

# Kazan Philistines Students' Language Learning Style and Language Learning Strategies: A Gender-Based Study<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the gender differences in language learning style and language learning strategies. The study used the perceptual learning-style preference questionnaire (PLSPQ) to investigate the learning style preferences and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) version 7.0 designed by Oxford (1990) to find the learning strategy preferences in Kazan Philistines. Given the lack of documents of personal origin, the main sources were family-wide lists of Kazan bourgeoisie, statements, metric books, forensic materials, complaints and petitions deposited in the funds of the State Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan. Based on these sources, issues such as the age limits of childhood, attitudes towards children in philistine families, practices and emotions regarding children in various life situations were investigated. As a result, it was concluded that the attitude towards childhood and children in the middle class is characteristic of a traditional pre-industrial society, childhood has not yet formed into a separately recognized and designated life stage. This was manifested in the practice of getting rid of illegitimate children, the desire to include the child as early as possible in resolving issues of maintaining himself and his family, including removal from the family by way of returning to school or working with strangers. However, the predominance of a rational attitude towards childhood did not exclude a positive emotional color in relation to children.

**Keywords:** Language Learning Style; Language Learning Strategies; Philistinism.

## 1. Introduction

Learning style and learning strategies have been the topic of discussions for a long time. Many researchers have been trying to find possible factors that affect

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learning style and strategies. One of the factors that caught the attention is gender differences. Males and females learn differently from each other (Ebel, 1999). Males tend to be more visual, more peers motivated and learn less by listening than females. In contrast, females tend to be auditory and learn well when it is quiet. Tannen (1992) suggests that male students prefer doing learning tasks which involve the talk in public settings more because they feel compelled to establish or maintain their position in the group. On the other hand, female students prefer talking more in private settings because they see conversation as an important way of maintaining relationships. Furthermore, females are better than males at language learning tasks relating to remembering verbal information, faces, names, and object locations. As for males, they do better with the travel directions tasks. Also, Kraft and Nichel (1995) proved that females were better at verbal fluency, vocabulary and quality of speech, but male students were better at writing. Still, despite many studies, inconclusive evidence on the influence of gender differences has been found (Taguchi, 2002). As for learning strategies, various learners' factors have been identified as factors related to language learning strategies, including language being learned, level of language learning, proficiency, degree of metacognitive awareness, gender, affective variables such as attitudes, motivation, and language learning goals, specific personality traits, overall personality type, learning style, career orientation or field of specialization, national origin, aptitude, language teaching methods, task requirements, and type of strategy training (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Namaziandost, Shatalebi, & Nasri, 2019). In terms of gender and language learning strategies, Kamarul et al. (2009) show that females report using language learning strategies more often than males and there are significant differences between genders in the use of affective and metaphysic strategies. Females tend to use them more often than males. According to the aforementioned issue, it can be seen that gender is one of the factors that can influence both language learning styles and strategies. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the gender differences in language learning styles and language strategies that Thai learners prefer. The objectives of the present study are to identify language learning styles and strategies used by first year university students in Thailand, and to examine gender differences in those two variables.

According to Reid (1998), language learning style is an 'internally based characteristics, often not perceived or consciously used by learners, for the intake and comprehension of new information' (p. ix). Reid (1998) reiterates that there are six major learning style preferences, covering visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group and individual. Firstly, students who prefer the visual learning style 'learn well from seeing words in books, on the chalkboard, and in workbooks. Students can remember and understand information and instructions better if their teachers read them. Students will not need a lot of oral explanation and they can learn alone with a book' (p. 165). Secondly, students who prefer the auditory learning style 'learn well from hearing words spoken and from oral explanation. Students can remember information by reading aloud or by moving their lips as they read; especially, when they are

learning new materials. They will learn well from audiotapes, lectures, and class discussion' (p. 165). Thirdly, students who prefer the kinesthetic learning style learn best by 'experience or by being physically involved in classroom experiences. Students can remember information well when they actively participate in activities, role-play, field trips and etc' (p. 166). Fourthly, students who prefer the tactile learning style learn best 'when they have an opportunity to do 'hands-on' experiences with materials. That is, working on experiments in a laboratory, handling and building models, and touching and working with materials provide students with the most successful learning situations' (p. 166). Fifthly, students who prefer the group learning style learn best when 'they are studying in a group or at least with another student. Students value group interaction and class work with other students and can remember information better when they work with two or three classmates. The stimulation and motivation students gain from group work or learn or work with others help them learn and understand new information better' (p. 166). Finally, students who prefer the individual learning style learn best when 'they work alone. Students can think better when they study alone, and they remember information learned by themselves. They understand materials best when they learn them alone, and they make better progress in learning when they work by themselves' (p. 166).

There are many definitions and explanations for the concept of learning strategies. Rubin (1981, as cited in Purpura, 1999), identified six strategy types: clarification or verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing or inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning and independent practice. O'Malley and Chamot (1990, as cited in Purpura, 1999) proposed the framework of strategies, which distinguishes three major strategy types. They are metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies. Each strategy type is further divided into a number of individual strategies. For example, the metacognitive strategies include advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, advance preparation, self-monitoring, delayed production and self-evaluation (Namaziandost, Neisi, Kheryadi, & Nasri, 2019).

Lastly, Oxford (1990) proposed two major classes of learning strategies, which are direct and indirect. These two classes are subdivided into a total of six groups, which are memory, cognitive, compensation strategies. These are all under the direct class. The metacognitive, affective, and social are under the indirect class. Direct strategies or memory strategies are the language learning strategies that directly involve the target language (Oxford, 1990, p. 37). The first type of direct strategies is memory strategies, which consist of creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing actions (Oxford, 1990; Namaziandost, Hashemifardnia, & Shafiee, 2019).

The second types of direct strategies are cognitive strategies, such as summarizing or reasoning deductively, enabling learners to understand and produce new language by many different means (Oxford, 1990, p. 37). Cognitive strategies are essential in learning a new language. It consists of four sets, practicing, receiving

and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning and creating structure for input and output (Oxford, 1990). The third type of direct strategies is compensation strategies, like guessing or using synonyms, which allow learners to use the language despite their often-large gaps in knowledge (Oxford, 1990, p. 37). Compensation allows learners to produce spoken or written expression in the new language without complete knowledge like to guess the meaning of a word, gestures or coining words. Many of compensation strategies are used to compensate the lack of appropriate vocabulary or grammatical knowledge. This way will help learners to understand more about target language and help learners to keep on using the target language by practicing it. Sometimes it helps learners to become more fluent in what they already know and may lead them to gain new information about what is appropriate or permissible in the target language. It consists of two strategies in the compensation strategies, which are guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (Oxford, 1990). Indirect strategies are 'the strategies that underpin the business of language learning' (Oxford, 1990, p. 135,). It is called indirect because these strategies support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language. They are divided into metacognitive, affective and social strategies (Oxford, 1990). The first type of indirect strategies is metacognitive strategies, which means beyond, besides, or with the cognitive. Therefore, metacognitive strategies are actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process (Oxford, 1990, p. 136). It consists of three strategies in this set, which is centering your learning, arranging and planning your learning and evaluating your learning (Oxford, 1990; Shakibaei, Shahamat, & Namaziandost, 2019).

The second type of indirect strategies is affective strategies, which refer to emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values (Oxford, 1990 p. 140). This strategy should not be overlooked because positive emotions and attitudes can make language learning far more effective and enjoyable. On the other hand, negative feelings can stunt progress.

The third type of indirect strategies is social strategies: language is a form of social behavior; it is a communication, and communication occurs between and among people. Learning a language thus involves other people, and appropriate social strategies are very important in this process (Oxford, 1990, p. 144). There are three strategies to achieve this social strategy, asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others (Oxford, 1990; Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019). Several studies have been conducted on language learning strategies. For example, Wafa (2003) reports on the current English language learning strategies used by Arabic speaking English-majors enrolled at An-Najah National University in Palestine. The subjects of the study are male and female students still studying for their B.A. degree. The results of this study show that An-Najah English majors use learning strategies with high to medium frequency, and the highest rank (79.6%) is for metacognitive strategies while the lowest (63%) is for compensation strategies. In

general, the results show that gender and proficiency have no significant differences on the use of strategies.

Another gender study on language learning strategies belongs to Kamarul et al. (2009), the findings of the study show that there are important gender differences in the use of language learning strategies. Female students also tend to use overall language learning strategies more often than males, especially with affective and metaphysic strategies (Oxford 1990).

## **2. Methods**

The childhood study of Kazan bourgeois combines the methods adopted in microhistorical studies and the history of everyday life. The pre-reform bourgeoisie was the lower layer of urban inhabitants, the bulk of the townspeople, whose life was occupied with concern for providing everyday necessities of life. This category of the population belongs to the low-reflecting group, among sources on the history of the Kazan bourgeoisie there are no documents of personal origin. Such a situation presents a sufficient cognitive difficulty, primarily due to the limited source material with indirect data extracted from family lists of Kazan bourgeoisie, various statements, metric books, forensic materials, complaints and petitions deposited in the funds of the State Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan. In this regard, ideas about childhood are inevitably supplemented by some speculation, which should be minimally subjective and not go beyond permissible limits (Laslett, 1987). Not being able to observe the life of bourgeois children in their entirety, we study those aspects and features of the past that have come down to us in verbal and non-verbal texts, the meaning of which is comprehended through imagination, the use of assumptions, and research flexibility (Savelyeva, 2015).

## **3. Results and Discussion**

From all of these results, it shows that there is a gender difference in language learning styles. For tactile, males prefer the minor learning style while females prefer the major learning styles as well as auditory and kinesthetic. For individual, males prefer the negative learning style while females prefer the minor learning style. For visual, both males and females prefer the minor learning style. Finally, for group, both males and females prefer the major learning style. However, for language learning strategies, there is no difference in strategies. Both groups sometimes used all the strategies. This study aims to study gender differences in language learning style and strategies. The result of the study shows that both males and females were different in terms of styles but were not different in terms of strategies. The results of the study are different from Reid (1987) in two aspects. Firstly, according to Reid's study, Thai learners who learn English see themselves as having the individual learning style preference. However, this study shows that they prefer the group learning style rather than the individual learning style. Secondly,

according to Reid's study, Thai learners who learn English see themselves as having the visual learner. However, this study shows that they prefer the auditory learning. Moreover, this study shares the same results with Wasanasomsithi's study (2003) who conducted a research on learning styles of English as second language learners of Thai students. The present study also found that they prefer the group and the auditory as their major preferences. Visual, tactile and kinesthetic are of the minor preferences and the individual learning are of the negative preference. The researcher thinks that the reason why both males and females preferred the group style and why individual style was negative is because our Thai culture or Asian culture seems to value Collectivism (Kim et al., 1984, as cited in Kim, 2004). In the collectivism culture, students seem to hesitate to answer the questions, cannot freely express their opinions, remain silent during class, etc. Collectivism promotes adherence to norms, respect for elders, group consensus, fostering interdependence and group success and etc. For this study, the researcher believes that Thailand's educational system is categorized in this collectivism category. This is in contrast with the Western individualism (Kim et al., 1984, as cited in Kim, 2004). Individualism mainly promotes self-expression, individual thinking, personal choice, fostering independence and individual achievement, etc. This can answer why language learners had different styles in Reid's study and same styles in Wasanasomsithi's (2003) research. In terms of culture, this reason can be confirmed by Reid (1998) as he believes that people from different culture of language learning and strategies may value different learning characteristics. Moreover, Marshall (1991, as cited in Wasanasomsithi, 2003) shows that teaching style may affect the learners' learning style. Therefore, this might affect the different learning styles of learners.

Petty-bourgeois children, even in a prosperous family, joined the work early in order to earn money. Obtaining education by philistine children has so far been little appreciated not only among the philistines, but also among the Kazan merchants. The governor of Kazan, Baratynsky, wrote in 1851 that "education is less common between the merchant class; the merchant class, tied to commercial interests, is for the most part limited to preparing its children for commercial matters, for which it only gives them the education necessary for this amount of activity" (Российский государственный исторический архив (RSHA)).

Furthermore, according to Reid (1998), learning styles are internally based characteristics and some theorists even believe that learning styles are rooted in fixed genetic traits. (as cited in Penger et al., 2008) Therefore, from the researcher's point of view, every individual has his styles of learning. This means that males or females, old or young learners or learners from

Training is often not completed. In the first parish school in the academic year 1824-1843, there were 219 students, 82 of them were middle class children, 37 of them dropped out without certificates, and 31 were left for the second year in the same class (GART.F.428. Op.1.D.28). Of the 212 students of this school in the academic year 1856-57, there were 72 people in the middle class, of whom only 7

were transferred to the next grade, 34 dropped out without a certificate, and 29 were left for the second year (GART.F.428. Op.1.D.287).

All countries have their unique ways of learning that are rooted in fixed genetic traits or internally based characteristics that none of us can observe or investigate why they prefer this style instead of others. For the language learning strategies, this current study shows that males and females had similar learning strategies. They both sometimes used the strategies. This disagrees with Kamarul et al. (2009) as they state that there are gender differences. One of the reasons why there is no difference in learning strategies in both males and females in this study may be because of the culture and the educational system. For example, according to Wafa (2003), the study reported on the current English language learning strategies used by Arabic-speaking English-majors enrolled at An-Najah National University in Palestine. In general, the results showed that gender and proficiency had no significant differences on the use of strategies, which was similar to the result in this study. They believe that the use of some individual strategies could be attributed to culture and educational system in Palestine where students had very limited opportunities to use functional practice strategies especially in large classes. This is quite similar to the study's population that learners were in large classes. Also, according to Moyer (2004), the individual learner's age has been identified as a relevant factor that leads to different learning strategies as well as gender. However, there are also many theorists who have different ideas from Singleton (1989) and Moyer (2004). According to Graham (1997) who based her work on O'Malley & Chamot (1990) and developed it further, Graham (1997) sees the learning strategies as inner processes which are difficult to observe. According to Ehrman and Oxford's (1990) study, they failed to discover any evidence of differing language learning strategy use between the two genders. Furthermore, a study of Yang (1998) involves questionnaire and group interviews in Taiwan. It made some interesting discoveries about her students' language learning strategy use that although her students were aware of various language learning strategies, few of them actually reported using them (as cited in Griffith, 2004). Therefore, in order to truly understand each learning styles and strategies, we have to consider a variety of variables and it is indeed needed for a further investigation.

#### **4. Conclusions**

For this part, the researcher would like to suggest some comments to readers toward the results of the study. The researcher would like to suggest that teachers should not focus on some activities that are appropriate to only one learning style but they should integrate them all in the class, so that learners with different leaning styles and strategy preferences can learn best. For example, for the benefits of learners, if teacher only uses pictures or graphs, only students with the visual style preference can learn best. This ignores the learners of the other styles. Moreover, before the

class, teachers should do a survey in order to know the learners' preferences for the benefits of learners. For example, the teacher can use PLSPQ to find out the learners' preferences. Once teachers know the results, teachers can arrange the teaching style that matches the learners' needs. For learning strategies, the results of the study show no differences. Both males and females sometimes use learning strategies. This may be because of the age factor. The population in this study is 20 or 21 years of age. Therefore, according to Singleton (1989) and Moyer (2004), age is considered to be one of the factors that affect language learning strategies. As a result, this study cannot be generalized to different age group population. These previous studies show that Asian students are likely to sometimes use the strategies with no difference between males and females. As a result, as the population of this study is Asian or Thai students, the results of the previous studies also matches with this study. There are also similar research findings on this matter.

Goh and Foong (1991) study gender and the language learning strategies of Chinese students who learn English as a second language at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. The result shows that all students sometimes use the strategies. The population is around 19 years of age and study English for at least six years. They use Oxford's SILL version 7.0 as an instrument. Moreover, Su (2005), study language learning strategies of Asian students who learn English as a second language and use SILL of Oxford version 7.0 as an instrument. Their result for overall language learning strategies is that all students sometimes use the strategies with no differences between males and females. However, Bremner (1999) studies the language learning strategies of 149 Hong Kong students with 36 males and 113 females' students using SILL of Oxford version 7.0. The results of the study are quite different from the others. It shows that students have some strategies that they use more than the others. Compensation and metacognitive strategies are used the most and memory strategy is of their least preference. From the researcher's perspective, I would like to suggest that Asian students tend to have learning strategies used in the same direction, which sometimes use the strategies. On the other hand, there are a few studies like Bremner (1999) that show the result in an opposite direction. As a result, this topic still needs further investigation.

Social attitudes and social behavior are largely explained through family research. The family in its development goes through a life cycle in which childhood is one of the most important stages. The ratio of adults to children and childhood, considered on the example of Kazan bourgeoisie in the first half of the 19th century, allows us to reconstruct some of the sociocultural attitudes characteristic of the townspeople of the studied period.

F. Aries, exploring the family and the child in traditional society, believed that the period of childhood in the pre-industrial period was extremely short, when the child could not do without outside help. As soon as the child was growing up, he "mixed with adults, sharing work and games with them." The child quickly grew up, "his education was carried out through education in people, thanks to the coexistence



of the child or youth and adults. He knew things, helping adults do them ” (Aries, 1999). According to F. Aries, this separation of childhood into a separate world takes place in an industrial society, when the process of socialization of a child does not occur within the family with early involvement in the survival process, but in school, when education and upbringing are singled out in a special stage of life, after which completion transition to adulthood.

As E. Le Roi Laduri noted in his study, “childhood, if not going into details, is an abstraction, because it consists of stages that line up in a number of generally accepted “age categories” (Ladur & Roi Montayu, 2001). Kazan bourgeoisie separation and awareness of childhood as a special stage, preceding adulthood, has not yet occurred, the schooling of the bulk of the townspeople has not yet been recognized as significant. Thus, on the whole, the family still existed in the value system of pre-industrial society.

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