

The Role of Personality Variables of Introversion and Extraversion on Language Proficiency Concerning Gender among Efl Language Learners in Qom

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ABSTRACT:

This study was an attempt to investigate whether Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners were predominantly extroverted or introverted, and to seek any significant differences between males and females regarding extroversion/introversion. One hundred Iranian institute students, including males and females, randomly selected from among students, participated in this study. Eysenck's (1967) Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) was used to measure extroversion. The findings revealed that first, most of the students were extroverted, and second, there were significant differences between males and females regarding their extroversion, that is, females appeared to be more extroverted than males. These findings might have some implications for second/foreign language learning. First, Iranian EFL learners in general, and females in particular, may be more likely to participate actively in oral communication and will probably do better in acquiring basic interpersonal communication skills. Second, unlike Iranian EFL learners in general, and males in particular, males may be more likely to succeed in learning some skills, namely listening and writing, and also females are more succeed in other skills. Finally, as learners are living in an Iranian EFL context, where they are provided with more opportunities to develop their academic language ability rather than interpersonal communication skills, it appears that all learners including both extroverts and introverts might benefit from being provided with more chances to practice their interpersonal communication skills.

Keywords: *Extraversion, Introversion, Learning Skills, Personality Variables.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

One of the most widely controversial subjects about second language learning is that some individuals are more successful in learning a second language. The process of learning a second/foreign language (SL/FL), unlike the first language acquisition, which is said to be acquired alike by all people, reveals great individual variability among learners when it comes to their ultimate success in mastering the language. Research conducted on second language acquisition has shown that there are varieties of factors, which influence the process of learning a FL (Brown, 2000). These non-linguistic factors known as *individual difference variables* (IDs) that are present among learners cause them to attain different levels of L2 proficiency, even though the circumstances in which they learn the target language are almost identical (Van Daele 2005: 92) Moreover, the fact that IDs are considered to be consistent predictors of success in SLA, yielding multiple correlations with language attainment in instructed settings within the range of .50 and above (Doˆrnyei and Kormos 2000: 42), makes them even more appealing for investigation The ID variables which affect learning outcomes can be

variously classified. The most common classification comprises three main groups: cognitive, affective, and personality variables. The first category is related to mental information processing including aptitude, as well as intelligence. Among the most commonly studied affective variables, one may find motivation and attitudes. As far as personality factors are concerned, they may be classified as belonging to the affective group (Jang 2001; Wakamoto 2007) or as being one of the social variables (Brown et al. 1973). However, because of their individuality, it seems reasonable to distinguish a separate group of personality variables, on top of which are the introversion and extraversion dimensions and further anxiety, self-esteem, risk-taking, tolerance of ambiguity empathy, and many others. The belief that the ID variables of personality in general, and the intro-extra dimension in particular, contribute significantly to learners' proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL) is held by numerous researchers including Kiany (1998); Dewaele and Furnham (1999); Van Daele (2005) or Berry (2007). In the 1970s it was hypothesized by some applied linguists (Naiman et al. 1978; Skehan 1989; Brown

2000) that extraverts in comparison with introverts are better language learners since they create more opportunities to practice the language by taking advantage of the input they are provided with and produce more output.

It is commonly believed that extraversion has been regarded as a preferable and helpful trait for language learning. In applied linguistic research, as is pointed out by Skehan (1989: 101) "the desirable end of the extraversion-introversion continuum has been taken to be extraversion." Thus, given this, it can be concluded that extroverts being higher input and output generators, and linguistically more active both inside and outside the classroom, ought to be capable of learning an FL more rapidly than their introverted counterparts. Many psychologists including Eysenck et al. (1981, 1985); Skehan (1986); Kiany (1998) are of the contrary opinion, namely, that extraversion is rather a drawback when it comes to learning a language, the assumption based on a strong biological foundation. This is because, according to Eysenck's theory of personality, extraverts have lower levels of cortical arousal, and at the same time become more easily inhibited which causes them to be more susceptible to mental distraction.

Besides, they have limited long-term memory, as opposed to introverts who benefit from possessing a wider long-term memory span (Eysenck et al. 1981: 40). These biologically determined diversities cause both groups to have different behavioral tendencies.

Eysenck et al. (1985) has also observed that it is introverts achieve superior academic attainment on written tests in comparison with extroverts, thereby suggesting that the former are better language learners. Bearing these two standpoints in mind, one can observe that there is a clear contradiction between the applied linguists' and psychologists' predictions concerning the effects of the intro-extra tendencies on general learning. Because the few studies undertaken have not produced consistent results, that would confirm one view or the other, this study aims to investigate these two standpoints in greater detail. In particular, the present research will try to demonstrate how the level of introversion and extraversion present in the individual affects learners' scores on oral and written proficiency tests. Moreover, an attempt will be made to define the personality and cognitive profiles of the good language learner (GLL) based on the various personality traits and abilities.

2. METHODOLOGY:

2.1. Participants:

The population from which the participants were selected for this included Iranian EFL learners whose first language was Persian. Almost all students are at intermediate level. They are in high school of different schools in Shahid Hemmat institute in Qom the city of Iran. The participants of this study were 60 male and female students whose age range was between 15-17 years old. After the administration of the Oxford

Placement Test (OPT), the students were selected about the number of students, 80 students were needed, so for homogenizing the participants about 20 numbers of students were omitted from the OPT exam, because their scores were between and this range of scores showed that these 20 students were too low or so high level, so these 20 numbers were deleted from total population and 60 participants remained 30 of them were male students and 30 of them were female students.

2.2. Instrumentation:

The types of instruments were administered in this study as follows:

2.2.1. OPT (Oxford Placement Test):

An OPT was used to homogenize the proficiency of the learners. It includes grammar, vocabulary, comprehension passages, and cloze questions. According to the findings, the result indicated that the questionnaire related to this variable has an acceptable reliability of 0.810.

2.2.2. Eysenck questionnaire:

This questionnaire includes some standard questions related to personality. This test included 58 questions psychological questions and it was related to mentality, also it determined two kinds of personality, and it determined two kinds of personalities: extraversion and introversion. The mind performance was indicated on the personality by this test. According to the findings, the result indicated that the personality question questionnaire is acceptable (α coronbakh = 0.682).

2.2.3. PET Questionnaire:

PET questionnaire is a standard questionnaire that contains four parts. It evaluates four skills listening, writing, speaking, and reading. PET questionnaire considers all aspects of the skills but speaking skill was omitted because the conditions of the class were not observed and it was related to the lack of supervisors. According to the findings of α coronbakh to assess the reliability of the writing questionnaire, the result indicated that the questionnaire related to this variable has an acceptable reliability of 0.785. According to the findings of α coronbakh to assess the reliability of the listening questionnaire, the result indicated that the questionnaire related to this variable has an acceptable reliability of 0.705. About the α coronbakh to assess the reliability of the reading questionnaire, the result indicated that the questionnaire related to this variable has an acceptable reliability of 0.811.

After preparing items and before starting the test pilot was done (for homogenizing students in terms of English background) to remove any flaws and find out whether the instruments were comprehensible, whether the certain time was enough, and whether distracters were effective or not. Finally, we calculated the item

difficulty, item discrimination, and choice distribution and we used a coronbakh of 10 participants for homogenizing the participants 5 numbers were omitted, and finally 5 numbers remained.

2.3. Design and Procedures:

The design of this research includesa background questionnaire, proficiency questionnaire, and PET questionnaire which determine the proficiency of the students, and the Eysneckquestionnaire which includes some standard questions that determine the type of personality of participants.

The design of this research is because there is no treatment first OPT questionnaire administered to determine the proficiency of the students and also for homogenizing them.

After preparing for the test the researcher selected students who were at the level of intermediate.

To determine the students in terms of introversion and extraversion variables Eysneck questionnaire should be administered but to make the test(Eysneck questionnaire) reliable at first the researcher selected some of the students randomly and administered the test one time and the result of this showed the reliability of the Eysneck questionnaire. Then the main test was administered this test included some standard questions that divided the introverted and extraverted students. The condition of the test at that time was suitable the class was too big and the light was enough and the temperature was ok, also students answered the questions enthusiastically because they were eager to know the type of their personality the time considered for this test was one hour that students answer those questions completely by considering the result of the test and key answers the researcher analyzed the test and determine the type of the student's personality. In this part of the research, a PET questionnaire was considered to evaluate four skills. The researcher step by step and during some stages gave students the tests first, starting with listening and this part was graded for all the students the result of the test showed that introverted students gave high marks next section writing skills were administered and this skill was graded by answer keys and the result showed high marks for introverted person. In another section,the reading skill was evaluated in this stage also by considering key answers the answer sheet was analyzed and extraverted students gave high marks in this skill. In the end, the researcher showed analyzed speaking skills but because of the condition of the class and the lack of supervisors, the researcher couldn't administer the test because without considering those items the test was not reliable and the result was not complete because of these conditions the researcher decided to remove this skill from the research.

2.4. Analysis Strategy:

According to the purpose and the nature of the obtained data, various statistical measures were used

named t-test. The independent variable in this study includes learning language skills and the independent variable is extraversion and introversion by considering these two variables the researcher analyzed the data via t-test and SPSS version 20.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

3.1. First part: descriptive statistic

In this research, data related to the frequency distribution of questionnaire variables has been given.

3.1.1. Investing level specification scores

Table 1.Frequency distribution of respondents based on scores of level specification.

		Freq uenc y	Percen t	Valid percent	Cumula tive percent
Resp onde nts	8	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	12	1	1.0	1.0	2.0
	13	2	2.0	2.0	4.0
	14	2	2.0	2.0	6.0
	17	3	3.0	3.0	9.0
	18	2	2.0	2.0	11.0
	19	1	1.0	1.0	12.0
	26	2	2.0	2.0	14.0
	28	1	1.0	1.0	15.0
	29	2	2.0	2.0	17.0
	30	3	3.0	3.0	20.0
	33	9	9.0	9.0	29.0
	34	7	7.0	7.0	36.0
	35	6	6.0	6.0	42.0
	36	11	11.0	11.0	53.0
	37	12	12.0	12.0	65.0
	38	12	12.0	12.0	77.0
	39	3	3.0	3.0	80.0
	42	6	6.0	6.0	86.0
	45	4	4.0	4.0	90.0
	46	2	2.0	2.0	92.0
	50	2	2.0	2.0	94.0
	51	2	2.0	2.0	96.0
	52	2	2.0	2.0	98.0
	55	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	To tal	100	100.0	100.0	

Investigating level specification scores. According to the findings of descriptive tables on the previous page, 60 percent of respondents who participated in the level specification questionnaire got scores between 31 to 40 (Among 100 people who participated in this test), and these persons are in upper intermediate level and other persons are in some other levels which are specified in receiving scores.

3.1.2. Investigating the personality type of respondents:

Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondents based on personality type.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Respondents	extroversion	34	56.7	56.7	56.7
	introversion	26	43.3	43.3	100
	total	60	100	100	

According to Table 2, more than half of respondents (56.7%) are introverts and the rest of them have extrovert personalities (43.3%).

3.1.3. Investigating the scores of personality among respondents:

Table 3. Frequency distribution of respondents based on scores of personality.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Respondents	12	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	13	1	1.7	1.7	3.3
	15	2	3.3	3.3	6.7
	16	1	1.7	1.7	8.3
	17	3	5.0	5.0	13.3
	18	4	6.7	6.7	20.0
	19	4	6.7	6.7	26.7
	20	8	13.3	13.3	40.0
	21	3	5.0	5.0	45.0
	22	7	11.7	11.7	56.7
	23	3	5.0	5.0	61.7
	24	5	8.3	8.3	70.0
	25	3	5.0	5.0	75.0
	26	5	8.3	8.3	83.3
	28	3	5.0	5.0	88.3
	29	3	5.0	5.0	93.3
	33	2	3.3	3.3	96.7
	35	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. Results of indices of central tendency and variable distribution.

Number	Value	60
	Non-respond	0
Mean		22.47
Medium		22.00
Standard derivation		5.003
Variance		25.033
Minimum		12
Maximum		35

According to the findings from the descriptive table (Tables 3 and 4), more than half of the respondents have taken a score of more than 22 in personality variables. It is mentionable that the lowest score is 12, and highest score is 35 and the mean is 22.47. It is noticeable that scores up to 22 are extrovert and scores less than 22 are introvert.

3.1.4. Investigating listening scores among respondents:

Table 5. Frequency distribution of respondents based on listening scores

		Frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Respondents	9	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	10	5	8.3	8.3	11.7
	11	5	8.3	8.3	20.0
	12	1	1.7	1.7	21.7
	13	6	10.0	10.0	31.7
	14	4	6.7	6.7	38.3
	15	4	6.7	6.7	45.0
	16	1	1.7	1.7	46.7
	17	6	10.0	10.0	56.7
	18	1	1.7	1.7	58.3
	19	4	6.7	6.7	65.0
	20	7	11.7	11.7	76.7
	21	7	11.7	11.7	88.3
	22	3	5.0	5.0	93.3
	24	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
	total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 6. Results of indices of central tendency and variable distribution.

Number	Value	60
	Non-respond	0
Mean		16.50
Medium		17.00
Standard derivation		4.463
Variance		19.915

Minimum	9
Maximum	24

According to the findings from the descriptive table (Tables 5 and 6), more than half of the respondents obtained scores up to 17 in the listening variable. It is mentionable that the lowest score is 9, the highest one is 24, and the mean is 16.5. It is noticeable that the maximum acquirable score in this skill has been 25.

3.1.5. Investigating writing scores among respondents:

Table 7. Frequency distribution of respondents based on writing scores

		Frequ ncy	Perc ent	Vali d perc ent	Cumula tive percent
Respond ents	0	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	1	9	15.0	15.0	16.7
	2	12	20.0	20.0	36.7
	3	15	25.0	25.0	61.7
	4	7	11.7	11.7	73.3
	5	16	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Tot al	60	100	100	

Table 8. Results of indices of central tendency and variable distribution of writing.

Number	Value	60
	Non-respond	0
Mean		3.10
Medium		3.00
Standard derivation		1.469
Variance		2.159
Minimum		0
Maximum		5

According to findings from the descriptive table (Tables 7 and 8), more than half of respondents have taken scores up to 3 in writing variable. It is mentionable that the lowest score is 0, the highest one is 5 and the mean is 3/1. It is noticeable that the maximum acquirable score has been 5 in this skill.

3.1.6. Investigating reading scores among respondents:

Table 9. Frequency distribution of respondents based on reading scores.

		Frequ ncy	Perc ent	Valid perc ent	Cumula tive percent
respon dents	5	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	7	1	1.7	1.7	5.0

	8	1	1.7	1.7	6.7
	9	1	1.7	1.7	8.3
	10	4	6.7	6.7	15.0
	11	2	3.3	3.3	18.3
	12	3	5.0	5.0	23.3
	13	3	5.0	5.0	28.3
	14	2	3.3	3.3	31.7
	15	3	5.0	5.0	36.7
	16	2	3.3	3.3	40.0
	17	3	5.0	5.0	45.0
	18	3	5.0	5.0	50.0
	19	1	1.7	1.7	51.7
	20	1	1.7	1.7	53.3
	21	1	1.7	1.7	55.0
	24	6	10.0	10.0	65.0
	25	5	8.3	8.3	73.3
	27	2	3.3	3.3	76.7
	29	5	8.3	8.3	85.0
	30	5	8.3	8.3	93.3
	31	2	3.3	3.3	96.7
	33	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	tot al	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 10. Results of indices of central tendency and variable distribution of reading.

Number	Value	60
	Non-respond	0
Mean		19.78
Medium		18.50
Standard derivation		8.032
Variance		64.512
Minimum		5
Maximum		33

According to data from the descriptive table (Tables 9 and 10), more than half of respondents have taken scores up to 18.5. It is noticeable that the lowest score is 5, the highest is 33 and the mean is 19.78. It is mentionable that maximum the acquirable score has been 35 in this skill.

3.1.7. Investigation of scores of respondents in triple skills

Table 11. Frequency distribution of scores of respondents in triple skills.

		Freq uenc y	percen t	Valid percent	Cumul ative percent
Respon dents	27	4	6.7	6.7	6.7
	28	1	1.7	1.7	8.3

	30	3	5.0	5.0	13.3
	31	2	3.3	3.3	16.7
	33	4	6.7	6.7	23.3
	34	2	3.3	3.3	26.7
	35	4	6.7	6.7	33.3
	36	2	3.3	3.3	36.7
	37	3	5.0	5.0	41.7
	38	3	5.0	5.0	46.7
	39	3	5.0	5.0	51.7
	40	1	1.7	1.7	53.3
	41	3	5.0	5.0	58.3
	42	4	6.7	6.7	65.0
	43	5	8.3	8.3	73.3
	44	3	5.0	5.0	78.3
	45	1	1.7	1.7	80.0
	46	2	3.3	3.3	83.3
	48	3	5.0	5.0	88.3
	49	1	1.7	1.7	90.0
	50	2	3.3	3.3	93.3
	51	1	1.7	1.7	95.0
	52	1	1.7	1.7	96.7
	54	1	1.7	1.7	98.3
	56	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 12. Results of indices of central tendency and distribution of triple skills.

Number	Value	60
	Non-respond	0
Mean		39.38
Medium		39.00
Standard derivation		7.249
Variance		52.545
Minimum		27
Maximum		56

According to the data from the descriptive table (Tables 11 and 12), more than half of respondents have obtained scores up to 39 in triple skills. It is mentionable that the lowest score is 27, the highest is 56, and the mean is 39.38. The maximum acquirable score in this skill has been 65.

3.2. Second part: inferential statistic:

3.2.1. Investigating the normality of distributing the scores in investigated variables:

Table 13. Results of normality test (Kolmogorov–Smirnov) in personality variables and triple skills.

Variable	(Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z)	Significant level
Personality	0.804	0.537
Listening	1.035	0.235
Writing	1.306	0.066

Reading	1.163	0.133
Triple Skills	0.470	0.980

According to the performed test, investigated variables have normal distribution because obtained sigs are over 0.050. So, parametric statistics must be used to perform the tests (Table 13).

3.2.2. Investigating personality differences between girls and boys:

Null hypothesis: there is no significant difference in personality between boys and girls.

Hypothesis 1: there is a significant difference in personality between boys and girls.

Results from the T-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the personality of boys and girls with a reliability of 95%. Because obtained sig (0.000) is less than 0.05. In sum, it can be said that the hypothesis "there is a significant difference between the personality of boys and girls" is proved. Scores more than 50% mean that subjects are extroverted and less introverted. Therefore, girls (24.97) are more extroverted than boys (19.97), as is seen in the table of difference of means.

3.2.3. Investigating the difference in writing skills between boys and girls:

Null hypothesis: there is no significant difference between the writing skills of boys and girls.

Hypothesis 1: there is a significant difference between the writing skills of boys and girls.

Results from the T-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between boys and girls with a reliability of 95% in this skill. Because obtained sig (0.019) is lower than 0.05. In sum, it can be said that the hypothesis "there is a significant difference between the writing skills of boys and girls" is proved. Boys (3.6) are better than girls (2.6) in this skill, as it is observed in the table of difference of means.

3.2.4. Investigating the difference in listening skills between boys and girls:

Null hypothesis: there is no significant difference between the listening skills of boys and girls.

Hypothesis 1: there is a significant difference between the listening skills of boys and girls.

Results from the T-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between boys and girls in this skill with a reliability of 95%. Because obtained sig (0.019) is lower than 0.05. In sum, it can be said that the hypothesis "there is a significant difference between the listening skills of boys and girls" is proved. Boys (17.38) are better than girls (15.17) in this skill, as it is observed in the table of difference of means.

3.2.5. Investigating the difference in reading skills between boys and girls:

Null hypothesis: there is no significant difference between the reading skills of boys and girls.

Hypothesis 1: there is a significant difference between the reading skills of boys and girls.

Results from the T-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between boys and girls in this skill with a reliability of 95%. Because the obtained sig (0.000) is lower than 0.05. In sum, it can be said that the hypothesis "there is a significant difference between the reading skills of boys and girls" is proved. Girls (26.00) are better than boys (13.57) in this skill, as it is observed in the table of difference of means.

3.2.6. Investigating the difference in triple skills between boys and girls:

Null hypothesis: there is no significant difference between the triple skills of boys and girls.

Hypothesis 1: there is a significant difference between the triple skills of boys and girls.

Results from the T-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between boys and girls in this skill with a reliability of 95%. Because the obtained sig (0.000) is lower than 0.05. In sum, it can be said that the hypothesis "there is a significant difference between triple skills of boys and girls" is proved. Girls (43.77) are better than boys (35.00) in this skill, as it is observed in the table of difference of means.

3.2.7. Investigating the difference in triple skills between boys and girls:

Null hypothesis: there is no significant difference between the triple skills of boys and girls.

Hypothesis 1: there is a significant difference between the triple skills of boys and girls.

Results from the T-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between boys and girls in this skill with a reliability of 95%. Because the obtained sig (0.000) is lower than 0.05. In sum, it can be said that the hypothesis "there is a significant difference between triple skills of boys and girls" is proved. Girls (43.77) are better than boys (35.00) in this skill, as it is observed in the table of difference of means.

3.2.8. Investigating the difference of triple skills between individuals with personality types of introversion and extroversion:

Null hypothesis: there is no significant difference between the triple skills of introvert and extrovert individuals.

Hypothesis 1: there is a significant difference between the triple skills of introvert and extrovert individuals.

Results from the T-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between introvert and extrovert individuals in this skill with a reliability

of 95%. Because the obtained sig (0.000) is lower than 0.05. In sum, it can be said that the hypothesis "there is a significant difference between triple skills of introvert and extrovert individuals" is proved. Extrovert individuals (41.77) are better than introverted individuals (37.56) in this skill, as it is observed in the table of difference of means.

4. CONCLUSIONS:

In this research, the author considered extroversion and introversion as independent variables it was proved extraversion and introversion variables affect language proficiency. The researcher found that extravert people learn better language skills than introverted people.

As mentioned in hypothesis 2 there was a significant impact on gender differences in learning skills the results indicated that male participants are better in some skills and female participants are better in other skills.

The procedure used and significant findings obtained are presented below in brief:

- There is a significant difference between the writing skills of boys and girls. Boys are better than girls in this skill.
- There is a significant difference between the listening skills of boys and girls. Boys are better than girls in this skill.
- There is a significant difference between the reading skills of boys and girls. Girls are better than boys in this skill.
- There is a significant difference between the triple skills of boys and girls. Girls are better than boys.
- According to the first hypothesis extravert groups are high proficient than introvert groups because the characteristics of extravert groups have an influence on learning skills and according to the second hypothesis male participants are better in listening and writing skills and female participants are better in reading skills.
- Totally researcher found that extraversion persons are better learners of the language.

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