

The Influence of External and Internal Factors on Communication Strategies: A PLS-SEM Analysis

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.102100033>

Received: 27 June 2026; Accepted: 08 July 2026; Published: 24 July 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of external and internal factors on learners' communication strategies using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Communication strategies are important in helping learners maintain interaction and overcome difficulties in foreign language communication. Grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and McCroskey's Communication Apprehension Theory, the study investigates how environmental and psychological factors affect learners' use of social-affective, fluency-oriented, negotiation for meaning, accuracy-oriented, and message reduction strategies. A quantitative approach was employed using a questionnaire adapted from Yaman and Kavasoglu (2013) and Endler (1980). Data were collected from students enrolled in Introductory Arabic courses and analysed using SmartPLS 4 to assess the measurement and structural models. The findings revealed that external factors significantly influenced all dimensions of communication strategies, indicating that classroom environment, peer interaction, and audience response strongly affect learners' communication behaviour. In contrast, internal factors such as anxiety and self-confidence did not show significant relationships with communication strategies. The results also demonstrated acceptable reliability, validity, and predictive relevance of the proposed model. Overall, the study highlights the importance of supportive learning environments in encouraging effective communication among learners. The findings provide valuable implications for educators and contribute to the understanding of communication strategies in foreign language learning contexts through the application of PLS-SEM analysis.

Keywords: Communication Strategies, External Factors, Internal Factors, Communication Apprehension, PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

Communication strategies play a crucial role in helping language learners maintain interaction and convey meaning when they encounter linguistic difficulties during communication. In foreign language learning contexts, learners often experience anxiety, fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and pressure from classroom environments, all of which may influence the strategies they use during communication. According to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, language learning develops through social interaction and collaborative communication within meaningful contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, McCroskey's (1977) Communication Apprehension Theory explains that communication anxiety may arise from both internal psychological conditions and external environmental influences. Previous studies have shown that external factors such as audience response, classroom atmosphere, and technological settings significantly affect learners' communication performance and strategy use (Gong & Kanai, 2025; Karin et al., 2025). At the same time, internal factors including anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and lack of confidence also contribute to learners' communication behaviour (Aripin et al., 2025). These findings indicate that communication strategies

are shaped by a combination of psychological and situational influences that affect learners' ability to communicate effectively in second or foreign language settings.

Despite the growing body of research on communication anxiety and communication strategies, several gaps remain in the literature. Most previous studies have examined either communication anxiety or communication strategies separately, with limited emphasis on how both internal and external factors simultaneously influence multiple dimensions of communication strategies. In addition, earlier studies mainly focused on descriptive or qualitative analyses of learners' speaking challenges and coping strategies (Karin et al., 2025; Aripin et al., 2025), while fewer studies have empirically tested the structural relationships between these variables using advanced statistical approaches. Furthermore, limited research has explored the combined influence of external and internal factors on specific communication strategy dimensions such as social-affective, fluency-oriented, negotiation for meaning, accuracy-oriented, and message reduction strategies adapted from Yaman and Kavasoğlu (2013). Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationships between external factors, internal factors, and communication strategies. PLS-SEM is considered suitable because it enables the researcher to evaluate both measurement and structural models simultaneously while examining complex relationships among multiple constructs (Hair et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2018). The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of how learners adapt their communication behaviour in challenging language learning environments.

Research Objective, Research Questions, and Hypothesis

The research questions will be addressed through SmartPLS analysis, incorporating both the measurement model and the structural model.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between External Factors and Social-Affective Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Social-Affective Strategies?	Ho1: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Social-Affective Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between External Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies?	Ho2: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between External Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies?	Ho3: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between External Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies?	Ho4: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between External Factors and Message Reduction Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Message Reduction Strategies?	Ho5: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Message Reduction Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Social-	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and	Ho6: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors

Affective Strategies	Social-Affective Strategies?	and Social-Affective Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies?	Ho7: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies?	Ho8: There is no significant relationship between External Factors Internal Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies?	Ho9: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Message Reduction Strategies	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Message Reduction Strategies?	Ho10: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors and Message Reduction Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant effect between External Factors and Communication Strategies	Is there a significant effect between External Factors and Communication Strategies?	Ho11: There is no significant between External Factors and Communication Strategies
To investigate if there is a significant effect between Internal Factors and Communication Strategies	Is there a significant effect between Internal Factors and Communication Strategies?	Ho12: There is no significant between Internal Factors and Communication Strategies

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

- Sociocultural Theory

The Sociocultural Theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky (1978) explains that learning is fundamentally a social process that develops through interaction with others and engagement within a cultural context. According to this theory, cognitive development occurs as individuals participate in social activities and gradually internalize knowledge through communication and collaboration with more knowledgeable others, such as teachers, peers, or language experts. A central concept in Sociocultural Theory is the Zone of Proximal Development, which refers to the gap between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with guidance or support. Through interaction within this zone, learners receive scaffolding, a form of assistance that helps them gradually develop higher levels of understanding and skill. In the context of foreign language learning, Sociocultural Theory highlights the importance of communication and social interaction as key mechanisms for language development. Learners often employ communication strategies such as asking for clarification, paraphrasing ideas, using gestures, or switching to simpler expressions to maintain interaction and negotiate meaning when they encounter linguistic difficulties. These strategies allow learners to continue participating in conversations while receiving feedback and support from interlocutors. Through repeated social interactions and strategic communication, learners gradually internalize new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and discourse patterns. Thus, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes that communication

strategies are not merely tools for overcoming language gaps but are essential processes that facilitate collaborative learning and the development of communicative competence in foreign language contexts.

- Communication Apprehension Theory

The Communication Apprehension proposed by McCroskey (1977) explains the fear or anxiety individuals experience when anticipating or engaging in communication with others. McCroskey defined communication apprehension as a form of communication-related anxiety that can occur in various contexts such as public speaking, group discussions, meetings, or interpersonal conversations. According to the theory, this fear of communication can be influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors refer to psychological and personal characteristics within the individual, such as low self-confidence, negative self-perception, language anxiety, and fear of making mistakes or being judged by others. Individuals who doubt their communication abilities or worry about negative evaluation are more likely to experience heightened anxiety during communication situations. These internal feelings may lead learners to avoid speaking, limit participation in discussions, or feel uncomfortable when expressing their ideas. On the other hand, external factors relate to environmental or situational influences that can trigger communication anxiety. These include unfamiliar communication settings, lack of supportive interaction from peers or instructors, cultural expectations, and previous negative communication experiences such as criticism or embarrassment during speaking tasks. In educational settings, particularly in foreign language classrooms, students may experience communication apprehension when they are required to speak in front of others or participate in group discussions. Both internal and external factors interact to shape individuals' levels of communication fear, affecting their willingness to communicate and their overall participation in learning activities. Therefore, McCroskey's theory highlights the importance of supportive learning environments and confidence-building strategies to reduce communication anxiety and encourage more effective communication.

Past Studies

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that both external and internal factors play crucial roles in shaping learners' communication strategies, particularly in high-anxiety contexts such as oral presentations. From an external perspective, audience-related factors and learning environments strongly influence how speakers manage their communication. Gong and Kanai (2025) highlight how audience appearance in video conferencing acts as a powerful external factor affecting speakers' anxiety and performance. Their findings indicate that familiar audience representations, such as the appearance of a close friend, significantly reduce anxiety and enhance presentation performance, while anime avatars help lessen perceived evaluative pressure by diverting attention from audience gaze. Similarly, Karin et al. (2025) identify fear of judgment and audience response as major external barriers during presentations, prompting students to adopt strategies such as humour, interactive media, and seeking peer or instructor feedback to maintain audience engagement. These findings suggest that external conditions—whether technological settings, audience characteristics, or classroom environments—directly shape the selection of communication strategies that help speakers cope with performance demands.

In contrast, internal factors such as anxiety, self-confidence, preparation level, and cognitive appraisal of speaking tasks also strongly influence communication strategy use. Aripin et al. (2025) report that public speaking anxiety (PSA) among ESL learners stems largely from internal challenges related to linguistic competence and fear of error, leading students to rely heavily on relaxation, preparation, and positive thinking strategies. Likewise, Karin et al. (2025) show that internal states such as physical anxiety symptoms and topic uncertainty motivate learners to practise repeatedly, use self-affirmation, and employ cognitive refocusing strategies. When examined together, these studies reveal an interaction between internal and external influences: while external factors trigger anxiety or pressure, internal coping mechanisms and strategic choices determine how effectively learners manage communication challenges. Overall, the literature underscores that effective communication strategies emerge not from a single source, but from learners' adaptive responses to both situational demands and internal psychological states, highlighting the need for supportive environments that address both dimensions simultaneously.

Conceptual Framework and Proposed Model of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study examines the influence of external and internal factors on learners' use of communication strategies in foreign language learning using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The framework is based on the communication strategies instrument developed by Ismail Yaman and Mehmet Kavasoğlu (2013), which categorizes communication strategies into several dimensions: social-affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, and message reduction strategies. These strategies represent the various techniques learners use to maintain communication when they encounter linguistic difficulties during interaction. Social-affective strategies involve managing emotions and seeking social support to facilitate communication, while fluency-oriented strategies focus on maintaining the flow of conversation. Negotiation for meaning strategies involve clarification requests, repetition, and confirmation checks to ensure mutual understanding. Accuracy-oriented strategies emphasize careful attention to grammatical correctness and language form, whereas message reduction strategies involve simplifying or avoiding certain messages when learners lack sufficient linguistic resources.

The framework also incorporates the measurement of internal and external factors that influence fear of communication, based on the concept of anxiety developed by Norman S. Endler (1980). Internal factors refer to personal psychological conditions such as low confidence, fear of making mistakes, language anxiety, and negative self-perception, which may affect learners' willingness to communicate. External factors, on the other hand, refer to environmental influences such as classroom atmosphere, peer reactions, teacher support, and social expectations that may increase or reduce learners' communication anxiety. These factors are theoretically supported by the Communication Apprehension Theory proposed by James C. McCroskey (1977), which explains that individuals often experience fear or anxiety when communicating due to both personal psychological traits and situational environmental conditions.

In addition, the framework is anchored in the Sociocultural Theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes that language learning develops through social interaction and communication within a cultural context. According to this theory, learners acquire language skills through collaborative interaction with others, particularly within the Zone of Proximal Development, where guidance and social support facilitate learning. Within this context, communication strategies play an important role in enabling learners to sustain interaction and negotiate meaning despite linguistic limitations. The proposed model suggests that both external and internal factors influence the extent to which learners employ different communication strategies. Through PLS-SEM analysis, the framework allows for the examination of how psychological and environmental factors affect learners' strategic communication behaviors in foreign language contexts, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of how learners manage communication challenges during language interaction.

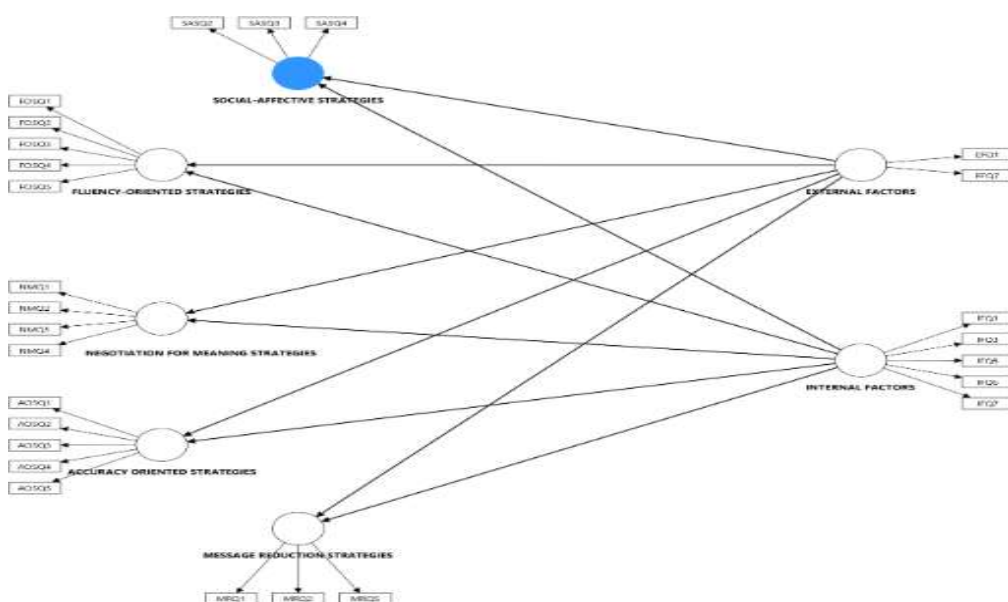


Figure 1- The Conceptual Framework

Influence of External and Internal Fear on Communication Strategies

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative research design to extend and predict an existing theory. The model selected (Figure 1) is a Type II hierarchical component model that uses a reflective–reflective approach. According to Fornell and Bookstein (1982), a reflective model is suitable when the construct represents a trait that influences its indicators.

Population and Sample

The demographic analysis is reported in percentages. According to Ziegenfuss (2021), using percentages helps researchers show how well the sample represents the population and allows the findings to be generalized. It also provides a clear and simple overview of the participants' characteristics.

Table 2- Percentage for Demographic Profile

Question	Demographic Profile	Categories	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male (114)	35.5%
		Female (207)	64.5%
2	Introductory Arabic Course	Level 1 (102)	31.8%
		Level 2 (105)	32.7%
		Level 3 (114)	35.5%

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the respondents based on gender and their level in the Introductory Arabic Course. Most respondents were female (64.5%), while males accounted for 35.5%, indicating a higher female representation in the study. In terms of course level, the distribution of respondents was relatively balanced across all three levels, with Level 3 having the highest percentage (35.5%), followed by Level 2 (32.7%) and Level 1 (31.8%). This suggests that participants from different learning stages were equally represented, providing a well-distributed sample for the study.

Instrument

Table 3 presents the distribution of items included in the questionnaire. The instrument used a 5 Likert scale with scale 1 is never. Scale 2 represents rarely. Scale 3 represents sometimes, while scale 4 is often and scale 5 is always.

Table 3- Distribution of Item in Instrument

SECTION	VARIABLE	SUB-COMPONENT	NO OF ITEMS
B	COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES Yaman, &, Kavasoglu, (2013).	SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	6
		FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	6
		NEGOTIATION FOR	4

		MEANING STRATEGIES	
		ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	5
		MESSAGE REDUCATION, ORIENTATION AND NON-VERBAL STRATEGIES	5
		TOTAL FOR CS	25
C	CAUSES OF FEAR Endler (1980)	EXTERNAL FACTORS	7
		INTERNAL FACTORS	7
		TOTAL FEAR	14
	TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS		40

The instrument used in this study consists of two main sections representing key variables in the research model, namely **Communication Strategies (Section B)** and **Causes of Fear (Section C)**, adapted from Yaman and Kavasoglu (2013) and Endler (1980). The **Communication Strategies** variable includes five sub-components: social-affective strategies (6 items), which involve managing emotions and interaction with others; fluency-oriented strategies (6 items), which focus on maintaining smooth communication; negotiation for meaning strategies (4 items), which involve clarifying and ensuring understanding during interaction; accuracy-oriented strategies (5 items), which emphasize correct language use; and message reduction, orientation, and non-verbal strategies (5 items), which involve simplifying messages or using gestures when facing difficulty. Altogether, this section contains 25 items. Meanwhile, the **Causes of Fear** variable comprises two sub-components: external factors (7 items), such as environmental or situational influences, and internal factors (7 items), such as personal anxiety or self-confidence, totaling 14 items. Overall, the questionnaire includes 40 items designed to measure both the strategies used in communication and the factors contributing to fear, providing a comprehensive understanding of the constructs in the study.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data were collected using a Google Form and subsequently analysed with SmartPLS 4 in two main stages. Following the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2017), the analysis was conducted at two levels: the measurement model and the structural model. The first stage focuses on assessing the measurement model, which evaluates the outer model, while the second stage examines the structural model, which represents the inner model. The results obtained from these analyses were used to address the research questions and to validate the proposed model.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The model developed in this study is a lower-order construct (LOC), and a reflective measurement model was employed. In a reflective model, a single latent construct that is not directly observable influences multiple observed variables, also known as indicators. A key characteristic of this approach is that the indicators are interchangeable, as they reflect the same underlying construct. In this study, each construct is measured using several indicators that represent its respective sub-components.

The findings of the study are presented in two main stages. The first stage focuses on the measurement model, which evaluates the reliability and validity of the constructs. The second stage presents the structural model, which examines the relationships between constructs and provides answers to the research questions.

Measurement Model

In SmartPLS, the measurement model is used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs by examining the relationships between latent variables and their observed indicators. This stage focuses on the assessment of the outer model. Figure 2 illustrates the measurement model applied in this study, while a more detailed explanation of its components is provided in the tables that follow.

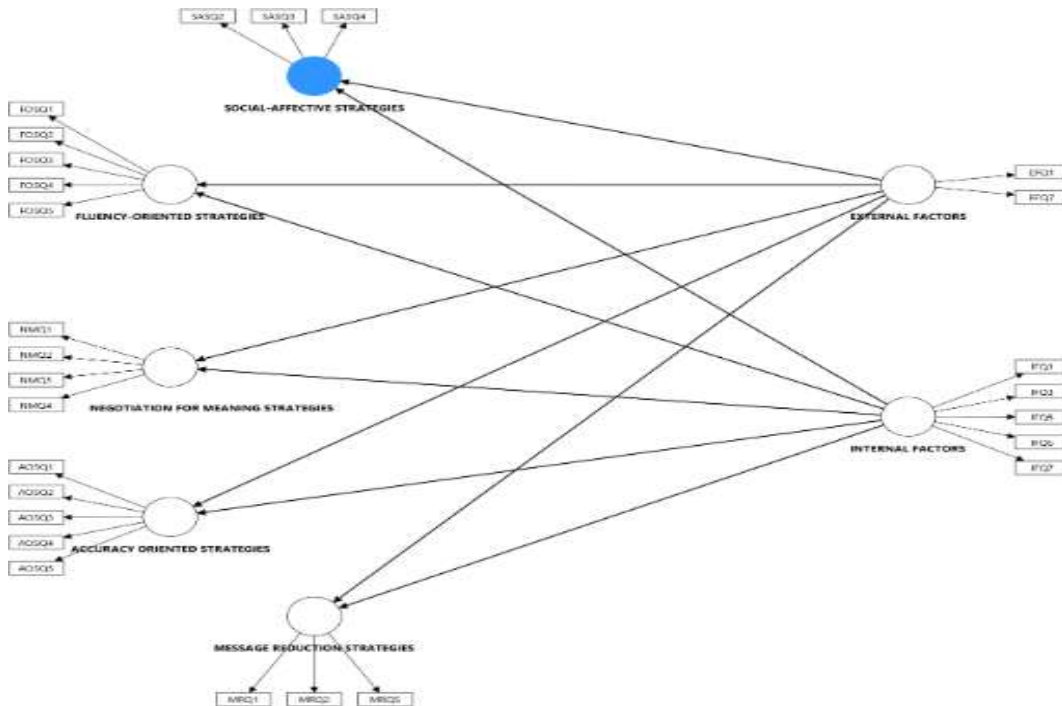


Figure 2- Measurement Model for Communication Strategies and Causes of Fear

1. Reliability

According to Ringle and Sarstedt (2016), reliability is evaluated through both indicator reliability and internal consistency reliability. Internal consistency is assessed using Composite Reliability (ρ_c) and Cronbach's Alpha, with acceptable threshold values ranging between 0.70 and 0.90. Indicator reliability is determined based on factor loadings, which should exceed 0.70, and squared loadings, which should be at least 0.50. Additionally, convergent validity is confirmed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where values of 0.50 or higher are considered acceptable.

Table 5 presents the reliability results for the construct Internal Factors. The results show that all items (IFQ1, IFQ3, IFQ5, IFQ6, and IFQ7) have strong factor loadings ranging from 0.775 to 0.880, indicating that each item is a good indicator of the construct. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.88 demonstrates good internal consistency among the items, while the Composite Reliability ($\rho_c = 0.91$) further confirms that the construct has excellent overall reliability. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted ($AVE = 0.669$) is above the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating adequate convergent validity and showing that the construct explains a substantial portion of the variance in its indicators. Overall, the Internal Factors construct demonstrates strong reliability and validity.

Table 6 -Results for Reliability- Social Affective Strategies

CONSTRUCT/ITEM	FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY (ρ_c)	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)
		0.693	0.83	0.62

SASQ2	0.799	
SASQ3	0.824	
SASQ4	0.736	

Table 6 presents the reliability results for the construct Social Affective Strategies. The findings indicate that all items (SASQ2, SASQ3, and SASQ4) show acceptable factor loadings ranging from 0.736 to 0.824, suggesting that each item adequately represents the construct. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.693 indicates moderate internal consistency, while the Composite Reliability ($\rho_c = 0.83$) shows good overall reliability of the construct. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted ($AVE = 0.62$) exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating satisfactory convergent validity and confirming that the construct explains a sufficient amount of variance in its indicators. Overall, the Social Affective Strategies construct demonstrates acceptable reliability and validity.

Table 7 -Results for Reliability- Fluency-Oriented Strategies

CONSTRUCT /ITEM	FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY (ρ_c)	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)
		0.841	0.887	0.611
FOSQ1	0.813			
FOSQ2	0.827			
FOSQ3	0.773			
FOSQ4	0.779			
FOSQ5	0.71			

Table 7 presents the reliability results for the construct Fluency-Oriented Strategies. The findings show that all items (FOSQ1, FOSQ2, FOSQ3, FOSQ4, and FOSQ5) have strong factor loadings ranging from 0.710 to 0.827, indicating that each item appropriately measures the construct. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.841 demonstrates good internal consistency among the items, while the Composite Reliability ($\rho_c = 0.887$) indicates strong overall reliability of the construct. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted ($AVE = 0.611$) exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming adequate convergent validity and showing that the construct explains a satisfactory level of variance in its indicators. Overall, the Fluency-Oriented Strategies construct demonstrates good reliability and validity.

Table 8 -Results for Reliability- Negotiation for Meaning Strategies

CONSTRUCT / ITEM	FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY (ρ_c)	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)
		0.842	0.893	0.677
NMQ1	0.803			
NMQ2	0.837			
NMQ3	0.869			
NMQ4	0.78			

Table 8 presents the reliability results for the construct Negotiation for Meaning Strategies. The results indicate that all items (NMQ1, NMQ2, NMQ3, and NMQ4) have strong factor loadings ranging from 0.780 to 0.869, showing that each item is a good indicator of the construct. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.842 demonstrates good internal consistency among the items, while the Composite Reliability ($\rho_c = 0.893$) indicates high overall reliability of the construct. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted ($AVE = 0.677$) is above the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming satisfactory convergent validity and indicating that the construct explains a substantial amount of variance in its indicators. Overall, the Negotiation for Meaning Strategies construct shows strong reliability and validity.

Table 9 -Results for Reliability- Accuracy-Oriented Strategies

CONSTRUCT/ ITEM	FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY (ρ_c)	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)
		0.855	0.896	0.634
AOSQ1	0.793	0.855	0.896	0.634
AOSQ2	0.814			
AOSQ3	0.823			
AOSQ4	0.856			
AOSQ5	0.683			

Table 9 presents the reliability results for the construct Accuracy-Oriented Strategies. The results show that all items (AOSQ1, AOSQ2, AOSQ3, AOSQ4, and AOSQ5) have acceptable to strong factor loadings ranging from 0.683 to 0.856, indicating that each item adequately represents the construct. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.855 reflects good internal consistency among the items, while the Composite Reliability ($\rho_c = 0.896$) indicates strong overall reliability of the construct. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted ($AVE = 0.634$) exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming satisfactory convergent validity and showing that the construct explains a sufficient amount of variance in its indicators. Overall, the Accuracy-Oriented Strategies construct demonstrates good reliability and validity.

Table 10 -Results for Reliability- Message Reduction Strategies

CONSTRUCT/ ITEM	FACTOR LOADING	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY (ρ_c)	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)
		0.668	0.82	0.603
MRQ1	0.776	0.668	0.82	0.603
MRQ2	0.831			
MRQ5	0.719			

Table 10 presents the reliability results for the construct Message Reduction Strategies. The findings show that all items (MRQ1, MRQ2, and MRQ5) have acceptable factor loadings ranging from 0.719 to 0.831, indicating that each item is a suitable indicator of the construct. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.668 suggests moderate internal consistency among the items, while the Composite Reliability ($\rho_c = 0.820$) indicates good overall reliability of the construct. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted ($AVE = 0.603$) exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming satisfactory convergent validity and showing that the construct

explains an adequate level of variance in its indicators. Overall, the Message Reduction Strategies construct demonstrates acceptable reliability and validity.

2. Validity

According to Ramayah et.al. (2018), for validity, the Discriminant validity (HTMT) needs to be less than 0.85 or 0.90.

Table 11- Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

	ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	EXTERNAL FACTORS	FLUENCY- ORIENTED STRATEGIES	INTERNAL FACTORS
ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES				
EXTERNAL FACTORS	0.538			
FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	0.876	0.541		
INTERNAL FACTORS	0.069	0.35	0.102	
MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	0.696	0.727	0.726	0.25
NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	0.791	0.611	0.814	0.134
SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	0.647	0.49	0.617	0.094

Table 11 presents the discriminant validity of the model. The results show that all constructs (Accuracy-Oriented Strategies, External Factors, Fluency-Oriented Strategies, Internal Factors, Message Reduction Strategies, Negotiation for Meaning Strategies, and Social-Affective Strategies) demonstrate acceptable discriminant validity as most HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85, indicating that the constructs are sufficiently distinct from one another. The highest relationships are observed between Fluency-Oriented Strategies and Accuracy-Oriented Strategies (0.876) as well as Negotiation for Meaning Strategies and Fluency-Oriented Strategies (0.814), suggesting relatively stronger conceptual associations between these communication strategy dimensions. In contrast, Internal Factors show very low correlations with the other constructs (as low as 0.069), indicating strong independence. Overall, the results confirm that the measurement model has satisfactory discriminant validity, meaning each construct measures a unique aspect of the research framework.

Structural Model

In SmartPLS, the structural model visualizes the hypothesized causal relationships between constructs. The structural model is thus formed after the researcher has established the reliability and validity in the measurement model. For the analysis of the structural model, the researcher runs bootstrapping and examines the collinearity, path coefficients of determination, effect size, PLS predict, and IPMA. In addition to that, the analysis in the structural model allows the researcher to answer research questions 1-6 and hypotheses 1-3). Figure 3 below shows the structural model for this study. Detailed explanation is elaborated in Tables below.

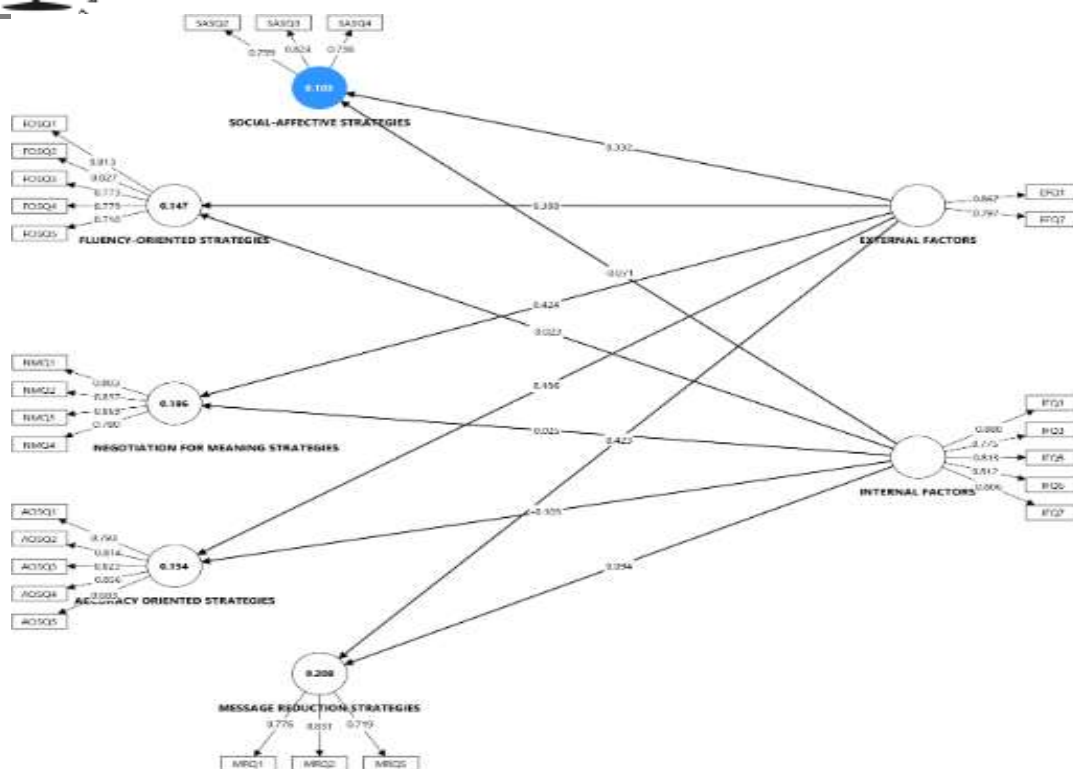


Figure 3- Structural Model Composing through Socio-Cultural theory

1. Collinearity

According to Ringle & Sarstedt (2016), the cut-off value for collinearity inner model VIF is less than or equal to 5.0.

Table 12- Collinearity

	Original sample (O)
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	1.068
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	1.068
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	1.068
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	1.068
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	1.068
INTERNAL FACTORS -> ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	1.068
INTERNAL FACTORS -> FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	1.068
INTERNAL FACTORS -> MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	1.068
INTERNAL FACTORS -> NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	1.068
INTERNAL FACTORS -> SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	1.068

Table 12 above presents the collinearity results for this study. The results show that all paths from External Factors and Internal Factors to Accuracy-Oriented Strategies, Fluency-Oriented Strategies, Message Reduction Strategies, Negotiation for Meaning Strategies, and Social-Affective Strategies have identical VIF values of

1.068. According to Ringle et al. (2024), the inner model VIF must be less than or equal to 5.0. Hence, this indicates that there is no multicollinearity issue among the predictor constructs. This means that External Factors and Internal Factors are not highly correlated and each contributes independently to explaining the communication strategy constructs in the model. Overall, the results confirm that the structural model is free from collinearity problems and is suitable for further analysis.

2. Coefficients of determination (R^2)

According to Ramayah,et.al. (2018) For coefficients of determination (R^2) 0.2 to 0.7, depending on the field of study. Social Sciences & Economics follows the range above.

Table 13- R^2

	Original sample (O)
ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	0.154
FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	0.147
MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	0.208
NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	0.186
SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	0.103

Table 10 shows the results for coefficients of determination (R^2). The results show that External Factors and Internal Factors explain 15.4% of the variance in Accuracy-Oriented Strategies, 14.7% in Fluency-Oriented Strategies, 20.8% in Message Reduction Strategies, 18.6% in Negotiation for Meaning Strategies, and 10.3% in Social-Affective Strategies. Overall, these values indicate a low to moderate level of explanatory power, suggesting that while the model has some ability to predict communication strategies, a substantial portion of the variance is influenced by other factors not included in the model.

3. P-Value

Table 14- Interpretation for p-value

Thresholds	Interpretation	Decision
$p \leq 0.05$	Often considered statistically significant	Reject H_0
$p \leq 0.01$	Indicates very strong evidence against H_0	Reject H_0
$p > 0.05$	Weak or no evidence against H_0	Failure to reject H_0

According to Goodman (1999), the p-value threshold serves as the cut-off point for determining statistical significance and is most commonly set at 0.05. Table 14 presents the interpretation of these thresholds. When the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, the result is generally considered statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. A p-value of 0.01 or lower indicates very strong evidence against the null hypothesis (H_0). In contrast, a p-value greater than 0.05 suggests weak evidence, and therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Table 15-Path Coefficient for the current study

	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	7.055	0
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	6.579	0
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	7.008	0
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	7.56	0
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	5.74	0
INTERNAL FACTORS -> ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	1.447	0.148
INTERNAL FACTORS -> FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	0.304	0.761
INTERNAL FACTORS -> MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	1.493	0.135
INTERNAL FACTORS -> NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	0.394	0.694
INTERNAL FACTORS -> SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	0.928	0.353

Table 15 presents data to answer research questions and hypotheses. Path coefficients are presented in beta and t-value. The significant value (t-statistic) must be more than 1.65, and p-values must be less than 0.05 to show significant relationships. The results indicate that External Factors have a strong and statistically significant positive influence on all communication strategies, as shown by high T-values (ranging from 5.74 to 7.56) and P-values of 0.000, meaning all effects are significant at $p < 0.05$. In contrast, Internal Factors do not show any statistically significant influence on any of the communication strategies, as their T-values are below the critical threshold of 1.96 and all P-values are above 0.05. This suggests that External Factors play a key role in shaping learners' communication strategies, while Internal Factors do not have a meaningful predictive effect in this model. Overall, the findings highlight External Factors as the dominant predictor in the structural model.

4. Effect Size (f^2)

According to Ramayah et al. (2018), the cutoff values for effect sizes (f^2) are 0.02 (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large). This section presents data to answer research questions and hypotheses;

RQ2- Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies?

H02- There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies.

According to Ringle, et.al (2024), for effect size, values from 0.02 to 0.15 are considered small. Values between 0.15 to 0.35 are considered medium while values 0.35 and above are considered large.

Table 16- Effect Size

	Original sample (O)	Interpretation
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	0.183	Medium effect
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	0.165	Medium effect
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	0.211	Medium effect
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	0.207	Medium effect
EXTERNAL FACTORS -> SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	0.115	Small effect

Table 16 presents the effect size (f^2) results, which measure the strength of the impact of External Factors and Internal Factors on the different communication strategies. The results show that External Factors have small to approaching moderate effects on all communication strategies, with the strongest effect on Message Reduction Strategies (0.211) and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies (0.207), followed by Accuracy-Oriented Strategies (0.183), Fluency-Oriented Strategies (0.165), and Social-Affective Strategies (0.115). Overall, this suggests that External Factors contribute meaningfully to predicting communication strategies. With reference to Table 12 above, H_{02} is rejected.

5. PLS Predict (Q^2)

In PLS-SEM, it is stated that $Q^2 \geq 0$ (Ringle et.al., 2024). Table 18 below reveals the PLS Predict (Q^2) for the dependent variable. The analysis reveals the Q^2 for all items in the dependent variable.

Table 17- PLS Predict (Q^2)

	Q^2 predict	RMSE	MAE
ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	0.133	0.938	0.73
FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	0.124	0.942	0.759
MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	0.186	0.909	0.717
NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	0.168	0.919	0.735
SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	0.082	0.966	0.764

Table 17 above shows the results for Q^2 Predict in the study. According to Cohen (1988), Q^2 Predict is used to interpret the magnitude of the predictive relevance. For $Q^2 > 0$ indicates the model has predictive relevance. Secondly, **0.02** indicates **small** predictive relevance. Next, **0.15** indicates **medium** predictive relevance. Finally, **0.35** indicates **large** predictive relevance.

The results show that all Q^2 predict values are greater than zero, indicating that the model has acceptable predictive relevance for Accuracy-Oriented Strategies (0.133), Fluency-Oriented Strategies (0.124), Message Reduction Strategies (0.186), Negotiation for Meaning Strategies (0.168), and Social-Affective Strategies (0.082). Message Reduction Strategies show the highest predictive relevance, while Social-Affective Strategies show the lowest. The RMSE and MAE values further indicate the prediction error for each construct, with relatively similar values across constructs, suggesting consistent but moderate predictive accuracy. Overall, the

findings confirm that the model has acceptable out-of-sample predictive ability, although the strength of prediction varies slightly across the constructs.

6. IPMA

Importance–Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA) is a technique used to assess both the importance and performance of selected constructs or indicators within a model. According to Ringle and Sarstedt (2016), IPMA helps identify areas that require improvement by comparing how important a construct is relative to how well it performs. In this study, IPMA was conducted separately for each construct, and the results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18- Latent Variables Average Performance (Performance)

	LV performance value, average
ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	64.306
EXTERNAL FACTORS	69.533
FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	67.233
INTERNAL FACTORS	73.121
MESSAGE REDUCTION STRATEGIES	68.014
NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	69.415
SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	68.598

According to jointly (Hauf, 2024) for PLS-SEM IPMA (Importance-Performance Map Analysis), there isn't a single "good score," but rather constructs with high importance (total effects) but low performance scores (rescaled 0-100) are key areas for improvement, indicating high potential for managerial action, while high importance/high performance is good, and low importance/low performance means less priority. Performance scores range 0-100, with higher values showing better attainment, but you interpret them *relative* to their importance.

The results in Table 18 show that Internal Factors have the highest average performance (73.121), followed by External Factors (69.533). Among the communication strategies, Negotiation for Meaning Strategies (69.415), Social-Affective Strategies (68.598), Message Reduction Strategies (68.014), and Fluency-Oriented Strategies (67.233) show relatively similar moderate-to-high performance levels, while Accuracy-Oriented Strategies record the lowest mean value (64.306). Overall, the findings suggest that respondents demonstrate the highest average score in Internal Factors, while Accuracy-Oriented Strategies are comparatively lower, indicating variation in the strength or usage of different constructs within the study model.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussion

Table 19- Outcome of Research Hypothesis

NO	Research Question	Research Hypothesis	Outcome
1	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Social-	H01: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Social-Affective	Reject null hypothesis There is a relationship between

	Affective Strategies?	Strategies	External Factors and Social-Affective Strategies.
2	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies?	Ho2: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies	Reject null hypothesis There is a relationship between External Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies.
3	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies?	Ho3: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies	Reject null hypothesis There is a relationship between External Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies.
4	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies?	Ho4: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies	Reject null hypothesis There is a relationship between External Factors and Negotiation for Accuracy Oriented Strategies.
5	Is there a significant relationship between External Factors and Message Reduction Strategies?	Ho5: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Message Reduction Strategies	Reject null hypothesis There is a relationship between External Factors and Negotiation for Message Reduction Strategies.
6	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Social-Affective Strategies?	Ho6: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors and Social-Affective Strategies	Accept null hypothesis There is no relationship between Internal Factors and Social-Affective Strategies.
7	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies?	Ho7: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies	Accept null hypothesis There is no relationship between Internal Factors and Fluency-Oriented Strategies.
8	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies?	Ho8: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies	Accept null hypothesis There is no relationship between Internal Factors and Negotiation for Meaning Strategies.
9	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies?	Ho9: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies	Accept null hypothesis There is no relationship between Internal Factors and Accuracy Oriented Strategies.
10	Is there a significant relationship between Internal Factors and Message Reduction Strategies?	Ho10: There is no significant relationship between Internal Factors and Message Reduction Strategies	Accept null hypothesis There is no relationship between Internal Factors and Message Reduction Strategies.
11	Is there a significant effect between External Factors and Communication	Ho11: There is no significant relationship between External Factors and Communication Strategies	Reject null hypothesis There is a relationship between External Factors and Communication

	Strategies?		Strategies.
12	Is there a significant effect between Internal Factors and Communication Strategies?	Ho12: There is no significant between Internal Factors and Communication Strategies	Accept null hypothesis There is no relationship between Internal Factors and Communication Strategies.

Table 19 summarizes the outcomes of the research hypotheses by indicating whether each null hypothesis was accepted or rejected based on the statistical analysis. The results show that all hypotheses related to External Factors (H1–H5 and H11) were rejected, indicating that External Factors have significant relationships with all communication strategies, namely Social-Affective, Fluency-Oriented, Negotiation for Meaning, Accuracy-Oriented, and Message Reduction Strategies, as well as a significant overall effect on Communication Strategies. In contrast, all hypotheses related to Internal Factors (H6–H10 and H12) were accepted, indicating that there are no significant relationships or effects between Internal Factors and any of the communication strategies or the overall construct. Overall, these findings highlight that External Factors play a significant role in influencing communication strategies, whereas Internal Factors do not show any meaningful impact in this study.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Figure 4 below presents the proposed model for the influence of external factors on communication strategies. This study has shown that external factors affect social-affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies and message reduction strategies.

Figure 4- The Proposed Model

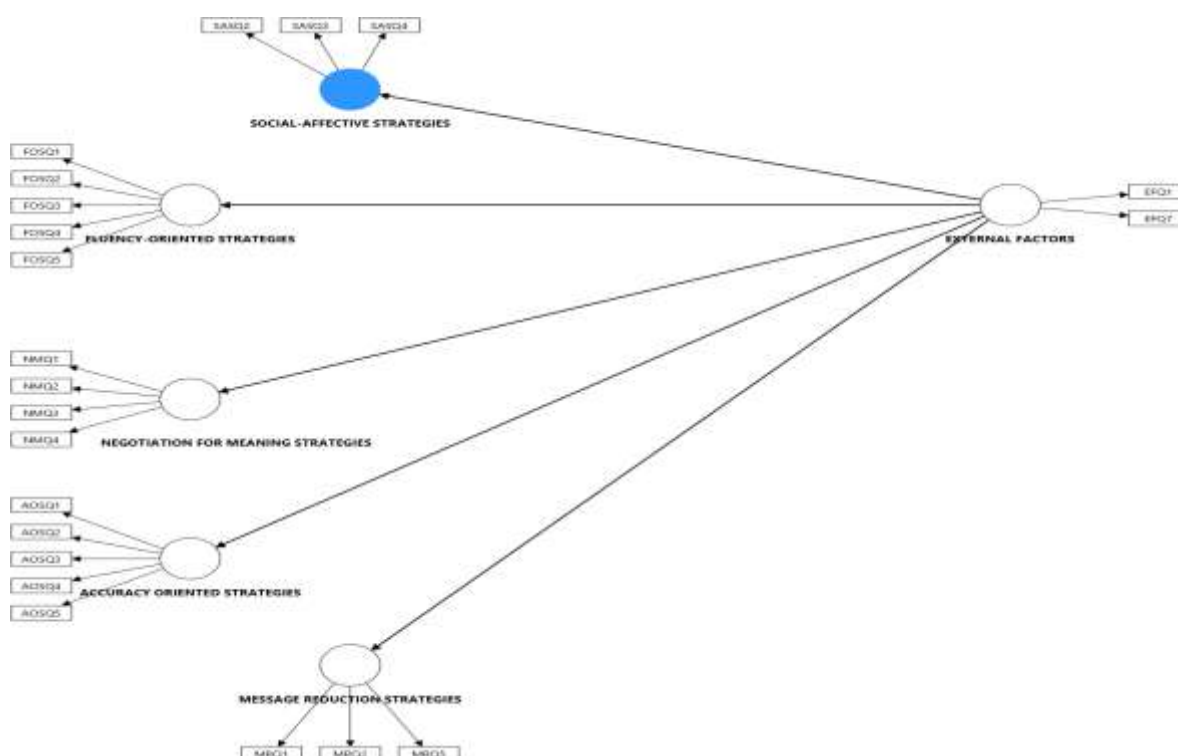


Figure 4- The Proposed Model

This study investigated the influence of external and internal factors on learners' communication strategies using PLS-SEM analysis. The findings revealed that external factors significantly influenced all dimensions of communication strategies, namely social-affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, and message reduction strategies. The structural model showed significant path coefficients for all relationships involving external factors, with p-values below 0.05,

indicating that environmental and situational conditions strongly shape learners' communication behaviour. In contrast, internal factors were found to have no statistically significant relationship with any communication strategy construct. These findings support McCroskey's (1977) Communication Apprehension Theory, which emphasizes the role of situational communication environments in influencing communication behaviour, as well as Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the importance of social interaction in language learning. The results are also consistent with previous studies by Gong and Kanai (2025), Karin et al. (2025), and Aripin et al. (2025), which found that audience response, classroom atmosphere, and communication settings significantly affect learners' use of communication strategies.

The implications of this study suggest that educators and language instructors should focus on creating supportive and less threatening learning environments to encourage effective communication among learners. Since external factors emerged as the dominant predictor of communication strategies, teachers should provide positive feedback, collaborative learning opportunities, and interactive classroom activities that reduce communication anxiety and promote meaningful interaction. The findings also indicate that communication strategies can be improved through environmental support rather than relying solely on learners' internal motivation or confidence. Furthermore, the use of PLS-SEM successfully validated the proposed model and demonstrated acceptable predictive relevance, reliability, and validity, supporting the suitability of this analytical approach for examining communication behaviour in language learning contexts (Hair et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2018).

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample of this study was limited to students enrolled in introductory Arabic courses, which may limit the generalizability of findings to learners from other languages backgrounds. Second, this study employed a quantitative survey-based approach using self-administered questionnaires. While this method is efficient for collecting large amounts of data, it may not fully capture the complexity of students' learning experiences and communication strategies.

Based on the limitations identified, several recommendations for future research are proposed. Researchers may conduct comparative studies involving different language proficiency levels, institutions, or cultural contexts to provide broader generalizability of findings. In addition, qualitative or mixed-method approaches may offer deeper insights into learners' experiences and communication challenges. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to examine changes in communication strategies over time. Future studies may also expand the model by including additional variables such as motivation, self-efficacy, cultural background, or technological learning environments to improve the explanatory power of the model. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on communication strategies by highlighting the significant role of external factors in shaping language learners' communicative behaviour.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank all the participants who voluntarily took part in this study and generously shared their time and insights.

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APPENDIX

Instrument No 5

Questionnaire On Oral Communication Strategies And Oral Presentation

(This instrument is adapted from Endler, 1980, and Yaman,2013)

SECTION	VARAIBLE	SUB-COMPONENT	NO OF ITEMS
B	COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES	SOCIAL-AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	6

	Yaman, &, Kavasoğlu, (2013).		
		FLUENCY-ORIENTED STRATEGIES	6
		NEGOTIATION FOR MEANING STRATEGIES	4
		ACCURACY ORIENTED STRATEGIES	5
		MESSAGE REDUCATION, ORIENTATION AND NON-VERBAL STRATEGIES	5
		TOTAL FOR CS	25
C	CAUSES OF FEAR Endler (1980)	EXTERNAL FACTORS	7
		INTERNAL FACTORS	7
		TOTAL FEAR	14
	TOTAL NUMBER OF ITMES		40

Q5 SEMESTER (CHOICES)

Section B- Communication Strategies

1	Never
2	Rarely
3	Sometimes
4	Very Often
5	Always

Social-Affective Strategies

1	SASQ1 I try to relax when I feel anxious.					
2	SASQ 2I try to enjoy the conversation.					
3	SASQ3I try to give a good impression to the listener					
4	SASQ 4I actively encourage myself to express what I want to say					
5	SASQ 5I don't mind taking risks even though I might make mistakes					
6	SASQ 6I try to use fillers when I cannot think of what to say.					

Fluency Oriented Strategies

1	FOSQ1 I pay attention to my rhythm and intonation.					
2	FOSQ 2I pay attention to my pronunciation					
3	FOSQ 3I pay attention to the conversational flow					
4	FOSQ4I change my way of saying things according to the context.					
5	FOSQ5I take my time to express what I want to say					
6	FOSQ6I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard					

Negotiation For Meaning Strategies

1	NMQ1 I make comprehension checks to ensure the listener understands what I want to say					
2	NMQ 2I repeat what I want to say until the listener understands.					
3	NMQ 3While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech.					
4	NMQ 4I give examples if the listener doesn't understand what I am saying.					

Accuracy Oriented Strategies

1	AOSQ1 I pay attention to grammar and word order during conversation					
2	AOSQ 2I notice myself using an expression which fits a rule that I have learned					
3	AOSQ 3I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.					
4	AOSQ 4I try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.					
5	AOSQ 5I try to talk like a native speaker.					

Message Reduction ,Orientation And Non-Verbal Strategies

1	MRQ1 I reduce the message and use simple expressions.					
2	MRQ2I use words which are familiar to me.					
3	MRQ3I replace the original message with another message because of feeling incapable of executing my original intent					
4	MRQ4I try to make eye contact when I am talking					
5	MRQ5I use gestures and facial expressions if I can't communicate how to express myself					