

Using Information Gap and Opinion Gap Tasks to Improve Introvert and Extrovert Learners' Speaking

Hamid Marashi ^{1*}, Razieh Naddim ²

¹ Associate Professor Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran, Iran

² MA Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran, Iran

Received: 2018/10/08

Accepted: 2018/12/08

Abstract: This study compared the effect of information gap and opinion gap tasks on introvert and extrovert EFL learners' speaking. Accordingly, 138 learners out of 180 intermediate learners were chosen through their scores on a sample Preliminary English Test (PET). These learners further responded to the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) which categorized them into introverts and extroverts. Altogether, four subgroups were established: 32 introverts and 37 extroverts undergoing the opinion gap task instruction and 33 introverts and 36 extroverts experiencing the information gap task treatment. All groups received 10 sessions of treatment and at the end sat for another sample PET speaking section as the posttest. A two-way ANOVA was run to respond to all the four questions showing that while extrovert learners benefited more from opinion gap tasks, introverts outperformed extroverts as a result of information gap tasks. The findings support the notion of using appropriate tasks for different personalities.

Keywords: Opinion Gap Tasks, Information Gap Tasks, Speaking, Extroverts, Introverts.

* Corresponding Author.

Introduction

Speaking is the first need for starting a conversation and indeed a challenging prerequisite for language learners. The ability to speak a language for most people is actually synonymous with having a mastery over that language as speech is the most fundamental requirement for human communication (Cecle-Murcia, 2001). Accordingly, learners often learn to assess their success in the process of acquiring a language learning on the foundation of to what extent they think they have progressed in learning to speak (Richards, 2015).

While emphasizing the fundamental role that speaking bears in second language teaching/learning, many scholars (e.g., Bygate, 1998; Byrnes, 2001; Hedge, 2008; Levelt, 1995; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004) assert that speaking is a highly demanding and complex cognitive skill that involves different mechanisms. It comes with no surprise then that a myriad of techniques and strategies have been designed and tried out to improve EFL learners' speaking, among them of course task-based language teaching plays a pivotal role in learning a language (Ameri-Golestan & Nezakat-Alhossaini, 2017; Sadeghi, Azad Mousavi, & Javidi, 2017). According to Gass (1997), tasks give learners opportunities to negotiate meaning with others and these negotiations often result in the correction of specific mistakes and help them promote second language learning.

Among these tasks are opinion gap tasks and information gap tasks. Indeed, an important aspect of communication are the notion of information gaps since in real communication, individuals often interact to obtain the information they do not have (Richards, 2006) while they are also inclined to both provide and seek opinion with their interlocutors (Ellis, 2003).

Alongside the methods and techniques which aim at facilitating the L2 learning process, there are also other elements which affect the latter including the personality types that impact students in acquiring a new language or in learning other subjects (Cook, 1996; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). One such personality construct closely related to ELT is the extroversion and introversion dimension (Ellis, 1994). Studies into this personality domain were initially introduced by Carl Jung in 1933 and more mainstreamed ever since the works of Eysenck and Eysenck in the 1970s (Marashi & Fotoohi, 2017) to the point that this personality type has gained the most attention in L2 researches (Dörnyei, 2009). Therefore, being extrovert/introvert is an important factor in language learning as noted by many scholars (e.g., Chamorro-Premuzic, Furnham, & Lewis, 2007; Heaven, Mark, Barry, & Ciarrochi, 2002; Paunonen & Ashton, 2001; Robinson, 2001; Farsides & Woodfield, 2003).

With the hugely extensive literature on applying task-based teaching in class and also the multitude of studies conducted on extroversion/introversion and also inspired by an unpublished study conducted by Khodayi (2014) on the comparison of information gap and opinion gap tasks on the writing skill of extrovert learners and a study on using opinion gap tasks among field-dependent and field-independent learners (Marashi & Mehdizadeh, 2018), the researchers sought to compare the effect of these two tasks on the speaking skill of introvert and extrovert EFL learners. Accordingly, the following four research questions were formulated:

Q₁: Is there any significant difference between the effect of information gap and opinion gap tasks on introvert EFL learners' speaking?

Q₂: Is there any significant difference between the effect of information gap and opinion gap tasks on extrovert EFL learners' speaking?

Q₃: Does using information gap tasks have any significantly different effect on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' speaking?

Q₄: Does using opinion gap tasks have any significantly different effect on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' speaking?

Review of the Related Literature

Speaking

Those who know a language are usually referred to as the 'speakers' of that language, as if this skill alone includes all other types of skills (Ur, 2006) since speaking is perhaps "the principal skill that stands for an overall knowledge of a foreign language" (Nowicka & Wilczyn'ska, 2011, p. 24). Consequently, speaking – which is basically the most common goal in learning a language (Ellis, 2003) – is an interactive process of actually constructing meaning which itself entails producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown, 2000; Gebhard, 2006). Accordingly, EFL learners need to be able to engage in this interactive process in a multiplicity of situations using different conversational strategies (Harmer, 2007). Interestingly, speaking can be rewarding and motivating while being frightening and intimidating at the same time thus turning it into a highly demanding skill, linguistically, cognitively, and emotionally (Hinkle, 2006).

Evidently, learning to speak a second language "requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules as learners must also acquire the knowledge of how native speakers use the language in the context of structured interpersonal exchange, in which many

factors interact” (Shumin, 1997, p. 1). Hence, spoken language proficiency comprises a mastery of not only pronunciation, delivery, and communication strategies but also vocabulary and language patterns together with ideas and organization (Gan, 2008).

Levelt (1995) has developed a frequently-cited model to explain speech production which comprises the three stages of conceptualization, formulation, and articulation. As Goh and Burns (2012) emphasize, all these three stages interact with one another and may overlap and recur during speaking. Conceptualization is the “beginning stage during which the speaker plans what they are going to say as well as the purpose of the message and the discourse type” (Thornbury, 2005, p.3). Once the content has been chosen, the speaker sets to decide about how to convey their message through resorting to their knowledge of phonology, lexis, and grammar while choosing an appropriate lexicon and putting their chunks coherently, i.e., formulation (Hagoort & Levelt, 2009, as cited in Bijani & Khabiri, 2017). The last stage, or articulation, is a physiological process during which speakers “activate and control specific muscle groups of the articulatory system (consisting of the vocal tract, larynx, and lungs) that allow for the production of sound waves carried to the listener” (Goh & Burns, p. 38). Moreover, the aforesaid three stages co-occur with self-monitoring whereby a speakers checks his/her speech in terms of accuracy and appropriacy while resorting to his/her metalinguistic and pragmatic knowledge (Goh & Burns; Thornbury).

Information Gap Tasks

Information gap tasks refer to the existence of lack of information among participants working on a common problem where one person has some information which has to be exchanged with others to solve a problem or make a decision (Neu & Reeser, 1997; Pica & Doughty, 1986). These tasks are very effective in the English classroom since learners are encouraged to negotiate meaning because they have to explain the information in a way to be comprehensible for others to accomplish the task; in addition, speaking with peers is less stressful than presenting in front of the entire class and being evaluated (Moss & Ross-Feldman, 2003).

Bachman, Lynch, and Mason (1995) provide a more comprehensive description of these tasks where he states that, “If the responses of a question and the information that the participants communicate to each other is new and not predictable from the context it can be called an information gap” (p. 134). This is perhaps why information gap tasks are quite

commonly used in adult classes around the world, up and down the proficiency continuum (Brown, 2000). Furthermore, Pica, Kanagy, and Falodun (1993) assert that the information gap task promotes more of these negotiations than other tasks while Pica, Kang, and Sauro (2006) concluded that, "Information gap tasks in addition to encouraging attention to form, function, and meaning modify interaction among learners and their interlocutors" (p. 301).

Opinion Gap Tasks

Opinion gap activities as Ellis (2004) states, identify and formulate a personal preference or attitude which is given in response to a specific situation and require students' feelings and ideas toward an issue. Opinion gap activities require students to raise questions and topics which also help students' creative thinking (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Examples are story completion and taking part in a discussion which are open in the sense that they afford many possible solutions. The activity may require using factual information, formulating arguments, and justifying one's opinion and often, there may be no right or wrong responses (Qing Liao, 2006).

Opinion gap tasks have proven successful in promoting negotiations (Ellis, 2003). Based on Prabhu's (1987) description, opinion gap tasks can engage students with both processing of the meaning and producing output. Also this per se could impact the extent of attention which given to language use (Willis & Willis, 2007). Aliakbari and Mohsennejad (2014) asserts that opinion gap task increased the students' participation in the classroom while Defrioka (2009) claims that opinion gap activities cause students to become more brave and confident and less stressful about dialogues.

Introverts/Extroverts

Introversion, theoretically is defined by Eysenck and Eysenck (1985, as cited in Brown, 2000) as "the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfillment from the reflection of this self from other people" (p. 167). Extraversion, on the other hand, "is the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self-esteem, and a sense of wholeness from other people as opposed to receiving that information within oneself" (Brown, p. 167).

Morrone-Strupinsky and Lane (2007) define introverts as those who like or need to spend time on their own, feel responsible for their deeds and consequences, are intrinsically motivated by all that has been done, and are seen as responsible and persistent individuals.

For extroverts, on the other hand, he further notes that they are socially and interactively oriented requiring “continual interest and relevance for sustained task involvement” (p. 304) and that an extrovert “instinctively relegates responsibility to factors outside of self, presents as impatient and having a low frustration tolerance, and is liable to be viewed as irresponsible and scattered” (p.304). Furthermore, introverts enjoy getting directly to the point in a conversation rather than beating around the bush and they tend to feel more comfortable if they express their ideas in written form (Broadbent & Kitzis, 2005). Also introverts specify more time on observing and reading people (Kahnweiler, 2009).

The extroversion/introversion continuum has been accepted far and wide in the psychology community since its conceptualization (Gan, 2008). In its initial conceptualization, the behavioral differences between extroverts and introverts were linked to certain physiological attributes of the brain (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). Further research consolidates this perspective in relating extroversion/introversion with a higher degree of the mesolimbic dopamine system sensitivity to various stimuli which are potentially rewarding (Depue & Collins, 1999) and also respiration (Prakash, Singh, & Yadav, 2016).

Method

Participants

This study was conducted with 138 female intermediate EFL learners with the age range of 16-18. These participants were non-randomly selected from among an existing sample of 180 learners based on their performance on a sample piloted language proficiency test (those who scored one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen). The 138 learners were randomly assigned into four groups: 33 introvert and 36 extrovert learners undergoing the information gap task procedure and again 32 introvert and 37 extrovert learners experiencing the opinion gap task procedure.

Another 30 learners sharing almost the same English language background with the main participants of the study participated in the piloting of the sample proficiency test. Furthermore, the two researchers rated the speaking tests; their inter-rater reliability had been established a priori ($r = 0.964$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$).

Instrumentations and Materials

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a language proficiency test, a questionnaire, and speaking posttest were administrated. Moreover, a textbook was also used in the teaching procedure, all of which are described in this section.

Pretest: Preliminary English Test (PET)

A sample Cambridge ESOL PET was administered for the participant selection process as described above. For the assessment of the speaking sections, the researchers used the PET general mark scheme. Furthermore, the reliability of the test during the piloting and main administration stood at 0.86 and 0.90, respectively.

Speaking Posttest

Another sample PET speaking paper was used as the posttest for all four experimental groups at the end of the treatment.

Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI)

The EPI (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barret, 1985) is a questionnaire that assesses the personality traits of people. This hugely validated test consists of 57 Yes/No items scored based on the EPI rating scale. Those who fill out the EPI receive three different kinds of score: the E score which is related to how much extrovert/ introvert a person is, the N score measuring the neuroticism/ stability, and the Lie score which tries to measure how socially desirable a person has wanted to prove to be. The E score is computed out of 24 since it consists of 24 items, the N score is out of 24, and the Lie score is out of nine. The Yes/No answers should be given based on the usual way of acting or thinking of an individual.

For the purpose of this study, the 24 items measuring the E score was used with those scoring 14 and above being considered extroverts while those scoring 10 and below as introverts. The time allocated to answer the questionnaire was 15 minutes.

The scale reliability of this questionnaire are robust, and confirmatory factor analyses demonstrated good factor structure while the instrument shows reasonable predictive validity to the actual course performance of students (Garcia & Pintrich, 1994). The answer key and the standard rating scales are also provided in the battery. The EPI was administered following the PET in order to identify the introvert and extrovert participants required for this study.

Course Book

The book *Discussions A-Z* by Wallwork (2010) for the intermediate level was used. There are many controversial topics in the book which encourage the learners to take part in class conversations. This book contains tasks for all four skills. Furthermore, there are some parts

consisting of a short reading and a number of questions to help learners have ideas to talk. For each session, one topic was used; therefore, 10 units of this book were covered during the treatment.

Procedure

Once the participants were homogenized in terms of their general language proficiency and speaking ability at the outset and divided into the four groups comprising 65 introverts and 73 extroverts (as described in detail earlier), the treatment commenced which consisted of 10 sessions, each of which lasted 90 minutes each. The same teacher (one of the researchers) taught all four groups using the same course book.

Information Gap Group

In the information gap group comprising two classes of 36 extroverts and two classes of 33 introverts consisted of the following tasks as a part of their discussion.

Task 1. The students were asked to speak using the words given to them on a small sheet of paper. Each of these 20 sheets contained one word on it. For instance, one of the students received the card with *pasta* written on it and she had to talk about its taste, the first time she had pasta, the material used for cooking it, the country from which it originates, etc.

Task 2. The students were divided into two groups of seven and eight students. Then in each group, the students were selected to stand in front of their team one by one. Each student was given a picture card (e.g., a bus driver) by the other group and the student had to explain the picture in the shortest way she could to make her team members understand and guess the word. She was not allowed to say the word and could only explain and define it.

Task 3. The students were divided into seven groups of pairs and each pair was asked to make a story based on a given picture card (e.g., a family carrying baggage to the airport). Then each pair would tell their story which could be funny, real, or even horrifying and get feedback from the others.

Task 4. The students were divided into three groups of five and one member of each group was selected in turn to pick up a wrapped paper among 20 such papers in a box with a word written on it (for example, sky diving). She then had to try to draw it on the board in order to make her peers guess that word.

Task 5. The students were divided in pairs; both of the students together in each group had the opportunity to choose one number from 1-20. Every number relates to a paragraph

written on a piece of paper, for example, a paragraph about “a girl living with his grandmother in a village close to a big famous jungle ...”. Then the students had to continue and write this story in any genre they like. Finally, they read their story to their peers and got feedback from other students.

Task 6. The students were divided in pairs and the teacher gave each pair a picture (e.g., an office). They were asked to write the word for every item they saw in the picture and then share their description with the other groups and make any addition or deletion to it.

During the tasks, the teacher moved around the class and monitored the students' speaking making sure that they were not speaking Farsi.

Opinion Gap Group

The same participant selection was conducted again for the other 69 students consisting of two classes for 32 introverts and two classes for 37 extroverts. The tasks that were assigned for these participants were under the treatment of opinion gap tasks.

Task 1. The teacher divided the students into four groups of three and four students and raised a topic to be discussed. After five minutes, the teacher asked the students in groups to share their opinions with others. Then, the groups discussed together, asking and answering questions. The topics could be social, political, etc. For example, the teacher raised a topic about the internet and networking. The groups were free to talk about the different aspects of the issue and the advantages and disadvantages of the internet and networking. They were allowed to agree or disagree with each other's point of view and everyone had to interpret their own ideas. Then, they spoke among groups; there were no right or wrong answers and the learners only discussed the issue and asked questions or responded to their peers' questions.

Task 2. The students were divided into pairs. Each pair had to express their own ideas individually; then, they shared their ideas taking turn in groups and the teacher chose one group to talk about their opinions and selected another group or groups to ask them questions. For example, the teacher asked a question this time “What would you do if you had three days to die?” They had five minutes to talk about their personal ideas in groups. After that, the teacher chose one group to share their ideas about the topic among other groups and also chose another group to ask questions about their opinions.

Task 3. The students were divided into four groups and in each one, there were three or four students. Every group received one photo which involved the issue they were going to

speak about. For example, one group received a photo of a satellite and were given seven minutes to talk about their opinions and different aspects of the issue. Then, each group showed its own photo to the others and every member was allowed to speak for two minutes.

Task 4. The teacher played a five-minute movie on the screen; then each student was free to talk about their ideas and beliefs. For example, the teacher played a short animation which was about success and the students one by one were allowed to talk and agree or disagree and explain their opinions along with their reasons. The teacher managed to give everyone the chance to speak.

Task 5. The teacher had asked the students to bring a quote of a famous person; then she collected them and chose one or two controversial ones for the topic of the day. For example, the quote “Change your thoughts and you change your world” by Norman Vincent Peale was chosen as the topic for discussion. The students talked individually about their ideas and commented about others’ ideas.

After the treatment, all the participants in the four groups sat for the same speaking posttest.

Results

Participants Selection

Once the sample pretest PET was piloted, it was administered for participants selection. The descriptive statistics of this administration are presented below in Table 1. As can be seen in the table below, the mean and standard deviation of the scores were 54.99 and 9.89, respectively.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of the PET Administration*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PET Administration	181	22	71	54.99	9.897
Valid N (listwise)	181				

Among the above 180 learners who took the test, a total of 138 whose scores fell one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected with 65 of them being introverts and 73 extroverts. The 138 participants were assigned to four groups (as described earlier). Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of these 138 participants’ scores on the speaking section of the PET administered earlier.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Scores of the 138 Students on the PET Speaking Section

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Introvert Information Gap	33	9	22	15.39	3.984	.088	.409
Introvert Opinion Gap	32	9	22	15.53	3.810	.162	.414
Extrovert Information Gap	36	9	23	15.67	3.570	.078	.393
Extrovert Opinion Gap	37	8	23	15.54	3.798	.036	.388
Valid N (listwise)	32						

To ensure further homogeneity between the four groups at the outset, a one-way ANOVA was run between the mean scores of the four groups on the PET speaking section. Prior to this, of course, the two assumptions for running this parametric test had to be checked. Firstly, the descriptive statistics of all four subgroups was checked for normality of distribution. As is evident from Table 2, the skewness ratios of all four subgroups (0.21, 0.39, 0.20, and 0.09) fell within the acceptable range of ± 1.96 . Next, the Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was checked: the variances among the four groups were not significantly different ($F_{(3,130)} = 0.999$, $p = 0.395 > 0.05$). Accordingly, the results of the one-way ANOVA are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. One-Way ANOVA of the Speaking Scores of the Four Groups at the Outset

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.152	3	5.051	.376	.770
Within Groups	1745.363	130	13.426		
Total	1760.515	133			

As Table 3 indicates, with the F value of 0.376 at the significance level of 0.770 being greater than 0.05, the mean scores of the four groups were not significantly different. Hence, the researchers were assured that the four groups bore no significant difference in their speaking at the outset and that any difference at the posttest could be attributed to the variation of treatment and personality under focus in this study.

Posttest

At the end of the treatment, the posttest was administered to all four groups. A series of statistical analyses were conducted before and after the administration which are described in full detail below. The descriptive statistics of the posttest administration is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics of the Scores of All Four Groups on the Posttest*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Introvert Information Gap	33	15	23	18.94	2.726	.018	.409
Introvert Opinion Gap	32	12	19	14.34	2.610	.712	.414
Extrovert Information Gap	36	12	23	17.75	3.298	.132	.393
Extrovert Opinion Gap	37	14	25	19.84	3.176	-.014	.388
Valid N (listwise)	32						

Responding to the Research Questions

To respond to all the four questions of the study together, a two-way ANOVA was required since there is a dual learning modality (information gap versus opinion gap tasks) and also a dual personality style (introvert versus extrovert) involved with one dependent variable (i.e., speaking skill) at stake. Prior to this of course, the two assumptions for running this parametric test had to be checked. Firstly, the descriptive statistics of all four groups, i.e. introverts in the information gap group, introverts in the opinion gap group, extroverts in the information gap group, and extroverts in the opinion gap group had to be checked for normality of distribution. As is evident from Table 4, the skewness ratios of all four subgroups (0.04, 1.72, 0.33, and -0.04) fell within the acceptable range. The next assumption was checking the Levene's test of equality of error variances: the variances among the four subgroups were not significantly different ($F_{(3,134)} = 2.232, p = 0.087 > 0.05$).

Accordingly, running a two-way ANOVA was legitimized. Table 5 shows the results of the tests of between-subjects effects.

Table 5. *Tests of Between-Subjects Effects*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	333.712a	3	111.237	10.366	.000
Intercept	43922.804	1	43922.804	4092.931	.000
Task Type	74.379	1	74.379	6.931	.009
Personality Style	204.485	1	204.485	19.055	.000
Task Type * Personality Style	49.336	1	49.336	4.597	.034
Error	1438.005	134	10.731		
Total	45517.000	138			
Corrected Total	1771.717	137			

a. R Squared = .188 (Adjusted R Squared = .170)

As Table 5 indicates, the significance value was less than 0.05 ($F_{(3,134)} = 10.366$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$). Furthermore, there was a significant difference between both introvert and extrovert learners ($F_{(1,134)} = 19.055$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$) and information gap and opinion gap tasks in this study in general ($F_{(1,134)} = 6.931$, $p = 0.009 < 0.05$).

Having said the above and going back to Table 4, the extroverts in the opinion gap group which gained the highest mean score on the posttest (19.84) benefited the most in terms of improving their speaking skill. Furthermore, the introverts in the information gap group and extroverts in the information gap group were second and third in terms of their speaking improvement with their mean scores standing at 18.94 and 17.75, respectively. And noticeably behind the above three groups stood the introverts in the opinion gap group with a mean score of 14.34. Hence, the overall results of this study indicate that the extroverts in the opinion gap task performed the best while the introverts in the opinion gap benefited the least.

Finally, as the interaction of the teaching type and personality style proved significantly different ($F_{(1,134)} = 4.597$, $p = 0.034 < 0.05$), the overall conclusion was that the interaction of the two teaching types (information gap and opinion gap tasks) with the two personality styles (introverts and extroverts) proved significant.

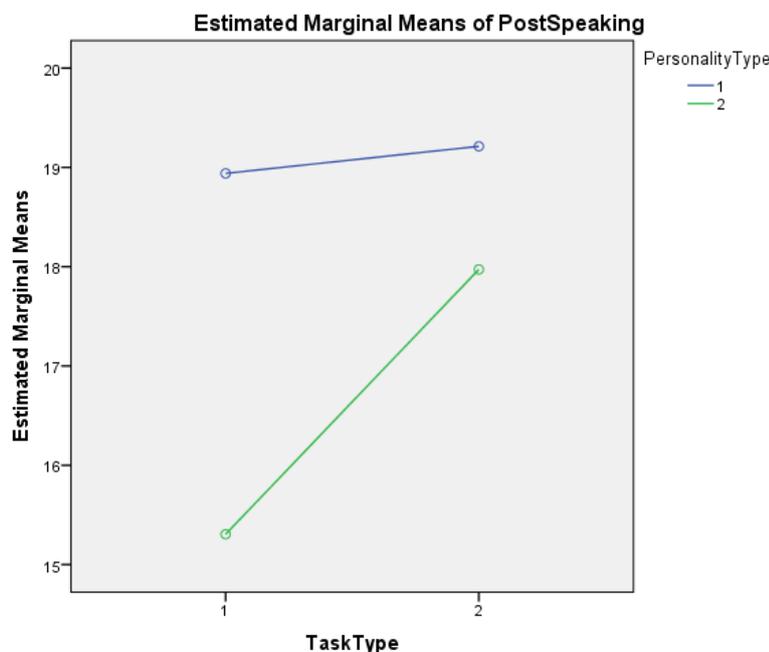


Figure 1. Interaction of the Teaching and Personality Styles on the Posttest

Based on the ANOVA table which reveals there are significant differences, the responses to all four research questions were as follows:

- *There is a significant difference between the effect of information gap and opinion gap tasks on introvert EFL learners' speaking.*
- *There is a significant difference between the effect of information gap and opinion gap tasks on extrovert EFL learners' speaking.*
- *Information gap tasks have a significantly different effect on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' speaking.*
- *Opinion gap tasks have a significantly different effect on extrovert and introvert EFL learners' speaking*

Finally, the researchers calculated the observed power to determine the strength of the findings of the research, that is, to evaluate the stability of the research findings across samples, effect size was also estimated. The observed power, as shown in Table 6, came out to be 0.74 for the task type which is considered a moderate effect size and 0.99 for the personality style which is considered strong, according to Mackey and Gass (2005).

Table 6. *Estimates of Effect Size for the Posttest*

Source	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^b
Corrected Model	.188	31.097	.998
Intercept	.968	4092.931	1.000
Task Type	.049	6.931	.743
Cognitive Style	.124	19.055	.991
Task Type * Personality Style	.033	4.597	.567

As in this univariate two-way ANOVA, there were only two modalities of the independent variable (task type) and two fixed factors (personality style), running Post-Hoc tests was not feasible since a minimum of three cases are required for such tests.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the extroverts in the opinion gap task performed the best while the introverts in the opinion gap benefited the least. The advantageousness of opinion gap tasks for extroverts has also been reported by Marzban and Hashemi (2012). Interestingly, Khodayi (2014) also found out that extrovert learners perform better on writing through doing opinion gap task instruction.

The result of this study is also in line with the finding of Marashi and Dibah (2013) in that extroverts outperformed introverts in a cooperative learning setting. The findings of the

aforesaid studies together with the present study delineate the fact that when it comes to an activity which requires group work, interaction, exchanges, etc. (all of which comprise the quintessential foundations of both opinion gap tasks and cooperative learning), extroverts produce the higher hand.

The above manifestation is perhaps of no surprise as it is the very nature of extroversion which encourages such individuals to be ready to engage and initiate and also express their viewpoints in a group. On the other hand, introverts tend to be more withdrawn from communal functions and are inclined to be more observant and not so expressive before others. Hence, the essence of extroversion/introversion may have been very much at work when it came to extroverts outperforming introverts in opinion gap tasks.

Contrary to what is perhaps common thinking in that extroverts generally outweigh introverts when it comes to speaking, the results of this study have proven otherwise. While the extroverts in the opinion gap task group benefited more than introverts in improving their speaking, the introverts who had undergone information gap task instruction enjoyed a higher achievement in their speaking compared to introverts. Again this very outcome was corroborated by Marashi and Dibah (2013) where they found out that the introverts who were exposed to a competitive learning modality outperformed the extroverts in their speaking.

As discussed earlier, the reason underlying this trend is perhaps very much to do with the nature of extroversion/introversion and the interaction procedure of these tasks. While opinion gap tasks require exchanges and expressions of opinions and views, information gap tasks do not require such expressiveness. Hence, introverts who are less gregarious and more observant would fulfill information gap tasks better and would thus benefit more in their speaking compared to the extroverts who undergo such an instruction.

Conclusion

According to these findings, opinion gap and information gap tasks have positive effect on improving learners' speaking and also enhance the participation and interest of learners in class activities. This is perhaps because of the variety of activities which encourage learners to interact. Since the results have shown the improvement of both introverts and extroverts in different contexts, it is imperative to use the right task for the right group in the pedagogical system.

To perform TBLT tasks in the classroom, teachers need to be trained on how to create a task and use it for learners' speaking. This training perhaps needs to entail procedures for

teachers to become more familiar with the personality variation of learners and to be made aware of how they could identify learners with such different personalities. The results of this study clearly revealed that through using the right category of tasks for a specific personality group, teachers can manage making their students more interested in learning the language since by knowing which tasks benefit learners with different personal traits more, teachers can facilitate the process of learning.

It may of course sound farfetched but ideally, learners could be asked to fill the EPI or other personality identification instruments such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) upon referring to a language teaching establishment as part of their placement procedure. This would definitely assist the entirety of the establishment in prescribing the most efficient instruction modality for learners with differing personality types. For instance, as suggested by this study, introverts could be provided with information gap task instruction while extroverts could undergo opinion gap task instruction.

Although teachers assume the pivotal function in the learning process, syllabus designers and textbook writers too play an important role in this regard. Some real life activities can be designed which could facilitate the learning process by considering personality traits. These tasks and activities appearing in a textbook should be arranged in a way that all learners with different personality traits could be encouraged to take part. Needless to say, teachers should be encouraged to come on board alongside syllabus designers in the process thus providing their practical experience throughout the designing.

The following recommendations are discussed here hoping that they would help researchers in continuity of this study. To begin with, the same study could be carried out among males to see whether the controlled variable of gender in this study would yield to different results. Secondly, the study also could be conducted in coed classes to see whether the results would be different if male and female introverts and extroverts were seated together in information gap task and opinion gap task groups. Another variable that could be involved is age; accordingly, the same study could be conducted within different age groups. Finally, in this study, extroverts and introverts were seated in different groups; it would be interesting to see whether the results would be different had there been equal numbers of introverts and extroverts in each group.

References

- Aliakbari, M., & Mohsennejad, F. (2014). The effect of story retelling opinion gap tasks on Iranian EFL students' speaking skill. *Advances in English Language and Literature*, 1(2), 7-15.
- Ameri-Golestan, A., & Nezakat-Alhossaini, M. (2017). Long-term effects of collaborative task planning vs. individual task planning on Persian-speaking EFL learners' writing performance. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 146-164.
- Bachman, L. F., Lynch, B. K., & Mason, M. (1995). Investigating variability in tasks and rater judgments in a performance test of foreign language speaking. *Language Testing*, 12, 238-257.
- Bijani, H., & Khabiri, M. (2017). Direct and semi-direct validation: Test takers' perceptions, evaluations, and anxiety towards speaking module of an English proficiency test. *Journal of Language and Translation*, 7(1), 25-41.
- Broadbent, M., & Kitzis, L. S. (2005). *The new CIO leader*. Boston, MA: Gartner.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Longman: Pearson Education.
- Bygate, M. (1998). Theoretical perspectives on speaking. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18(1), 20-42.
- Byrnes, J. P. (2001). *Cognitive development and learning in instructional contexts*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. New York: Heinle Publishers.
- Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Furnham, A., & Lewis, M. (2007). Personality and approaches to learning predict preference for different teaching method. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 17, 241-25.
- Cook, V. (1996). *Second language learning second language teaching*. New York: Arnold.
- Defrioka, A. (2009). Improving students' interaction in speaking class through information gap activities. *Leksika Journal*, 3(2), 33-45.
- Depue, R. A., & Collins, P. F. (1999). Neurobiology of the structure of the personality: Dopamine, facilitation of intensive motivation, and extroversion. *Behavioral and Brain Science*, 22(3), 491-517.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *The psychology of second language acquisition*. Oxford: University Press.

- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2004). The definition and measurement of L2 explicit knowledge. *Language Learning, 54*, 227-275.
- Eysenck, H. J., & Eysenck, M. W. (1985). *Personality and individual differences: A natural science approach*. New York: Plenum.
- Eysenck, S. B. G., Eysenck, H. J., & Barrett, P. (1985). A revised version of the psychoticism scale. *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences, 6*(1), 21-29.
- Farsides, T., & Woodfield, R. (2003). Individual differences and undergraduate academic success: The roles of personality, intelligence, and application. *Personality and Individual Differences, 34*(7), 1225-1243.
- Gan, Z. (2008). Extroversion and group oral performance: A mixed quantitative and discourse analysis approach. *The Hong Kong Institute of Education, 23*(3), 24-42.
- Garcia, T. & Pintrich, P. R. (1994). Regulating motivation and cognition in the classroom: The role of self-schemas and self-regulatory strategies. In D. H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Self-regulation on learning and performance: Issues and applications* (pp.132-157). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gass, S. M. (1997). *Input, interaction, and the second language learner*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gebhard, J. G. (2006). *Teaching English as a foreign or second language: A self-development and methodology guide*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Goh, C. C. M., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education.
- Heaven, P. C. L., Mak, A., Barry, J., & Ciarrochi, J. (2002). Personality and family influences on adolescent attitudes to school and self-rated academic performance. *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*(3), 453-462.
- Hedge, T. (2008). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford: University Press.
- Hinkle, E. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching the four skills. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(1), 63-94.
- Kahnweiler, J. (2009). *The introverted leader: Building on your quiet strength*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

- Khodayi, M. (2014). *The effect of using information gap task on extrovert EFL learners' writing*. Unpublished master's thesis, Islamic Azad University Central Tehran Branch.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levelt, W. M. (1995). *Speaking: From intention to articulation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. New York: Routledge.
- Marashi, H., & Dibah, P. (2013). The comparative effect of using competitive and cooperative learning on the oral proficiency of Iranian introvert and extrovert EFL learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(3), 545-555.
- Marashi, H., & Fotoohi, M. (2017). The relationship between extrovert and introvert EFL teachers' adversity quotient and professional development. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 4(3), 156-170.
- Marashi, H., & Mehdizadeh, P. (2018). Using information-gap tasks to improve reading: An analysis of cognitive styles. *Journal of Language Horizons*, 2(1), 87-103.
- Marzban, A., & Hashemi, M. (2012). The impact of opinion-gap tasks on the speaking of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. *Journal of Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70(25), 943-948.
- Morrone-Strupinsky, J. V., & Lane, R. D. (2007). Parsing positive emotion in relation to agentic and affiliative components of extroversion. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 42, 1267-1278.
- Moss, D., & Ross-Feldman, L. (2003). *Second language acquisition in adults: From research to practice*. Washington, DC: National Center for ESL Literacy Education. Retrieved February 27, 2018, from http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/SLA.html
- Neu, H., & Reeser, T. W. (1997). *Parle-moi un peu!: Information gap activities for beginning French classes*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Nowicka, A., & Wilczyn'ska, W. (2011). Authenticity in oral communication of instructed L2 learners. In M. Pawlak, E. Waniek-Klimczak, & J. Majer (Eds.), *Speaking and instructed foreign language acquisition* (pp. 24-42). New York: Multilingual Matters.
- Pasternak, M., & Bailey, K. (2004). Preparing nonnative and native English-speaking teachers: Issues of professionalism and proficiency. In L. Kamhi-Stein (Ed.), *Learning and teaching from experience* (pp. 155-176). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

- Paunonen, S. V., & Ashton, M. C. (2001). Big Five factors and facets and the prediction of behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(3), 524-539.
- Pica, T., & Doughty, C. (1986). Information gap tasks. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(2), 305-325.
- Pica, T., Kanagy, R., & Falodun, J. (1993). *Choosing and using communication tasks for second language instruction*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Pica, T., Kang, H. S., & Sauro, S. (2006). Information gap tasks: Their multiple roles and contributions to interaction research methodology. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 28, 301-338.
- Prabhu, N. (1987). *Second language pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prakash, Sh., Singh, A., & Yadav, K. S. (2016). Personality (introvert and extrovert) and professional commitment effect among B. Ed teacher educator students. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(2), 43-49.
- Qing Liao, X. (2006). Information gap in communicative classrooms. *Forum Online*, 39(4), 38-44.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, P. (2001). Individual differences, cognitive abilities, aptitude complexes, and learning conditions in second language acquisition. *Second Language Research*, 17(4), 368-392.
- Sadeghi, K., Azad Mousavi, & Javidi, S. (2017). Relationship between EFL learners' self-perceived communication competence and their task based and task-free self-assessment of speaking. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 8(2), 31-50.
- Shumin, K. (1997). Developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities. *English Teaching Forum*, 35(3), 8-14.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *Natural grammar: The keywords of English and how they work*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ur, P. (2006). *A course in language teaching practice and theory trainee book*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallwork, A. (2010). *Discussions A-Z: A resource book of speaking activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.