

# Personality Traits and the Use of Coping Strategies in Academic Oral Presentations among Malay ESL Learners

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## ABSTRACT

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This study examines the relationship between personality traits and coping strategies used by Malay learners during oral presentations. It aims to explore how different personality types may influence communication effectiveness in public speaking contexts. A descriptive–quantitative design was employed, with surveys serving as the main data collection method. Two sets of questionnaires; the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Oral Presentation Strategy Inventory (OPSI), were administered to 119 ESL learners enrolled in English courses at a Malaysian public university. The collected data were analysed using SPSS version 29. The findings indicated a predominance of introverted tendencies among participants, accompanied by a practical orientation reflected in their sensing traits. Extroverted learners appeared to perform better than introverted learners; however, both groups adopted comparable coping strategies to manage presentation anxiety. This study offers an in-depth understanding of how personality differences intersect with learners' communication strategies, extending discussions on individual factors that shape oral performance in ESL contexts. The results provide insights for educators and practitioners on how awareness of personality traits can inform more responsive teaching approaches to enhance learners' oral presentation skills.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is a crucial skill for academic and professional advancement and good oral presentation skills is a key aspect (Aziz et al., 2021, Tee et al., 2020). Despite its recognised importance, ESL learners persistently face challenges in this domain (Aziz et al., 2021; Tee et al., 2020; Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014). Jalleh et al. (2021) found that various factors attributed to the challenges faced by ESL learners in oral communications which include educational background, learning experience and culture.

Kembaren et al. (2022) found that there were various reasons which contributed to the challenges faced by ESL learners in oral presentations. Among the challenges included lack of self-confidence, fear of judgment and making mistakes compounded by nervousness and tension, and perceived lack of support. Grieve et al. (2021) found that peer judgment and the audiences' reception and responses heighten presenters' anxiety. Similarly, Mardiningrum and Ramadhani (2022) also found that audience factors affect the oral presentations of the students. Some of the concerns regarding oral presentations expressed by learners include forgetting their lines and peer reception (Abad et al., 2021). Peer reception include fear of making mistakes which could lead to embarrassment and losing face. Roslim et al. (2023) further confirmed that fear of negative audience perception, judgment and evaluation critically affect readiness and performance.

Oral presentation skills are closely intertwined with personality traits, defined as characteristic patterns of thought, emotion and behaviour, influenced by both psychological mechanisms and environmental interactions (Allport, 1937; Funder, 2016; Larsen & Buss, 2017; Bergner, 2020). A key trait, extraversion or introversion, significantly influences communication (Allport, 1937; Bahrudin & Amir, 2018). Extraversion is linked to oral fluency (Sheir et al., 2015; Van Daele et al., 2006) while introversion is associated with public speaking anxiety (Mustoip et al., 2024). Extroverts are more enthusiastic and expressive, while introverts prefer solitary learning due to anxiety (Raja, 2017). This is further supported by Liang and Kelsen (2018) who found extraverted students performed better in presentations, showing positive correlations in delivery aspects such as pronunciation and clarity of voice. Influenced by personality traits like neuroticism and extraversion also affects ESL learners' performance (Kelsen, 2019; Liang & Kelsen, 2018; Alrasheedi, 2020). In a study on the relationship between personality traits and oral presentations, Liang and Kelsen (2018) found that students who are extraverted are more likely to perform well in oral presentations introverted ones. They suggested that extraversion traits are useful for low ability student. Subsequent research has further emphasised how personality traits like neuroticism and extraversion underpin public speaking anxiety that affects ESL performance (Kelsen, 2019; Liang & Kelsen, 2018; Alrasheedi, 2020). Understanding this interplay is crucial for improving learner comfort and fostering confident communication.

A body of research has also invested into the strategies adopted by ESL learners in confronting their fears and difficulties in oral presentations (Belaman et al., 2022; Farizah, 2021; Zulkflee et al., 2023; Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014; Ghamarian, 2016; Rayati et al., 2022). The studies reveal limited English proficiency contributing to challenges in delivering oral presentations (Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014; Zulkflee et al., 2023) and the strategies employed to ensure successful presentations include tactics like message alteration, non-verbal cues, and negotiation for meaning (Belaman et al., 2022; Farizah, 2021; Zulkflee et al., 2023; Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014). Nonetheless, there has been a notable scarcity of research conducted in this specific area, particularly concerning Malay ESL learners in Malaysia, indicating a need for further investigation. More research is needed to comprehensively understand the dynamics of coping strategies among ESL learners in oral presentations. However, while Farizah (2021) established a lack of significant difference in strategies between personality types among Indonesian learners, this study seeks to replicate and extend this finding into a distinct demographic: monolingual Malay learner within a mainstream Malaysian public university. This is crucial for testing the generalisability of the theory that strategy use maybe independent of personality across different cultural and educational settings. Furthermore, this study introduces a context specific instrument: the Oral Presentation Strategy Inventory (OPSI). Adapted from

Nakatani's Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) (2006), the OPSI is tailored specifically to the demands of formal academic presentations rather than on general interactive communications. This allows for a more targeted investigations of strategy use in academic settings.

Therefore, this study intends to identify the coping strategies of the ESL learners in dealing with oral presentations and determine the relationship of the strategies with their personality traits. This can be expressed by the following research questions:

- (i) What are the respondents' personality traits?
- (ii) What are the strategies employed by the respondents in oral presentation?
- (iii) Is there a relationship between the respondents' personality traits and their coping strategies in oral presentations

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Personality traits and oral presentation skills**

The term personality has been evolving in recent years. Originating from Allport (1937), personality refers to "the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment" (p. 48). Funder (2016) later emphasised that personality refers to "characteristic patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour" (p. 5) while Larsen and Buss (2017) incorporated environmental interactions in their definition. Bergner (2020) synthesised these views, describing personality as a set of "enduring set of Traits and Styles" that dictates how people differ in their responses to social context. (p. 4). This interaction between traits and environment is crucial for understanding their influence on oral presentation performance. Recent research has further suggested that personality should be understood as interacting with contextual and psychological factors in shaping second language performance, rather than functioning as a fixed predictor (Botes et al., 2024; Kim & Hwang, 2024).

Research indicates personality significantly influences second language learning (Hajimohammadi & Mukundan, 2011; Sheir et al., 2015; Suliman, 2014). According to Bahrudin and Amir (2018), learners who are comfortable with activities aligning with their personality can better improve their language skills. Extraversion is often linked to oral fluency in second language learning as extroverts were observed as willing to produce more utterances although language accuracy was lower (Sheir et al., 2015; Van Daele et al., 2006). Mustoip et al. (2024) observed that extroverts were more enthusiastic and preferred group activities. Their risk-taking nature makes them better at expressing their ideas orally (Zafar et al., 2012). Moreover, the extroverts' ability to beat negative emotions due to their confident and outgoing personality can contribute to their expected mastery of speech delivery verbally and non-verbally. Chen et al., (2022) found that recent meta-analytic findings indicate that personality traits are related to second language learning outcomes, although the strength of these relationships varies across traits and contexts.

In contrast, as introverts had a higher anxiety level, they tended to opt for solitary learning (Mustoip et al., 2024). Feeling anxious when speaking in public, also known as fear of public speaking or glassophobia, may affect one's performance in delivering a presentation. Statistics show that about 75 percent of the population experiences fear and anxiety upon delivering a speech (Keshirim, 2023; Zauderer, 2023). This has been confirmed by Raja (2017) who investigated students' anxiety levels in public speaking of a foreign language which reported that 75 percent of them had a fear of public speaking. It also identified a lack of confidence due to the respondents' meek disposition as most observed to have caused fear and anxiety. Another study correlated personality traits with perceived public speaking anxiety as personality described 16 to 32 percent of the variance in anxiety factors (Kelsen, 2019). While public speaking anxiety was positively predicted by neuroticism, it was also negatively predicted by extraversion. Alrasheedi (2020)

identified anxiety as a part of the affective factors besides shyness and fear of making mistakes that influenced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking performance. Hence, less tendency to interact with others can present introverts with fewer opportunities to polish their communicative skills. Current meta-analytic evidence further supports the link between personality and anxiety, showing that neuroticism is positively associated with second language anxiety across learning contexts (Dong et al., 2024).

## **2.2 Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)**

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Myers, 1993) has been widely used to assess personality within organisational contexts (Harvey, et al., 1995). Dornyei and Ryan (2015) considered MBTI as "the most widely employed personality test in the world" (p. 19). It is a psychometric questionnaire that gauges people's psychological preferences by identifying how they view the world and act on it. Originally formulated by Jung (1921 as cited in Rush, 2019) MBTI is founded on four dichotomies, resulting in 16 psychological types such as ESTJ (extraversion (E), sensing (S), thinking (T), judgement (J)) as well as INFP (introversion (I), intuition (N), feeling (F), perception (P)) (Myers et al., 1998).

## **2.3 Coping Strategies**

According to Smith et al. (2016), coping strategies refer to collaborative cognitive and behavioural efforts to counter the appraised limited personal resources in fulfilling internal and external demands. Carver et al. (1989) viewed coping as related to stress as the former surfaces as the result of the latter. Stress occurs as one perceives something as a threat. To survive the threat, he or she must cope with the stress by applying certain strategies. In the context of oral presentations, coping strategies refer to the ways of facing or surviving the stress due to speaking anxiety. Zulkurnain and Kaur (2014) related the act of coping to communication difficulties in using a target language. These difficulties can stem from limited personal resources concerning insufficient linguistic knowledge as well as the stress of producing comprehensible utterances in completing a speech. Besides, affective factors can also play a role when an anxious speaker is affected by his or her environment which includes the audience. Therefore, to avoid such difficulties, one needs to apply communicative strategies to help him or her cope with the situation. Recent studies have also shown that coping strategies in second language communication are closely linked to learners' perceived communicative competence and their ability to manage speaking anxiety in classroom settings (Kuluşaklı & Genç, 2024).

## **2.4 Oral Communication Strategies Inventory (OCSI)**

Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) developed by Nakatani (2006) aims to systematically gather information on learners' perceptions of strategy utilisation during communication activities. The OCSI comprises two main sections: strategies for addressing speaking difficulties and strategies for addressing listening challenges. The strategies for coping with speaking problems include "Social Affective, Fluency-Oriented, Negotiation for Meaning, Accuracy Oriented, Message Reduction and alteration, Non-verbal, Message Abandonment and Attempt to Think in English" (Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014, p. 96). Its validity and reliability have been examined by Yaman and Irgin (2013) within the context of an adapted OCSI questionnaire based on Turkish culture and found that it was not a valid and reliable tool to assess the listening skills of foreign language learners. This might have been caused by the need to translate the questionnaire into their first language which could have led to misunderstanding and thus, compromised the accuracy of the responses. Regardless, Liu (2018) who used OCSI to examine learners' communication strategies in an oral test felt that it was a good predictor of speaking test performance of lowly and highly proficient participants.

## **2.5 Past Studies on Personality Traits and Coping Strategies**

Research on personality and coping strategies explores their relationship and effects on language learning. The MBTI is often used to link personality to learning strategies. Gu and Sharil (2023) found that MBTI could reveal learners' preferred strategies preferences. Hamdzah et al. (2022) correlated MBTI types with learning styles, finding introverts preferred solitary study and extroverts group environment. Using the Big Five Inventory, Kelsen (2019) found personality traits (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Openness) significantly predicted 16-32 percent of the variance in public speaking anxiety for EFL learners. Similarly, Kenoh and Torres (2021) and Hadas (2011) used MBTI to investigate strategy influence and design courses based on learner preferences. Botes et al., (2024) further suggested that personality influences language learning behaviour in interaction with classroom practices and emotional factors, rather than acting as a single determining variable

Personality traits have also been studied in relation to motivation to learn a foreign language. Liang and Kelsen (2018) investigated the impact of personality and motivation on collaborative oral presentation performance among university students. The Big Five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience) and the Collaborative Inquiry-based Project Questionnaire were utilised to measure students' personality traits and motivational construct. The findings indicated that Extraversion, Project Work, and Social Pressure significantly correlate with oral presentation scores, suggesting that extraverted personalities may compensate for lower English language ability and that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play significant roles in student performance. Al-khresheh (2024) me that oral presentation performance can be improved through repeated exposure to presentation-based activities, suggesting that strategy use may develop through practice rather than personality alone.

Meanwhile, OCSI has been used in studies intended to examine learners' coping strategies and oral communication skills. Zulkurnain and Kaur (2014), for instance, employed OCSI as a survey questionnaire to examine the oral communication difficulties of second language learners enrolling in a Malaysian university's Diploma programme and the strategy they used to cope with those difficulties while engaging in English oral communication activities. The findings indicated that learners' limited knowledge of English contributed to the difficulties. To cope with this, they applied negotiation of meaning strategy in their oral interactions. In another study within the Malaysian context, Zulkflee et al. (2023) utilised OCSI to identify learners' oral communication strategies used in coping with their anxiety. Several other studies (e.g., Ghamarian, 2016; Rayati et al., 2022) have also used OCSI within the context of EFL learning to examine the effects of learners' language proficiency on their communication skills. Another study using OCSI was conducted on Turkish EFL learners and found that there is a significant relationship between strategies used and media exposure to English language. It concluded that more media exposure positively influences strategies used in oral communication (Demir et al., 2018).

Coping strategies have also been associated with fear of presentation. A study by Belaman et al. (2022) examined the relationship between coping strategies and the fear of presentations involving 210 students at a Malaysian public university. Their findings revealed that message reduction, orientation, and non-verbal strategies were predominantly utilised by respondents, and the strategies employed were influenced by various internal and external factors inducing fear during oral presentations. Zulkflee et al. (2023) in their examination ESL learners' anxiety levels, factors causing anxiety, and strategies to overcome speaking anxiety during oral presentations among 130 MUET-CEFR ESL learners in Malaysia revealed that many participants experience moderate to high anxiety levels, with message reduction and alteration being the most utilised coping strategies. Recent findings also support that learners actively employ communication strategies to manage speaking demands and maintain fluency in academic contexts, particularly under conditions of anxiety and evaluation (Kuluşaklı & Genç, 2024).

In order to identify the oral communication strategies employed by EFL learners who were introverts and extroverts, Farizah (2021) incorporated both MBTI and OCSI questionnaires in her investigation. Based on the analysis of independent samples t-test, the results showed no significant differences in the strategies employed by the two different personality groups. Despite the different personalities, both groups were determined to communicate with others successfully by employing strategies such as message alteration and reduction, non-verbal, and negotiation for meaning to overcome their difficulties.

In summary, personality traits significantly influence ESL learners' public speaking performance, with extroverts generally faring better. Learners employ various coping strategies to manage anxiety, and research suggests that incorporating strategy training can improve oral presentation outcomes.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The study employs a descriptive quantitative research design, employing surveys to assess respondents' personality traits and coping strategies. Personality was measured using the Myers-Briggs Temperament Indicator (MBTI), based on Jung's typological. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was selected in this study as a framework for examining personality traits because it provides a structured typological approach for understanding individual differences in cognitive orientation and interaction preferences. The instrument has been widely used in educational and organisational research to categorise how individuals perceive information, make decisions, and engage with their environment (Myers et al., 1998). In the field of second language learning, personality variables—particularly the dimension of extraversion–introversion—have been frequently associated with differences in communication behaviour, participation patterns, and speaking anxiety. Research has shown that personality traits can influence learners' willingness to communicate and their performance in oral tasks such as presentations and discussions (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Kelsen, 2019). For example, studies examining public speaking in English as a Foreign Language context have reported that personality disposition plays a role in shaping learners' anxiety and presentation performance (Kelsen, 2019). More recent research also continues to emphasise the role of personality traits in influencing language learning motivation, persistence, and communication behaviour in second language contexts (Xu, 2025).

Coping strategies were evaluated with the Oral Presentation Strategies Inventory (OPSI) adapted from Nakatani's (2006) Oral Communication Strategies Inventory (OCSI). OPSI covers 5 strategies, namely Social Affective Strategies, Fluency Oriented Strategies, Accuracy Oriented Strategies, Message Reduction and Alteration Strategies and Non-verbal Strategies. Data were analysed using SPSS 29 to determine prevalent traits and strategies and explore their relationships between personality traits and strategies.

#### **3.1 Participants**

A purposive sampling technique was employed to recruit participants who met several predetermined criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The participants were required to be Malay undergraduate students enrolled in English language courses at a Malaysian public university where oral presentations formed part of the course assessment. This criterion ensured that all respondents had direct experience delivering academic presentations in English. The focus on Malay ESL learners also allowed the study to examine personality traits and coping strategies within a relatively homogeneous linguistic and cultural group, thereby reducing variability arising from differences in first language background and educational experience. A total of 119 Malay ESL undergraduates (93 females; 26 males) from a public university in Malaysia participated in the study.

### **3.2 Instrument for Data Collection**

The study employed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Personality traits that categorises human behaviour across four scales: Extraversion (E) - Introversion (I), Sensing (S) - Intuition (N), Thinking (T) - Feeling (F), and Judging (J) - Perceiving (P). These scales scrutinise how individuals engage with the world, gather information, make decisions, and manage external experiences. These scales interplay to describe an individual's approach to both receiving information (sensing and intuiting) and making decisions (thinking and feeling), recognising that individuals engage in both extraverted and introverted activities to varying degrees.

Several studies have examined the reliability and validity of the MBTI. For example, Myers and McCaulley (1985) reported reliability coefficients ranging from .74 to .85 across the four MBTI scales based on large samples collected by the Center for Applications of Psychological Type (CAPT). Harvey (1996) also conducted a meta-analysis of MBTI manual studies involving over 100,000 respondents and reported reliability estimates between .80 and .87 for the main MBTI dimensions. In addition, researchers have often evaluated the validity of MBTI scores by comparing them with other personality assessment frameworks and behavioural measures (De Vito, 1985; Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

More recent research continues to examine the relationship between personality traits and language learning behaviour. For instance, Kelsen (2019) found that personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism were associated with public speaking anxiety among EFL learners. Similarly, Roslim et al. (2023) reported that personality traits can influence students' confidence and perceived performance in online academic presentations. These studies suggest that personality traits remain relevant when examining learners' communication behaviour in academic speaking contexts.

In gauging the respondents' coping strategies, a questionnaire adapting Nakatani (2006) Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) was developed. OCSI includes 58 items and is divided into two parts. The first eight categories deal with the strategies for coping with speaking problems and the second seven categories are concerned with the strategies for dealing with listening problems. The adapted version of the questionnaire covers only 5 Strategies that concern oral presentation, namely Social Affective Strategies, Fluency Oriented Strategies, Accuracy Oriented Strategies, Message Reduction & Alteration Strategies and Non-verbal Strategies. The adapted questionnaire is named Oral Presentation Strategy Inventory (OPSI). It uses 5-likert scales from 1 to 5, where 1 represents Strongly Disagree to 5 represents Strongly Agree. The questionnaire is divided into 2 sections; the first gathers the respondents' personal details, while the second gathers information regarding the strategies used by the respondents during oral presentations. There are 30 items which are categorised into five strategies. A reliability test was conducted on the OPSI questionnaire as it was adapted, and a few items were taken out from the original version by Nakatani (2006). The Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.885 ensured that the adapted questionnaire was reliable.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

Data were collected using an online questionnaire administered to undergraduate students enrolled in English language courses at a Malaysian public university. The survey link was distributed through the course communication platform during the academic semester after students had been exposed to oral presentation activities as part of their coursework. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research before completing the questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained electronically prior to participation, and anonymity of the respondents was assured as no identifying information was collected. The collected responses were subsequently downloaded and prepared for statistical analysis.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analysed using the latest version of SPSS (Version 29). The MBTI scores were tabulated to identify prominent personality traits and types. OPSI data were statistically analysed to determine the mean scores of each strategy. Finally, data correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between presentation strategies and personality traits.

The interpretation of mean scores in this study was based on dividing the Likert scale into equal intervals. Since the scale ranged from 1 to 5, the range value (4) was divided by five levels of interpretation, resulting in an interval width of 0.80 for each category. Based on this calculation, mean scores were classified into five levels: very low, low, moderate, high, and very high. This approach is commonly used in social science and educational research to provide a clearer interpretation of respondents' agreement levels (Pallant, 2016; Best & Kahn, 2006). By applying this method, higher mean scores indicate more frequent use of a particular strategy, while lower mean scores reflect less frequent use.

Table 1 Mean Score Interpretation

Mean	Interpretation
1.00-1.80	Very Low
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very High

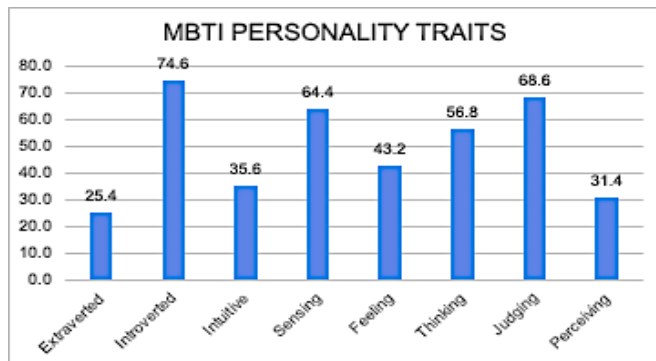
## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings that are sequenced according to the established research questions.

### 4.1 Research question 1: What are the respondents' personality traits?

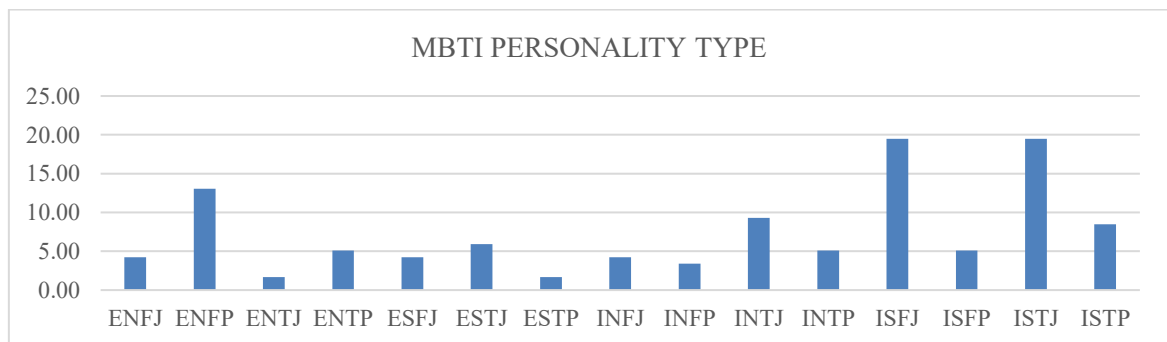
Majority of the respondents, more than seventy percent, exhibited Introvert (74.6%) tendencies suggesting a preference towards inward reflection and thought orientation. This finding is similar to that of Hamdzah et al. (2022) who found most of their respondents are Introverts. Both sets of respondents (Hamdzah's and the current study) are Malays in tertiary education. Extroverted (25.4%) traits are not prevalent among the respondents as only a quarter of the respondents thrive on outward focus and action-oriented behaviour. Sensing (64.4%) is also another preferred trait as more than sixty percent of the respondents prefer using Sensing over Intuitive (35.6%) suggesting a tendency towards reality and details. Amsah et al. (2020) also found that a significant number of respondents in their study prefer Sensing over Intuition. In addition, a slight majority lean towards Thinking (56.8%) over Feeling (43.2%), indicating a preference towards logical, and objective decision-making. Lastly, a majority of the respondents, almost seventy percent, exhibit Judging (68.6%) tendencies over Perceiving (31.4%), suggesting a preference for structure and firm organisations.

Fig. 1 MBTI Personality Traits



Based on the MBTI dataset, certain personality types are more prevalent than others as can be seen in Figure 2 below. Notably, the ISFJ (Introverted, Sensing, Feeling, Judging) personality type emerges as the most evident, representing 19.49% of the respondents. This substantial number indicates a significant portion of individuals characterised by introversion, sensory perception, emotional empathy, and a penchant for structured decision-making. Following closely is the ISTJ (Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging) personality type, mirroring the ISFJ's representation at 19.49%. This parallel presence suggests a notable cohort sharing akin traits, albeit favouring objectivity over empathy. The ENFP (Extraverted, Intuition, Feeling, Perceiving) personality type is also notable, comprising 13.04% of respondents, highlighting a considerable inclined towards empathy but with flexibility and adaptability.

Fig. 2 MBTI Personality Type



#### 4.2 Research Question 2: What are the strategies employed by the respondents in oral presentations?

The adapted questionnaire Oral Communication Presentation Inventory (OPSI) covers 5 Strategies, namely Social Affective Strategies, Fluency Oriented Strategies, Accuracy Oriented Strategies, Message Reduction & Alteration Strategies and Non-verbal Strategies. The discussion will be based on each strategy employed by the respondents.

##### *Social Affective Strategies (F1)*

Social Affective Strategies (F1) involve learners' affective matters during presentations. The highest mean (4.46) was for "I try to give a good impression to the audience" indicating a strong desire to project

favourably. In contrast the lowest mean, (3.70) was for using fillers when unable to recall information, suggesting a priority on fluency over hesitation. The findings suggest that the respondents are concerned about the fluency and coherence of the presentation and also the audience's perception.

#### *Fluency Oriented Strategies (F2)*

F2 is related to presentation fluency, and the highest mean (4.39) was for "I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard", emphasising on clarity and volume audience comprehension and engagement during presentations. The lowest mean (3.86) was "I take time to express what I want to say" likely due to the time constraint and to sustain audience interest without prolonging the speech. This strategy could result in an efficient delivery.

#### *Accuracy Oriented Strategies (F3)*

F3 focuses on the desire to speak English correctly. The highest mean (4.17) was for "I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake" suggesting a self-correcting and a commitment to language accuracy to maintain credibility and clarity in presentations. The lowest mean was for "I try to pronounce words like a native speaker" with a mean score of 3.83. The findings would suggest that the respondents put greater emphasis on delivery using a clear and correct language rather than native-like pronunciation.

#### *Message Reduction & Alteration Strategies (F4)*

F4 involves avoiding a communication breakdown by reducing an original message, simplifying utterances, or using similar expressions that can be confidently used. The statement "I use words which are familiar to me" has the highest mean, 4.33, indicating that the respondents would use comfortable vocabulary and phrases to ensure clear and smooth delivery. The lowest mean is the statement "I reduce the message and use simple expressions" with a mean score of 3.69. This suggests a reluctance to oversimplify and potentially jeopardize the substance of the information.

#### *Non-verbal Strategies (F5)*

The final strategy, F5 focuses on the use of eye contact, gestures, or facial expressions to help the presenter deliver the intended meaning. In this strategy, the highest mean with a score of 4.25 is the statement "I try to make eye contact when I am presenting". This suggests that the respondents are focused on establishing connection and engagement with their audience as making eye contact can enhance speaker credibility, build rapport, and foster audience attentiveness, contributing to effective communication and message delivery. The lowest mean score is 3.17 for the statement "I move around during my presentation". This suggests that the respondents minimise physical movement or mobility while speaking, maintain focus on the message and avoid distractions.

As shown in Table 2, the respondents reported very high use of several presentation strategies, particularly those related to audience engagement and speech clarity.

Table 2 Summary of the Most Frequently Used Oral Presentation Strategies

Rank	Strategy Category	Strategy Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1	Social Affective Strategies (F1)	I try to give a good impression to the audience.	4.46	Very High
2	Fluency-Oriented Strategies (F2)	I try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard.	4.39	Very High
3	Message Reduction and Alteration Strategies (F4)	I use words which are familiar to me.	4.33	Very High
4	Non-Verbal Strategies (F5)	I try to make eye contact when I am presenting.	4.25	Very High
5	Accuracy-Oriented Strategies (F3)	I correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.	4.17	High

In summary, the analysis emphasises the nature of communication strategies employed by respondents, highlighting the significance of clarity, engagement, and authenticity in speech delivery. The study examines prevalent behaviours through mean value examination, revealing respondents' consistent prioritisation of techniques that enhance clarity, engagement, and professionalism. Strategies such as self-correction, emphasis on sentence structure, and direct audience engagement through eye contact and nonverbal cues are observed, showcasing a collective dedication to effective communication methods. The findings are similar to a study by Belaman et al. (2022) of Malaysian ESL learners where the respondents in their study indicated that self-correction, non-verbal cues and giving a good impression are the most commonly used strategy in oral presentation.

In addition, there exists a reluctance towards behaviours involving simplification or linguistic compromise, evident in lower agreement on strategies like message reduction or achieving native-like pronunciation. This contrasts with a similar study conducted by Zulkifle et al. (2023) who found that message reduction is the most used strategy by their ESL learners. The respondents in the study also display hesitancy towards physical movement during presentations, preferring a static posture. This balanced approach highlights the importance of professionalism and authenticity, with respondents favouring strategies that optimise clarity and engagement while minimising oversimplification or unnecessary physical movement. These findings display the dynamics of communication strategies, highlighting the interplay between clarity, engagement, authenticity, and message integrity in speech delivery contexts.

#### 4.3 Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between personality traits and strategies?

To determine the relationship between the personality traits and the oral presentation strategies, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient test was conducted. The mean of the five factors in oral strategies is represented as MeanF1, MeanF2, MeanF3, MeanF4 and MeanF5. Schober et al. (2018) suggested some published stratifications to determine the relationship between the variables as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 3 Stratifications of Correlation Coefficient

Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
0.00-0.10	Negligible Correlation
0.10-0.39	Weak Correlation
0.40-0.69	Moderate Correlation
0.70-0.89	Strong Correlation
0.90-1.00	Very Strong Correlation

Source: Adapted from Schober et al. (2018)

Based on the stratifications above, data from the participants would suggest that there is a negligible or weak correlation between personality traits and oral presentation strategies as can be seen in the Table 3 and 4 below. The mean for all the Factors 1- 5 has either a weak or negligible correlation with all personality traits. The correlation is significant for only Factor 5 and Personality Traits 1 as the Sig. (2-tailed) is at 0.021 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). However, this finding contradicts a study by Liang and Kelsen (2018) that recorded a significant correlation between extraversion and presentation performance, particularly in aspects such as pronunciation, clarity of voice, fluency, eye contact, body language, and enthusiasm.

While this study's central finding reported a weak correlation between personality traits and presentation strategies, it aligns with the earlier work of Farizah (2021). The distinct demographic composition of the sample of this study provides a unique perspective that adds a new layer of significance

to this conclusion. The confirmed predominance of ISFJ and ISTJ types (Fig. 2) that collectively representing over a third (39%) of respondents, is a critical contextual factor. These profiles are characterised by a strong sense of duty, practicality, attention to detail, and a preference for structure and order (Myers et al., 1998). This study, therefore, moves beyond the broad Introvert/Extrovert dichotomy to pose a more relevant question: would these specific, highly structured personality profiles demonstrate a unique preference for certain, perhaps more rigid or accuracy-oriented, strategies? The fact that even among these conscientious types, strategy use remained largely uncorrelated with their core traits significantly strengthens the argument that presentation strategies are universal, learned skills in an academic context, rather than direct expressions of innate personality. The result therefore supports the view that effective presentation strategies can be learned and applied by students irrespective of their personality orientation.

Table 4 Pearson Correlations Coefficient

		Personality Traits 1	Personality Traits 2	Personality Traits 3	Personality Traits 4
MeanF1	Pearson Correlation	<b>.122</b>	<b>-.031</b>	<b>.065</b>	<b>.030</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.187	.742	.481	.748
	N	119	119	119	119
MeanF2	Pearson Correlation	<b>.062</b>	<b>-.139</b>	<b>.119</b>	<b>-.105</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.504	.132	.199	.255
	N	119	119	119	119
MeanF3	Pearson Correlation	<b>.154</b>	<b>-.108</b>	<b>.104</b>	<b>-.093</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.095	.244	.259	.317
	N	119	119	119	119
MeanF4	Pearson Correlation	<b>.038</b>	<b>.035</b>	<b>.098</b>	<b>.002</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.678	.703	.290	.982
	N	119	119	119	119
MeanF5	Pearson Correlation	<b>.212*</b>	<b>-.038</b>	<b>.161</b>	<b>-.040</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.678	.080	.666
	N	119	119	119	119

\*\**.* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\**.* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 Inter-Item Correlation Matrix (Pearson Correlation)

<b>Inter-Item Correlation Matrix</b>								
	Introverted	Extraverted	Intuitive	Sensing	Feeling	Thinking	Judging	Perceiving
MeanF1	.122	-.122	-.031	.031	.065	-.065	.030	-.030
MeanF2	.062	-.062	-.139	.139	.119	-.119	-.105	.105
MeanF3	.154	-.154	-.108	.108	.104	-.104	-.093	.093
MeanF4	.038	-.038	.035	-.035	.098	-.098	.002	-.002
MeanF5	.212	-.212	-.038	.038	.161	-.161	-.040	.040

#### 4.4 Interpretation and Theoretical Implications

The consistent lack of correlation, even among detail-oriented personality types, suggests that the powerful, standardising force of the academic context itself may override dispositional preferences. This phenomenon can be understood through the lens of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where learning is seen as a social process of becoming a participant in a community of practice. In this case, the university classroom is a community with its own set of norms and expectations. Learners, regardless of personality, are socialised into a uniform set of best practices for presentations through explicit instruction, lecturer feedback, and peer observation. The nature of graded assessments compels all learners to converge on a set of strategies that are perceived as leading to success within this specific academic culture. The

environment (the university classroom) acts as a powerful equaliser, shaping behaviour in a way that mutes the influence of underlying personality traits.

The predominance of introverted traits among the respondents may reflect the communicative tendencies often reported among learners in second language contexts, where speaking in a non-native language can heighten self-consciousness and anxiety. Previous research has shown that learners who identify as introverted may experience greater apprehension when required to perform oral tasks such as presentations, particularly when these tasks involve evaluation by peers or lecturers (Kelsen, 2019). In addition, cultural communication norms in many Asian educational contexts often encourage restraint and careful expression rather than overt verbal participation, which may partly explain the higher proportion of introverted tendencies observed among the respondents.

Furthermore, this finding challenges a trait-based view of learning strategies and aligns more closely with a socio-cognitive perspective (Bandura, 1986). This theory suggests that behaviour is a result of a dynamic interaction between personal factors (e.g., personality), the environment, and the behaviour itself. In the context of this study, the formal oral presentation which is an intense environmental factor with clear assessment criteria, becomes the dominant force. It elicits a standardised strategic response from learners, making their pre-existing individual differences in personality less relevant to their reported strategy use. Strategy use is, thus, not a fixed expression of personality but a context-dependent adaptation.

The results indicate that respondents tended to prioritise strategies that support clarity of message and audience engagement, such as speaking clearly, maintaining eye contact, and using familiar vocabulary. These findings suggest that learners focus on maintaining comprehensibility and building rapport with the audience during presentations. Similar patterns have been observed in studies of Malaysian ESL learners, where strategies such as self-correction, non-verbal cues, and message clarification were frequently used to manage speaking difficulties and maintain communication effectiveness (Belaman et al., 2022; Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014). The use of such strategies may reflect the influence of classroom instruction that emphasises effective presentation techniques and audience awareness in academic communication tasks.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between personality traits and coping strategies used by Malay ESL learners during oral presentations. The findings indicate that introverted tendencies were more prevalent among the respondents, suggesting that many learners prefer inward reflection and cautious communication when performing academic speaking tasks. The results also show that respondents frequently relied on strategies that prioritise clarity and audience engagement, such as speaking clearly, maintaining eye contact, and using familiar vocabulary. However, the correlation analysis revealed only weak relationships between personality traits and the coping strategies employed during oral presentations. This suggests that learners with different personality orientations may adopt similar strategies when preparing for and delivering presentations in an academic setting.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to the ongoing discussion on the role of individual differences in second language communication. While personality traits have often been associated with language learning behaviour, the results of this study suggest that their influence on presentation strategies may be limited. Instead, the findings indicate that strategy use during oral presentations may be shaped more strongly by contextual factors such as classroom instruction, task expectations, and repeated exposure to presentation activities. This perspective supports the view that language learning behaviour emerges from the interaction between individual traits and the learning environment rather than being determined solely by personality characteristics.

The findings of this study also offer several implications for ESL teaching practice, particularly in courses that require oral presentations. Since presentation strategies appear to be used similarly by learners with different personality traits, instructors may focus on explicitly teaching effective presentation techniques rather than assuming that confident speaking behaviour is naturally associated with extroverted personalities. Classroom activities that provide structured opportunities for presentation practice may help learners develop coping strategies such as maintaining audience engagement, organising ideas clearly, and managing presentation anxiety. By emphasising practical communication strategies, educators may help learners build confidence in delivering academic presentations regardless of their personality orientation.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The data were collected from a single group of Malay ESL learners at one public university, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other learner populations. In addition, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may not fully capture learners' actual behaviour during presentations. Future studies could consider including observational data or presentation performance assessments to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how coping strategies are applied in real presentation contexts. Further research involving learners from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds may also provide deeper insights into how personality traits interact with communication strategies in academic speaking tasks.

In conclusion, by demonstrating the primacy of context over personality in shaping strategic behaviour, this study contributes a valuable perspective to ESL pedagogy and the psychology of language performance, affirming that effective communication can be a skill for all, not a trait for a few.

## 6. RESEARCH ETHICS

The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by and has been approved by UiTM Research Ethics Committee ref number 600-UITMKPH(PJI.5/2/4/12) (82).

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## 8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

## 9. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

**Roslina Abdul Aziz:** Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation and writing-original draft; **Badli Esham Ahmad:** Conceptualisation, methodology, writing-original draft and formal analysis; **Kamisah Ariffin:** Conceptualisation, formal analysis, writing- review and editing and validation; **Nadhratunnaim Abas:** Conceptualisation, supervision, writing- review and editing, and validation. **Akiko Kamata:** supervision, writing- review and editing.

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