid 19 phase, the researchers needed to adhere to the procedures and requirements posed by the campus before they were allowed to be present at the meeting room where the interviews were conducted. Other than this, the researchers received good cooperation from both academic and non-academic staff at the campus.

***Data Reliability and Validity***

As stated earlier, the classifications of CS were done systematically with the use of Nvivo software (version 12). This helped to address the issue of the reliability of research findings. Meanwhile, the issue of the validity of the research findings on the classifications of CS was addressed by verifications on the findings by two inter-raters; the number which according to Liao, Hunt, and Chen (2010), would be sufficient to verify the findings obtained from 19 candidates examined in this study.

## Findings and Discussions

The findings of this study are discussed in this section in the following manner. First, interviewers' feedback on the use of CS is presented in a table, followed by the findings on interviewers' favourable and less favourable types of CS. Excerpts taken from the real data are also presented to support the findings on the types of CS highlighted in this section.

***Interviewers' Feedback on the Use of CS by the Candidates***

Based on the input given by the interviewers, it can generally be concluded that CS did help the candidates to convey their intended messages although some types of CS might not be appropriate in some contexts of interactions. This is seen in the following excerpts given by interviewers.

IP3: 'Yes, this strategy also needs to be applied based on the suitable situation'
IP4: 'the use of CS sometimes is good and sometimes is bad. It depends'

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Table 2 contains the interviewers' opinions about the use of CS by the candidates.

**Table 2: Interviewers' Feedback on Use of CS by the Candidates**

| Interviewers | Feedback Given |
|---|---|
| IP1 | **Yes, actually it helps**, from what I see, when the candidates asked about certain part of the questions which they were not clear, we understand sometimes they want clarifications on the questions asked to get the clear meaning before they can proceed with their answer. …. **So, I think CS is very useful for the candidates during their communication.** |
| IP2 | **Yes, it helps**, because the use of CS itself have many reasons and it depends on the need of the interview candidates. Number one, let's say if they need time, the use of fillers is very useful for them to show that they need time to process the words…. **Asking for clarification for example is very useful in most of the interview session,** if we do not understand certain part of the questions asked, we cannot assume right? We have to ask for the clarification on certain terms that we are not familiar with. |
| IP3 | To me, **it really helps** because sometimes when the candidates do not clear, usually they will find ways so that it will not obviously show that the candidates actually do not understand. So, by using CS it gives a solution to them. Actually, it is normal to use this kind of strategies when they communicate. It depends on the context itself. **Yes, this strategy also needs to be applied based on the suitable situation.** So, **I think CS really helps in delivering the message during communication.** |
| IP4 | From my own personal view, **I think there is certain time when CS help** the interview candidates during their communication. Some CS are used to help the interview candidates in delivering their intended messages. The use of fillers is quite normal among the L2 speaker, as we do not know how to start the sentence. The use of word 'okay' basically is normal during the starting of the sentence. So, for me **CS help** the interview candidates when they face difficulty during their communication because if we can see from the fluency of the interview candidates, not all of them are good in English. However, **the use of CS sometimes is good and sometimes is bad. It depends.** And too much use of fillers such as emm…aaa…err is quite not suitable to be used during job interview session. |
| IP5 | In my own opinion, **I think the use of CS really helps** and it is one of the strategies to save the situation when the interview candidates face difficulty in delivering their messages. |

From the above excerpts, it can be seen that all interviewers acknowledged that CS was helpful in oral communication although at the same time, they also remarked that the types of such strategies employed should take into consideration the context of interactions.

***Interviewers' Favourable and Less Favourable Types of CS***

Among the many types of CS employed by the interview candidates, it was found that self-rephrasing, self-repair, and self-repetitions were favourable to the interviewers while the other three types of CS namely the use of fillers, asking for help and asking for clarifications were less favourable to them. Meanwhile, asking for repetition and asking for clarifications were

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perceived differently by the interviewers with one considering it as favourable while the other thought the opposite. These findings are illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Summary of Interviewers' Favourable and Less Favourable Types of CS**

| Favourable types of CS | Interviewers | Less favourable types of CS | Interviewers |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-rephrasing | IP and IP2 | Use of fillers | IP1, IP2, IP4 and IP5 |
| Self-repair | IP3 | Asking for repetition | IP1, IP2 |
| Self-repetition | IP3 | Asking for clarification | IP1 |
| Asking for repetition | IP4 | Asking for help | IP2 |
| Asking for clarification | IP5 | Asking for confirmation | IP3 |

As seen in Table 3, self-rephrasing is the most favourable type of CS to IP1 and IP2 while IP3, IP4, and IP5 favoured self-repair, self-repetition, asking for repetition, and asking for clarification. Based on the input given, they preferred self-rephrasing in the event when the candidates were able to elaborate their points during the interview sessions. The use of this strategy can be seen in the following excerpts:

<Files\\Video 2>
IP4: What are the other things that you will do to your students other than teaching?
P4: I will always be there for them, in case err...**they need me for their designing. If they have problems with their designing**.

In the above excerpt, the candidate reworded the phrase 'they need me for their designing' to 'if they have problems with their designing' to give a clearer message to the interviewer. According to IP1, when the candidates use self-rephrasing, it not only shows that the candidates are able to paraphrase further about the certain part of the communication but also enables the interviewers to understand better what was explained by the candidates.

Meanwhile, another type of CS favoured by the interviewers was self-repair. This refers to the case when the candidates realize their errors and quickly repair them to prevent delivering the wrong messages as seen in the following excerpt.

<Files\\Video 1>
When asked how the candidate conducted her online distance learning (ODL) classroom in as a part time lecturer before, she responded the following.

P3: Before this, I create a YouTube content to social for my students which is, they can have some of the presentation and then, **they have…they can** make their own…their own video presentation with their…their creativity

Notice that the candidate changed her phrase 'they have' to 'they can' so that her message became more accurate. As remarked by IP3, when candidates noticed that they made mistakes, they did not want the interviewers to get the wrong messages or notice their mistakes. Hence, they quickly repaired their utterances.

Next, the interviewers also appeared to favour self-repetition. In the current study, it was noticed that unlike what was stated by Dörnyei and Scott (1997) that repetition strategy is used

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to gain time before the speaker was able to respond appropriately, the candidates in this study repeated their utterances to emphasize a specific part of the message delivered as seen in the following excerpt.

<Files\\Video 2>
When asked what was needed to make the students sustain in class, the candidate gave the following response.

P2: Students should have aaa...**the interest** itself...**the interest**

By repeating the phrase 'the interest', the candidate was actually emphasising the keyword of what made students sustain in class (i.e. their interest).

The next favourable type of CS was asking for repetition. The act of asking the interviewer to repeat his/her earlier utterances, however, must be performed appropriately as commented by IP4 who remarked that the way the candidates requested repetitions had a huge impact on their interactions. This implies that appropriately using proper words when asking for repetition is important to give positive implications on oral interactions.

As asserted by IP4, if the interview candidates always ask for repetition, somehow it shows that they did not focus or listen properly during the interview sessions, and it would disrupt the communication process. Despite this, however, IP2 commented that if the interview candidates were not able to grasp the questions asked, the interviews could be more tolerant by repeating the questions if requested by the candidates.

Next, in the event when the candidates were unclear on a certain part, asking for clarification was acceptable and even favoured by IP5 since the candidates were not expected to be silent when they were unclear of any subject matter being talked about. As asserted by IP5, instead of ignoring the question, the candidates could ask the interviewers to explain further about what they did not understand. IP1 however, was rather against asking for clarification as the strategy indicates that the candidates are not intelligent enough to understand the questions asked.

In contrast to the use of the above strategies which were welcome by the interviewers, the least favourable type of CS as agreed by four interviews, namely IP1, IP2, IP4, and IP5, was the use of fillers. As commented by the interviewers, frequent use of fillers distracts interactions and hence, was not preferable to be employed in interview sessions. Overuse of non-lexical fillers such as "aaa…", "erm…" and "err…" in every chunk of sentences would leave negative impressions on the candidates and might affect their performances in the interviews. Despite this, IP4 would accept minimal use of fillers since he felt that interviewers should understand that the candidates might need time before they could speak further. Hence, he added that the use of CS must depend on the situation while the candidates themselves must be careful with the frequency of using it so that it would not be too obvious.

Aside from fillers, another less favourable type of CS is asking for confirmation. This strategy was not favoured by IP3 as it might indicate that the candidates did not pay full attention to what was said by the interviewers.

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## Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the objectives of the study are achieved as the candidates employ different types of CS mainly self-rephrasing, self-repair, and self-repetitions, the use of fillers, asking for help and asking for clarifications when facing difficulties during oral interactions. The strategies mentioned include favourable and less favourable by the interviewers. The findings further support the importance of CS, which is widely employed by L2 speakers and hence, should be seen as something common in interactions, particularly in L2 communication. Also, the categorization of "favourable" and "less favourable" CS presented in this study specifically in job interviews contributes to the literature and sheds some light on better usage of CS by incorporating "favourable" types of CS in dealing with communication problems in job interviews. Supported by Kuen's et al. (2017) study which reported positive effects of CS teaching, L2 learners ought to be taught the strategies, particularly on the types of CS that are appropriate in specific communication contexts. However, while students should be exposed to the use of CS, caution must be taken of the types that are less favoured by the interviewers. Too much use of fillers, for instance, can be disruptive while the use of other types of CS could be perceived differently by the interlocutors. Having said this, it is worth noting that the communication context and manner of how CS is employed must be paid close attention by the speakers for successful communication. To make this happen requires not only efforts by L2 learners but also curriculum developers who must ensure that Malaysian students are well-exposed to the use of CS to produce competent ESL speakers in this country.

## Recommendation for Future Research

As stated earlier, the focus of the current study is on the use of CS by the candidates during interviews conducted to select permanent and part-time lecturers for three faculties namely the Faculty of Art and Design (FSSR), the Faculty of Information Management (IM), and the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS) at a university. It is worth noting here that no comparison of results was made between the three faculties. While each faculty might have different expectations about their selection criteria, future research could compare the results of different faculties. The outcomes could shed light on measures to be taken by each faculty to ensure that their lecturers meet the expectations put forward by the faculties.

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## Appendix 1

**Dörnyei and Scott's Taxonomy of CS (1997)**

| Categories of Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) Taxonomy | Communication Strategies |
|---|---|
| *Direct Strategies* | |
| Resource deficit-related strategies | Message abandonment<br>Message reduction<br>Message replacement<br>Circumlocution<br>Approximation<br>Use of all-purpose words<br>Word-coinage<br>Restructuring<br>Literal translation<br>Foreignising<br>Code switching<br>Use of similar sounding words<br>Mumbling<br>Omission<br>Retrieval<br>Mime |
| Own-performance problem-related strategies | Self-rephrasing<br>Self-repair |
| Other-performance problem-related strategies | Other-repair |
| *Interactional Strategies* | |
| Resource deficit related strategies | Appeals for help |
| Own-performance problem-related strategies | Comprehension check |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | Own accuracy check |
| Other-performance problem-related strategies | Asking for repetition<br>Asking for clarification<br>Asking for confirmation<br>Guessing<br>Expressing non-understanding<br>Interpretive summary Guessing<br>Expressing non-understanding<br>Interpretive summary<br>Responses<br>Repeat<br>Repair<br>Rephrase<br>Expand<br>Confirm<br>Reject |
| *Indirect Strategies* | |
| Processing time-pressure related strategies | Use of fillers<br>Repetition<br>Self-repetition<br>Other-repetition |
| Own-performance problem-related strategies | Verbal strategy marker |
| Other-performance problem-related strategies | Feigning understanding |