

# The Empirical Study of English Reading Strategies Used by Learners with Introversion and Extroversion in Rural Junior High Schools in Western China

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**Abstract:** English reading is an indispensable skill of a second/foreign language learner. Besides, reading is one of the key points and difficulties in English teaching of junior high school. Especially, the importance of reading is reflected in the curriculum standards and the compilation of textbooks. Due to the relatively lower quality of education in rural areas than in urban areas, the author hopes to study the use of some reading strategies by rural junior high school students with introversion and extroversion to improve their English reading ability.

In this paper, the author chooses 170 junior three students in Guanyingtan junior high school in Neijiang city as the participants of the study, as they have studied English for more than 2 years and have formed relatively fixed study habits and methods. The author mainly adopts questionnaire survey to do this study. Firstly, the author uses Eysenck personality questionnaire to identify the participants' personality (introversion/extroversion). Secondly, the author uses an English reading strategy questionnaire to analyze the usage of English reading strategies by participants with introversion and extroversion. By analyzing the data collected, the author justifies that there is not significant correlation between the use of English reading strategies and rural junior high school students' personality (introversion/extroversion). And, the author finds that metacognitive reading strategies and cognitive reading strategies are used more frequently than social/affective ones.

**Key Words:** English reading strategies; rural junior high school students; introversion; extroversion

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## 1 Introduction

In the teaching process of junior high school, reading takes up a lot of class hours. Improving reading ability occupies a highly important position in learning English well. The poor reading ability is directly related to the improper mastery of reading strategies. The study of reading strategies is becoming more and more popular in China, but the study focus more on college or senior high school than on junior high school. The author wants to improve learners' reading ability by studying the use of their reading strategies. Nevertheless, what exert the impact on the effective use of English reading strategies? As a matter of fact, many factors affect it, such as reading teaching mode, environment, article genre, personality (extroversion and introversion), motive and learners' experiences, etc. In this paper, the author devotes to studying the use of reading strategies of learners with extroversion and introversion.

Although the research of English reading strategy to date is impressive in quantity and quality, there is just a little study focusing on English reading strategy from the perspective of learners with introversion and extroversion. Moreover, the less study has related personality to English reading strategy. No researchers, to date, have found an unmistakable link between the use of English reading strategy and personality (introversion & extroversion). Meanwhile,

junior high school students in rural areas of Western China are weaker in learning English than in urban areas. The research can help them know why they cannot do well in learning English and find better methods of improving their English reading ability. What's more, to a certain extent, it finally narrows the gap in English proficiency between urban and rural areas.

In a summary, with many respects considered, it becomes indispensable to study the use of English reading strategies of learners with extroversion and introversion in rural junior high schools in Western China.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Reading Strategies

Block (1986, cited in Yi Zheng, 2014) proposes reading strategies are a process of interacting between the content and conscious and dynamic readers; Aarnountse and Schellings (2003, cited in Yi Zheng, 2014) proposes reading strategies are a kind of cognitive activities for the possible problems in confirming, predicting or solving problems by readers to understand the article wholly. However, the author regards reading strategies as the ways, skills or behaviors employed consciously by readers to read effectively or solve the problems existing in the reading process.

O' Walley & Chamot (1985, cited in Wang Lifei, 2009) classified learning strategies into cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and social/affective strategies. Meanwhile, most researchers in China believe their classification includes cognitive reading strategies, meta-cognitive reading strategies and social/affective reading strategies. Metacognitive reading strategies include advance organization, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Cognitive reading strategies include elaboration, inferencing, imagery, grouping, note-taking, resourcing, deduction, summarizing and transfer, etc. Social/affective reading strategies include self-talk, question for clarification, cooperation, self-reinforcement, etc. (O' Walley & Chamot, 1985, cited in Wang Lifei, 2009). In this paper, the author mainly discusses the reading strategies based on the classification of O'Malley & Chamot.

### 2.2 Introversion/Extroversion

In Jung's view, introverted learners are quiet, isolated, rarely express their feelings; besides, they are shy, nervous, cautious, unsociable, less adaptable to environmental changes and not good at social adaptability. Extroverted learners are lively and cheerful, are good at communication, and show concern and curiosity about external things; besides, they are not good at hiding their thoughts and emotions, are easy to adapt to changes of the environment and are also talkative, free, regardless of the feelings of others. (Hou Zhihui, 2014)

It can be known that introverted and extroverted language learners have different performances in the use of learning methods and attitudes towards language learning. Therefore, introverted and extroverted learners should be also different in the use of reading strategies. To prove the hypothesis, the author does this study.

### 2.3 Related Research

Since the fifties of the last century, the second/foreign language learners and researchers, at home and abroad, have begun to pay attention to the relationship between personality (introversion and extroversion) and foreign language learning.

Suter, Swain and Burnaby (1976) and Naiman (1978) (Wang Yuzhen, 2008) concludes the research result that there does exist correlation between personality (introversion and extroversion) and L2 achievement; Wu Yian and Liu Runqing (1993, cited in Liang Xiaobo and Tan Jiling, 1999) involves the issue in An Investigation Report on the Quality of English Undergraduate Students in China whether there is significant correlation between personality(introversion and extroversion) and English learning, whose research result indicates that there is no significant correlation between them; You Huajuan (2015) shows that there is a certain relationship between the personality type of senior high school students and the achievement of English reading comprehension. Therefore, it still remains unclear whether there is

a significant correlation between the use of English reading strategies and junior high school students' personality (introversion and extroversion).

## 3 Research Design

### 3.1 Research Questions

The purpose of the present study is to find the correlation between the use of English reading strategies and rural junior high school students' personality (introversion and extroversion). The author raises the following questions and tries to solve them by studying:

(1) Is there any correlation between the use of English reading strategies and rural junior high school students' personality (introversion and extroversion)?

(2) If there is certain correlation, what will be the correlation between them?

#### 3.2 Participants

The author chooses 170 junior three students in Guanyingtan junior high school in Neijiang city as the participants of study, 67 of who are boys and 103 of who are girls. The age ranges from 13 to 16 and the average age is 14.33. Junior three students are more representative than other grade students in this junior high school as they have studied English for more than 2 years and have formed relatively fixed study habits and methods.

#### 3.3 Methods and Instruments

The author adopts two questionnaires:

The first one is Eysenck personality questionnaire (appendix I), which is compiled by H.J. Eysenck, a British psychologist. This questionnaire involves two versions: children version and adult version. The children version is compiled for the persons of 7-15 years old; the adult version is compiled for the persons of over 16 years old. The participants' age in this study vary from 13 to 16, and the average age is 14.33. Therefore, in this research, the author chooses the children version. Meanwhile, according to the content of the study, the part of introversion and extroversion from this questionnaire is used in this study. What's more, the part is excerpted from Chinese version of Gong Yaoxian (1985, cited in Hou Zhihui, 2014). In China, this version is generally accepted. As a result, it can make the result of the study credible that choosing this version as a questionnaire in this study. Meanwhile, to make the result more authentic and credible, the author put a few lie tests in the questionnaire.

The second one is English reading strategy questionnaire (appendix II), adopted by many researchers and modified properly according to the classification of O'Malley & Chamot and actual research situations. To make the result more authentic and credible, the author put a few reverse tests in the questionnaire. In this study, the author mainly studies some strategies of O'Malley & Chamot: metacognitive reading strategies, including advance organization, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring and self-evaluation; cognitive reading strategies, including inferencing, note-taking, resourcing and summarizing; social/affective reading strategies, including cooperation and self-reinforcement.

#### 3.4 Data Collection

This study regards a class as a unit to implement the tests, all of which are completed under the supervision. Before the tests, the participants are asked about matters needing attention and the test time is about 20 minutes. The questionnaires are taken back immediately after the participants finish them. A total of 170 questionnaires are sent and recovered 164. Three out of 164 are invalid. Therefore, only 161 questionnaires are valid.

## 4 Results and Data Analysis of the Investigation

#### **4.1 Identification of the Participants' Personality Types**

According to norm-referenced test, the personality traits of the participants are calculated. There are two personality traits: introversion and extroversion in this research. The number of introverted participants is 49, which occupies about 30 percent; the number of extroverted participants is 56, which holds about 35 percent. Apart from introverted and extroverted participants, there are 56 ambivalent participants, who hold about 35 percent. From the data above, it can be known that the number of introverted participants is least among these three personality traits. In this thesis, the author mainly focuses on the study of introverted and extroverted participants.

#### **4.2 Analysis of Metacognitive Reading Strategies Used by Introverted and Extroverted Participants**

Table 4.2 is about the usage of metacognitive reading strategies by introverted and extroverted participants.

**Table 4.2 Applicative rate of metacognitive reading strategies**

Strategy Number	Subject	Never Use (%)	Generally Not Use (%)	Sometimes Use (%)	Usually Use (%)	Always Use (%)
1	Introvert	14.29%	14.29%	46.94%	6.12%	18.36%
	Extrovert	17.86%	17.86%	23.21%	28.57%	12.5%
2	Introvert	0.00%	26.53%	53.06%	14.29%	6.12%
	Extrovert	0.00%	0.00%	58.93%	41.07%	0.00%
3	Introvert	6.12%	32.65%	32.65%	20.41%	8.17%
	Extrovert	5.36%	17.86%	41.07%	12.50%	23.21%
4	Introvert	26.53%	26.53%	32.65%	6.12%	8.17%
	Extrovert	23.21%	28.57%	35.71%	12.50%	0.00%
5	Introvert	6.12%	26.53%	46.94%	20.41%	0.00%
	Extrovert	5.36%	23.21%	17.86%	35.71%	17.86%
6	Introvert	14.29%	20.41%	59.18%	6.12%	0.00%
	Extrovert	17.86%	23.21%	23.21%	23.21%	12.50%

In the above table, “1” refers to “advance organization”; “2” refers to “directed attention”; “3” refers to “selective attention”; “4” refers to “self-management”; “5” refers to “self-monitoring”; “6” refers to “self-evaluation”. From the above stable, it can be clearly seen that all of these metacognitive reading strategies are used by both introverted and extroverted participants, although they use these strategies with a slightly different frequency. The metacognitive reading strategy, directed attention, is usually used by extroverted participants; meanwhile, the strategy is used more frequently by extroverts than introverts. Besides, both of introverts and extroverts use “self-management” and “self-evaluation” at a relatively low frequency.

#### **4.3 Analysis of Cognitive Reading Strategies Used by Introverted and Extroverted Participants**

Table 4.4 is about the usage of cognitive reading strategies by introverted and extroverted participants.

**Table 4.4 Applicative rate of cognitive reading strategies**

S t r a t e g y subject Number		Never Use	Generally Not Use	Sometimes Use	Usually Use	Always Use
7	Introvert	20.41%	14.29%	32.65%	32.65%	0.00%
	Extrovert	5.36%	12.5%	46.43%	30.35%	5.36%
8	Introvert	6.12%	20.41%	53.06%	20.41%	0.00%
	Extrovert	12.5%	12.5%	46.43%	17.86%	10.71%
9	Introvert	0.00%	20.41%	40.82%	26.53%	12.24%
	Extrovert	5.36%	12.5%	17.86%	46.43%	17.85%
10	Introvert	16.33%	20.41%	51.02%	12.24%	0.00%
	Extrovert	12.5%	23.21%	26.79%	23.21%	14.29%

In the above stable, “7” refers to “inferencing”; “8” refers to “note-taking”; “9” refers to “resourcing”; “10” refers to “summarizing”. From the above stable, it can be clearly seen that all of these cognitive reading strategies are also used by both introverted and extroverted participants, but all these strategies, especially inferencing, are used a little more frequently by extroverts than introverts. Besides, both introverts and extroverts use the strategy, “summarizing”, at a relatively low frequency.

#### **4.4 Analysis of Social/Affective Reading Strategies Used by Introverted and Extroverted Participants**

Table 4.6 is about the usage of social/affective reading strategies by introverted and extroverted participants.

**Table 4.6 Applicative rate of social/affective reading strategies**

S t r a t e g y Subject Number	Never Use	Generally Not Use	S o m e t i m e s Use	Usually Use	Always Use
11	Introvert	14.29%	26.53%	32.65%	16.33%
	Extrovert	12.5%	17.86%	10.71%	41.07%
12	Introvert	26.53%	40.82%	26.53%	6.12%
	Extrovert	35.71%	23.21%	28.57%	12.5%

In the above table, “11” refers to cooperation; “12” refers to “self-reinforcement”. It can be clearly seen that the frequency of using these two social/affective reading strategies is relatively low, especially self-reinforcement.

### **5 Conclusion**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

Through investigation and analysis of data, it can be found there is no significant correlation between the use of English reading strategies and rural junior high school students’ personality (introversion and extroversion). Although students of different personalities (introversion/extroversion) use these reading strategies at a little different rate, generally, the use of the reading strategies is almost not dissimilar. Besides, it can also be seen that metacognitive and cognitive reading strategies are used more frequently by both introverts and extroverts than social/affective reading strategies. Rural Junior high school students focus more on metacognitive and cognitive reading strategies. Therefore, teachers in rural junior high schools should help students learn a variety of reading strategies and train them to effectively use various reading strategies, especially social/affective reading strategies.

#### **5.2 Limitation and Suggestions for Future Research**

Firstly, due to the limitation of space condition, the participants, who are selected in the research, are limited and

the sample size is insufficient. Secondly, due to the time constraints, the single research method cannot make the result extremely convincing.

In the next research, the author will enlarge the sample size and collect data through various research methods, such as the classroom observation, in-depth interview, questionnaire survey, assignment analysis and so on in order to ensure the objectivity of the investigation. Besides, the author will find some effective measures of training students to use a variety of reading strategies.

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