



The Effect of Teachers' Personality and Corrective Feedback on EFL Learners' Motivation

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Abstract

This study intends to shed light on the effect of teachers' personality on Iranian EFL learners' motivation. For this purpose, two different groups were asked to take part in the present study: Group one (15 male and 30 female teachers) and group two (115 male and 183 female students). Three instruments were used to collect data; big five factor inventory for both group participants. Teachers' questionnaire is regarding Corrective feedback and Students' questionnaire regarding feedback. This study was conducted in three phases. Big five factor inventory were administered for both groups in the first section. In the second phase, both groups were given CF test to present their attitudes and opinions regarding corrective feedback. The last phase of this process was observation of the CF questionnaires of both teachers and learners and comparing their answers with the real results in the Institutes. To ascertain the relationship between teachers' personality and corrective feedback, a correlation analysis was used. The analysis revealed that there was a negative relationship between Neuroticism and Corrective feedback at the 0.05 level of significant (P value) in both participants' groups. This means that higher Neuroticism is associated with the lower Corrective feedback. Consequently, the observation indicated that, some specific personality can lead to improvement in learning.

Keywords: Big five factors personality, Corrective feedback, EFL Teachers' personality, EFL Students' personality

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the vital role of CF is clear to everyone who has some knowledge of teaching. Therefore, it seems as if it has had highly hidden or unhidden notions. In the field of foreign Language Acquisition (FLA), however, there appears to be a growing consensus among the majority of researchers concerning the significant role of CF when we talk about teaching.

Since the significance of corrective feedbacks on learners has been much emphasized by most educational scholars and researchers, they can be much effective in a foreign language learning environment. As such, their effectiveness in Iranian EFL learning environments and their relationship with the personality of the teachers working in the field necessitate the present study.

BACKGROUND OF PERSONALITY AND CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

Personality is defined as “the organized, developing system within the individual that represents the collective action of that individual’s major psychological subsystems” (Mayer, 2007). Previous studies have clearly demonstrated that understanding the humane characteristics of a teacher is highly relevant to English language learning (Gibbons, 2003; Zhang & Watkins, 2007). Educational administrators are increasingly searching for relevant information and methods to establish teacher-student engagements as such collaborative interactions provide an ideal environment for EFL teaching (Gibbons, 2003). Teacher’s personality refers to inner-qualities of a teacher, observed from the teacher’s expression of values, beliefs, behavior, and attitude (Sronge, Tucker & Hind man, 2004). There are several key indicators associated with teacher personality. Effective personal qualities include being caring, fair and respectful, having positive attitude towards the teaching profession, participating in social interactions with students, being sincere, and practicing reflective teaching.

The Big Five personality traits

The Big Five is the commonly used term for the model of personality which describes the five fundamental factors of our personality. Natural language of personality is the starting place for a shared taxonomy. Beginning with Klages (1926), Baumgarten (1933), and Allport and Odbert (1936), various psychologists have turned to the natural language as a source of attributes for a scientific taxonomy. This work, beginning with the extraction of all personality-relevant terms from the dictionary, has generally been guided by the lexical approach (see John et al., 1988; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996a).

Allport and Odbert identified four major categories. The first category included personality traits (e.g., sociable, aggressive, and fearful), which they defined as “generalized and personalized determining tendencies--consistent and stable modes of an individual’s adjustment to his environment” (p. 26). The second category included temporary states, moods, and activities, such as afraid, rejoicing, and elated. The third category consisted of highly evaluative judgments of personal conduct and reputation, such as excellent, worthy, average, and irritating. Although these terms presuppose some traits within the individual, they do not indicate the specific attributes that gave rise to the individual’s evaluation by others or by society in general. (Allport and Odbert)

Cattell also claimed that his factors showed excellent correspondence across methods, such as self-reports, ratings by others, and objective tests; however, these claims have not gone unquestioned (Becker, 1960; Nowakowska, 1973). Moreover, reanalysis of

Cattell's own correlation matrices by others have not confirmed the number and nature of the factors he proposed (e.g., Tupes & Chrystal, 1961; reprinted 1992). Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981) concluded that Cattell's "original model, based on the unfortunate clerical errors noted here, cannot have been correct" (p. 168), although the second-order factors of the 16PF show some correspondence between Cattell's system and the subsequently derived Big Five dimensions. This five-factor structure has been replicated by Norman (1963), Borgata (1964), and Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981) in lists derived from Cattell's 35 variables. Following Norman (1963), the factors were initially labeled as:

- (I) Extraversion or Surgency (talkative, assertive, energetic)
- (II) Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful)
- (III) Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable)
- (IV) Emotional Stability versus Neuroticism (calm, not neurotic, not easily upset)
- (V) Culture (intellectual, polished, independent-minded)

Extroversion

Extroversion is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world. Extroverts enjoy being with people, are full of energy, and often experience positive emotions. They tend to be enthusiastic, action-oriented, individuals who are likely to say "Yes!" or "Let's go!" to opportunities for excitement. In groups they like to talk, assert themselves, and draw attention to themselves. Introverts lack the exuberance, energy, and activity levels of extroverts. They tend to be quiet, low-key, deliberate, and disengaged from the social world. Their lack of social involvement should not be interpreted as shyness or depression; the introvert simply needs less stimulation than an extrovert and prefers to be alone.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness reflects individual differences in concern with cooperation and social harmony. Agreeable individuals' values get along with others. They are therefore considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, and willing to compromise their interests with others'. Agreeable people also have an optimistic view of human nature. Disagreeable individuals place self-interest above getting along with others. They are generally unconcerned with others' well-being, and therefore are unlikely to extend themselves for other people. Sometimes their skepticism about others' motives causes them to be suspicious, unfriendly, and uncooperative.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness concerns the way in which we control, regulate, and direct our impulses. Impulses are not inherently bad; occasionally time constraints require a snap decision, and acting on our first impulse can be an effective response. Also, in times of play rather than work, acting spontaneously and impulsively can be fun. Impulsive

individuals can be seen by others as colorful, fun-to-be-with, and zany. Conscientiousness includes the factor known as Need for Achievement (NACH).

Neuroticism or (inversely) Emotional Stability

Neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience negative feelings. Those who score high on Neuroticism may experience primarily one specific negative feeling such as anxiety, anger, or depression, but are likely to experience several of these emotions. People high in Neuroticism are emotionally reactive. Their negative emotional reactions tend to persist for unusually long periods of time, which means they are often in a bad mood. These problems in emotional regulation can diminish a neurotic's ability to think clearly, make decisions, and cope effectively with stress.

Openness to Experience

Openness to Experience describes a dimension of cognitive style that distinguishes imaginative, creative people from down-to-earth, conventional people. Open people are intellectually curious, appreciative of art, and sensitive to beauty. They tend to be, compared to closed people, more aware of their feelings. They tend to think and act in individualistic and nonconforming ways. People with low scores on openness to experience tend to have narrow, common interests. They prefer the plain, straightforward, and obvious to the complex, ambiguous, and subtle. They may regard the arts and sciences with suspicion, regarding these endeavors as abstruse or of no practical use. Closed people prefer familiarity to novelty; they are conservative and resistant to change. Briefly, The IPIP-NEO (Goldberg, 1999) is a 300-item inventory that measures construct similar to those in the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Despite evidence for its reliability and validity, the IPIP-NEO is even longer than the original 240-item NEO PI-R.

THE THEORETICAL DEBATE ON CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

CF is a frequent practice in the field of education and in learning generally. It typically involves a student receiving either formal or informal feedback on his or her performance on various tasks by a teacher or peer(s).

Nativist theory

It has been generalized that this theory, with Chomsky (1975) as the main proponent, claims that negative evidence (information of what is ungrammatical) hardly plays a role in the acquisition of a language. The Universal Grammar is conceived of as universal principles that are special to grammar formation.

Cognitive theory

In the 1990s, Nativists began to be challenged by both empirical and theoretical research, which has demonstrated that explicit grammar, error correction, and/or focus on form could promote Second Language Acquisition (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Ellis, 1993, 1994; Long, 1996; Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 1995 cited

by Russell, 2009). Long (1996), referring to SLA, claims that negative evidence is essential for L2 acquisition, especially among adolescent and adult L2 learners.

Sociocultural Theory

Most recently, SLA researchers have begun to examine CF through the Sociocultural Theory. From this perspective, language learning in particular is a dialogical process in which acquisition occurs in interaction and not as a result of interaction. That is, L2 acquisition is a process in which the learner and other people interact. CF episodes are viewed as the space for studying how interaction mediates learning through the construction of ZPDs (zone of proximal development) (Cf. Ellis, 2009).

THE PEDAGOGICAL DEBATE ON CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

The implications of the Nativist Theory in the language teaching/learning grounds are several. Russell (2009) declares Stephen Krashen as the "main proponent of the hands-off" approach to error correction to which his Monitor Model (1981, 1982) ascribes. This Monitor includes five hypotheses that have shaped the teaching of languages during the last three decades. The Acquisition /Learning Hypothesis distinguishes between acquisition and learning. The former is a subconscious process just as children learn a language.

Literature review

Lenka Hruskova (2011) in her research claimed that NEO inventory does not detect intelligence or ability of teachers is not intended to detect mental disorders. She carried out various personality types of teachers of foreign languages and as a default information leading to their teaching styles, teaching strategies, methods and techniques. She found that while examining the relationship between instructional strategies of teachers and pupils is very difficult (since the learning outcomes can also be influenced by factors other than the teaching strategies and interaction styles of the teacher), nevertheless, some relationships may be considered very probable. There is an increasing demands on the teacher (both on physical endurance, health and mental toughness), as well as increasing requirements for the educational, psychological education which includes moral and environmental education and special training requirements.

Sepehri & et al (2011) carried out a research related to teachers' personality. They proved that learning how to learn is an empowering experience, and discovering one's learning style can lead to an increase in achievement and self-confidence. However, it is important to realize that no one style is better than another, although many language school programs favor certain types of learners over others. On the other hand, students should be prepared to expand their learning style repertoire so that they will be more empowered to learn in a variety of learning situations. They also mentioned that a person is probably not totally one 'type' (e.g. totally analytical or totally global) but somewhere along the continuum between the two.

Zarei (2011) also carried out the study to discover the relationship between age and CF in oral communication. She claimed that her study not only meant to find out the preferences and beliefs learners hold attending English courses, but it can be a kind of awareness-raising activity, too, because as Little and Singleton (1990 qtd. in Ellis, 1994) argue, "It is possible to help adult learners to explore their own preferences to shape their learning approach to suit the requirements of a particular learning.", so the burden on the teacher is to understand these preferences of each learner and include as much flexibility as possible in amount, time and way of feedback provided.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESES

This study has been designed to gain appropriate answers to the following questions.

1. Which types of teachers' personalities can present the best teaching in the field of EFL?
2. To what extent do teacher's personalities cause CF in the class?

In the light of the problem of the study and research questions that have been raised, it is hypothesized that:

1. Different types of personalities can be prosperous in different teaching.
2. Learners' motivations have corresponded directly to the characteristics of the teachers.

METHOD

Participants

To achieve the answer of questions in chapter 1, two different groups were selected for this study. Group (1): The total population of the study included 51 English school Iranian EFL teachers in some of the Language Institutes in Gachsaran and Noor Abad. The participants differed in the age range of 28 to 43 years, 18 males and 33 females and all of them were graduated as a BA and MA. It is worth mentioning that the participants' local dialect was ignored in this study. The statistical population of 45 participants were drawn out of the total 51 participants, 15 males and 30 females, as the others did not return their questionnaires. Group (2): almost, all intermediate to high levels of adult EFL students learning English in Language Institutes, in the age 16 to 30. It should be noted, elementary levels and other ages such as kids, teenagers and young students who were unable to distinguish the meaning of CF and NEO PI-R items inventory did not participate in this study. The total population of Student group was 381, 195 females and 186 males but the statistical population of 298 participants returned their questionnaires, 183 females and 115 males.

Instruments

The instruments in the study were altered in three different types of questionnaires. NEO PI-R for both group participants, Teachers' questionnaire regarding CF and also Students' questionnaire regarding CF. Therefore, NEO quested for finding personal differences in the personalities of teachers and also Students of English language.

Feedback can be positive or negative. Positive feedback affirms that a learner response to an activity is correct. It may signal the veracity of the content of a learner utterance or the linguistic correctness of the utterance, while Negative feedback signals, in one way or another, that the learner's utterance lacks veracity or is linguistically deviant. To achieve the reliability of all questionnaires Cronbach's alpha coefficients was administered for all instrument, the results of the Cronbach's Alpha were: 0.83, 0.79 and 0.81 respectively.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

This study was conducted in three phases. NEO PI-R questionnaire were administered for both groups in the first section. Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of teachers' personality on their learnings. The students were also informed that they would remain anonymous. In the second phase, both groups were given CF test to present their attitudes and opinions regarding corrective feedback. It is worth mentioning that in order to ensure that the students would consider the performance task serious, some Institutes principals and professors informed them the scores would be considered as part of their ongoing term grade. The last phase of this process was observation of the CF questionnaires of both instructors and learners and comparing their answers with the real results in the Institutes.

DATA ANALYSIS

Our data consisted of the results of the questionnaires-- NEO PI-R questionnaire, Teachers' questionnaire regarding CF and Students' questionnaire regarding CF. Also comparing CF questionnaires to Students' report card, the data gathered from the questionnaires were entered into the computer item by item based on their own values, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 19 to get descriptive analysis and Pearson correlation analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research questions, table 1 below is the statistical results to find the relationship between Personality and corrective feedback.

One of the aims of the present study was to determine the possible relationship between teachers' personality and CF in language learning. A correlation analysis was run and the results are summed up in Table 1. The analysis revealed that there was a negative relationship between Neuroticism and CF at the 0.05 level of significant (P value) in both participants' groups. This means that higher Neuroticism is associated with the lower Corrective feedback. ($r = -0.239$, $\text{sig} \geq 0.071$) in teacher's case and for students ($r = -0.149$, $\text{sig} \geq 0.059$).

Table 1. The relation between Neo and creativity of teachers and Students

Variables	N	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Teachers CF	45					
	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	-0.239	0.784	-0.018	0.108	0.589
	P value< 0.05	0.071	0.021	0.058	0.047	0.049
Students CF	298					
	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	-0.149	0.891	0.009	0.223	0.321
	P value< 0.05	0.059	0.032	0	0.051	0.038

Pearson correlation coefficient was run to find the relationship among the second domain in the name of Extraversion and Corrective feedback. In this domain, there was a positive significance between 2 variables. ($r=0.784$, $\text{sig}\leq 0.021$), in teachers' case and for students' case ($r=0.891$, $\text{sig}\leq 0.032$). According to the results of Table 4.10, the Pearson correlation coefficient for attitude towards the third domain of personality, named Openness and CF in language learning, indicated a negative relationship between these two variables ($r= -0.018$, $\text{sig}\geq 0.058$) in teachers' case and for students' case ($r= 0.009$, $\text{sig}\leq 0$) which means that high Openness is associated with low attitude towards Corrective feedback. It is word mention that p value in students' case appeared as Zero, suggesting that it might be considered) neutral and a cause of different results in both teachers and students' groups. The Pearson correlation coefficient also carried out for the fourth domain of personality of Agreeableness and CF and they were ($r=0.108$, $\text{sig}\leq 0.047$), in teachers' case and for students' case ($r=0.223$, $\text{sig}\leq 0.051$). It means that there is a positive relationship between Agreeableness and corrective feedback. The last domain of Neo inventory domain, called Conscientiousness was also analyzed by SPSS. The correlation between attitude on CF and Conscientiousness indicated positive relationship between both variables. Numerical statistics were ($r=0.589$, $\text{sig}\leq 0.049$), in teachers' case and for students' case ($r=0.321$, $\text{sig}\leq 0.038$). It indicated that those with positive relationships in EFL would significantly perform better than those with negative relationships.

Question 2: To what extent do teacher's personalities cause CF in the class?

In this study, it was hypothesized that Learners' motivations have corresponded directly to the characteristics of the teachers. To support this hypothesis, finding the relationship between motivation and CF is necessary.

Husseini (2012) in his thesis classified discourse and mentioned that all oral and written languages are affected beyond the situations of society, sex, culture, nature and nurture. He also mentioned some new discourses like, sexuality discourse, functional discourse and so on. Before, some protagonists like fair Clough, Vandyke, and Bloomer had mentioned political discourse and law discourse. He also mentioned that there are lots of spark to motivate each learner to be more interested in learning a language. He claimed that sometimes smile of a teacher, shape or all subjects can be useful to interest someone to learn new things. He stated that "unfortunately, in most classes, instructors never consider the learners' feelings, which factors make willing learners to unwilling? Most instructors just show off themselves in the class. They do not let learners speak,

therefore learners just listen or sometimes, they think about something else. In short, the knowledge of discourse has opened a different attitude to instructors, like, removing the learners fear, having confidence in class, motivating learners, distinguishing idiosyncrasy, regarding age, sex, social class, native language, class level, aim of the class and so on." (P. 11).

In order to answer the second question, we should look at Table 1. While there is a direct relationship between Neuroticism & Openness, there is a negative relationship between them and Corrective Feedback, meaning that lower Neuroticism and Openness has higher rank in Corrective feedback.

CONCLUSION

Based on the procedure of the study, the participants were categorized in teachers group and students group. Based on the numerical results and the analysis revelation, different results for each personality domain, the classification of all big five types of personality and the relationship of each of them are explained shortly in the following paragraphs:

1. There was a negative relationship between Neuroticism and CF at the (0.05) level of significance (P value) in both participants' groups. This means that higher Neuroticism is associated with the lower Corrective feedback. ($r = -0.239$, $\text{sig} \geq 0.071$) in teachers' case and for students ($r = -0.149$, $\text{sig} \geq 0.059$).
2. Pearson correlation coefficient was run to find the relationship among the second domain of Extraversion and Corrective feedback. In this domain, there was a positive significance between 2 variables. ($r=0.784$, $\text{sig} \leq 0.021$), in teachers' case and for students' case ($r=0.891$, $\text{sig} \leq 0.032$).
3. According to the results which were shown in Table 1, the Pearson correlation coefficient for attitude towards the third domain of personality of Openness and CF in language learning indicated a negative relationship between these two variables ($r= -0.018$, $\text{sig} \geq 0.058$) in teachers' case and for students' case ($r= 0.009$, $\text{sig} \leq 0$) which means that high Openness is associated with low attitude towards Corrective feedback. It is worth mentioning that p value in students' case appeared as Zero, suggesting that it might be considered neutral and a cause of different results in both teachers and students' groups.
4. The Pearson correlation coefficient also carried out for the fourth domain of personality of Agreeableness and CF and they were ($r=0.108$, $\text{sig} \leq 0.047$), in teachers' case and for students' case ($r=0.223$, $\text{sig} \leq 0.051$). It means that there is a positive relationship between Agreeableness and corrective feedback.
5. The last domain of Neo inventory domain that was called Conscientiousness also analyzed by SPSS. The correlation between attitude on CF and Conscientiousness indicated positive relationship between both variables. Numerical statistics were ($r=0.589$, $\text{sig} \leq 0.049$), in teachers' case and for students'

case ($r=0.321$, $\text{sig}\leq 0.038$). It indicated that those with positive relationships in EFL would significantly perform better than those with negative relationships.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This kind of studies exactly will be fruitful for language Institutes owners or principals who are going to make contracts to teachers. If they want to progress in the quality of teaching in their Institutes, discovering the personalities of teachers can be the best method to carry out while choosing teachers. Whereas positive evaluations can encourage efficacy beliefs, negative evaluations can more easily defeat those beliefs. It is important for teachers to consider the sensitive nature of learning when providing feedback to students. Learning can be a very personal act and harsh criticism has the potential to squelch students. Teachers should make efforts to help students understand how their affective processes can influence their EFL learning performance. In short, teachers should make every effort to help their students increase competence through confidence.

Our investigation provides evidence for the roles and importance of attitude towards teachers' personality and the relationship with corrective feedback among EFL students. This research could be considered a preliminary investigation on which follow-up work could be based. In a comparative future study, it would be interesting to assess: Whether teacher personality creates and enhances motivation among students or whether teacher personality makes affirmative effects in different levels.

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