

Research paper

The Relationship between Personality Types of Iranian Non-English Teachers as EFL Learners and Learning Language

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the impact of personality types on language learning by a group of Iranian teachers. Therefore, 30 male and female teachers as English learners teaching in different fields in Quchan, a city in the northeast of Iran, were selected as research participants through convenience sampling. The instruments used to gather the data were the Myers and Briggs Test Inventory (MBTI) for identifying their personality types. Another inventory was the teacher's final scores of their course as a proficiency test for determining their level of success in language learning. After analyzing the data with SPSS software, it was found out that there was a significant and meaningful relationship between some personality types and foreign language learning by Iranian teachers. Also, some results show that sometimes personality doesn't affect learning English, so there must be other reasons that affect teacher's learning of language.

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Introduction

The relationship between personality and second language learning ability has received some research interest these days. Takeuchi, Griffiths and Coyle (2007) argued that the strategies that a learner uses and their effectiveness depend greatly on the individual differences of learners. One of the most important of them is the personality factor. The personality of the teacher is an important motivating factor in the educational process. (Muhrinova et al. 2020). However, not many researchers investigate the influence of this factor on learning and even teaching (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989-1990; Sharp, 2008; Wakamoto, 2000). Also, as mentioned

by Cook (2003), this is a very significant affective factor for learning. Personality is a factor that must be used in teaching and learning areas, especially in some countries that emotional aspects work more. The researcher of the present study believes that having more information and being more aware of the qualities and favorites of teachers will guide us in our planning for specific and appropriate teacher training programs and teaching teachers as learners.

Brown (2003) believes that the systematic study of personality in acquisition can lead to a better perception of the language learning process and the development of effective teaching methods. In recent years, although learners' Personality types have been investigated to find solutions to solve problems in teaching and learning, not many contributions have been made to the teachers that are learning English themselves as language learner. Personality types facilitate learning behavior and motivate the person, and these traits are decisive for the person in insisting or giving up (Blickle, 1998).

Much research until now have been conducted on the relationship between personality types and other different variables such as motivation, self-efficacy, behavioral factors, SLA and ELT (Rartore, 2019; Hanana, Rukmigarsari, & Fathani, 2019; and Pangestu & Yunianta, 2019). But none of them has explored the relationship between personality and learning a foreign language like English by non-English teachers (All the teachers from different fields of teaching like mathematics, art, literature and so on). The researcher is going to find non-English teacher's personality characteristics affect their language learning. Learning and knowing another language by non-EFL teachers is valuable. Still, most of them trace that they cannot remember another language as well as other learners, as they are busy in their job, they do not need to learn another language, and always they lack motivation. So most of the Non-English teachers don't try to learn another language. The researcher feels knowing another language can help them think and do better in their job, have a dynamic memory and sometimes use their linguistic information in their field of teaching. For instance, they can use new world findings about teaching in their classes and enjoy teaching more. The qualities of teachers can help education authorities to plan more suitable training programs for teachers. So this study aims to evaluate how the personality of the Non- EFL Iranian teachers affect learning a language.

The research problem was defined by means of the following questions:

- 1-What are the primary personality types among Iranian teachers?
- 2-Is there a significant relationship between participants' personality profiles and their learning styles?
- 3-Can a particular type of personality of non-English teachers affect learning a language more than the others?
- 4- Which type of personality is dominant among non-English Iranian teachers?

Literature Review

Personality is an essential factor that can be used in different situations and for other people. According to Talasbek et al. (2020) personality is a combination of a person's characteristics and attitudes in dealing with different social situations as in school, university, family, working

team, etc. There are four Jungian functions-sensing, Intuitions, feelings and thinking that exists in every individual. In line with this theory, and for evaluating the personality types of people, Myers and Briggs (1975) created the Myers- Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and applied for Jung's work and influenced a generation of researchers trying to understand differences in human beings. The instrument is a widely used psychological self-report questionnaire used to assess people's orientation toward the Jungian types. There are four personality dimensions and 16 distinct personality types measured by MBTI, with applications in educational, career, and family counselling settings. It identifies the preferred way an individual perceives (gathers data) and judges (makes decisions). Briefly speaking, the MBTI indicates a person's psychological preference for consistent and enduring patterns of how the world is viewed, information is collected and interpreted, how decisions are made, and how individuals live out lifestyle choices (Martin, 1997). Four separate scales exist. Each is continuous and indicates a person's preference for a particular index. The four scales are: Extroversion versus Introversion, Sensing versus Intuition, Thinking versus Feeling, and Judging versus Perceiving. Extroverts (E) are more concerned with what is happening around them than in their own emotions and thoughts. Introvert: It means a person who is more concerned with his own emotions and feelings than in issues outside himself. In other words, it means being too shy to join social activities. The other types of personality are Sensing(S) and Intuition (N) show us the different ideas and preferences that people have when they meet additional information of the outside world, and they want to analyze the received data. Individuals with sensing personality are more aware of their senses regarding their environment, are often factually based, focus on practical, concrete problems. Individuals who tend to understand the world through an Intuitive process prefer to live in a world of possibilities and options, often looking toward the future. The third section of personality types is Thinking (T) /Feeling (F) characteristics. The thinking learners learn more effectively from impersonal circumstances and logical consequences. Their strengths are in their ability to analyze and their self-discipline. However, they can suffer from performance anxiety because their self-esteem is attached to achievement. The feeling learner learns more effectively from personalized circumstances and social values. They have the advantage of their strong desire to bond with the teacher, resulting in good relations, which lead to high self-esteem. However, they can become discouraged if not appreciated, and disrupted by a lack of interpersonal harmony. The judging learner learns more effectively by reflection, analysis, and processes that involve closure.

A teacher's personality, in general plays a vital role in the educational process. It is often examined in relation to outcome factors on the teacher's side or student's side; for example, teaching effectiveness, teacher burnout or teacher self-efficacy. On the student's side, teacher's personality is usually analyzed about the student's motivation or student's achievements (Khalilzad & Khadi, 2018). Knowing about the personality factors of teachers can be beneficial for teaching in general. For example, for teacher's planning and preparing for teaching it can be helpful. (Schnitzius et al. 2019). A teacher's personality can also be beneficial for the initial teacher selection or hiring process (Bastianet, 2017).

Several studies have investigated the importance of personality type and learning style and their relationship. Personality traits can enhance the academic performance of learners (Luqman and Khalid, 2018). Also, Behnam and Bayazidi (2013) indicated that teachers less awareness of their personality types and their attributes toward learning impact their teaching style.

Despite the varieties of research in the personality and learning era, relatively no study has been conducted to find the relationship between personality type and learning a foreign language in which language learners are non-English teachers. Consequently, due to the lack of research in this era, this paper attempted to show this matter.

Methodology

In this study, a quantitative method was chosen because the primary goal of this research was to find a relationship between teacher personality types and learning English in Iranian non-TEFL teachers. The independent variable, personality type, was examined about four kinds of personality, and the dependent variable, language learning, was known as a different variable.

Participants

The participants of the present study comprised 30 teachers selected according to convenience sampling among a group of Iranian teachers in Quchan, a city in the north of Iran that had attended a course of learning English. So only the teachers of other fields like physical education, chemistry, history, counseling, empirical science and literature were selected to attend in this study, and the EFL teachers did not attend this study. Unfortunately, some participants did not cooperate with the researcher, because some of them didn't have enough time to spend for doing research and filling the questionnaire and some told that they don't like to be a member of the participants at all. So the number of samples that received the questionnaires and complete them are about 30. They had attended a class of learning English as in-service class, in that class, these teachers had to learn some general grammatical rules, study and scan some reading passage and learn some English words. First, they have explained about the research aims and then the way they must fill in the questionnaire. After a brief explanation of the purpose of the research at last, the participants accepted the MBTI inventory and then completed it in the class in 30 minutes and delivered them in the classroom to the researcher. To receive reliable data, the researcher explained the purpose of completing the questionnaires and assured them that their responses would be kept confidential; moreover, the questionnaires were coded numerically and the participants were asked not to write their names on them if they want. They were simply required to provide some information such as age, gender, teaching experience, educational level and their educational field on top of the questionnaire. As an incentive, the participants allowed to receive feedback about their performance on the instrument by presenting their phone numbers according to their wish. The profile of the teachers is as follows. Their ages varied from 32 to 50 Years old with four till 28 years of teaching experience in teaching different fields other than teaching the English. The

education level of these teachers was BA, and some had MA. They were teaching in different schools with different students in Quchan city or villages around.

Instrumentation

To determine the teacher's personality type's kind Myers-Briggs Type (MBTI) Indicator was used. In 1976, Isabel Myers and Katharine Briggs, who were a mother and daughter team, invented a new version of personality inventory that they called MBTI. It is now the most widely employed personality test globally and has ever been translated into 16 languages (Dornyei, 2005). There are four personality dimensions and 16 distinct personality types measured by MBTI now, with applications in educational, career, and family counselling settings. So, the MBTI indicates a person's psychological preference for consistent and enduring patterns of how the world is viewed, information is collected and interpreted, how decisions are made, and how individuals live out lifestyle choices (Martin, 1997). For obtaining the personality types of Iranian teachers, the translated version of MBTI, a self-report questionnaire, and each item of the questionnaire contain two options from which teachers were supposed to choose one. According to Felder (2002), "The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator measures preferences on four scales derived from Jung's Theory of Psychological Types" (p.21). They provide the eight dichotomies as follows: Introversion (I), Sensing (S), Thinking (T), Judging (J), Perceiving (P), Extroversion (E), Intuition (N), Feeling (F).

The scores of the participants accounted and the results obtained via SPSS software, version 22. THz. Another instrument used in this study was the final scores of the learners that they received at the end of the language learning course. Using this software was, to some extent time consuming. The questions in this test were discovered from the course book named "Results" that the learners had studied during the course and then took an exam of that.

Data Analysis

This study was conducted based on correlation design between an independent variable and dependent variable to establish a relationship between personality and learning language with non-English teachers. At first, a personality questionnaire was given to participants that were selected through convenient sampling. After gathering the sheets entirely, they answered a language proficiency examination at the end of their English course. Some teachers did well in their test, and some did not. But all of their answer sheets included in the research. Personality types and language learning were recorded and entered into SPSS software and appropriate statistical tests were run to analyze the data. (table 3)

Results

For exploring different personality types of participants of this study, an MBTI questionnaire was given to participants, and its results are given below (see Table1). Different types of personality have 16 alternative combinations that the following tables show every one of them.

Table 1*MBTI Results (combined traits)*

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
N=1	N=0	N=1	N=2
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
N=1	N=0	N=0	N=0
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
N=1	N=0	N=2	N=4
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
N=4	N=1	N=4	N=8

Table 2*MBTI (individual traits accounting through Pearson correlation)*

E	0.71%	S	0.38%
I	0.79%	N	0.38%
T	0.95%	J	0.26%
F	0.15%	P	0.004%

Table 3*The Correlation of Total Personality Types and Language Learning by Teachers in Summary.*

Personality trait	Pearson correlation(r)	Sig.
N	.038	.840
S	.171	.366
E	.071	.711
I	-.079	.679
F	.015	.939
T	.195	.303
J	-.026	.890
P	-.004	.984

To determine the relationship between personality types and learning a foreign language by Iranian teachers, a Pearson product – moment correlation was run. The findings for teachers who had the Intuition (N) type of personality indicated that there is a significant correlation between these personality types and language learning ($r=0.038$, $p<0.5$ and $sig=0.840$, $p<0.5$) (see Table 4).

Table 4

The Results of Correlation Between Teacher's Personality Type (the N one) and Language Learning.

		score	N
score	Pearson	1	.038
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.840
	N	30	30
N	Pearson	.038	1
	Correlation		

The other type of personality is Sensing (S). The correlation was accounted for teachers who have a sensing personality and their language function test. Here ($r = 0.171$ and $\text{sig} = .366 < .05$) so, again, this sensing model has been an influential factor in learning a foreign language by Iranian teachers. Table 5 shows this effect.

Table 5

The Results of Correlation Between Teacher's Personality Type (the S one) and Language Learning.

		score	S
score	Pearson	1	.171
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.366
	N	30	30
S	Pearson	.171	1
	Correlation		

Extroversion is another type of personality whose relationship with language teaching seems to be positive. In that $r = 0.071 < 0.5$ and its related results has been shown in Table 6.

Table 6

The Results of Correlation Between Teacher's Personality Type Extroversion (E) and Language Learning.

		score	E
score	Pearson	1	.071
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.711
	N	30	30
E	Pearson	.071	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.711	
	N	30	30

In Table 7, the introverts (I), Judging (J), Perceiving (P), were considered in one table although they were accounted one by one via SPSS software. Still, it seems that this type of personality, because these three factors' results had shown a negative effect on language learning by teachers. It means that language learning is not significant for them, and these teachers use personality types in other aspects of life rather than English. So, these teachers don't have enough motivation for learning another language (for introvert's $r = -.079$, the r for judging ones was $-.026 < .05$ and for perceiving people, it's only about $-.004$ it's deficient, and there can't be any relationship (Table 7).

Table 7

The Results of Correlation Between Teacher's Personality Types (I, P, J) and Language Learning.

		score	I
score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.079
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.679
	N	30	30
		score	J
score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.890
	N	30	30
J	Pearson Correlation	-.026	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.890	
	N	30	30
		score	P
Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.984
	N	30	30
P	Pearson Correlation	-.004	1

Table 8 shows the findings for teachers who had the Feeling (F) type of personality indicated that there is a significant correlation between these personality types and language learning. The results have been specified in table8.

Table 8.

The Results of Correlation Between Teacher's Personality Type Feeling (F) and Language Learning.

		score	F
score	Pearson	1	.015
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.939
	N	30	30
F	Pearson	.015	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.939	
	N	30	30

And the last personality kind is thinking (T). The findings for teachers who had the thinking type of personality indicated that there is a significant correlation between these personality types and language learning ($r=0.195$, $p<0.5$ and $\text{sig}=0.303$, $p<0.5$) (table 9).

Table9.

The Results of Correlation Between Teacher's Personality Type Thinking (T) and Language Learning.

		score	T
score	Pearson	1	.195
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.303
	N	30	30
T	Pearson	.195	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.303	
	N	30	30

Discussion

In the first research question, participant's major personality types were the field of challenge. As mentioned in the results, Iranian teachers do not have the same personalities, and their major type of personality, according to the questionnaires, was thinking type. It means that they try to learn more through impersonal circumstances and logical consequences (Tables 1 and 3). To answer the other research question, according to tables 8 and 9, a significant relationship presents between personality characteristics and learning a language, because the distribution is statistically significant. ($r=0.195$, $p<0.5$ and $\text{sig}=0.303$, $p<0.5$) (Table 9). Although in some traits, it seems there are differences in language learning success that is related to personality, like the intuitions, judging and Perceiving do not have relations.

To answer the last two questions of this study, it can be seen that some personality traits affect learning more. Here, the ENTJ personality type was dominant among Iranian teachers. It shows these teachers try to use their personality traits in learning a language more than the others. Based on what has been mentioned, the teachers with this kind of personality, should be adapted to the individual differences in nature to enhance the progress for another language learning. This can be due to the fact that different learners learn differently in which their nature affects their perception of learning a language. In this study, it was ENTJ type.

Also, to determine the relationship between personality types and learning, a foreign language by Iranian teachers a Pearson product-moment correlation was run. The findings for teachers who had the Intuition (N) type of personality indicated that there is a significant correlation between these personality types and language learning ($r=0.038$, $p<0.5$ and $sig=0.840$, $p<0.5$) (Table 4).

It can be seen that the findings of this study are in line with Lumen and Khalid (2018) and Behnam, Yazidi (2013), who found that Personality traits can enhance the academic performance of learners and that teachers less aware of their personality types and their attributes toward learning impacts their teaching style. Other studies have sometimes found that successful language learners are more likely to use specific learning strategies (Harris & Grenfell, 2004; McDonough, 1986; Li Qin, 2006; Skehan, 1999). In other research products, conducted in Iran, the result was more similar, however. For instance, Alibakhshi (2011), using MBTI, found that about 44% of Iranian teachers have ESTJ personality (like the present research) and, about 30% of them have ISTJ personality type and other personality types were seen in about 30% of the participants. Alibakhshi's (2011) study also recognized one personality type (ISTJ) was more prominent. Similar to, Alibakhshi (2011), Akbari, Ghonsooli and Ghorbani (2015), found that ISTP and ISTJ were the most frequent personality type of teachers in Mashhad, one of the eastern cities in Iran. So, the results of the present study were similar to some research projects, and it indicates that the process of learning a language, including personality types, is believed to be deeply important.

Conclusion

As reported before, this study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between personality types and learning a foreign language by Iranian teachers. This relationship was explored through some explanations that tried to identify which personality type has more relation with non- English Iranian teachers. Based on the results of the present study, Iranian teachers do not have the same personality types. ENTJ personality type was dominant among Iranian teachers.

It could also be concluded that personality and language learning in some eras like the intuitions, judging and Perceiving do not have relations, and so the teachers use their particular personality type in some fields and phenomena other than learning a language. Although it seems discovering one's personality characteristic can lead to an increase in achievement at

learning language and it should be emphasized that some have a more active use of their personality type on learning another language.

Implications

In language learning and teaching, many studies have been done, and researchers try to do different projects about more attention to fundamental factors in teaching and learning. One of the critical aspects of learning is the psycholinguistic era, as the role of teaching attitude and personality type that seems to be less spoken about in some aspects. The result of the present study can help educators and other researchers to continue exploring the way personality can affect the way how non-English teachers can learn another language and that how they can use their learning in their jobs and also the findings are of value to all those involved in language teaching.

Suggestions for Further Research

The same research can be done via a broader generalization, more cities in Iran, more subjects from different schools and private institutes of the country, involving both English teachers and non-English ones and comparing personality of foreign teachers and students and the method they learn a language. This study also can be done by some other instruments like observation and other data analysis instruments. The impacts of the other variables such as age, degree, and teaching experience, as well as socioeconomic status of teachers on teaching efficacy, were not studied in this research and thus need further investigation.

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