The Relationship between Personality Types and the Type of Correction in EFL Writing Skill

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between two personality types, namely, extroversion vs. introversion, and two types of correction (self-correction and teacher correction) in an EFL writing context. Review of literature revealed that a few studies have been conducted on the efficacy of error correction techniques with regard to different personality traits of the language learners in an EFL context. Moreover, empirical studies that aim at determining the correlation between extroversion and language performance tend to yield inconsistent results. Therefore, an attempt was made in this study to investigate the relationship between self and teacher correction methods with the personality traits of Extraversion/Introversion among Iranian FL students. For this purpose, 48 medical students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran, taking the academic writing course, participated in the study. In the beginning, the questionnaire devised by Marie G. Mclntyre (2010) was used to determine their personality types, i.e. extroversion and introversion. Then, the students were assigned into two classes. In one class, self-correction of the assignments was used and teacher correction was used in the other. Then, data were subjected to independent t-test as an indication of inferential statistics. The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two personality types and the two types of correction.

Keywords: Personality, peer review, extroversion, introversion, teacher correction, writing skill

INTRODUCTION

Many studies in the literature have shed light on the relationship between personality types in general and extraversion/introversion in particular with different aspects of language

learning and teaching. An increasing number of recent studies suggested that personality traits have incremental validity in predicting academic success and failure (Ackerman, 1999; Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2002, 2003a,b; De Fruyt & Mervielde, 1996; Petrides, Chamorro-Premuzic, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2005). For example, Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham (2003a,b) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between personality traits and academic performance in three longitudinal studies of two British university samples. Additionally, indicators such as attendance, tutorials, etc. were also studied in relation to the personality traits. The results showed that personality was significantly related to academic performance.

In the EFL context, Busch (2006) investigated the relationship between the extroversion-introversion tendencies of Japanese students and their proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The results showed that extraversion had a significant negative correlation with pronunciation, a subcomponent of the oral interview test. In addition, introverts tended to gain higher scores on the reading and grammar components of the standardized English test. Busch (2006) also concluded that even though introverts tended to score better on most of the English proficiency measures, it was found that junior college males who were extraverts had higher oral interview scores.

Gan (2008) has also worked on the particular personality dimension,

extroversion, in relation to oral performance in a second language (L2). The researcher used Esyenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) to gather the required data. The study revealed that the extravert demonstrated a more active participation in the assigned assessment task, while their speech generally showed a higher level of accuracy and fluency. In another study by Chamorro-Premuzic, Furnham, Dissou, and Heaven (2005), which focused on the relationship between personality traits and preference for particular assessment methods in an ESL context, the results uncovered the positive correlation between extroversion and preference for oral examinations and both significant and positive correlations between extraversion and preference for group work.

Carrell (2002) has shown the relationship between personality types of writers and raters and holistic rating of writing. The results indicated that personality types of writers affect the ratings their essays received, and those of the raters affected the ratings they gave to the essays. Similarly, Karbalaei (2008) conducted a study on the relationships between extroversion/introversion personality variables and EFL learners' performance on listening strategies. The results showed that extroversion/introversion personality trait had no significant effect on EFL learners' use of listening strategies.

In a recent study, Erton (2010) investigated the relationship of different personality types, extroverts and introverts, with students' different learning styles. The findings showed that each personality group

(extroverts/introverts) has different learning styles. Although the tendencies are different, the success of these students did not show any significant differences (Erton, 2010).

Since the purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between different types of personality and the type of corrective feedback, it is worth mentioning that for more than a decade, a great deal of research has been done on the topic of written corrective feedback (CF) in SLA and second language (L2) writing (Ferris, 2010). Although more recent studies suggest that corrective feedback (CF) is valuable (see for e.g., Rahimi, 2009; Bitchener, 2008; Sheen, 2007), it is still not clear if it is effective with regard to different personality types of the language learners.

In another study carried out among Iranian EFL learners, the impacts of three types of corrective feedback on the acquisition of Wh-question forms were investigated. The results revealed the effects of metalinguistic feedback in both immediate and delayed post tests.

Moreover, the relationship between personality types (introversion and extroversion) and Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension ability has been investigated by Alavinia and Sameei (2012). They found out that there was a significant relationship between the students' personality type, i.e. extroversion and introversion, and their listening comprehension ability. In a more related study, Hajimohammadi and Mukundan (2011) found no significant impact of personality type on EFL students' writing progress in Iran.

The review of literature also revealed that a few studies have been directed at finding out whether definite error correction techniques in writing are more effective with regard to language learners' different personality traits in an EFL context. Moreover, empirical studies that aimed at correlating extroversion and language performance tended to produce inconsistent results. In fact, a few research studies have been done to determine whether definite error correction techniques are more effective with regard to different personality traits of the language learners. Hence, the results of this study will help to provide further advantages for language learners and their teacher to meet the goals of the programme. Here, personality of the student appears to be in the core of the issue. Since no such study has been done in an EFL context in Iran, so the necessity of undertaking this study has become more evident.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to determine the relationship between extroversion and introversion as two personality types and self-correction and teacher correction as two different corrective feedbacks. Taking into consideration the objectives of the study, the following research questions are sought to be answered:

1. Is there any relationship between extroversion and self-correction in the writing progress?

2. Is there any relationship between extroversion and teacher's correction in the writing progress?

3. Is there any relationship between introversion and self-correction in the writing progress?

4. Is there any relationship between introversion and teacher's correction in the writing progress?

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Participants

This study involved 48 medical students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran, as an EFL context. The students were 25 females and 23 males aged between 19 and 21 years old. The native language of all the participants is Persian. They enrolled in the academic writing course aimed at developing their writing skills. Their level of English proficiency was equitable based on their scores in General English II course, which is a prerequisite for the academic writing course. Two intact classes were selected for the study.

Instruments

For the purpose of collecting data required for this study, a questionnaire devised by Marie G. McIntyre (2010) was used to measure the degree of extroversion and introversion. The administered questionnaire included questions such as "(A) I express my opinions openly or (B) I keep my opinions to myself" and "(A) when I have a decision to make, I like to talk it over with other people or (B) I like to think it through on my own".

On the whole, it consisted of twenty items. Ten items are related to extroversion while ten others measure introversion. For each item, the students should distribute 3 points between each choice. If they felt that the choice (A) was almost true for them, they would then give 3 points to (A) and none to the other choice (B). If the answer (A) was often true but question (B) was sometimes true, they would then give 2 points to (A) and 1 point to (B). Finally, if the students had a high score in one category, then they might be likely to use that style most of the time. A moderate score may mean that they tend to be introverted in some situations and extroverted in others. Therefore, the mentioned questionnaire only tapped the type of personality types, i.e., that of extroversion and introversion. For more information, please refer to Appendix I.

Procedures

Two academic writing classrooms were selected. After the students had been made familiar with the objectives, requirements and grading scheme of the course, they were selected based on the extroversion-introversion questionnaire from the very beginning of the term and based on that, they were assigned into two groups (extroverts and introverts) in each classroom. Then, the instructor conducted the writing course aiming at developing the students' writing skills. The course lasted for seventeen weeks during which ten paragraphs on general topics in different genres including descriptive, process, opinion, comparison/contrast, problem/solution paragraphs

were assigned to the students to write after carefully instructing them on the grammar and fundamentals in paragraph writing. Each week, a typical paragraph was assigned to the students to work on as a homework. However, most of the work was done in the class as class assignments to ensure a better monitoring of the students' performance. Only the completion of the writing assignments could be done at home in the case of time constraint in the classroom. Therefore, the instructor could completely monitor the students' abilities and potentials in the area of paragraph writing. In one of the classes, the students themselves corrected the assigned paragraphs based on the rating scale provided by the instructor and then the instructor once more corrected the assignment according to the same criteria and gave the necessary feedbacks to the students and reminded them of the detected problems. The rating of the assignments was all done according to the following criteria for all types of paragraphs in the two classrooms:

Table 1. Criteria used for rating the assignments

Format	2 points
Capitalization & Punctuation	2 points
Topic sent.	3 points
Major sent.	4 points
Minor sent.	4 points
Conclusion	3 points
Grammar	4 points
Cohesion & Connectors	3 points
Unity	15 points
Total	40 points

The criteria were adopted from the writing book entitled, "Writing for paragraph to essay" by Zemach and Rumisek (2003).

On the other hand, in the second class (control class) the assignments were corrected by the instructor herself again based of the same rating scale and the feedback was given to the student. Here, no self-correction was done.

The collected data were subjected to descriptive statistics using minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. Then, they were also subjected to the independent t-test as the representation of inferential statistics.The t-test was used to evaluate the differences in means between these two groups of students, namely introverts and extroverts. Here aimed to find the differences between the students' scores in the two groups, so we had to judge the difference between their means relative to the spread or variability of their scores. According to the analysis of data, the difference between the groups was not statistically significant, showing that there was no considerable overlap between these groups to conclude the types of personality had any relationship with the type of correction. A visual representation of the data is displayed through histograms. All of these analyses were done in SPSS, version 11.5

RESULTS

To better illustrate the pattern of the respondents' answers to the questionnaire, the items were divided into two groups, each of which concerning one personality type, namely introverts and extroverts. Then, the participants' personality type was determined. For each item, the students

should distribute 3 points between each choice. If the students have a high score in one category, then they may be likely to use that style most of the time. A moderate score may mean that they tend to be introverted in some situations and extraverted in others. In this questionnaire only the whole numbers like 2 were used not the numbers such as 1.5.

In the classroom where the method of self-correction was practiced, 9 introverts (34.6%) and 17 extroverts (65.4%) were observed. There were 12 introverts (54.5%) and 10 extroverts (45.5%) in the classroom where the teacher's correction was used as a traditional corrective feedback. The total number of participants was 48, as shown in Table 1.

Through descriptive statistics, the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation were calculated (Table 2). Table 2 illustrates the measures of central tendency and dispersion for the 48 students. The minimum and maximum for the score "a" which represents the computation of all questions concerning extroversion as a personality type were 2 and 21, respectively. Also, the minimum and maximum for the score "b" which indicates introversion for 48 participants were 9 and 28, respectively. The mean and standard deviation for scores "a" and "b" were 15.2, 15 and 4.76, 4.79, respectively. The distribution of the data was presented in the form of a quasi-normal curve as Figures 1 and 2 depict the same information.

Table 2
Group * type Cross tabulation

			type		Total
			introvert	extrovert	
group	1	Count	9	17	26
		% within group	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%
	2	Count	12	10	22
		% within group	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	21	27	48
		% within group	43.8%	56.3%	100.0%

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics

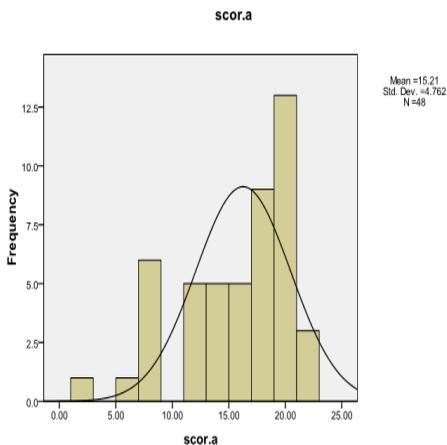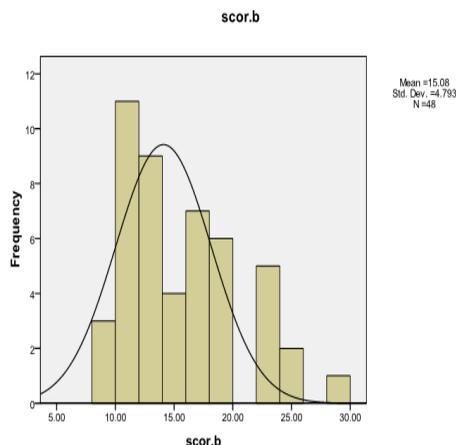|	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Score .a	48	2.00	21.00	15.2083	4.76226
Score .b	48	9.00	28.00	15.0833	4.79287
diff	48	-26.00	12.00	.1250	9.51511
Valid N (listwise)	48				

Fig. 1. Distribution of data

Fig. 2. Distribution of data

Table 4
Independent samples test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
extro	self	5.445	.024	1.912	46	.062	2.56643	1.34213	-.13514	5.26801
	Teacher's			1.850	35.462	.073	2.56643	1.38720	-.24843	5.38130
intro	self	5.265	.026	-1.673	46	.101	-2.27972	1.36258	-5.02244	.46300
	Teacher's			-1.617	35.172	.115	-2.27972	1.40958	-5.14083	.58139

In order to answer the research questions and to find out whether there was any relationship between different variables in the writing process, an independent t-test was run through inferential statistics. The results showed that the differences were not statistically significant (See Table 3). The observed significance for both groups of extroversion and introversion was more than the significance levels.

To sum up, the main points can be encapsulated by answering the research questions.

1. Is there any relationship between extroversion and self-correction in the writing progress?

2. Is there any relationship between extroversion and teacher's correction in the writing progress?

The findings indicated that no significant difference was found between extroversion and self-correction on one hand and between extroversion and teacher's correction on the other. The significance computed is 0.24, which is more than .062 and .073 (the significance level) for the two types of correction (Table 3). These results illustrate that although one's personality type might be extroversion or introversion, the type of corrective feedback whether traditional or self is not a determining factor.

3. Is there any relationship between introversion and self-correction in the writing progress?

4. Is there any relationship between introversion and teacher's correction in the writing progress?

Although a positive correlation was found between introversion and self-correction on one hand and this personality trait and teacher's correction on the other, this relation was not statically significant. The computed significance is 0.26, which exceeds 0.101 and 0.115 (the significance levels) for the two types of correction (Table 3). Based on the findings, the error correction techniques in writing are not effective with regard to different personality traits of the language learners in an EFL context. The findings are in line with the results obtained by Busch (2006), Karbalaei (2008), and Erton (2010).

DISCUSSION

The present study intended to investigate the relationship between two personality types, namely extroversion vs. introversion and two types of correction, self-correction and teacher correction in relation to EFL writing skill. A questionnaire that included 20 items was used as the data collection instrument of this study to measure the degree of extroversion and introversion. The subjects were 48 medical students at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran (an EFL context). They enrolled in the academic writing course at the university. They were assigned to write different paragraphs of different topics in different rhetorical organizations. After running a t-test to determine the relationship between the personality types and types of correction, the results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two personality types and the two types of correction. This result is in the same line with those of the study conducted by Hajimohammadi and Mukundan (2011).

Therefore, according to the findings, personality traits are not indicatives of students' academic success or failure. These results are not consistent with the common-sense view. In other words, The extent to which one might be outgoing or very silent in the class is not actually a good criterion to judge his or her academic success.

CONCLUSION

This study has shed some insights into the relationship between two personality types, namely extroversion vs. introversion, and two types of correction, i.e. self-correction and teacher correction, in an EFL writing context. The findings showed no significant difference between extroversion and self-correction on one hand and extroversion and teacher's correction on the other. The results also demonstrated that although there was a positive correlation between introversion and self-correction, the relation between this personality trait and teacher's correction was not statically significant. As for the obtained data, it could be concluded that the error correction techniques in writing are inconsistent with language learners' different personality traits in an EFL context. In other words, being extroverted or introverted has no significant effect on students' preference of the corrective feedback. These results are not consistent with the common sense view. However, due to the preliminary nature of the present study (to our knowledge, the attempt to relate personality dimensions to preference for academic correction methods) and the limitations, replication studies with larger sample size and in different academic contexts seem to be advantageous in leading the researchers to more reliable results.

Implications of the Study

According to the results of the present study, the extent to which one might be outgoing or very silent in the class is not a good criterion to judge the type of correction employed. So, the teachers should not consider these personality dimensions as variables that influence their use of correction techniques. However, since foreign language writing classes in Iran are mostly teacher centred and individualistic teaching cannot be practiced due to crowded classes and also in spite of the results of the present study, by knowing the students' personality types, teachers can have a better understanding of the classroom dynamism and follow the activities, strategies and techniques which best suit their learners who have different personality traits.

Limitations of the Study

This study, like any other research, has its own limitations. Any attempts to generalize the findings of this research to general population should be made with caution. One of the limitations of this study is the small number of the students included as the respondents. Another limitation is the use of different topics with different rhetorical modes such as descriptive, process, comparison, etc., which may have produced different impacts. Effect of gender is not perused as the focus of the study. Therefore, it may also be interfering with the results. Thus, it is important highlighting these points as it is worth taking them into consideration in any further research.

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APPENDIX I

St. No: --

INSTRUCTIONS

For each item, **distribute 3 points** between choices (A) and (B). Use whole numbers, **not** 1.5.

Example:

> *If you feel that (A) is almost always true of you, then give 3 points to (A) and none to (B).*
>
> *If (A) is often true, but (B) is also sometimes true, then give 2 points to (A) and 1 point to (B).*

1. ☐ (A) At parties, I tend to talk a lot.
   ☐ (B) At parties, I tend to listen a lot.

2. ☐ (A) People view me as lively and outgoing.
   ☐ (B) People view me as calm and reserved.

3. ☐ (A) I express my opinions openly.
   ☐ (B) I keep my opinions to myself.

4. ☐ (A) People think that I am easy to get to know.
   ☐ (B) People think that I am hard to get to know.

5. ☐ (A) I enjoy social gatherings where I can meet lots of new people.
   ☐ (B) I enjoy being home alone and having time to myself.

6. ☐ (A) I tend to speak before I think.
   ☐ (B) I tend to think before I speak.

7. ☐ (A) On a trip, I enjoy talking with people I don't know.
   ☐ (B) On a trip, I prefer not to talk to people.

8. ☐ (A) Spending too much time alone makes me tired.
   ☐ (B) Spending too much time with other people makes me tired.

9. ☐ (A) When I have a decision to make, I like to talk it over with other people.
   ☐ (B) When I have a decision to make, I like to think it through on my own.

10. ☐ (A) In my neighborhood or apartment complex, I know many people.
    ☐ (B) In my neighborhood or apartment complex, I know a few people.