



Shiraz University
International division

M.A. Thesis in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

**On The Relationship between Personality Types and Adults’
Second Language reading Performance**

By
Athar Nasek

Supervised by
N. Rashidi, PhD.
AND
S.A. Razmjoo, PhD.

September 2014

I n the Name of Allah,

The compassionate, the merciful

In The Name of God

**On The Relationship between Personality types and Adults'
Second Language reading Performance**

By

Athar Nasek

THESIS

**SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE EQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.)**

IN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

SHIRAZ UNIVERSITY

INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

EVALUATED AND APPROVED BY THE THESIS COMMITTEE AS:

.....N.RASHID,Ph.D.,ASSOCIATE PROF.OF TEFL

(CHAIRMAN)

.....S.A.RAZMJOO,ph.D.,ASSOCIATE PROF.OF TEFL

.....

September 2014

**To my dear husband and my little girl
pardis**

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr.Rashidi my thesis Supervisor, for his insightful and invaluable comments, suggestions and patient reading of several drafts of the thesis which were great help for me in accomplishing this great job that without his help it was impossible to finish the project. It has been an honor for me to work with him.

I would also owe a depth of gratitude to Dr.Razmjoo, my thesis advisor whose fruitful advice and guidance were really of great help in improving the thesis.

I would also like to thank Dr.Saadat who helped me a lot in gathering the data needed in this study.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my parents, my older sister, all my friends and those whom I am indebted for the successful completion of this study.

Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my dear husband and my little girl whom without their patience and support; I could not continue my study and accomplish this job satisfactorily.

ABSTRACT

On The Relationship between Personality Types and Adults' Second Language Reading performance

BY

Athar Nasek

Personality is considered a part of affective factors and a very important category of individual differences that can affect second language teaching and learning. The intent of the present study is to investigate the relationship between personality types and adults' second language reading. The participants were 100 students consist of 50 males and 50 females who were chosen among the Iranian students who are learning English as their second language. They range in age from 17-25 years old and were chosen based on the availability. To collect the data for this research study, the researcher administered two instruments: first the MBTI personality questionnaire consists of 41 questions and second, the TOFEL test of reading comprehension. Sensing- intuition and judging- perceiving were four personality types which has been investigated through this questionnaire in this study. Two-way ANOVA analysis of variance was run in order to investigate if there is a relationship between these four personality types and adult's reading performance. Statistical analysis revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between adults' personality types and their reading performance. Furthermore, investigating the effect of gender on reading performance with regard to the personality types indicated that males and females have different performance in reading comprehension by considering their different personality types. So, personality factor can be considered as one of the important factors in reading performance of adults' language learners. The findings of the present study are finally discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.0. Introduction	
1.1. Preliminaries	
1.1.1. The importance of reading skill	
1.1.2. Definition of reading	
1.1.3. Factors that affecting second language reading	
1.1.4. Definition of personality	
1.1.5. Objectives of the study	
1.1.6. Research questions	
1.1.7. Significance of the study	
CHAPTER TWO: LITRATURE REVIEW	
2.0. Introduction	
2.1. Research on Personality and second language acquisition/learning	
2.2. Research on personality and L2 reading performance	
2.3. Research on personality and reading performance regarding gender	
Chapter Three: METHOD	
3.0. Introduction	
3.1. Participants	
3.2. Instruments	

3.3. Data collection procedure

3.4. Data analysis procedure

CONTENT

PAGE

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS and DISCUSSION

4.0. Introduction

4.1. Results

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

4.2. Discussions of the study

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0. Introduction

5.1. Summary

5.2. Conclusions

5.2.1. Is there any relationship between personality type and second language reading performance?

5.2.2. How can personality type affect second language reading?

5.2.3. Is there a statistically significant difference between males and females' performance regarding their personality type?

5.3. Implications

5.4. Limitations of the study

5.5. Suggestions for further research

REFERENCES

Appendices

Appendix A: Reading Comprehension Test: Taken from TOFEL BARRONS

Appendix B: Personality Questionnaire: Taken from MBTI questionnaire

LISTE OF TABLES

CONTENT

PAGE

Table 1.1: Myers-Briggs Character Type

Table 2.1: Reliability Statistics of MBTI questionnaire

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for reading and Four personality types

Table 4.3: Results of ANOVA on the effect of personality/gender on reading

Table 4.4: Multiple Comparisons between different personality types (Scheffe)

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

The first chapter of the present thesis is composed of five main parts. The first part deals with introducing the nature and importance of reading comprehension among other skills in second language learning. The second part is allocated to investigating the factors affecting second language reading, and then to the definition of personality and different classifications of this term. Next, the objective of the study, then the research questions will be presented. Finally the significance of the study will be introduced.

“What you have, what you are-your looks, your personality, your way of thinking-is unique. No one in the world is like you. So capitalize on it”. (Jack Lord, 1998)

1.1. Preliminaries

1.1.1. The importance of reading

Learning a second language involves acquiring the four skills of speaking, listening reading and writing. Reading comprehension is considered as a great source of knowledge and it has been one of the important parts in second /foreign language tests and examinations. It plays a crucial role in the educational and professional lives of many students. As Horwitz (2008) believed among these skills, reading is fundamental to the development of full second language competence. Reading comprehension is a highly interactive process that takes place between a reader and a text. Different individuals bring variable levels of skills and experience to these interactions.

In many second or foreign language teaching situations, reading receives a special focus. In most EFL situations, the ability to read in a foreign language is all that students ever want to acquire. After all, reading is the basis of instruction in all aspects of language learning for example, in using textbooks for language course, writing, revising, and developing vocabulary, acquiring grammar, editing and using computer-assisted language learning programs. Therefore, reading instruction is an essential component of every second-language curriculum. Since effective reading is essential in acquiring a second language therefore; it seems essential to allocate much more attention to this important skill.

In the foreign language (FL) learning reading is often used for purposes which are different from those found in mother-tongue. The most typical use of reading in a foreign language class is to teach the language itself (Nutall, 1982). In this way, different aspects of language such as vocabulary, structure and other things can be learnt through reading in a foreign language. According to Horwitz (2008) reading can provide a wide range of language input unavailable to learners in other ways.

It is believed that the most common and effective technique used in obtaining knowledge is the reading comprehension. Reading is one of the most basic activity through which we can obtain information; it is also the most basic means of acquiring knowledge in human brain. Therefore, through reading, learners can open a new window to the day-to-day lives of native speakers and their culture. Also by reading different texts, learners can experience a much wider variety of conversational situations than they would ever experience through their own interactions with other people.

Reading has always been an essential and probably the most important skill for university students in order to access to knowledge in academic context (Grabe, 1991). Levine et al. (2000)

also confirm the importance of reading skill as the necessary ability for reading academic texts that university students of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) need to acquire. Therefore, reading comprehension is the integral part of instruction and acquiring information in language learning and really considered an essential ability needed for comprehending academic materials for educational and academic success of language learners.

1.1.2. Definition of Reading

Reading comprehension is defined in different ways but most of them observe it as a process of constructing meaning from text. In order to get much more familiar with this term, it seems essential to mention different opinions and definitions. According to Smith (1994),

“Comprehension may be regarded as relating what we attend to in the world around us – the visual information of print in the case of reading- to what we already have in our heads. Learning can be considered as modifying what we already have in our heads as a consequence of attending to the world around us.”(P.53)

Gebhard (2006) asserts that reading includes discovering meaning in print and script, within a social context, through bottom-up and top-down processing, and use a set of strategies and skills to come to the intended meanings. In learning English as a second or foreign language, Anderson (1999) asserts that reading is the most important skill to master. The ultimate goal of reading is to construct meaning based on visual encoded information. Essentially, it entails converting print into language and then to the message intended by the author (Koda,

2010). Since language learners often have easier access to reading materials through print media and the internet than to listening experiences, reading has the possibility of reducing social distance. It can be considered as a route to academic success for many language learners. Reading comprehension has been defined in many ways over the years. According to Nutall (1996), overriding aim of reading is to get the correct message from the text—the message the writer intended for the reader to receive. Reading comprehension is the process of meaning construction as a result of blending content and message of the text into the readers existing knowledge and skills during reader text interaction (Pardo, 2004). Akbayir (2003) believed that the main goal of reading is to discover the meaning between the combination of words and phrases to associate the systems with each other, find the meaning of a word and make a sense. It means, the process of reading comprehension provides a link between thinking, textual content, and the reader's level of readiness, expectations and objectives of reading (Yogurtcu, 2012). According to Fry (1965) it is very difficult to define comprehension. We might say that comprehension is a part of the communication process of getting the thoughts that were in the author's mind. He also believed that reading can be thought of as being on two levels at once. The first level is to get the objective information i.e. facts. Then on a higher level, the reader should be able to get subjective information i.e. the tone and the mood of the story, understand ideas or the overall information. Aebersold and Field (1997), expressed this fact that reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text. It is, however, the interaction between the text and the reader that constitutes actual reading. Reading skill is the cognitive process that a reader uses in order to make sense of a text. In another definition by Bamford and Day (1998) reading is defined as “the construction of meaning from a printed or written message. Construction of meaning involves the reader

connecting information from the written message with previous knowledge to arrive at a meaning-at an understanding”. Mikulecky (1990, as cited in Mikulecky, 2008) is another researcher who believed that reading consists of some steps in order to achieve its goal. These steps are listed below:

- “1. Automatic decoding: Being able to recognize a word at a glance.
2. Previewing and predicting: Giving the text a quick once-over to be able to guess what is to come.
3. Specifying purpose: Knowing why a text is being read.
4. Identifying genre: Knowing the nature of the text in order to predict the form and context.
5. Questioning: Asking questions in an inner dialog with author.
6. Scanning: Looking through a text very quickly for specific information.
7. Recognizing topics: Finding out what the text is about.
8. Classification of ideas into main topics and details: Categorizing words and idea on the basis of their relationships; distinguishing general and specific.
9. Locating topic sentences: Identifying the general statement in a paragraph.
10. Stating the main idea of a sentence, paragraph or passage: Knowing what the author’s point is about the topic.
11. Recognizing patterns of relationships: Identifying the relationships between ideas; the overall structure of the text.

12. Identifying and using words that signal the patterns of relationships between ideas. Being able to see connections between ideas by the use of words such as first, then, later.
13. Identifying the main idea, using patterns and other clues.
14. Recognizing and using pronouns, references, and other lexical equivalents as clues to cohesion.
15. Inferring the main idea, using the main patterns and other clues.
16. Recognizing and using patterns, references, and other lexical equivalents as clues to cohesion.
17. Guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context: Using such clues as knowledge of word parts, syntax, and relationship patterns.
18. Skimming: Quickly getting the gist or overview of the passage or book.
19. Paraphrasing: re-stating texts in the reader's own words in order to monitor one's own comprehension.
20. Summarizing: Shortening material by retaining and re-stating main ideas and leaving out details.
21. Drawing conclusions: Putting together information from parts of the text and inducing new or additional ideas.
22. Drawing inferences and using evidence: Using evidence in the text to know things that are unstated.
23. Visualizing: Picturing, or actually drawing a picture or diagram, of what is described in the text.

24. Reading critically: Judging the accuracy of a passage with respect to what the reader already knows; distinguishing fact from opinion.
25. Reading faster: Reading fast enough to allow the brain to process the input as ideas rather than single words.
26. Adjusting reading rate according to materials and purpose: Being able to choose the speed and strategies needed for the level of comprehension desired by the reader.”(PP.7-8)

1.1.3. Factors affecting second language reading

English reading has always been considered one of the most important parts of foreign/second language learning. Since competence in reading can open the door to a world-wide store of knowledge and information, it is considered a very important aspect in education. Learning to read is a very complex developmental process and many factors can affect this process. It is also a process that presents many challenges to young learners. It is believed as a very complex and subtle process that involves sensation, perception, comprehension, integration and application.

Reading truly has no purpose without comprehension. Comprehension involves constructing meaning from what is being read. For example, Durkin (1993) defines comprehension as purposeful thinking during which the intended meaning is constructed through interactions between reader and text. In order to comprehend a text, a reader must actively and intentionally think about and analyze meaning while reading. Good comprehension requires strong abilities in all four of the other fundamental literary skills. Students must consider many bits of information while reading to comprehend the text such as genre, text structure, the author’s purpose and familiar words.

Comprehension and reading performance like learning a second language may be affected by some factors. Some of these factors include the physiological, psychological, environmental, sociological, parent factor and teacher factor. Each of these factors influences to some extent one's performance. So, it is not easy to explain why an individual's performance may be satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Among these factors, the psychological one has gotten the most importance during these centuries. Rogers (1983) based his theory of education almost exclusively on the fundamental importance of affect in learning. According to Brown (2007), Affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior. Within the affective domain, another subarea of interest over the past half-century or so has been the measurement of personality characteristics and its relationship to the success in various kinds of endeavors especially for those who want to learn another language. Bagheri and Faghih(2012)believed that two important factors that can affects the process of reading and consequently the process of comprehension arethe reader variable andthe text variable. Reader variables are the strategies used by readers, their background knowledge, motivation, personality, self-esteem and sex. In recent years, the importance of these factors has been of interest in the field of language learning because of their high effects on learning a foreign or a second language (Anders, 2002).Learner's factors are among those factors that can affect language learning to a great extent. Personality is one of those factors that can affect the learning process especially for those who try to learn the second language in the foreign environment.

It is truism that different people feel desire and act differently when confronted with the same situation. The reason is that the psychological and behavior patterns are inborn and these inborn patterns influence the way people approach life, interact with each other, merge with society and establish identities as individuals in it (Ehraman &Dornyei, 1998). It has been frequently

observed that different learners attain highly different levels of L2 proficiency even though the circumstances in which these learners acquire a target language are almost identical (Zafar, 2012). Almost all language teachers observe that some learners learn a second language easily and some with more difficulty. Many factors are responsible for success or failure of the language learners in second language learning such as motivation, attitude, intelligence level etc., and it seems that one important factor for success in learning another language is each learners' type of personality.

Among many individual differences in learning languages, personality is the one accepted by the majority of practitioners to have an influence on any type of learning in general and language learning in particular. Interest in the affective aspect of learning was promoted, among other things, when it was realized that the whole personality of the learners need to be involved in education and that learners do not automatically develop emotionally as they may intellectually. One of these factors which is very important and also difficult to describe scientifically is the psychological aspect which is the affective domain.

In order to discover the basic elements of personality, many tests were developed such as Cattell's model(1965),which is based on sixteen factors to investigate universal aspects of personality (Cattell& Mead,2008) such as extroversion/introversion, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling and judging/perceiving and Eysenck model, which is based on three factors including extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, Neuroticism and openness to describe and explain the systematic individual differences (1959). They describe personality by five – factor model which was referred to as the “Big Five”.