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The Relationship of Language Learning Strategies and Personality on English Proficiency in Japanese University Students

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The purposes of this study were to explore the primary language learning strategies used by Japanese university students, to determine how language proficiency levels relate to the use of language learning strategies and personality type, and to practically apply the findings to university teaching situations. Factor analysis, conducted in a sample consisting of 187 Japanese university students, identified five underlying factors: *Authentic-language-use strategies*, *Heuristic strategies*, *Social strategies*, *Pleasure-oriented strategies* and *Entrance-exam-measured strategies*. Correlation analysis showed that *Authentic-language-use*, *Heuristic*, *Social*, and *Pleasure-oriented strategies* had positive correlations with proficiency, however, *Entrance-exam-measured strategies,* the distinctive factor in Japanese students, had no correlation with proficiency. Though there was no relationship between personality traits and proficiency, this study found that the students with personality traits such as endurance and order, which are conventionally regarded as being beneficial to Japanese students of English, used impractical strategies. This study suggests that being immersed in an enjoyable and interactive learning environment is more effective than solitary, repetitive study.

Key words: language learning strategies, personality, English proficiency, Japanese university students

One of the central questions for English teachers teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is to consider what effects individual learner differences have on learning outcome. There has been a lot of research concerning the relationships between English proficiency and learner differences such as age, personality, aptitude, cognitive style, motivation and learning strategies. Among these, studies of the relationship between language learning strategies (LLSs) and proficiency seem to be important because LLSs are teachable in a classroom to a certain extent and it develops communicative competence as a tool for active, self-directed involvement (Brown, 2002; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 1990). In addition, studying the relationship between personality and proficiency is worthwhile because "in the eyes of many language teachers, the personality of their students constitutes a major factor contributing to success or failure in language learning, and learners also consider personality factors to be important" (Ellis, 1994, p. 517). Although almost ten years have passed since Ellis (1994) stated that "the research that has investigated personality variables and language as a second language is so scanty and, in many ways, so unsatisfactory" (p. 517), this situation has not changed. As Dörnyei (2005) asserted that future research which includes personality traits as independent variables is still desirable, there is a further need for more expansive, comprehensive studies in this area.

In fact, a fairly large body of research already exists that has examined the relationship between the use of LLSs and learning outcome or personality. However, few have focused on the relationships among the three variables, LLSs, personality and English proficiency. Research exploring the relationships among the three variables, LLS use, learners' personality, and proficiency allows English teachers to improve classroom instruction to more effectively meet the needs of each individual student in their classrooms. With an awareness of which strategies contribute to students' proficiency, English teachers can encourage LLS use by suggesting those more naturally acceptable to particular students. Especially, researchers should rather make use of reliable and manifold psychological parameters for students to explore

personality traits. For example, the Extroversion-Introversion scale is widely used because it is easy to extract two factors with stability and can be enforced in relatively small number of items without consuming time. However, such scale seems to be unitary and too broad to categorize personality because personality is too complicated to easily be divided into small number of dimensions. Researchers should employ a personality test which could obtain important manifold information related to personality. For that reason, to get more precise information about Japanese students' personality traits, the New Personal Inventory (NPI), developed by Yanai, Kashiwagi and Kokusho (1987) was used in this study. Employing such personality test that made use of psychometric method makes teachers learn their students' individual differences more precisely and that would have more practical and pragmatic implications for teaching English in Japanese classrooms.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research on Language Learning Strategies in Japan

Important research on language learning strategies (LLSs) generally defined as "steps taken by learners to enhance their own learning" (Oxford, 1990, p.1) started in the mid-1970s. In most of the early research of LLSs, the primarily concern has been identifying what good language learners do to learn as ESL (Naiman et al., 1978; Rubin, 1975, 1981; Stern, 1975). Since1990, Oxford had introduced a new taxonomy, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), which made quantitative research easier using student-completed, summative rating scales, the focus shifted from just identifying strategies to finding the relationship between LLSs and language development (Bremner, 1998; Busch 1982; Green & Oxford, 1995; Shmais, 2003).

In Japan in the 1990s, research on LLSs gradually increased through the

influence of more LLSs research overseas. Watanabe (1990) administered the Oxford's SILL version 7.0 in Japanese to Japanese university students and found that entrance examination had an effect on the LLS use and that the classification of strategies in his study was not consistent with that of Oxford. Takeuchi (1993a) examined the relationship between the frequency of LLS use and listening comprehension ability. He concluded that the frequent use of some LLSs such as "I volunteer answers in class", "I review and practice", "I try to think in English" and "I try to maintain conversation in class", could be detrimental to the improvement of EFL listening comprehension ability depending on the conditions. Kimura (1996) reported that "there is a close relationship between the proficiency and strategies, and the proficient learners who use Metacognitive strategies most employ a wider variety of strategies and less proficient learners (p. 51). Yamato (2001) conducted the factor analysis with 45 items from SILL's 50 items, and identified six factors: *Metacognitive*, *Cognitive*, *Heuristics*, *Social/Affective*, *Conceptually- driven*, and *Pleasure-oriented strategies*. Kato (2005) examined how LLSs affect the English proficiency of Japanese university students using SILL in Japanese. She found five factors, *Metacognitive-affective*, *Memory-compensation*, *Social*, *Cognitive*, *Entrance-exam-measured strategies*. In her study the significant correlation was found among *Metacognitive-Affective* and *Cognitive strategies* and English proficiency. The negative correlation was found between *Entrance-exam-measured strategies* and English proficiency.

Research on the Personality Variable

While a relatively large body of research on LLSs exists, few have focused on the relationship between LLSs and personality traits defined as "patterns of behavior that characterize a person's response to the environment" (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, p. 253). Entwistle and Entwistle (1970) found that "there was a clear link between good study methods and both introversion and stability, though some highly motivated students had higher scores on neuroticism" (p. 140). Busch (1982) examined the relationship between the

introversion-extraversion tendencies of Japanese students and their proficiency. His hypothesis that extraverts were more proficient in English than introverts was not supported. Instead, introverts tended to have higher scores on the reading and grammar than extraverts. Ehrman and Oxford (1989) explored the effects of personality characteristics on the use of LLSs. They found that extroverts were significantly more prone than introverts to employ visualization strategies while introverts reported more frequently searching for communication meaning. Blickle (1996) analyzed the relationship between personality traits, LLSs and performance. He found that the relationships between basic personality traits (Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience) and grades were mediated by the different use of LLSs. Brown (2000) discusses extroversion and introversion in the L2 acquisition. He admits that it conceivable that "extroversion may be a factor in the development of general oral communicative competence" (p. 156) because extroverted language learners are willing participants in class activities.

Purpose of Study

The major purposes of this study were: (a) to explore the primary language learning strategies(LLSs) used by Japanese university students, (b) to find out the relationship between LLSs and personality type, and (c) to determine how language proficiency levels relate to the use of language learning strategies and personality type.

1. What are the primary LLSs used by Japanese university students?
2. Is there a relationship between LLSs and personality type?
3. Do both LLSs and personality have an effect on English proficiency?

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of 187 Japanese university students enrolled in (A) a University in Saitama Prefecture and (B) a University in Tokyo participated in this study. The participants were selected on the basis of convenience and availability. All of the students had progressed through the Japanese education system in typical fashion, having studied English for 6 years prior to entering university. The sample consisted of 147 female and 40 male students. Using this uneven ratio of male to female does not invalidate the result of this study because the relationship between gender and LLS use is unclear (Green & Oxford, 1995). In order to see the general tendency of the population a mixed sample from different majors was used. They were 1st-year to 4th-year students from the Human Studies department, Literature department, Economics department, Management department, Law department, and Global Media department. This sample represents a typical mix of students at Japanese university students; usually a Japanese university has 5 or 6 departments whose students have different motivations to learn English and different English levels. The sample was voluntarily asked to answer two different questionnaires during classes taught by the researcher. 63 students from this sample voluntarily took the TOEIC test. Seeing as taking TOEIC test costs the student's money, having incomplete data was inevitable. This lowers the validity of the results in variance analysis, however, using the TOEIC test which is an accepted measure of English ability as a criterion for academic success gave for more valid results than using course grades or self-reporting.

Survey Instruments

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

To measure students' frequency of use of LLSs, Oxford's SILL (1990,

Version 7.0 for ESL/EFL) was used. The SILL used was Japanese translating by Watanabe (1990).

The SILL has been used in a lot of studies all over the world and has been checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). Robson and Midorikawa (2001) proclaimed in their study that "this initial attempt at determining the reliability and validity of the Japanese language version of the SILL is that it is neither reliable nor valid in this student sample" (p. 223). However, their conclusion seems to need more data for verification because their claim is based on a rather small sample size (153 students), and some problems which they presented are the problems of self-report questionnaires in general not those of the SILL Japanese version. More importantly accumulating more data on the SILL Japanese version is extremely relevant because scientific research data on this area in Japan is insufficient and how reliable and valid the version 7.0 is still to be attested.

The SILL is a self-scoring paper-and-pencil survey and consists of 50 items, which was divided into six categories: (a) *Memory strategies* (9 items), (b) *Cognitive strategies* (14 items), (c) *Compensation strategies* (6 items), (d) *Metacognitive strategies* (9 items), (e) *Affective strategies* (6 items), and (f) *Social strategies* (6 items). It uses a 5-point Likert scale for which students are asked to indicate their response from 1 ("Never or almost never true of me") to 5 ("Always or almost always true of me") to a SILL description such as "I start conversations in English".

New Personality Inventory (NPI)

To gather information on personality, the NPI developed by Yanai et al. (1987) was used. The NPI measures broader dimensions regarding multiple traits of personality common to normal people by means of extensive use of factor analysis and is one of the most popular personality tests in Japan.

The NPI consists of 13 scales (including a lie scale) which demonstrated high test-retest reliabilities ranging from .88 to .95. It offers information on personality traits by dividing people into 13 types; social-extroversion,

activeness, agreeableness, initiative, endurance, order, assertiveness, aggressiveness, uncooperativeness, inferiority, neurosis, depression, and fantasticalness. It is a multiple-choice questionnaire, in which the respondents choose one of the following responses: agree (1), neither agree nor disagree (2), or disagree (3).

English for International Communication Test (TOEIC) as a measure of proficiency

To measure students' English proficiency, the test scores from TOEIC were used. The TOEIC measures the ability of nonnative English-speaking people to use English in everyday work situations. The test consists of 200 questions to be completed within 2 hours and is divided into two sections. Section I, the listening component, contains 100 questions to be completed and takes 45 minutes. Section II, the reading component, contains 100 questions to be completed and takes 75 minutes. There are no breaks during the test. The proficiency of the examinee is expressed as a numerical score between 5 and 495 for both the listening and reading parts, giving a total score between 10 and 990. The TOEIC test is a valid index because it is acknowledged as an exterior and objective measurement for English proficiency.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was administered in Japanese in the English classes at two different universities in July 2006. The response rate was over 99% providing an overall sample size from these classes of 187 subjects. The TOEIC test was administered on July 20, 2006 at A University and on July 29, 2006 at B University under the supervision of the researcher and an assistant. Upon completion of the data collection, descriptive statistics were computed for all questionnaire items and TOEIC test scores. All of the data was put into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS12.0J for Windows). The data was analyzed in two phases. First, a factor analysis was employed to summarize the underlying characteristics of LLS use of this

sample. The factor extraction was processed with the maximum-likelihood method with Promax rotation. Eigenvalues were required to be greater than 1.0. A factor analysis of the NPI was not conducted in this study because a factor analysis of the NPI was conducted among a larger sample of 957 than this study and has already been attested to have a high validity by Yanai, Kashiwagi, and Kokusho (1987). Second, once the LLS factors were identified, the relationship between LLSs and personality variables and proficiency variables was investigated by correlation analyses. The alpha level for all statistical decisions was set at .05.

RESULTS

Findings: Research Question 1

To answer research question 1, a factor analysis for the 50 items in the questionnaire was conducted. Five factors were extracted using the maximum likelihood method with Promax rotation. The numbers of the factors were determined by scree plot and eigenvalue criterion above 1.0. The Cronbach alpha for each factor were .69, .72, .73, .72 and .82, respectively. Table 1 shows the results of the factor analysis for the 50 items in the questionnaire.

TABLE 1
The Results of Factor Analysis for the 50 Items in the SILL (N = 187)

strategies	Item	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Authentic-language-use strategies	To try not to translate word for word	.66				
	To start conversations in English	.65				
	To look for people to talk with in English	.63				
	To write notes, messages in English	.63				
	To read English without looking up every new word	.61				
	To use English in different ways	.56				
	To ask questions in English	.56				
	To write down my feelings in a diary	.52				
	To make up new words if I don't now the right ones	.5				

	To physically act out new English words	.5		
	To guess what the other person will say next	.49		
	To try to find many ways to use English	.49		
	To try to talk like native English speakers	.43		
	To remember words by remembering their location	.42		
	To use new English words in a sentence	.37		
	To think about my progress	.32		
	To think of relationships between what I already know and new things	.3		
	To encourage myself to speak English	.29		
Heuristic strategies	To make guesses on unfamiliar English words		.64	
	To use a word that means the same thing		.62	
	To ask the other person to slow down		.6	
	To find the meaning of word by dividing it into parts		.49	
	To connect the sound and an image of the word		.49	
	To try to learn about the culture of English speakers		.48	
	To notice my English mistakes		.43	
	To remember a new word by making a mental picture		.37	
	To skim an English passage, and read carefully		.37	
	To use gestures		.36	
	To give myself a reward or treat		.34	
	To try to find patterns in English		.32	
	To look for words in my own language that are similar to new words		.32	
	To make summaries of information in English		.27	
Social strategies	To practice English with other students			.59
	To ask English speakers to correct my mistakes			.58
	To try to be a better learner of English			.57
	To talk to someone else about how I feel about English learning			.49
	To ask for help from English speakers			.44

	To pay attention when someone is speaking English	.41		
	To plan my schedule to study	.4		
	To have clear goals	.25		
	To try to relax	.22		
	To notice if I am nervous when I'm learning English	.18		
Pleasure-oriented	To look for opportunities to read in English		.93	
	To read for pleasure in English		.82	
	To watch English TV shows or movies		.72	
	To review English lessons often		.32	
Entrance-exam-measured	To use flashcards			.52
	To say or write new words several times			.43
	To practice the sounds of English			.42
	To use rhymes to remember			.28

Note: Results were calculated using the maximum-likelihood method with Promax rotation.

As in Watanabe's study (1990), the classification of strategies as a result of factor analysis in this study was not consistent with that of Oxford (1990). Therefore the factors extracted from this study were named by the researcher in a way that was more applicable to Japanese learners.

Factor 1, the largest component of LLSs for this sample constituting 24.0% of all items' variance, has a heavy loading from 18 statements such as "to start conversations in English," and "to look for people to talk with in English." These items indicate the learners' practical use of English in authentic situations. Thus, Factor 1 was named *Authentic-language-use strategies*. Factor 2 is weighted by 14 items such as "to make guesses on unfamiliar English words", "to use a word that means the same thing" and "to find the meaning of word by diving it into parts", which indicate the learners' heuristic learning method. Hence, this factor was named *Heuristic strategies*. Factor 3 received loading from 10 items which are concerned with learning through interacting with people, for example, "to practice English with other students," or "to ask English speakers to correct my mistakes." Hence, Factor 3 was named *Social strategies*. Factor 4 received loading from 4 items which show enjoying studying English, for example, "to read for pleasure in English" and "to watch English TV shows or movies." Generally students

watch TV or movies not just for learning but for enjoying themselves. Therefore, Factor 4 was named *Pleasure-oriented strategies*. Factor 5 received loading from 4 items. These strategies such as using flashcards, and saying or writing new words several times to help to memorize multiple English words, are regarded as effective methods to pass the university English entrance examination in Japan. They are all popularly used among high school students for preparing for university entrance examinations (Kato, 2005; Olah, 2006; Watanabe, 1990). Therefore, Factor 5 was called, *Entrance-exam-measured strategies*.

Findings: Research Question 2

Correlation analysis was conducted among the 5 factors extracted from the SILL and the13 factor scale of the NPI. For the factor analysis of personality traits, the basic 13-factor traits of personality of the NPI, which Yanai, Kashiwagi, and Kokusho (1987) identified, were used. The constructed scales demonstrated high test-retest reliabilities ranging from .88 to .95 (Yanai, Kashiwagi, & Kokusho, 1987). Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of factors from the NPI among this sample.

TABLE 2
The Results of Descriptive Statistics of the Factors in NPI (N = 187)

Factor	Mean	SD
agreeableness	2.32	.40
endurance	2.25	.43
depression	2.22	.52
neurosis	2.18	.34
initiative	2.10	.45
social extroversion	2.08	.35
inferiority	2.07	.23
order	1.99	.50
aggressiveness	1.99	.39
active	1.97	.34
fantasticalness	1.90	.22
assertiveness	1.89	.45
uncooperativeness	1.67	.37

Table 3 shows the results of Pearson's correlation coefficients among the 5 factors of the SILL and the basic 13-Factor traits of personality of the NPI. The alpha level for all statistical decisions was set at .05. As Table 3 shows, *Authentic-language-use strategies* had a significant correlation with eight personality traits; social extroversion, activeness, agreeableness, initiative, order, assertiveness, endurance and aggressiveness ($p < .05$). *Heuristic strategies* had significant correlations with seven personality traits; activeness, agreeableness, initiative, endurance, order, social extroversion and assertiveness ($p < .05$). *Social strategies* had significant correlations with six personality traits; social extroversion, activeness, agreeableness, initiative, assertiveness and order ($p < .05$) and had a negative correlation with uncooperativeness ($p < .05$). *Pleasure-oriented strategies* had significant correlations with six personality traits; social extroversion, activeness, agreeableness, initiative, endurance and order. *Entrance–exam-measured strategies* had significant correlations with two personality traits; endurance and order ($p < .05$). Personality traits such as inferiority, neurosis, depression, and fantasticalness had no significant correlation with the five LLS factors.

TABLE 3
The Results of Correlation Analysis Between 5 Factors From the SILL and 13 Factors From the NPI (N = 172)

SILL / NPI	*Authentic-language-use*	*Heuristic*	*Social*	*Pleasure-oriented*	*Entrance-exam-measured*
social extroversion	.33*	.16*	.30*	.24*	.08
activeness	.43*	.25*	.35*	.28*	.07
agreeableness	.34*	.24*	.28*	.33*	.04
initiative	.32*	.20*	.20*	.22*	.11
endurance	.18*	.21*	.09	.24*	.29*
order	.25*	.28*	.17*	.20*	.18*
assertiveness	.35*	.17*	.22*	.09	.07
aggressiveness	.18*	-.01	.14	.01	.07
uncooperativeness	-.00	-.10	-.16*	-.05	.02
inferiority	.03	.09	.08	.00	-.07
neurosis	-.05	.08	-.07	-.05	.09
depression	.08	.14	-.03	-.04	-.03

fantasticalness	.09	.06	.14	.05	.08

*p<.05

Findings: Research Question 3

Correlation analysis was conducted between English proficiency (TOEIC test scores), and the factors from the SILL and the NPI. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the TOEIC test scores.

TABLE 4
The Results of the Descriptive Statistics of TOEIC Test Scores (N = 63)

	Min.	Max.	Mean
The Score of Listening	85.0	405.0	221.3
The Score of Reading	35.0	320.0	138.1
The Total Score	130.0	710.0	358.9

Table 5 shows the results of Pearson's correlation coefficients among TOEIC test scores and the five factors from the SILL.

TABLE 5
The Results of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients Between TOEIC Scores and the Five Factors From the SILL (N = 63)

Strategies / TOEIC	*Authentic-language-use*	*Heuristic*	*Social*	*Pleasure-oriented*	*Entrance-exam-measured*
Listening	.49*	.44*	.31*	.52*	.01
Reading	.42*	.30*	.32*	.51*	-.03
Total	.49*	.41*	.33*	.56*	.03

*p < .05

Authentic-language-use strategies, Heuristic strategies, Pleasure-oriented strategies and *Social strategies* had significant correlations (p < .05) with listening score, reading score, and total score. No significant correlation was found between *Entrance-exam-measured strategies* and TOIEC test score.

Table 6 shows the results of Pearson's correlation coefficients between TOEIC test scores and the 13 personality traits from the NPI.

TABLE 6
The Results of the Person's Correlation Coefficients Between TOEIC Test Scores and the NPI Factors (N = 63)

TOEIC score / Personality Traits	Listening	Reading	Total
social extroversion	.19	.09	.16
activeness	.09	.01	.06
agreeableness	.09	.05	.08
initiative	-.03	-.06	-.05
endurance	-.02	-.04	-.04
order	.01	-.04	-.02
assertiveness	-.00	-.02	-.02
aggressiveness	-.06	-.16	-.13
uncooperativeness	-.17	-.00	-.12
inferiority	-.11	-.15	-.14
neurosis	-.08	.00	-.05
depression	-.03	-.11	-.08
fantasticalness	-.30*	-.14	-.24

*$p < .05$

There was a negative significant correlation ($p < .05$) between personal trait, *fantasticalness,* and listening score. No significant correlation was found between the other personality traits and TOEIC test scores.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Primary Language Learning Strategies Used by Japanese University Students and Their Relationships with Proficiency

This research provides new insights into how LLSs relate to English proficiency and gives information about successful learners of English in Japanese universities. Five underlying factors, *Authentic-language-use strategies, Heuristic strategies, Social strategies, Pleasure-oriented strategies,* and *Entrance-exam-measured strategies* were extracted from this sample. Four of these five factors; *Authentic-language-use strategies, Heuristic strategies,*

Social strategies, and *Pleasure-oriented strategies,* are characterized by active use of English in realistic communicative situations. It is important to note that the correlation analysis showed these four factors had significant correlations with proficiency ($p < .05$) (See Table 5). While there are many factors that contribute to being a proficient English speaker, these results suggest that successful students are likely to use a variety of strategies including active LLSs. Furthermore, these results imply that opportunity-seeking attitudes such as consciously searching for practice opportunities for authentic situations, or trying to use English on every possible occasion, plays an important role in becoming a good learner.

This study provides information about poor learners as well. Through factor analysis, the factor, *Entrance-exam-measured strategies* was identified in this sample. It demonstrates that university entrance examinations still have an effect on university students' choices of strategies for learning English (Olah, 2006; Watanabe, 1990). More importantly, it should be noted that, *Entrance-exam-measured strategies* had no relationship with English proficiency ($p < .05$), while the other 4 factors had positive correlations with proficiency ($p < .05$). In the previous study by the researcher (Kato, 2005) *Entrance-exam-measured strategies* had a negative correlation with English proficiency ($p < .05$). Watanabe (1990) also pointed out that the strategies such as using flashcards and saying or writing new words several times might be less effective at university level. It might not go too far to say that *Entrance-exam-measured strategies*, which are generally acknowledged as some of the effective methods to pass university entrance English examinations, are not very effective strategies to achieve practical English proficiency especially for university students. Stated more directly, to use strategies such as "rote memorization" or "grinding away studying for exams", is not as effective as many Japanese students believed it to be.

Language Learning Strategies and How They Relate to Personality Traits and Proficiency

Many language teachers sense from their teaching experience that personality traits have a relationship with accomplishment. However, the results of this study demonstrate the link between personality and English ability is weaker than had earlier been proposed (Blickle, 1996); there was no significant correlation between personality traits and English proficiency (TOEIC test score) except in "fantasticalness" (i.e., projecting a persona which is not real or escaping from reality) ($p < .05$) (See Table 6). On the other hand, there was a significant correlation with the five strategy factors and personality traits (See Table 3). These results can be interpreted as showing that personality traits do not directly influence English proficiency level but LLS choice (Dörnyei, 2005; Wakamoto, 2000), which in turn affects English proficiency: Personality traits provide the motivational impulses or the motivational blocks that lead the learner to use or not to use certain LLSs and thus to improve or reduce performance (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988). In other words, LLSs are mediators between basic personality traits and performance (Blickle, 1996). Table 7 shows the summarized results of the relationships between these five factors and personality traits.

TABLE 7
The Summarized Results of the Relationships Between Five Factors and Personality Traits

Strategies	Personality Traits
Authentic-language -use	*social extroversion**/ *activeness** / *agreeableness**/ *initiative**/ *assertiveness**/ endurance* / order*/ aggressiveness*
Heuristic	*social extroversion** / *activeness** / *agreeableness**/ *initiative** / *assertiveness**/ order* / -uncooperativeness*
Social	*social extroversion** / *activeness** / *agreeableness** / *initiative** / *assertiveness**/ order*
Pleasure-oriented	*social extroversion** / *activeness** / *agreeableness** / *initiative** / endurance*
Entrance-exam-measured	endurance* / order*

**p*<.05
note: The italics are the traits called "Positive Type".

At the same time, these results provide information about the types of the students in terms of their attitude toward language learning. As Table 7 shows, the students with personality traits such as social extroversion, activeness,

agreeableness, initiative, and assertiveness are classified as "Positive Type" (Yanai & Kokusho, 1987, p. 6). These Positive Type students use the following strategies; *Authentic-language-use strategies, Heuristic strategies, Social strategies* or *Pleasure-oriented strategies,* which had a significant relationship with English proficiency. On the other hand, "Grind Type", students with personality traits such as endurance and order prefer to use *Entrance-exam-measured strategies*, which had no relationship with English proficiency (See Table 5) and had a negative correlation with English proficiency in the study by Kato (2005). This indicates that Positive Type students prefer to use active LLSs and can be successful learners. On the other hand, Grind Type students tend to choose LLSs which had no relationship with proficiency while they believe these LLSs will guarantee them academic success. It is the general consensus in Japan that Grind Type students, who study a fixed amount of material sitting at desk orderly and with endurance, may be successful learners. However this research suggests that this generally prevailing belief is a myth; endurance and order might not the key qualities that lead to high English proficiency.

The relationship among LLS use, personality and English proficiency cannot easily be represented by a one-way arrow leading from cause to effect, however, Figure 1 helps to illustrate how LLS use of each personality type leads to different levels of English proficiency.

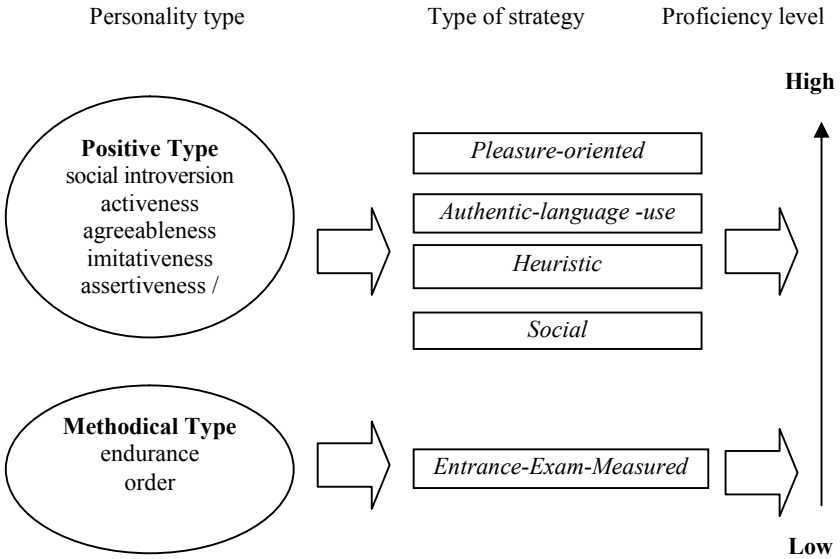

FIGURE 1
The Relationships Among Five Factors, Personality Traits and Proficiency Level

Practical Suggestions for Implementation of the Findings

"Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence" (Oxford, 1990, p. 1). The current study empirically showed that active strategies such as *Authentic-language-use strategies, Heuristic strategies, Social strategies*, and *Pleasure-oriented strategies* are essential to mastering English. English teachers should make every effort to encourage the use of these active strategies and transform English classrooms into stimulating places that utilize communicative-oriented teaching practices. At the same time, this research showed that a grinding studying method, in other words, traditional exam preparation techniques do not necessarily to lead English proficiency. Teachers should advise students to avoid the traditional exam preparation techniques such as studying patiently a fixed amount of material sitting at desk everyday, but instead encourage them to

seek opportunities to use English in their everyday lives. More effort must be made to promote a conscious awareness and use of effective strategies within the confines of the foreign language classroom.

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