An Investigation of the Extraverts-Introverts’ Speaking Anxiety in English Classes

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1.1. Background

Individual Differences (IDs) can have a consequential effect not only on the most important process underlying Second Language Acquisition (SLA) but also they may affect various learning styles and rates as well as inducing strengths and weaknesses in acquiring our mother tongue (Dornyei, 2005). Eysenck (1994) has acknowledged that human beings differ from each other in numerous ways; however, some of these ways are of more importance to psychology than the others to be probed extensively, among which personality is of wider significance.
Campbell, McCabe, Troup, and Davalos (2011) pointed out that exploring facets of personality and individual differences can be even conducive to gaining a better insight into cognitive system; however, learner differences in second or foreign language learning can be interpreted not only by depending on the cognitive factors such as language aptitude and learning style, but also by hinging upon affective factors, such as motivation and anxiety (Tianjian, 2010).
Accordingly, Extraversion-Introversion (E-I) is one of the major personality differences that has grabbed the attention of the psycholinguists, in particular (Dornyei, 2005). Therefore, it would be worthwhile to clarify the underlying characteristics of this construct to gain a more comprehensive view of this personality type indicator, respectively. Eysenck and Eyenck (1975), and Myers (1962) claim that extraverts tend to be open to the strangers and get socially mixed whereas introverts are likely to keep aloof and tend not to keep a high profile.
“Extraverts have found to be more talkative in triads or groups (Bem & Allen, 1974; Shaw, 1976 as cited in Thorne, 1987, p. 718) but not necessarily in dyads where findings are inconsistent” (Campbell & Rushton, 1987 as cited in Thorne, 1987, p. 718). Based on Jungian personality typology (1923/1976) extraverts are generally outgoing, direct, energetic, and sociable and introverts are more reticent, bashful, thoughtful, sensitive, and inscrutable. Besides, he believes that extraverts prefer constructing a more inclusive, common space whereas introverts tend to take a more exclusive and individual space. In fact, Gale (1969) defines extraverts as the ones who are more restless and energetic in restricted environments.
Furnham (1990) highlighted the existence of numerous distinct common-sense relationships between (E-I) and language use to the point that with the relative ease, a reliable measure of this trait can be produced. For instance, regarding the oral production, extraverts are characterized by their talkativeness and fewer pauses, whereas introverts are marked by tending to utilize more formal speech with more careful grammatical constructions (Dornyei, 2005); however, acquisition and fluent production of foreign languages can be highly affected by Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), too (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; Andrade & Williams, 2008). Many students feel more anxious and distressed in the foreign language (FL) class than in any other classes (Campbell & Ortiz, 1991; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989), and their anxiety seems to stem predominantly from the speaking situation (Koch & Terrell, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Price, 1991).
Consequently, since speech is one of the most natural and common way of exchanging information, it is widely considered as one of the prominent skills in foreign language learning classes contributing to the opening of numerous L2 discussions, maintenance of pairworks and groupworks, and promoting higher chances of self-expression.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

Inasmuch as awareness of these personality differences as useful predictors for L2 achievement can make a big contribution to Second/Foreign language teachers’ performance for adopting wiser and due strategies in dealing with individual differences, psycholinguists have mostly addressed the impact of these personality dimensions on the learners’ natural communicative oral performance (e.g., Socan & Bucik, 1998; Dewaele & Furnham, 1999, 2000). It seems that conducting a research on the relationship between this personality trait and the learners’ anxiety level while speaking English, in a mixed qualitative and quantitative method, has been comparatively neglected.
1.3. Purpose of the Study

The present study aims at examining the relationship between the students’ extent of extraversion and their speaking anxiety at a quantitative phase, and analyzing the speech fluency and accuracy across a number of extraverts and introverts at a qualitative phase, respectively.

In sum, it focuses on investigating the relationship between the extraversion level and the speech anxiety level in the foreign language classes. In other words, the study attempts to examine the relationship between (E-I) and speaking anxiety in a mixed method approach.
1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions are posed and will be investigated in the study:

1. Is there any significant relationship between the students’ speaking anxiety level and their extent of extraversion?

2. Is there any significant difference regarding the speech anxiety across highly extraverted, moderately extraverted, moderately introverted, and quite introverted individuals?

3. Is there any significant relationship between the extraversion level and speech fluency?

4. Is there any significant relationship between the extraversion level and speech accuracy?
1.5. Null Hypotheses
1. There is no significant relationship between the students' speaking anxiety level and their extent of extraversion.

2. There is no significant difference regarding the speech anxiety across highly extraverted, moderately extraverted, moderately introverted, and quite introverted individuals.

3. There is no significant relationship between the extraversion level and speech fluency.

4. There is no significant relationship between the extraversion level and speech accuracy.
1.6. Definition of Key Terms

**Extraversion-introversion:** According to Eysenck and Eyenck (1975), extraversion is the act, state, or habit of being predominantly concerned with obtaining gratification from what is outside the self, whereas introversion is the state or tendency toward being wholly or predominantly concerned with and interested in one's own mental life. Extraversion and introversion are typically viewed as a single continuum. So, to be high in one necessitates being low in the other.

**Speaking anxiety:** MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), defined speaking anxiety as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts.

**Speech fluency:** According to Dawn Dodson (2010), speech fluency is used to denote broadly a high level of language proficiency, most typically foreign language or another learned language and to indicate fluid language use, as opposed to slow, halting use. Fluency is basically one’s ability to be understood by both native and non-native listeners. A higher level would be bilingual which indicates one is native in two languages, either having learned them simultaneously or one after the other.
1.7. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Since numerous variables may be found affecting ESL proficiency, and consequently the L2 oral production, it is beyond the scope of the present study and also extremely difficult to consider all the potential variables that might account for the differences in how L2 learners develop higher proficiency in the areas of speaking in one study, intensively.

Therefore, the focus of the present study is to investigate the relationship between (E-I) and L2 verbal communicative language ability. Henceforth, further research on the impact of other confounding variables including teachers' effectiveness, motivation, gender, learning styles, willingness to communicate, and language learning strategies on developing L2 oral skill across extroverts-introverts is required.
Furthermore, the present study aims at merely addressing one language skill (speaking) exclusively; therefore, further studies are recommended to be conducted on the role of this personality type indicator on the L2 achievement in the area of listening, reading, and writing, as well.
2. Literature Review

Extraverts have proved to have outperformed introverts in faster doing of more complex tasks which calls for more response competition; however, the easiness of the task or the task which involves little response competition would deprive them of the favored advantage (Eysenck, 1974, 1976).

The distinction between extraverts and introverts regarding the complexity of the task has received a special attention by numerous researchers (e.g., Bone, 1971; Mclaughlin & Eysenck 1967; Shanmugan & Santhanam, 1964). For instance, Eysenck (1976) has assumed an inverse relationship between optimal level of arousal and the task difficulty. Eysenck’s theory is in line with the Yerkes-Dodson law which claims a curvilinear (inverted U) relationship between the level of “drive” and performance (Socan & Bucik, 1998).
Socan and Bucik (1998) confirmed that since the middle level of arousal results in the optimal performance, extraverts’ performance on mental speech task should consequently be better in “high arousing” conditions while introverts would favor “low arousing” conditions.

Dewaele and Furnham (1999) explained that introverts are more susceptible to higher pressure conditions since the arousal level exceeds their optimal level, which in turn hampers the automaticity of their oral production; therefore, they slide back to controlled serial processing which would result in slower speech production, hesitation, and more errors. In addition, Dewaele and Furnham (2000) have attributed the inability of introverts in producing longer utterances to their lack of sufficient short-term memory capacity which would attenuate their speech fluency.
3. Methodology

This section contains detailed information about the methodological implementation of the current study, the purpose of which is to assess two dimensions of the individual personality traits among which extraversion-introversion and speaking anxiety have been exclusively taken into account as the focus of this study.
3.1. Participants

A community sample of 60 advanced English students, studying at Imamreza University of Mashhad, with the average age of 19.22, ranging from 18 to 25, comprising 12 males and 48 females, participated in this study. Besides, in the qualitative phase 28 freshman males and females’ speech, including 14 extraverts and 14 introverts, were audio recorded to analyze their speech fluency and accuracy, extensively.
3.2. Instruments

The employed instruments in the study included two questionnaires, with one containing items related to their level of extraversion, and the other containing items related to their public speaking anxiety.

3.2.1. Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test.

The standardized Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test was utilized in this study consisting of 15 multiple choice questions with two choices of a, b devoted specifically for assessing the overall level of extraversion-introversion in the individuals. This scale produces a possible range of scores from zero to fifteen based on which the learners were categorized into four main dichotomies of 1. Quite introverted (if gained six and below) 2. Moderately introverted (seven or eight) 3. Moderately extraverted (between nine to twelve) 4. Quite extroverted (thirteen and above that) depending on the MBTI guidelines. Cronbach's alpha was computed with the score exhibiting the reliability coefficient of .79 for the extraversion-introversion trait.
3.2.2. Public speaking classroom anxiety scale.

For the purpose of this study, Public Speaking Classroom Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) was utilized. The questionnaire consisted of 17 items, each on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree (scale point 5) to strongly disagree (scale point 1). The internal consistency coefficient of the completed questionnaires turned out to be .84.
The survey was conducted in the first semester of the 2013-2014 academic year. To find out the relationship between extraversion and public speaking anxiety, two questionnaires were administered to 60 university students. One containing the single scale for speaking anxiety and the other for extraversion level. Both were administered at the beginning of normal English classes, with the former taking about 12 minutes on average, while the latter about 8 minutes. Furthermore, in an attempt to study the differences between extraverts and introverts regarding their oral production in the EFL classroom context, 28 females’ speech, at the advanced proficiency level based on the administered TOEFL exam score, comprising 14 from highly extraverted and moderately extraverted, and 14 from quite introverted and moderately introverted extraversion scale, were audio recorded during their panel discussion classes in five successive sessions each lasting for 90 minutes.
Depending on the university curriculum the students had to pass these four-credit panel discussion classes for two successive semesters as a compulsory course to gain the chance of making their way to the higher levels. To this end, the learners were provided with opportunities for having free interpersonal natural English discussions on agreed various everyday topics based on which they were meticulously scored on both their accuracy and fluency in regard to the TOFEL's accuracy and fluency scales by their professor. Henceforth, their discussions were recorded in a relatively stressful interpersonal situation. In all, seven and half hours of speech were recorded each having the opportunity of speaking around 16 minutes all during these sessions. Finally, for further analyses the recordings were transcribed by the researcher into orthographical English. These transcriptions were then coded at the word level based on their structural nature and for possible lexical or morphological errors.
3.4. Data Analysis

After collecting the data, they were entered into and processed with SPSS program. Considering the aim of this study is mainly two-fold, firstly it aims at investigating the relationship between extraversion and public speaking anxiety and secondly, it attempts at testifying the significant differences across the four dichotomies of extraversion scale regarding their speech anxiety level, Spearman correlation for the first and Kruskal-Wallis for the second were computed. Finally, to specify the location of differences between pairs of groups (highly extraverted, moderately extraverted, moderately introverted, quite introverted) Siegel and Castellan inequality formula was utilized.
References


