Iraqi EFL Students' Perspectives on Tolerance for Ambiguity

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Abstract

This study examines Iraqi EFL students' views on ambiguity tolerance, an important affective aspect in language learning. EFL environments often face uncertainty due to lexical, syntactic, and cultural difficulties. This study addresses a gap in the literature by directly investigating the Iraqi student perspective. A descriptive research approach was used to assess students' cognitive and emotional responses to uncertain, unfamiliar, and unpredictable situations using a 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire derived from previous models. The University of Baghdad College of Education for Women's English Department gave the instrument to 87 fourth-year students.

In general, participants had moderate to high ambiguity intolerance. Unpredictability, ambiguous rules, and imprecise information made students uncomfortable, frustrated, and uneasy. Most intolerance was connected with unpredictability and a preference for organized surroundings with clear solutions. The research also showed that social and cultural ambiguity reduced intolerance. Sample standard deviations indicated significant individual variation. The study found that this intolerance for ambiguity affects learning, adaptation, and stress. It suggests using clear instructions, systematic support, and explicit communication to help students manage

ambiguity, improving learning conditions and maximizing their precision and reliability in well-defined tasks.

Keywords: Iraqi EFL Students, ambiguity tolerance, Language Learning, Learner Perspectives.

الخلاصة

تبحث هذه الدراسة في وجهات نظر الطلاب العراقيين الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول تقبلهم للغموض، وهو عامل مؤثر في تعلم اللغة. وإدراكًا منا بأن الغموض، الناتج عن التعقيدات المعجمية والنحوية والثقافية، يُمثل تحديًا شائعًا في سياقات تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، يُعالج هذا البحث فجوة في الأدبيات من خلال استكشاف وجهة نظر الطلاب العراقيين بوضوح. وقد استُخدم تصميم بحث وصفي، مستخدمًا استبيانًا بمقياس ليكرت مكونًا من ٢٠ بندًا، مُقتبسًا من نماذج مُعتمدة، لقياس استجابات الطلاب المعرفية والعاطفية للمواقف غير المؤكدة والجديدة وغير المتوقعة. طُبقت الأداة على ٨٧ طالبة من المرحلة الرابعة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية للبنات بجامعة بغداد. تكشف النتائج عن اتجاه سائد نحو عدم تقبل الغموض، يتراوح بين المتوسط والعالي، بين المشاركات. وأفادت الطالبات بانزعاج وإحباط وتوتر كبيرين في المواقف التي تتسم بعدم القدرة على التنبؤ، وغياب القواعد الواضحة، وعدم وضوح المعلومات. وارتبطت أعلى مستويات عدم التسامح بعدم القدرة على التنبؤ بشكل عام، وتفضيل البيئات المنظمة ذات الحلول النهائية. ومع ذلك، أشارت النتائج أيضًا إلى أن عدم التسامح مرتبط بالسياق، حيث يُثير الغموض الاجتماعي والثقافي مستويات أقل نسبيًا من عدم الراحة. وأشارت الانحرافات المعيارية إلى تباين فردي ملحوظ داخل العينة. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن هذا التعصب السائد للغموض يمكن أن يؤثر على فعالية التعلم، والقدرة على التكيف، ومستويات التوتر. وتوصي باستراتيجيات تربوية توفر إرشادات واضحة، ودعمًا منظمًا، وتواصلًا صريحًا لمساعدة الطلاب على إدارة الغموض، مما يُعزز بيئة تعليمية أكثر ملاءمة، ويعزز قدرتهم على الدقة والموثوقية في المهام المحددة جيدًا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية العراقيون، التسامح مع الغموض، تعلم اللغة، وجهات نظر المتعلم.

1. Introduction

It is well accepted that affective elements play a significant role in learning, particularly when learning English as a foreign language (EFL). No EFL programmer is likely to reach its full potential if psychological and emotional characteristics of pupils are not taken into consideration (Gardner, 1985, p. 244). One of these factors that has been found to significantly affect students' achievement is their tolerance for ambiguity. Understanding how students perceive ambiguity can help teachers develop effective teaching tactics.

EFL students regularly come across linguistically or culturally ambiguous circumstances in Iraqi classrooms (Abbe et al., 2007). Because they might be construed in a variety of ways,

idiomatic statements, intricate grammatical patterns, or foreign language can all lead to this kind of ambiguity (Ely, 1989). Students have difficulties when they believe they must comprehend every word in order to comprehend the message as a whole, or when they find it difficult to accept that words or phrases might have more than one meaning. These challenges may restrict vocabulary growth and prevent more comprehensive language development. "Iraqi schoolchildren often exhibit a low threshold for ambiguity in EFL classes," according to research (Abbas, 2018, p.9). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no prior study has specifically examined Iraqi students' attitudes on ambiguity tolerance, which emphasizes the significance of the current investigation. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine how Iraqi EFL students view and react to ambiguity in their English language acquition.

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction:

Because language is the main way people talk to each other, it's very important that people understand each other accurately. This is the point at which ambiguity, which is simply described as a phrase with many meanings, comes into play (Gillion 1990:394). Ambiguity looks at what the speaker or listener is trying to figure out in addition to the meaning. Many statements, especially in English, can be unclear. If you read a sentence or word phrase in a different tone, it can mean different things or more than one thing.

This brings up a question. What makes ambiguity important? Ambiguity is necessary because it makes language work better. You don't need a bigger and more complicated vocabulary because you can change and utilize words with fewer syllables and easier to say.

Also, ambiguity is an important part of how language works. If languages were too exact and well-defined, so that each word only meant one thing, they would be almost useless and impossible to use. This would make it very hard for people to share and communicate complicated thoughts, ideas, and opinions. To clarify any confusion about this linguistic phenomena, the research will define ambiguity and its main types, giving instances (Abbas, 2018, p.112).

2-2 Defining Tolerance of Ambiguity

Language "ambiguity" occurs when a word, phrase, or sentence has multiple meanings. Language experts distinguish between structural ambiguity, which comes from word order and grammatical patterns in a sentence, and lexical ambiguity, which comes from word meanings. Traditional wisdom holds that pupils should become intolerant of ambiguity, which hinders language learning. Thus, teachers and students are urged to avoid confusing formulations during education.

However, affective-based teaching strategies like Terrell's Natural Approach, Lozanov's Suggestopedia, Asher's Total Physical Response, and Curran's Community Counselling have revolutionized how language learners handle uncertainty. These theories provide a framework for studying how ambiguity tolerance—or intolerance—affects second-language learning. In this perspective, ambiguity involves not only several interpretations but also uncertainties like complexity, novelty, unpredictability, or the lack of clear answers. Yule (2017), 132.

Psychologically, intolerance of ambiguity is well-defined. Budner (1962) defines it as "the propensity to perceive ambiguous, novel, or complex situations as sources of threat" (p. 29). According to Norton (1975), "a tendency to interpret information that is unclear, contradictory, fragmented, multifaceted, probabilistic, unstructured, uncertain, inconsistent, or vague as possible sources of psychological discomfort or threat" (p. 608).

In this study, tolerance of ambiguity is a learner's cognitive readiness to interact with concepts, statements, or language input that may contradict or challenge their knowledge or belief systems. This tolerance can improve understanding, flexibility, and language development rather than hinder it.

2.3 Types of Ambiguity

This study will explain the most important types of ambiguity, including lexical (semantic) ambiguity (polysemy and homonymy), syntactic (structural), pragmatic, ellipsis, and complement ambiguity, and others.

2.3.1 Lexical Ambiguity

Lexical ambiguity is the many ways spoken or written language might be understood that make it hard to grasp without more information. "The double meaning in lexical ambiguity originates from the meanings of the words themselves." Stageberg (1981:57). This implies that word ambiguity might result from many meanings.

We need more information to establish the context and determine the genuine intent of words because they can have various meanings. The Greek term "lexikos" means "related to a word". Lexical ambiguity has two branches: homology and polysemy (Wigmore, 2019).

2.3.1.1 Homonymy

In semantic analysis, lexical ambiguity refers to words with various meanings but the same form or sound. A study of nearly 5000 English words found 7.4 homonyms with multiple dictionary entries. However, 84 dictionary items have several meanings and are split into homophones and homographs.

A-Homographs

Terms for words with the same spelling but various meanings, such as:

 1. Second (smallest minute unit) & second number in series.

 2. Ear: (the hearing organ) and (a cereal plant's seed head).

 3. Bat (animal) & (solid-surfaced, handle-equipped tool). Yule (2017), p. 132 B-Homophones
 Words that sound alike but have different meanings, origins, and spellings, such as: 4. Sea and see. 5. Night and night. 6. Dear and deer.

2.3.1.2 Polysemy

Polysemy, from the Greek words7. poly, meaning "many," and semy, meaning "meaning," suggests that a single word can have several meanings and senses. Yule 2017:133, including Seven feet measures a mountain's bed and top. 8. Head (of a high-ranking person, body, ship's restroom) 9: Flat (A flat surface, apartment, and no feelings).

2.3.1.3 Differences between Homonymy and Polysemy

You can distinguish these two by understanding the speaker's goals. We use polysemy when a word has numerous meanings based on sense relations. Although homophones are two words with the same sound or spelling, the speaker's understanding and judgment are needed to identify them. If we are confused if a term is polysemy or homophonemy, we can reference a dictionary. Listeners may perceive words differently than speakers or writers. Polysemy is a term having numerous meanings that has one entry with a numbered list in most dictionaries. Homonyms have two entries.

Homonyms "ear," "bat," and "second" and polysemy "head," "foot," and "flat" Some words, like date, can confuse readers: Date could be a meal or a period in time; they are homonyms.

Using "date" as "a point of time on a letter, a meeting or appointment, a meeting with a person we like, or even a person we are in a relationship with," is polysemy. Want to know how someone's date went? There are several possible answers (Yule 2017, p.133).

2.3.2 Phonological Ambiguity

"Ambiguity in the level of phonology arises from the sound of language uttered," according to Ullmann (1972, p.86). This type of ambiguity is regarded as a sub branch of lexical ambiguity and occurs when two or more words have the same sounds but differ in meanings. It is typically noticed at the surface level of structure rather than the deep structure, such as:

10-week end - weak end

11- I scream - Ice cream

12- Friday - fry day

2.3.3 Morphological Ambiguity

This type demonstrates that the English language contains a number of ambiguous prefixes and affixes that can cause misunderstandings, particularly in developmental morphology, which refers to words that have the same pronunciation and spelling but differ structurally. The following hierarchical structure aids in identifying ambiguous words:

13-Unlockable.

Which has two structures :

Figure 1. The meaning can be not able to be locked & able to be unlocked (Szymanek, 2013 , pp. 303-304).

2.3.4 Syntactic Ambiguity

Another name is structural or grammatical ambiguity. Syntax rules allow different forms based on meaning. various grammatical combinations have various functional properties, hence one surface structure can have numerous deep structures.

Syntactic ambiguity comes from the link between words and clauses and the sentence structure that underlying word order. Syntactically ambiguous sentences can be inferred to have several structures. Syntactic ambiguity usually results from poor word choice. If you choose terms with meaning instead of meaning or utilize wrong sentence structure, the reader or listener will often be confused (Yule, 2017, p.110). These examples show linguistic ambiguity:

VP+NP+PP

14- Women hit man with purse

VP NP   PP

The line could imply "The woman hit the man using a purse" or "The man is holding a purse". This ambiguity arises because "with a purse" can modify both nouns—the woman and the man—either of which can be its antecedent. The sentence does not specify the PP-modified noun. You may change a guy or woman by carrying a purse. Yule (2017), 132. Lack of information in construction causes structural uncertainty. More details clarify the sentence:

A-She purse-hit the man. Broken purse.

Woman hit man with purse. Injury to man.

A refers to the woman with a purse, and B to the man.

Gerund + VP

15-Grandparent visits are dull.

Gerund VP

Verbs follow gerunds in the second type of ambiguity. The example sentence is unclear since "visiting grandparents" can be a compound noun or noun phrase. When it has a noun and a modifier, writing is difficult to remove ambiguity, but speech can be resolved using tone. A compound noun, "the action of visiting grandparents," is indicated by the / 2 – 3 1 ↑ / pattern. When articulated with the / 3 2 -1 ↑ / pattern, the utterance conveys a noun phrase (visiting grandparents).

VP+NP+more…than+NP

16- Matt prefers kids to Lucy.

VP NP

This third ambiguity category concerns comparative degree. The abbreviated form can be the subject of the second phrase or the object of the verb "love," which compares "the kids," making it unclear. The comparative sentence can be the same as the main clause, thus eliminate everything save the contrasted phrase (Baker 1989:347). When using comparative degree, people use "John hates Mary more than Simon," instead of "John hates Mary more than he hates Simon," to avoid repeating words. Similar terms were deleted from the type 3 sentence, giving it two meanings. A: Matt loves the kids more than Lucy. B. Matt loves the kids more than Lucy.
To clarify, add missing information to the reduced version. Shorten "Matt loves the kids more than Lucy does" to "Does." Matt cannot say "Matt loves the kids more than he loves Lucy."

VP+NP+PP1+PP2

17- Cover the bedroom bed with the blanket.

VP NP　　　　PP1 PP2

The sentence above is ambiguous since the first modifier (on the bed) can alter the closest NP or PP2. Whether in the bedroom or on the bed changes the blanket is uncertain. Changing the blanket means it's on the bed and should go in the bedroom. However, if it changes in the bedroom, the blanket must be relocated to the bed.

A terminal junction between the first and second modifiers eliminates ambiguity. It could imply "Put the blanket on the bed / in the bedroom." Before entering the bedroom, the blanket was placed on the bed. Second interpretation: Place the blanket on the bedroom bed. It says the bed should be in the bedroom with the blanket on it, not in the living room.

The patient thanked the nurses for the flowers (NP + Adj. Clause 18).

NP　　　　　　Clause adj

Two alternate interpretations of this fifth statement can make it ambiguous:
A-The patient thanked the nurses for the flowers.
B- The patient thanked the nurses for the flowers.

The first sentence contains no junction between the antecedent (NP) and adjective phrase, unlike the second. According to the first phrase, the adjective clause (who had given her some flower) precludes NP (the nurses) from revealing which nurses the patient praised. The patient may have only thanked caregivers who gave her flowers. Instead of limiting the antecedent (the Nurses), the adjective clause in the second sentence gives additional information that does not

identify the person (Sinclair 1990:363). The patient thanked and handed flowers to each nurse (Simatupang, 2007).

2.3.5 Pragmatic Ambiguity

   Pragmatic ambiguity concerns conversational implications. Pragmatic ambiguity happens when a sentence's meaning is uncertain and uses words with several meanings. It studies how people use real language or information.

   It analyzes query and document context. According to (Kripke 1977, pp.255–276) and (Searle 1979, pp.190–208), pragmatic ambiguity is conceptually unclear because either the language is unambiguous but the speaker is utilizing it to transmit different or additional information, or it has two interpretations and creates ambiguity. George W. Bush's political speech illustrates pragmatic ambiguity:

   19-"The enemies of liberty and our country should make no mistake."
 Semantically, G. W. Bush warns that America has the right to be involved in international affairs because of its history and because it chooses to do so in his speech about what America has become. But practically speaking, The purpose of this structurally ambiguous statement is to alert the enemies as well as many Americans who question the strength and boldness of the United States. Therefore, it might be a reference to the Democratic Party, which typically opposes American meddling in international affairs, particularly the war against Iraq. The analysis of this sentence is as follows: "the enemies of [liberty and our country] should make no mistake."

2.3.6 Ellipsis due to Ambiguity

   Ellipses remove words from a sentence or phrase without changing its meaning, keeping it fully meaningful. Elipsis meaning "to leave" in Greek, as in "20-Lana, that way; jack, there." Without an ellipsis, Jack stays and Lana moves. Language is repetitive, yet contextual signals can disclose the underlying meaning, thus much can be deleted without changing meaning. Examples of ellipses:

 1. Sluicing ellipsis: in direct and indirect interrogative phrases like 21-he came, I don't know why. The ending of a sentence is removed, especially if it repeats words. I'm not sure why he arrived.

 2—Verb-ellipsis: 22-mark won in 1988 and Rob won in 1990. Rob and Mark won 1990 and 1988 without ellipsis. 1973:262 (Greenbaum & Quirk)

3—Noun-phrase ellipsis removes nouns and related words. Examples are: 23. We have a cat named Rami. Rami and I have one cat without an ellipsis.

4- The "…" ellipsis, better known as the "Dot Dot Dot," removes a word, sentence, or section without revealing its meaning. 24—I quit today. After much consideration, I resigned today (Muhammad, 2018, p. 13).

2.3.7 Punctuation Ambiguity

The Oxford Dictionary describes punctuation as "the marks, such as full stop, comma, and brackets, used in writing to separate sentences and their elements and clarify meaning." When sentences are connected at the hip, they use "pivot words," which end one sentence and start the next. This has lexical and syntactic uncertainty. Again, the surface structure is ambiguous, not the deep structure. Note, say:

25-A lady without her man is savage.

26- Without women, men are feral. (Obrien,2009)

2.4 Difference between vagueness and ambiguity:

Despite their common association, ambiguity and vagueness are separate ways to read words, phrases, sentences, and texts. They differ in essential characteristics and importance for semantic theory and language philosophy. Ambiguity concerns mappings across levels of representation with different structural properties, while vagueness concerns term meanings. Ambiguity differs from vagueness in numerous ways:

1-Ambiguity might not be sustained across meaning-preserving

Translation, Keep vagueness.

27-Came from bank

Ambiguity, unlike A- لقد جئت من الشاطئ ✓ B- لقد جئت من المصرف ✓ C-لقد جئت من الشاطئ او المصرف. × vagueness

28, Lead: construct (c6nstruct-construct); lives

29-(Beach-beech) (which-witch) (ice cream-I scream) (oversees-overseas) (which fails phonetics to phonological encoding). Science-signs (writer-rider) may be dialectically constrained (Bromberger,2012, p.76).

2.5 Functions of ambiguity

Speaking of ambiguity, this paper says English is just like any other language.   In daily conversation, people have problems with phonology, syntax, and meaning.   More than most

western languages, English has a large vocabulary, few suffixes, tens of thousands of homophones, and a loose, grammatical, and fluid syntax. This can make English unclear, which can be hard for both local and foreign speakers (Ying, 2019, p.237).

Ambiguity has two sides, and we need to look at the side that helps us. It can help us understand when the framework of a language doesn't make sense. This can have a special effect that can help us communicate in ways like   PUN: A joke about how a word can mean more than one thing or how some words sound alike but mean different things.   Advertising and marketing often use words that aren't clear.   In the ad, the content may seem shorter and squished together. This ad was picked to show how puns have a special effect.   (1) Yule (2017), page 111, line 30 "Give your son and heir more sun and air."   Advertisement for a beach bath.   Thoughtful ambiguity: (sun) and (son), (air) and (heir) makes it easy to win parents' love.   Euphemism is the writing practice of making a bad word sound better.   This style is used when writing about sex, violence, death, crimes, and things that are "embarrassing."   Euphemisms cover up angry words with nice ones.

Euphemisms are words that are used to make jokes or to be ironic. For example, "31- went away for expressing death" is a euphemism.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive research is an essential methodology in educational research, employed to comprehend and delineate diverse phenomena without altering variables or determining causal relationships. It helps researchers get a quick look at the current state of affairs in a certain place, giving them information that can help with policy, decision-making, and future research (Lans & Van der Voordt, 2002).

3.2 Participants

The research was performed at the college of education for Women/ University of Baghdad with (87 female) English department students, in the 4th stage. During the academic year, samples are chosen randomly (2024-2025).

3.3 Instrument

The instrument for data collection (questionnaire) consists of twenty items. The questionnaire was adopted by Kianinezhad (2024) and Ansari (2023). The Likert-scale is used as part of the questionnaire. The responses to the scale varied from "Strongly Agree (5)" to "Agree (4)" to "Neutral (3)" to "Disagree (2)" to "strongly Disagree (1)".

3.4 Validity

The instrument is correct if it correctly measures what it is meant to calculate (Ebel, 1972, P.555). To guarantee the face validity of the questionnaire, members of the teaching team of the jury university who ensured the face validity of the assessments were subjected to it. Each juror is asked to state comments and recommendations on the suitability of the specifics of the questionnaire, see the table (1)

Table 1

Names of Jury Members

NO.	NAME	SPECIALTY	POSITION
	Prof. Dr. Nahida T. Majeed	ELT	Tikrit university / collage of Arts
	Prof. Dr. Isra'a B. Abdurrahman	Linguistic	Tikrit university / collage of education for woman
	Asst. Prof. Ali S. Jameel	ELT	Anbar university / collage of Arts
	Asst. Prof. Najwa Y. Ismeal	ELT	Tikrit university / collage of education for humanities

3.5 Reliability

According to Brown (2003, p.98), reliability refers "to the extent to which the results can be regarded as consistent or precise. To ascertain the dependability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficients were determined in order to assess the efficacy of "student perceptions of tolerance for ambiguity." Reliability values ranging from 0.88 are considered acceptable.

4. Findings

4.1 Data Analysis Related to the Questionnaire

The statistical analysis shows a strong and unambiguous trend toward Intolerance of Uncertainty throughout the whole sample. The highest levels of agreement were on basic, abstract ideas. The group's discomfort is particularly evident in relation to general unpredictability, as demonstrated by Item 2 ("I dislike unpredictable situations") achieving the highest mean score of 3.96, and their marked preference for organized environments, indicated by the high agreement with Item 10. The lowest agreement numbers, on the other hand, show how far this intolerance can go. This group doesn't seem to mind cultural ambiguity as much as the others, since item 16 got the least support. The data shows that most people agreed with the claims because the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories were the biggest for almost every item. The moderate standard deviations seen throughout further support the idea that this tendency is a common trait among the group, but there is still a wide range of opinions among the respondents.

Table 2.

Students Response to the Questionnaire Items

Item	Statement	Mean	Std Dev.	Strongly Disagree (1) %	Disagree (2) %	Neutral (3) %	Agree (4) %	Strongly Agree (5) %
1	"I don't like situations that are uncertain".	3.82	1.07	1.8%	7.9%	21.1%	**36.8%**	32.5%
2	"I dislike unpredictable situations".	3.96	1.02	1.8%	5.3%	19.3%	**35.1%**	38.6%
3	"I feel uncomfortable when I don't understand the reason why something is happening."	3.54	1.22	5.3%	11.4%	21.1%	**32.5%**	29.8%
4	"I don't like to go into a situation without knowing what I'm getting into."	3.18	1.32	10.5%	14.9%	**28.1%**	24.6%	21.9%

5	"I feel threatened when I don't know what is going on around me."	3.54	1.28	7.0%	10.5%	21.9%	**29.8%**	30.7%
6	"I feel uneasy when I am in a situation where I am not sure what is expected of me."	3.18	1.42	14.0%	12.3%	21.1%	**26.3%**	26.3%
7	"I find it frustrating when a situation is unclear."	3.46	1.32	7.9%	12.3%	21.1%	**28.1%**	30.7%
8	"I feel uncomfortable when information is presented in a way that is difficult to understand."	3.61	1.15	3.5%	9.6%	24.6%	**38.6%**	23.7%
9	"I find it unsettling when things don't go according to plan."	3.39	1.40	10.5%	12.3%	19.3%	**28.1%**	29.8%
10	"I prefer working in situations where the rules are clear and fixed."	3.82	1.21	4.4%	7.0%	19.3%	**31.6%**	37.7%
11	"I enjoy working on problems that have clear solutions."	3.75	1.26	5.3%	7.9%	21.1%	**29.8%**	35.1%
12	"I get nervous when there is no clear solution to a problem."	3.46	1.31	7.0%	12.3%	21.9%	**31.6%**	27.2%
13	"I find it uncomfortable when there is	3.54	1.27	5.3%	11.4%	21.1%	**32.5%**	29.8%

	more than one interpretation of a situation."							
14	"I find it frustrating when there is no clear right or wrong answer."	3.54	1.33	7.0%	10.5%	21.1%	**29.8%**	31.6%
15	"I feel uncomfortable when I am unsure about how to behave in a situation."	3.04	1.42	14.9%	14.0%	**24.6%**	24.6%	21.9%
16	"I feel uneasy when I don't understand the customs and practices of a culture."	2.89	1.39	17.5%	14.9%	**26.3%**	24.6%	16.7%
17	"I prefer to work in situations where there is a well-defined hierarchy."	3.25	1.35	10.5%	14.0%	**24.6%**	28.1%	22.8%
18	"I get frustrated when I don't know the rules of a game or activity."	3.46	1.25	5.3%	12.3%	24.6%	**33.3%**	24.6%
19	"I feel nervous when I am not sure what is expected of me in a social situation."	3.46	1.30	7.0%	11.4%	23.7%	**29.8%**	28.1%
20	"I prefer to work in situations where everything is planned in advance."	3.46	1.27	7.0%	11.4%	21.9%	**33.3%**	26.3%

Discussion of Results

Population uncertainty tolerance is moderate to high on the 20-item scale. The average ratings, 2.89 to 3.96 (on a 5-point scale), show that most respondents feel anxious, annoyed, and uncomfortable when things are unclear, uncertain, or unpredictable. However, the Likert scale and standard deviations show the group is unique. This implies a continuum of this group's uncertainty intolerance.

The mean ratings were highest in uncertain event and clarity. At 73.7%, Item 2 ("I don't like unpredictable situations") had the highest mean (M=3.96). Item 1 ("I don't like unreliable situations," M=3.82) and Item 10 ("I prefer working in conditions where the boundaries are clear and fixed," M=3.82) scored well. This shows that people are most uncomfortable without norms and no predictability. People agree with Item 11 ("I enjoy working on problems that have clear solutions," M=3.75), demonstrating they need mental tranquility and importance.

The findings also demonstrate that uncertainty negatively impacts mental and emotional health. Items with "feel uncomfortable," "feel threatened," "feel uneasy," and "frustrating" were generally agreed upon. Item 5 ("I feel unsafe when I don't understand what's going on," M=3.54) and Item 7 ("I find it challenging when a situation is unclear," M=3.46) show that not knowing what's going on can be bothersome and stressful. Item 8 ("I feel nervous when information is delivered in a way that is difficult to understand," M=3.61) likewise reveals that confusing communication causes this discomfort.

Less tolerance is becoming more common, although how strong it is depends on the situation. This reveals that social and cultural ambiguity had the lowest average scores. Items 16 ("I feel uneasy when I don't understand the customs and behaviours of a culture," M=2.89) and 15 ("I feel uncertain when I am unsure about how to respond in a situation," M=3.04) had the highest "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" responses. This indicates the group may be more able to handle ambiguity in social and cross-cultural circumstances, but they don't like it elsewhere. They may face these circumstances less regularly.

Item 4 ("I don't like to go into a situation without knowing what I'm getting into," M=3.18) and Item 6 ("I feel uneasy when I am not sure what is expected of me," M=3.18) had lower

averages and more neutral/disagree This shows that a large minority is more likely to "dive in" to new situations or less impacted by unclear role expectations.

Clear, concise replies are preferred by the group.   Items 13 and 14 (both M=3.54) reveal that most people dislike problems with multiple solutions or no obvious winner.   This and the high scores for Items 11 and 12 indicate a preference for clarity and finality over openness and nuance.

All items have huge standard deviations, 1.02 to 1.42, which is interesting.   This shows a wide reaction range around the mean.   Thus, public opinion varies on everything.   On every topic where most people agreed, a sizable minority disagreed or was neutral.   Major discovery: uncertainty management treatments or procedures must be customized and cannot be applied to all group members.

Brown et al. (2015) say uncertainty management impacts organisational behaviour.   They can't tolerate major organizational changes, ambiguous agile methods, or less hierarchical structures because they like specific rules, plans, and hierarchies (Items 10, 17, and 20). According to research, these people require clear leadership and new methods to be calm and productive. Large standard deviations prevent managers from using a one-size-fits-all approach. Teams may have structure- and uncertainty-lovers.

Social and cultural uncertainty scored lowest (15 and 16). Hofstede's (2001) cultural component of Uncertainty Avoidance explains this complex conclusion.   Social ambiguity may be easier due to demography or a difference between formal procedural and informal social uncertainty, however the sample has a high UAI.   It shows that UAI differs by culture or group, contradicting Hofstede's simple use. This justifies using Hofstede's indices cautiously in individual evaluations.

5. Conclusion

The group being researched is sensitive to ambiguity, especially when things go wrong, challenges are hard, or facts are unclear.   This tendency may cause several things: Your work performance: Sensitive people may feel pressured, resist change, and struggle to learn in fast-paced environments.   However, these people could excel in roles that require precision, standards, and product quality. Improve our intelligence:

This group may have unresolved concerns and struggle to study alone in school or training. Clear rules, goals, and rubrics help students learn. Communication: Give this group simple, succinct, and understandable information to comprehend you. In answer to Item 3, context and rationale for decisions may reduce stress. People can't handle uncertainty, therefore they can develop techniques to manage their anxiety and use their skills in accurate, reliable situations. Why people think this way and how well programs that teach ambiguity tolerance work need more research.

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