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An Appraisal Analysis of the performance of Malaysian Fresh Graduates in a Job interview

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Abstract:	<p>The issue of graduate employability had been of global concern for two decades as indicated by the calibre of employable graduates. In Malaysia, the concern is mainly the inability of the undergraduates to express themselves adequately in English during job interviews. Malaysian public universities require undergraduates to take a variety of English for Specific Purposes courses to prepare them for the work force. The National Graduate Employability Blue Print 2015-2025 disclosed that 60,000 graduates were unemployed attributable to the lack of proficiency to impress the interviewer in English. The current study was undertaken to investigate how fresh graduates perform in English and why they are successful, reserved or unsuccessful in job interviews from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) Appraisal Theory namely from the Attitude subsystem. The theory focuses on the English language proficiency of the candidates in terms of their ability to express their stances in English. Data of the study comprised walk-in interview transcripts of 10 fresh graduates for the post of Administrative Officer. An Appraisal analysis to reveal stance is sought from answers for the general interview question, "How do you face challenges?". Preliminary findings show that the Appreciation subsystem of Attitude was used predominantly by candidates who were successful. More employability-development-opportunities need to be provided by institutions of higher learning. The current study hopes to advance knowledge on the performance of graduates at job interviews and contribute to the field of SFL and Educational Linguistics.</p>

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ABSTRACT

The issue of graduate employability had been of global concern for two decades as indicated by the calibre of employable graduates. In Malaysia, the concern is mainly the inability of the undergraduates to express themselves adequately in English during job interviews. Malaysian public universities require undergraduates to take a variety of English for Specific Purposes courses to prepare them for the work force. The National Graduate Employability Blue Print 2015-2025 disclosed that 60,000 graduates were unemployed attributable to the lack of proficiency to impress the interviewer in English. The current study was undertaken to investigate how fresh graduates perform in English and why they are successful, reserved or unsuccessful in job interviews from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) Appraisal Theory namely from the Attitude subsystem. The theory focuses on the English language proficiency of the candidates in terms of their ability to express their stances in English. Data of the study comprised walk-in interview transcripts of 10 fresh graduates for the post of Administrative Officer. An Appraisal analysis to reveal stance is sought from answers for the general interview question, "How do you face challenges?". Preliminary findings show that the Appreciation subsystem of Attitude was used predominantly by candidates who were successful. More employability-development-opportunities need to be provided by institutions of higher learning. The current study hopes to advance knowledge on the performance of graduates at job interviews and contribute to the field of SFL and Educational Linguistics.

Keywords: Malaysian fresh graduates, job interviews, systemic functional appraisal analysis

INTRODUCTION

New graduates today are faced with a more challenging in the competitive world. For many of them it is a struggle to be gainfully employed because they do not have the required skills that current employers need in the present highly charged and rapidly changing globalised world (Ministry of Higher Education, 2016). This is connected to the survey carried out by Sapaat, Mustapha, Ahmad, Chamili and Muhamad (2011) on the chances of new graduates being employed, focusing on categorising by portraying a graduate as either having a job, not working, or uncertain. They obtained the information from the research survey database (MOHE, 2009). The information obtained in 2009 comprised 12,830 exemplars and 20 traits related to depictions of graduates from 19 government and 138 private universities.

A number of research studies have been carried out on the skills needed for graduates to be employed and these focused on the reasons why graduates failed to be employed. One of the primary factors that led to lack of employability was inadequate interaction skills rather than academic qualifications. Hence, the paucity of the required abilities that are needed to be employed; particularly being proficient in English has, to a great degree led to new graduates to face an uphill battle in securing their first jobs. A few constituents that have been shown to play an important role are soft skills that encompasses presentation, proper attire, ambition, communication skills, versatility, confidence, body language, traits, and creativeness (Davis & Herrera, 2013; Devins & Horgarth, 2015; Newton & Kusmierczyk, 2011; Holmes, 2013).

“The most important aspect of a successful hire is getting the most suitable candidate who is competent for the job and company” (Davis & Herrera, 2013, p. 48). In actual fact, candidates can be trained to acquire the basic abilities needed to be employed, although it may be difficult to

1
2
3 overcome preset notions about interview processes. For candidates, an important factor is to pay
4
5 close attention on the present, contemplate the future and focus on being employed in the chosen
6
7 field by being competent in English language proficiency (hereafter proficiency). When attending
8
9 interview sessions, looking sullen, slouching, and behaving in a disinterested way does not indicate
10
11 confidence to the interviewer (Maturo, 2008). Hence, the candidate should be attentive to the
12
13 questions and think carefully before providing answers in proficient English to increase their
14
15 chances of employability. It is important for the candidate to be well-prepared and knowledgeable
16
17 on how interviews are conducted beforehand to be able to handle questions effectively with
18
19 minimal hesitation. Questions like how the interviewee can handle challenges are a common
20
21 favorite among interviewers. A well-prepared candidate might respond by saying, “Sometimes it is
22
23 a testing time for me to be patient, but I have always managed to handle issues in the work
24
25 situation by staying focused”.

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31 There were a few problems related to undergraduates who were facing problems in securing
32
33 employment because of their lack in proficiency that resulted in vigorous discourse in newspapers
34
35 and social media (Christopher, 2017; Abu Bakar, 2018; Tanius, Johari, Yulia, Heng and Pazim,
36
37 2019; Abu Bakar, 2020; Chau, 2021). These issues demand for a coordinated effort to focus on
38
39 them. Firstly, the National Graduate Employability Blue Print 2015-2025 stated that 60,000
40
41 graduates were jobless primarily due to poor proficiency and being incapable of impressing the
42
43 interviewer in English (MHEM, 2016; 2016, Zainuddin, Pillai, Dumanig & Phillip, 2019). The
44
45 problem of unemployable graduates is an ongoing multinational issue as stated in Knight’s (2001)
46
47 research carried out 20 years ago. Secondly, because of a lack of proficiency, new graduates
48
49 seeking jobs faced difficulty in speaking properly when attending interviews (Selvaratnam, 2018).
50
51 Thirdly, new graduates had difficulty in interacting constructively in job interview settings because
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3 they were not proficient (Rajaendram & Karim, 2016; Elankovan, 2018; Singh & Singh, 2008;
4
5 Sravani, 2015). Due to a lack of proficiency, it is hard to measure the employability skills of new
6
7 graduates (MHEM, 2016; Chua, 2021).
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11 There are a few opposing ideas regarding employability provided by Holmes (2013) on
12
13 graduate recognition, De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, De Witte and Alarco (2008) on
14
15 employment control and societal assistance, Singh and Singh (2008) on attitudes of recruiters and
16
17 workers on work abilities and Clement and Murugavel (2015) and Su-Hie, Ernisa, Kee-Man, Jecky
18
19 and Collin (2017) on the efficacy of English language training for undergraduates and other
20
21 groups. In the Malaysian context, the primary problem is undergraduates being unable to speak
22
23 properly in English in interview settings. Many public universities in Malaysia make it a
24
25 requirement for undergraduates to undertake various courses such as English for Professionals,
26
27 Language for Employment, Business Writing, Presentation Skills, English for Communication and
28
29 Mastering English to adequately equip them for the working environment. However, these new
30
31 graduates' presentation in interviews is still considered to be disappointing at best. Hence, this
32
33 research is carried out to study the effectiveness of the language proficiency among new graduates
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35 and also the reasons for the poor performance in interviews among the successful, reserved and
36
37 unsuccessful using SFL theory Appraisal Theory-Attitude.
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43 **LITERATURE REVIEW**

44 **STUDIES OF APPRAISAL THEORY ABROAD**

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47 The Analyses of Appraisal Theory Abroad System functional linguistics (SFL) has centered on the
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49 lexico-grammatical investigation of the three metafunctions-ideational definition, relational
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51 denotation and verbatim connotation by perceiving clause as depiction, reciprocity and
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3 communication. The theory encompasses a broad and comprehensive field, but it overlooks the
4
5 denotations of interpretation. James Robert Martin observed this shortcoming early in the 1900s
6
7 and suggested the Appraisal Theory based on SFL. Martin initially proposed the complete
8
9 Appraisal Theory in his hypothesis *Beyond Exchange: Appraisal Systems in English* was released
10
11 in 2000. Since its publication The Appraisal Theory has attracted wide interest around the world.
12
13
14 Subsequently Martin and David Rose formulated a comprehensive narrative of the Appraisal
15
16 scheme in their publication *Working with Discourse* to create a platform for the investigation of
17
18 relational definition and various other definitions.
19
20

21 The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English in 2005 gives a detailed explanation of
22
23 the theory of appraisal in the book by Martin and White (2008) which developed a discussion
24
25 group of Appraisal Theory on website which attracted a few scholars and graduates to participate
26
27 in the relevant studies and activities. The discussion had greatly benefited the development of the
28
29 Appraisal Theory. Meanwhile, *Text (or Text & Talk)*, which is the specific Journal for Appraisal
30
31 Theory, publishes the special issue for the application and development of the Appraisal Theory.
32
33 The International Conference on Evaluation and Text Types sponsored by the University of
34
35 Augsburg was convened from July 22 to 23, 2005. Since then, studies on appraisal theory in text
36
37 have received more attention from scholars.
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44 **INTRODUCTION OF ATTITUDE SYSTEM (CHECK THE LANGUAGE)**

45
46 According to Martin and White (2008, p.33), Attitude System is one of the three important treatise
47
48 of the semantic support elucidating relational denotation (besides participation and discussion). It
49
50 primarily evaluates the way the presenter or writer articulates his individual observation in words.
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1
2
3 Appraisal theory is categorized into three complementary fields namely ‘attitude’, ‘engagement’
4
5 and ‘graduation’.
6

7 Attitude is linked with thoughts that incorporate emotive responses, perceptions of attitude
8
9 and interpretation of effects. Engagement concerns validating viewpoints and the tenor of speech
10
11 surrounding thoughts in the conversation. Graduation focuses on grading experience where
12
13 thoughts are augmented, and classifications tone downed (Martin & White, 2008, p. 35). The
14
15 engagement scheme can be categorised into monogloss and heterogloss. The graduation structure
16
17 can be separated into weight and concentration. Attitude is classified into three areas of
18
19 standpoints, that are ‘affect’, ‘judgment’ and ‘appreciation’.
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21
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23 Affect is the focus of the three groupings of stance. Affect is focused on grading optimistic
24
25 and pessimistic attitudes: are we content, happy or distressed, positive or apprehensive, attentive or
26
27 uninterested? (Martin & White, 2008, p. 42) It is conceivable to classify Affect structure into effect
28
29 as ‘quality’, affect as ‘process’, affect as ‘comment’. When Affect is applied to denote “quality”
30
31 quality adjectives or phrases normally denote feelings. Affect when used as “process” applies
32
33 process clauses to denote emotions, and primarily includes intellectual process and deportment.
34
35 Affect when used as “comment” applies illustrative addition to analyse the clause method.
36
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39 Judgment focus is on mindset with regards to comportment, which can be admired or
40
41 criticized, praised or condemned. (Martin & White, 2008.p. 42) It is feasible for judgment to be
42
43 compartmentalized into societal respect and societal approval. “Judgments of respect is associated
44
45 with ‘normality’ (how outstanding a person is), ‘capacity’ (how skilled a person is) and ‘tenacity’
46
47 (how determined a person is), while judgments of approval is concerned ‘veracity’ (the truthfulness
48
49 of a person) and ‘propriety’ (the honesty of a person).” (Martin & White, 2008, p.52)
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Appreciation entails analysis of semiotic and normal events considered significant or insignificant in a particular field. (Martin & White, 2008, p.43) Normally appreciation can be classed into 'reactions' to events and happenings (do they attract our interest; are we pleased?), their 'composition' (poise and intricacy), and their 'value' (how inventive, original, prompt) (Martin & White, 2008, p. 43). The assessment scheme primarily analyses the personal philosophy of the speaker or writer using the appraisal lexicon. The primary attributes of Attitude are dichotomy and openness. Polarity is the attribute to articulate orator's or author's approach towards endorsing or disapproving. Explicitness concerns with the methodology used for appraisal Polarity could be an affirmative approach and a pessimistic approach while explicitness could be a frank approach and indirect approach, See Figure 1.

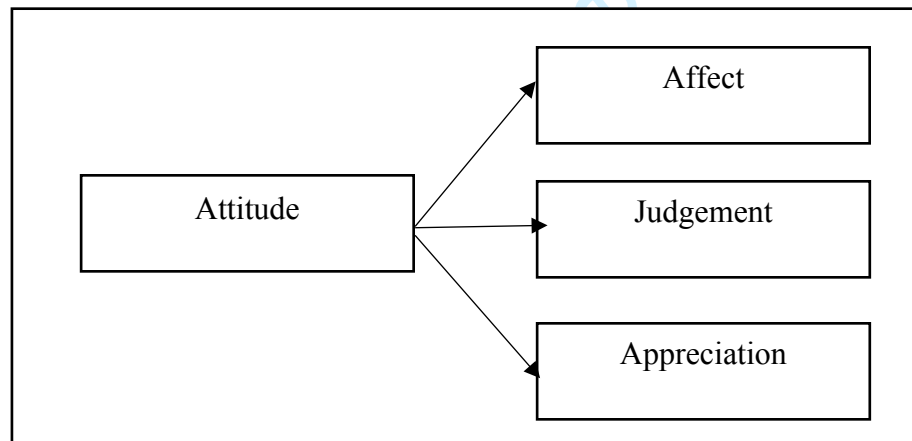


Figure 1. *Appraisal Theory of Sub-system of Attitude*

As an example, in an interview for a job, it is the manner in which the candidates speak and their utterances during the interviews that will provide a further evaluation to the interviewers. In the interview process, an interviewee who expresses his thoughts using the term 'I'm nervous' will manifest the pessimistic affect. If candidates use terms like, 'I am independent and reliable', then this is regarded as an affirmative judgment. Butt (2009) postulated that if the 'content is too intense

1
2
3 and passionate; the listeners could interpret the text as being sentimental, subjective or demanding'
4
5 (p. 212).
6

7 Three types of attitude, namely affect, judgement, and appreciation commonly depend on
8 the adjective form. Martin and White (2005, p. 58-59.) made each type different from grammatical
9 frames. Affect and judgement is relational clause and appreciation is a mental clause for. In
10 affect, personal feeling affect something and it makes the person feel affected. For example: -I feel
11 happy (about that/that they've come), -It makes me feel happy that they've come. For judgement, it
12 is judgement of a person/ for another person to do that and for person to do that was judgement, for
13 example: - It was silly of/for them to do that -(For them) to do that was silly or appreciation, people
14 consider something appreciation and people see something as appreciation, for examples:-I
15 consider it beautiful -They see it as beautiful.
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28 The three forms of attitude, affect, judgement, and appreciation normally appear in the
29 adjective form. Martin and White (2005, p. 58-59) differentiates each form from grammatical
30 structures, where affect and judgment are comparative clauses while appreciation is a subjective
31 clause. In affect an individual experience influences with regards to things and that makes an
32 individual experience affect, for instance: -I am pleased (about that/that they've come), -I am
33 pleased that they've come. For judgement, it was judgement for an individual/of an individual to
34 do that and for an individual to do that was judgement, for instance; it was frivolous of/for them to
35 do that (For them) to do that was frivolous or appreciation, persons regard something with
36 appreciation and persons regard something with appreciation, for instance:-I regard it as attractive
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49 -They regard it as attractive.
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3 Aside from the grammatical structure, it is possible to differentiate three areas of inclination
4
5 from objectives of appraisals and areas of appraisals. For affect, the objects are person and
6
7 cognizant being, the area of appraisals are sentiment, affections, and matters of the heart. For
8
9 judgement, the objects are person and cognizant being, the area of appraisals are demeanor,
10
11 behavior, and disposition. For appreciation, the objects are articles/occurrences, the object of
12
13 appraisals is worth, structure, and the objects that have an effect on speakers. Following its
14
15 introduction, appraisal theory has been used in multiple fields of conversation, namely media
16
17 communication, secondary school English essential writing, history writing, legal communication,
18
19 scholarly discussion, contrarian writing, preschooler communication, stories etc. These researches
20
21 of various kinds have both hypothetical and functional weight. The broad appeal of appraisal
22
23 theory confirms that it is a very useful tool for evaluating viewpoints and social connotations. A
24
25 few significant investigations are produced below, with emphasis on Judgment appraisal.
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29

30 Coffin (1997) utilised appraisal theory to evaluate secondary school history scripts and
31
32 discovered that the primary evaluation resource applied in narrating genus was Judgment. Writers
33
34 also apply added implied Judgment sources in the initial two phases (laying out the circumstances
35
36 and noting down occurrences) and are more likely to apply more emphatic Judgments in the
37
38 concluding phase. The purpose of this interaction of overt and implied Judgment sources is to
39
40 create a notation of the earlier goal, realistic and consistent, while framing a precise and hence
41
42 personal outlook which is primarily delivered in the concluding phase.
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47 Korner (2000) referenced the speech aspects of common law judgments centered on AT,
48
49 especially on the Engagement structure and Graduation structure. When delivering judgments, the
50
51 judges in general draw on Engagement and Graduation sources to “foreground some definitions
52
53 and to background others. This is to position themselves with different scripts and evaluate other
54
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3 scripts to institute levels of sameness and contrasts between earlier verdicts and ongoing
4
5 verdicts.
6
7

8 In Referencing appraisal theory, Wu and Desmond (2017) carried out a preliminary
9
10 investigation of evaluation reservoirs in candidates' contentious writings. This is a corpus-based
11
12 investigation consisting of 40 compositions in three diverse classes extending from highly-rated to
13
14 lowly-rated. It was established that even though contrasts appeared between the extent and
15
16 approach of resource application in evaluation, it was found to be insignificant in the general
17
18 achievement of an essay.
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23 A diachronic investigation of the progress of children's Attitude sources was undertaken by
24
25 Painter (2003), who studied and noted down her two sons' speech progress in the early years. In
26
27 relation to Judgment, she concluded that her two sons' vocabulary usage was restricted and that the
28
29 early verbal formations denoting Judgment were connected to the children's own deportment.
30
31 Though the two sub classifications of Judgment (societal respect and societal endorsement) do
32
33 exist in child language progress, societal endorsement judgments emerge in some areas only.
34
35 Furthermore, he additionally made a comparison between the aspect of attributed (clear) judgments
36
37 and suggestive (implied) judgments by way of abstract statements. In summing up, to a certain
38
39 degree, "studying one's native language is inevitably a route of studying to identify skill in the
40
41 appraisal expressions pertinent to the student's meaning group" (Painter. 2003).
42
43
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47 With the objective to investigate the disparity of Attitude resources among different
48
49 genders, Page (2003) studied the appraisals provided by both sexes that focused on the subject of
50
51 childbirth knowledge. There were 23 sets of appraisals that were derived from unofficial interviews
52
53 of nine couples who lately had children and also five women who functioned as birthing
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3 participants. In the study of Judgment, the author established that Judgment resources arose less
4
5 than Affect and Appreciation resources in both sexes' descriptions. They appeared to evaluate
6
7 themselves more rather than other participants. The author also established that the entire Judgment
8
9 resources applied to the societal respect group. Aiming to develop a hypothetical structure to
10
11 elucidate the appraisal procedures concealed in the opening segments of scholarly investigation
12
13 documents, Susan (2004) conducted a thorough examination of social definitions built on the
14
15 Appraisal structure. She selected both undergraduate essays and produced investigation documents
16
17 and examined and contrasted the evaluation resources applied. The conclusions revealed that both
18
19 publishers, and young authors individualise their writings by applying mindset utterances and also
20
21 choose to apply greater Appreciation resources rather than Affect or Judgment resources.
22
23
24

25
26
27 To conclude, the findings from the investigations as explained above reveal, that there is
28
29 still a lack in studies conducted in relation to job interviews, especially to integrate the attitude
30
31 scheme to make job interviews more relevant and meaningful. Consequently, in the current
32
33 investigation, the attitude scheme, affect, judgment and appreciations will be applied as evaluation
34
35 tool to interpret the job interview input. See figure 2 for an overview of theoretical framework.
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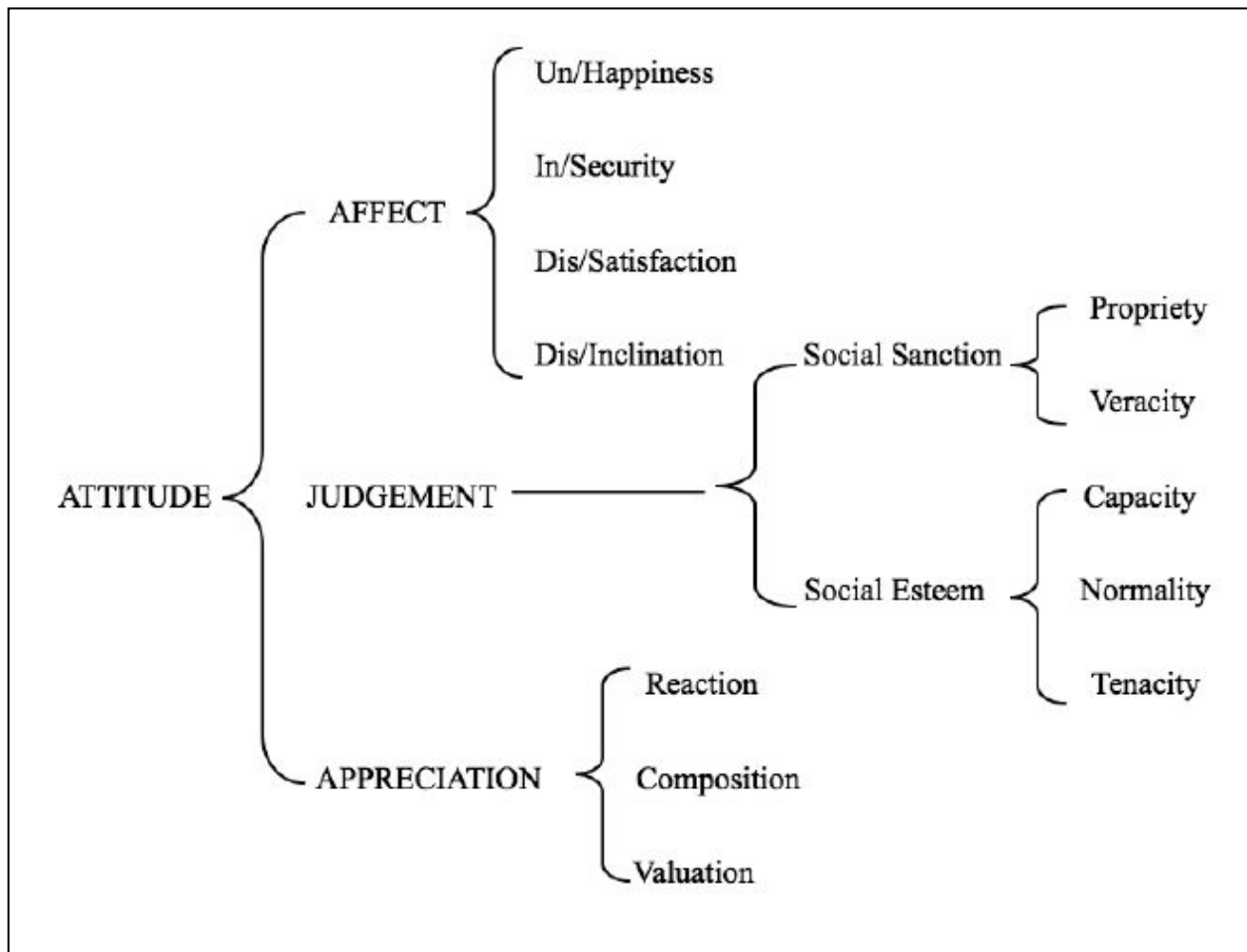


Figure 2. *An overview of Theoretical Framework*

METHODOLOGY

SETTING

The job interview data was collected from one of the organisations in Malaysia which is located in Kuala Lumpur. The permission was obtained from the organisation in order to conduct the study. The organisation deals with customer services, trainings as well as some multi-level marketing. The organisation always open for walk-in-interview, e.g. each month there would be 8-10 candidates attend the interview. As the organisation deals with the training, usually, any type of

1
2
3 conversations, audio recording will take place with the permission of the candidates for the
4
5 improvement.

8 **SAMPLING**

10
11 A consent was obtained from each of the 10 participants (candidates). The participants were fresh
12
13 graduates and they had been looking for jobs for the past 6 months since graduation. Some of the
14
15 participants have just started working (not more than 1 month) but not relevant to their studies.
16
17 These participants obtained their bachelor's degrees from the private and private universities
18
19 (Malaysia) from various fields such as business administration, marketing, management, economic,
20
21 education, linguistics, physics, chemist and engineering.
22
23
24
25

26 **DATA COLLECTION**

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28
29 The data was collected in the mention organisation by one of the Human Resource Officer (HR)
30
31 who conducted interviews especially for walk-in-interview. As mentioned earlier, the interview
32
33 was walk-in-interview and at least 8-10 candidates attended the interview in a month. Therefore,
34
35 the data of the present study that was used in the analysis was collected from those candidates who
36
37 attended the interview in February 2021 during the pandemic Covid-19. The organisation did not
38
39 allow the researcher to access January 2021's data. Each interview session was carried out for
40
41 15-20 minutes. However, there were a few interviews that were only within 8-10 minutes. There
42
43 was no reason mentioned by the HR officer for the time differences in the interviews. There were
44
45 several terms and conditions mentioned by the organisations, e.g. the organisation's name should
46
47 not be written in any academic article, transcription should be done in the premises and the
48
49 transcribed data should be not attached in the appendices.
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DATA ANALYSIS

The job interview data was recorded and transcribed. There were no any transcription notation symbols used for transcribing the data as this study was not looking at the conversation analysis. A qualitative analysis was used to analyse the data by using appraisal analysis, attitude contained of appreciation, affect and judgment of SFL (Martin & White, 2005). The data was focused on one theme “how do you face challenges” which is one of the standard interview questions. Matthew and Nanette (2007) and Hansen (2007) suggested that even though there were many questions to be asked in job interviews, but how do you face challenges question is more significance in the job interview and the answers may answer in-depth manner which may able to evaluate an interviewee’s attitude, emotion quality and capabilities. This is ensuring whether the candidates are able to create a strong impression to show they have a good English language proficiency. The data was categorised based on the definitions given by Martin and White (2005). Whilst, the sample occurrences from the studies of Mohd Noor, Md Tab and Kamarulzaman (2017) as discussed in the literature review are used as an example to select the accurate data for the analysis. The transcriptions and categorisation were verified by three experts from the field of SFL, two local lecturers from Malaysia and one from overseas. These three experts made an agreement that more than 90 % of transcription and categorisation of the data was as Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) had suggested, that the inter-rater reliability (IRR) that was required in the qualitative study was accurate. Even, Li (2002) and Wodak (2013) noted that, with the IRR, even a sample is extracted from any written text extract or an excerpt of spoken represents the entire study based on

the objective. Therefore, in the present study, only two or three sample of excerpts were used for the analysis.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The findings present the frequency of utterances of attitude sub-system-appreciation, affect and judgement by successful, reserved and unsuccessful candidates.

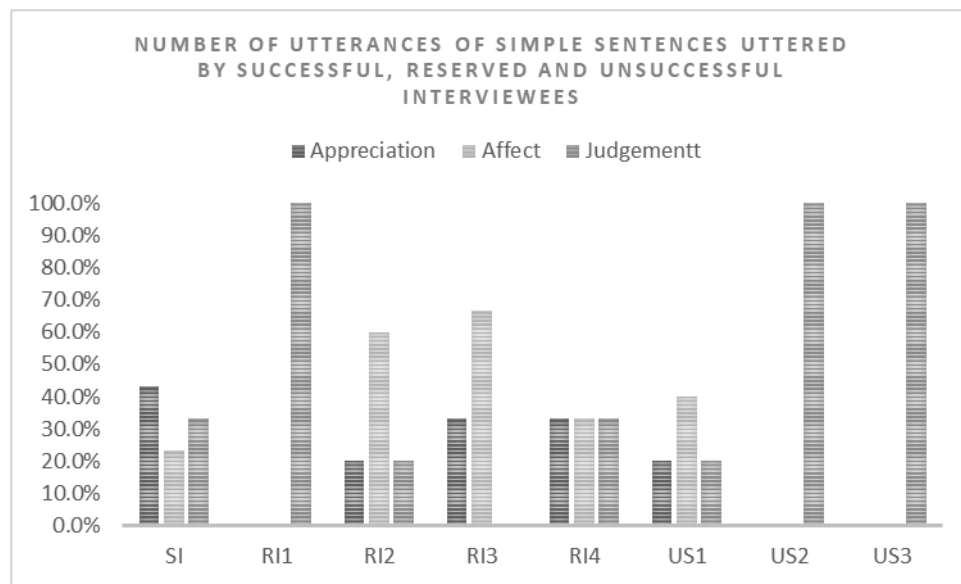


Figure 3. *Frequencies of Utterances of Attitude System*

Figure 3 shows the frequency of utterances of appreciation, affect, and judgement utterances used by successful, reserved and unsuccessful candidates. The most predominantly used by successful candidates 45% of appreciation. Reserved candidates and unsuccessful candidates only used limited utterances. It can be seen that successful candidates used a total of 40% utterances in the interview. However, unsuccessful candidates used not more than 40% utterances. Moreover, a

1
2
3 successful interviewee used positive appreciation, affect and judgement. The successful candidates
4
5 did not show negative side to interviewer, but reserved and unsuccessful candidates the negative.
6
7 Appreciation utterances have the highest rate among successful candidates followed by affect and
8
9 judgment that have the lowest usage rate. However, most of the reserved candidates used more
10
11 affect utterances. Sample utterances of successful, reserved and unsuccessful candidates are
12
13 presented below based on the attitude sub-system.
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20 APPRECIATION

- 21
22
23 **Successful** IE18: **I handled this challenge and what I was able to exemplify** to my
24 superiors is willingness and enthusiasm to adapt to change
25
26 IE13: I think **my major challenges I did face is when I was asked to replace**
27 **a colleague because of emergency leave...**this happened when I was working
28 in the purchasing department
29
30 **Reserved** IE12: Sure...decisions I have to make within a team are difficult(.) only
31 because these decisions take more time and require deliberate communication
32 between team members.
33
34 **Unsuccessful** IE11: **I can take up any jobs to work** in this company
35
36 IE6: I think **I can work better I think I would be able** to perform better in your
37 company as your company deal with customers too.
38
39

40 The candidates convinced the interviewer of their qualities in the interview conversations. IE18,
41
42 IE13 and IE12 had expressed well on their qualities in handling different tasks in their previous
43
44 jobs. They had shown their qualities of adaptability and change in environment. IE11 and IE6
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46 reactions were to be flexible in the current company in accepting any tasks. However, responses on
47
48 the likeness or challenges revealed what they might have gone through. Therefore, reserved
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50 candidates seem to be less convincing in the interview.
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AFFECTS

- Successful** IE12: I am very **skilled** hmmm and **good at balancing** multiple projects and meeting deadlines
- Reserved** IE16: I **managed to get** the 50 media partners for our event with two exclusive features...presentations in a local technology magazine and also an interview on a local radio station.
- Unsuccessful** -

IE12 uttered 'skilled', 'good at' and 'managed to get' portray stronger affect to the interview as they showed greater capabilities of the candidates. IE16 pointed out their capabilities that created a positive impression on the interviewers

JUDGEMENT

- Successful** IE12: I **created a schedule that detailed how I would break down each project in to small assignment I completed all three projects ahead of time** and avoided unnecessary stress
- IE15: I **diligently held meeting before semester break to delegate all tasks**
...
- Reserved** IE6: I **like to listen to the complaints**
- IE7: **like me I always listen to songs. I think it is a good way to resolve.**
- Unsuccessful** IE19: **solved by talking to the manager and asking him what he thinks**

IE12 & IE15 demonstrated their behaviour in handling the tasks, with detailed elaboration. IE6 & IE7 expressed less in handling the tasks, IE19 was unable to be independent, required the assistance of the superior to solve the task. The candidates convinced the interviewers that he/she can be a good example to others. IE12 & IE 15 had expressed that they were ethically positive as in their behaviour by being diligent in their task with detailed information. Whilst the reserved like IE6 & IE7 expressed in a different manner. IE6 answered without further elaboration and showed that listening to complaints alone is a positive trait. Likewise, IE7 showed that behaviour like;

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3 listening to songs would help to resolve the situation. IE19 actually showed that he/she was unable
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5 to be independent as he/she needed the assistance of the supervisor or manager.
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10 DISCUSSION

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12 The present study has revealed that various used phrases have uttered by successful, reserved and
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14 unsuccessful candidates. See Table 1.
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17 **Table 1**

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19 *Sample utterances used by successful, reserved and unsuccessful based on Questions “How do*
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21 *you face challenges”?*
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23 Successful	24 Reserved	25 Unsuccessful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to show positive impression • Capabilities • Confidence • Independent • Taking responsibilities • Accepting criticism • Adaptability • Willingness to take different roles • Persuasive • Convincing • Describe in detail • Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used short phrases • Incomplete sentences • Desperate in job • Unable convince • Unable to show independency in their previous task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to impress • Unable to express much • Not much of elaboration on previous tasks • Unable to show independency in their previous tasks

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43 Table 1 shows the various phrases used by successful candidates based on the proficiency as
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45 compared to the reserved and unsuccessful candidates. The phrases which were used by successful
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47 candidates to answer “how do you handle face challenges” in work places probably had created a
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49 favourable impression on the interviewer. This was because in workplace there would be lots of
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3 challenges that had to be handled meticulously via interactions (Halliday, 2014). Therefore, the
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5 appropriate use of words or phrases would be convincing.
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8 The successful candidates revealed in their utterances they had used phrase that indicated
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10 they could express proficiently as to how they could overcome challenges. Their utterances
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12 revealed they had a positive outlook when they faced problems and had the capability and
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14 confidence to overcome them. They could also work independently when they encountered
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16 problems and had to find solutions for them. They could also accept criticism to help them when
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18 they encountered problems. Another quality revealed in the utterance of the successful candidates
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20 was their adaptability to different situations that could help them to find solutions. They were also
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22 persuasive and convincing in their approach when they faced challenges. The findings consensus
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24 by the statements of Rajaendram and Karim (2016), Abu Bakar (2020), Abu Bakar (2020) and
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26 Chua (2021) that portray a good proficiency chances of getting jobs. Further, the use of phrases or
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28 words appropriately show a candidate's attitudes based on the context as in job interviews for "how
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30 do face the challenges". Besides the utterances of the successful candidates, they had the ability to
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32 work in a team to find solutions.
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39 The reserved candidates used in their utterances short sentences and phrases that were not
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41 impressive. Their utterances revealed that they were desperate in getting the job. As such their
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43 utterances did not convince the interviewers. Moreover, they revealed in their utterances they were
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45 unable to work independently. The unsuccessful candidates used utterances that did not convince
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47 the interviewers because of their limited proficiency. They could not elaborate much on their
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49 previous tasks. Their utterances could not show they could work independently. The finding is
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51 consisted with the finding of Zainuddin et al. (2019) that due to poor proficiency most of the
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3 candidates were not able to perform well in job interviews and chances of getting jobs are limited.
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5 Further, the present study did not find any significant differences between reserved and
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7 unsuccessful in terms of using phrases or words in answering “how do face the challenges”
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9 question owing to poor proficiency.
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13 The finding of the present study may be explained by the fact that the use the appraisal
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15 theory, attitude; affect, judgment and appreciation in job interviews would determine ones aptitude
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17 and attitude based on the proficiency.
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19 20 **IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY** 21

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23 The findings of the study contributed in various aspects. Firstly, the appraisal theory, attitude;
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25 affect, judgment and appreciation can be incorporated into existing course modules in colleges or
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27 universities. Probably, educational institutions should welcome the research output pertaining to
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29 job interviews which will be helpful to train the undergraduates for job employment. Secondly, the
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31 ideas of using attitude; affect, judgment and appreciation elements in answering job interview
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33 interviews, especially “how do face the challenges” in workplace as there are lots of challenges in
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35 workplace to be faced and interaction could be one of the important tools to handle those
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37 challenges. Looking at those phrases which were used by successful candidates (see Table 1)
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39 would be helpful for under graduates and fresh graduates to use in their job interviews in the future.
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41 These findings may also help language instructors to use these elements in teaching or mock
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43 teaching by using specific words and phrases that can be used to answer the interview questions.
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45 This would be helpful for undergraduate’ to create a favourable impression in job interviews. The
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47 sampling size would be one of the limitations as the job interview has been conducted during the
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3 Covid-19 pandemic and refrain from the contacts. A stringent procedure has been applied to
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5 shortlisted the candidates for the job interviews.
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8 **CONCLUSION**

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11 Appreciation subsystem of Attitude was used predominantly by candidates who were found to be
12
13 successful. More “employability-development-opportunities” (Harvey 2001, p.1) need to be in
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15 place in institutions of higher learning. The current study hopes to advance knowledge on
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17 performance of graduates at job interviews and contribute to the field of SFL and Educational
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19 Linguistics. The present study shows the application of particular words and phrases to create a
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21 better understanding and perform well in job interview. The Appreciation subsystem of Attitude
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23 can be used amongst fresh graduates in Malaysia or it can be also applied in other countries which
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25 use English as a second language. The present study is also linked to the issue which are mentioned
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27 earlier and the suggestions provided could be solutions to prevent unemployment issues. As
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29 highlighted in The National Graduate Employability Blue Print 2015-2025 that 60,000 fresh
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31 graduates were unemployed and the number would be lesser in the future if higher leaning
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33 institutions play an important role to overcome the stated issues. Further research is required to
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35 establish the viability of the language management theory by Neustupný’s (1978) by having more
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37 participants or candidates. This theory may reveal how speakers manage their language in speaking
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39 and be more systematic in expressing their thoughts in any communicative events, especially in
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41 professional contexts as in job interviews.
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