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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates aspects of communication strategies employed by Malaysian ESL learners when they encounter communication problems in oral interaction. This study also intends to find out the types and functions of interactional communication strategies when the ESL learners express agreement, disagreeing, arguing and negotiating. Moreover, the interactional aspects of communication strategies are examined to understand how the strategies contribute to resolving understanding problems and lead to mutual understanding of the message.

This study adopts the theory of interactional conceptualization of communication strategies in which communication strategies are analyzed as language production strategies and interactional strategies. The method incorporates the use of audio and video recording, transcript analysis, observations, fieldnotes, retrospective interviews and questionnaire analysis. A frequency count of the types of communication strategies are also undertaken. The communication strategies taxonomy offered by Dörnyei & Scott (1997) and the categories of interactional communication strategies based on the work of Celce-Murcia, et al. (1995), Dörnyei & Scott, (1997) and Williams, et al. (1997) are used to analyse and classify the data. Some modifications and additions have been made to the taxonomy. Data are obtained from oral interaction of 53 third year Accounting students from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Observations of meetings at two private organizations were also conducted to help make conclusions and triangulate the data collected from the simulations done by the UKM students.

The findings indicate that the learners tend to be achievement-oriented. In addition, it is found that the communication strategies are used as independent and supportive strategies. The results also establish new description and functions of some communication strategies, which involved topic avoidance; self-repetition; retrieval; code switching; literal translation, and other-repetition. With regards to understanding problems, the results reveal that the problems are associated with wrong interpretation of the speaker's utterance, unclear questions that leads to non-understanding, unclear replies, hearing problem (due to deficient pronunciation) and inappropriate use of certain words or phrases in the discourse. Interactional communication strategies such as rejection, acceptance, confirmation checks, clarification requests and reformulation strategies are largely employed to resolve the understanding problems. Echoing and guessing strategies are also used. Several sub-strategies are proposed with regards to interactional communication strategies; which includes other-repair strategy, acceptance strategy and rejection + addition of information strategy. The results from observations of meetings at the workplace revealed that the executives used similar types of strategies; although the functions of some of the communication strategies differ – in particular the code switching strategy.

Finally, several pedagogic implications have been suggested since the results of the present study support the notion of teaching and training learners to use communication strategies. Suggestions for future research include studies on communication strategies in interactional sociolinguistics and interlanguage pragmatics.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyelidik aspek berkaitan strategi komunikasi (*communication strategies*) yang digunakan oleh pelajar Malaysia yang mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua apabila mereka menghadapi masalah komunikasi sewaktu berinteraksi secara lisan. Kajian ini juga bertujuan mengenal pasti jenis strategi interaksi komunikasi (*interactional communication strategies*) yang digunakan dan fungsinya apabila pelajar memberikan pendapat yang melibatkan persetujuan, pendapat yang bertentangan, memperdebatkan pendapat atau membuat perundingan. Selain daripada itu, aspek strategi interaksi komunikasi (*interactional aspects of communication strategies*) juga diselidik untuk memahami bagaimana strategi-strategi tersebut meyumbang kepada penyelesaian masalah apabila berlakunya masalah komunikasi dan seterusnya kepada pemahaman mesej yang ingin disampaikan.

Kajian ini berlandaskan teori strategi komunikasi yang berkonsepkan interaksi (*interactional conceptualization of communication strategies*) di mana strategi komunikasi diselidik sebagai proses penghasilan bahasa (*language production*) dan strategi interaksi (*interactional strategies*). Kaedah penyelidikan melibatkan rakaman audio dan pita video, analisis transkrip, pemerhatian, nota semasa kajian lapangan, temubual secara retrospektif dan soal selidik. Pengiraan mengenai kekerapan penggunaan strategi komunikasi juga dilakukan. Taksonomi strategi komunikasi yang dicadangkan oleh Dörnyei & Scott (1997) dan taksonomi strategi interaksi komunikasi berdasarkan taksonomi yang dicadangkan oleh Celce-Murcia, et al., 1995; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997 dan Williams, et al., 1997 digunakan untuk menganalisa data kajian. Beberapa modifikasi dan penambahan telah dilakukan ke atas taksonomi yang digunakan. Data diperolehi daripada perbincangan lisan yang melibatkan 53 orang pelajar tahun ketiga, jurusan Akauntan, Fakulti Ekonomi dan

Perniagaan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Pemerhatian mesyuarat di dua buah organisasi swasta juga dilakukan. Maklumat ini membantu dalam membuat kesimpulan terhadap data simulasi perbincangan lisan yang diperolehi daripada pelajar-pelajar UKM.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa para pelajar lebih cenderung menggunakan strategi komunikasi yang bersifat pencapaian atau “achievement oriented”. Selain daripada itu, didapati bahawa strategi komunikasi juga digunakan sebagai strategi bebas (*independent*) dan strategi yang meyokong (*supportive*). Penerangan tambahan dan fungsi tambahan berhubung strategi komunikasi juga telah didapati daripada hasil kajian. Ini termasuklah pengelakan topic (*topic avoidance*), pengulangan secara sendiri (*self-repetition*), ‘retrieval’, alternasi kod (*code switching*), terjemahan secara literal (*literal translation*) dan pengulangan oleh pendengar (*other-repetition*). Dapatan kajian untuk masalah berkomunikasi sewaktu berinteraksi menunjukkan bahawa masalah yang dihadapi adalah disebabkan oleh interpretasi mesej yang tidak tepat, soalan-soalan yang tidak jelas, jawapan yang tidak begitu tepat, masalah pendengaran (disebabkan oleh sebutan yang salah) dan penggunaan perkataan atau ungkapan yang salah. Strategi interaksi komunikasi seperti penolakan (*rejection*), penerimaan (*acceptance*), pengesahan (*confirmation checks*), permintaan untuk penjelasan (*clarification requests*) dan penyusunan semula pertuturan (*reformulation*) sering digunakan untuk meyelesaikan masalah komunikasi. Strategi komunikasi seperti pengulangan (*echoing*) dan tekaan (*guessing*) juga digunakan. Beberapa sub strategi baru untuk strategi interaksi komunikasi telah dicadangkan, iaitu ‘other-repair’, penerimaan (*acceptance*) dan penolakan + penambahan maklumat (*rejection + addition of information*). Dapatan kajian daripada pemerhatian mesyuarat di tempat kerja mendapati bahawa eksekutif-eksekutif juga menggunakan strategi komunikasi yang sama. Walau

bagaimana pun, terdapat beberapa perbezaan berhubung fungsi strategi tersebut, terutamanya untuk strategi alternasi kod.

Akhir sekali, hasil kajian menunjukkan sokongan terhadap penggunaan strategi komunikasi di dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris. Oleh yang demikian, beberapa implikasi pedagogi telah dicadangkan. Kajian berhubung strategi interaksi komunikasi berlandaskan sosiolinguistik (*interactional sociolinguistics*) dan strategi antara bahasa berlandaskan pragmatik (*interlanguage pragmatics*) turut dicadangkan.

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