

# HOW DO STUDENTS LEARN THE FOUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING SKILLS IN THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SETTINGS?

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**ABSTRACT:** The need to be proficient and productive in academic and social interaction is an important issue to produce a proficient English language graduates in the Malaysian setting. This paper describes the processes involved in learning the four language skills and their effects on general academic skills. This qualitative study is an attempt to gather and investigate in depth information on Malaysian university students' use of the English language in their daily interactions. Essentially, it is a qualitative phenomenological study that utilizes the interview as a tool to gather information from undergraduates of a Malaysian public university based in the Klang Valley. A total of nine (9) final year undergraduate students in art and science-based programmes from a public university were interviewed. Analysis done led to five main themes that represented the pattern of their English language usage. The themes found were indicative that the uses of English language in interactions were (1) limited to needs and situation, (2) based on location and purpose, (3) affected by low self efficacy and language skills (4) strong affective barriers and (5) unsupportive social environment. It could be said that the findings can act as an eye opener for definitive actions to be taken to improve EL interaction amongst Malaysian undergraduates towards the fulfilment of the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB-HE) 2015-2025 (Higher Education) aspirations.

**KEYWORDS:** Language skills, language proficiency, language learning processes, language for social interaction and, attitudes and perceptions.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's higher education system has faced many critical challenges to produce quality graduates in its quest to fulfil the needs of domestic and global labor markets. The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education), launched in April 2015, focusing on many new priorities, including the importance of balanced graduates of Malaysian universities imbued with language skills, good moral conduct, critical thinking and communication skills has set a new milestone to be achieved by higher education institutions (MOE, 2015). On the other hand, employers too raised that employability skills among university graduates and English language skill are major criteria for employability especially in the private sector (Shafie, 2010).

The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) emphasizes 5 major System Aspirations among which 'Quality' of graduates and in light of 'Students Aspirations' the element of Language Proficiency is among the 6 major areas of concern and English proficiency, operationally, is clearly emphasized. The aspiration on language proficiency is not surprising because the English proficiency problems of Malaysian university graduates are not new and studies "seem to resonate a feeling of uneasiness with the graduates' level of English proficiency" (MOE, 2015; Isarji, et al., 2008).

## II. THE NEED TO BE PROFICIENT AND PRODUCTIVE IN ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Local and global competitiveness are seen crucial in shaping the importance of English as a medium of instruction. Added with the socio-economic pressure and other internal historical factors in Malaysia, English is viewed as an important global language for communication and career advancement. More often than not, related studies on English as the major medium of instruction in the local universities focused more on the perspectives of curriculum makers (The Ministry of Education and syllabus designers in the university), implementers (lecturers) and material developers (textbooks, publishers). Students' perspectives (perceptions, learning processes and social usage) of English in the university are observed to be neglected. There are gaps in our understanding on how English, particularly as a medium of instruction and a vehicle for social interaction,

can be best taught, used or applied from the students' perspectives. Plainly speaking, how the students view and perceive the language, to some degree, may influence their learning behaviors and academic achievement (Klaassen & Graaff, 2001).

A number of critical factors affecting the students learning the language such as motivation and goal orientation may shape the perceptions and beliefs in learning the language and its functions in their daily lives (Ravinder, et al, 2009). However, these factors should not be viewed as working in isolation thus viewing the factors and other related affecting factors in a contextualized manner may yield better findings and meaningful suggested solutions in helping them to be proficient in English. According to Fei, Siong, Kim and Yaacob (2012), they claimed that "Malaysia has had the English language indelibly woven into its history, and the language has been a constant significant factor in shaping national policies, particularly educational policies" (p. 146). It highlights the usage of English language towards the development of the country and considers English as an important language for Malaysian to be proficient in. In their study, they highlighted that English language shapes undergraduate students' identity. English is considered as a tool to empower undergraduates' experience. This is similar with the result found in Lee Su Kim's study (2001). It was found that English language has positive impact on students' identity whilst ensuring experience for the students.

There are only few studies conducted on students' experiences in learning and using English language in academic as well as social interaction. But there are few studies specifically exploring the undergraduates' experiences in learning and utilizing English language in Academic and Social interaction moreover with a focus on Developing new English learning and social interaction models. For example, a study conducted by Ching-Yi Wu (2014) on Qualitative Study of Taiwanese Students Studying Abroad: Social Interactions, Navigating US Culture, and Experiences Learning English Language. This study only covers on the significant relationship between the Taiwanese students studying abroad and their social interactions, navigating US culture and experiences in learning English language. This study seeks evidence of the extent Taiwanese college students are able to participate in social interaction and be able to learn English better by using their English experiences in US. This study did not cover on the important of experiences of English language learning has towards academic like a study conducted by Martirosyan, Eunjin Hwang and Wanjohi (2014). Martirosyan, Eunjin Hwang and Wanjohi (2014) conducted a study on Impact of English Proficiency on Academic Performance of International Students. This study, aimed at analyzing the impact that English proficiency has on International students' academic performance in North Central Louisiana. This is a step taken by them to promote insight for the administrators of the institutions who want to encourage and boost international students' academic performance. The result found that students with high level of English proficiency are likely to have highest CGPA.

### III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As we can see nowadays, Malaysian, regardless of their age, identity and race are bilingual. They can speak two languages; Bahasa Malaysia and English. This is because Bahasa Malaysia and English are compulsory subjects to pass in the Malaysian education syllabus. (Wendy Hiew, 2012). Therefore, we can infer that learning and utilizing English language in academic and social interaction are highly encouraged among Malaysian especially undergraduates. Undergraduates who are studying in colleges, universities or any higher institutions are expected to be able to communicate using English. This is because some of the higher institutions are using English as their medium of instruction. Thus, those who are less proficient in English will be at greater loss because they cannot interact effectively with people around them. Undergraduates' experiences in learning and utilizing English language in academic and social interaction can be considered crucial for them to get a good job and to be successful in their profession of interest.

Thus, a study on students' experiences in learning and utilizing EL in academic and social interaction which may impact their proficiency level among Malaysian students is timely. This is because the results found from this study could be an agency in facilitating educators to improve their teaching strategies and students' learning for a better proficiency level. By the same token, educators can produce learning strategies and models to improve students' proficiency level by understanding the kinds of experiences they have had and challenges they faced throughout their English language learning. Without these understanding, educators as well as students need to totally rely on their own strategies in teaching and learning process. In terms of Malaysian context presently, they are found likely to be at least a bilingual, speaking the two most important languages; Bahasa Malaysia and English regardless of their ages, identities and races. This is due to the reason that Bahasa Malaysia and English are compulsory and important subjects to pass in the Malaysian education system (Wendy, 2012).

Undoubtedly, learning and utilizing EL in academic and social interaction are highly encouraged among Malaysian especially undergraduates. Undergraduates who are studying in colleges, universities or any higher institutions are expected to be able to communicate using EL as many of the higher learning institutions use EL as their medium of instruction. Thus, those who are less proficient in English will be at a greater loss academically. Additionally, undergraduates' experiences in learning and utilizing English language in academic and social interaction are crucial for them to get a good job and to be successful in their profession of interest. Furthermore, not much is understood on how the undergraduates learned English before they enrolled as IIUM students specifically on what could be their English-language experiences in IIUM, problems and challenges they faced, and the coping mechanisms or strategies utilized in learning the language. Knowledge on how the students utilize the language in their daily social interactions within and outside the classroom environment is also lacking. Hence, it is crucial to probe into the students' English language learning processes and its daily usage in the quest of supporting and enhancing their language skills and consequently increase their employability skills. Thus, this study seeks to investigate and understand the phenomenon of English across the four main language skills among the undergraduates and suggest a qualitative phenomenological study on the perception of and experiences in learning English among the undergraduate students.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

This study is investigating on how the students learn the four English language learning skills in the academic and social settings through the following questions:

- 1- What are the challenges faced by students in using English language learning skills in the academic and social settings?
  - a) Are the students able to manage the problems of using English language learning skills in the academic and social settings?
  - b) What are the challenges that they encountered?
  - c) What are the strategies that they employ to overcome the challenges?
- 2- Are the students able to manage the problems of using English language learning skills in the academic and social settings?
  - a) What are the challenges that they encountered?
  - b) What are the strategies that they employ to overcome the challenges?
  - c) Are the strategies to overcome the problems effective? Why?

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### A) METHOD AND DESIGN:

This is a qualitative phenomenological study due to its in depth study of "instances of phenomenon in real life settings and from the perspectives of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 634). In this context the researchers explore the essence of the experiences by uncovering the underlying themes of meaning of shared experience of the informants (Patton, 2002). Participants were selected using purposeful sampling method by focusing on information rich cases (Berg, 2004). A total of 9 informants, final year undergraduate Malaysian students, were identified through a screening questionnaire for diversity of field of study.

### B) SETTING/SITE:

Main campus as well as Kuantan campus of the International Islamic University Malaysia.

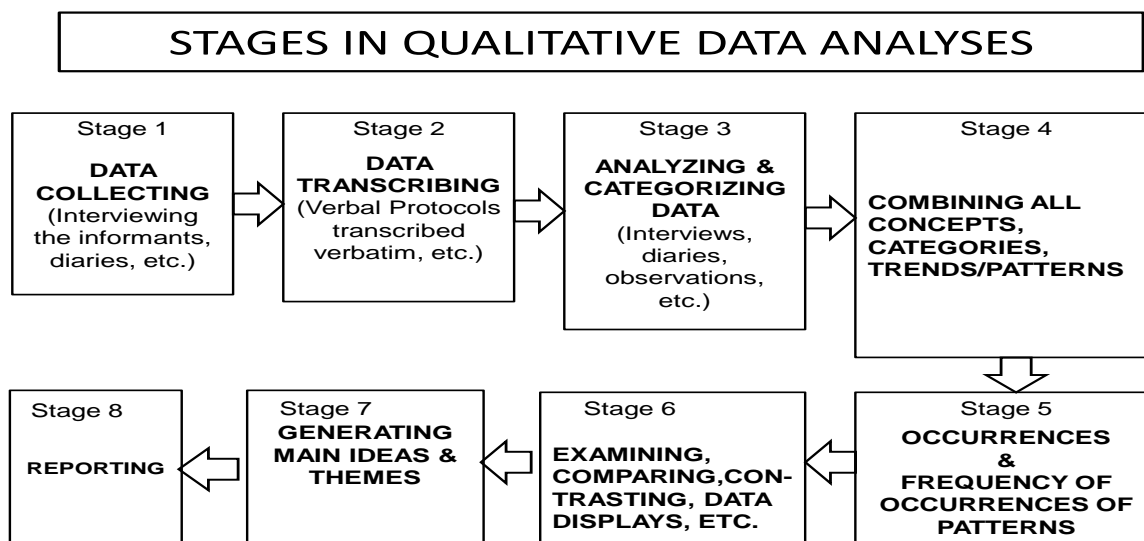
### C) DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:

Data collection was done using semi structured interview as it allows authentic first-hand information to be collected in an in-depth and detailed manner. Informants involved in this study were selected using purposeful sampling method with a focus on information rich cases (Berg, 2004). A total of 9 informants, final year undergraduate Malaysian students, studying in a Malaysian public university based in the Klang Valley, were identified through a screening questionnaire to ensure suitability and diversity of field of study. Prior to the interview, the informants were given explanation to the aims and importance of the study. Then, an informed consent was requested from the informants for their agreement to participate in the study and the use of recording device during the interview. A digital recorder was used to record the interview. The interview was conducted in English with the allowance for code-switching to Bahasa Malaysia for comprehension and clarity purposes. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim for analysis purposes by adapting the following procedures and stages of data analysis (Figure 1.0):

- 1- Screening Questionnaire (Identifying the informants with rich information)
- 2- Individual Interviews

### D) FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Figure 1.0 :Stages in Qualitative Data Analysis



**E) INTERVIEWING STAGES:**

The interviewing session in this study was conducted through several stages as listed:

Stage 1: Interview the Informants (tape-recorded)

Stage 2: Transcribe verbatim (using a verbal protocol template)

Stage 3: Data analyzing and categorizing (main ideas to themes using a coding template)

Stage 4: Validation (Credibility and trustworthiness of coded data)

**V. RESEARCH FINDINGS:**

Table 1.0 presents the findings from this research based the interview questions, occurrences, elaborations and themes as shown below:

**Table 1.0: Research Findings**

Qu est	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Intervie w Questions	Elaboration I1 (Informant 1)	D U I 1	Occurrence I1	Elaboration I2 (Informant 2)	D U I 2	Occurrence I2	Support occurrence DU	Theme
1(a)	How do learn the four basic English skills in this university?	Okay. I think that aa the last time I learn from the university from the CFS only and then through the degree. And there only one course involve in English is LE4000. That course is focusing on writing for your proposal.	38	Improve writing and reading through subject requirements <sup>10</sup>	....you can't master the languages if you not doing a lot of exercises or practice the language itself.	50	Exercises and practice <sup>9</sup>	I2: 50, 62	<sup>9</sup> Exercises and reading extensively
		So that what..that is part of	3		You	6			

		that. and then, for reading. Just from the book. ..yeah from the courses book. That is how we learn that.	8		can analyze the sentences how they wrote they articles in the newspapers, you can learn vocabulary also, improve the vocabulary.	2			
		Aaaa writing skill. Actually I'm not good in the writing..in constructing the words. but I try to practice from the word that using in the book // alright // somehow I'm using the google translate. // ahha // tried to write in bahasa first, and then copy to the google then automatically translate it	40		And then, she always told us to just read the articles she gave in the I'taleem,	114			
		If our sources I'm learning the speaking aaa from my friends. I create aa I have international friends and try to speak with them..memulamemangusah. Yeah but they are very helping. They are not focusing on your grammar that..aaadiamacamasal you cakapdiafaham // the meaning laaa // yeah you faham. They you can create the conversation with them.	38	Improve listening as speaking through social interactions <sup>11</sup>	I think I really understood what you teach me in the class because ... even when we are doing the activities or presentations, you always explain whatever it is	120	Classroom activities <sup>10</sup>	I1: 38	<sup>11</sup> Social interactions
		And in listening, aaaa most probably I attend the program in English. If they have a program aaa that aa communicate in English.	38						
<b>1(b)</b>	<b>To what</b>	I can rate that from one to ten,	4	Very	Yah, I	1	Advers	I1:	<sup>12</sup> Positiv

) <b>degree/extent the skills have affected your academic skills and performance?</b>	I can give it nine to ten. very much expect..affected. Because somehow you have to write in exam. The writing in English. Your lecturer wants you to understand what you want to going to explain.	2	strong influence of EL on academic performance <sup>12</sup>	know that, but sometimes when there is some students who can speak English fluently, err my motivation just go down.	36	e effect on motivation <sup>13</sup>	42,44	e impact on academic performance
	Yeah. (// it has actually affected your academic performance. right? // hmm-hmm // you are saying language skills are important and they are actually affect your academic performance.)	44	The skills using English ? Yah... I think it's really affected my performance because sometimes if you can't really perform better in your examination, then you can't get the better grade.	114	Adverse effect on academic performance <sup>13</sup>	12:114,116	<sup>13</sup> Negative impact on motivation and academic performance	
	Dr. Faizah's class, err I can't... I think I can't really score in her class				116			

					because of my language, not really ... err...				
1(c)	What are the challenges you have faced in learning the four language skills?	<p>Cabarandiaaaabanyaktapi yang kita paling terasatubilakitanak communicate in English bilakitatakada feedback. ...takda orang kata support. Bilakita try to speak, other people speak back in Malay. We try to speak English, they speak Malay....haatakde continuous conversation... it stops like that.</p>	46	Social environment not supportive of EL interaction <sup>15</sup>	<p>Actually, my primary school is the private school, but they don't really ... err they don't really take the fees, not really hard, so that the teachers not really trained to teach the skills. That is why I think that's the problem.</p>	106	Teachers not well trained <sup>4</sup>	I2:106, 96, 114	<sup>14</sup> Teachers not well trained to teach EL
		<p>Aaa the challenge maybe..yeah surrounding. Environment. ..The setting. The environment.</p>	48		<p>Ya. Sometimes they not, they do not, did not really want to teach us err what's be... err what do we called</p>	96			

				<p>it? There are a big mistake in our writing, they don't really want to encourage us to speak in class. That's the things I think affect my motivation. I just think that no... English is not important. But then my mother wants me to continue my study in English ... (laughing).</p>				
		Not really. (Is the setting conducive?)	50	Madame Mohaida sometimes, she is really fast until I can't get whatever have been said. And			11:46, 48, 50,52	
		Aaaa it's like aaaa if you have a group of friends. I give examples if you have a good of friends. If you are the one person starts to speak in English. In the conv..they start to interrupt the conversation. They all will start to talk and start to asking why you speak in English. Kenapacakap English tiba-tiba? it's like kita..kitapulah awkward.. bersalah.. kalaukita. Then bendatukadang-kadang..tengo	52		114	Teacher too fast <sup>14</sup>		<sup>15</sup> Social environment not supportive of EL interaction



		<p>kkitapunya relation. kadang-kadang orang cakapkita try to be someone else. Kenapa? ... Some of them are very good in English but they don't want to speak in English maybe they are shy. ...haa among the local.</p>			<p>then, she always told us to just read the articles she gave in the I'taleem, and then I don't really have that interest to the articles because it has been twenty pages, I don't really</p>				
<p>2(a)</p>	<p><b>What are the challenges you have faced in utilizing the four skills in your social interaction?</b></p>	<p>Maybe.. mungkin.. kelancaran? umungkin adamasalah. // kelancaran? Fluent? // fluency dalam berbahasatungkinhaa ayelah kita most probably deal with the people who very good in English. Aaaa yeah. Kita pon rasa rendah diri nak bercakap // alright // that kind of feeling tu yang kadang-kadang jadi burden untuk kita untuk start to speak. // that feeling is actually aaa? // malu. // aaa we may not be that perfect.</p>	<p>54</p>	<p>Lack of fluency and low self efficacy in EL<sup>16</sup></p>	<p>Yah, and then... I think in my class there is Hanis, Khalis, and Syahril, right? They really ... yah they really good in speaking, I really afraid that mm, if I make mistake in front of them. Ramiza and Rumaid ahtu,</p>	<p>134</p>	<p>Low self efficacy in interacting using EL<sup>16</sup></p>	<p>I1: 54 I2: 134</p>	<p><sup>16</sup>Lack of fluency and low self efficacy in interacting using EL</p>

					they really good in speaking. Those make me fear too. Those people lah.				
2(b)	How do you cope/overcome the problems?	Aaaaa by practicing. You have to write your own speech, you have to write what you want..what guidelines you want to say, you have to write your points, what you want to deliver. Keep on practicing before you meet you client.	56	Make preparations <sup>19</sup>	I need to have courage to overcome this by myself. I need to... yah, maybe I need to err... use English more in my daily life. Really, I think I should do. I should do that. But then, I...	126, 148	126, 148	126, 148	17Increase interactions in EL
		If your client doesn't understand what you are trying to say, you can use your bahasa. And then, start to communicate back in English.	56	Code switch <sup>18</sup>	I think, I'm not supposed to tell them about that. Maybe I can initiate myself to... I think maybe I can ask them to has a convers	11: 56, 58	11: 56, 58	18Improve communication skills	
		Homework is important. Study your client. If you study your client, you know how you want to..we can.. kitaboleh faham macamanak bagi client kitafaham. Sebab kita study client kita. Kita study character dia. Apa yang dianak. So bilakitafaham caradia, kitaboleh prepare well to communicate with him.	56	Be anticipative towards others' needs <sup>18</sup>		148	Interact in EL in social media <sup>17</sup>	11: 56, 58	19Study and make preparations
		Yeah. By preparing myself	5	Study <sup>19</sup>					

		<p>well. By studying.</p>	<p>8</p>		<p>ation in English maybe, twice... maybe twice in a day, after the class, maybe we can chatting like using English language. I sometimes find international international student s, not from this university but from others, in the social media, just to err convers in English . Really, I did that sometimes.</p>				
<p>2(c)</p>	<p><b>Are the strategies to overcome the problems effective? Why?</b></p>	<p>Yeah. Mostly effective.</p>	<p>60</p>	<p>Strategies effective<sup>20</sup></p>	<p>Question not addressed</p>			<p>11: 60</p>	<p><sup>20</sup>Strategies to overcome problems effective</p>

Based on Table 1.0 above, the informants' excerpts to the interview questions were transcribed in elaborations and summarized responses were shown in the occurrences. The generated main themes are as shown in the table which are:

- a) Exercises and reading extensively.
- b) Fulfilling subject requirements.
- c) Social interactions.
- d) Positive impact on academic performance.
- e) Negative impact on motivation and academic performance.
- f) Teachers not well trained to teach EL.
- g) Social environment not supportive of EL interaction.
- h) Lack of fluency and low self-efficacy in interacting using EL.
- i) Increase interactions in EL.
- j) Improve communication skills.
- k) Study and make preparations.
- l) Strategies to overcome problems effective.

Table 2.0 further presents the findings from this research based the interview questions, occurrences, elaborations and themes as shown below:

**Table 2.0: Summary of Research Findings**

Interview Questions	Main-themes	Sub-themes
1- How do learn the four basic English skills in this university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercises and practice.</li> <li>• Extensive reading for classes.</li> <li>• Classroom activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercises and reading extensively.</li> <li>• Fulfilling subject requirements.</li> <li>• Social interactions.</li> </ul>
2- To what degree/extent the skills have affected your academic skills and performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse effect on motivation.</li> <li>• Adverse effect on academic performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive impact on academic performance.</li> <li>• Negative impact on motivation and academic performance.</li> </ul>
3- What are the challenges you have faced in learning the four language skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers not well trained.</li> <li>• Teachers not motivating.</li> <li>• Teacher too fast.</li> <li>• Low self-efficacy in interacting using EL.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers not well trained to teach EL.</li> <li>• Teachers not motivating.</li> <li>• Social environment not supportive of EL interaction.</li> <li>• Lack of fluency and low self-efficacy in interacting using EL.</li> </ul>
4- What are the challenges you have faced in utilizing the four skills in your social interaction?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of fluency in interacting using EL.</li> <li>• Low self-efficacy in interacting using EL.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of fluency in English communication.</li> <li>• Language anxiety and low confidence in using English.</li> </ul>
5- How do you cope with the problems?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have more interactions in improving communications in EL.</li> <li>• Interact by using EL in social media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase interactions in EL.</li> <li>• Improve communication skills.</li> <li>• Study and make preparations prior to planned interaction.</li> <li>• Find suitable peers to communicate in EL.</li> <li>• Have self-courage to overcome the problem and improve the situation.</li> </ul>
6- Are the strategies to overcome the problems effective? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective ways and strategies to overcome problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find effective ways and strategies to overcome problems.</li> </ul>

**VI. DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that some addressed responses are the common problems and challenges faced the EL teachers and learners especially among non-native English speakers. The discussion of this study is also addressing the issues in the problem statement in order to explore in-depth picture of this study.

**A) IMPROVING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY BY FULFILLING SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS**

In order to improve English language skills through subject requirements, it is crystal clear that the students are still having the lack of language proficiency when it requires them to produce their own language outputs. The students are still depending on the textbooks or instructional materials which indicate their lack of self confidence in communication in English by their own ways and styles. The interview responses through the mixed use of English and Malay languages are also a clear sign that they are still having problem in EL proficiency which has to be overcome since the early stage of pre-university language learning.

**B) THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE ABILITY TOWARDS LANGUAGE MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE**

From the responses, the respondents have mentioned the effect of language ability among the respondents has positive and negative impacts towards their language motivation and performance. Hence, it is very important for the teachers to inculcate the learning motivation among their students first in order to strengthen self-learning motivation in learning English. When the students have found their ability to learn, this will push them up to achieve more in language skills and proficiency. The teachers also have to be well trained in teaching English and keeping the motivation up among the students. The teachers themselves are the main factor that affect the language learning motivation among their students positively or vice versa.

**C) HAVING LANGUAGE EXERCISES AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS EXTENSIVELY**

The need to have language exercises and reading extensively is also a crucial issue among language learners as the teachers have to be more creative in conducting language activities during classroom session and assigning extra language drills outside the classroom. The need to create and provide English language environment for social interaction is indeed an important factor in order to enhance language proficiency in the social settings. The respondents have mentioned few obstacles to achieving this goal which are the lack of fluency and low self-efficacy in interacting using EL. Hence, the respondents have suggested few strategies in improving the situation by increasing the interactions in EL, improving communication skills by making preparations prior to planned interaction, finding suitable peers to communicate in EL and to have self-courage to overcome the problem and improve the situation. The students also have to find effective ways and strategies to overcome their problems.

Table 3.0 below presents summary of theme generation as shown below:

**Table 3.0: Summary of Theme Generation**

RQ	Interview Questions	Support occurrence DU I1&I2	Theme I1&I2
1(a)	How do learn the four basic English skills in this university?	I2: 50, 62	<sup>9</sup> Exercises and reading extensively
		I1:38, 40 I2:114, 120	<sup>10</sup> Fulfilling subject requirements
		I1: 38	<sup>11</sup> Social interactions
1(b)	To what degree/extent the skills have affected your academic skills and performance?	I1: 42,44	<sup>12</sup> Positive impact on academic performance
		I2: 114,116	<sup>13</sup> Negative impact on motivation and academic performance
1(c)	What are the challenges you have faced in learning the four language skills?	I2:106, 96, 114	<sup>14</sup> Teachers not well trained to teach EL
		I1:46,48, 50,52	<sup>15</sup> Social environment not supportive of EL interaction
2(a)	What are the challenges you have faced in utilizing the four skills in your social interaction?	I1: 54 I2: 134	<sup>16</sup> Lack of fluency and low self efficacy in interacting using EL
2(b)	How do you cope/overcome the problems?	I2: 126, 148	<sup>17</sup> Increase interactions in EL
		I1: 56, 58	<sup>18</sup> Improve communication skills
		I1: 56, 58	<sup>19</sup> Study and make preparations
2(c)	Are the strategies to overcome the problems effective? Why?	I1: 60	<sup>20</sup> Strategies to overcome problems effective

**VII. CONCLUSIONS**

This paper has explored important issues in producing a proficient English language graduates in the academic and social interaction settings. The generated themes and sub-themes of this study can be the eye opener for the educational institutions especially in IIUM that the students are still struggling with their language proficiency in EL although they have passed English Placement Test (EPT) during pre-university level. In addition, the needs to continue suitable language teaching and learning strategies should be continuously enforced in order to strengthen students' language motivation, ability and proficiency until they achieve the level of independent language user in various language communication skills. The findings are also a proactive eye opener for definitive actions to be taken to improve EL interaction amongst Malaysian undergraduates towards the fulfilment of the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB-HE) 2015-2025 (Higher Education) aspirations.

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