The Relationship between Personality Traits and Metacognitive Listening Strategies among Iranian EFL Learners

1Farid Ghaemi, 2Farzaneh Sabokrouh

1Department of English Language, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran
2Department of English Language, Islamic Azad University, Iran

Corresponding E-mail address:
fgphaemi2004@yahoo.com

Abstract: Language learning was varied depending on individual characteristics and variations of language learning outcomes was attributed to learner characteristics. On the other hand, when we studied the recent research on second or foreign listening instruction, most of them had emphasized the need for assessing the effectiveness of metacognitive strategy training in order to improve second language listening comprehension. According to this goal, the research objective was to investigate the relationships of personality traits with metacognitive awareness of listening strategies among Iranian adult learners of English utilizing the NEO PI-R and the SILL. 80 participants were students studying English in one of the institutions in drawn from four intact classes. The instruments were used including background questionnaire, general English proficiency test; metacognitive awareness listening questionnaire consists of 21 randomly ordered items related to L2 listening comprehension and the NEO Personality Inventory-Revised developed by Costa and McCrae (1992). The analysis of the data sources from the NEO PI-R, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening provided the framework for the discussion on the correlations of each of the five domains and the 30 facets of the FFM and the metacognitive groups. NEO Personality Inventory-Revised questionnaire and Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) were administered to see whether there was any correlation between the students’ use of metacognitive listening strategies and five domains of personality traits. The results displayed that there were relationships among variables but some subscales were related and some other was to some extent, related.

Index Items: Listening Comprehension, Metacognitive Strategies, Personality Traits

1. INTRODUCTION

The experience of learning a foreign language, for most learners, is not only a process that is cognitively demanding, but also emotion-laden. Most second or foreign languages are learned in classroom settings, where there is constant performance evaluation by the instructor and peers. Further, language learning is believed to vary depending on individual characteristics (Skehan, 1989), and variations of language learning outcomes are attributed to learner characteristics (Dé-
myei, 2006). Further, listening comprehension can be regarded as an important language skill to develop. Listening is a skill in language proficiency which can directly affect other skills and be affected by several other strategies or techniques (Safarali & Hamidi, 2012). Language learners are interested in understanding target language (L2) speakers and they want to be able to access the rich variety of aural and visual L2 texts available via network-based multimedia (e.g. Dunkel 1991; Rost 2002, as cited in Vandergrift, 2007). On the other hand, personality makes a difference in how people learn and what they learn (Myers & Myers, 1980). Carver and Sheier (2000) defined personality as “a dynamic organization of psychophysical systems that create a person’s characteristic patterns of behavior, thoughts, and feelings” (p. 5). Personality variables are considered one of the critical individual variables influencing any success of L2 learning, as do linguistic, affective, motivational, and demographic factors (Carrell, Prince, & Astika, 1996). Language learning strategies are believed to help language learners “make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8).

1.1. Statement of Problem

Listening comprehension may seem relatively straightforward to native language (L1) speakers but it is often a source of frustration for second and foreign language (L2) learners (e.g., Graham, 2006). Further, little attention has been focused on systematic practice in L2 listening, i.e.; on the integrated instruction of a sequential repertoire of strategies to help L2 learners develop comprehension skills for real-life listening (Berne, 2004; Vandergrift, 2004).

On the other hand, when we study the recent research on second or foreign listening instruction, most of them have emphasized the need for assessing the effectiveness of metacognitive strategy training in order to improve second language listening comprehension. Further, it is worth mentioning that new approaches for developing an effective L2 listening have focused their attention on real-life authentic listening by making use of top-down approaches and analyzing the processes taking place during the instruction (e.g. Buck, 2002; Goh, 2008; Richards, 2002; Vandergrift, 2004).

Despite, recognizing the importance of listening strategies for the development of foreign language proficiency, very limited studies have been performed in Iran concerning the strategies employed by Iranian EFL learners in relation to listening proficiency levels. Some studies found a significant relationship (Harris & Grenfell, 2004), and some studies failed to find a correlation between the two (Sharp, 2005). Little empirical research has been conducted on the relationships between language learners’ personality traits and metacognitive listening strategies, using a measurement tool of the five-factor model (FFM) of personality, which is also referred to as the big five personality traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992) in the English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, although the structure and interpretation of the FFM was expected to renew interest in the study of the role of personality factors in language learning (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996).

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The ultimate goal of this study was to examine language learners’ individual differences focusing on the relationships of personality traits with metacognitive awareness of listening strategies of Iranian university students studying English as a foreign language. According to this goal, I had the following research objective: To investigate the relationships of personality traits with metacognitive awareness of listening strategies among Iranian adult learners of English utilizing the NEO PI-R and the SILL.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study provides information on language learners by examining the relationships between language learners’ per-
sonality traits and metacognitive listening strategies in EFL contexts. Language learners will have a heightened awareness of the degree of their listening strategies and of the profiles of their personality traits through the survey process, leading to finding and improving their strategic strengths and weaknesses appropriate to personality traits. Language teachers will utilize students’ profiles of individual differences by guiding them with appropriate choices of strategies correlated with personality traits, which will effectively contribute to language teaching and student counseling (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989). There will be more of a likelihood of preventing negative results stemming from incompatible teaching and learning strategies (Cohen & Scott, 1998).

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Theoretical Background

Listening has historically been the least researched of the four language skills. This neglect may stem from its intangible (Morley, 1991) and “inside-the-head” (Dunkel, 1991, p. 438) nature. However, listening plays a critical role in both the acquisition of a second language and the development of communicative competence in that language, as several models of SLA have shown (Dunkel, 1991, as cited in Krashen, 2008). For example, Krashen’s (1981) “Input Hypothesis” (p. 9) posited that language learning is dependent upon the presence of what he termed “comprehensible input” (p. 9). This is especially relevant at the earliest stages of language acquisition, and the receptive skills are crucial for providing this input. This historic neglect led Dunkel (1991) to call for more empirical research into the processes underlying listening comprehension, with the aim of improving L2 listening instruction. Several researchers have focused that call, and the last 20 years have seen a growing interest in and understanding of the listening process (Goh, 2008; Vandergrift, 2007).

2.2. Personality and Language Learning

The word personality derives from the Latin word persona, which stands for an actor's mask or character in the theater. In ancient Latin-speaking countries, masks played an important role in typifying actors’ characters rather than disguising their characteristic identities. Allport (1937) defined personality as “the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychological systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment” (p. 48) and insisted that personality provides information on the way people talk, remember, think, and love. Therefore, personality traits can predict how a person behaves in certain ways in a specified situation (Cattell, 1965) because traits are both physical and behavioral features that can be examined across the people (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985).

Carrell et al. (1996) insisted that personality differences become one of the important factors that affect successful L2 learning along with affective, motivational, and demographic factors. Personality provides invaluable information on language learners’ learning processes in that personality traits distinguish each individual from each other in what to learn and how to learn. Dörnyei (2006) underscored that personality variables interact with other variables stemming from the learning situation and that students’ engagements in learning tasks in their social context are personality-based.

Many researchers have examined the relationships between personality variables and language acquisition. Certain personality variables proved to facilitate learning a second or foreign language: empathy (Guirao, Brannon, & Dull, 1972); shyness and conformity (Hamayan et al., 1977); introversion and extraversion (Busch, 1982); and sensitivity to rejection, and tolerance of ambiguity (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978). Research has produced inconsistent results on the relationships between personality and language learning. Some researchers found that extroversion, one of the most discussed personality variables, is significantly related to language achievement, indicating that extroverted language learners are more successful language learners (Kiany, 1998; Robinson et al., 1994), but others found that extroversion did not have a significant
relationship with learning achievement (Busch, 1982). These inconsistent results have led the study of personality in language learning to remain relatively unexplored empirically compared to other variables of individual differences, and have led scholars to take other factors affecting successful L2 learning into consideration.

### 2.3. Metacognitive Strategies and Listening Comprehension

The positive impact of instruction was suggested both on language learning and on listening comprehension. First, lots of studies indicated that development in strategic knowledge led to improvement in language performance (Annevirta et al., 2007). Annevirta et al (2007) drew their conclusion from the high correlation between improvement in meta-knowledge and better language performance. Enhanced metacognitive knowledge was suggested to be a good predictor of learning, indicator of better text comprehension (Annevirta et al., 2007; Pressley, 2002), a compensation for one's cognitive and intellectual limitations (Veenman et al, 2006, p.6), and an effective tool for successful listening (Zhang & Goh, 2006). Second, across the literature, it was widely suggested that knowledge and use of metacognitive strategies facilitates L2 listening comprehension (Annevirta et al., 2007; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, cited in Vandergrift, 2003; Zohar & Peled, 2008, cited in Goh, 2008). Goh (2008) indicated the three benefits as 1) affectively more motivating and less anxious, 2) advantage in listening performance, and 3) more benefit to weak listeners.

### 2.4. Empirical Investigations

Personality and language learning strategies are considered an important variable of individual differences in language acquisition in that more successful language learners tend to employ language learning strategies to accord with their personalities. Mumford and Gustafson (1988) also underscored that personality variables may facilitate or hinder language learning strategies. However, the relationships between the two have not been extensively researched compared to other individual variables such as attitudes, motivations, anxiety, and demographic variables. Research has shown that specific personality types or traits are related to preferred language learning strategies.

Liyanage (2004) investigated the relationships between language learning strategies and personality type of 948 (470 male and 478 female) ESL students in government schools in Colombo, Sri Lanka, using the Language Learning Strategy Inventory (LLSI) and the EPQ. The study found that the four personality types (choleric, sanguine, melancholic, and phlegmatic) affect the choice of metacognitive, cognitive, and social affective strategies. The research also found that subjects with high extraversion scores who belong to choleric (unstable extravert) and sanguine (stable extravert) types obtained significantly higher scores for all three strategies and that, comparatively, subjects with high introverted scores who belong to melancholic (unstable introvert) and phlegmatic (stable introvert) types obtained a higher score for metacognitive strategies than cognitive and social affective scores.

### 2.5. Research Questions

Based on the above-mentioned research objectives, this study addressed the following research question as follows:

RQ: Are there any correlations between personality traits and metacognitive listening strategies among Iranian EFL learners?
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Participants

The participants were students (N = 80) studying English in one of the institutes in drawn from four intact classes. Participants were identified as homogeneous based on their performance on TOFEL proficiency test. Those scoring between one standard deviation above and below the mean were classified as the main participants.

3.2. Instruments

A Background Questionnaire: The demographic survey or background questionnaire will be designed to identify the participants’ sex, age, majors, and background of learning English, medium of instruction, years of studying English, purpose and attitude toward learning English.

General English Proficiency Test: The TOEFL proficiency test was used as the pedestal for evaluating the subjects’ level of proficiency in English. This test includes 40 multiple-choice vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension items.

Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ): This questionnaire consists of 21 randomly ordered items related to L2 listening comprehension. The items measure the perceived use of the strategies and processes underlying five factors related to the regulation of L2 listening comprehension. These five factors include Planning and Evaluation (how listeners prepare themselves for listening and evaluate the results of their listening efforts), Problem Solving (inferencing on what is not understood and monitoring those inferences), Directed Attention (how listeners concentrate, stay on task, and focus their listening efforts), Mental Translation (the ability to use mental translation parsimoniously), and Person Knowledge (learner perceptions concerning how they learn best, the difficulty presented by L2 listening, and their self-efficacy in L2 listening).

The NEO Personality Inventory-Revised (NEO PI-R): The NEO PI-R, developed by Costa and McCrae (1992), is the standard self-report questionnaire of the FFM. There are two versions of the NEO PI-R: Form S and Form R. The former is designed for self-reports and the latter is used for observer reports. For this study, I used Form S of the NEO PI-R, which is also appropriate for use with adults 17 years or older such as individuals of college age. The NEO PI-R is considered the most widely and extensively validated measure of the five-factor model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It provides a systematic assessment of emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal, and motivational styles by measuring five domain scales and 30 facet scales. The NEO PI-R is rated on a five-point Likert-scale system for each personal trait ranging from 1 to 5: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The NEO PI-R is composed of 240 items asking the five domains and 30 facets. Each participant had an overall score of the five domains and 30 facets, respectively. The reliability and validity of the NEO PI-R will be reported using Cronbach’s alpha and Guttman split-half coefficients to test internal consistency.

3.3. Procedure

First, background on the students’ learning English knowledge, along with their characteristics, was tested via the demographic survey at the beginning of the program. The second step was to determine the level of proficiency of the participants by a General English Proficiency Test (TOEFL) in order to select the homogeneous subjects in both contexts. Then, they were given Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) as pretest. Finally, The NEO Personality Inventory-Revised questionnaire was administered to see whether there is any correlation between between the students’ use of metacognitive listening strategies and five domains of personality traits based on The NEO Personality Inventory-Revised questionnaire.
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Correlational Analysis

To investigate the relationships between personality traits and metacognitive listening strategies using the NEO PI-R for personality traits and the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire for metacognitive listening strategies, Pearson’s $r$ correlations were computed. Out of the five domains, extraversion ($r = .256, p < .001$), openness ($r = .368, p < .001$), and conscientiousness ($r = .321, p < .001$) were significantly correlated to the overall strategy use. Neuroticism ($r = -.081, p = .202$) and agreeableness ($r = .083, p = .192$) were not significantly correlated to the overall strategy use.

4.2. Neuroticism and metacognitive strategy

Neuroticism was significantly negatively correlated with metacognitive strategies ($p = -.008$) as shown in Table 1. Extraversion showed statistically significant relationships with metacognitive ($p < .001$) strategies according to this table. Regarding openness, it was significantly correlated to metacognitive ($p < .001$). As shown in Table 1, agreeableness was not significantly correlated to metacognitive listening strategies. As far as conscientiousness is concerned, it was significantly correlated to metacognitive ($p < .001$) strategies.

4.2.1. Neuroticism

The neuroticism domain stands for a tendency to experience negative emotional affects (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: anxiety, angry hostility, depression, selfconsciousness, and vulnerability. The current study found that neuroticism was significantly negatively correlated to metacognitive strategies. This result indicates that Iranian EFL students who tended to easily experience anxiety, anger, depression, frustrations, or intense reactions used the strategic approaches of coordinating the learning process less frequently than students low in neuroticism or emotionally stable. This finding is in accordance with the majority of previous studies that reported a negative influence on educational outcomes and language learning (Bandura, 1986; NahI, 2001; Schouwenburg, 1995). On the other hand, emotional stability, the opposite of high neuroticism, turned out to generally predict university success, maintaining the finding that emotionally stable students perform better than neurotic students (Sanchez-Marín, Rejano-Infante, & Rodriguez-Troyano, 2001). In this study, the high level of neuroticism kept Iranian EFL students from making use of the metacognitive functions of centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating their learning. In other words, students who had irrational ideas, difficulty controlling their impulses, and trouble with handling stress less frequently used metacognitive strategies than students who were emotionally stable, calm, even-tempered, and good at coping with stressful situations. As it is clear in Table 1, the correlation among anxiety and metacognitive awareness strategies were calculated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Metacognitive strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.169**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.317**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.279**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Five Domains and Overall metacognitive Strategy Use

A model that predicts students’ use of metacognitive strategies from the level of the five domains of the FFM was developed by a simultaneous regression method as shown in Table 2. The linear combination of the five domains of the FFM was significantly related to metacognitive strategies, considering the coefficient of multiple determination ($R^2 = .250$) was
statistically significant, $F(5, 244) = 16.288$, $p < .001$. The results indicated that 25% of the variance of metacognitive strategies can be explained by the variance of the five domains of the FFM; in other words, 25% of the use of metacognitive strategies is predicted or determined by the five domain variables. The standard error of the estimate was .537 and the standard deviation of metacognitive strategies was .614, which indicated the observed errors in predicting metacognitive strategies were smaller than the observed differences in the means for metacognitive strategies; as a result, this regression model proved to be successful. A review of the partial regression coefficients for the five domains found that only two variables—conscientiousness ($p < .000$) and openness ($p = .001$)—were significant predictors of metacognitive strategies partialling out the effects of the other variables. As it is indicated in Table 2, the correlation among anxiety and metacognitive awareness strategies were calculated.

Table 2. Five Domains Predicting Metacognitive Strategies: Multiple Regressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>rank</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>rp</th>
<th>rsp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>4.696</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.441</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>.359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>3.376</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>1.126</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>-.167</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.905</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.715</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2. Extraversion

The extraversion domain references a tendency to prefer stimulation, company of others, and engagement with the external world (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, and positive emotions. The current study found that extraversion was positively correlated to metacognitive strategies. This indicates that Iranian EFL students high in extraversion more frequently used these strategies than the students low in extraversion. In comparison, the students who were shy reserved, independent, and even-paced did not employ these strategies as often. This indicates that the students high in extraversion are good at lowering their anxiety level, encouraging themselves, and taking their emotional temperature. They are willing to ask questions, cooperate with others, and empathize with others in their learning processes.

There are previous studies on the preferences for learning strategies depending on language learners’ personalities. These consistent findings have been found from the studies of ESL learners (Liyanage, 2004; Sharp, 2008), EFL learners (Wakamoto, 2000), and FL learners (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, 1990). The majority of findings from previous studies on the relationships between extraversion and language learning strategies have reported that extroverted students preferred to use social strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Sharp, 2008), functional practice and social-affective strategies (Liyanage, 2004), and affective and visualization strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989). In comparison, introverted students preferred to use metacognitive strategies while avoiding using social strategies (Sharp, 2008) and strategies for searching for and communicating meaning (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989).

4.3.3. Openness

The openness domain stands for a willingness to experience inner and outer worlds (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values. This current study found that openness was significantly positively correlated to metacognitive strategies. This result implies that Iranian students, who were curious about their own worlds and welcoming of unconventional values and novel ideas, showed more frequent use of these strategies than the students who were more conventional and conservative in behavior, maintaining a narrow outlook and scope of interests. In other words, the students high in openness utilized strategic approaches in storing and retrieving information in the target English language; understanding and producing English by many different means; filling the knowledge gap; controlling their own cognition; regulating their emotions, motivations, and attitudes; and interacting with others.
The majority of findings from previous studies on openness have reported that students’ level of openness was positively correlated to academic achievement (Schuerger & Kuna, 1987). The students high in openness must be taking advantage of their wider range of interests and inspiration for new information and learning resources. Furthermore, their willingness to welcome unconventional ideas and values must be increasing the awareness of different perspectives in interpretations, points of view, and content quality, leading to retrieving a broad range of information more effectively.

As Oxford (1990) pointed out, learning another language deals with new information such as “unfamiliar vocabulary, confusing rules, different writing systems, seemingly inexplicable social customs, and nontraditional instructional approaches” (p. 136). Therefore, students’ high openness, such as unconventional and liberal behaviors and preference for variety, becomes a foundation for a critical approach in accepting, utilizing, and evaluating new information on the target English language.

4.3.4. Agreeableness

The agreeableness domain stands for a tendency to build harmony in social situations (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness. The current study found that agreeableness was not significantly correlated to metacognitive listening strategies and was not a significant predictor for using these strategies via the multiple regression analysis. This result implies that students’ degree of agreeableness did not indicate any preferred use of these strategies whether they were sympathetic to others and eager to help them (high on agreeableness) or they are skeptical of others’ intentions and more competitive than cooperative (low on agreeableness). This finding is in accordance with the majority of previous studies that revealed that agreeableness was not a significant predictor of end-of-training proficiency (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995) and learning success (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003). Only a couple of previous studies found a positive relationship between agreeableness and self-reported academic performance (Heaven et al., 2002) and in-class performance and overall GPA (Rothstein et al., 1994).

4.3.5. Conscientiousness

The conscientiousness domain stands for a tendency to show self-discipline and an aim for accomplishment (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation. The current study found that conscientiousness was strongly correlated to metacognitive strategies. This result implies that the students who were more purposeful, strong-willed, and determined to achieve their goals more frequently used these strategies than the students who were more lackadaisical in accomplishing their goals. This finding is in accordance with the majority of previous studies that revealed conscientiousness as the most important personality factor related to academic performance and success (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003; Wolfe & Johnson, 1995). However, a few studies on the relationships between conscientiousness and language learning revealed findings different from this study. Ehrman and Oxford’s (1990) study of FL learners found that judges in the MBTI, who were considered high on the conscientiousness domain in the FFM, preferred using two indirect strategies, metacognitive and social strategies, whereas perceivers in the MBTI, who were considered low on the conscientiousness domain, preferred to use two direct strategies, cognitive and compensation strategies. Moreover, the conscientiousness domain, indirectly measured by the MBTI, was found not to play a positive role in language acquisition. Rather, its role was found inconsistent and insignificant. The level of judging in the MBTI, which corresponds to conscientious in the FFM, was found not to have any correlation with end of training proficiency in Ehrman and Oxford’s (1995) study of FL learners, and even judging was found to be negatively correlated with grammar performance in Carrell et al.’s (1996) study of EFL adult learners.

5. CONCLUSION

This section presents the discussions and interpretations of the findings according to the research topics. The NEO PI-R of the FFM provides a systematic assessment of “emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal, and motivational styles” (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 14) through five domain scales (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and
conscientiousness) at the broadest levels. It also provides a more in-depth analysis of personality traits by measuring more specific facet scales within each of five domain scales. Each domain scale has six intercorrelated facets that produce the domain score. The analysis of the data sources from the NEO PI-R, the Metacognitive Awareness Listening provides the framework for the discussion on the correlations of each of the five domains and the 30 facets of the FFM and the metacognitive groups. Each domain scale has six intercorrelated facets that produce the domain score. The analysis of the data sources provides the framework for the discussion on the correlations of each of the five domains and the 30 facets of the FFM and the six strategy groups.

**Neuroticism**

The neuroticism domain stands for a tendency to experience negative emotional affects (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. The current study found that neuroticism was significantly negatively correlated only to metacognitive strategies out of the six strategy groups. This result indicates that learners who tended to easily experience anxiety, anger, depression, frustrations, or intense reactions used the strategic approaches of coordinating the learning process less frequently than students low in neuroticism or emotionally stable. This finding is in accordance with the majority of previous studies that reported a negative influence on educational outcomes and language learning (Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997; Bandura, 1986; Costa & McCrae, 1992; De Barbenza & Montoya, 1974; Entwistle, 1988; Lathey, 1991; Miculincer, 1997; Nahl, 2001; Schouwenburg, 1995).

**Extraversion**

The extraversion domain references a tendency to prefer stimulation, company of others, and engagement with the external world (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, and positive emotions. The current study found that extraversion was positively correlated to metacognitive strategies. Extraversion has been one of the most discussed personality factors in language learning and the findings of previous studies on extraversion appear to be varied. Some studies found that extraversion had a significant relationship with learning achievement (Chastain, 1975; Kiany, 1998; Robinson et al., 1994; Rossier, 1976; Skehan, 1989). Other studies found that introversion had a positive influence on language achievement (Carrell et al., 1996; Smart et al., 1976). Other studies did not find any significant relationships between levels of extraversion and learning achievement (Busch, 1982; Daele et al., 2006; Ehman & Oxford, 1995; Strong, 1983; Suter, 1976; Swain & Burnaby, 1976).

**Openness**

The openness domain stands for a willingness to experience inner and outer worlds (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values. This current study found that openness was significantly positively correlated to metacognitive strategy. The majority of findings from previous studies on openness have reported that students’ level of openness was positively correlated to academic achievement (Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997; Blickle, 1996; De Fruyt & Mervielde, 1996; Schuerger & Kuna, 1987).

**Agreeableness**

The agreeableness domain stands for a tendency to build harmony in social situations (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness. The current study found that agreeableness was not significantly correlated to metacognitive strategy. Previous studies of FL learners (Ehman & Oxford, 1989, 1990) found that the thinking-feeling scale in the MBTI, which is closely correlated to the agreeableness domain in the FFM, was significantly related to the preference for specific language learning strategies. However, the current study did not find any significant relationship among the five domains and the six strategy groups on the domain level.
Conscientiousness

The conscientiousness domain stands for a tendency to show self-discipline and an aim for accomplishment (Costa & McCrae, 1992). It consists of six facets: competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation. The current study found that conscientiousness was strongly correlated to metacognitive strategies. This finding is in accordance with the majority of previous studies that revealed conscientiousness as the most important personality factor related to academic performance and success (Blickle, 1996; Busato et al., 2000; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003; De Fruyt & Mervielde, 1996; De Raad & Schouwenburg, 1996; Heaven et al., 2002; Hirschberg & Itkin, 1978; Lounsbury, Sundstro, Loveland, & Gibson, 2003; Wolfe & Johnson, 1995). Also, several studies found that the advantages of a high level of conscientiousness are not limited to academic performance.

REFERENCES


**Appendix**

**NEO PI-R Questions**

1. I am not a worrier.
2. I really like most people I meet.
3. I have a very active imagination.
4. I tend to be cynical and skeptical of others’ intentions.
5. I’m known for my prudence and common sense.
6. I often get angry at the way people treat me.
7. I shy away from crowds of people.
8. Aesthetic and artistic concerns aren’t very important to me.
9. I’m not crafty or sly.
10. I would rather keep my options open than plan everything in advance.
11. I rarely feel lonely or blue.
12. I am dominant, forceful, and assertive.
Without strong emotions, life would be uninteresting to me.
13. Some people think I’m selfish and egotistical.
14. I try to perform all the tasks assigned to me conscientiously.
15. In dealing with other people, I always dread making a social blunder.

16. I have a leisurely style in work and play.

17. I’m pretty set in my ways.

18. I would rather cooperate with others than compete with them.

19. I am easy-going and lackadaisical.

20. I rarely overindulge in anything.

21. I often crave excitement.

22. I often enjoy playing with theories or abstract ideas.

23. I don’t mind bragging about my talents and accomplishments.

24. I’m pretty good about pacing myself so as to get things done on time.

25. I often feel helpless and want someone else to solve my problems.

26. I have never literally jumped for joy.

27. I believe letting students hear controversial speakers can only confuse and mislead them.

28. Political leaders need to be more aware of the human side of their policies.

29. Over the years I’ve done some pretty stupid things.

30. I am easily frightened.

31. I don’t get much pleasure from chatting with people.

32. I try to keep all my thoughts directed along realistic lines and avoid flights of fancy.
33. I believe that most people are basically well-intentioned.

34. I don’t take civic duties like voting very seriously.

35. I’m an even-tempered person.

36. I like to have a lot of people around me.

37. I am sometimes completely absorbed in music I am listening to.

38. If necessary, I am willing to manipulate people to get what I want.

39. I keep my belongings neat and clean.

Sometimes I feel completely worthless.

40. I sometimes fail to assert myself as much as I should.

41. I rarely experience strong emotions.

42. I try to be courteous to everyone I meet.

43. Sometimes I’m not as dependable or reliable as I should be.

44. I seldom feel self-conscious when I’m around people.

45. When I do things, I do them vigorously.

46. I think it’s interesting to learn and develop new hobbies.

47. I can be sarcastic and cutting when I need to be.

48. I have a clear set of goals and work toward them in an orderly fashion.

49. I have trouble resisting my cravings.

50. I wouldn’t enjoy vacationing in Las Vegas.

51. I find philosophical arguments boring.

52. I’d rather not talk about me and my achieve-
53. I waste a lot of time before settling down to work.

54. I feel I am capable of coping with most of my problems.

55. I have sometimes experienced intense joy or ecstasy.

56. I believe that laws and social policies should change to reflect the needs of a changing world.

57. I'm hard-headed and tough-minded in my attitudes.