

## The effects of EFL learners' extroversion and introversion on their development of grammatical knowledge in terms of applying feedback types

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### Abstract

The ethical and professional responsibility of any teacher is providing feedback in second language acquisition. Extroversion and introversion are the most important factors of personality traits which can have significant effects on second language acquisition. Thus, the current study tried to explore the roles of feedback types (self-correction and teacher-correction) and learners' personality traits (extroversion and introversion) on learning grammatical knowledge. To this end, 58 homogenate students out of 80 students were selected based on the Quick Oxford Placement Test. Based on Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, 39 students were chosen. They were divided into two equal experimental groups A & B randomly. Self-correction was used in group A, and teacher-correction was applied in group B. After administering a pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test, the results were calculated on a two-way ANOVA. According to the outcomes, self-correction and introversion had very significant effects on grammar learning. In addition, introverted students were better on recalling of learned knowledge.

**Keywords:** feedback, self-correction, teacher-correction, introversion, extroversion, grammatical knowledge

### 1. Introduction

Language instruction in the world of second or foreign language teaching is naturally divided into four separate skills, usually reflecting speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Richards & Schmidt, 2002) [31]. Among these basic skills, as Harmer (1998) [17] pointed out, writing has been recognized as an important skill for language learning.

To Currier (2008) [7], the ability to write well can have a profound impact on our lives. To Thornbury (2000) [36], one of the most important writing skills which increases the accuracy of the written work is grammar. Grammar is one of the most difficult aspects of a foreign language to master.

Tense is the central concept in English grammar (Levy, 2016). It is central for understanding of how English sentences can be effectively used to convey thoughts. The correct use of tenses causes raising the level of readability of business writings. It also allows the readers to comprehend accurately what have been written using English tenses (Siddiqui, 2014) [34].

Much earlier studies (e.g. Guiora, 1983; Hinkel, 1992, 1997; Riddle, 1986; Sharwood Smith & Rutherford, 1988) have proved that English tenses are often difficult for L2 learners to use appropriately (as cited in Hinkel, 2004). For the development of writing and writing skills, feedback is generally regarded as essential at all levels, from students at the kindergarten to students working on dissertation projects (Biber, Nekrasova & Horn 2011) [3]. To Petchprasert (2012) [28], feedback is an essential part of language learning and teaching that influences students' learning and achievement.

Rana and Perveen, (2013) [27] refer to the role of feedback which is the ethical and professional responsibility of teachers. Students seldom make good use of the feedback and they often repeat the same mistakes in future writing assignments (Rana & Perveen, 2013) [27].

To large number of previous researchers (e.g. O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Reiss, 1985; Tamada, 1996; Wenden, 1991, as

cited in Nikpoor & Farsani, 2010) [13], it seems reasonable for language teachers to make their students less dependent on the teachers and reach a level of autonomy. Today, as Richard and Rodger (2001) [30] also confirm, teaching method is not considered as the most important element in determining the success or failure of language teaching and learning. The belief is that language teachers should try to make their students less dependent on the teachers and reach a level of autonomy (Tamada, 1996, & Wenden, 1991 as cited in Forouzan & Nemat Tabrizi, 2015) [14]. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers take advantage of the differences in today students' learning styles and personality types for contributing to more successful learning (Forouzan & Nemat Tabrizi, 2015) [14].

According to Skehan (1989) [35], some factors like intelligence, language aptitude, motivation, age, learners' personalities impact learning English. Callaghan (1966) [5] believes that there are affective factors which can greatly influence on learners' learning and also on the kinds of feedback which a teacher employs. One of these key factors is personality traits. To Pervin and Cervone (2010) [6], personality traits are consistent patterns in the way individuals behave, feel and think. Among the personality traits, two important variables in predicting English language proficiency are extroversion and introversion that have been extensively studied than any other personality traits (Hemmatnezhad, et al; 2014) [18]. Wong (2011) [39] believes that extroversion-introversion (E-I) is a gateway through which teachers can manipulate the learning of their students and they will be able to adjust their lessons so that students obtain the maximum benefits from them. However, knowing about E-I is one way in which to individualize teaching (Wong, 2011) [39]. It is assumed that grammatical difficulty is, to some extent, associated with personality traits in language aptitude. (Sawyer & Ranta, 2001) [33].

Therefore, based on depicted information, knowing and selecting effective and useful feedback in terms of introversion

and extroversion is an important issue. Regarding this issue, almost all Iranian English teachers face some kind of challenges in teaching grammar (Ganji, 2009) <sup>[16]</sup>. The main point is when, after long hours of teaching, they recognize that their students haven't learned what they were supposed to learn (Ganji, 2009) <sup>[16]</sup>. In addition, many English teachers are often confused on how to provide feedback on these students' errors (Hong, 2004) <sup>[21]</sup>. So, teachers should select a type of feedback that can help and cause a permanent learning and is useful based on learners' personalities. There are a lot of uncertainties among researchers on which type of feedback in terms of learners' personalities are helpful in teaching and learning processes especially in the field of grammar (Hemmatnezhad, et al., 2014) <sup>[18]</sup>.

Thus, a better understanding of the variables like learners' personality traits and better selecting of feedback types in teaching process may be effective in learning and teaching grammar in second or foreign language. As Bellon, Bellon, & Blank (1991) <sup>[2]</sup> believe that effective feedback can improve students' confidence, self-awareness and enthusiasm for learning. In addition, O'Farrell (2002) <sup>[25]</sup> lists some of the benefits of successful feedback. Successful feedback will build confidence in the students, and motivate them to improve their learning. In addition, it can help the students to identify strengths and weaknesses (O'Farrell, 2002) <sup>[25]</sup>. Moreover, to Martines (2006) <sup>[22]</sup>, it is necessary to be aware of variety of students individual learning styles, individual factors affecting their acquisition and learning and be flexible enough to adapt to the students individual needs. To this end, it will be possible to have the key for success in both language teaching and language learning.

Thus, in order to investigate the performance of the extroverts and introverts with regard to their progress in grammar knowledge and also with regard to different types of feedback (teacher-correction and self-correction), the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1. Is there any significant difference between the effect of introversion and extraversion on the development of Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge?

RQ2. Are there any significant interactions between feedback types and extrovert versus introvert learners in the development of grammatical knowledge?

RQ3. Is there any significant difference between the effect of introversion and extroversion on the retention of Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge?

To empirically answer the research questions addressed above, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

RH1. There is no significant difference between the effect of introversion and extroversion in the development of Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge.

RH2. There are no significant interactions between feedback types and extrovert versus introvert learners in the development of Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge.

RH3. There is no significant difference between the effect of introversion and extraversion on the retention of Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1 Participants

To conduct the study, from among approximately 80 Iranian adult female and male students in Islamic Azad University in Jahrom, the researcher selected 58 participants randomly in terms of their scores on the Quick Oxford Placement Test

(QPT). QPT was administered to homogenize the students on their knowledge proficiency levels. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) was given to all participants to find the introverted and extroverted students. From among these 58 participants, about 17 learners were introverted and 22 learners were extroverted and the others were average. All the participants ranged in age from 19 to 25. They were freshmen and they were studying physical education (AM). Their native language was Persian and their second language to which the students were exposed was English.

### 2.2 Instruments

Three different types of instruments used in this study including: Quick Oxford Placement Test (QPT), Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), and TOFEL Grammar Paper based Test (PBT) (as pre and post-tests).

### 2.3 Material

In this study, the material for teaching consisted of three main tenses: simple present tense, simple past tense, and future tense. The researcher taught these tenses based on a book called *English Verb Tenses* by that was an informal but extensive reference for ESL and EFL students, the good folks who teach them, the idly curious, and the linguistically perplexed by Uchiyama (2006) <sup>[37]</sup>.

### 2.4 Procedures

Initially, the teacher administered the Quick Oxford placement test to check the initial differences among the students and to select homogenous groups. Thus, from 80 available students just 58 were selected based on the result of QPT. Then, based on the students' responses to Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), the degrees of extroversion and introversion of all the 58 students were measured. Out of 58 homogenous students, 17 students were identified as introverted and 22 students were identified as extroverted. After administrating QPT and EPQ, the participants were randomly divided into two groups. The half of extroverted and introverted students were assigned into experimental group A and the other half of extroverted and introverted students were put in experimental group B. To this end, the first group (group A), contained nine introverted and eleven extroverted students and the second group (group B), contained eight introverted and eleven extroverted students. So, there were 20 students in group A and 19 students in group B.

After selecting the participants and in order to specify the students' knowledge of English tenses, the researcher administered the pre-test to the students of both groups. This exam was based on TOEFL Paper Based Test (PBT). After that, the students were randomly divided into two groups. The study was carried out within a period of 9 weeks. In the first week (over two sessions), the three tests (QOPT, EPQ, and PBT) were administered. During a period of 4 weeks, the teacher taught simple present tense, simple past tense, and future tense, and reviewed the taught tenses. Every tense was taught in two sessions over one week.

After teaching every tense, the researcher administered a short quiz based on the tense she had taught in both groups. She wanted to know whether they were able to use correctly the tense she had taught, and what type of errors they had committed related to correct use of the tense taught in that session. Every short quiz involved six sentences that the

students had to change to negative and interrogative forms. The students only had 30 minutes to do the quiz on every tense.

In the experimental group A (self-correction), the researcher collected all the students' papers. She checked the students' papers at home in order to find out what types of errors they had committed. But, the researcher did not underline or identify the errors in the students' papers. However, she kept a copy of the students' papers for herself.

In the second session, the researcher explained the errors and gave more examples. By doing consciousness-raising, the students were provided with some examples in which the main verbs were highlighted and the modal verbs were underlined. The students were asked to read the examples and show the grammatical errors. Moreover, the researcher wrote two columns of sentences on the board. One included right sentences (correct forms) in simple present tense, and the other one contained wrong sentences (ill forms). Then, she asked the students to compare the sentences and explain the wrong points in the sentences. After that, she explained all errors, which the students had committed in their papers without referring to any specific error the students had committed. She gave back the papers and the students had to find their errors and correct them on their own. This procedure continued in the following sessions.

In the experimental group B (teacher-correction), the researcher collected the students' papers. She identified the students' errors on the correct use of tense she had taught and provided them with explicit feedback, and corrected the students' errors explicitly. In the other words, she underlined each error and wrote the correct answer above each error. In the second session, she gave back the papers to the students and explained the students' errors on the board.

At the end of the treatment in the fifth week, the researcher reviewed the tenses she had taught. Then in the sixth week, the researcher administered the post-test based on PBT to compare the performances of two groups. Three weeks after the post-test (in the ninth week), the researcher administered the delayed post-test without informing the students about the exam in advance.

**3. Results and discussion**

**The Result of the first Research Question:** The first research question attempted to explore whether there was any significant difference between the effect of personality types (i.e. extroversion and introversion) on the development of Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge. To answer the first research question, a Two-Way ANOVA was run.

**Table 1:** Two-Way ANOVA on the scores of post-test in term of personality types

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personality	45.852	1	45.852	11.393	.002

According to table 4.6, the sig. level for the effect of personality traits was .002 (sig. = .002 < .05). Thus, from the result of Table 4.1, it can be concluded that generally personality types had a significant effect on the post-test scores, and introversion can have more positive effect on the learning grammatical knowledge by the students.

**The Result of the Second Research Question:** The second research question attempted to explore whether there were any significant interaction between the effect of feedback types and extroverted and introverted EFL learners on the development of grammatical knowledge. Thus, a two-way ANOVA was run.

**Table 2:** Two-Way ANOVA on the scores of post-test in term of Relationship Between personality types & Feedback Types

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Feedback*Personality	9.058	1	9.058	2.251	.143

As indicated in Table 2, the Sig. level between feedback types and personality types was .143 (Sig. = .143 > .05). Therefore, there was no significant interaction between two independent variables.

research question attempted to explore whether there was any significant difference between the effect of personality types (i.e. extroversion and introversion) on the retention of Iranian EFL learners' grammatical knowledge. To answer the third research question a two-way ANOVA was run.

**The Result of the third Research Question:** The third

**Table 3:** Two-Way ANOVA on the scores related to the Delayed- post-test in term of personality types

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personality	32.458	1	32.458	5.867	.021

As table 3 indicated, the Sig. level for personality types was .021 (Sig. = .021 < .05). So, according to Table 3, it can be concluded that personality types had a significant effect on the delayed post-test scores, and the introversion had more positive effects.

Regarding the depicted results, the Sig. level of the effect of the personality types was 0.002 (0.002 < 0.05). So, it can be concluded that personality traits can have positive effect on learning grammatical knowledge. Moreover, introversion had more positive effect than extroversion on the learning of

grammatical knowledge in the post-test. Thus, the first research hypothesis is rejected.

The results of the second research question showed that the Sig. level of the interaction between personality types and feedback types in the post-test was .143 (.143 > .05). So, it can be concluded that there was no statistically significant interaction between these two variables. So, there is enough evidence to confirm the second research hypothesis.

By running a descriptive statistics and a two-way ANOVA, it was seen that the Sig. level of the effect of the personality traits

on the delayed post-test was .021 (.021 < .05). Regarding these results, it can be said that personality traits had positive effect on the retention of the grammatical knowledge, and introversion was more effective than extroversion in the delayed post-test. So, the third research hypothesis is rejected. The results of the first and third research questions support the outcomes of the studies such as, Furnham (1990) <sup>[15]</sup>, Chastain (1975, as cited in Dewaele, 2012) <sup>[8]</sup>, Dornyei (2005) <sup>[9]</sup>, Bush (2006) <sup>[4]</sup>, and Sotoudeh Nama and Moini (2013) <sup>[24]</sup>. These studies concluded that introversion had a better and positive influence on the learning process than extroversion. In addition, Entwistle and Wilson (1977) <sup>[11]</sup> claimed that introverts will achieve more because they have better long-term memory than extroverts. Besides, they learn a language in a more serious way and spend more time on reading and writing due to their personality trait. On the contrary, the finding of the third research question is not in line with the results of studies like Strong (1983), Rossier (1976) <sup>[32]</sup>, and Meenakshi and Zafar (2011). They tried to explore the effects of personality traits (extroversion & introversion) on L2 learning process. Although, they found that personality traits were important factors in L2 learning, they claimed that extroversion had a positive effect on learning grammatical knowledge.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that selecting feedback in terms of the students' personality types can play an important role in learning process of grammar knowledge. The results of this study confirmed that, considering personality types like extroversion and introversion in learning processes had effective influence on the learners' grammatical improvement. In line with the results of the study, several studies like: Alavi and Baradaran (2015) <sup>[1]</sup>; Bush (2006) <sup>[4]</sup>; Dornyei (2005) <sup>[9]</sup>; Moini and Sotoudeh Nama (2013) <sup>[24]</sup>, claim that introverted learners significantly outperformed extroverted learners. One possible explanation for such a finding refers to the personality characteristics of introverted learners, in a way; they tend to be better performers in receptive skills like listening, reading, and structure. In addition, according to Eysenck (1965) <sup>[13]</sup>, "introverts generally have a reflective and thoughtful personality type that suits the receptive kinds of tasks" (p. 59-60). Moreover, to Eysenck (1965) <sup>[13]</sup> "the typical extrovert does not like studying by himself and is generally impulsive individual" (p. 59-60). Ellis (1994) <sup>[10]</sup> believed that extroverts are more eager to talk, to join the groups and participate in classroom activities. As well as, introverted learners will do better at developing cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). The extroverts are not able to concentrate on materials and subjects for a long time and are too sociable to learn with the same condition (Eysenck, 1957) <sup>[12]</sup>. Thus, it can be concluded why the introverted students had better scores in delayed post-test after three weeks period. To Powell and Kusuma-Powell (2011) <sup>[29]</sup>, by knowing students personalities, the teacher can create a psychologically safe environment for every learner and determine each student's readiness for learning. In addition, knowing students' personalities enables teachers to identify and find easier ways to the curriculum to increase engagement, success, develop, and demonstrate greater emotional intelligence in the classroom. Therefore, based on the above mentioned findings, it can be concluded that the special characteristics of introverts: like high concentration, attention, their eagerness to think, to listen rather than to speak,

to do by themselves, and also the kind of feedback (self-correction technique) which was applied in the context, could help them to perform better than extroverts in grammatical learning.

Considering the impact of identifying personality traits in terms of applying self-correction and teacher-correction, teachers can create a better instructional environment for their learners and easily get the understanding of students' motivations and favorite method of working in class. Thus, the implication of this study can provide teachers and educators secure and confident in teaching environment. Furthermore, the results of this study enable the researchers to teach other language skills (speaking, listening, vocabulary, pronunciation) by the inspiration of the current study. In addition to the value of these findings to EFL writing teachers, the outcomes of this study should be of interest to teachers in other areas who are dealing with written work of EFL students.

This study has made some important contributions to a better understanding of the extroversion-introversion personality and its relationship to some learning outcomes (i.e., performance on grammatical knowledge in terms of feedback types).

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