An Investigation of Learning Strategies & Personality Traits Among Proficient & Less Proficient ESL Learners

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to provide an insight in determining the link between personality, language learning strategies and proficiency. Personality traits make a difference in affecting how people learn and what they learn (McCaulley & Natter; Myres & Myres, as cited in Moody, R., 1988). In view of this, this study explores the various combinations of language learning strategies that are utilized by proficient and less proficient Malaysian ESL learners according to their personality traits. In order to ascertain the personality traits and learning strategies employed, the Keirsey FourTypes Sorter (KTS) is used to collect data on the personality type of the ESL learners, while the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is used to indicate the subject's preferred language learning strategies. This study attempts to investigate the personality factors that influence proficient and less proficient ESL learners in choosing their language learning strategies. The findings reveal that personality is not significantly related to language learning strategies, yet choices of language learning strategies are related with proficiency to a certain extent. The outcome of the present study would be useful to assist language instructors in helping less proficient ESL learners in undergoing a more effective and successful second language learning experience and enlighten proficient ESL learners about their preference in language learning strategies.

Introduction

In recent years, theorists of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have given much consideration in their research to individual differences. As it is commonly agreed, people have their own preferential ways in choosing their language learning strategies depending on their characteristics, traits and temperaments. One of the renowned researchers in SLA, Oxford (1989), has highlighted the factors related to choice of language learning strategies such as the proficiency of language learners, gender, motivation, learning style, aptitude, and career orientation. Another researcher Ellis (1985) concluded that there is no single way in which learners acquire knowledge of a second language (cited in Peal, 1994). In fact, in the study of personality, personologists such as David Keirsey (1998), mentioned that people differ from each other and have a number of distinctive patterns in accomplishing their tasks or goals. Personality is one of the important factors that distinguishes a person from another. Each of us may have different set of qualities, therefore, it would be beneficial if each of us understand our own personality traits and use them in the learning process. The concept of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) is related to aspects of individual differences. Each individual has his / her own way of learning a language. Therefore, there is a clear connection between LLS and personality traits as these two fields of study conclude that people are different from one another and consequently they learn differently

The Missing Link

Personality is important because personality traits make a difference in how people learn and what they learn (McCaulley & Natter; Myres & Myres, as cited in Moody, 1988). For example, extroverts usually will be more outspoken compared to introverts. Therefore, they may be able to learn a language easily because they are not afraid of making mistakes. As a result, different students given the same presentation may respond very differently, and these ways of responding may be linked to a fundamental personality trait. For this reason, one cannot expect a student to adapt to the instructor. Rather, the instructor must design approaches that will take advantage of the student's unique talents (Moody, 1988). If personality traits are not taken into consideration in language learning, perhaps less proficient ESL learners may be the group that would be greatly affected, as they may not be aware of the LLS that they need. In another research, Ehrman & Oxford (1990), mentioned that proficient learners appear to use a wider range of strategies in a greater number of situations than less

proficient learners. Generally, proficient learners know how to use appropriate strategies in accordance to their own stage of learning proficiency, personality, age and purpose for learning the language.

Much research have been done in the past focusing on *Proficient/ Good/Fast* ESL learners and their learning strategies. Researchers who have conducted studies on these good and proficient ESL learners are Sewell (2003), Thompson (2005), Naiman, et al (1978) and Rubin & Thompson (1982). However, only a handful focuse on less proficient ESL learners (Vann & Abraham, 1990). Therefore, this study aims to investigate LLS used by proficient and less proficient ESL learners in the Malaysian context.

The Significance

Instructors and students of proficient and less proficient groups would be made aware about the importance of personality traits in language learning through this study Instructors, therefore, should try to take individual difference into consideration in the teaching and learning process. Factors such as gender, motivation, cultural background, attitude, belief and age may influence a person's second language learning experience. This study focuses on two variables which are personality and language learning strategy Also, this study is one of the few studies that have used KTS and SILL together to find out the relationship between personality traits and LLS. KTS has been used widely in management, career counselling and information technology By using KTS in this research, this instrument has been given a new function in the field of language learning. This study would be useful to assist language instructors, facilitators and teachers in helping less proficient ESL learners in undergoing a more effective and successful second language learning experience besides enlightening proficient ESL learners about their preference in LLS according to their personality traits.

The Goal

The purpose of this study is to find out the combinations of learning strategies for the proficient and less proficient Malaysian ESL learners who exhibit different personality traits. This study also attempts to investigate the correlations between LLS and personality traits of ESL learners. Besides that, this study looks at how different types of personality traits influence ESL learners in choosing certain type of LLS. This study is designed based on a study by Oxford & Ehrman (1990), where the researchers used the **Myers-Briggs Test Inventory (MBTI) & Strategy Inventory for**

Language Learning (SILL) to find the correlations between personality traits and LLS. However, in this study, MBTI is replaced with The Keirsey FourTypes Sorter (KTS) because KTS is also an instrument used to determine personality traits based on MBTI. According to Leenerts (2003) both KTS and MBTI reflect trustworthy theories. Berens, as cited in Leenerts (2003) reported that test retest reliability correlations for MBTI exceed + or   70 over two administrations and that the Keirsey Sorter has comparable reliability In this study, the proficient and less proficient groups of Malaysian students have been used as the subjects in order to investigate their choice of LLS for comparison purposes.

Research Questions

The following research questions are investigated in this study·

i.   What are the combinations of Oxford's six language learning strategies that are used by proficient Malaysian ESL learners who fall into different KTS personality traits?
ii.   What are the combinations of Oxford's six language learning strategies that are used by less proficient Malaysian ESL learners who fall into different KTS personality traits?

Relevant Theories & Studies

Second language acquisition theory

The process of learning and acquiring a language additional to the native language is the SLA process. For some individuals this process may be a rapid one, yet for others it may be a slower or gradual process. This depends on the environment and the ability of the different individuals. For example, knowledge of first language has much positive cognitive connection with second language learning [Bialystok (1991), Collier & Thomas (1995), Garcia (1994) and Genesse (1987)]. There have been also some studies that have emphasised that learners must reach a certain level of learning in the first language in order to be successful second language learners [Collier (1987), Collier & Thomas (1989) and Cummins (1981 & 1991)]

Krashen is one of the most controversial researchers in the field of SLA. According to Krashen (1982) as cited in Brown (2000), acquisition and learning do not fall under the same category He mentioned that adult second language learners have two ways of internalizing (incorporating

within oneself) the target language. The first way is acquisition. This is similar to a child who subconsciously picks up a language. It is a spontaneous process of developing a system to learn a language. The second way is through conscious learning where the learners are alert to their learning process. Krashen claims, as cited in Peal (1994).

Fluency in second language performance is due to what we have acquired, not what we have learned. (1981a:99)

On the other hand, Oxford another popular researcher, chooses the notion of a learning-acquisition continuum, rather than a dichotomy According to Oxford, as cited in Peal (1994)

However, this distinction seems too rigid. It is likely that learning and acquisition are not mutually exclusive but are parts of potentially integrated range of experience.   Moreover, some elements of language use are at first conscious and then become unconscious or automatic through practice (1990:4).

Researchers such as Ellis also do not accept Krashen's view point. Ellis (1985) uses the term "second language learning" to represent both conscious and subconscious learning in second language learning.

If one accepts Krashen's view on language learning and acquisition, then the application of LLS cannot lead to internalization in the second language learning process. Gregg (1984 82), in his research mentions that, there is no reason to accept Krashen's claim, in the absence of evidence.

As mentioned earlier, this study attempts to look at the most suitable combination of learning strategies for the proficient and less proficient Malaysian ESL learners who fall into different personality traits. By opting for Oxford's point of view on LLS, this study aims to explore factors that influence learners' decisions in choosing their preferred LLS.

Factors that make a learner successful in his or her second language learning experience could also be determined by individual differences. Learners may vary in different ways. The framework that was created by Yorio has led to many subsequent researches and studies. According to Yorio (1976), there are several factors that may lead a person's language learning experience. The factors are like age, cognition level, native language, input, affective domain and educational background. These are the domains that should be included in SLA theory More detailed explanation on individual differences is given in the following section.

Individual differences

Each individual is different in his / her language learning ways. There are numerous studies that have researched this phenomenon. The differences could occur due to age, past knowledge, personality, learning style, learning strategy, motivation, aptitude, setting or environment.

Jia & Fuse (2007) examined how 10 native Mandarin speaking children and adolescents with different ages at the time of arrival in the United States acquired six English grammatical morphemes over a period of 5 years. Performance differences among the subjects were predicted by the age of arrival. However, such effects only existed for 2 out of 6 morphemes. Growth curve analysis in their study proved that language environment was a stronger predictor of individual difference than age of arrival. Besides that, Korenman & Peynircioglu, (2007) proved that the learning rate and memory of an individual is also different.

Even gender differences influence an individual's language learning process. For example, Clements, et. al (2006) found evidence for differences in laterality between males and females when processing language. In their study they mentioned that males are more left dominant on language tasks while females are more right lateralized. Moreover, individuals also differ even when they have different goals and aims during the learning process. Motivation is also a common factor that distinguishes individuals. Motivation is categorized into two types, which are integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation can be identified as the learner's orientation with regard to the goal of learning a second language (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). However, instrumental motivation is generally characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a second language (Hudson 2000).

Aptitude is also a factor that influences second language learning. This experience also differs among learners because some learners may have high aptitude towards learning a language and others may not. Carroll (1991) identified aptitude as an ability to learn quickly Through the years, many aptitude tests have been developed. The Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and the Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB) are most widely used aptitude tests (Pimsleur, 1996). However, Meera in 2005 with his colleagues has created anaptitude test that can be taken via computers.

Personality trait is also a factor that differentiates individuals. It somehow contributes to the success of language learning within each individual. It is further explained in the following part.

Other than the internal factors which was explained earlier, in the SLA process a learner may be influenced by external aspects too. This includes the socio-cultural factors. According to Zhang (2006) as far as the field of pragmatics is concerned, one cannot safely say that language can be isolated from socio-culture, as cultural factors are always reflected in our daily and professional communication. Brown as cited in Jiang (1999) describes the relationship of culture and language as following:

"A language is part of culture and a culture is part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture."

For example, Tse (2001), in his research points out that the research conducted through the years show that the learning period for French and German students to learn English is generally shorter that experienced by East Asian learners. Language distance is one of the reasons for the East Asian students to experience this. However, culture distance also plays its part because East Asian students may encounter cultural shock in their learning processes to a certain extent, which is one of the hindrances in SLA (Tse, 2001). Before moving on to understand personality traits further, one must take into account that success of second language learner is determined by both external and internal factors.

Personality traits

Moody (1988) stated in his study that language teachers and writers of textbooks basically create programs just for certain personality type of students. Therefore there would be certain students who fail and others who succeed. This can be clearly explained because of the personality types that make a difference in how people learn. This study attempts to use KTS as the personality assessment test to assess the personality trait. The KTS is adopted from the *Please Understand Me II* (1998) by David Keirsey. This is a free alternative of MBTI. Both MBTI and KTS are modified based on Jung's work (1921). The KTS uses four scales to sort candidates into one of Keirsey's four Temperaments. Keirsey developed four main temperaments. **Artisans** are interested in the use of machines and equipment; **Guardians** in managing and organizing; **Idealists** are interested in working with people; while **Rationals** are interested in complexity both organic and mechanical.

Uses of KTS in research

KTS is a self-scorable questionnaire. 16 questions related to personality need to be answered. Each item has four choices which need to be ranked from "most like you" to "least like you", on a four point scale. According to Keirsey (1978), one can be characterized as either a Guardian, Artisan, Idealist or Rational.

Daughenbaugh, et. al (2002) in their research employed two online surveys which are KTS and a course satisfaction instrument in order to find out if different personality types express more or less satisfaction with course delivered online versus the traditional classroom method. The result of the study is that Extroverts have stronger preference for online courses than Introverts. However, in order to generalize the study to wider populations, Daughenbaugh and his colleagues believe that there is a need for further research. Daughenbaugh, et. al (2002)'s also mention that MBTI is similar to KTS. In their study, several researches conducted using MBTI have been cited. Culp & Smith (2001) study how personality type affects team performance on engineering project; Jarlstrom (2000) studied career expectations of Finnish students, and Bozeman (1978) used the MBTI to study implementation of a computer-based information system. As cited in Daughenbaugh, et. al (2002), studies that have used KTS include: Ballou & Brown (1987) who used KTS to study burnout among college dorm assistants, and Morris (2000) who used KTS to study personality traits of applicants to dental school. MBTI & KTS have also been used in number of studies related to education [e.g. Rollins(1990), Schroeder (1993), Carnell & Monroe (1993), Felder (1993) & Fish & McKeen (1995) as cited in Daughenbaugh, et. al (2002)]

Hollandsworth (1988) used KTS, interview and observation as the data collection method to find out the effects that personality traits have on the attitudes of developing writers. Fearn, Francis & Wilcox (2001) used KTS & the Francis Scale of Attitude towards Christianity in order to study the attitude toward Christianity and psychological type.

From the information gathered on the use of KTS in research this study concludes that KTS has been widely used in many fields such as career consultations, information technology, engineering, religion as well as in education. In the next section, the focus will be on LLS.

Language learning strategies (LLS)

The cognitive psychology model is one of the second language learning models related to LLS O'Malley and Chamot (1990), mentioned that

lcarning strategies are special ways of processing information There are
many studies on LLS that were carried out using cognitive psychology as
the framework. Some of the researchers that explored cognitive psychology
and LLS include: Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, (1978); Bialystok
(1991); O'Malley & Chamot (1990); Thompson (2005) and Oxford (1989).

Oxford & Crookall (1989) mention that LLS is studied through the
following procedures. observation and intuition, interviews and think-aloud
procedures, note taking; diaries, surveys; and studies on LLS training. This
study focuses on the survey method in order to find out the appropriate
LLS

Naiman, Frohlich, Stern and Todesco (1975) produced interviews
exploring the learning strategies used by good language learners. Their
work is based on three variables which are teaching, learner and the context
which affects the learning and subsequently affects the learning strategies
used. Besides that, Bialystok (1978) also used cognitive system in her
research. Her study is based on three levels, which are input, knowledge
and output. LLS are used throughout the three levels. O'Malley et. al (1985)
as cited in Peal (1994) have come up with a strategy categorized into three
levels, namely· metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and socio-
affective strategies. Meanwhile, Rubin and Thompson (1982) presented
fourteen general types of learning strategies according to cognitive theory
However, no studies have been created for affective domain.

Oxford (1990) on the other hand, classified LLS into two major groups
which are Direct strategy and Indirect strategy The direct strategy contains
memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. The
indirect strategy contains metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and
social strategies. Oxford also conceptualized SILL which is used to access
the frequency of the LLS used. It has proved to be an instrument that has
received much attention since its inception, the next part will attempt to
outline SILL.

SILL use in research

According to Oxford & Nyikos (1989) SILL has been used widely around
the world. Strategy descriptions on the SILL were drawn from a
comprehensive taxonomy of LLS that systematically cover the four language
skill areas of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The taxonomy was
based on an extensive research review

Oxford & Ehrman (1990) have used both MBTI and SILL in their
research. They found that their subjects showed differences in strategy

use, depending on the MBTI personality type. In their study they realized strong correlations between personality type and choice of language strategies.

According to Oxford & Green (1995) SILL helps teachers to obtain a rapid, broad-brush picture of the strategies students are using and enables teachers and researchers to plan strategy instruction more effectively.

Hsiao & Oxford (2002) compared and examined the theories of LLS of 517 English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners by using SILL. In their study, they have pointed out that "the SILL has shown significant relationships to the following: Learning Style Profile, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Style Analysis Survey, Affective Survey, the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory, and other measures (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, 1990; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995, Yang, 1992b)."

In this study, once learning strategies are identified for both groups of proficient and less proficient ESL learners, their learning strategies are compared to evaluate further the effect of personality type on their learning strategies. Oxford (1989) pointed out more proficient learners appear to use a wider range of strategies in a greater number of situations than do less proficient learners. Hence, additional attention (research) is needed for less proficient ESL learners as they might not be able to choose the appropriate learning strategies automatically to use in second language learning process as compared to proficient ESL learners.

Research Method

In this study, the researcher discovered that there is a need for a mixed method of research as quantitative method alone is not sufficient. With the inclusion of qualitative method the feelings and experience of individuals can be evaluated. In this study both quantitative (SILL and KTS) and qualitative (interview) methods were utilized. SILL was used to identify the preferred choices of LLS, while KTS was used to identify the personality traits. Therefore, this study finds a balance between both paradigms' strengths and weaknesses by carrying out a mixed method research. Creswell (1994) mentioned that mixed-method research uses the advantage of both quantitative and qualitative paradigm.

Participants were divided into two groups   proficient ESL learners and less proficient ESL learners. 33 participants were selected for the proficient group, while 35 participants were selected for the less proficient

group. Purposive sampling was used in this selection because the population for this study is exclusive as they have to meet certain criteria.

One of the criteria is that the participants must be enrolled as a pre-university student in University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). Since the researcher is focusing on a group of students who are from a particular university, the case study approach is suitable. The second criterion is that the participants must at least be in their second semester and have at least taken one ESL related paper in the University, which is FALE1003 English Language. This is because by the second semester the participants would have taken at least one English related paper which ascertains their proficiency level.

FALE1003 English Language is set as a benchmark to determine the proficient and less proficient participants because this paper covers all aspects of English Language skills like reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The third criteria is that the proficient group of participants must show proof of their high achievement in FALE1003 English Language in the university The score requirements for proficient participants are A and A-
 The less proficient group of participants must also show proof of their low achievement in FALE1003 English Language in the university and school level. The score requirements for less proficient participants are C and below. The participants' FALE1003 English Language results were obtained from the administrators of the university

ESL learners with results of B+,
Language were not chosen as participants for this study This is because the ESL learners with these results did not fall under proficient or less proficient category Therefore, choosing them as participants of this study contradicts the purpose of this study

Results & Finding

Background of the Participants

This section describes the background information of participants. It provides a brief introduction of the participants involved in this study Also it shows the distribution of the participants according to their proficiency, age, and gender, personality trait and LLS.

Proficiency Group

Table 1 shows the number of participants who fall under the proficient and less proficient group. The less proficient group outnumbers the proficient group by 3%.

Proficiency	Number	Percent
Less proficient	35	51.5
Proficient	33	48.5
Total	68	100.0

Table1   Distribution of Proficiency

Gender

Table 2 illustrates the number of male and female participants. Males outweigh females by 23 6%.

Gender	Number	Percent
Female	26	38.2
Male	42	61.8
Total	68	100.0

Table2   Distribution of Gender

Age

Table 3 shows the participants' age which ranges from 17 to 22 years old. The difference is not considered significant.

Age group	Number	Percent
17	1	1.5
18	34	50.0
19	17	25.0
20	4	5.9
21	10	14.7
22	2	2.9
Total	68	100.0

Table3   Distribution of Age

Personality Traits

Table 4 shows the distribution of participants according to personality traits. Keirsey Temperament Sorter divides the personality traits into four characteristics which are Artisan, Idealist, Guardian and Rational. Rationals outweigh the rest of the personality traits while Artisans hold the lowest percentage among all.

Personality Trait	Number	Percent
Artisan	10	14.7
Idealist	15	22.1
Guardian	17	25.0
Rational	26	38.2
Total	68	100.0

Table4   Distribution of Personality Trait

Language Learning Strategies

The following descriptive statistics show the distribution of the language learning strategy variable. The data below highlights that the compensatory strategy holds the highest mean which implies that it is the most popular strategy among participants. Meanwhile the affective strategy falls under the category of less preferred strategy

STRATEGY	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Memory	68	1.50	3.67	2.6784	.44312
Cognitive	68	2.57	4.14	3.2744	.39587
Compensatory	68	2.10	4.83	3.3372*	.59846
Metacognitive	68	1.56	4.67	3.2534	.67229
Affective	68	1.00	4.50	2.3826*	72451
Social	68	1.83	4.67	3 1549	.65590

Table 5   Distribution of Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies & Personality Traits of Proficient Learners

This section discusses the combinations of Oxford's six language learning strategies that are used by proficient Malaysian ESL learners who fall into different KTS personality traits. The overall scores for each strategy were divided by the number of questions for each category to arrive at the mean for each strategy. This was done for all the strategy groups. Strategies with the mean 3.0 and above were regarded as preferred language learning strategy used by the participant. SILL is designed to assess the frequency of the language learning strategies used (responses range from, 'almost never true of me' to 'always true of me' on a five point scale). Therefore, mathematically 2 5 is the average. Hence, the researcher made an assumption that any scores above 3 0 would indicate the preferred language learning strategy

Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviation of the language learning strategies used by proficient ESL learners who belong to one of the Keirsey personality traits. The most used strategy by the proficient ESL learners is Cognitive strategy (with a mean score 3.4127), while the least used strategy is the Affective strategy (with a mean score of 1 9258). Memory strategy also seemed to be one of the less used strategy as the mean score is just slightly over 2.5 (with a mean score of 2.6045).

Affective strategy seemed to be least used by proficient ESL learners. This strategy is termed as indirect strategy by Oxford (1989) because this strategy supports and manages language learning without directly involving the target language. Affective strategies help to regulate emotions, motivations and attitudes (Oxford, 1989). An example of affective strategy is using music to lower your anxiety level. In one of the recent studies conducted, Gregersen, et. al. (2001) studied the usage of strategies by successful and unsuccessful language learners. Their results suggest that good language learners increase their use of cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies, and decrease their use of memory and affective strategies. Compensation strategies were maintained evenly by both successful and less successful language learner. The result of Gregersen, et. al. (2001) study's is reflected by the findings of this study, where memory and affective strategy were found least used by proficient group of learners.

As mentioned earlier, findings from Table 6 show that one of the least used strategy for proficient group is Memory strategy Oxford (1990) mentioned that this strategy requires the learners to store and retrieve new information during the learning process. Examples of memory strategies

are like acronyms, rhyming, images, a combination of sounds and images, body movement and flashcards. However, it is found in this study that although they are categorized as proficient, they do not use this strategy to learn language. This may be explained statically where the total mean score for memory strategy is insignificant as highlighted in Table 4.4.

The personality traits of proficient group ESL learners are shown in Table 6 The results show that there are four learners with Guardian personality, while there are a total of 14 learners with Rational trait.

From Table 6, it can be concluded that Artisan, Idealist and Guardian ESL learners tend to use more Compensatory strategy with a mean score of 3.3800, 3.5413 and 3 7475 respectively Rational ESL learners seem to be more inclined towards Cognitive strategy with a mean score of 3.3364. It is also found that regardless of the personality traits, the least used strategy is Affective strategy. One of the reasons not much difference can be found in their choices of language learning strategy is because this group of students are proficient ESL learners. Therefore, they tend to choose the most suitable and effective strategy for them regardless of their personality trait. O'Malley (1987) pointed out that successful foreign language learners employ a variety of strategies to assist them in gaining command of new language skills. This is proven in this research question.

Keirsey		Memory	Cognitive	Compensatory	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Artisan	Mean	2.5386	3.2943	3.3800	2.6171	1.9757	3.0971
	N	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Std. Deviation	.43717	.36013	78024	62952	.48521	.54426
Idealist	Mean	2.7350	3 5175	3 5413	3 3600	2.1675	3.4363
	N	8	8	8	8	8	8
	Std. Deviation	.47809	38492	8603	61384	76615	79749
Guar-dian	Mean	2 2500	3 6775	3 7475	3.3875	1.8350	3.0825
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Std. Deviation	29280	.49601	79826	.77410	.33000	.51623
Rational	Mean	2 6643	3.3364	3 2150	3.2857	1 7886	2.7743
	N	14	14	14	14	14	14
	Std. Deviation	.32016	.40317	.36698	.85957	.38805	.62792
Total	Mean	2.6045	3.4127	3.3936	3.1742	1.9258	3.0406
	N	33	33	33	33	33	33
	Std. Deviation	39748	.40367	.65238	77505	.51803	.67150

Table 6. Descriptive Data of Proficient Learners between Language Learning Strategy & Personality Traits

The next section will focus on less proficient Malaysian ESL learners who fall into different KTS personality traits.

Language Learning Strategies & Personality Traits of Less Proficient Learners

This section describes the combinations of Oxford's six language learning strategies that are used by less proficient Malaysian ESL learners who fall into different KTS personality traits. The strategy with a mean 3 0 and above was regarded as the preferred language learning strategy used by the participants.

Table 7 shows that the most used strategy by the less proficient ESL learners is Metacognitive strategy with a mean score of 3.3280, while the least used strategy is Memory strategy with a mean score 2.7480 Affective strategy is also considered as a less used strategy as the mean is just 2.8134. The results show that there are three learners with Artisan personality, while there are a total of 1 2 learners with Guardian trait.

Keirsey		Memory	Cognitive	Compensatory	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Artisan	Mean	3.1500	3.0233	3.1667	3.5900	2.8900	3.4433
	N	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Std. Deviation	.46357	14572	.28868	.75439	.84042	.09815
Idealist	Mean	2.5714	3.2043	3.3100	3.4129	2.9043	3.4057
	N	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Std. Deviation	.50634	.30309	.59607	.51552	.49839	73182
Guardian	Mean	2.6631	3.0754	3.3154	3.2423	2.8562	3.0392
	N	13	13	13	13	13	13
	Std. Deviation	.45294	.45075	.64019	.56367	75394	.76124
Rational	Mean	2.8425	3.2133	3.2642	3.3058	2.6950	3.3758
	N	12	12	12	12	12	12
	Std. Deviation	.46868	.27619	.51281	.58424	.53996	.45997
Total	Mean	2.7480	3.1440	3.2840	3.3280	2.8134	3.2626
	N	35	35	35	35	35	35
	Std. Deviation n	.47744	.34551	.54699	.55988	.62305	.63147

Personality Traits

Table 7　Descriptive Data of has Proficient Learners between Language Learning Strategy & Personality Traits

Table 7 shows that Artisan ESL learners are more inclined to use Metacognitive strategy and less inclined to use Affective strategy with mean scores of 2.8900 and 3 5900 respectively. Idealists use more of Metacognitive strategy but less of Memory strategy with respective mean scores of 3.3154 and 2 6631. Guardians also use less Memory strategy but are more inclined towards Compensatory strategy with mean scores of 2.6950 and 3.3758. Finally, the Rationals use more social strategy but less Affective strategy with respective mean scores of 3.3758 and 2.6950.

It can be seen that less proficient learners who are Artisan and Idealist tend to use more Metacognitive strategy which 'help learners coordinate their learning process through planning, organizing, and evaluation, are essential to successful FL learning at all stages of the language acquisition process' (Gregersen, et. al, 2001). With this choice of language learning strategy, artisan and idealist learners may achieve successful language learning experience if the strategy is used appropriately. Compensatory strategy is used more by Guardians where it is considered a direct strategy. Direct strategies are those strategies that require mental processing of the language. Finally, Rationals in this group prefer to use Social strategy. This strategy is categorized as indirect strategy which supports and manages language learning without directly involving the target language. The preference of language learning strategy of less proficient learners also did not relate particularly to the personality trait. This trend can also be noticed among proficient learners.

From RQ1 and 2, it can be concluded that Malaysian ESL learners tend to use less memory strategy in language learning regardless of their proficiency. According to Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford (2003), memory strategy helps learners to link target language item or concept with another but does not necessarily involve deep understanding. Memory strategy includes the task of entering information and retrieving it later.

In Malaysia, the teaching and learning system tends to emphasize on rote learning. In rote learning, learners memorize everything without understanding it first and then they will retrieve it later during output learning (exams, test, and quiz). However, this study shows otherwise. It yields a new insight that memory strategy is less used and maybe the participants of this study use their creativity and understanding to understand a concept instead of memorizing it blindly. Conversely, Gregersen, et. al (2001) found that poor learners augmented their use of memory, cognitive, compensation, and metacognitive strategies, while diminishing their use of affective and social strategies.

Furthermore, results of this study show that regardless of proficiency, both proficient and less proficient groups tend to use a variety of strategies. Oxford & Nyikos (1989) however mentioned that only good language learners use a variety of learning strategies. In another research Ehrman & Oxford (1990) also pointed out that successful learners use a variety of strategies, thus they become more self-directed and it helps them to improve their performance.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) mentioned that less effective students not only had fewer strategy types in their repertoires but also frequently used strategies that were inappropriate to the task or that did not lead to successful task completion. Although in this study, it is found that proficient and less proficient learners use a variety of strategies, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) mention, it would seem that probably the less proficient learners might have used strategies that were inappropriate for certain tasks.

The findings also show that language learning strategy preferences do not associate with personality, but do correlate statistically with the proficiency level of learners. Association of learning strategies with proficiency significantly exists only with cognitive strategies and affective strategies.

Conclusion

This study will be helpful to many readers especially to second language learners and teachers. With the knowledge of appropriate learning strategy, one can bring out the best of himself or herself in the learning process. This study will give the opportunity for instructors to develop appropriate programs and syllabus to increase and maintain the interest of students in language learning. As opposed to rote learning which is quite prevalent in our education system today, the knowledge of LLS will also promote creative thinking and problem solving skills among students. Through this study it is expected that equipped with relevant knowledge regarding personality and LLS, instructors will be able to facilitate language teaching and learning sessions more interestingly; then effective lessons can be designed for both proficient and less proficient ESL learners.

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