

EFFECT OF INTROVERSION IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Abstract The topic of personality and language learning has been one of the most heated ones in recent years. Extroversion and introversion are predicted to have a relationship with language learning since they are thought to contribute to language learning and SLA outcomes. The role of extroversion-introversion in second language acquisition is defined by a variety of assumptions. Furthermore, some research has been undertaken using these assumptions to investigate if there is a link between language learning and these two variables, as to how different people learn a second language differently has been interesting for most in the world of education and also for me as a teacher. However, this topic namely the impact of introversion on learning a language is put forward to find out the priorities and the drawbacks that introverted students have in learning languages. This paper is intended to explore how an introverted English learner performs, behaves, and acts during the learning process and how these can be beneficial or disadvantageous for the learner. One teen student of Uzbek high school is chosen as the subject of the case study and tested to identify his personality type. Then he was interviewed so as to identify the difficulties he encountered in speaking and advantages in other parts of the learning procedures like listening, reading, and writing, which requires individual performance and high cognitive processing. Understanding the home culture of the candidate, it can be predicted that the culture may stimulate introverted behavior in the learner.

The case study's findings and conclusions are expected to be important to instructors because, based on the information acquired as a result of this study, the properties of an extrovert-introvert domain can be used by teachers to regulate their classroom instruction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the second language education world, the effect of personality characteristics has been claimed to be significant in learning a language. According to Dornyei (2005), among these characteristics, introversion and extraversion is one which is commonly discussed. There has been much research into whether extroverts or introverts have an upper hand in second language acquisition over the other. Some

linguists believe that extrovert learners have more advantages in their learning processes as they are open to using the language, the rest of them concur introversion can give more opportunities to students through observation and self-motivation. However, this paper reviews prior research studies and their outcomes on this topic and discusses the advantages and disadvantages that introversion gives to second language learners, and compares it with its counterpart.

First of all, let's recognize who are the extroverts and introverts. Brown (2000) described an extrovert as one who gets the energy from outside sources, whereas an introvert is said to find it in their inner world. By definition, introverted people are more concerned with their own feelings and ideas, and they are reluctant to converse with other people. According to Myers (2003), introverted people have enough inner drive that they do not need outside stimuli to accomplish things, which can facilitate certain aspects of learning a language. They are self-motivated and often do reading and other individual activities with greater attention which can promote them in second language acquisition, particularly in writing. Skehan (1989) pointed out introverts can have a priority over extraverts in verbal learning and overall academic achievement as they are better at solitary activities. It is true that not spending time talking to people around allows us to observe, analyze, think, and eventually learn. It can be concluded that less outgoing learners can do better in a classroom setting where success is measured by remembering grammar rules and vocabulary, yet in spontaneous communication, they are not as good as their gregarious counterparts (MacIntyre, Clément, & Noels, 1998).

Eysenck (2004) noted that there are seven personality traits based on the introvert dimension. They are carefulness, unsociability, inhibition, responsibility, inactivity, reflectiveness, and control. Introverted people tend to do things carefully in a safe and familiar way and avoid dangers. This creates inhibition which discourages risk-taking that is very important in improving a second language. Guiora (1972) claimed that inhibition has a negative impact on at least second language pronunciation performance. That is where introverts lose the battle against extroverted people in language education as they are active in social interaction and more prone to take risks. Controlling and arranging everything before doing it seems another barrier in the accomplishment of speaking a second language fluently, as Brown (2000) noted "If we never ventured to speak a sentence until we were certain of its total correctness, we would likely never communicate productively at all". People with unsociable characters do not prefer to have many friends and often feel stressed about interacting with other people lacking the very important experience needed for fluency in a language (Eysenck, 2004).

The role of extraversion and introversion in the development of speaking skills is also considerable. Pitchard (1952) studied thirty-three English schoolboys studying French to determine whether there is a correlation between outgoingness and success in speaking a second language fluently. He observed them in the playground and rated them in three ways, namely conversational approaches to other children, spontaneous entry into a game with another boy, and engagement in friendly horseplay. He found a positive connection between extroversion and fluency in French. The result was positive as it was conducted in a real natural social environment where students need to interact, which can be advantageous for outgoing students.

In contrast to the research results illustrated above, some researchers discovered that there is no relationship between sociable behavior and success in second language acquisition. Chastain (1975) studied students of French and concluded that there was no noticeable connection between these character traits and learning a language. Nevertheless, he found a significant correlation in German and Spanish classes. That means the existence of correlation might depend on the language which is being learned. Naiman et al. (1978) found no substantial correlation between outgoingness and learning a language among the high school French students in his study of the personality traits and their effects on language education.

As can be seen from the given reviews, there is much controversy on the topic of extraversion and introversion and their effects on language acquisition. Considering this it can be stated that finding out the exact impact of introversion and extraversion on second language acquisition has not been easy in empirical studies. Different researchers investigated the topic and arrived at different conclusions. For instance, it is often claimed that extroverted students are more successful in languages yet research findings do not always support this viewpoint (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Therefore, It is worth noting that further research studies are needed to identify the relationship between language education and introverted or extroverted personality. Extroverts and introverts have advantages and disadvantages in different aspects of learning a second language as discussed above. What is more, the awareness of teachers and professors about these traits would make the process of learning more interesting and efficient.

RESEARCH DESIGN

At first, to find out the personality type of the participant Eysenck's Personality Inventory (EPI) (Extroversion/Introversion) was used. The Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) was developed by HJ Eysenck in 1975 and is a commonly used self-report personality inventory. Various researchers have agreed that the EPI is accurate and valid and that it is one of the most well-researched psychological tools. This test measures two independent aspects of personalities namely Introversion/Extroversion

and Neuroticism-Stability, each of which has 57 “yes-no” questions with no repeat. The extraversion is out of 24 which measures how extroverted the person is.

Secondly, interviews and classroom observations were the tool to collect information about the effects of introverted personality on acquiring English which is the foreign language for the learner. The subject of the case study was learning English during preparing for the IELTS exam, which assesses four skills listening, reading, writing, and speaking to check the general proficiency of a learner. In this case study, the IELTS test result was applied when the assessment of proficiency is needed. The interview questions were designed to study the learning trajectory of the learner during this process.

Apart from interviewing, the participant was also observed in the classroom to make sure the answers given in the interview were not inaccurate. I observed the learner while teaching him and in different classes to ensure his character was not manipulated. In addition, observations revealed some factors that can influence language learning which the subject himself was not aware of.

DATA COLLECTIONS AND FINDINGS

To begin with, the participant was told to do Eysenck’s Personality Inventory (EPI) test to identify whether the participant is introverted or extroverted.

The data were mainly collected through interview questions. First of all, It can be concluded that there is a correlation between introversion and learning English.

“...I like speaking English generally, but not in the classroom where everyone watches me. I like speaking or practicing English alone so that no one can notice my mistakes.”

As we can notice the learner has an inhibition to speak and converse with other students in the classroom because he is not outgoing, putting him at a disadvantage in expanding his experience. Another thing he mentioned is that his grades in individual projects are better than in group projects which require active interaction with group members. Apart from that, the candidate also pointed out that knowledge is more important to him and he likes reading, which can be related to better grades in individual projects.

The answer to the sixth question can show which aspect of the language is influenced by personality.

“I have wondered many times how some students produce ..more fluent speech than mine with less knowledge than I have”

Answering this question, the candidate compared other students' achievements in speaking implying they are better speakers than him as they are more outgoing. He found making sentences orally a bit hard even with good knowledge, and he blamed his reserved personality for this. He also pointed out that his pronunciation and fluency

suffered the most. His IELTS test report form (see appendix) illustrates that he got 6.0 (B2) from writing and 5.5 (B2) from reading but 5.0 (B1) from the speaking module of the test. This can also explain that speaking skill is quite challenging for the subject of the case study.

Furthermore, the participant revealed that he does not start conversations easily, the unwillingness he has may come from introverted behavior.

“Sometimes I choose to wait them speak to me if my need is not urgent.”

This might be another contributing factor in the lack of speaking practice. He also stated that he is not comfortable with speaking English when other people are watching him. This is one of the qualities of an introvert that may decrease speaking or practicing hours which are substantial in mastering fluency and pronunciation.

However, being an introverted learner is not always disadvantageous. It has been investigated that people who are not keen on socializing enjoy reading and doing individual things. This means introverted students can be successful in academic achievement which requires individual competence.

“.., I am better at individual tasks. So, reading and writing are easier for me”

The subject of the case study confirmed that he works better independently and likes reading.

“In group activities, I often find myself in the role of observer...”

Being observant and a good listener can enable the learner to be more attentive and get lots of input which allows him to understand different concepts more easily by analyzing them. This can also explain why this candidate got higher scores in the reading and writing modules of the IELTS.

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