

*In the Name of God,
The Compassionate,
The Merciful*



**On the Relationship between Learners' Self-regulation, Gender
and Proficiency Level and Their Willingness to Communicate in
a Foreign Language**

*MA thesis submitted to the English Language Department in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching
English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)*

*Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Humanities,
Tarbiat Modares University*

By:

Sabra Ramezani

Supervisor:

Dr. Ghafar Samar

Advisor:

Dr. Kiany

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Approval of Thesis

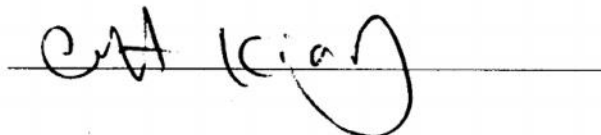
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Committee on final examination

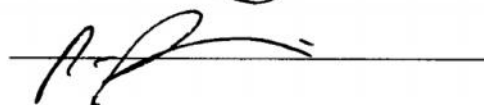
1. Supervisor: Dr. R. G. Samar



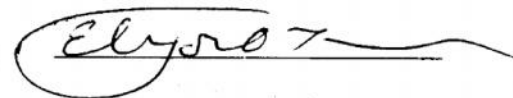
2. Advisor: Dr. G. R. Kiany



3. Internal Reader: Dr. Ramin Akbari



4. External Reader: Dr. Elham Foroozandeh



آیین‌نامه حق مالکیت مادی و معنوی در مورد نتایج پژوهشهای علمی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس

مقدمه: با عنایت به سیاست‌های پژوهشی و فناوری دانشگاه در راستای تحقق عدالت و کرامت انسانها که لازمه شکوفایی علمی و فنی است و رعایت حقوق مادی و معنوی دانشگاه و پژوهشگران، لازم است اعضای هیأت علمی، دانشجویان، دانش‌آموختگان و دیگر همکاران طرح، در مورد نتایج پژوهشهای علمی که تحت عناوین پایان‌نامه، رساله و طرحهای تحقیقاتی با هماهنگی دانشگاه انجام شده است، موارد زیر را رعایت نمایند:

ماده ۱- حق نشر و تکثیر پایان‌نامه/ رساله و درآمدهای حاصل از آنها متعلق به دانشگاه می‌باشد ولی حقوق معنوی پدید آورندگان محفوظ خواهد بود.

ماده ۲- انتشار مقاله یا مقالات مستخرج از پایان‌نامه/ رساله به صورت چاپ در نشریات علمی و یا ارائه در مجامع علمی باید به نام دانشگاه بوده و با تایید استاد راهنمای اصلی، یکی از اساتید راهنما، مشاور و یا دانشجو مسئول مکاتبات مقاله باشد. ولی مسئولیت علمی مقاله مستخرج از پایان‌نامه و رساله به عهده اساتید راهنما و دانشجو می‌باشد.

تبصره: در مقالاتی که پس از دانش‌آموختگی بصورت ترکیبی از اطلاعات جدید و نتایج حاصل از پایان‌نامه/ رساله نیز منتشر می‌شود نیز باید نام دانشگاه درج شود.

ماده ۳- انتشار کتاب، نرم افزار و یا آثار ویژه (اثری هنری مانند فیلم، عکس، نقاشی و نمایشنامه) حاصل از نتایج پایان‌نامه/ رساله و تمامی طرحهای تحقیقاتی کلیه واحدهای دانشگاه اعم از دانشکده ها، مراکز تحقیقاتی، پژوهشکده ها، پارک علم و فناوری و دیگر واحدها باید با مجوز کتبی صادره از معاونت پژوهشی دانشگاه و براساس آئین‌نامه های مصوب انجام شود.

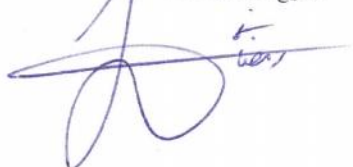
ماده ۴- ثبت اختراع و تدوین دانش فنی و یا ارائه یافته ها در جشنواره‌های ملی، منطقه‌ای و بین‌المللی که حاصل نتایج مستخرج از پایان‌نامه/ رساله و تمامی طرحهای تحقیقاتی دانشگاه باید با هماهنگی استاد راهنما یا مجری طرح از طریق معاونت پژوهشی دانشگاه انجام گیرد.

ماده ۵- این آیین‌نامه در ۵ ماده و یک تبصره در تاریخ ۸۷/۴/۱ در شورای پژوهشی و در تاریخ ۸۷/۴/۲۳ در هیأت رئیسه دانشگاه به تایید رسید و در جلسه مورخ ۸۷/۷/۱۵ شورای دانشگاه به تصویب رسیده و از تاریخ تصویب در شورای دانشگاه لازم‌الاجرا است.

«اینجانب..... دانشجوی رشته..... مقطع..... دانشگاه..... متعهد می‌شوم کلیه نکات مندرج در آئین‌نامه حق مالکیت مادی و معنوی در مورد نتایج پژوهشهای علمی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس را در انتشار یافته‌های علمی مستخرج از پایان‌نامه / رساله تحصیلی خود رعایت نمایم. در صورت تخلف از مفاد آئین‌نامه فوق‌الاشعار به دانشگاه وکالت و نمایندگی می‌دهم که از طرف اینجانب نسبت به لغو امتیاز اختراع بنام بنده و یا هر گونه امتیاز دیگر و تغییر آن به نام دانشگاه اقدام نماید. ضمناً نسبت به جبران فوری ضرر و زیان حاصله بر اساس برآورد دانشگاه اقدام خواهم نمود و بدینوسیله حق هر گونه اعتراض را از خود سلب نمودم»

امضا:.....

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آیین 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 می شوند:

ماده ۱: در صورت اقدام به چاپ پایان نامه (رساله) ی خود، مراتب را قبلاً به طور کتبی به «دفتر نشر آثار علمی» دانشگاه اطلاع دهد.

ماده ۲: در صفحه سوم کتاب (پس از برگ شناسنامه) عبارت ذیل را چاپ کند:

«کتاب حاضر، حاصل پایان نامه کارشناسی ارشد/ رساله دکتری نگارنده در رشته
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از آن دفاع شده است.»

و مشاوره سرکار خانم/جناب آقای دکتر

ماده ۳: به منظور جبران بخشی از هزینه های انتشارات دانشگاه، تعداد یک درصد شمارگان کتاب (در هر نوبت چاپ) را به «دفتر نشر آثار علمی» 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، تأدیه کند.

ماده ۵: دانشجو تعهد و قبول می کند در صورت خودداری از پرداخت بهای خسارت، دانشگاه می تواند خسارت مذکور را از طریق مراجع قضایی مطالبه و وصول کند؛ به علاوه به دانشگاه حق می دهد 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.

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نام و نام خانوادگی: *سپهر رضایی*

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سپهر رضایی

Dedicated to my parents for their everlasting love & support

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Abstract

Willingness to communicate (WTC) and self-regulation (SR) are two constructs that contribute to language learning in one way or another. The former refers to the idea that language learners who are willing to communicate in the second language look for chances to communicate, and actually they do communicate, and the latter is related to the degree to which learners control or direct the mental processes involved in language learning. The present study focused on the relationship between L2 learners' WTC, SR, gender and proficiency level to answer the following research questions: 1) Is there any relationship between L2 learners' self-regulation and their willingness to communicate? 2) Is there any statistically significant difference between male and female L2 learners in terms of their self-regulation and willingness to communicate? 3) Is there any relationship between L2 learners' gender and proficiency level and their willingness to communicate? 118 male and female BA students majoring in English participated in the study. Participants took the Oxford Placement Test 1 (2004), and filled out two questionnaires including Self-regulation Trait Questionnaire, and L2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using a variety of statistical techniques such as Pearson product moment correlation, step-wise multiple regression, Independent sample t-tests and two-way ANOVA. The results revealed that willingness to communicate and self-regulation had a positive correlation, and that from among the four subscales of SR, only *planning* was the best predictor of learners' WTC. Also, there was no significant difference between male and female participants in terms of both their willingness to communicate and self-regulation. Findings also showed that male and female learners' proficiency level and their willingness to communicate had a significant relationship, with intermediate

females outperforming intermediate males, and elementary males performing better than elementary females in their WTC. The pedagogical implications of the study are also presented.

Key words: Willingness to communicate (WTC), Self-regulated learning (SRL), Language proficiency

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List of Abbreviations

BA: Bachelor of Arts

CA: Communication Apprehension

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FLA: Foreign Language Acquisition

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

PCC: Perceived Communication Competence

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SPCC: Self-perceived Communication Competence

SR: Self-regulation

SRL: Self-regulated Learning

TL: Target Language

UWTC: Unwillingness to Communicate

WTC: Willingness to Communicate

Chapter One:

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Human beings are born with some basic needs, among the most important of which is the need to communicate verbally or nonverbally with other members of a community. MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, and Noels (1998) put that we communicate with our community members because we need either their service and cooperation or their help. Individual human beings show invariable tendencies in the amount of their first-language talk (Goldman-Eisler, 1951, Cited in McCroskey & Richmond, 1991) which represents humans' willingness to communicate. Therefore, personality is a determining factor in people's willingness towards communication (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu, 2004). Hardly can one find two people who are the same in the way and the amount of their communication (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). Some people are generally shy, introvert and taciturn and are classified as poor communicators, while others are self-assertive, extrovert and more sociable and are regarded as good communicators.

Culture is yet considered as another determining factor in the amount and quality of communication (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). For instance, Finns are poor communicators, especially in informal encounters. In contrast, Americans are known to be good communicators (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

In second language acquisition, willingness to communicate (WTC) refers to the idea that language learners who are willing to communicate in the second language (L2) actually look for chances to communicate, and actually they do communicate in the L2. MacIntyre et al. (1998) argued that the ultimate goal of L2 education is to help students become more willing to communicate. Thus, to meet the goals of language learning,

teachers should employ strategies to reinforce WTC, to involve learners in verbal behaviors, and to lessen their anxiety and communication avoidance. MacIntyre et al. emphasized that in interacting with others, and pedagogically speaking, in the process of language learning, context plays a crucial role since the active use of language in and out of the classroom can strongly predict the students' success in internalizing the language. Seeking opportunities to communicate with others would greatly increase the chances for gaining comprehensible input and for L2 communication practice (Larsen-freeman, 2007).

Still, MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donovan (2002) regard other variables such as age and sex to be effective in the amount and the quality of students' verbal involvement in class. As Milani (2008) argues, because of the genuine competitive atmosphere in co-educational settings in Iran, the lack of self-confidence or self-perceived competence in one certain gender can influence the degree of their willingness to communicate in language learning environments.

Level of students' proficiency in the second language is yet another variable which can affect willingness to communicate. Ehrman & Oxford (1990) believed that different levels of language competence may entail different degrees of willingness to use a second language to communicate (Cited in MacIntyre et al., 1998). In lower levels, since the students are less competent, they might feel less self-confident in communicating and hence more willing to remain silent.

Over the past few decades, the issue of individual differences among language learners like the differences among their learning styles, learning strategies, and strategy use in language learning contexts has received a great deal of attention. For a long time, methodologists have been trying to find out the answer to the question of why learners

perform differently in learning activities while they are presented the same material by the same instructor and teaching method.

In addition to differences in learning styles and strategies, language learners differ from each other in the degree to which they control, direct or regulate the mental processes involved in language learning process. In the past few years, self-regulated learning (SRL) has been one of the main constructs which has emerged in educational psychology. According to Zimmerman and Schunk (1989), self-regulated learning is “self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions which are systematically oriented toward the attainment of students’ own goals” (p.59). Zimmerman (2000) states that, “self-regulated learning involves learners' active participation in learning from the metacognitive, motivational and behavioral point of view” (p.66). Considering the importance of this construct in language learning, L2 teachers should help their students to foster their self-regulation, and to search their repertoire of effective learning and problem solving strategies that will optimize their language learning processes and products.

On the other hand, according to Boekaerts (1999), self-regulation is central to understanding learning processes in the classroom, and for that reason, research into its dynamics and outcomes has potential implications for creating optimal learning environments. In spite of its importance, the full value and implications of self-regulation theory are not as widely used as they should be.

Self-regulation, as a psychological construct which helps language learners to understand, plan, and monitor learning processes, can affect learners’ understanding of the importance of their contribution in both individual and group activities in the classroom to