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Appendix A: The Open-ended Question List

This questionnaire has been designed to find the problematic behaviors which lead to misunderstanding during real interactions. By these questions the researcher simply is looking for the problems regarding communication that Iranians face in Malaysia as a country where English is a second language.

Your input is greatly appreciated and would only take less than 30 minutes.

The returned papers will be treated with the utmost confidence and no identities will be included within the final paper.

Faculty of Language and Linguistics

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By: Nastaran Zahra Bodaghi

Date: Name: Age:
Sex: Level of education: No. of year in Malaysia:

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you need to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

2. Have you had any negative experience or feeling of any difference during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus drivers? If so can you describe it?

3. What are the things you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversation, etc)

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

Appendix B: Collected Question Lists with Responses from Respondents

Respondent number 1: Bahareh

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Once I went to UPM campus, there I asked how to get to science faculty. Some Malaysian students gave me wrong information. Also when I asked some people about taxi station or bus stop there, they got wrong in saying right or left.

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Of course, yes. I remember 2-3 times I took a taxi and after getting on the taxi the driver showed that he did not get where I want to go, so he made me to get off and take another taxi. This story also happened once I got on a bus from KLCC, I asked the driver about the zone he was going to but he did not get what I was saying.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

I can say that my Malaysian friends avoid explanations of a case and to make you understand they repeat same sentences rather than elaborating.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

The most surprising thing in Malaysian language that I recognize is they use the same words for saying 'hello' and 'good bye' (I mean the same phrase when entering and getting out a place.)

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

Respondent number 2: Farhad

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes five month ago, I was looking for an address, so before a traffic light I asked a taxi driver to help me. He could not tell me the direction and asked me to follow him. After ten minutes driving behind his taxi I thought he had not understood what I had asked, but finally he showed me the place.

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Not negative experience but there is just differences here Malaysians almost call a taxi in taxi station with gesture (keeping one hand in front of themselves), but some Iranians call a taxi everywhere.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

Malaysians are very kindly, peaceful and calm but Iranians are very serious in their social intercourse. I remember when I enrolled at UTM, my supervisor invited me for lunch at a Malaysian restaurant that was very dirty and I did not like to eat there. But

when I invited him for lunch, I asked him if he would like Iranian food, and he said he had tried before and he liked, so I sent him to an Iranian restaurant and we had enjoyable time.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Yes, I remember a Malaysian lady whose English was very good but when explaining about the classes which I was going to register my kid, she repeatedly was saying “pani” or “panama” together with English sentences. I was ashamed to ask her what was that meaning but later I found out that she was saying “apa ini” “ apa nama” just like people who use the phrase ” what is this?” in English.

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

I think if Iranians or others want to come to Malaysia they should know these before coming:

- 1. About the rules, what are prohibited and what are allowed.*
- 2. Respect the Malaysian people and do not think they are just like Iranian.*
- 3. About climate.*
- 4. About their food.*
- 5. About the diseases and the ways of prevention.*
- 6. About the rituals and dos and don'ts.*

Respondent number 3: Khashayar

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes, 2 or 3 times happened for me to ask directions from people who knew the way but they could not explain.

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

No, because in Malaysia if you want to take a taxi just use place name and no need to mention name of the streets or other parts of the address. Also Malaysians just use hand for calling a taxi but in Iran you must call by your sound.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

No, I think both are the same.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Yes, I heard many times ordinary people do not use plural and singular words properly for example they say “one children”.

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

Respondent number 4: Mehdi

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes, sometimes it's happening because of thinking is not truly as you want. Once I asked a girl "where is the nearest Mac Donald?" She brought her fist in front of her face and it seemed to me that she didn't pay attention to my question. Later asking more directions from Malaysians I understood they point out with their thumbs instead of index finger.

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Yes, for example taking a taxi or bus, about directions or price, sometimes drivers cannot understand well and we have problem. Also Iranians are not patient like Malaysians who mostly are very cool, that's why misunderstanding happens.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

The different is that Iranian are not like Malaysian jovial and smiling people and in my idea Malaysian are more helpful than Iranian but I think Iranians work faster and with

fewer mistakes. Iranians are more than Malaysians emotionalist that's why the greeting and inviting is friendlier. Also for payment just the person who invited you pays the bill not any person for himself.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Yes Malaysian people calling each other sometimes with some noise from their mouth, and when they meet each other and also for saying goodbye they use same word for hello (SALAM ALAIKOM), but the thing I like so much is their temperament when Malaysian meet each other, their face all the time is smiling.

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

In my point of view as far as I am living in Malaysia, I like this country, and I like the people. In terms of official works which may any foreigner deal with, I recommend them to stick to the local rules and try to respect local culture. I also recommend people to be smart, act smart and have a great time regardless of any religious views or political views.

Respondent number 5: Negar S

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

No, but during the first months after I came to Malaysia I had problem in understanding of local people accents.

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Yes, I can remember I was waiting for a bus to Ampang Point for a long time while it was exactly next to me and I did not know just because of misunderstanding of the driver's accent.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

As I noticed Malaysians can say "No" to some requests easier than Iranians, I mean they are frank in most of their communications. In addition I have seen that apologizing is more common in Iranians relationship in compare with Malaysians which is sometimes meaningless for local people. And Iranians use more compliments for invitation and I think they do it in a more formal manner.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Yes, the gesture of saying "hello" in Malaysian language means "No" in Persian body language surprised me for the first time. Also, here, there are some special sounds when two people want to call each other which were unfamiliar for me. I also remember once I was with my Malaysian classmate in a car. She asked driver 'can you slow the volume?' because the sound of radio was disturbing her; the sentence looked weird to me.

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

Respondent number 6: Shabnam

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes, once I was looking for an airline agency in Bukit Bintang. I asked several people, such as people in the street, a taxi driver, two policemen, and a store man. Some said it is on your right, some said it is on your left. And some did not understand me. Finally, I took a taxi, and after passing only 500 meters, I was in front of the agency.

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Yes many times. Usually taxi drivers have problems because their pronunciation is different. Once a taxi driver was watching a movie while driving, when I reminded him that he is going a wrong direction, he started arguing with me as it was my fault that I did not give him a complete address because I was talking with my friend. And in Iran to call a taxi both hands and calling with sound are used but in Malaysia just hands are used to call a taxi in the streets.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

I have not noticed much difference.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Yes, use of “kissing sound” for calling other people in public. Not saying words such as “hello” or “good bye” when entering and going out of a place like a classroom at the university.

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

In this case I would suggest the person to have a trip to Malaysia in order to be in the atmosphere in which he is going to live, make it clear what he is going to do and if it is a suitable place to achieve his goals. However, in this trip it is really important to get information for living as an inhabitant rather than a tourist. In addition it is very helpful to talk with people who have quit same characteristics because they can share their experience and problems they have faced.

Respondent number7: Elmira

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes, once I asked for direction to Ampang LRT station and she told me a direction to Ampang Point (Plazza).

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

No I had not, actually I drive myself but I remember my friends complain from some bus drivers.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

They don't know anything about joking. And they always agree with everything. They do whatever they say without any reason. But about cases like invitations and so on actually I haven't any Malaysian friend so I don't know about that.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

So many times I surprised, by their calling each other with the noise they make with their lips and their conversations. For example my neighbors after saying hello ask me where I am going to!!

Or once at a shopping after trying a skirt the girl working there told me 'can?'

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

Speak with their tour leaders and just go with them and buy her/his optional tour if they do this they wouldn't have any problems because she/he help them :)

Respondent number 8: Fataneh

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes, I think some issues affect on misunderstanding; some people here cannot understand our accent or they do not know English. I heard "Tak tau" as an answer of my questions many times which means "I do not know" in Malay language.

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Yes, for taxi driver I think they want to take more money so while they know the address they send us other place by purpose.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

Malaysians are mostly calm and they are more patient than Iranian, Iranians lose their temper so fast. About inviting can say Iranians most of the time invite friends to their house but Malaysians invite you to restaurants.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Malaysian's greeting is different some people say "salam alaikom" but some friends say nothing when they meet each other as greeting and just start to talk, I was witness of such greetings in trains so many times.

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

Here they speak English if someone come to Malaysia and cannot speak English he would be faced problem.

Respondent number 9: Mahsa

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes because of difference in accent and pronunciation of some words and names of the streets and places, sometimes they don't know what we say and we should show them the name and address that we are looking for in written.

2. Have you had any negative experience during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Yes, I asked a bus driver that if he was going to for example x destination and he said yes, but later I understood its wrong way.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

When Iranians disagree with something they normally make up a story but in Malaysia, actually my experience refers to an official case, you are given the reasons.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Sometimes they use incorrect English sentences for example many of us had been asked "you are from where?"

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

First of all to specify their opinion of coming, to know that is Malaysia can provide their goals or not and is it their desired country?

Then I will recommend them get enough information about here and check everything before coming (such as quality of life, fees of living, cultural compatibility and so on) and also improve their English.

When they come here they aware and be careful to all of their environment and take care of everything.

Respondent number 10: Negar N

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

It happened a few times.

2. Have you had any negative experience or feeling of any difference during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Yes, many times... I told taxi driver I wanted to go somewhere but he sent me somewhere else, and when we got there we both found out that driver had heard something else!!

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

Malaysians are more comfortable to make jokes or express disagreement but Iranian sometimes feel shy to be disagreed with an issue. Both Malaysian and Iranian respect a group to say joke depends on the age of the groups. Malaysian invites you in this way: Come lah, I treat you lah. But Iranian invites you like this: Would you like to have a cup of coffee with me.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Malaysians turn their head slightly up to ask you "what do you want?" or "what did you say?" while in Iranian culture this gesture means "no".

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

I will suggest them to improve their English before coming because it's most important thing to be in touch to others. The other object is to know some information and rules about Malaysia culture, climate, and food and so on...then it's much easier to communicate with people. In this way if one day they would have problem they can solve it by themselves.

Respondent number 11: Bahram

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes, I experienced misunderstanding when asking about high ways; some Malaysians don't know how to guide you.

2. Have you had any negative experience or feeling of any difference during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

Yes, taxi drivers always do not use taxi meter, and ask for more money. And I do not know why some people in Malaysia, talking about their currency name it "dollar". One of my friends who were visiting Malaysia for one week paid us\$ 15 to a taxi driver who took him to Grand Season hotel from KLCC, its normal price was RM15 that time, but driver had said \$15.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

I have no idea.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Yes but I do not remember now.

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

I myself will recommend him/her to try to use some basic words in Malay language and also use some dictionary books that they can use to understand some basic words in Malay language. The easiest way is to give them a paper with a list of words that have a translation from Persian to Malay and the way they should pronounce it correctly. This is my opinion.

Respondent number 12: Zahra

1. Have you ever been in a situation in which you needed to ask for directions from a person and faced a misunderstanding? If so, can you describe it?

Yes it happens very usually when I ask for direction in the street for address and in the office for official procedures.

2. Have you had any negative experience or feeling of any difference during your daily come and go in Malaysia, for example miscommunication with taxi or bus driver? If so can you describe it?

No, I have not. Because I live near university and don't use transportations that much.

3. What are the things that you found similar or different between Iranians and Malaysians in some behaviors such as joking, promising, giving or asking reason, apologizing, invitation, etc?

Malaysian usually do not refuse any thing and they rarely say "No", they are more agreeable than Iranian and they thank people for everything even if they themselves do a favor for someone else. Saying "Thank you" is very common among Malaysian people, when they also do a wrong thing they apologize several times.

4. Have you ever been surprised here in Malaysia by some other behaviors related to language, which was not familiar to you, by a person or persons? (e.g. greeting, complaining, daily conversations etc). If so can you describe it?

Malaysian use “La” at the end of sentences! I do not know what it means but it is surprising even when they speak English they use “Lah” Ok Lah 😊!

5. If an Iranian person wants to come here, what would you recommend him/her to have fewer problems in communication with Malaysians?

And about their culture, if you do something wrong they do not mind as they know we are Iranian.

