



Recognizing and Interpreting Personality Types of Senior Secondary School EFL Learners

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56855/ijcse.v3i1.896>

Received January 8, 2024; Accepted February 12, 2024; Available online March 2, 2024

Abstract: Language learning comprises comprehensive concept, alongside its components and needs. However, personalities and language learning strategies have been a very intriguing topics for English for Foreign Language (EFL). Language learning have always to be designed as learner- centered, because learners are individuals who differ in significant ways. Personality is the characteristic of someone that influence them in some way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. MBTI type is chosen mainly because its ability to portrays more specifics trait in individuals. MBTI types are divided in four different dimensions, those traits show how individuals' preference on strategies and techniques on working, such as introvert/extrovert, thinking/feeling, intuitive/sensing, and perceiving/ judging. This review aims to elucidate previous researches on how personality affect English comprehensions among learners. The results showed that on personality traits significantly affect four main categories in EFLLT such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Thus, the information can be used in developing EFLLT strategies that can help learners improving their English mastery through the understanding on what is their weakness, strength, and preference.

Keywords: EFLLT, MBTI, personality traits, strength, weakness.

1. Introduction

Language learning is always a battle of heart; feelings play a significant role in language study and must be taken seriously when planning a successful language learning campaign. As quoted from Ehrmann, Leaver, and Oxford, "It is at least as important to manage feelings as it is to use more cognitive strategies since negative feelings reduce the effectiveness of most [language] learning activities." Appropriate self-efficacy promotes persistence in the face of difficulty and

It can thus only be obtained from fulfilled personal needs in learning (TESOL International Association, 2017). Thus, language learning has always been connected to the learners' psychological factors to understand what is required during the learning process (Aminah et al., 2018; Askani & Askari, 2018).

Language learning comprises comprehensive concepts, components, and needs (Mutlu, 2018). Various variables, such as learner, teacher, and learning environment, always affect the learning process. Those

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variables later will also lead to the need for different techniques in learning and teaching. The process is always different because learning itself is defined as “acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction” (Brown, 2007) or “the internalization of rules and formulas which can be used to communicate in the L2” (Tuncay, 2013). Those personalized learning techniques are defined as learning strategies and learning styles hugely influenced by the learners’ personalities (Brown, 2007). Thus, understanding the learners’ personalities is essential in deciding instructional design for EFL learning (Askani & Askari, 2018; Mutlu, 2018; Revola, 2016).

The relationship between personality traits and linguistic learning has been the subject of a large body of research projects in recent years; both have been studied in a variety of nations, including Indonesia, Japan, Iran, Poland, China, Turkey, and the United States of America (Askani & Askari, 2018; Marpaung & Widyantoro, 2020). Learners’ personality refers to a complex organization of cognition, effects, and behaviors that give direction and pattern to an individual’s life (Mutlu, 2018). Language learning has always been designed as learner-centered because learners differ in significant ways (Akeem & Stapa, 2020; Carey & Barthelmeh, 2016; Mutlu, 2018; Tahir, 2012). From Jung’s personality type perspective, personality traits can also define a preferable learning approach. As for the extroverted, sensing, feeling, and perceiving type, classroom expectation was described as connected to people and spontaneous. Meanwhile, for introverted, intuitive, thinking, and judging types, classroom expectation was more likely in reflective and in-order behavior (Capellan, 2017). An awareness of these personality differences is essential for the most efficient use of learning methodologies presented in the classroom (Sadeghi et al., 2012).

In Indonesia, learning programs have been regulated to be designed as learner-centered due to this understanding (Marpaung & Widyantoro, 2020). However, the practices still need to meet the ideals as learning in school is mainly done in a centered way. This approach was

Then, it was reported as ineffective due to students’ low motivation, participation, and understanding (Dewi, 2017). This is still far from the ideal model of English learning as this approach should be made to get the best result in English learning, especially as a foreign language that needs extra effort (Chen, 2020).

While personality often becomes a research variable in many previous research in English education, the MBTI personality type has yet to be used in previous research despite its popularity among young learners. Research by Marpaung and Widyantoro (2020) in a journal assesses the correlation between students’ personality types and their EFL performance, especially speaking skills. The personality type they used is the Big Five personalities, proposed by Costa and McCrae in 1992. Their research found no correlation between students’ personality type and their English-speaking skills. It suggested another factor outside personality type contributed to the student’s speaking skills.

A different result was found in research conducted by Tahiri et al. (2014). Their research found that personality style positively correlated with student learning style. They argued that EFL teachers could use the information about their student’s personality types to adjust learning styles in the classroom. It enabled them to create a dynamic atmosphere and better classroom management. Besides, acknowledging student personality types also enabled the teachers to participate in class activities that meet the student’s learning preferences based on their personality type.

Another study about personality type in EFL learning was conducted by Kafryawan (2020). In his research entitled, “The Influence of Extroversion Personality towards EFL Learners’ Writing Skills,” he found a medium correlation between EFL learning extroversion type and writing skills. This research used an EPI questionnaire to determine student personality type: introversion or extroversion. However, this research only focuses on the extroversion personality type and does not examine introverted students.

From the previous research, several research gaps can be filled by this research. Firstly, the MBTI personality type is rarely used in research as a contributive variable to assess EFL student performance. Secondly, personality type based on MBTI is not used in assessing effective classroom management for a student. Thirdly, previous research only focuses on specific linguistic competence, while four linguistic competencies (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) are strongly interrelated. Lastly, the research is also expected to fill the gap in

student-centered learning. Even though it is theoretically a student-centered EFL learning in Indonesia, there still needs to be more focus on the students. This research is expected to give a broad understanding of student-centered EFL learning. Based on these gaps, this research brings novelty by using the MBTI personality

type in assessing effective EFLT in four linguistic competencies in Indonesian schools. Besides, it brings novelty to the current development of student-centered learning implementation.

This review aims to give perspective on senior high school students' perception of English as a Foreign Language learning based on their MBTI Personality Type; this study will also elucidate previous studies that show the importance of understanding learners' personalities and how it impacts the effectiveness of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning and teaching (EFLT) activities. As personality traits are essential for language learning effectiveness, personality should be considered as strategy building for EFLT. Thus, information from this paper can help to build an understanding of how important it is to know the students' personalities; thus, it can also become a basis for deciding future strategies in the EFLT program

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 English as a Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (EFLT)

English, as an international communication language, is one of the languages most needed by students. The importance of English in international communication makes this language a part of the Indonesian national curriculum. English is one of the significant subjects in primary and secondary schools in Indonesia. This is due to the importance of English for global communication nowadays. This language is a language that must be learned from elementary school to college. Mastering this language will make communicating more accessible for students in the broader area. This will also help their learning process and future careers. Students require mastery of English from an early age to face global competition. English-based communication is needed for every sector, such as education, economics, scientific meetings, conferences, and daily basics. Language enables people to participate in information exchanges; it is used for sharing information, reading instructions from food packages to gadgets, understanding directions, and other activities. As globalization becomes a part of life, English will become more intense and required daily. Thus, students need to learn and understand this language from primary education (Utami, 2021).

Learners and teachers need to be connected in EFL Learning and Teaching. The strategies for teaching usually lead to higher engagement of the students. Engagement is the key to language and literacy learning. This condition represents the dynamic state of learners. This keeps learners in a state of active thinking, focusing, and enjoying the learning process. Engagement needs learners' willingness to be in the right frame of mind (Mercer, 2019). Educational research has shown that students who are actively engaged in the learning activity will learn more than passive students. The statement is also well supported by extensive evidence that student engagement in lectures improves understanding and academic results (Wang & Tahir, 2020). The strategies employed can be based on the personality of the students, as it will ease students to learn in their natural way, and learning can be more enjoyable

1.2.2 Students' Personality Types Worth Considering in EFL Instruction: MBTI Approach

Personality is the characteristic of someone that influences them in some way of thinking, feeling, and behaving (Aminah et al., 2018). Several personality theories have been stated, such as five-type personalities, enneagram, the seven personalities, and MBTI (Daniels & Price, 2000; Putick, 2009; Sharp, 1988). Each dimension of personality type represents a continuum; individuals can be screened on the spectrum to be less or more, say, extroverted, but it is also possible to identify their idealized personality type (Nikoopour & Farsini, 2010). One personality trait often used for deciding strategies for EFLT, including by Brown (2007), is the MBTI type. This approach is chosen mainly because of its ability to portray more specific traits in individuals (Mutlu, 2018). MBTI types are divided into four different dimensions; those traits show how individuals' preference for strategies and techniques for working (Thomson, 1998), as described briefly below:

- a. **Introverts:** Introverts are oriented to the inner world, i.e., they are motivated from "within," and oriented towards the inner world of ideas, imagery, and reflection. Introverts get their energy from within and are analytical, quiet, and studious. Introverts show effectiveness in working alone, depth in thought, and usually very initiative when the situation or issue is critical (Kurniasy & Susan, 2019; Mutlu, 2018; Nikoopour & Farsini, 2010).

- b. Extroverts: Extroverts are oriented to the outer world, i.e., motivated from "without," and their attention is directed outward. They are people who are sociable, friendly, self-confident, and outgoing. They appear relaxed and confident. These people tend to be by people, culture, and things around them and like to make decisions considering others' demands (Brown, 2007; Mutlu, 2018).
- c. Intuitive: Intuition is an ability to deal with information based on its hidden potential and possible existence. These people like theories, possibilities, innovation, and new issues and avoid trivial, concrete, natural, and unrelated concepts. An intuitive person can deal with information based on its hidden potential and possible existence (Brown, 2007; Mutlu, 2018).
- d. Sensing: Sensing is the ability to deal with information based on its physical qualities and affection for other information. These people prefer tangible, concrete, and natural things and dislike working on abstract theories and topics. A sensing person uses the senses and powers of observation (Brown, 2007; Nikoopour & Farsini, 2010).
- e. Thinking: Thinking is dealing with information based on structure and function. These people judge people, lives, and events based on logic, analysis, and evidence and avoid illogical and emotional judging (Mutlu, 2018).
- f. Feeling: Feeling is the ability to deal with information based on its initial energetic condition and interactions. Someone who makes decisions on subjective, personal values and standards uses feeling. Feeling people understand other people and are interested in people and their feelings, desire harmony, and easily pass their moods to others. Students with these personality traits show empathy for others and are very easy to work in a group (Mutlu, 2018; Nikoopour & Farsini, 2010).
- g. Perceiving: Perceiving types are motivated into activity by the changes in a situation. These people are called data collectors because they like gathering more information before making decisions (Mutlu, 2018).
- h. Judging: Judging types are motivated to engage in activity by their decisions resulting from changes in a situation. They do not like to leave unanswered questions, plan to work ahead, and tend to finish them (Mutlu, 2018).

1.2.3 Recognizing and Interpreting Personality Types

Student-centered learning is an approach in education where learner and their needs become the focus of the education process rather than being centered around teacher input (European Commission, 2018). Nowadays, this approach is widespread and is implemented both in Indonesia and around the world. SCL is believed to be effective in optimizing student performance in school. This approach emphasizes the student's active involvement in teaching and learning. Ergo, the teacher needs to adjust their learning method to be more effective for the students.

One of the problems in student-centered learning is that it is difficult for a teacher to understand their students' characteristics. Hence, it is important to recognize students' characteristics to create more effective classroom management. One of the ways to recognize students is by grouping them into personality type groups. One of the famous personality types is MBTI. This test can indicate differing psychological factors people use to perceive the world and make decisions (Myers & Myers, 1995). In this research, the researcher uses the MBTI test in <https://www.16personalities.com/id> to recognize students' personality types. Teachers can illustrate effective classroom management and teaching methods by acknowledging students' personality types. Hence, it is expected that this personality type grouping can bypass the barrier of student-centered learning. For

To further understand the correlation between personality types and EFLLT, this research aims to investigate it further.

Furthermore, more than recognizing students' different personalities is required for teachers to create an effective classroom. It also needs an interpretation to explain the meaning of each personality type for effective student-centered learning. Thus, this research also aims to interpret how personality types affect the student's EFL learning competencies and capabilities. For instance, the INTP personality type tends to focus on their inner self using their logic and rationality. So, they are expected to be a good independent learner and master the language theories better than students of other personality types.

By conducting observations and interviews with three students, this research aims to recognize their personality types and then interpret how they affect their EFL learning capabilities. In short, recognizing and

interpreting student personality types using MBTI is expected to create more effective student-centered learning. The researcher sees it as an urgent matter in EFLLT since, in theory, Indonesia recognizes the need for student-centered learning. However, the practice of it still needs to be more effective.

2 Research Method

This section presents the research designs, questions, and approaches used in this review.

2.1 Research design

This research is a descriptive analysis that was conducted through interviews and a literature review. The research was conducted by interviewing three senior high school students from different schools and collecting research data from previously published national and international scientific articles. The information collected is in the form of data on personality traits' impact on each EFL performance.

2.2 Research goal and questions

The research goal of this literature review was to investigate previous studies on the effect of personality traits on learners' English performance, specifically in terms of reading, listening, writing, and speaking. This study is specified to understand the impact of personality traits in defining students' strategies during the English learning process. The research questions of this literature review are:

- a. RQ1: How is the senior secondary school EFLLT process in Indonesia?
- b. RQ2: How is a personality test conducted for EFLLT students?
- c. RQ3: How is the interpretation of the MBTI-based test for EFLLT students?
- d. RQ4: How can the SSS EFL instruction design accommodate students' personality types?

3 Result and Discussion

Recognizing and Interpreting Personality Types of Senior Secondary School (SSS) Students to Support the Achievement of EFL Learning Outcomes

3.1 The Senior Secondary School EFLLT

The curriculum and learning process of SSS learning are regulated by Permendikbud Number 20-21 (2016) and Permendikbud 37 (2018) about Main and Basic Competency in Primary and Secondary Education based on Curriculum 2013 (K13) in Indonesia. The government aims for competencies during primary and secondary education, such as 1) spiritual attitude competence, (2) social attitude, (3) knowledge, and (4) skills. These competencies are achieved through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular learning processes. Students from SSS are expected to understand, apply, and analyze the factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge based on their curiosity about science, technology, art, culture, and humanities with insight into humanity, nationality, state, and civilization related to the causes of phenomena and events, and apply knowledge procedural in a specific field of study according to their talents and interests to solve problems. On the other hand, there are other competencies to have based on the global requirements, such as High Order Thinking skills and character building, and the 4C models, which consist of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and innovation. Those competencies aim to prepare the future generation for global competition in the 21st century (Ratama, 2021; Sunardi & Doringin, 2020). To meet those expectations, the EFLLT should be conducted in a student-centered concept to make the improvement more effective.

Secondary school students' responses towards EFLLT are mainly laced with anxiety. They claimed they could not speak English and lacked knowledge of it. An analysis of data found that five main topics were linked to the problems of students speaking English, including (1) lack of knowledge of vocabulary, (2) grammar as a stumbling block, (3) fear of others' adverse reactions,

(4) low bravery when speaking publicly in English, (5) anxiety when speaking English. Those characteristics are mainly developed from the lack of support from teachers

or peer students (Farhani et al., 2012). Thus, developing a system that could boost bravery and students' self-esteem in English lessons is essential.

3.2 Collecting Data on Students' Personality Type

Understanding the personality type can be done by conducting a personality test based on the description (Putick, 2009; Rector & Ed, 2014; Sharp, 1988; Thomson, 1998; Wallwork, 2018). However, in this study, the researcher used a developed MBTI-based personality test for ease of study with the same question as the abovementioned source. The tools used in personality tests in this research are <https://www.16personalities.com/id>. From this test, the three interviewees are described in different.

3.3 MBTI types, as displayed in Figure

This will help the teacher generate a study design that accommodates the needs and preferences of students based on their personality traits. Compared to traditional questionnaires, this tool is easier to use and can be performed quickly. Furthermore, students get to know their personality types exactly after their test. This will help them grow curious about reading and understand their personalities.

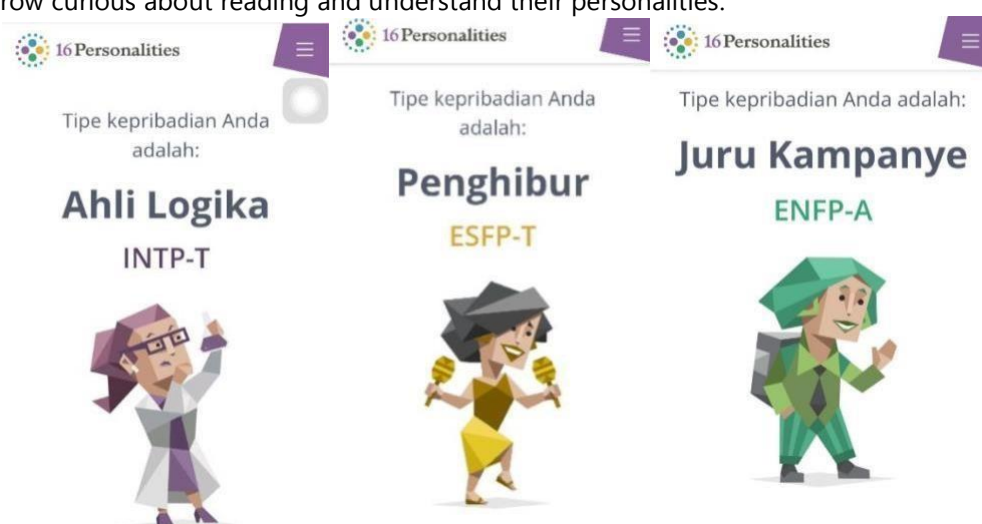


Figure 1. Personality types of the interviewee based on the test tools, from left to right: Kendra, Sheva, and Sabrina.

3.4 Interpretation of students' personality type

The interpretation of the student's personality type should be based on the theoretical explanation of each of the personality traits. The interpretation could be made to understand each type's preference for socializing and learning. For this purpose, a table (Table 1) was generated to interpret each interviewee's personality type (Rector & Ed, 2014) and compare it to their learning approach preferences. Thus, the list will continue as more respondents appear.

Several studies have been conducted to understand the effect of personality traits on English learning; these studies will help to build instructional design in EFLT. The studies focus on how personality affects learners' performance, and some describe different techniques successfully applied to specific performance. Figure 2 represents the research focus that is carried out using personality topics in EFLT. From the graph, it is clearly understood that researchers have been exploring the general relation of those two topics, and the next most studied case was about speaking performance and its relation to personality traits. It might be strongly related to the perspective that speaking performance is always connected to someone's communication, which is also affected by their personality (Marpaung & Widyantoro, 2020).

4.5. Effect of personality on learners' speaking performance

The study conducted by Kurniasy & Susan (2019) showed that students with introverted personalities tend to have higher anxiety towards speaking performance than extroverts. The reason for that is affected by the nature of their personality. Vural (2019) also discovered the tendency to lower anxiety in speaking that extroverted people own. The other study also found that extrovert learners tend to have more mastery in speaking (Arniatika, 2019; Faisal, 2019; Hardiyanti et al., 2021; Lemak & Valeo, 2020; Retny et al., 2017; Uzer, 2017). Extroverts can speak better because of their nature in order to go along with society. Meanwhile, introverted students tend to think deeply before speaking, which increases the possibility of getting anxious (Paradilla & Hasanah, 2020). Further, the report from Ehrman & Oxford (1995) exhibited that MBTI personality affected speaking comprehension. This report showed that students with thinking personalities were ahead of their friends with opposite characteristics. At the same time, sensing-intuition scaling showed that students with an intuitive nature were more likely to have higher scores in overall linguistic education. From this study, it is well concluded that judging-perceiving was not directly related to speaking performance. This might be influenced by the flexibility of perceivers that is balanced by the persistence and self-discipline nature of the judging personality (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995).

However, other studies also reported different results, with no significant effect of the introvert-extrovert trait on speaking performance (Husain et al., 2020; Marpaung & Widyantoro, 2020; Paradilla & Hasanah, 2020). Those contrary results can be a plausible explanation of how motivation, as well as a supportive environment, can support even naturally introverted people to be more comfortable in speaking

4 Conclusion

This review and interview have elucidated how personality traits affect English competency and perspective. The previous studies also find that it is essential for learners to understand their personality traits as this could be an essential requirement for designing their learning strategies. Understanding learners' personality traits is important for teachers as it will be impactful in designing the study environment that lets students explore different techniques in EFLT for better performance.

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