

## PERSONALITY FACTORS THAT HAVE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

*Zafar Qurbonboyev*

*Teacher, Uzbekistan State World Languages University.*

**Abstract.** *Foreign language learning is the process that is contributed by a number of factors such as motivation, interaction, age, personality, learning styles and so on. This phenomenon varies in each person as learners have different understanding and personality. This paper focuses on personality factor in language learning and highlight some personality traits which can play a crucial role in language learning.*

**Key words:** *Foreign language learning, personality, motivation, interaction, extrovert, introvert.*

### **Introduction**

Foreign or second language (L2) learning is the process that is contributed by a number of factors. These factors are includes motivation, interaction, age, personality, language aptitude, learning styles and so on. This phenomenon varies in each person as learners have different understanding and personality. Some learners with specific characteristics and personality acquire the target language successfully in a short period of time whereas some others find it challenging and they experience slow acquisition of the second language. It implies that as well as other factors, personality traits have also important role and impact in L2 learning successfully.

This article focuses on personality factor in language learning and aims to highlight some personality traits which can play a crucial role in language learning. This topic is quite interesting as there are learners who are extroverts and introverts in any classroom. Some educators say that both extroverts and introverts can succeed in language learning, however, most say that extroverted students are mostly first to answer the questions. They are less afraid of making mistakes in speaking English than introverts in the classroom. On the other hand, introverted students reluctantly participated in discussions and they are quite careful to choose the appropriate words in order not to make mistake in their speech. Researches show that when the learners finish English course, the achievement of students in the English language are different that extroverted learners had reached better results than introverts. It is needed to mention that their personality is one of the main reasons to gain better achievements. Thus, this article discusses the personality factors which can contribute to language learning.

### **Materials and Methods.**

#### **What is personality and its relation to SLA?**

In SLA field, the personality factor has not gained as much attention as motivation or age but it has particular importance in learning L2. In the first place, before discussing the personality factor, let's define the term "personality" and its correlation with second language learning. So the question arises that what is personality and its relationship with language acquisition?

Personality is the specific combination of qualities in each individual that makes a person different from others, in a way that the person behaves, feels, thinks and acts. According to this, people are classified into two main typical personality traits which are extroverted (sociable and outgoing) and introverted (shy and reserved). Such kind of personality factors affect mainly to the rate and success of language learning. Several

studies and theories state that personality factors profoundly impact the degree of success that learners achieve in learning L2 (Gass & Selinker, 1994), that some characteristics of the students may motivate or inhibit L2 learning. In addition to this, Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) indicate based on some findings that if curiosity arises and feeling motivated by new experiences, and in most cases being gregarious and outgoing, may be valuable personality traits in people who wish or need to acquire L2. These facts confirm that personality is correlated with language learning and it has significant relationship with second language acquisition.

### **Definition of Extroversion and Introversion**

Extroverted and introverted students are totally different learners who contradict each other in personality characteristics. This factor is one of the most widely investigated dimensions in SLA field. Eysenck (1965, p. 59-60) presented the description of the extroverts and introverts as follows:

The typical extrovert is out-going, has a lot of friends, fancies parties, likes to have people around to talk to, and does not like studying alone in peace by himself. He is eager to have joy, seize chances to speak, often searches excitement, acts or speaks without thinking the outcome, and he is generally an impulsive person. He always has ready answer, generally likes change...

The typical introvert, on the contrary, is a quiet, peace-loving person, thoughtful, fond of books rather than people, he is reserved and shy, prefers his own company but his intimate friends are exception. He tends to plan in advance, he does not like fun or excitement, takes matters of everyday life with proper seriousness, and prefers a well-arranged mode of lifestyle...

### **Which makes a successful language learner? Extrovert or Introvert?**

Generally, in L2 learning process, extroverts are gregarious learners who wish to join discussions and try to have conversation in the classroom with teacher or group mates in the target language. This creates them a good chance to practice an L2 because of their personality. At the same time, introverts are quiet and reserved learners who speak as less as possible even in the interesting discussions. For this reason, introverts do not get much chance to communicate or engage in conversations in language learning classrooms. In this case, the opportunities to practice an L2 varies and introverts lack communicative practice in the target language while extroverts benefit from interaction. Here is a pertinent question to inquire accordingly. Which one is better learner to be successful in L2 learning?

Many investigators (Naiman et al., 1978; McDonough, 1981) have suggested that more outgoing learners will be more obsessed with talking, more likely to join discussions, more likely to participate in the classroom activities, more likely to take part in group works, and lastly, more likely to get advantage of language-use opportunities outside the classroom by using the target language to improve their language skills. Since extroverts practice an L2 more than introverts, it is natural that they should have better achievements than shy students, at least in their communication skills. However, Gass Susan (2013) states that there are available reasons to consider that both extroversion and introversion can lead to success in L2 learning, but in different ways. According to her, extroverts are better and fluent in L2 production, particularly in stressful times but another key point is that introverts are also good at using strategy in learning process, which may lead them achievements or progress in

SLA. At this point, findings suggest that extroversion is advantageous in particular tasks and methods, likewise, introversion is also beneficial in other ways.

Another researcher suggests that introverts can have higher achievements than extroverts. Skehan (1989) cited that extroverts who are sociable learners are easily distracted from studying partly because of their outgoing character and they are likely unable to concentrate on the same thing for a long period. It shows that sociable students tend to learn new materials quicker which may not be stored in student's memory for long. According to some investigations, Entwistle and Wilson (1977) suggest that extroverted learners have superior immediate recall which means excellent short-term memory. However, they may have poorer remembering after a break (Eysenk, 1970). At the same time, introverts might code information more securely into a long-term memory which is very significant in terms of new vocabulary and grammar rules. In the evaluation of all these findings, it has been supposed that in some cases of language learning process, introverted learners will get higher academic progress and language acquisition than extroverted learners.

The general studies present that there is no clear concept to show either side as the most effective learners, however, the above discussion suggests that extroversion is one of the key factors to L2 learning ultimately. In particular, extroverted learners who are sociable, adventuresome, gregarious and talkative can benefit from more practice in L2, inside or outside the classroom which may lead to great achievements. In the meantime, introversion seems less helpful in SLA but studies show that introverts might have also high success as extroverts. In other words, introversion is also another factor which has major contribution to L2 learning. However, it can be said that extroverts might be slightly better learners as they have more interaction. In general, language learning is built with communication and interaction which are main components of successful L2 acquisition. All things considered, these two dimensions are important factors in L2, especially extroversion has major contribution in L2 learning.

### **Sociability as an effective factor in language learning**

One of the outstanding personality traits in L2 learning is sociability. In SLA field, this dimension has been referred as positive and important factor in the rate and success of L2 learning. Initially, let's clarify the term "sociability" that according to Cambridge English Dictionary, sociability is "the quality of liking to meet and spend time with other people".

First thing to remember, language learning is based on learning by speaking in which sociability is accepted as a main feature. Gardner (1985, p.31) states that "learners who are sociable and willing to communicate freely with others should be more successful at learning an L2 than the students who are more reserved". This perception points out that communication or interaction is one of the advantageous ways to achieve ultimate attainment in L2 learning.

In general, language learning process is built with interaction. The more learners interact, the more they learn the language. As in the saying 'practice makes perfect'. Hence, sociability is linked with this concept that the more sociable students are, the more they will interact. Consequently, interaction which is performed with the help of sociability, will lead to master the target language eventually. Pritchard (1952) reported an investigation about sociability and fluency of French which was done by French teacher. The results of this investigation presented a high relationship between sociability dimension and ratings of French fluency of 33 grammar school learners. The

students' usual speed of speaking French was promoted because of their sociability. Such kind of remarkable results can be taken as an example to mean that sociability correlates with L2 achievement even as a significant factor to fluency of the target language.

In general point, sociability is considered one of the key characteristics of the extroverted students who are happy with people. Sociability creates a chance for learners to interact with others in the target language. Since students take advantage of more interaction in L2 learning process, they will have more likely better fluency than the students who do not have more interaction. Some researchers investigated and supported for an important correlation between sociability and second language acquisition. Chastian (1975) tested 80 students of French, 72 students of German and 77 students of Spanish. He investigated their sociability in SLA and obtained remarkable relation between this test and grades in second language. In addition, Vallette (1964, p.92) discussed investigations from a survey that performed in France by Ruth Metraux, the person who found that young learners were quick to learn an L2 who were "the talkative, outgoing, easily adaptable children, even eager to express themselves". As shown above, sociability plays an important role in SLA process and one of the key factor to contribute L2 learning ultimately.

### **Conclusion**

It is obvious fact that individual differences (IDs) factor has been investigated over the decades by many researchers in SLA field. In particular, personality traits factor has been widely discussed in L2 learning process even though it is not as outstanding topic as age or motivation IDs variables. The discussion generated in this essay aimed to highlight some personality traits which have major contribution to L2 learning. All things considered, this paper most likely identified some of the most helpful and important factors in second language acquisition.

### **References:**

1. Dornyei, Z. (2006). Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition. *AILA Review*, 19:42-68.
2. Ellis, R (2008). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Entwistle, N.J. & Wilson, J.D. (1977). *Degrees of excellence: The academic achievement Game*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
4. Eysenck, H.J. (1970). *The Structure of Human Personality*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
5. Eysenck, H.J. (1965). *Fact and Fiction in Psychology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
6. Gardner, R.C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning. The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Arnold
7. Gass, S. (2013). *Second Language Acquisition. An introductory course*. London: Routledge.
8. McDonough, S.H. (1981). *Psychology in Foreign Language Teaching*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
9. Naiman, N., Frohlich, M., Stern, H.H. & Todesco, A. (1978). *The Good Language Learner*. Research in Education Series, 7. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
10. Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. London: Hodder Education

11. Pritchard D. (1952). An investigation of the relationship of personality traits and ability in modern languages. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*. 22: 147 – 8.
12. Skehan, P. (1989). *Individual Differences in Second Language Learning*. London: Edward Arnold
13. Spada, N. & Lightbown, P.M. (2013). *How Languages are Learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.