

# Investigating ESL students' perceptions of ambiguity tolerance-An Analytical case study at Jizan University KSA

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to elucidate the perspective of students' tolerance of ambiguity to enhance proficiency in English as a secondary language. The aptitude to tolerate ambiguity, commonly referred to as AT, plays a crucial role in the process of language acquisition. It pertains to an individual's aptitude to manage and adapt to unfamiliar and uncertain aspects of the target language being learned. This skill is precious in comprehending and interpreting new information more effectively and flexibly. By cultivating AT, language learners can augment their overall proficiency, ultimately achieving greater fluency and mastery of the language they are studying. The interpretation of an ambiguous piece of language reflects the level of tolerance or intolerance of a language learner, as well as their capacity to endure the structure of the language and its impact on their emotional perception of progress. To illuminate the concern, a group of 110 students, consisting of 26 at the preparatory level, 50 at the proficient level, and 34 at the master's level in the English department at Jizan University, responded to a questionnaire comprising 12 items. The questionnaire focused on the Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (SLTAS), modified by Erten and Topkaya in 2009. To feature a circumstantial perspective, A comprehensive assessment was conducted on students across various levels to evaluate students' capacity to tolerate ambiguity. It is evident from the study results that students must acquire the necessary skills to navigate and comprehend language structures that may be unclear or open to interpretation because of their high ambiguity tolerance. Additionally, findings indicate no significant difference exists in levels of ambiguity tolerance among students categorized by proficiency as preparatory, proficient, or master. Furthermore, four open-ended questions were executed to limited introductory, proficient and master levels, each aiming to measure the coherence between the statistical findings and data interpretation. The outcomes derived from the open-ended inquiries aligned with the most recently scrutinized studies.

**Keywords:** Perception, Tolerance, ambiguity, ESL, language learning, Jizan, KSA.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition requires different teaching methods to the fullest extent, depending on the needs of learners. Nevertheless, discussions on language teaching methods are considered obsolete and useless in the recent era because the model that n techniques concentrates more on individual uniqueness and language learning variables to detect learning problems. With reference to a hypothesis, linguistics ambiguity is subject to vague and undefined circumstances. In addition, tolerance analyses manipulation by an individual in dubious conditions. Thus, tolerance for ambiguity can be demarcated as the level at which an entity is

contented with indecision, volatility, incompatible instructions, and anxieties. Ambiguity tolerance is apparent in an individual's aptitude to function efficiently in an indeterminate situation.

(Chapelle, 1986) states that Ambiguity tolerance (AT) is an individual's capability to perform reasonably and serenely in a state where elucidation of the entire stimulation is obscure. Ambiguity tolerance is a highly valued attribute that enables individuals to remain calm and composed when faced with uncertain situations. On the other hand, (Ely, 1989)(1989) specified that It would be an infrequent occurrence to possess knowledge of the novel vocabulary, precise context, and exact pronunciation of all newly introduced words. Additionally, Ely pointed out the concern of reflecting learners' individuality or rational patterns in the context of second language learning. It is crucial to identify and determine the specific personality traits or cognitive style variables that significantly impact language learning. Reflecting learners' individuality and rational patterns in the context of second language acquisition is an essential aspect that cannot be disregarded. BAŞÖZ (2015) presumes that personality contrasts and learning approaches have broadly obtained a reputation as they have a significant function in assisting students in having finer accomplishment in language acquisition. (Brown, 2000) indicated that the degree of receptiveness to embracing new concepts and intentions that may potentially challenge one's pre-existing beliefs is a crucial aspect of AT (2000, p. 119). For some individuals, the presence of ambiguity in a learning experience can provide a sense of excitement and engagement, as it necessitates a deeper level of cognitive processing and exploration. However, for others, the lack of clear and explicit guidance can lead to feelings of confusion and frustration, hindering their learning progress. Consequently, Foreign language learning environments are often characterized by ambiguity, which can profoundly and deleteriously influence language acquisition. The presence of ambiguity may create challenges for learners in the form of uncertainty and struggle in comprehending and producing language. On the other hand, it can also serve as a catalyst for learning by promoting critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. White (1999) emphasizes that AT is prone to initiate a great level of anxiety in students. If it is not tolerated in a rational vision, it may negatively affect language learning. Establishing a supportive and coherent environment for individuals learning a new language is imperative, as excessive stress can impede their language acquisition abilities. Maintaining an optimistic and encouraging atmosphere is pivotal for achieving success in language learning endeavours.

## **1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.1.1: Ambiguity and ambiguity attitudes**

(Hoffman, 1989) stated that The English word ambiguous derives originally from the French ambiguity, derived from the Latin word ambiguous, which combined the stems ambi- ("on both sides") and agere ("travel" or "drive"), which, taken together, means to "wander about" or to "drive on both sides" (Mish, 1984; Partridge, 1966). The metaphor employed in this context pertains to an individual traveling and arriving at a critical juncture that presents multiple paths to follow, each leading to a distinct destination. The traveler is presented with the challenge of selecting the most appropriate path based on the merits of each option available. (Lihong Wang, 2017) Ambiguity is a complex phenomenon in English, where a word, phrase, or sentence can have multiple meanings. This can create confusion while communicating information, leading to misunderstandings and disputes. However, some people use ambiguity to their advantage, often in sophism or debates. Despite its potential drawbacks, ambiguity can also have its recompenses. For instance, it can be used to create imaginative works, such as poetry and lyrical prose, that evoke emotions and add appealing value to the language.

(Dai, 2021) explained that correct logical judgments are crucial to analyzing the context when encountering ambiguous sentences. Ambiguity is a complex linguistic phenomenon that arises when a word, phrase, or sentence can have multiple interpretations, making communication challenging. However, analysing ambiguity can lead to a deeper understanding of language, allowing more effective communication and

evading confusion. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and address ambiguity in any form of communication to ensure clarity and accuracy.

(Stefan T. Trautmann, 2015) Chapter 3 of the book *Ambiguity Attitudes* highlighted the analysis of probable arbitrators of the ambiguity approach, the vital perceptual mannerism, and the correlation of it with behavior beyond the laboratory environment; it is significant to highlight that the findings exhibit a lack of consistency and clarity, indicating the need for further investigation and analysis.

(Baillon, A., Huang, Z., Selim, A., 2018) Stated in their study that Navigating ambiguity can be challenging, particularly when time is the essence. It is worth noting that under such circumstances, individuals may perceive greater ambiguity and become less sensitive to it. Nonetheless, it is essential to maintain a skillful and respectful demeanour while navigating ambiguity, keeping in mind that one has the skills and resources necessary to do so effectively.

(White, J. P., & Perfors, A., 2022) The findings of the study indicate that individuals tend to have a preference for clarity in various qualitative situations. However, this preference may vary among individuals and can be influenced by their preconceived notions about the potential outcomes of ambiguous situations.

(Osmont, A., & Cassotti, M., 2023) Their study revealed that only early adolescents did not exhibit ambiguity aversion among the two groups. In contrast, middle adolescents and adults displayed a significant preference for avoiding ambiguous options, regardless of the level of ambiguity. This suggests that young adolescence may mark the beginning of ambiguity aversion development, although this inclination to avoid ambiguity is already present in middle adolescence.

(Demir, 2020) concluded from his studies that ESL learners' writing contains more linguistic ambiguities than grammatical ambiguities, and students are susceptible to vocabulary and verb ambiguities in contrast to other grammatical elements

(Boyarskaya, Elena, 2019) Explained in their study about the use of intentional ambiguity in a language. As a speaker, one has the ability to comprehend and acknowledge instances of intentional ambiguity. Sometimes, speakers use polysemous words to their advantage by intentionally priming multiple meanings, creating ambiguity.

(Yuan Zhang, Hongwei Ding, 2020) Their study highlights a concerning issue regarding L2 learners' ability to decipher prosodic ambiguity. They investigated that many of the L2 learners were able to effectively use prosodic cues to resolve ambiguity because they were informed in advance about the existing ambiguity, and they were able to utilize these cues. It suggests that their difficulty stems from a lack of awareness regarding ambiguity, which limits their ability to detect it within the sentence structure. This finding raises concerns about the effectiveness of current language learning methods and calls for further investigation into improving the learning experiences of L2 learners.

The simplest definition of ambiguity reads that an expression is ambiguous if not only concern meaning but rather the interpretations that can be made by the reader/listener.

(Ogba Igiri, 2017) Upon careful exploration, the writers thoroughly examined the reasons, sources, and various forms of ambiguity encountered when studying English. The writer proceeded to enumerate and expound on the underlying causes of ambiguity, which include the omission of vital punctuations, the use of double or multiple referent pronouns, and the multiple class membership of verbs.

### 1.1.2 TOLERANCE

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Tolerance is defined as the “willingness to accept behavior and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them”. In contrast, Merriam-Webster defines the latter as “the capacity to endure pain or hardship.”

(Moosavi, 2021) discusses the concept of "the myth of academic tolerance", encourages academics and universities to take action against the unjust labelling of East Asian students, and states that educated and well-travelled individuals can still have prejudice. Western universities may not effectively address racism if it is underreported.

(Clifford, 1988) The principal objective of this study was to validate the School Failure Tolerance (SFT) scale and investigate the progressive trends and gender disparities in educational risk-taking and failure tolerance among children. The outcomes showed a noticeable surge in low-risk-taking behavior with grade level, without any noteworthy variations between genders. The outcomes of this study hold significant implications for the academic community and may aid in our comprehension of the factors that contribute to student's academic achievement or lack thereof.

(Salwa Majali, 2020) concluded that female students have a higher tolerance than males, according to a study. The findings suggest that UAE students exhibit more significant levels of tolerance compared to their peers, as influenced by their cultural background. However, there was no significant variance in tolerance levels based on the student's year of study.

(Hjerm, Egre,, 2020) This study extensively analyses a fresh perspective on tolerance, which is defined as a value orientation toward respecting differences. Additionally, the research delves into the complex relationship between tolerance and preconception across five distinct countries, providing valuable insights into these concepts' cultural variations and nuances.

(Jian Xu, Yung Ba, 2022) The study's primary objective was to explore the potential of tolerance of ambiguity in mitigating stress levels and burnout among students. It also provides some implications for educational stakeholders.

(Maykel Verkuyte, Rachel Kollar, 2021) analyses the various meanings and uses of tolerance and intolerance in different contexts. It also discusses the normative and empirical implications of these concepts.

(Robinson, 2010) The study's findings indicate a marked enhancement in academic achievement across all strata. Nevertheless, it is manifestly evident that the pace of tolerance expansion has experienced a deceleration. It is plausible to contend that while placements allow students to obtain an education, they may also potentially undermine the pedagogical milieu.

### 1.1.3 AMBIGUITY TOLERANCE

As posited by Norton in his 1975 publication, the notion of tolerance is characterized by an individual's capacity to refrain from embracing situations that are ambiguous or indeterminate in nature. In contrast, intolerance can be ascribed to the perception of uncertainties and vagueness as instigators of discomfort and peril. (Ely, 1989; Ehrman, 1993; 1994) postulated that an individual's level of tolerance towards ambiguity could potentially be indicative of their distinctive personality traits. It has been duly observed that individuals who possess a heightened capacity to endure ambiguity are predisposed to experience a greater sense of ease in circumstances typified by unpredictability or uncertainty (Budner, 1962).

(Ellis) specified that the capacity to endure ambiguity is a fundamental facet of acquiring a foreign language, which necessitates the ability to manage indefinite stimuli without experiencing vexation and requiring any form of assistance.

(Hitsuwari, Nomura, 2022) It has been established that ambiguity tolerance is a personal characteristic that reflects a tendency to be less averse to uncertainty and is strongly linked to creativity. This finding suggests that one's cognitive processes can be influenced by embracing ambiguity, which can be cultivated through the creation and interpretation of haiku, a form of poetry that demands multiple perspectives and decisions.

(Zhu, Y., Shen, Z., Huang, B., Geng, Y., Liu, W. , 2022) The aforementioned study highlights the cruciality of apprehending the manner in which tolerance of ambiguity can manifest an influence on the comprehension of speech, as well as foreign language anxiety. The tolerance of ambiguity in different scenarios has varying impacts on second language learners. Those with a high tolerance for ambiguity perform better in speech comprehension and experience less foreign language anxiety compared to those with a low tolerance for ambiguity.

(Ely, C.M. , 2022) A study was conducted on university students in Spain to examine how their tolerance for ambiguity might affect their use of different strategies for learning a second language. To gauge the students' tolerance for ambiguity as a cognitive or personality trait, the team created a measurement scale. Additionally, the findings of the study indicate that their motivation level, attitude, and concern for grades could also be characterized by the use of these approaches. The team partially verified some of the hypotheses concerning tolerance for ambiguity through multiple regression analysis.

(Öz, G., 2022) there was no significant difference in student's ability to handle ambiguity in learning English based on their gender. The results suggest that teachers and researchers in the English language field could benefit from the implications and recommendations presented.

(Hassan Soodmand Afshar; Dayan Khasemy, 2019) The results of the conducted study have illuminated the notable fact that students of English as a foreign language in Iran embracing specific belief systems, adhere to particular learning styles, and possess heightened levels of tolerance for ambiguity. They exhibit a discernible enhancement in their aptitude for listening comprehension, particularly among seniors. Pearson Correlations showed a positive correlation between these factors and their listening abilities. Tolerance for ambiguity was found to be the most significant predictor. This research helps us better comprehend the factors contributing to the findings affecting EFL learners' listening comprehension skills.

(Yu, Miao, 2022)It is crucial to encourage students' active participation in the educational and teaching processes, as highlighted by the findings of this research. A successful learning framework should facilitate growth and enhance learners' performance, and therefore, it is essential to cultivate tolerance for ambiguity and resilience in the learning context.

(GENÇ, GÜLTEN, 2016) The findings of the conducted research study indicate that the participants exhibited a restricted ability to manage ambiguous situations in their secondary language. Moreover, the participants experienced elevated anxiety levels during the reading process due to the text's complex nature and various individual factors. The results of the aforementioned research suggest that foreign language reading anxiety is subjected to the influence of various pivotal factors, such as the degree of ambiguity tolerance in the secondary language, gender, and the level of competency in reading foreign languages. The latter association is robust and statistically significant.

(Dewaele, Jean-Marc., 2013) Following an extensive statistical analysis, it has been deduced that the variables of FLCA, SLTA, and self-rated English proficiency are interdependent upon one another and collectively account for a significant 50% of the variance in each other. The research results indicate that individuals who displayed an elevated degree of tolerance towards ambiguity in their secondary language



showcased a decreased level of anxiety in their English as a foreign language curriculum and encountered a heightened sense of proficiency in their secondary language.

(Erten, Topkaya, 2009) Based on the results of this study, it appears that students may exhibit a decreased tolerance for ambiguity during their educational pursuits. Specifically, female learners have been found to report even lower levels of tolerance compared to their male peers. Additionally, the study discovered a significant association between students' tolerance for ambiguity, their perceived academic success, and the type of strategy training they received.

(Hossini, Zehra Seifoori, 2020) The researchers utilized the SLTAS to gauge the learners' capacity to cope with uncertainty in their second language. Additionally, they assessed the accuracy of their spoken language by examining the proportion of grammatical inaccuracies to the whole number of t-units induced during a picture description task. Upon analyzing the data, it became apparent that the participants' oral performance was notably imprecise and that a moderate, statistically substantial correlation existed between the aforementioned variables.

(Mina, Ehsan, 2021) The principal aim of the investigation was to scrutinize the effects of two distinct approaches of written corrective feedback (CF) in conjunction with the learners' ambiguity tolerance (AT) on the precision of L2 writing. The analysis findings demonstrated that both forms of written CF exhibited favorable outcomes in augmenting the learners' writing accuracy. Additionally, as per the study's discoveries, the provision of direct feedback exhibited greater efficacy than its indirect counterpart. However, it was noted that the observed difference failed to attain statistical significance. These outcomes underscore the significance of the teacher's direct correction and the learner's self-correction in augmenting the accuracy of written expression.

( Jafari, Yavari, Shokri, 2015) As mentioned earlier, the research findings strongly suggest that self-assessment may contribute to learners' increased capacity to tolerate ambiguity and bolster their overall proficiency. The data suggests that self-assessment has a favorable influence on learners' abilities and should be considered a valuable tool in educational settings. (Nosratinia, 2013) Interpreting the study's outcomes, it appears that the relationship between emotional intelligence and ambiguity tolerance among learners may not be statistically significant.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 SAMPLES

The research was executed at the English Department of Jizan University. 26 preparatory (Level 1-2) students, 50 proficient level (Level 3-5) and 34 Master (level 6-8) level students; hence, a total of 110 samples participated in this study of the academic year 2022-23. The appropriate sampling method was applied to the assortment of partakers. 53 male and 57 female students contributed their experience to this study. The gender distribution was considered a requirement of the study to concentrate on the effect of gender on AT. The age range of the participants is not considered.

*Table 2.1 1Data showing the level-wise distribution*

		Frequency	Percent%	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
ts Participan	preparatory level	26	23.6	23.6	23.6
	proficient level	50	45.5	45.5	69.1
	Master level	34	30.9	30.9	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Table 2.1 2Data showing Gender-wise distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Participants	Male	53	48.2	48.2	48.2
	Female	57	51.8	51.8	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Table 2.1 3 Data showing Gender distribution in each level

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Level	preparatory level	Count	11	15	26
		% of Total	10.0%	13.6%	23.6%
	proficient level	Count	27	23	50
		% of Total	24.5%	20.9%	45.5%
	Master level	Count	15	19	34
		% of Total	13.6%	17.3%	30.9%
Total		Count	53	57	110
		% of Total	48.2%	51.8%	100.0%

Table 2.1.3 shows that the population of feminine participants is slightly higher than that of male participants despite all efforts made to equalize the population because the researcher was unable to reach remotely located male campuses. Henceforth, most studies (except qualitative) were done through online questionnaires.

## 2.2 INSTRUMENTS

The study focuses on the participants' perspective; thus, it is generally required to be measured by a survey methodology. The Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (Ely, 1995) was selected to enumerate the partakers' AT. A modified version of (SLTAS) by Erten and Topkaya (2009) had a 5-point Likert scale, establishing an additional attach (3-not sure/undecided) was executed to delve into the ramifications of refraining from imposing a quandary upon pupils that would necessitate them to elect between alternatives with positive or negative connotations. (Hou, 2016) stated that within the domain of testing, the reliability coefficient of an assessment would theoretically reach a pinnacle of 100 if the test were to exhibit flawless dependability, and it is crucial to recognize that no test is entirely impervious to inaccuracies and ambiguities.

Ensuring the dependability and consistency of measurements is a pivotal aspect of producing accurate and reliable results in any assessment. In light of this, the significance of research reliability becomes paramount in delivering authentic outcomes. To attain this objective, the study employs a diverse range of reliability tests for distinct variables to guarantee the authenticity and consistency of the research outcomes. SPSS was used for the following analysis.

Table 2.2 1 Reliability scales

Cronbach's alpha				Split half																																																													
<div>Case Processing Summary</div> <table><tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>N</td><td>%</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="3">Cases</td><td>Valid</td><td>110</td><td>100.0</td></tr><tr><td>Excluded</td><td>0</td><td>.0</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>110</td><td>100.0</td></tr></table> <div>a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.</div>						N	%	Cases	Valid	110	100.0	Excluded	0	.0	Total	110	100.0	<div>Case Processing Summary</div> <table><tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>N</td><td>%</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="3">Cases</td><td>Valid</td><td>110</td><td>100.0</td></tr><tr><td>Excluded</td><td>0</td><td>.0</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>110</td><td>100.0</td></tr></table> <div>a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.</div> <div>Reliability Statistics</div> <table><tr><td rowspan="5">Cronbach's Alpha</td><td rowspan="2">Part 1</td><td>Value</td><td>.948</td></tr><tr><td>N of Items</td><td>6<sup>a</sup></td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">Part 2</td><td>Value</td><td>.941</td></tr><tr><td>N of Items</td><td>6<sup>b</sup></td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Total N of Items</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Correlation Between Forms</td><td>.909</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">Spearman-Brown Coefficient</td><td colspan="2">Equal Length</td><td>.952</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Unequal Length</td><td>.952</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Guttman Split-Half Coefficient</td><td>.952</td></tr></table> <div>a. The items in part 1: Q1 to Q6</div> <div>b. The items in part 2: Q7 to Q12</div>						N	%	Cases	Valid	110	100.0	Excluded	0	.0	Total	110	100.0	Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.948	N of Items	6 <sup>a</sup>	Part 2	Value	.941	N of Items	6 <sup>b</sup>	Total N of Items			12	Correlation Between Forms			.909	Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length		.952	Unequal Length		.952	Guttman Split-Half Coefficient			.952
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The adapted iteration of the SLTAS, which utilizes a 5-point Likert scale, has undergone rigorous assessments of its reliability, including evaluations of Cronbach's alpha and Split-Half internal consistency. The outcomes of these evaluations are readily available for perusal and conclusively attest to the instrument's unwavering dependability and validity. Cronbach's alpha is a widely recognized metric for evaluating internal consistency, measuring the extent of interconnectedness among a set of items. The current research reveals that Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the 12 items is .969, signifying a highly exceptional level of internal consistency. This implies that the items are strongly interrelated and measure an identical underlying construct. The results emphasize the dependability and validity of the instrument implemented in the study. A coefficient of 0.70 or higher determines an acceptable level of reliability. Conversely, a reliability coefficient below 0.70 is deemed poor. Split-half reliability is a widely utilized form of internal consistency reliability within psychometrics. The underlying principle of this method involves assessing the extent to which scores and error variances generated by the two halves of a test demonstrate similarity in scores. This consideration holds significant importance for researchers and practitioners who seek to ensure the precision and consistency of their measures. It is postulated that the test items in question are congruent with the construct of the Spearman-Brown coefficient and necessitate a minimum threshold of 0.80 to be deemed acceptable. This is a crucial factor that must be taken into consideration when assessing the effectiveness of the test items. The study yields .948 in part 1 and .941 in



part 2, which shows relatively high data reliability. (stats.oarc.ucla.edu). In light of the fact that all participants involved in the current study were affiliated with the English department, it was determined that there was no need to provide a translation of the scale into Arabic. Such a measure was deemed superfluous given the context of the research. In order to accurately gauge various behaviors in a live classroom environment, it is imperative to utilize a dependable methodology. An effective strategy involves the implementation of open-ended questionnaires, which consist of four distinct inquiries. These questionnaires should be administered to students with differing proficiency levels: five preparatory, 15 proficient, and ten advanced students. This approach makes it feasible to assess the consistency between the statistical and content-based analyses, resulting in a more comprehensive evaluation of the behaviors under scrutiny.

### **2.3 DATA GATHERING PROCESS**

Primary data was acquired by utilizing a survey link from the renowned search engine Google, consisting of the modified SLTAS. The male and female campuses are considerably distanced, so the link option works effectively. The link was distributed by WhatsApp groups with the help of colleagues. The instructor provided a comprehensive explanation to the preparatory level on how to effectively complete the 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, as these students are beginners for such surveys and questions. The questionnaire was filled out electronically. A meticulous process was employed to select a representative sample of students for the purpose of conducting an open-ended questionnaire. Specifically, 15 students with proficiency, 5 with preparatory skills, and ten at the master level were chosen. The questionnaire, which was administered in the English language, was deliberately designed to elicit comprehensive explanations regarding the underlying factors contributing to linguistic ambiguity.

### **2.4 DATA INVESTIGATION**

The concurrent study was administered through the multimethodology structure that encompassed both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Initially, the employment of a quantitative research methodology was undertaken with the objective of collecting responses for the SLTAS. The statistical data was evaluated using the IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0 software package, a sophisticated and comprehensive tool designed to analyze complex data sets. This software is widely recognized for its accuracy and reliability. SPSS was initially designed for social sciences but has since become a versatile software tool with applications in medical management, marketing, and education research. It offers a wide range of features that enable researchers to manage, analyze, and interpret large datasets. SPSS's user-friendly interface makes it appealing and accessible to researchers with minimal statistical knowledge. Given its expanding range of uses, SPSS has become a must-have tool for researchers in various fields. (TechTarget-Contributor, 2018)

For descriptive analyses, all the 12 items in SLTAS were analyzed individually and recorded in tabular form. The numerical values attributed to each scale component mentioned above were derived through meticulous calculation utilizing the corresponding mean and standard deviation data. The statistical data was distributed typically, indicating a reliable and consistent set of results. Thus, the researcher paved the way to run variational tests through SPSS. The researcher presumes that the data samples are fragments of a population that follows a probable distribution of the fixed set of parameters. (Hora, Parametric Tests — the t-test, 2021)

An independent sample t-test was a significant assessment to examine the variance in ambiguity acceptance perceptions among male and female learners. A one-way ANOVA test was carried out, determining the perspective of AT in accordance with different levels (prep, pro, master). Paired sample statics were used to reveal the correlation between the levels and a group of questions related to specific skills. As the objective of the study endeavoured to garner a comprehensive grasp of the attitudes harboured by students

towards the tolerance of ambiguity, to accomplish this, a qualitative survey consisting of four open-ended questions was conducted by the researcher, involving meticulous recording, summarization, and analysis of the responses, which yielded invaluable insights.

### 3. FINDINGS

#### 3.1: Statical Analysis

The outcomes of the said study have been precisely examined and assessed in correspondence with the three fundamental research inquiries

1. What is the tolerance level toward ambiguity among learners from different levels at Jizan University?
2. Is there a correlation between a student's academic tiers/ level (preparatory, proficient, or master's) and their degree of ambiguity tolerance?
3. Is there a discernible contrast in the level of ambiguity tolerance amongst male and female ESL learners at Jizan University?

##### 3.1.1 What is the tolerance level toward ambiguity among learners from different levels at Jizan University?

The question was evaluated using measures of central tendency and variability, such as mean and standard deviation. The overall score of the second language ambiguity tolerance scale (SLTAS) was found to be 40 (Mean=3.315 and Standard Deviation= 1.197). On the scale, 1 means “strongly disagree”, 2 means “disagree”, 3 means “undecided”, 4 means “agree”, and 5 means “strongly agree”. A higher score will show that the learners are less tolerant of English Language ambiguities. The following is the scoring method used for SLTAS analysis besides means and SD.

1. The scores are tallied according to the mentioned criteria: SA is assigned a value of 4, A as value of 3, U of 0, D as of 2, and SD is assigned a value of 1. (SA = 4, A = 3, U = 0, D = 2, SD = 1)
2. Calculate the cumulative score for all the statements and then proceed to compare it against the scale mentioned. A high score indicates a greater intolerance of ambiguity.

*Table 3. 1 The SLTAS item's mean and standard deviation values*

Items	N	Mean	SD	Highest scored
1. When I'm reading something in English, I feel impatient when I don't totally understand the meaning.	110	3.59	1.187	3
2. It bothers me that I don't understand everything the teacher says in English.	110	3.83	1.252	3
3. When I write English compositions, I don't like it when I can't express my ideas exactly.	110	3.14	1.114	4
4. It is frustrating that sometimes I don't understand completely some English grammar.	110	3.35	1.184	3
5. I don't like the feeling that my English pronunciation is not quite correct.	110	3.54	1.215	2
6. I don't enjoy reading something in English that takes a while to figure out completely.	110	3.16	1.185	3

7. It bothers me that even though I study English grammar, some of it is hard to use in speaking and writing.	110	3.01	1.132	4
8. When I'm writing in English, I don't like the fact that I can't say exactly what I want.	110	2.95	1.221	4
9. It bothers me when the teacher uses an English word I don't know.	110	3.21	1.212	3
10. When I'm speaking in English, I feel uncomfortable if I can't communicate my ideas clearly	110	3.27	1.233	4
11. I don't like the fact that sometimes I can't find English words that mean the same as some words in my own language.	110	3.25	1.221	3
12. One thing I don't like about reading in English is having to guess what the meaning is.	110	3.49	1.217	4
<b>TOTAL AMBIGUITY TOLERANCE SCORE</b>	110	3.315	1.197	40

Table 3.1 displays that the Mean response of the items in the scale fluctuates between 2.95 and 3.59. The total mean highest score on each scale item was 40. On the contrary, When the overall mean of SLTAS is considered, the participants have divulged a marked level of ambiguity tolerance, which surpasses the midpoint (Mean=3.315) and is indicative of a valuable trait in alignment with some discoveries of the literature. For instance, Kazamina (1999) discovered this while working with Greek civil servants' data above the midpoint. It is worth noting that this statement aligns with Oxford's assertion that language acquisition can present particular challenges leading to ambiguity and stress for learners. (Oxford, 1999). Based on the obtained data, it can be deduced that the ESL students enrolled at Jizan University have a moderate tolerance towards ambiguity. This indicates that they exhibit a judicious approach towards evaluating input prior to making informed decisions and are not easily dissuaded by inadequate knowledge. Although, analyzing individual items shows a variety of results. The partakers scored the lowest in items 8 (2.95), 7 (3.01) and 3 (3.14), which concentrates on ambiguity tolerance associated with productive skills such as writing and speaking, which shows that many students experience challenges with sentence structures that exhibit ambiguity in their writing, cogitation, and oral expression. The paucity of clarity in their communication adversely impacts their self-assurance when articulating their notions in the public domain. Public speaking forums can undoubtedly elicit an overwhelming sense of trepidation, which can detrimentally impact one's aptitude for efficacious communication. Moreover, conveying thoughts and concepts proficiently, whether spoken or written, can be a formidable obstacle for specific individuals. Navigating through unstipulated circumstances can be a daunting experience for individuals. The absence of clarity in such dilemmas can induce anxiety, impulsive decision-making, and responding precipitately. This may result in culminating in a diminution of self-assurance. According to (J. Dewaele & Ip, 2013), it is in congruence with the perspective of Oxford and Ehrman (1992) that students who possess a reduced verge for ambiguity may encounter impediments in undertaking perceptive risks, such as deducing an informed conjecture based on their pre-existing knowledge. This may consequently result in a decrement in their risk-taking capacity, which in turn could potentially impact their efficacy in undertaking risks.

The outcome of the research study reveals that the English as a Second Language (ESL) learners of Jazan University exhibit a considerable degree of tolerance towards indeterminate structures in the domain of receptive skills, namely reading and listening. Notably, the participants attained the highest scores in items 1 (3.59), 2 (3.83), and 5 (3.54). The researcher concludes that fostering a tolerance for ambiguity in reading

and listening skills is conducive to enhancing students' confidence in these areas as they can yield this weakness as a boon. Furthermore, by developing a mindset of tolerance, learners can interpret incomplete or contradictory information as an opportunity for growth and improvement in their reading comprehension skills. The students can effortlessly decipher complicated sentences despite being perplexing and inadequate information. The standard deviation is a statistical measure that conveys the average level of variability in the data set. In turn, it measures the dispersion of scores in a dataset from the mean. An SD with a high value in normal distributions indicates that the values tend to be significantly distant from the mean. In contrast, a low standard deviation indicates closely grouped values around the mean. The outcome of the study reveals a significantly low standard deviation of 1.197. This suggests that the data points are firmly gathered around the mean, providing evidence of high reliability.

It has been noted that individuals may encounter challenges in producing desired results in the language of interest owing to the presence of ambiguity, which in turn may prompt them to manifest an unfavorable attitude towards ambiguous linguistic elements.

3.1.2 Is there a correlation between a student's academic tiers (preparatory, proficient, or master's) and their degree of ambiguity tolerance?

The collected data underwent rigorous statistical analysis utilizing the One-Way ANOVA Test to discern any discernible deviations in ambiguity tolerance demonstrated by the participants across the three tiers. The results of this examination are presented forthwith.

*Table 3. 2 AT difference between levels/tiers*

Q 1 TO 12	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
preparatory level	26	33.0000	7.16101	30.1076	35.8924
proficient level	50	42.1200	12.84863	38.4685	45.7715
Master level	34	41.5000	13.38079	36.8312	46.1688
Total	110	39.7727	12.43306	37.4232	42.1222

The variances are presented in Table 3.2 by running a One-way ANOVA test. It was observed that participants of different tiers exhibited differences in their ambiguity tolerance ( $p < .000$ ). The study's outcomes demonstrate that there are three distinguishable participant groups, as established through descriptive statistics, cluster and variance analysis, according to their AT. The findings present significant implications for comprehending the influence of AT within the sample population. Most proficient participants ( $n = 50$ ; 45.0 %) had moderate tolerance levels ( $M = 42.12$ ,  $SD = 12.84$ ). It has been observed that the cohort of participants at the mastery level ( $n = 34$ ), comprising 30.0% of the total sample, demonstrated a lower level of tolerance compared to others. ( $M = 41.50$ ,  $SD = 13.38$ ). However, the lowest number of preparatory levels ( $n = 26$ ; 23.0 %) displayed considerable openness and rectitude to ambiguity. To be exact, the mean score was 33.00, with a standard deviation of 7.16. Therefore, it can be inferred that a diverse spectrum of ambiguity tolerance thresholds exists within the cohort of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

Table 3. 3 AT difference between and within the three levels/tiers

Q1 -12					
Levene's Test	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1569.538	3	784.769	5.496	.005
Within Groups	15279.780	107	142.802		
Total	16849.318	110			

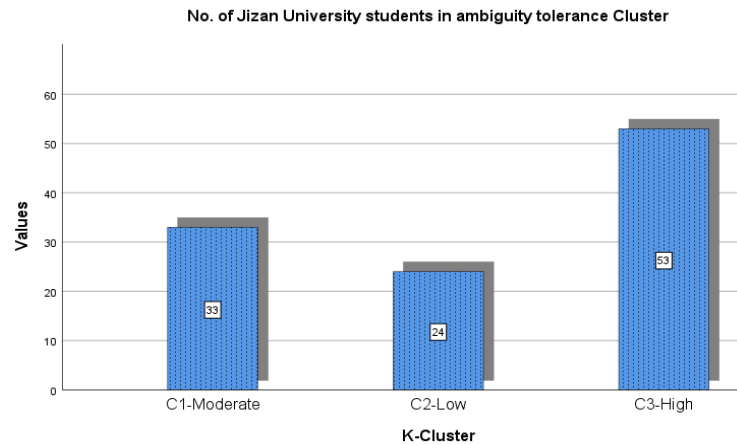
Table 3. 4 AT comparison within the tiers

(I) Level	(J) Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
preparatory level	proficient level	-9.12000*	2.88936	.002
	Master level	-8.50000*	3.11327	.007
proficient level	preparatory level	9.12000*	2.88936	.002
	Master level	.62000	2.65633	.816
Master level	preparatory level	8.50000*	3.11327	.007
	proficient level	-.62000	2.65633	.816

It is essential to compare the p-value, or the probability value, with the significance level known as alpha  $\alpha$ . If the p-value is  $\leq \alpha$ , the result is considered statistically significant. Conversely, if the  $p > \alpha$  result is deemed not statistically significant, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The later statistical analysis was conducted using the ANOVA Test for Equality of Variances, which yielded no significant difference in variances in Table 3 (Sig=0.005,  $p < 0.05$ ). As a result, we are able to assume equal variances between and within the levels safely. In addition, we have taken the proactive step of including the df (degree of freedom) in the table for convenience and ease of reference. Based on the results presented in Table 4, it has been ascertained that the degree of tolerance in terms of mean difference exhibited by students at a proficient level is closely aligned with master-level peers. However, the former groups display a lowered level of tolerance in comparison to students at the preparatory level. This finding suggests that students at the proficient and master levels possess a heightened capacity for dealing with ambiguous structures compared to their counterparts at preparatory levels. As the statistical analysis indicates, the proficiency and preparatory levels do not exhibit any noteworthy variance in tolerance degree ( $p > 0.05$ ). On the contrary, the preparatory level shows variances when aligned with proficient (Sig=0.8,  $p < 0.05$ ) and master level (Sig=0.8,  $p < 0.05$ ). After careful consideration of the information provided, it can be inferred that preparatory students with lower levels of proficiency may have a reduced ability to adapt to ambiguity when compared to those who are proficient or masters in the field.

Using SPSS software has provided various statistical techniques to analyze data, including Cluster analysis. It groups participants based on their ambiguity scores, which can help identify patterns and relationships. A cogent and significant grouping of participants into three clusters, signifying the presence of different degrees of ambiguity among the levels of students, can be attained by implementing the K-means clustering method.

Figure 1 K cluster



*Table 3. 5 Student clusters based on ambiguity tolerance*

Number of Cases in Each Cluster			% of total no	MEAN	SD	MIN	MAX
Cluster	C1 M	33.000	30%	2.910	0.593	2.09	3.94
	C2 L	24.000	21.8%	1.860	0.182	1.71	2.21
	C3 H	53.000	48.1%	4.230	0.129	3.96	4.36
TOTAL		110.000	100%	3.0	0.301	2.586667	3.503333

The provided data has a mean of 3 and a standard deviation 0.301. This implies that the majority of the data values are likely to be within 0.301 units of the mean. Assuming a normal distribution, empirical rules dictate that approximately 68% of the data values lie within one standard deviation of the mean, which, in this case, falls between 2.699 and 3.301. Similarly, about 95% of the data values are within two standard deviations of the mean, which results in a range of 2.398 to 3.602. The coefficient of variation can be calculated by dividing 0.301 by three and multiplying the result by 100%, which yields a value of 10.03%. This value indicates that the data has low to moderate variability. However, classifying low or high variability is subjective and depends on the context and data type.

After applying thorough statistical methodologies such as K-cluster analysis, ANOVA, and descriptive statistics, it has been ascertained that there are three discernible clusters of students based on their varying degrees of tolerance for ambiguity. A significant proportion of students (C3=53; 48.1%) had very high levels of intolerance (mean 4.2, SD=0.1). Using the coefficient of variation, you can calculate that it is  $(0.1/4.2) \times 100 = 2.38\%$ . This indicates that the data set has very low variability, much below 10%. Whereas the other cluster (C1= 33; 30%) had moderate levels (mean= 2.91) as the coefficient of variation is  $(0.5/2.9) \times 100 = 17.24\%$ . This indicates that the data set has moderate variability, as it is between 10% and 20%. Only the smaller group of students (C2=24; 21.8%) ascertained that they hold a substantial ability to endure and accommodate ambiguity with ease (mean= 1.8), with the coefficient of variation indicating that the data set has low variability, as it is below 10%. It is understandable that there may be differing perspectives among language learners in regard to navigating ambiguity.



Table 3. 6 Variances among three AT clusters

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.143	2	.071	.279	.757
Within Groups	27.321	107	.255		
Total	27.464	109			

The p-value in ANOVA measures how much the variability between groups (explained by the independent variable) is compared to the variability within groups (unexplained by the independent variable). The interpretation must compare the p-value to a significance level, usually 0.05 or 0.01. The p-value (sig) less than or equal to the significance level concludes that there is a significant difference between the group means. If the p-value is greater than the significance level, then the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and concludes that there is no significant difference between the group means. The current study yields  $F = 0.27$  and  $\text{sig} = 0.75$ , which cannot reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference between the group means. This is because the p-value (sig) is greater than 0.05, which means there is a high probability of obtaining an F-statistic as low or lower than 0.27 by chance, assuming that there is no difference between group means.

3.1.3 Is there a discernible contrast in the level of ambiguity tolerance amongst male and female ESL learners at Jizan University?

Table 3. 7 AT variance between genders

t-test	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean difference	df	Sig.	T value
SLTAS	Male	53	40.0377	13.22579	.51142	108	.582	.215
	Female	57	39.5263	11.76117	.51142	104.248	.582	.214

According to Table 3.5, obtained by running a t-test, there was no major numerical difference between male ( $M = 40.03$ ,  $SD = 13.2$ ,  $t = .215$ ) and female participants ( $M = 39.5$ ,  $SD = 11.7$ ,  $t = .214$ ). As per the assessment, the tolerance level for ambiguity is moderately balanced. It is worth mentioning that the gender of EFL learners did not exert any significant influence on their levels of ambiguity tolerance.

Table 3. 8 Levene's Test for Variance Equality

Independent t-test Gender		F	Sig.
SLTAS	Equal variances assumed	.305	.582
	Equal variances are not assumed.		

An evaluation of hypothetical gender disparities in ambiguity tolerance was conducted using Levene's Test. Based on the results obtained, it can be inferred that the significance value is above 0.05, with a specific value of 0.582. This observation suggests that the researcher has satisfactorily met the assumption of homogeneity of variance, enabling them to proceed with interpreting the independent samples t-test alongside the means and standard deviations. It is worth noting that if the p-value is less than 0.05, there may be a violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption, necessitating a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for analysis.

*Table 3. 9 Division of males and females to distinct tolerance clusters*

CLUSTER	Male	%	Female	%
LOW C2	8	15%	16	28%
MOD C1	16	30.3%	17	29.8%
HIG C3	29	54.7%	24	42.2%
TOTAL	53	100	57	100

The above data reveals that male and female learner of ESL exhibit differences in their tolerance for ambiguity. Specifically, females have been found to have a lower tolerance for ambiguity than males. While this difference is not definitive, it is noticeable that 28% of female learners fall under the low tolerance category, while the same is true for only 15% of male learners. However, there is a close similarity between the percentages of female (29.8%) and male learners (30.3%) with moderate tolerance levels as well as in high tolerance cluster, with males 29 (54%) and females 24(42%) showing no significant differences. These findings suggest that further studies can be conducted to explore the reasons for this difference in tolerance levels between male and female ESL learners. It would be possible to develop tailored teaching approaches that can accommodate the varying tolerance levels of learners. It is important to note that female ESL learners tend to have a lower tolerance for ambiguity in the process of learning a foreign language, and this could be taken into consideration while designing teaching methods and materials.

Based on current understanding, it seems that no investigation has been carried out to address the possibility of gender-based variations in the capacity to tolerate ambiguity. Nevertheless, numerous studies in affective and cognitive domains have comprehensively examined and addressed this matter. According to a study conducted by Fukuchi and Saamoto in 2005 (page 342), men show less tolerance compared to women. Although their findings were inconclusive, it was noted that more men reported experiencing discomfort. “Some individuals may experience difficulty with grammar or struggle to find equivalent English words for Japanese words they are familiar with. This can cause discomfort or confusion”. The authors suggest that women may be more likely to possess ambiguity tolerance than men. The results of this study align with established research on the relationship between learning styles and personality traits. According to a report from Oxford in 1993, males are often considered more field-independent than females. This means they may be better at identifying details from confusing backgrounds compared to their female counterparts. The reflection-impulsivity distinction provides additional support. Individuals who exhibit reflective learning tendencies tend to carefully consider all available details before deciding or accepting a hypothesis. Conversely, those who exhibit impulsive learning tendencies may feel a sense of impatience when faced with uncertainty and are more likely to make decisions quickly (Larsen, Freeman et al., 1991). According to Oxford, girls are generally more reflective than boys, whereas boys can be more impulsive. Research findings suggest that the female gender displays a decreased tolerance threshold for ambiguity and an increased inclination towards achieving closure in acquiring a language, in contrast to their male counterparts. The fallouts of this study concerning gender distinctions may align with previous research on learning styles (for further information on gender differences research, refer to Oxford's 1993 and 1995 reviews). Studies have shown that female students who may have difficulty distinguishing details from complex backgrounds and require careful consideration before making decisions may experience a greater level of discomfort in incomplete and uncertain language learning situations compared to their male counterparts. This is due to the fact that men tend to notice details more quickly and may rush to conclusions in ambiguous scenarios. It is essential to take this into consideration when designing language learning programs and ensuring that all students, regardless of gender, are provided with a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

### 3.2 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Furthermore, the research was administered by means of an open-ended questionnaire containing four carefully crafted questions. Its primary objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the partakers' tolerance towards ambiguity, which was deemed a pivotal aspect of the research. Therefore, an open-ended questionnaire was formulated, and in order to maintain its relevance, the content undergoes a rigorous review process led by two peer experts before distribution. The questions posed during this process aid in the overall quality and accuracy of the material. After the approval, they were distributed among the partakers. The following are the questions.:

1. How do you encounter unfamiliar material when consuming English content through reading or listening?
  2. How do you effectively navigate the situation When faced with unfamiliar language during written or oral communication in English?
  3. Are you confident in your capability to effectively handle ambiguous or unfamiliar content in English?
  4. Have you been trained to deal with vague or unknown items in English?
- ( ) If your response is YES, please specify what they were. \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) If your response is No., Would you be interested in participating in a training program? \_\_\_\_\_

Aimed at the initial question related to receptive competencies like reading and listening, participants in the three categories utilized the term "try", "search ", and "get help from friends and teachers", which means that they attempted to comprehend the intended message based on the written or spoken context. Individuals turn to sources such as the internet, reputable dictionaries, or subject matter experts when seeking further clarification. A proficient-level student mentioned, " I usually try to look to other sentences for related information which could lead to the meaning from the context. If there is nothing. I will ask my teacher or get help from fellow students.". Another proficient student revealed the experience that "While listening, I listen to the audio two times and write the new or anonymous words then I check them in a dictionary or take help of internet. "One of the Master level students specified, "I enjoy guessing the meaning of things if I do not get it then I look for unfamiliar words online". A preparatory learner specified, " Whenever I come across a new English word, I make an effort to understand its main idea."

The second query pertains to practical abilities, specifically speaking and writing. All 30 students from the three levels expressed that they strive to employ diverse means for articulating their ideas and perspectives, like using translation engines, searching for the synonym of a word or getting help from a teacher or peers. Even though preparatory students were considered more tolerant of cryptic or unfamiliar forms, their reactions to questioning were more reasonable and fact-finding than proficient and mastery-level students. For example, a preparatory class student reacted, "I try to use many words and examples to tell a situation". One more preparatory student expressed, "I create a plan to be original, and then I begin to speak or write". A master-level learner described the experience as "When I speak, I do not get time to think or get a translation, so I try to express the situation by acting the situation or using facial gestures, but while writing, I have enough time to use internet and dictionaries to search for a desired word."

The third inquiry concerns the learners ' self-appraisal, signifying if they feel competent in ambiguous structures. From all three levels, out of 30 interviewees, 16 (53%) responded that they do not feel competent, whereas 10(33%) responded YES, whereas 4(13%) of the interviewees did not reply. Of 8 preparatory level students, 6 (75%) responded NO and 2 (25%) responded YES. This question's results align with the current research, which show that preparatory students tend to have a lower tolerance towards ambiguous sentence

structures. However, they feel they need to be more competent to cope with unknown language structures and are concerned by uncertainty.

Regarding the fourth inquiry, if the students were provided with any guidance or training on how to effectively manage ambiguous or unfamiliar elements of the English language, 24 (80%) learners out of 30 interviewees stated that they did not receive any training regarding this issue. A preparatory student said, "Yes, I would like to have training if I get free time". A mastery-level student would love to attend the training to improve her skills. A proficient student recommended, "Yes, training the students to cope with the difficulties of the second language is the institution's duty." One of the proficient students stated, "I want more and more training for improvement of my skills."

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Our research provides valuable insights into the tolerance levels of language learners towards ambiguous structures. By analyzing differences based on academic level and gender, we can better understand how to support and empower ESL learners. Our findings build upon previous research in this field, highlighting the importance of evaluating receptive and productive language abilities. The SLTAS scale is a valuable tool that considers students' perspectives. Even though the range between the lowest and highest mean scores may be significant, there are no comparable scales. Researcher like (Chiang, Hui-Hua, 2016) has used students' English knowledge and language choices to delve into ambiguity tolerance in language, suggesting that there is a nearly statistically significant positive correlation between ambiguity tolerance and English proficiency, as measured by the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores. However, the study found that tolerance for ambiguity and classroom work styles have a statistically significant positive association with English proficiency.

Based on the study's second research question, it was found that Preparatory students were less tolerant ( $M=33$ ) than proficient ( $M=42$ ) and mastery-level students ( $M=41$ ). Based on the analysis, it was concluded that the variances between the last two levels were not statistically significant. (Erten, Topkaya, et al., 2009) have established a meaningful correlation between learners' proficiency levels and ambiguity tolerance, with reading strategies training resulting in higher tolerance levels. The current study suggests that preparatory levels may have had more writing and reading courses, which could explain the difference in results compared to proficient and master levels. According to a study conducted by (Chu, Yi Lin, et al., 2015), a correlation exists between students' language proficiency, learning strategies, and ability to tolerate ambiguous structures. The study found that all students made an effort to comprehend and interpret ambiguous structures while answering open-ended questions. However, their level of tolerance towards ambiguity varied based on their language learning strategies and levels. Specifically, master-level students expressed more confidence than preparatory classes in this regard. Additionally, other studies by Varasteh et al. (2016) and Alahdadi and Ghanizadeh (2017) discovered that metacognitive, cognitive, and motivational strategies were positively associated with students' tolerance towards ambiguity, validating the conclusions of the current research. Notably, it has been observed that preparatory classes exhibited greater tolerance towards ambiguous structures. Through a thorough analysis of the structured open-ended questions, it has been determined that the utilization of deep learning strategies is the optimal perspective for students to develop confidence in handling ambiguous language structures. These findings are consistent with previous research studies referenced in the present report.

#### 5. LIMITATIONS

The study, while informative, was limited by the small sample size, which could have impacted the overall results and hindered the ability to draw more detailed conclusions. A more extensive study may be necessary for better and more complete comprehension. The relationship between tolerance of ambiguity levels and perspectives. To ensure a more representative and balanced set of responses to the questionnaire, the

researcher may want to consider distributing it at an earlier stage in the term. This would allow for a more comprehensive and inclusive range of feedback. (Preparatory classes 26, Proficient 50, and Master-level 34). As a result, the findings may have been influenced and skewed. It is worth noting that the study primarily focused on students' perspectives of ambiguity tolerance in language learning, gender, and academic levels. Age, background, nationality, and GPA were not taken into account. Including these variables in future, supplementary research endeavours have the potential to furnish a more exhaustive and all-encompassing understanding of the subject matter, thereby augmenting erudition and expertise in the domain in question.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The principal aim of the present study is to examine the level of tolerance of Jizan university-level students in relation to ambiguity in their acquisition of English as a Second Language (ESL). Furthermore, the study explored the extent to which this tolerance varies based on the academic level and gender of the learners. The research findings indicated that ESL learners at Jizan University are moderately tolerant of ambiguous language structures, as evidenced by their SLTAS scale scores above the mid-point (Mean=3.315); in essence, this finding underscores the adaptability and resilience of Jizan University's ESL students and speaks voluminously to the quality of education imparted by the institution, attributed to the familiarity with language structures that the learners were exposed to during their high school or tertiary studies. Moreover, as learners progress through the academic levels, their comprehension of ambiguity is influenced by the literature course, which is more advanced than other courses. These findings are significant for language educators and administrators as they provide insight into the linguistic tolerance levels of ESL learners and how best to support their language acquisition journey. An analysis of student mean scores indicates that ambiguity tolerance levels vary across language skills. In particular, higher scores were observed in reading and listening skills. In comparison, it has been ascertained that the scores about specific productive skills, particularly in writing and speaking, are lower than the expected outcomes., suggesting that students may have tolerance for ambiguous language structures in their oral and reading skills, but written communication and speaking skills are worth concerned. Upon thorough examination of the comparative tiers, it has been observed that the preparatory level manifests the lowest mean score about intolerance towards ambiguity. Additionally, the research has divulged that no notable gender-based differences regarding tolerance exist.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions of this study suggest that to enhance language proficiency, it is advisable to provide additional writing strategies and oral practice exercises. Students may need help when encountering vague language structures owing to their limited language proficiency. To ensure the quality of future research, it is recommended that researchers consider the variation such as fear, concern and uneasiness levels along with particular linguistic proficiencies. Acquiring an understanding of the psychological construct and its impact is paramount for foreign language learners and their education. Armed with this insight, teachers can customize their lesson plans and teaching methodologies to assist students in overcoming psychological barriers. Moreover, this knowledge can be instrumental in helping teachers address various factors such as gender, proficiency level, strategy training, and perceived reading success concerning AT. Conducting a more comprehensive study that investigates the impact of ambiguity acceptance on a broader spectrum of partakers could provide more authentic and generally applicable outcomes. Additionally, a continuous observational study may offer a valuable approach to monitoring the progress of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. Furthermore, it presents an opportunity to cultivate their ability to tolerate ambiguity over an extended period.

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## APPENDIX

Open-ended questionnaire sample

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FKmXIEV7d7mucQxRvLkSJxFe7QSVdGGL/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FKmXIEV7d7mucQxRvLkSJxFe7QSVdGGL/view?usp=drive_link)

SLTAS Mastery Level

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdqtcBJGvs9Kwv70uFLr2042aKQIhbB6cdbrwYzDESMYXMSQ/viewform?usp=sharing>

SLTAS Proficient Level

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecbu8C2yEiCmxpCSIJVuv7xHvnVntWk04OqSPge1OeIeC7Yw/viewform?usp=sharing>

SALTAS Preparatory Level

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezmRpfRfne-a1xTVBCzg\\_zoBv5YUIYKqUW-j9S0nhnnsDww/viewform?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezmRpfRfne-a1xTVBCzg_zoBv5YUIYKqUW-j9S0nhnnsDww/viewform?usp=sharing)

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