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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching
English as a Foreign Language**

**ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRANIAN
LEARNERS' PERSONALITY TYPE AND
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES In Speaking**

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In The name of God
The Merciful
The Compassionate

Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to my dear parents and my wife for all of their support and encouragement.

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Abstract

Personality refers to the totality of psychological, intellectual, emotional and physical characteristics that make up the individual, especially as others see him” (Reference).

Learning strategies deal with identifying what good language learners report they do to learn a second or foreign language, or, in some cases, are observed doing while learning a second or foreign language (Rubin & Wenden, 1987). Also, communication strategies help the learners to overcome the problems they have while communicating with others by keeping communication strategies channels open and increasing a learner’s language input (Yang Dong & Gai Fang Peng, 2010).

This study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL learners’ personality types and communication strategies in speaking. In doing so, one hundred and fifty male and female English students from different universities in Tehran participated in this study. Myers and Briggs Personality Type Indicator was run to determine the personality type of each participant. Then, five participants from every personality type were invited to an oral interview. The purpose of oral interview was measuring the participants’ use of communication strategies. The data of the study were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners’ personality types and communication strategies. The results also showed that the dominant personality type among Iranian learners was ISTJ. The results also showed stalling and circumlocution are the most widely communication strategies used by Iranian EFL learners.

Key words: Iranian EFL Learners, Personality Type, Communication Strategies, Learning Strategies.

List of Tables:

	Page
Table 2.1 Myers and Briggs Personality Type Indicator.....	11
Table 4.1 The Four Bipolar Scales of the Myers & Briggs Type Indicator.....	35
Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics for personality types of Iranian language learners.....	36
Table 4.3 Use of communication strategies by Iranian language learners.....	41
Table 4.4 Descriptive statistics for CSs used by Iranian learners with personality types	42
Table 4.5 Chi-square for the relationship between personality types and CSs.....	43

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	IV
Abstract.....	V
List of Tables... ..	VI
Table of Contents.....	VII

CHAPTER I: Introduction

	Page
1.1 Preliminaries	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.3 The Significance of the Study	2
1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses	3
1.5 Limitations and De-limitations of the Study.....	3
1.6 Definitions of the Key Terms	4
1.6.1 Communication Strategies	4
1.6.2 Personality Type	5
1.7 Outline of the Study	6

CHAPTER II: Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Review of Studies on Personality Types	7
2.2.1 Extraversion versus Introversion	9
2.2.2 Sensing versus Intuition.....	9
2.2.3 Thinking versus Feeling.....	10

2.3 Definition of Strategies.....	11
2.4 Taxonomies of Learning Strategies.....	14
2.4.1 Cognitive Strategies.....	15
2.4.2 Metacognitive Strategies.....	15
2.4.3 Compensation Strategies:.....	15
2.4.4 Social Strategies:	15
2.4.5 Memory Strategies:.....	15
2.4.6 Affective Strategies:.....	15
2.5 The Significance of the Strategies	16
2.6 Communication Strategies	17
2.6.1 The Purpose of Communication Strategies.....	19
2.6.2 Taxonomies of Communication Strategies.....	20
2.6.2.1 Poulisse’s Typology of Communication Strategies.....	23
2.6.2.2 Dornyei’s Classification of Communication Strategies.....	24
2.7 The Relationship between Personality Type & Communication Strategies....	26

CHAPTER III: Methodology

3.1 Introduction.....	29
3.2 Design of the Study.....	29
3.3 Participants	29
3.4 Instrumentation	30
3.4.1 MBTI Personality Type Indicator.....	30
3.4.2 Oral Interview Instrument.....	31
3.5 Procedure.....	32
3.6 Data analysis.....	33

CHAPTER IV: Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction.....34
4.2 Discussion43

CHAPTER V: Summary, Conclusions, and Implication

5.1 Introduction.....47
5.2 Summary.....47
5.3 Conclusions.....48
5.4 Pedagogical Implications of the Research.....49
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research.....50

References.....51

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Myers and Briggs Personality Indicator (MBTI)
- Appendix B: Interviewer Questions

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preliminaries

Research into language learning strategies started in 1960s. Particularly ,developments in cognitive psychology influenced much of the research done on language learning strategies (Williams & Burden, 1997). “In most of the research on language learning strategies, the main focus has been identifying what good language learners report they do to learn a second or foreign language, or, in some cases, are observed doing while learning a second or foreign language" (Rubin & Wenden, 1987).

“Strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. They are contextualized “battle plans” that might vary from moment to moment, or day to day, or year to year. Strategies vary individually; each of us has a number of possible ways to solve a particular problem, and we choose one – or several in sequence – for a given problem” (Brown, 2000, p.113).

In addition to acquiring a second language, communication strategies help the learners to overcome the problems they have while communicating with others by keeping communication channels unlock and increasing a learner’s language input (Yang Dong & Gai Fang Peng, 2010). In better words communication strategies let the learners continue their communication through different ways when they are faced with problems i.e. when they don’t know the exact word for an object ,they may define it or they may use fillers or pauses so that they can organize their own thoughts.

“Some English teachers have consistently focused on communicative competence as their main teaching goal, and more recently, there have been more researchers and English teachers

who have realized the significance of strategic competence. However, the study on communication strategies is rather weak and we still need more research on communication strategies” (Yang Dong & Gai Fang Peng, 2010).

This is one reason that the researcher is carried out the present research to find out if there is any relationship between Iranian EFL learners’ personality type (LPT) and the communication strategies (CSs) which they use in their speaking.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are different factors which can affect strategy use (Oxford, 1990). The frequency and variety of language learning strategies vary between different learners and depend on a number of variables (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). Studies by different researches show that individual learners differ considerably in the use of learning strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford & Cohen, 1992).

“Factors such as attitudes, sex, ethnicity and others have received lesser emphasis in the recent studies of language learning strategies” (Oxford & Cohen , 1992). We still need more research on personality aspects of human beings because of the importance of personality traits as factor which can influence learning strategy use (Willing, 1987). In this way, there are studies which try to focus more on individual differences in strategy use (Oxford, 1992; Oxford & Eherman 1993). Although many studies have been carried out on learners' learning strategies, it is not yet known whether personality type of the learners has any impact on the communication strategies they use in their speaking or not.

1.3 The Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically speaking, applied linguists and psychologists can become aware of personality types of Iranian EFL learners and types of communication strategies which they may use in their conversations. Practically

speaking, language teachers can become more familiar with the dominant personality type of EFL learners and make use of appropriate teaching styles and strategies in order to increase the students' achievement. Moreover, language teachers should know that personality of learners can influence the types of strategies which they use so that they can teach communicative strategies to language learners in line with their personality types.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The main objective of the present paper is to find out whether there is any significant relationship between the personality type of Iranian EFL learners and the communication strategies that these learners employ while interacting with others. More specifically, the following research questions are addressed in this study:

- 1- What is the dominant personality type among Iranian EFL learners?
- 2- What kinds of communication strategies (CSs) are more dominant among Iranian EFL learners in their communication with others?
- 3- Is there any relationship between Iranian learners' personality type and communication strategies that they employ in speaking?

In order to investigate the research question safely, the research query is stated in the form of a null hypothesis:

There is no relationship between Iranian learners' personality type and communication strategies in their speaking.

1.5 Limitations and De-limitations of the Study

Doing any research on the learners of a foreign language, the researchers are faced with some problems. Some of the problems are the results of the qualitative research, methods and the type

of instrumentation used in conducting this type of research. The present research is not an exception and the researcher faced some problems. The main limitations of the study were:

- a) Due to the nature of speaking test, not many language learners were willing to contribute to the study. Therefore, the participants were selected through convince and purposive sampling.
- b) As the participants of the study were not selected randomly, we are not safe to generalize the findings of the study.
- c) As some personality types were not possessed by any of the participants, the researcher tried to delete them from the list of personality types.
- d) The number of communication strategies was quite a lot and including all of them in the study was somehow difficult and time consuming. That is why, only some of the most commonly reported ones were used in this study.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1 Communication Strategies

The results of the studies indicate that there is no general consensus on communication strategies and finding a single or a precise definition of communication strategies that all communication researchers have agreed on it would be difficult. There are many definition proposals for communication strategies of the second language learners (Karimnia & Salehi, 2007). The following definitions will provide us with a better understanding of the nature of communication strategies:

According to Faerch & Kasper (1983) “communication strategies are the potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal.”

Tarone (1981) considered the interactive aspect of communication strategies as one of the important parameters in defining communication strategies. The result of Tarones' work added a new view to the study of communication studies. She believed that learners use communication strategies to fill the gap in their own native language and that of the target language interlocutors. Its main characteristic is "negotiation of an agreement on meaning." She considers communication strategies to be interactional phenomena: "a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared" (cited in Yang Dong & Gai Fang Peng).

1.6.2 Personality Type

Personality can be defined as "the combination of characteristics or qualities that form an individual's distinctive character" (Cambridge International dictionary of English, 1995, p.1070), or it can be defined as "the total of psychological, intellectual, emotional and physical characteristics that make up the individual, esp. as others see him" (The new lexicon Webster's encyclopedia dictionary of the English, 1995, p.749) (cited in Fazeli, 2011).

The study of personality deals with the issue of human individuality. As an individual each of us thinks, feels and acts in a different way. The patterns of our thinking, feeling, and acting represent who we are and provide the basis of our interaction with other individuals.

Being interested in personality, psychologists have tried to develop various theories of personality and certain tools to assess people's personality i.e. Myers and Briggs personality type indicator (MBTI). They have tried to collect information about people 's personality and use the related information in selecting people for various jobs, marriage, giving guidance to people in the need of psychological help, and mapping their potential. Thus the study of personality

contributes to different areas of human behavior (The New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2004).

1.7 Outline of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with introduction, significance of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, definition of key terms, and outline of the study. The second Chapter deals with review of literature on personality types of learners, and communicative strategies. The third chapter includes methodology, design, participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. In chapter four the results are presented and discussed. Chapter five includes summary, conclusion, implications, and recommendation for further studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of two parts. In the first part, the main studies on learners' personality types are reported and in the second part the studies on the communication strategies are reviewed.

2.2 Review of the Studies on Personality Types

The term personality is widely used to refer to main characteristics of an individual. Talking about personality, psychologists use it to refer to the characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling and acting. Characteristic patterns mean the consistent and distinctive ways our ideas, feelings and actions are organized (Fazeli, 2011).

The famous psychologist Carl Jung believed that human behavior is not random, but human behavior can be predicted and classified. He believed human's preferences will result to varieties in behavior (Kroeger & Theusen, 1988). The mentioned preferences are formed in the early childhood and provide the main attributes for our personalities. Hughes (1994) extended Jung theories and argued that people can be divided into the following groups: Thinking (T), Feeling (F), Sensing (S), Intuition (N), Judging (J), and Perceiving (P). He also focused on the attitude types of Extroversion (E) and Introversion (I).

There are a number of factors which can affect learning strategies such as learning context as well as learner's internal processing preferences, age, sex.... Also there is a relationship between the frequent use of learning strategies and achievement in the language (Green & Oxford, 1995). In such situation, there is a claim that use of language learning strategies help the learners retrieve and store material, and facilitate their learning (Grander & MacIntyre, 1992). Chomat, Barnhardt, El-Dinary and Rabbins (1999) state that differences

between more effective learners and less effective learners were found in the number and variety of strategies used. In this way, the importance of encouraging learning strategies can not be ignored.

If the teachers can understand the connection between personality and information gathering, they can have a better understanding of the different learning behavior of the students. As the result of this understanding, they can help themselves and their students and help their students with their learning. The teachers must meet each student in the framework of his personal search style, some for instance find it easier than others to search databases (Hawk, 1993).

Personality types are expressed in learning styles, which are in turn reflected in learning strategies, which eventually produce a certain learning outcome (De Raad & Schouwenburg, 1996). Personality types serve as directors or blocks for motivation and learning strategies (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988 as cited in Blicke, 1996). Blicke (1996) has compared the “Five Factor Model Personality Types” with learning strategies and learning outcome. He found that the student’s personality was related to learning outcome mediated by learning strategies.

Making aware the language learners of different learning strategies and teaching them how to use these strategies appropriately, teachers can help the learners to learn much better. Learners should be exposed to different types of learning contexts based on their preferences in order to discover and develop their own learning strategies .It is unfair to limit the learners into a single model of learning, even that learning model is pleasant to them(Wallace ,1991, p.24) .

The Swiss psychologist Carl Jung published his theories on human personality in his book which was called Psychological Types, in 1923. In his book he said human behavior is not random, on the contrary, it is predictable and therefore classifiable. He referred to this view as typology of individual. Jung believed the differences in human actions are the results of their

preferences (Kroeger & Theusen, 1988). These preferences are shaped early in life and provide the key attributes for our personality. Later on Hughes (1994) extended Jung's theory and classified people based on their preferences into following groups: Sensing (S), Intuition (N), Feeling (F), Thinking (T), Judging (J), and Perceiving (P). He also has focused on attitude types of Extroversion (E) and Introversion (I).

Working with his model, two American women, Briggs and Meyers built a model to classify behavioral preferences. The result of their work is called (MBTI) or Myers and Briggs Personality Type Indicator (Wolk and Nikolai, 1997).

2.2.1 Extraversion (E) versus Introversion (I)

People are grouped as extraverts and introverts based on their attitudes. Myers and Briggs recognized that each of the cognitive functions can operate in the external world of action, behavior, things and people (extraverted attitude) or the internal world of ideas and reflection (introverted attitude).

The terms Extrovert and introvert tell us how people get energy from the world around them. It is said that those who are regarded as extraverts receive energy from other people and the world around them. They are sociable and like to interact with others and are action oriented. They are physically and verbally active. On the other hand Introverts get energy from inner world of their own concepts. They are not sociable and prefer to be a lone (Heinstrom, 2000).

2.2.2 Sensing (S) versus Intuition (N)

Those people who prefer to rely on their five senses are "sensing people". They are detail oriented, look for facts, and are trustable. Sensing tend to gather information that is concrete,

tangible and which is present. As it was stated before they seek information which is meaningful through the five senses. They don't believe hunches, which seem to be baseless. (Cooper, 2001)

Intuitive people like assignments which let them rely on their initiative. They are more imaginative than observant and are more interested in whole concepts than details. They prefer to do things differently from others. They try to find out patterns and relationships among the facts they have accumulated. They trust hunches and their intuition and look for the "big picture." (Cooper, 2001)

2.2.3 Thinking (T) versus Feeling (F)

As it was stated before based on Jung, thinking and feeling are the decision-making (judging) functions. The thinking and feeling functions are both used to make rational decisions, based on the data received from their information-gathering functions (sensing or intuition).

Thinking people prefer to make their decisions based on what seems acceptable, valid, fundamental, and reliable to them, they are interested in harmony. While making decisions or arriving at judgments they focus on human values and needs. They tend to be good and they are often impersonal and impartial. (Cooper, 2001)

Feeling people have emotional relationships and let feelings override logic. They look for harmony and like small group work. They prefer to have warm relationship with others, in other words they are more interested in people rather than things or ideas. (Cooper, 2001)

2.2.4 Judging (J) versus Perceiving (P)

There are a group of people who are interested in preplanned structure, and a teacher who carefully provides it. Judging people are disciplined, crucial, and have their own plans. They focus on completing the task; only want to know the essentials and like to have things decided and settled.

Perceptive people are impulsive, adaptable and curious. They can peruse problems in their own way. Making decisions, they need more information and often put off things to the last minute. (Cooper, 2001)

If we put these four letters together, then we get our personality type code, and there are sixteen combinations. For example, INTJ indicates that we prefer Introversion, Intuition, Thinking and Judging.

Using Myers and Briggs indicator can help us to find out more information about our personality type. This not only helps us to identify which of the 16 personality type codes is nearest to our personality, but also produces an individual profile that helps us to identify the unique aspects of our personality. This unique profile can be used in a number of ways, such as finding an appropriate career or identifying your natural leadership style (The New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2004).

Table 2.1 Myers and Briggs Personality Type Indicator (MBTI)

1.Extravert, Intuition, felling, Judging (ENFJ)	9.Introvert, Intuition, felling, Judging (INFJ)
2.Extravert,Intuition, felling, Perceiving (ENFP)	10.Introvert,Intuition, felling, Perceiving (INFP)
3.Extravert,Intuition,Thinking, Judging (ENTJ)	11.Introvert,Intuition,Thinking, Judging (INTJ)
4.Extravert,Intuition,Thinking,Perceiving (ENTP)	12.Introvert,Intuition,Thinking,Perceiving (INTP)
5. Extravert, Sensing, felling, Judging (ESFJ)	13. Introvert, Sensing, felling, Judging (ISFJ)
6.Extravert, Sensing, felling, Perceiving (ESFP)	14. Introvert, Sensing, felling, Perceiving (ISFP)
7.Extravert, Sensing, Thinking, Judging (ESTJ)	15.Introvert, Sensing, Thinking, Judging (ISTJ)
8.Extravert,Sensing,Thinking,Perceiving (ESTP)	16.Introvert,Sensing,Thinking,Perceiving (ISTP)

2.3 Definition of Strategies

According to Oxford (1990a:1) Language learning strategies “...are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential