

Personality Types and Language Learning in Relation to Language Proficiency among Senior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the relationship between personality types and language learning strategies to English proficiency. This is quantitative research employing a descriptive-correlational research design. In total, there were 231 senior high school student-respondents who took the test, derived through stratified random sampling, from three schools within the lone district of the City of Mati, Davao Oriental. The mean was used to determine the introversion and extroversion levels, the level of usage of language learning strategies, and the level of English language proficiency of the respondents. The Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to identify the relationship between personality types and language learning strategies, and English proficiency. The findings of this study revealed that there are slightly more introverts than extroverts who took part in the study. Along with this finding, the language learning strategy statements were generally found to be somewhat true to the respondents. Results show that there was no significant relationship that existed between personality types and English proficiency. Furthermore, language learning strategies were found to have a significant relationship with English proficiency.

Keywords: Education, English, personality types, language learning strategy, English proficiency, quantitative method, descriptive-correlational design, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The necessity to effectively communicate in the English language has recently increased due to the demands that are required to compete in the various fields to further globalization. In order to do this, students in countries, especially those who do not use English as their native language, study English as a main subject in their educational curriculum. Varying personality types were studied and considered, and different language learning strategies were employed to achieve English proficiency. However, recently it has been evident that students have become less adept in communicating using the English language. This resulted to a decline in their proficiency. The most common difficulties encountered by the students are the construction of sentences, usage of right verb tenses, paragraph coherence, usage of contextually appropriate vocabulary, and difficulty in comprehending texts.

A study conducted by Masalimova et al. (2016) pointed out that 69% of their respondents had difficulties identifying the structural pattern of the English sentences, made mistakes in reproducing the tense of the verb-predicate, and cannot differentiate between affirmative or negative and active or passive sentences. In the United States, a research by Rossier (2016), as cited in Domantay & Ramos (2018) tested 50 Spanish-speaking ESL high school students appraising only their oral English skills and found out that many students recently, are not able to effectively compose words, make words into meaningful sentences, and combine sentences into coherent paragraphs (Domantay & Ramos, 2018).

Another study conducted in the Pacific Islands of Fiji by Chand (2014), in Oceania, have found out that despite the students' immersion in the usage of the English language, there still existed in the tertiary students' writing, errors in terms of the appropriateness of the words they used according to the context, the spelling of words, and their sentence construction. In Thailand, a study conducted by Cubalit (2016) cited that the students' skills in reading and listening are still generally weak, compared to other

members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In the Philippine context, it was recently shown in a nationwide survey referred to as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that 15-year-old Filipino students ranked the lowest among 79 countries which took part in the testing. The country's average score in reading was 340 points—roughly 147 points or 90% below the 487 OECD Average (OECD, 2019). All in all, the countries were ranked in descending order according to the average reading score, which is the focus of PISA 2018. Only 19% of the takers of the test were found out to be able to point out the main idea in a moderate length text, reflect on the forms and purposes of texts, and search for information based on complex criteria. Furthermore, the mathematical and scientific performance of these students were evaluated to still be far below average, mainly attributing thus to low reading comprehension.

This Philippine scenario prompted the researcher to conduct a study to learn more about these certain variables which can predict the students' proficiency in their command of the English language. Although the studies cited earlier (Masalimova, et al., 2016; Rossier, 2016; Chand, 2014; Cubalit, 2016; and OECD, 2019) have looked into other variables' effect or possible correlation to language proficiency, the researcher desired to look into the relationship that may exist between personality types and written English. Another thing which sets this study's gap to others is the new research instrument being used, which is more context-appropriate to language learning as compared to the leading instruments that generally test personality types.

This study also aimed to compare findings with most researches on the effect of language learning strategies on whether they can predict proficiency in the English language. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there are only a few recent researches on the topic, thus this study shall reflect results with respondents in the Philippines the 21st century. This study can provide a database that can be used as a tangible reference for a deeper understanding on the development of the learners' linguistic proficiency. For students, this study could provide them

essential feedback and information regarding their language learning, thus knowing themselves better which is a key to the development of their English language skills. A person's personality type is a reference not just for one's preferences on learning, but also as to how one responds to stimuli in the learning environment, in general.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Carl Jung's Personality Theory (1971), GassSelinker's (1994) and Cattell's (1987) investment theory, and Rubin's (1975) Theory on Second Language Learning.

Carl Jung's Personality theory emphasizes that a person can fall in either one out of two categories, introversion and extraversion (Jung, 1971). However, being classified to one type does not mean that the person is not capable of displaying the other type. All persons possess both mechanisms but the relative predominance of one or the other determines the type where a person belongs to (Rothgleb & Clemens, 1992). Gass and Selinker (1994) and Cattell's (1987) investment theory, in support to the hypotheses by Omaggio-Hadley's (1993), theorized that personality factors influences the degree of achievement of individuals in learning a second language, since some features of the learners' personality could encourage, or inhibit second language learning (Gass & Selinker, 1994; Cook, 1996 in Capellan, 2017). Furthermore, these studies (Gass and Selinker, 1994; Cattell, 1987; OmaggioHadley, 1993) emphasize that only can language acquisition at all levels of proficiency be effective when these two factors are considered and given appropriate attention.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research that is descriptive-correlational. This study is quantitative in nature since this intends to establish, confirm, and validate relationships and develop generalizations that contribute to theory (Leedy et al., 2001). According to Creswell (2003), quantitative research employs experimental inquiry strategies and surveys and uses predetermined

instruments to yield statistical data. As for this study, a quantitative method was used to objectively and numerically show data.

This study also made use of the descriptive research method. This type of research describes the phenomena being studied. The data were gathered, and descriptive statistics were to analyze these data (Lomax et al., 2013). Graphs and charts were used to show data distribution (Kritsonis, 2002). In this study, the students' personality types, their language learning strategies and their English proficiency were presented in detail.

Furthermore, this study used the correlative research method which involved looking into the relationship in between two or more variables that exist (Cherry, 2017). Moreover, it investigated on a range of factors such as the nature of the relationship between the factors and the theoretical model that were developed and tested to explain these correlations (Lomax et al., 2013). This was utilized in this study to determine if there exists a relationship among the students' personality types, the language learning strategies they employ, and their English proficiency as measured by the research instruments predetermined for the purpose.

Place of the Study

This research was conducted in Davao Oriental, a province in the Philippines, within Region XI, that borders Davao de Oro to the West, Agusan del Sur to the north and Surigao del Sur to the northeast. It faces the Philippine Sea, part of the Pacific Ocean, to the east. It is the easternmost province in the country with Pusan Point in the municipality of Caraga as the easternmost location. It has a registered population of 558,958 as of 2015 according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), with a population density of 98 inhabitants per square kilometer or 250 inhabitants per square mile. The province has one city which served as its capital—the City of Mati. This province is mostly inhabited by immigrants from Visayas. Major ethnic groups within the province include Mandaya, Mansaka, Manobo, and Ka'agan.

Respondents

The respondents of this research were Senior High School students of three schools within the province of Davao Oriental. The researcher decided that they are the most representative

respondents of the study since these students are about to finish high school, and thus, can be considered to be fully equipped with basic English instruction since elementary and junior high school. Furthermore, it can be said that they are preparing for collegiate education since the new K-12 curriculum incorporates minor subjects from college into the senior high level.

Furthermore, the stratified random sampling was used as the sampling method in this research. It is where the population is divided into groups called strata and a random sample is taken from each subgroup (Taherdoost, 2016). This is often used when there is a great deal of variation within a population to be tested.

Statistical tools

The **Mean** and the **Standard Deviation** were used to determine the level per personality type, language learning strategies and language proficiency. The **Pearson Product Moment Correlation**, measured how strong the relationship is between two variables (Lane, 2018), was used to find out whether there existed relationships and associations among the three variables: students' personality types, language learning strategies and English language proficiency. The **Multiple Regression Analysis** this statistical tool was used to determine the moderating effect, if there is, of the independent variables: personality types and language learning strategies, to the students' English proficiency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Levels of Personality Types

Presented in Table 1 are the level of personality types of the 231 respondents who participated in this study. As a whole, the test gained an overall mean of 3.03, which indicates that the respondents, in general, believes that the statements on their introversion/extroversion in language learning are somewhat true

of themselves. Taking the general standard deviation of .432 into consideration, this means that the answers are generally homogenous or identical. Furthermore, the results showed that the level of extroversion can be quantified to have reached an overall mean score of 2.95 and an SD of .558, indicating that the respondents' extroversion is at a moderate level, thus somewhat true to them, and that their responses are homogenous. Introversion, in general, gained an overall mean score of 3.11, and an SD of .576, signifying that the level of introversion among the students who took the test are at the moderate level, and that the responses show homogeneity in the responses, based on the standard deviation.

Table 1

Social Media Engagement of the Grade 10 Students

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
Extroversion	2.95	.558	Moderate
Introversion	3.11	.576	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.11	.576	Moderate

The results of this study have shown that students, no matter the personality type, prefer listening than talking in the classroom. This supports the results of a related study conducted in Iran by Baktash et al., (2016), which states that reticence or shyness to participate in the classroom setting is common and existent among students, notwithstanding their personality and level of proficiency. This furthermore coincides with the results on a more recent study by Murphy, Eduljee, Croteau, and Parkman (2017), that neither extraversion nor introversion is significantly related to classroom participation.

Usage Levels of Language Learning Strategies

The levels of usage of the senior high school students' strategies in learning a language are presented in Table 6. This second variable is composed of six indicators. The general mean of the whole test is 3.26, which points out that the strategies described in the statements are sometimes practiced by the respondents in learning English as a second language.

Table 2
Usage Levels of Language Learning Strategies

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
Memory-related Strategies	3.09	.561	Sometimes
Cognitive Strategies	3.22	.572	Sometimes
Compensation Strategies	3.18	.731	Sometimes
Metacognitive Strategies	3.41	.657	Sometimes
Affective Strategies	3.18	.702	Sometimes
Social Strategies	3.45	.788	Sometimes
Overall Mean	3.26	.491	Sometimes

As a whole, this Social Strategies earned a category mean of 3.45, therefore signifying that the statements therein are sometimes practiced by the students in learning English. *Asking the other person to slow down or say it again if one does not understand something in SL* gained the highest mean with 3.72 interpretable to be often practiced by the respondents. This meant that the students mostly asks the speaker to slow down so they can understand. This is in consonance with the results of two studies conducted in Iran by Khosravi (2012) and Salahshour, Sharifi, & Salahshour (2012), where social and metacognitive strategies are the most used strategies in learning English. Meanwhile, memory-related strategies, has the lowest mean of 3.09, interpreted to be sometimes practiced by the students in their learning of the English language.

Level of Proficiency in the English Language

Presented in Table 3 are the mean percentages of the students' scores computed using 50-based equivalency. The Grammar and Vocabulary Test comprises of 50 items while the Reading Test has 10 items. As seen in the table, the overall mean score of the students for both tests is 76.47, described as Poor, which is interpreted that the students, in general, are not proficient in their usage of the English language. When broken down into its indicators, the students scored an average of 76.18 for the Grammar and Vocabulary Test, thus within the 75-77 range which are only barely passing the mark, and 77.90 in the Reading Test which both

points out that the on average, the student respondents are not proficient in both competencies of the English language..

Table 3

Level of Proficiency in the English Language

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Descriptive Rating
Grammar and Vocabulary	76.18	10.147	Poor
Reading	77.90	11.249	Poor
Overall Mean	76.47	9.429	Poor

Although achieving an overall passing rate, this is quite surprisingly rather low since it is known that the Philippines use English as one of its second languages, and English is commonly used in the three branches of media in the country: broadcast, social and print, which the students must be exposed to. The researcher took the initiative to count the number of respondents who achieved scores higher than or equal to 30 (the passing score in a 50-based computation of equivalents) and found out that 56.28% of the whole sample population has passed the test, with scores averaging to 37.89 for 60 items. For the grammar and vocabulary test, 130 students passed out of the total population of 231, with scores averaging 33.84; 144 students passed in the reading test with scores averaging 7.01, all computed using the 50-based computation.

As observed by the researcher, the items by which the students usually made mistakes in are those of the forms and tenses of the verb. This is followed by the appropriate usage of prepositions in a sentence. The questionnaire is more of a supplication test, where the test-taker must choose from four choices the appropriate word or phrase that must be put in the blank. As for the reading test, the students have scored quite good in it, thus the level of most of the students' reading comprehension must be at the interpretive (second) level, which is at par with what is required by the reading test.

**Correlations between Personality Types
and Proficiency in English Language**

Through the results exhibited in Table 4, it is revealed that the correlation between Personality Types and Linguistic Proficiency is not significant. It is shown in the table that the p-value (.133) has exceeded over the 0.05 margin of error. Since there is no correlation that exists between the two variables, there is no more a need to look further into the influence of the independent variable to the dependent through regression analysis. This supported the results of the study done by Chen, Jiang, and Mu (2015) and Sharp (2008) saying that neither extroversion nor introversion were key factors in a learner's performance in the English language.

Table 4
Correlations between Personality Types and Proficiency in English Language

Variables	Language r	Proficiency Sig.	Interpretation
Personality Types	.100	.133	Not Significant
Language Learning Strategies	.138	.038	Significant

Moreover, this result disproves a theory in Stephen Krashen's (1988) Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis that states that a person's personality poses a significant effect on his proficiency in the English language, most especially his grammar knowledge, explaining that extroverts benefit out of language usage, thus extroverts are more grammatically concise than introverts. Furthermore, the results of this study do not support Gass and Selinker's (1994) investment theory stating that personality factors influence an individual's level of achievement in second language learning.

Nonetheless, the results of this study have supported the findings of the study conducted by Sharp (2008) in Hong Kong stating that there is no clear relationship that is found between personality and ability in the second language, thus leading this researcher to not investigate further on the variables. Another study

by Kato (2009) yielded the same results that personality types have nothing to do with proficiency. More recently, a study by Capellan (2017) tried to correlate personality types with their language examination grades and concluded that the results were statistically insignificant.

The results of this study align with Rubin's (1975) Language Learning Strategy Theory, stating that some of the successes in learning a new language may be attributed to the strategies that the learners use. The results also support Gass and Selinker's (1994) idea theorizing that personality factors influence the degree of achievement in second language learning. These figures pointing out to the correlation of language learning strategies and English language proficiency is in accordance with studies by Ariani (2015), Salahshour, Sharifi, & Salahshour (2012) and Khosravi (2012). This study disagrees with the results found by a study focusing on cultural intelligence, language learning strategies, and English language proficiency conducted in a nearby Southeast Asian country, Indonesia, by Rachmawaty, WeIllo, Akil, and Dollah (2018) stating that there is no correlation between the two variables: language learning strategies and proficiency in the English language.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. The results of this study showed that knowing whether a language learner is an introvert, or an extrovert does not affect, in any way, his level of proficiency (grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension) in the English language. This indicates that activities related to language learning may be given, without considering the students' personality types. This study pointed out that the students may not have many ideas about language learning strategies, thus explaining the infrequent usage of these strategies in learning the English language. The usage of students of language learning strategies does not mainly affect English proficiency thus, notwithstanding its type or category, it may or may not be reconsidered in the learning of English due to the result established after the conduct of the study that language learning strategies are significantly yet weakly correlated with the level of proficiency in the English language. Since, aside from language learning strategies, there are other factors that affect how language learners learn the

target language (e.g. motivation, experiences, age), it would be unwise to support the idea that all language learners prefer the same good language learning strategies, nor should they be trained to use and develop the same strategies to become successful in learning the English language.

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