

# ***The Connection between Personalities and Secondary Language Learning : From the Perspective of Learning Strategy***

Grace(Zhixuan) Liu<sup>1,a,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Chengdu University of Technology, Sichuan Province, China  
a. liu.zhixuan@student.zy.cdut.edu.cn

\*corresponding author

**Abstract:** The research is faced with secondary language learning among different individuals, which focuses more on learning strategies. Based on this viewpoint, this research has investigated 112 different individuals in the form of questionnaire, in order to predicate whether personality affects secondary language learning outcome or not. According to the research, students account for the largest proportion, whose age period are from 20 to 35. In other words, the paper showed the biggest rate of informants, college students in recent years. It is discovered that more than half of participants agree with the point that personality has an influence on secondary language learning. Take attitude for example, approximately 80% of them are positive about solving their problems that they are faced with during the learning process. The paper adopts the analysis of the link between personality and secondary language learners and discourse analysis to deeper understanding of positive and negative transfer among different learners. The result showed such an answer: it is not just personality is correlated to secondary language learning, a number of external factors is linked with learning outcome, especially in positive transfer in language learning . In consequence, except personality from the perspective of learning strategies, researches that linked with external factors are still in the long run, such as teaching methods, learning atmosphere and the status of language.

**Keywords:** personality, secondary language, Learning strategy

## **1. Introduction**

Under the background of globalization in today's society, the reform and opening-up policy is becoming more and more prevalent in China over decades. In such a condition, international exchange and cooperation significantly has an influence on international relationship. As a result, the number of people who learn secondary language is rising steadily. There are many elements that affect secondary language learning outcome, including gender, age, personality, learning strategy and so on. In these factors, it is thought that human tend to have a combination between their personalities into language learning strategies. There is no denying that personality is a significant factor, therefore, it has attracted the attention of academic circles. At the same time, it was supported by many experiments.

Based on traditional results, the main characteristics of secondary language learners can be divided into two types, which are extrovert and introvert. This is based on Jung's experiment in 1921. During early 1900s, Carl Jung came up with his core ideas from the perspective of personality, including introversion and extroversion [1]. Petric mentioned that the advantage of introvert type is beneficial for autonomic learning, while the disadvantage of introvert type has weakness in team work [2]. Petric also holds the point that extroversion is linked to interaction among different individuals, but such type is likely to lose the ability of independent thinking [3]. As a result, Jung's experiment shows that personality is positively correlated with learning achievement, no matter introvert type or extrovert type. However, the secondary language learning outcome does not just depend on introversion or extroversion. In fact, secondary language learning outcome is also impacted by other factors, such as personal concepts, attitudes, the status of language, motivation and so on. Additionally, the individual needs to be combined with external environment divided into a variety of aspects.

From the perspective of learning strategies in people's personality, previous research had two aspects--individual differences and affective social factors.

On the one hand, individual differences usually bring about subjective influence, which includes personal concepts of secondary language learning, personal affective state, experience among different individuals. Take Arabic in the secondary school in SMKAs as an example. As Noor et al. showed, language status is an element of secondary language learning, which has a meaning that secondary language learners pay less attention to learn new foreign words due to difficult understanding [4]. The Arabic research approved that attitude affects secondary learning results among learners. According to Gu, learners usually are aware of their knowledge, and they are conscious about what they should do [5]. Under the background of Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice, Gu also held the viewpoint of knowledge[6], which is necessary but not suitable for all learners' performance. Thereby, this research suggested that individual difference is of great significance in secondary language learning.

On the other hand, affective social factor would unavoidably produce external influences for secondary language learners. A typical research is about the educational concept of innovation and entrepreneurship. To analyze the result, Chen emphasized the fact that teachers' instruction should not be ignored [7]. That is to say, teachers are required to provide cognitive strategies, social strategies, as well as affective strategies for their students, on account for improving students' learning abilities, even their cognitive approaches. Another specific example is about dictionary users. According to Adams, although some L2 students were asked to look new words up in the dictionary, they are suggested by researchers that they should enhance their reading comprehension at the same time [8]. The example of dictionary users drew a conclusion of instruction difference, which has a connection with external learning conditions.

Based on the above discussion, three research questions are delivered over the article.

- (1) Does interest affect the learners' character?
- (2) What are the main elements affecting learning strategies?
- (3) Does personality really affect secondary language learning?

## 2. Methodology

This article is going to use questionnaire to get the result. In this paper, it is externalized that personality is positively correlated with learning achievement among individuals, no matter positive transfer or negative transfer.

To be more specific, 112 people participated in the investigation. Most of them are students and employees in different enterprises. At the same time, individuals like teachers, doctors or nurses, civil servant and so on also exist in the investigation. In order to have a deeper exploration of the connection between personalities and secondary language learning, all of the questions are linked

with personalities, motivation, learning methods, and personal concepts. Combined with the answers from different participants, it is obvious to get the data and charts about the results. The main methods are two aspects: one is frequency and continuous, the other is Chi-Square. To put it another way, figures in this questionnaire can provide evidence to judge the hypothesis.

Here are several typical questions in the investigation:

1. What's your job?
2. Are you interested in secondary language learning?
3. Do you agree with the point that personality affects secondary language learning?
4. Do you need to be supervised during secondary language learning?
5. Are you confident in leaning a secondary language?
6. Do you agree with the point that you choose to learn secondary language because of personal interest/working requirement/examination requirement?

Except these major questions, the perspectives of teaching and learning methods were also mentioned in the questionnaire.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 Data of Different Individuals

Designation	Option	Frequency and Continuous
<b>Job</b>	Employees of the enterprises	44
	Civil Servant	1
	Others	7
	Doctor or Nurse	1
	Student	54
	Teacher	5
<b>Are you interested in learning Foreign Language</b>	No	27
	Yes	85

Table 1 mainly represents the data of 112 different individuals who learn secondary language and whether they are interested in language learning or not. It is obvious that the largest frequency and continuous is student, while the smallest part is civil servant. And from the point of interest, most of them are interested in learning foreign language. Thereby, preliminary known, interest is one of the factors that influence secondary language learning.

Table 2 is the result of Chi-Square Analysis about the reason why participants choose to study

Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis Results In Different Factors

Item	P
Personal Interest	0.294
Examination Requirement	0.154
Working Requirement	0.388

secondary language. Owing to the fact, the main reasons are threefold: personal interest, examination requirement and working requirement. It is obvious that  $p > 0.05$ , so the three points are not positively related to secondary language learning outcome.

Table 3 Chi-Square Analysis Results between Supervision and Confidence

Item	Option	You are confident about secondary language learning (%)					Total	$\chi^2$	P
		Not always	Disagree	Agree	Totally Disagree	Totally Agree			
You need to be supervised in secondary language learning	Not Always	15(60.00)	15(27.78)	15(27.78)	0(0.00)	8(25.81)	39(34.82)	43.610	0.000**
	Disagree	5(20.00)	24(44.44)	24(44.44)	0(0.00)	5(16.13)	34(30.36)		
	Agree	2(8.00)	9(16.67)	9(16.67)	1(100.00)	1(3.23)	13(11.61)		
	Totally Disagree	2(8.00)	3(5.56)	3(5.56)	0(0.00)	9(29.03)	14(12.50)		
	Totally Agree	1(4.00)	3(5.56)	3(5.56)	0(0.00)	8(25.81)	12(10.71)		
Total		25	25	54	1	31	112		
You don't need to be supervised in secondary language learning	Not Always	10(40.00)	16(29.63)	16(29.63)	0(0.00)	4(12.90)	30(26.79)	51.902	0.000**
	Disagree	4(16.00)	6(11.11)	6(11.11)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	10(8.93)		
	Agree	10(40.00)	29(53.70)	29(53.70)	1(100.00)	8(25.81)	49(43.75)		
	Totally Disagree	1(4.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	1(3.23)	2(1.79)		
	Totally Agree	0(0.00)	3(5.56)	3(5.56)	0(0.00)	18(58.06)	21(18.75)		
Total		25	1	54	1	31	112		
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$									

Table 3 illustrates the issue of supervision. To be more specific, the chart has a deep analysis that whether supervision influences learners or not. Since  $p < 0.05$ , the supervision is positive relative to secondary language learning objectives.

Here are the discussions about three research questions that are mentioned in the end of introduction.

As for the first question, the research paper is faced with the main group, student, which has the most massive frequency and continuous. Specifically, the result is based on the percentage of learners' interest. And the research paper will focus on different learning styles. First of all, "need for achievement" is linked to learners' interest. According to Nedzinskaitė, Švenčionienė, and Zavistanavičienė, the students' self-assessment essays have a reflection of their academic achievement, which promote their hard work [9]. And as Ali et al. reported, if there is a combination with students' abilities, students' attitudes will be likely to enhance [10]. On account for my investigation, 90.18% of the participants showed agreement that they have a sense of achievement after making progress in secondary language learning. Simultaneously, the status of language should be refined because of the cultural diversity. In other words, with the influence of different languages' status, learners' attention would change among different languages. Chan held the point that Confucianism is one of the cultural values among Chinese learners, which has an impact on Chinese education system [11]. This example is a symbol of language status that has to do with learners' attitudes. What's more, learners' habits also affect secondary language learning. And as Ali mentioned, the status of culture is an essential in human society, which is to be faced with different conditions through communication [12]. Thereby, since language has been considered as a crucial symbol of national identity, the status of language can change learners' attitudes. To put it another way, personal concept of secondary language learning is one of the elements that affects learning outcome.

In terms of the second question, this research will present an explanation of internal and external environment, so as to analyze the factors deeply. For one thing, learners' attitudes sometimes depend on the status of language. Like English, it is used widely used all over the world. El-Omari insists on the point that students who are in secondary school have a sense of achievement in English learning, which has a reflection on most time of our life [13]. At the same time, with the development of economy and technology, English has been a tool to be applied in science (El-Omari) [14]. For another, with time goes by, teaching methods in secondary language learning should be adjusted over time. As Ugwu mentioned, language teachers are usually required to make good use of the best teaching style [15], however, the teaching methods should be used in an appropriate condition. In fact, different types of teaching methods have their advantages and setbacks. For instance, Grammar Translation Method is helpful for students' reading and writing part in secondary language learning, while the Communication Language Learning is useful for improving students' speaking part and enhancing their positivity. So a teaching method is supposed to be applied in a reasonable way. Moreover, a wise learning method is in favor of learning outcome. In order to enhance the quality of education and critical thinking, teaching method plays an important role in education system in high school (Aghili, Karami and Pakmehr) [16]. According to my questionnaire, different types of learning methods presented in it--applications to memorize words through smart phones, copying with pens and papers, reading materials, as well as movies or TV series in foreign languages. The data showed that 60.71% of participants prefer to use related applications in their smart phones, which has the largest rate, while the smallest rate is 17.86%, who are used to reading. Hence, various forms of learning styles have different types of learning outcome.

To be honest, the database in my investigation showed that 66.08% of the participants agree with the point that teaching quality in schools is relevant to secondary learning outcome. And 75.89% of them thought that secondary language learning outcome is region from the preference of their teachers.

According to the third question, with the comparison of the data, the connection between personality and secondary language learning outcome would be approved. On the one hand, personality is one of the factors that affect secondary language learning, such as anxiety, motivation, or aversion among individuals. A specific example is about L2 students' motivation. According to Li, making an effort to inspire students' self-image is helpful to transfer their value and attitudes [17].

On the other hand, external factors like learning atmosphere, teaching methods, and personal learning approaches can promote learners' abilities and their motivation, so as to make progress in secondary language learning. Take in-class atmosphere as an example. As Babaei, Ofoghi, and Sadeghi suggested, if it is the teacher controls the whole class, the students' positivity might be crushed in some circumstances, which are related to their self-concept, concentration, and motivation [18]. That is, leaning atmosphere is supposed to be created wisely. For instance, holding an activity that is attractive can enhance learners' positivity. As a whole, secondary language learning outcome is a combination of character and external environment.

#### 4. Conclusion

The current research mainly explores the connection between personalities and secondary language learning, which focus more on learning strategies. The learning strategies include personal concepts, attitudes, and actions of learning approaches. In the meantime, external environment is linked with learners' personalities. It reveals that external environment is also essential for secondary language learners.

To draw a conclusion, although personality has an impact on secondary language learning outcome, external environment should not be ignored. That is to say, learners' environment should be improved. There are three major points for researchers to do more exploration in the future research.

In the first place, one of the external factors is teaching methods because a proper direction significantly affects learning outcome. As a matter of fact, with the development of technology, a huge amount of new techniques are increasing dramatically in recent years. Therefore, the teaching method should follow the new time period in today's society, so that the teaching quality is possible to satisfy secondary language learners' requirements. Secondly, it is everyone's responsibility to create a high-qualified and effective learning atmosphere for secondary language learners. There is no denying that a magnificent learning atmosphere is in favour of secondary language learning, due to the positivity among students. Thirdly, the status of language should be explored more in the future. Frankly speaking, the status of language can obviously determine the number of learners. As mentioned previously, the status of Arabic can affect learners' attitudes in a certain way.

Without doubt, there are some limitations in the research. For one thing, the scope of participants is too large, which made the result less cautious. Thus, control variate method should be paid attention in the future research. This means participants in the investigation need to be adjusted into one type. For another, the questions about motivation are limited. Owing to the fact, except supervision and preference in secondary language learning, maybe career plan has an influence on motivation during the learning process. What's more, a number of factors can affect secondary language learning. That is to say, it is not merely that teaching methods, learning atmosphere and the status of language impact learning outcome. It is possible to believe other things that affect secondary language learning, like family background, interpersonal relationship and cultural system in different countries. All in all, the research of the connection between personality and secondary language learning is a long way to go.

#### References

- [1] Houston, E. (2019) *Introvert vs Extrovert: A Look at the Spectrum and Psychology*.
- [2] Petric, D. (2019) *Introvert, Extrovert and Ambivert*.
- [3] Noor, Z. et al. (2016) *Foreign Language Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Malaysia*.
- [4] Gu, P. (2005) *Learning Strategies: Prototypical Core and Dimensions of Variation*.
- [5] Chen, Z. (2016) *Language Learning Strategies Based on the Educational Concept of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*.
- [6] Adams, B. (2009) *Second Language (L2) Reading Strategy Instruction: Its Effects on Comprehension and Word Inferences Ability*.

- [7] Nedzinskaitė, I., Švenčionienė, D., and Zavistanavičienė, D.(2006)*Achievements in Language Learning through Students' Self-assessment.*
- [8] Ali, S. (2015) *The Importance of Culture in Second and Foreign Language Learning.*
- [9] Chan, S. (1999) *The Chinese learner-A question of Style.*
- [10] Ali,Z. et al.(2012) *Second Language Learners' Attitudes towards the Methods of Learning Vocabulary .English Language Teaching* Vol. 5, No. 4; April 2012.
- [11] El-Omari, A.(2016) *Factors Affecting Students' Achievement in English Language Learning. Journal of Educational and Social Research* MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy.Vol. 6 No.2
- [12] Ugwu, A. (2015) *Language Teaching Methods: A Conceptual Approach. OBUDU JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES. VOL. 9 NO. 1 (2015). P.20-34.*
- [13] Aghili, A., Karami, M. and Pakmehr, H. (2012). *Another View to Importance of Teaching Methods in Curriculum: Collaborative Learning and Students' Critical Thinking Disposition. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Science. Volume 46,2012, Pages 3266-3270.*
- [14] Li, R.(2017) *Differences in the Motivation of Chinese Learners of English in Different(Foreign or Second Language) Context.*
- [15] Babaei, M., Ofoghi, N. , and Sadeghi, A.(2016) *Impact of Class Atmosphere on the Quality of Learning.*