



Introversion Personality and Students’ Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

Introversion is characterized by social isolation and introspective nature. In the process of learning English as a foreign language, it is important to understand learner’s personalities. This is because each individual language learner has different tendencies and can influence the effectiveness and success of learning the four main skills of the language. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between introversion personality and students’ reading comprehension. 95 eleventh-grade upper secondary students were randomly selected for this study. The researchers used a questionnaire to measure students’ introversion personality, and a test to measure their reading comprehension. *Serial Correlation Coefficient* formula was employed as the main method to analyze the data. Based on the analysis, it was found that both the students’ introversion personality and reading comprehension was categorized as average. This indicated that introversion personality and students’ reading comprehension were significantly correlated. The correlation between the two variables were strong. Therefore, it can be concluded that introversion personality played an important role in affecting students’ reading comprehension. Thus, the more introverted the students, the better their reading comprehension.

Keywords: personality, introversion, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

In the process of learning a foreign language, differences among language learners always exist. One of the most important differences that promote success in foreign language learning is the personality trait. This is called individual variability. Since personality trait has an impact on language learning, language-learners need to recognize and understand their own personality.

Wenxia, Su & Liu (2013) investigated learners’ personality traits of 934 Chinese first-year undergraduate non-English majors and their motivation in relation to their contributions to achievement in English at the tertiary level. The findings revealed that: (1) the participants were generally moderately extroverted, moderately prone to become anxious and be influenced by social desirability. Nevertheless, the majority reported to be dependent and tender-minded; (2) the majority of the

participants reported to be moderately motivated to learn English; (3) the personality traits were significantly related to all or many of the motivation measures; and (4) most of the personality and motivation scales were significantly correlated with the students' attainment in English.

Rekabdar, Behrouzi, and Hakhverdian (2015) cited Busch who said that personality was one of the individual differences, which was widely accepted to have an influence on both learning in general and language learning in particular. In addition, Leaver, Ehrman, and Shekhtman (2005) reviewed Carl Jung who divided three aspects of personality models that most researched; they were (1) extroversion and introversion (*direction of energy flow*), (2) sensing and intuition (*mental function for taking in data*), and (3) thinking and feeling (*mental function for coming to conclusions and making decisions*). Most researched personality trait in terms of educational settings combined both *introversion* and *extroversion*.

Since personality trait has an impact on language learning, language learners need to *recognize* and understand their own personality. Dornyei (2005) simplified the definition of introversion as a trait that is referring to where people prefer to focus their attention and get their energy from their inner world of ideas and experiences. This definition indicates that the internal world takes a role to attack, motivate, support, and stimulate the introvert much more than external world. Myers (2010) classified the characteristics of introverts into two types; (1) *stable introverts*: they are characterized as people who are passive, careful, thoughtful, peaceful, controlled,

reliable, even-tempered and clam; and (2) *extreme introverts*: they are characterized as people who are quiet, unsociable, pessimistic, sober, rigid, anxious, do not like excitement and moody people.

Studies on personality factors generally focused on extroversion and introversion aspects of personality. Extroversion–introversion dimension is the most researched personality trait in language studies (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 2008). An individual personality with extrovert characteristic tends to change environment with his/her own thoughts and emotions. Myers (2003), underlined that extroverts inevitably seek stimulation outside themselves, and their orientation of energy is toward the outer world. On the other hand, introvert people are more interested in their own thoughts and feelings than in things outside themselves, and are often shy and unwilling to speak or join in activities with others. The introverted person tends to be quiet, imaginative, and more interested in ideas than in interacting with people. The extroverted person is outgoing and sociable.

As far as the learning atmosphere is concerned, Carl Jung, as cited by Hergenhahn, & Henley (2014), described *introversion* and *extroversion* as two major orientations that accompany students in learning. Jung believed that although every individual possesses both orientations, he or she usually assumes one of the two dimensions more than the other. Although most people tend to either introversion or extroversion, Jung believed that the mature, healthy adult personality reflects both attitudes about equally.

Eysenck & Eysenck (1985) found that it was generally true at all ages from about 13 or 14 upwards that introverts showed superior academic attainment to extrovert. The characteristics of individual with introversion personality as mentioned above seemed contradictive with research findings (Robinson, Gabriel & Katchan, 1994; Smart, Elton & Burnett, 1970). "One major finding was that the personality dimension of Neuroticism accounted for 23% of the variance of French oral examination marks: a value which approaches the predictive power of the written French test. A second important finding was that individuals with high neuroticism and high extraversion scores did better on the oral test than on the written test when compared with individuals having high neuroticism and low extraversion scores who did better on the written test than on the oral test. These and corresponding factor analysis results conform to theoretical expectations and indicate that a "two-factor" model is necessary to explain observed relationships. One factor is attributed to differences in cerebral "arousal" that cause differences in neuroticism as well as determining differences in general learning ability. A second factor is attributed to differences in cerebral "arousability" that cause the psychological contrast between melancholic and choleric personality types. This includes differential performance on oral and written measures of language learning." (Robinson, Gabriel & Katchan, 1994).

However, concerning SL/FL learning, mixed findings are revealed (Ely, 1986; Liu & Zhang, 2011; Smart et al., 1970; Strong, 1984). In other words, introverts do not need extra stimulation because they have sufficient internal stimulation, so their orientation

of energy is toward an inner world (Myers, 2003). In short, extroverts take the attitude of live it, and then understand it; however, introverts prefer to understand it before living it (Myers & Kirby, 1994; Myers, 2003).

Brown (2007) adds that the trait of introversion and its opposite, extroversion, are regarded as the most potentially important factor in the acquisition of a second or foreign language. It means that both of them have implications for promoting success in second or foreign language learning, although the effects of these traits are contradictory.

In addition, he reported the result of investigation by Busch (1982) who explored the relationship of introversion and extroversion to English proficiency in adult learners of English in Japan, she hypothesized that extroverted students as measured by (standard personality inventory) would be more proficient than introverts. Her hypothesis was not supported by her findings. In fact, introverts were significantly better than extroverts in their pronunciation.

A research conducted by Fatma Husain Ali Suliman to 20 students of English Department, Faculty of Arts, Misurata University, Libya. She focused her study on *The Role of Extrovert and Introvert Personality in Second Language Acquisition*. Result shows that personality traits, in particular extroversion and introversion, have a major effect on second language acquisition process. The extroverted learners, who use the second language to interact without inhabitation, talk more fluently, tend to take actions with less reflection, work better in groups and excel during classes with high

levels of activity. The extroverted students easily communicate in the second language even though they might not produce accurate output. These characteristics influence their ways of learning in the second language; so, it is believed that extraverts are more successful in communication. On the other hand, introverts tend to be exterts talk less and reflect more before acting, like to be quiet, like to work independently or with one or two other people. They tend to be more passive rather than actively social. In addition, many introverted students have an obsession with producing accurate grammatical sentences with native-like accent. Although introverts have all these characteristics, extroverts are still more successfully especially in communication.

As they have different characteristics and preferences in terms of learning a foreign language; so, they might have different ability to grasp each of the four language skills. Reading comprehension is one of the most important skills that directly involves sufficient stimulation to comprehend the reading texts before leaving it. Therefore, in learning a foreign language, especially when the learners have more opportunities to interact with written sources, he/she would have stuck on the sources rather than communicating with native speakers. In addition, the behavioral intention of the learners also stimulates willingness to communicate (WTC) using the foreign language especially in the situation in which its instruction is going on. MacIntyre (2007) as cited by Judith L. Shrum and Eileen W. Grisan (2010) summarized the results of a number of studies that examined WTC and found that:

1. Extroverts showed higher WTC than introverts when studying new foreign language vocabulary words in a moderately unfamiliar situation; however, in a familiar situation, the introverts showed higher WTC than the extroverts (MacIntyre, Clément, & Noels, 2007). The researchers attribute this to the fact that introverts learn better in familiar situations because they prefer routine, while extroverts thrive on change and novel situations.
2. An event that leads to low WTC is when a learner whose native language is English initiates L2 communication with an L2 speaker and the L2 speaker switches to English (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000). The rejection of the speaker's volition to communicate in L2 apparently reduces the WTC.
3. Situations resulting in low WTC include those in which speakers feel a lack of self-confidence when communicating with strangers and when they feel they are being criticized by the listener, especially for accent and grammatical errors (MacDonald, Clément, & MacIntyre, 2003).

Klingner, Vaughn, and Broadman (2007) reviewed that reading comprehension is a complex process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of skills related to decoding, word reading, and fluency and the integration of background knowledge, vocabulary, and previous experiences. Nevertheless, each reader might not have similar understanding significantly. As Snow (2002) explained that individual children or readers vary in their reading comprehension abilities. The variability in reader characteristics may partially account for these differences.

In terms of reading skill, Gass and Selinker (2008) argued that the stereotype of an introvert is someone happier with books than with other people, while the stereotype of an extrovert is the opposite. The description of language learners with introvert orientation above showed that they tended to read books frequently and the activity might possibly affect their reading comprehension. In other words, introversion personality can give prediction upon students' reading comprehension.

Several research studies have carried out to investigate whether extroversion/introversion personality trait have an impact in the process of language learning. Suliman (2014) conducted a research about the role of extrovert and introvert personality in second language acquisition. The finding of this research concluded that personality traits, extroversion and introversion, had a major effect on second language acquisition process. She found that 65% of students' personalities affected their acquisition while 35% of them did not show that their personality type had affected them. Abali (2006) investigated the effect of personality traits extroversion/introversion on verbal and interactive behaviors of learners to 19 students of Ankara University. The result showed that learners with extroversion and introversion tendencies differed in terms of the way they communicate in L2, which revealed that both extroverted and introverted subjects were aware of the effect of their personality on their language behavior.

Veysel Altunel (2015) examined language learners' individual differences by focusing on the

relationships of *extroversion* and *introversion* and language learning of Turkish university students through administrating Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT) and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) in an input-based instruction setting. Before starting the instruction, students took a pre-test, and at the end of academic year students took a post-test along with a personality test. Results of the study provides learning environments and instruction type interact with students' personality type. It is observed that input-based instruction benefits introverts more than extroverts in overall language performance.

Due to the content of introversion personality seems different from extroverts, it does not mean that the introverts are failed individuals in learning English language. As far as reading activity is concerned, introverts are more appropriate personality whose preference to reading books. This activity makes their comprehension on reading the texts are more powerful. Besides, the introverts are also personality traits that form behavior and activity for their own typicality in their daily life. Hannah (2000) implies her own experience by suggesting a view on a case of an introvert individual whose adaptation to life has been injured by the demands of an extraverted reality with which he is unable to cope. As a result, he will only get more and more discouraged by repeated failures if he tries to overcome the difficulty directly in the outer world. But if he can overcome the difficulty in the inner world of fantasy where he is not subject, as a rule, to the feelings of panic which overcome him in the outer world he will slowly become more self-confident (p. 41).

Since the current study is limited to introversion personality and reading comprehension, this study becomes crucial to overcome students' difficulties in comprehending reading text. Although they had participated actively when discussing, questioning and answering as well as sharing ideas or opinions, and also reading aloud, there would be no matter if some of them got low score in reading comprehension test.

As the response of these phenomena, this study aims at finding out the information about students' introversion personality and their reading comprehension and figuring out the relationship between the two variables. The findings of this study are expected to be able to assist the teacher in designing more effective and efficient language learning classroom, to help the students recognizing the role of personality in learning, and language learning particularly; so, they can use appropriate strategy and maximize their ability in learning language, and finally to provide more information for further studies. On the contrary, this study only focused on introversion personality in English language learning for upper secondary students.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 95 Indonesian upper secondary school students participated in this study. The participants were selected on the basis of convenience and homogeneous sample selection because they were all the eleventh-grade students and they already had four year experience in learning English prior to this study was conducted. In addition,

this sample also represented a typical mixing of those students whose major were Science and Social Studies. They were assumed to have different personality traits to learn English and different English levels of proficiency including their comprehension in reading English texts. The sample was voluntarily requested to answer two different instruments.

Instruments

Questionnaire

In investigating the relationship between introversion personality and students' reading comprehension, participants were given a personality questionnaire in which the scale was categorized into *highly*, *average*, and *poorly introvert*. The options in the questionnaire were constructed based on the scale. There were three options of statements that represented each scale. They just need to choose the statement that most appropriate with their own personality. Sarah E. Hampson (1988) asserted that extraversion-introversion (EI) scale was then constructed a common-sense from the items rated most typical for extraversion (e.g. 'likes talking', 'impulsive', 'can't stand long periods of solitude') and most typical for introversion (e.g. 'thinks often about himself/herself', 'sensitive', 'likes playing chess and reading books') (p.104).

In the collection of the data for introversion personality, a questionnaire constructed by Philip Carter was used. The measured components were based on the following indicators:

Table 1
Blue Print of Introversion Personality

No	Aspects	Indicators	Questionnaire Items
1	Sociability/ Interaction	Reserved and distant except to intimate friends.	1, 4, 6, 9, 21
2	Excitement	Do not like excitement, distrust the impulse of the moment.	2, 3, 11, 17, 23
3	Expenditure of energies	Reliable, take matters of everyday life with proper seriousness, pessimistic, quiet, retiring sort of person, introspective.	5, 12, 14, 18, 22
4	Risk-taking/ Planning	Plans ahead, look before they leap, like a well-ordered mode of life.	7, 8, 15, 19, 25
5	Interests in internal events	Fond of books rather than people and reading/writing rather than speaking.	10, 13, 16, 20, 24

Table 1 above showed that the questionnaire measured the students' introversion personality was administered in five different aspects. Carter (2005) provided 25 items to measure the students' introversion personality. Nevertheless, the researchers needed to modify several items in order to adjust to the Indonesian culture which was considered appropriately distributed in the context of the respondents as secondary school level. The modification of the questionnaire's items with regards to the Indonesian translation of all the items provided. The items were item 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 21, 23, and 24. The data of questionnaire were calculated by summing up the scores, in which each respondent's choice on option *a* was scored 1, each respondent's choice on option *b* was scored 0, and score 2 belonged to the choice of option *c*. This reveals that the collected data from the

questionnaire were categorized into ordinal data.

Reading Comprehension Test

The participant was also given a validated reading comprehension test. The test was constructed in multiple choice items. Thus, they need to choose the best option for the correct answer on their understanding about the text.

Nevertheless, multiple-choice was the collected data used to measure students' reading comprehension. The test material focused on narrative text. Therefore, the items were administered based on the following indicators:

Table 2
Blue Print of Students' Reading Comprehension in Narrative Text

No	Indicators	Test Items
1	The students' ability to analyze the social function of narrative text.	4, 10, 15, 20
2	The students' ability to analyze the setting and characters of a short story in narrative text form.	1, 8, 11, 16
3	The students' ability to comprehend the complication of a short story in narrative text form.	2, 7, 13, 18
4	The students' ability to analyze the resolution of a short story in narrative text form.	3, 9, 12, 19
5	The students' ability to identify the language features of narrative text.	5, 6, 14, 17

Table 2 above represented 20 test items used to measure students' reading comprehension. A narrative passage was provided to see student's comprehension about the passage. The questions were most oriented to typical of the narrative passages which was generally focused on *settings, characters, sequence, and story plots*. The scores of reading comprehension test were calculated by summing up the correct answers of each item. The correct answer was scored 1 and score 0 was for false answer. The data collection of the test was categorized into interval data.

Technique of Analyzing the Data

In order to find out whether there was a significant correlation between introversion personality and students' reading comprehension, the data were analyzed statistically. In analyzing the data, the researchers used *Serial Correlation Coefficient* (r) technique. Hartono (2010) provided the formula of serial correlation coefficient (r) as follows:

1. Serial correlation coefficient:

$$r_{ser} = \frac{\sum\{(or - ot)M\}}{SD_{tot} \cdot \sum\left\{\frac{(or - ot)^2}{p}\right\}}$$

2. Total deviation:

$$SD_{tot} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum fx^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum fx}{N}\right)^2}$$

3. Substituted to the formula of "r" chotomization (r_{ch}):

$$r_{ch} = r_{ser} \sqrt{\sum\left[\frac{(o_r - o_t)^2}{p}\right]}$$

4. The r_{ch} value was multiplied with the result of its correction factor.
5. The result of r coefficient was consulted to r_{table} by referring to the degree of freedom that read N-2.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore the strong correlation between introversion personality trait and student's reading comprehension. It has revealed valuable information about varieties on the degree of students' introversion personality, variety of reading comprehension level, and the association between these two variables.

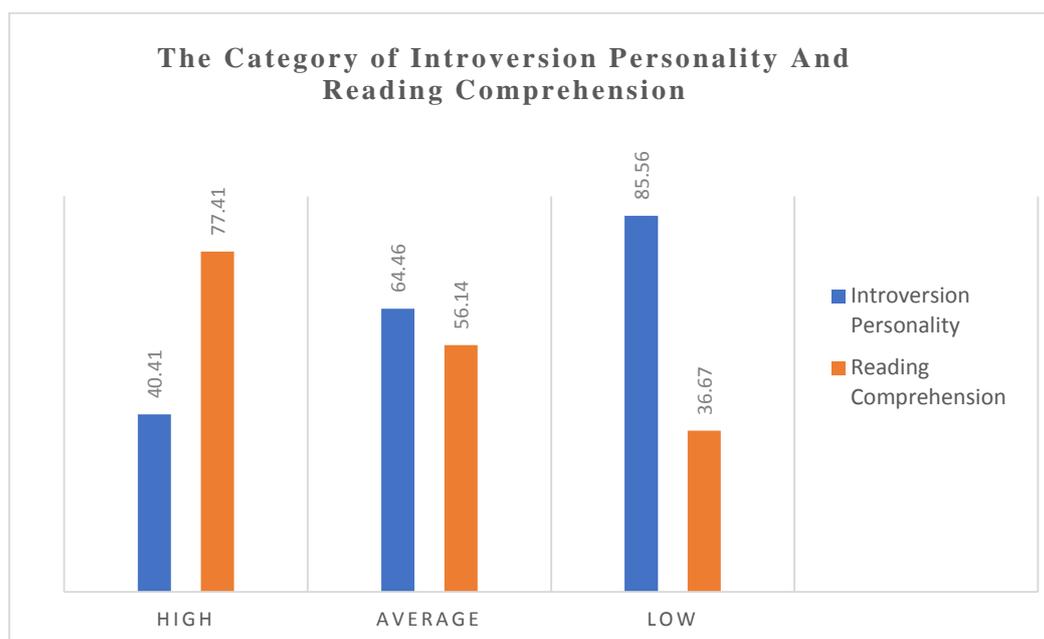


Chart 1: The Degree of Students' Introversion Personality and Their Reading Comprehension

Chart 1 above showed that the students were grouped into high, average, and low categories. The mean scores of students who belonged to high category were 40.41 for introversion personality and 77.41 for reading comprehension. The two mean scores above were contrary since the highly introvert students were measured with the low score of questionnaire which means that the lower their questionnaire score, the more introverted they were. Meanwhile, the students who were good in reading comprehension got high score in reading comprehension test, which means that the higher their test score, the better their reading comprehension. Therefore, the students who belonged to high category had low score in introversion personality test and high score in reading comprehension test.

The mean scores of students who belonged to average category were 64.46 for introversion personality and

56.14 for reading comprehension. Based on the mean scores above, it can be seen that they had insignificant difference score between introversion personality and reading comprehension.

The mean scores of students who belonged to low category were 85.56 for introversion personality and 36.67 for reading comprehension. The mean scores of this category were contrary since poorly introvert were measured with the high score of questionnaire, which means that the higher their questionnaire score the less introverted they were. Meanwhile, the students who were poor in reading comprehension were measured with low score, which means that the lower their test score, the worse their reading comprehension were. Therefore, the students who belonged to low category had high score in introversion personality test and low score in reading comprehension test.

The *Serial Correlation Coefficient* analysis explored that the value of r_{ser} was $r_{tris} = 1.01126771$. Substitute the result of r_{ser} into “ r ” chotomization:

$$r_{ch} = r_{tris} \sqrt{\sum \left[\frac{(o_r - o_t)^2}{p} \right]}$$

$$r_{ch} = 1.01126771 \sqrt{\sum 0.75775}$$

$$r_{ch} = 0.88029918$$

Then, the value of r_{ch} was consulted to the correction factor table. The correction factor of r_{ch} 0.88 based on three categories was 1.026. In order to have an equivalent value of r coefficient between r_{ch} and r product moment, then, r_{ch} was multiplied with the result of its correction factor.

$$r_{ch} = 0.88 \times 1.026$$

$$r_{ch} = 0.903$$

Statistically, if $r_o > r_{table}$; so, alternative hypothesis was accepted and null hypothesis was rejected. Meanwhile, if $r_o < r_{table}$ so, alternative hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis is accepted. Based on the result of the data analysis, it was found that r_{ch} was 0.9. This value of r_{ch} was compared with r_{table} by considering the degree of freedom, which $df = N-2$ was 93. By considering $df = 93$ at 5% significant level = 0.205 and at 1% significant level = 0.267, it can be concluded that $0.205 \leq 0.903 \geq 0.267$. It meant that the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and Null Hypothesis was rejected.

Therefore, there was any significant correlation between introversion personality and students' reading comprehension at State Senior High School 1 Teluk Kuantan Kuantan Singingi Regency. However, the result of r coefficient above was also used to give the interpretation of the strength of correlation between introversion personality and students' reading

comprehension. Thus, the strength of correlation between introversion personality and students' reading comprehension at State Senior High School 1 Teluk Kuantan was 0.903. The strength of correlation between two variables based on the value of r coefficient belonged to large category, since its range was 0.50 – 1.00.

The finding of this study was in line with the findings of the previous research on similar variables. Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) studied about a study on the relationship between extroversion-introversion and risk-taking in the context of second language acquisition. Results show that extroverts seem to take full advantage of language-use opportunities as they tend to be sociable, and are more likely to join groups, more inclined to engage in conversations both inside and outside the classroom. However, results have also concluded that a more introverted personality may be better suited to classroom learning, especially reading and writing skills. Rekabdar, Behrouzi, and Hakhverdian (2015) also conducted a study of Iranian Intermediate Extroverted vs. Introverted Learners and Metacognitive Strategies. The result showed that after 10 sessions using the strategies, a post-test was administered and the result showed that the introverted students had higher marks and they had better reading-performance in comparison with the extroverted students. It revealed that metacognitive strategies were more appropriate used by introvert than extrovert.

Based on the literature review of introversion personality in language learning and findings of previous studies, it revealed that the extroversion-introversion personality trait was important to be considered in language learning process. It is because

this kind of personality can affect the other factors of language learning, such the use of learning strategy and the preference of learning style. Thus, the characteristics of introverts and reading comprehension as one of language skills became the important variables to be studied.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Keeping in view findings of this study concluded that introversion personality and students' reading comprehension were correlated significantly. The strength of the association between two variables was categorized into large. Thus, the more introverted the students, the better their reading comprehension. Hence, a more introverted personality may be better appropriate to classroom learning especially receptive skills.

Suggestion

The researchers proposed some suggestion as follows:

1. The students have to recognize their personality, especially in term of introversion-extroversion dimension. Since their personality in terms of introversion-extroversion dimension affects their preferences, tendencies, and interests in learning, especially language learning. By recognizing their own personality, they would recognize their own way and strength in learning. It would be useful for them to support their effort and get high achievement in learning.
2. The teacher should not conduct the learning situations monotonously in every meeting. Hence, the teacher should establish and expand joyful, fun, and comfortable classroom with diverse methods and techniques in

order to make the students more interested in English class, which can encourage their English language skills. The techniques and methods used by the teacher should give opportunities either for introvert or extrovert students. Thus, every student would get opportunities to use and develop their English language skills naturally as their personality tendency.

3. The teacher and students should be more aware toward internal and external factors that may influence the learning situations or classroom atmosphere so then the teacher could teach maximally and the students would learn better. Thus, achievement as one of the learning goals might be achieved as high as they can.

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