

Effect of Personality on Learning Language

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Abstract

Emphasis on technologies and information in improving language learning is increasing these days. It is a good strategy but it seems that we need to have a full imagine of the students and any learner before education. It will help monitoring and evaluation of language teaching and learning.

One way to evaluate a person is using personality scales. There is many standard personality scales in the world of sciences. These scales are used in many fields in science and medicine to determine personality of the people and design more personality-based plans.

From the other hand, there are many published articles about effect of personality on the different aspects of learning language. These two dimensions (learning language and personality) have another dimension. It is factors that influencing personality.

Personality is shaped by both genetic and environmental influences. Among the most important of the latter are cultural influences. Culture is transmitted through language and the modeling of behavior when conditions permit humans to communicate through shared language, by living in the same historic period, and when they are sufficiently proximal to influence each other.

For this reason determining personality has many challenging aspects and may have some conflicting areas. For example, imported personality instruments may not necessarily be comprehensive enough to reveal particular distinctive factors in specific cultures. We discuss in this article legal aspects of determining personality, effectiveness of this action and possibility of that in learning language.

Keywords: personality, language, effectiveness

Introduction:

Developing understanding of personality typology, personality traits, thinking styles and learning styles theories is a very useful way to improve teacher's knowledge of motivation and behaviour of student.

Motivation, management, communications, relationships are a lot more effective when the teacher understand personality of the student.

Understanding personality is also the key to unlocking elusive human qualities, for example leadership, motivation, and empathy.

Understanding personality types is helpful for appreciating that while learners are different, everyone has a value, and special strengths and qualities, and that everyone should be treated with care and respect. They just behave differently because they are different [1].

There are many different personality and motivational models and theories, and each one offers a different perspective.

There are many other personality models, psychometrics tests and concepts aside from those featured here.

Knowing about learner's preferred styles and strengths enables us to provide them with assistance, opportunities, direction and responsibilities that fit well with their needs and motivations.

From the other hand, knowing about preferred styles and strengths enables learner to decide how and when to adapt, so as to match her/his behavioural style and communications to best meet the needs of others, and also to see more clearly her/his true potential, and for some, her/his destiny.

Personality and language learning:

Our whole personality and emotions are fully involved when learning a second language. learner's personality, i.e. how they handle the feelings that are evoked during the learning process, what kind of motivation the learner brings to the learning task, as well as personal values, beliefs and attitudes related to learning; whether they prefer to work alone or in groups, and the kind of relationship the learner prefers to have with the teacher and other learners. These are all key factors in the learning process. The learner's personality type as well as these various emotional factors form the affective side of a learner's total learning style.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is an instrument widely used to help people discover the way they tend to take in information, make decisions and relate to people. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator identifies preferences in four areas: Extroversion vs. Introversion, Sensing (concrete-sequential) vs. Intuition, Thinking vs. Feeling, and Judging (closure-oriented) vs. Perceiving (closure-oriented). These 8 types of learners differ in the way they learn the language and they have different learning styles. Each of the mentioned eight preferences that goes to make up a psychological type has its assets and liabilities when it comes to language learning.

The extroverted learner learns more effectively through concrete experiences, contacts with the outside world, and relationships with others. They value group interaction and classwork done together with other students. They are willing to take conversational risks, but are dependent on outside stimulation and interaction.

The introverted learner learns more effectively in individual, independent situations that are more involved with ideas and concepts. Their strengths are their ability to concentrate on the task in hand as well as their self-sufficiency; however, they need to process ideas before speaking which sometimes leads to avoidance of linguistic risk-taking in conversation. They will enjoy using computers for study and review.

The sensing learner learns more effectively from reports of observable facts and happenings; prefers physical, sense-based input. Their great assets are their willingness to work hard in a systematic way, and their attention to details; however, they will be hindered should there be a lack of clear sequence, goals or structure in the language or language course.

The intuitive learner learns more effectively from flashes of insight, using their imagination, and grasping the general concepts rather than all the details. Their strengths are their ability to guess from the context, structuring their own training, conceptualizing and model-building. However, they can be hindered by inaccuracy and missing important details.

The thinking learner learns more effectively from impersonal circumstances and logical consequences. Their strengths are in their ability to analyze and their self-discipline. However, they can suffer from performance anxiety because their self-esteem is attached to achievement.

The feeling learner learns more effectively from personalized circumstances and social values. They have the advantage of their strong desire to bond with the teacher, resulting in good relations which lead to high self-esteem. However, they can become discouraged if not appreciated, and disrupted by lack of interpersonal harmony.

The judging learner learns more effectively by reflection, analysis, and processes that involve closure. They have the advantage of systematically working through a task, and wanting to get the job done. However, they suffer from rigidity and intolerance of ambiguity.

The perceiving learner learns more effectively through negotiation, feeling, and inductive processes that postpone closure. Their strong points are their openness, flexibility and adaptability to change and new experiences. However, they may suffer from laziness and inconsistent pacing over the long haul.

Challenges:

There are challenging areas in this issue. The first point is that no perspective is ever completely accurate and reliable. The more perspectives a teacher have, then the more clearly he/she see and understand learners. So teacher is important in this issue.

Students' prior knowledge is very important and plays an important role on both self-efficacy beliefs and task performance, and the predictive power of self-efficacy on task performance may lie in its association with learning strategy use [2].

Chang et al said in 2008 reported that degree of anxiety is an important factor in learning and power of it [3]. Also, Salamonson et al reported that a workshop may affect ability of writing in language learners [4]. Another affective factor was reported by Chen in 2009. He showed that reducing writing anxiety and promoting writing self-efficacy could enhance writing success [5].

Personality dimension of Neuroticism affect on oral examination marks. Another important finding was that individuals with high neuroticism and high extraversion scores did better on the oral test than on the written test when compared with individuals having high neuroticism and low extraversion scores who did better on the written test than on the oral test [6]. In fact, other emotional factors may affect language learning such as: anxiety (high/low), attitude (positive/negative), motivation (strong/weak), self-confidence, persistence and personal sense of responsibility. Each student comes with their own constellation and intensity of emotional factors and all these affect their emotional involvement with the language learning task.

Permission from owner of the personality scale is one of challenging areas. If in doubt about using any materials you should check with the owner of the intellectual or personality scale or test concerned. Even in the cases that the test is free, care is required when using them. Free tests are fine for fun and for basic rough indicators, but generally (there are some exceptions) neither for serious applications, nor for purposes involving sensitive situations or serious decisions, such as recruitment, career direction, counselling, or serious training nor development needs analysis.

People with strong 'sensing' and 'thinking' personalities will be less comfortable with vague and approximate test than people who have strong intuitive and empathic mindsets. So, the teacher should think about type of audience before deciding on a use and an explanation. He/she should ensure it's acceptable and suitable for the delegates.

If teacher should not use tests 'mostly for fun', and 'just as a rough indicator'. Also should not position a free test of uncertain origin and debatable scientific validity as being a reliable indicator. We should emphasise that all tests provide a reflection of personality of some sort, the use of which usually provokes thought, prompts discussion and possibly also invites a little self-discovery.

We should be careful to avoid unintentionally using any tests that appear free but which are actually subject to copyright and intellectual property terms of use and costs.

Additionally, if teacher wants to include a personality test in a classroom, and is unsure where to start, it generally helps if he/she first asks his/her audience what they'd like to know about themselves, and if they already are aware of any particular frames of reference or personality models. And then seek and source tests accordingly, that are aimed at, or which enable, measuring those criteria, or which use the model concerned.

Personality tests are useful and helpful when used appropriately, and when they are adapted and interpreted in a way that is meaningful to the audience.

It's the same as using any other tool for any other situation: first understand the perspective - the frame of reference of the audience or user - and then select and adapt a tool to fit.

Conclusion

Learning how to learn is an empowering experience, and discovering one's learning style can lead to an increase in achievement and self-confidence. However, it is important to realize that no one style is better than another, although many language school programs favor certain types of learners over others. On the other hand, students should be prepared to expand their learning style repertoire so that they will be more empowered to learn in a variety of learning situations. It should be emphasised that a person is probably not totally one 'type' (e.g. totally analytical or totally global) but somewhere along the continuum between the two. What you should aim for is to strengthen those areas where someone is weak [7].

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