ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 3 | 2021
ISSN: 2181-1385
Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF) 2021: 5.723
DOI: 10.24411/2181-1385-2021-00515

LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY USE: DO EXTROVERSION AND INTROVERSION IMPACT LEARNERS' LLS PREFERENCES?

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ABSTRACT

Facilitating language acquisition, finding easier but effective ways of learning have been crucial issues of all times both for teachers and learners, even the linguists in the field of Second Language Learning. Finding an appropriate strategy is not straightforward, it demands certain criteria, like gender, age, language proficiency, personality to be taken into account. This very study described in this article aims to conduct small-scale research on how language learning strategy use differs between two different personality traits, namely, introversion and extroversion. To collect determined data firstly two different learners have been chosen with the help of McCroskey's introversion scale by Richmond & McCroscey (1998). Then Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning was chosen to get clear picture of the language strategy preferences of the learners with different personality traits.

Keywords: Introvert, extrovert, introversion scale, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SLIIL), personality trait, gender, motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Although the students get the same instructions and the same methods are used by similar instructors, why they perform differently or why they are different at learning language skills. It has been one of the central questions in the field of SLA that attracted vast number of researchers and language instructors. As Gass and Selinker (2008) claimed that “one of the most widely recognized facts about second language learning is that some individuals are more successful in learning a second language than other individuals” (p. 395). Some underlying factors, such as motivation, intelligence, anxiety, aptitude, personality and things alike have already scientifically proved to exert a direct influence on language learning. The current article deals with one of these factors, *language learning strategies* which have been widely studied in different contexts by various scholars so far. Language Learning Strategies are the pivotal part of Second Language Acquisition that is consciously or unconsciously employed by language learners and vary among individuals. Effectively chosen and

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employed strategy is believed to be the key to success in SLA. An old proverb here gives a lucid picture of its importance: “Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime”. Likewise, if the teacher answers or helps students to find questions that student himself was not able to solve, it will be temporary. In contrast, if he teaches how to use an appropriate strategy that works well in learning language, they will learn how to manage their learning. It means that the teacher should know which strategy are mostly employed by his learners if they are using suitable one whether these strategies are helping them.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A small scale survey has been conducted with two different participants, who were chosen as a subject of the study, to meet the objectives of the present case study.

The first participant is Sevara Sadriyeva who is a third year student of Tashkent Medical Academy and her major is medicine. She is 22 years old. She is not so successful in English although she has been learning it for two years. Her nationality is Uzbek and she is a fluent speaker and user of Russian as well. On the other hand, the second participant Muhammadali who is being studied is a highly extrovert, always eager to engage in communication, and active in group works. In one word, opposite of Sevara on account of his personality. He is 16 years old and currently studying at high school. He is also a bilingual, active user of Russian. As it mentioned above, the research was aimed to identify the correlation between LLS use and level of introversion and extroversion. Initially, a general questionnaire was employed to get background information about the participants, their language learning process, weaknesses and strengths, and others. That questionnaire helped to gather not only personal information about them, but also to figure out their own opinion about their language acquisition and current proficiency level. The main part of the research that devoted to seeing noticeable differences in LLS use of introvert and the extrovert student was conducted in two stages and two different questionnaires were employed to obtain reliable and valid data. While selecting instruments for collecting data I paid deep attention to how reliable and valid they are. Because the outcomes of the work are closely dependent on the method that you employ.

Stage I: Analyzing introversion level of participants

Before analyzing the relationship between learner strategy preferences and learners’ introversion and extroversion, it is crucial how introvert or extrovert they are. Taking this point into consideration, a questionnaire of McCroskey’s Introversion Scale designed by Richmond and McCroskey (1998) was distributed. This

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questionnaire constitutes 18 different items except for communication. Because the results of previous introversion scales proved that apprehension of communication may have a negative influence on the outcomes. Furthermore, with the help of the following ratings of the scale participants level of introversion can be analyzed: Oxford's (1990) SILL

1) Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neutral
4) Agree 5) Strongly agree

*Stage 1*According to the formula of the scale, the scores should be 12-36, in which 19 is considered the average range neither introvert nor introvert. If the learner's results indicate higher ranges than 28, he is highly introvert or the scores are below 20, it means low introversion (high extroversion). I found this scale very helpful for identifying the introversion level of my learners. To keep the validity of the test, that is to say, the participants answered honestly and accurately, I took the questionnaires individually. Besides, they were asked to be honest and would not get any marks for the answers. Because in many cases, the desires of learners for getting higher marks influence the quality of the research that they are involved in.

Stage 2 Identifying language learner strategy preferences

Having analyzed the introversion level of the participants, the next task was to figure out the impact of it on the usage of language learning strategies. Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning was employed to measure the participants' LLS preferences`. SILL is one of the widespread scales that has been used by several kinds of research to analyze the level of strategy use. Currently, different types of SILL are available in several languages for various learners. The very version (7.0) that I am using in the very study is in English and for ESL/EFL learners. It constitutes 50 Likert scale items in 6 different categories (A, B, C, D, E, F), which in turn represent the types of strategies. In other words, A- memory strategies, B- cognitive, C- compensation, D- metacognitive, E- effective and F- social strategies. The first three strategies are considered direct, while the last three ones are classified as indirect strategies. In order to identify learners' tendency to particular categories, they are asked to answer the items with the help of 5 responses of Likert scale. They are the followings:

1. Never or almost never true 2. Usually not true
3. Somewhat true 4. Usually true
5. Always true

Moreover, Oxford (1990) included the scale that demonstrates the level of each category with the accordance of total results. There three averages: High (3.5 to 5), Medium (2.5 to 3.4) and Low (1.0 to 2.4) that reflect how often the learner employs

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certain categories. The teacher can analyze the most frequents and less frequent strategies of his learners with the help of it. Simultaneously, it can assist the instructors in terms of material design.

After having conducted both questionnaires, the results of both introvert and extrovert participants would be compared and analyzed if there is considerable statistical differences in the usage of language learner strategies. If yes, what are the learning strategies that most frequently employed by extroverts or what were the most favorite LLS of introvert students. The results of the two questionnaires can help me to answer the research question and draw conclusions.

RESULTS

Relying on the data that was gathered through the different questionnaires it was possible to answer the research question. In the initial stage, a questionnaire that aimed to get general background information about participants was helpful to see some other distinctions between the participants apart from their personality traits. The results of *McCroskey's introversion scale* proved my assumptions scientifically. We can analyze some distinctions between two participants in their responses to items via the Likert scale.

2. Do you like socializing with others? Sevara was Disagree (2), while Muhammadali was Agree (4) with this point. Or the question: *14. Are you consider yourself as a "good mixer?" Introvert learner chose strongly disagree point while extrovert one stayed neutral.* Generally, two participants demonstrated two different results and it means that they fell into two different types of personality. One is introvert (Sevara) and the next is extrovert (Muhammadali).

The next questionnaire, that was selected to find out language learning strategy use and preference of the participants, was Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. With the help of 5 responses of the Likert Scale the data was collected. Through the gathered information the responses of two participants' responses were compared and it made it possible to see differences between two personality traits in terms of LLS use. (Figure 1)

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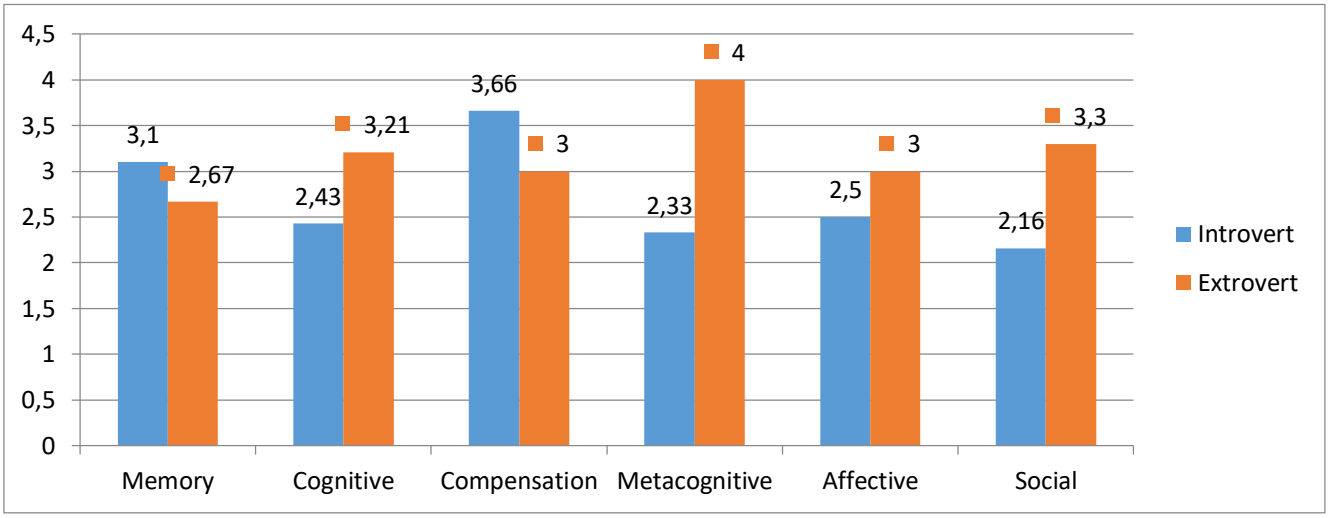


Figure 1

The results of the study indicate significant statistical differences in terms of strategy use between two personality traits, introversion, and extroversion. Extrovert learners' results in four categories, namely, Cognitive, Metacognitive, Affective and Social outnumbered the figures of introvert learners. In contrast, introvert students mostly employed Memory and Compensation strategies.

Part A: Memory strategies are mostly used for remembering and keeping the information. According to the questionnaire introverts (3.1) use this strategy a little more than extroverts (2.67). The responses for 9 items of this section mostly different in two participants. For example,

Items	S	M
I try to use the new words in the sentence in order to remember them	3	4
I physically act out new words in target language	1	1

Table 2

In these two examples, the first item was agreed by both of them, while the next one strongly disagreed by both introvert and extrovert learners.

Part B: Cognitive strategies that are the largest section of SILL aimed to check learners analyzing, monitoring and summarizing skills. The outcomes of the very study demonstrated that extrovert learners would use them more frequently than the introvert one. The responses for some items of this category are the same although they fall into different types of personality traits.

Items	S	M
I try to find patterns in target language	4	4
Reading in SL gives me pleasure	2	2
I watch TV shows and movies in SL	1	4

Table 3

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The last responses in this example are quite different and the main reason for it is not connected with the introversion level, but it lies under the proficiency level of the students.

Part C: Compensation Strategies involve the strategies that help to compensated certain shortages in language, like guessing, paraphrasing, coining words and others. In the usage of them, introvert learners showed higher results than an introvert. Relying on my observation during the classes, I can say that my introvert participant, Sevara is really good at this strategy.

Part D: Metacognitive Strategies are regarded as "'thinking about thinking" and involves planning, arranging and evaluating your learning (Oxford, 1990). This strategy mostly employed by more proficient learners who hold control over their language learning. Therefore, distinct differences are observed in preference of this category and extrovert learner's results whose proficiency level is higher show considerably higher figures. (4 – 2.33)

Part E: Affective Strategies evaluates through 6 items how learners' affective characters, such as, emotion, anxiety, self –esteem, motivation, and beliefs impact language learning. Indeed, extroverts gain the advantage in this category because of their emotional character. If we compare frequency of the responses, the results would be like that:

	Always true (5)	Usually true(4)	Somewhat true(3)	Usually not true(2)	Never true of me (1)
Sevara(Introvert)	-	1	3	-	2
Muhammadali(Extrovert)	1	1	2	1	1

Table 4

Part F: Social Strategies are very category in which responses of an introvert and extrovert learners noticeably differentiate. There are 6 items mostly about asking questions, collaborative working, and cultural awareness.

		Sevara	Muhammadali
1	If I something is unclear, I ask the person to be slower and repeat	4	4
2	I ask to be corrected when by SL speakers while talking	4	5
3	I like practicing with my peers	1	3
4	I sometimes need for the help of SL speakers	1	4
5	I give question in source target language	1	3
6	I eager to learn the culture of the language that I learn	1	1

Table 5 (Oxford's (1990) SILL)

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As Table 5 demonstrates both types of learners have chosen peer work, but in terms of asking for help or questions, the results are quite different. The extrovert participant has mostly selected true ranks while introvert one almost Never true points. With the help of the last item, it was discovered that the learners have no interest in the culture of the country whose language they are learning.

DISCUSSION

Overall results of the current paper demonstrate that personality traits, namely introversion, and extroversion of the learner can be influential in the second language learning process and employing effective language strategies. This factor, however, solely is not so powerful to change the learners' tendency to selecting any LLS. There are many other factors are observed in this case that comes together with personality, such as, proficiency level, gender, and age. In other words, the impact of some other characteristics, like level of proficiency and age of can exert a considerable influence on LLS use of EFL/ESL students.

The outcomes of the study will be helpful to direct the learners to proper channel. As a teacher, I can take the results of the study into consideration and design materials or organize lesson accordingly. I strongly believe that if the participants themselves are cautiously aware of their personality traits whether it affects the process of language learning or not, they can organize the learning process successfully by choosing suitable learning strategies. It means that this study brings some advantages not only to the researcher but also to the participants of it. Despite some gained data, conducted a small-scale study is not enough to tackle the issue of differences in language learner preferences. Therefore, I am planning to dive much deeper into this very issue and detect some further factors that will be influential on second language acquisition.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, learning the second or foreign language is a systematic and intricate process that demands using effective ways or strategies to facilitate acquiring new language together with its culture and way of thinking. Appropriately chosen learning strategies will be helpful for the learners to develop the language skills easier as well as in fascinating way. The core concept here is employing a suitable strategy that meets your needs. According to the results of several types of research, there are loads affective factors that impact selecting the language learning strategies, such as, personality traits, age, gender, proficiency level, and many others. Among them, personality trait has been capturing linguist's attention and considered as an effective

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learner variable. The very study aims to investigate one of these factors, namely, introversion and extroversion and how they can impact learner's preferences of language learning strategy. To obtain reliable data, experiments are conducted in two subjects by using three different questionnaires, personal, Oxford's SILL and McCroskey's Introversion Scale. The results of these surveys demonstrated that introvert and extrovert learners LLS use differs noticeably from each other. Meanwhile, the impact of some other characteristics, like level of proficiency and age of the participants have been detected.

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