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*In The Name Of God*

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Faculty of Humanities  
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Strategies**

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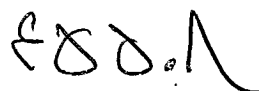
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## آئین نامه چاپ پایان نامه (رساله) های دانشجویان دانشگاه تربیت مدرس

نظر به اینکه چاپ و انتشار پایان نامه (رساله) های تحصیلی دانشجویان دانشگاه تربیت مدرس مبین بخشی از فعالیتهای علمی-پژوهشی دانشگاه است بنابراین به منظور آگاهی و رعایت حقوق دانشگاه، دانش آموختگان این دانشگاه نسبت به رعایت موارد ذیل متعهد میشوند:

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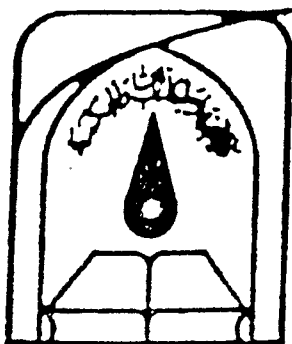
کتاب حاضر، حاصل پایان نامه کارشناسی ارشد/ رساله دکتری نگارنده در رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی است که در سال ۱۳۸۲-۱۳۸۱ در دانشکده علوم انسانی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس به راهنمایی جناب آقای دکتر غفار ثمر و مشاوره جناب آقای دکتر میر حسنی از آن دفاع شده است.

ماده ۳: به منظور جبران بخشی از هزینه های نشریات دانشگاه تعداد یک درصد شمارگان کتاب (در هر نوبت چاپ) را به مرکز نشر دانشگاه اهدا کند دانشگاه می تواند مازاد نیاز خود را به نفع مرکز نشر در معرض فروش قرار دهد.

ماده ۴: در صورت عدم رعایت ماده ۳، ۵۰٪ بهای شمارگان چاپ شده را به عنوان خسارت به دانشگاه تربیت مدرس، تادیه کند.

ماده ۵: دانشجو تعهد و قبول می کند در صورت خودداری از پرداخت بهای خسارت، دانشگاه میتواند خسارت مذکور را از طریق مراجع قضایی مطالبه و وصل کند، به علاوه به دانشگاه حق میدهد به منظور استیفای حقوق خود، از طریق دادگاه، معادل وجه مذکور در ماده ۴ را از محل توقیف کتابهای عرضه شده نگارنده برای فروش، تامین نماید.

ماده ۶: اینجانب آرزیتا خواجه دانشجوی رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی مقطع کارشناسی ارشد تعهد فوق و ضمانت اجرایی آن را قبول کرده، به آن ملتزم می شوم.



Tarbiat Modarres University  
Faculty of Humanities  
English Department

The Relationship between Tolerance of  
Ambiguity, Gender, Level of Proficiency  
and Use of Second Language Learning  
Strategies

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (MA) in  
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By:  
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To my little baby  
and  
to my husband

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## Abstract

Research supports the effectiveness of using L2 learning strategies and has shown that successful language learners often use strategies in orchestrated fashion. Using language learning strategies varies as a function of various factors. These factors according to Oxford (1990) include motivation, gender, cultural background, attitudes and beliefs, type of task and learning style. This study comprised of 120 male and female sophomores majoring in English with an age range of 18-25. These subjects took part in a Michigan test of proficiency and filled two questionnaires: (1) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, (2) Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale. The aim of the study was to show the influence of tolerance of ambiguity style on strategy use on the one hand and the level of proficiency on the other hand. Also the interaction of tolerance of ambiguity and gender on the second language learning strategies was investigated.

Correlational procedure was used for the purpose of the study. It was shown generally that there is a positive correlation between tolerance of ambiguity and strategy use. This means that the high tolerant students use strategies more than the less tolerant ones. Also the correlation was found to be positive between tolerance of ambiguity and level of proficiency, meaning that the high tolerant learners are more proficient than the less tolerant students. Also using Two Way Anova, no interaction effect was found between tolerance of ambiguity and gender on the extent of strategy use and these two variables exerted their influence independently on the student's use of strategies. Moreover, the study reported on the existence of some sort of difference between high tolerant and low tolerant students in the type of strategies that they use. High tolerant and low tolerant students were found to use metacognitive strategies more and affective strategies less than other types of strategies. Also the high tolerant students made more use of all kinds of strategies in comparison with less tolerant students except for the memory strategies.

**Key words:** Language learning strategies, Learning style, Tolerance of ambiguity and Level of language proficiency.



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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

Enabling students to become good language learners and to communicate fluently, accurately, and appropriately in a second language has always engaged the minds of authorities so that they have always been fumbling for ways to facilitate it. One way to approach this goal is through taking language learning strategies into account.

Foreign or second language learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques students use—often consciously—to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the second language (Oxford, 1990). These strategies help learners to enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall, and use of new information (Rigney, 1978).

According to Oxford (1989) different learners, use different kinds of language learning strategies. For example an introverted, analytic person learns through grammar drills and sentence analyses. In contrast an

extroverted sociable, globally oriented person gets the general meaning without knowing every word. Another student may use gestures to communicate in the classroom when the words do not come to mind. And still another student may learn words by breaking them into their components while somebody else may group words to be learned and then labels each group (Oxford, 1989).

Learning strategies do not operate by themselves, but rather are directly tied to the learner's underlying learning styles (i.e., general approaches to learning) and other personality-related variables (such as anxiety and self-concept) in the learner (Brown, 1994). The above mentioned strategies differ greatly in part because the general learning styles of students using them are so varied (Oxford, 1989). Schmeck (1988) underscores the need to understand learning strategies in the context of learning styles, which he defines as the expression of personality specifically in the learning situation. Recent research (Ehrman & Oxford, 1988, 1989; Oxford & Ehrman, 1988) suggests that learning style has a significant influence on students' choice of learning strategies, and that both styles and strategies affect learning outcomes.

Learning styles are internally based characteristics, often not perceived or used consciously, that are the basis for the intake and understanding of new information (Reid, 1995). According to Brown (1994) learning style refers to consistent and rather enduring tendencies or preferences within

an individual. They are also considered as general characteristics of intellectual functioning (and personality type, as well) that especially pertain to a person as an individual, that differentiate a person from someone else. For example a person might be more visually oriented, more tolerant of ambiguity, or more reflective than someone else. These would be styles that characterize a general pattern in one's thinking or feeling (Brown, 1994).

Research on learning styles is based on the assumption that learners receive information through their senses and prefer some senses to others in specific situations (Kroonenberg, 1995, O'Brien, 1989, Oxford, and Ehrman, 1993). Usually, students learn more effectively when they learn through their own initiatives. So if learners are made aware of this fact, they can explore their own style preferences and strategy preferences and determine whether they should be doing any style stretching or to broaden their strategy repertoire given their observed difficulties in handling the language learning (Cohen, 2000). Reid (1995) has classified learning styles into three main categories: cognitive, sensory and personality learning style. One of the personality (affective/temperament) learning styles is tolerance/intolerance of ambiguity.

Norton (1975) conceived of intolerance of ambiguity as: "a tendency to perceive or interpret information marked by vague, incomplete, fragmented, multiple, probable, unstructured, uncertain, inconsistent,