

Mapping Personality Types among EFL Learners: Insights from Indonesian University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the personality types of students in the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo and to explore their pedagogical implications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. A quantitative descriptive design was employed, involving 118 undergraduate students from three academic cohorts (2021–2022, 2022–2023, 2023–2024). Data were collected through an adapted version of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) and validated for Indonesian learners by Wulandari (2017). The instrument used a five-point Likert scale to measure extroversion and introversion tendencies. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage, were computed using Microsoft Excel to determine personality distribution. The results revealed that most students (61.86%) were ambiverts, followed by extroverts (27.12%) and introverts (11.02%). These findings suggest that ELESP students tend to balance social engagement and reflective learning, offering advantages in diverse EFL classroom contexts. The study highlights the need for personality-responsive pedagogy that accommodates varied learner characteristics to promote more effective and inclusive language learning.

KEYWORDS

Extroversion; introversion; ambiversion; EFL learning; personality types.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning and teaching, understanding learners' individual differences is widely recognized as crucial for optimizing language acquisition outcomes. Among these individual variables, personality has received particular attention because it directly influences learners' motivation, interaction styles, classroom participation, and learning strategies (Dörnyei, 2014; Oxford, 2017). EFL learning encompasses four integrated skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—each requiring both cognitive processing and affective regulation. These skills elicit distinctive psychological and behavioural responses, making personality one of the most influential affective factors in predicting language learning success (Ellis, 2008). For example, speaking and listening often require spontaneous engagement, which tends to be easier for extrovert learners who thrive in social contexts (Brown, 2007). Conversely, reading and writing may favour introverted learners due to their preference for reflection and sustained attention (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1996). Thus, personality differences—particularly extroversion, ambiversion, and introversion—play a significant role in shaping EFL performance across various skill areas.



Extensive empirical evidence has explored the relationship between personality traits and language learning performance. Dewaele & Furnham (2000) found that extrovert learners often outperform introverted peers in communicative and fluency-based tasks because of their greater willingness to communicate and lower social inhibition. In contrast, Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham (2005) observed that introverts may achieve higher performance in tasks requiring focus and depth, such as reading comprehension and academic writing. More recently, research in EFL contexts has emphasized that learners who display a balance of extrovert and introverted traits—often referred to as ambiverts—can adapt flexibly across interactive and reflective learning situations (Cain, 2012; Liang & Kelsen, 2018). These findings suggest that personality does not operate as a simple dichotomy, but rather as a continuum that influences how learners engage with different aspects of language learning.

However, most existing studies have been conducted in Western contexts or have examined only specific language skills, such as speaking or writing, rather than exploring personality distribution more broadly. Cultural and educational factors may shape personality expression differently in Indonesian classrooms, where collectivist norms, teacher-centred traditions, and emerging communicative approaches coexist (Marcellino, 2008; Sulistiyo, 2016). In broader EFL research, introverted learners have been shown to perform better in receptive and reflective skills such as reading and writing due to their deeper cognitive engagement and preference for independent learning (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2005; Dörnyei, 2014). In contrast, extroverted learners often excel in productive and interactive skills such as speaking and group discussions because of their sociability, confidence, and lower communication apprehension (Dewaele & Furnham, 2000; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016). In the Indonesian higher education context, Kafryawan (2020) reported a positive relationship between extroversion and writing performance, suggesting that socially active students may also channel their communicative energy into written expression. Meanwhile, Hanifa (2018) indicates that more introverted Indonesian EFL learners often experience higher communication anxiety, particularly in speaking tasks. Collectively, these findings support the view that personality interacts dynamically with sociocultural and pedagogical factors, and that personality–performance relationships cannot be generalized across learning environments.

From a pedagogical standpoint, identifying students' personality types provides valuable insights for designing balanced classroom activities. Awareness of whether students lean toward extroversion, ambiversion, or introversion can help teachers adjust instructional strategies to accommodate diverse learning preferences (Abdolrezapour & Ghanbari, 2022; Liang & Kelsen, 2018). Extrovert students may need structured opportunities for reflection and accuracy-based tasks, while introverted learners may benefit from scaffolded speaking practice in supportive environments. Ambivert learners, who combine elements of both, can often bridge group and individual tasks effectively. Consequently, personality identification serves not merely as a descriptive exercise but as a foundation for personality-responsive instruction in EFL classrooms (Ding, Zhu, & Yan, 2022).

The current study aims to identify and categorize the personality types of students in the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo using the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). The EPQ, developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) and adapted for Indonesian learners by (Wulandari, 2017), has demonstrated strong cross-cultural reliability (Barrett, Petrides, Eysenck, & Eysenck, 1998), making it suitable for this context. By determining whether students are predominantly extrovert, ambivert, or introvert, this study seeks to describe the personality



profile of ELESP learners and discuss its pedagogical implications in the Indonesian EFL context. Although the research focuses solely on personality type identification, the discussion integrates insights from previous studies to highlight how each personality orientation may influence participation and engagement in EFL learning. The findings are expected to provide empirical and pedagogical groundwork for designing inclusive and adaptive teaching practices in higher education EFL settings.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to identify the personality types of students—extrovert, ambivert, and introvert—within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning and teaching. The main objective was to determine the distribution of personality traits among students enrolled in the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo and to provide implications for EFL pedagogy.

A descriptive quantitative design was considered appropriate because it allows researchers to systematically describe and interpret characteristics of a population without manipulating variables (Creswell, 2017). In the field of applied linguistics, descriptive research is often used to explore learner-related variables such as motivation, attitude, and personality, as these influence classroom participation and achievement (Dörnyei, 2007; Oxford, 2017). Accordingly, this design enabled a detailed overview of the students' personality composition, providing empirical evidence to inform pedagogical decisions in EFL settings.

Participants

The participants of this study were undergraduate students enrolled in the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were selected based on their willingness to complete the online questionnaire distributed via institutional communication platforms.

A total of 118 students from three consecutive academic cohorts—2021–2022, 2022–2023, and 2023–2024— took part in the study. This cohort-based inclusion ensured a representative distribution across different academic stages. These students were selected because they had already completed or were in the process of completing key English language skills courses (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) and core linguistics subjects. Such coursework provided sufficient experience in EFL learning contexts, allowing their responses to more accurately reflect personality-related tendencies in academic performance and engagement.

Before participation, all respondents received a brief explanation of the study's objectives and procedures. Informed consent was obtained electronically, and participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, following ethical research standards for educational studies (Mackey & Gass, 2022).

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), originally developed by H. J. Eysenck & Eysenck (1975) to measure major personality dimensions, including extroversion and introversion. The EPQ was chosen for its strong psychometric reliability and cross-cultural validity. Barrett et al. (1998) confirmed that the

EPQ demonstrates factorial consistency across 34 countries, supporting its applicability in diverse cultural and educational contexts.

For the Indonesian EFL context, this study employed an adapted version validated by Wulandari, (2017). In her adaptation process, Wulandari administered the original 30-item EPQ to Indonesian EFL learners to test its validity and reliability. The validation results showed that 20 items met the psychometric standards, resulting in a shortened but reliable Indonesian version. These 20 items were deemed sufficient to represent the essential characteristics of extroversion and introversion among Indonesian university students.

The adapted version consisted of 20 statements measuring two major dimensions—extroversion and introversion. Example extroversion items included: “*I like plenty of bustle and excitement around myself*” and “*I usually take the initiative in making new friends,*” reflecting sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm. Meanwhile, introversion items such as “*I prefer to have few but special friends*” and “*I prefer reading to meeting people*” represented reflective, reserved, and self-contained tendencies. These items were designed to capture behavioral and affective differences among EFL learners with distinct personality orientations.

To improve measurement sensitivity and capture a broader range of responses, the original yes/no format of the EPQ was modified into a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Items 1–10 measured extrovert characteristics, whereas items 11–20 measured introverted tendencies. For scoring consistency, extroversion items were scored directly (1–5), while introversion items were reverse-scored (5–1), ensuring that higher total scores reflected stronger extroversion tendencies.

Each participant’s total personality score was obtained by summing the responses to all 20 items. The scoring criteria used in this study followed the classification framework developed by Velicer & Stevenson (1978), which was subsequently adopted by Wulandari (2017) in her Indonesian EPQ version. The total scores were categorized as follows: 81–100 = Strongly Extrovert, 61–80 = Extrovert, 41–60 = Ambivert, 21–40 = Introvert, and 0–20 = Strongly Introvert. This structured scoring system provided a clear differentiation among participants and a valid basis for personality classification within the EFL learner population.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistical methods. Each response on the Likert scale was assigned a numerical value, and the total score for each participant was calculated by summing all 20 EPQ items. The resulting total scores were then categorized according to Velicer & Stevenson’s (1978) criteria adopted by Wulandari (2017) to determine each participant’s personality type.

Data collection and computation were carried out using Microsoft Excel, which allowed for systematic tabulation and manual calculation of descriptive statistics. The analysis focused on generating frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations to identify the dominant personality types among students in the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP).

The use of descriptive statistics was appropriate for this study’s aim—to describe personality distribution rather than test hypotheses or predict variables. These descriptive findings provided the empirical foundation for the subsequent discussion, which interprets how the dominant personality types observed among ELESP students may influence engagement, participation, and learning behavior in EFL classrooms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the personality types—extrovert, ambivert, and introvert—of students in the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo. Data collected from 118 participants were analyzed descriptively using Microsoft Excel to determine the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage of each personality type. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Personality Types

Personality	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Percentage
Extrovert	65.63	4.46	32	27,12%
Introvert	37.00	3.06	13	11,02%
Ambivert	54.03	4.38	73	61,86%
Total			118	100%

As shown in Table 1, the mean scores indicate that the majority of students were classified as ambiverts ($M = 54.03$, $SD = 4.38$), representing 61.86% of the total sample. This group exhibited balanced characteristics between extroversion and introversion, suggesting moderate levels of social engagement, adaptability, and reflective behavior. A smaller proportion of students were identified as extroverts ($M = 65.63$, $SD = 4.46$; 27.12%), while the least represented group was introverts ($M = 37.00$, $SD = 3.06$; 11.02%).

These results demonstrate that most ELESP students possess mixed personality traits, enabling them to participate effectively in both communicative and reflective learning situations. The dominance of ambiverts suggests that the student population tends to exhibit flexibility across various learning contexts, rather than an extreme inclination toward sociability or introversion.

Discussion

The findings reveal that the majority of ELESP students fall within the ambivert category, followed by extroverts and introverts. This personality distribution suggests that Indonesian EFL learners in higher education contexts tend to demonstrate a balanced orientation between outgoing and reflective dispositions. Such an equilibrium may be influenced by cultural, educational, and pedagogical factors within Indonesian classrooms, which often encourage collaborative learning while maintaining respect for personal reflection (Marcellino, 2015; Sulistiyo, 2016). From a sociocultural perspective, this phenomenon aligns with Vygotsky (1978) concept of social constructivism, where learning occurs through both interpersonal interaction and intrapersonal reflection—two processes naturally balanced by ambivert learners.

Dominance of Ambivert Personality

The predominance of ambivert learners aligns with the idea that individuals who exhibit a mix of extrovert and introverted traits may adapt more flexibly in learning contexts. Although the term “ambivert” is less frequently explored in second language acquisition (SLA) research, studies on personality continua suggest that flexibility in social interaction and reflection can be beneficial (Octaviani, Nuryani, & Yusuf, 2023). In EFL learning, this balanced trait allows students to adapt to various communicative and academic demands, whether in group discussions, presentations, or individual writing tasks.

According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), personality traits operate dynamically within the L2 Motivational Self System, meaning that learners' motivation and classroom behavior shift depending on situational contexts. Ambiverts' balanced orientation allows them to engage both socially and introspectively, leading to more stable motivational

regulation. This finding also resonates with the interactionist view of language learning (Long, 1996), which emphasizes that both negotiation of meaning through communication and internal cognitive processing are essential for second language development.

Previous studies in Asian EFL contexts also support this pattern. For example, Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum (2016) found that Indonesian university learners demonstrate varying language performance influenced by personality traits, showing adaptive behaviors across both social and individual learning situations. Similarly, Wulandari (2017) reported that many Indonesian EFL learners display ambivert tendencies due to the sociocultural balance between collectivist interaction and personal responsibility in academic contexts. In line with the dynamic systems perspective in applied linguistics (Larsen–Freeman, 2019; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), ambiversion can be seen as a form of adaptive stability—learners continuously adjust their engagement level based on interactional demands and emotional regulation needs. Thus, the current findings reinforce the idea that ambiversion may be the most adaptive personality orientation for language learners in culturally mixed learning environments.

Extrovert Learners and Classroom Engagement

The study also found that 27.12% of students were identified as extroverts, characterized by high sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm in interactive learning situations. Extrovert learners are typically comfortable engaging in group tasks, role-plays, and oral communication activities (Alagić, 2022; Dewaele & Furnham, 2000). These traits are advantageous in communicative language teaching (CLT) contexts, where learning depends heavily on verbal participation and collaboration.

Recent research within applied positive psychology (MacIntyre et al., 2016) suggests that extroverted engagement is not necessarily synonymous with effective learning; rather, the quality of interaction and learners' ability to regulate their emotions play a crucial role in language achievement. Extroverted learners often rely on spontaneous and socially driven communication, which enhances fluency and participation but may sometimes compromise grammatical accuracy or depth of content (Almusharraf & Almusharraf, 2021; Dewaele & Furnham, 2000). Therefore, while extroverted students tend to excel in oral and collaborative classroom activities, it is important for teachers to integrate learning tasks that promote reflection and precision. Activities such as reflective journals, process writing, or peer feedback sessions can help extroverted learners internalize linguistic accuracy and develop more balanced communicative competence without diminishing their natural enthusiasm for interaction.

Introvert Learners and Reflective Processing

In contrast, only 11.02% of students were classified as introverts, suggesting that a minority of learners prefer independent and reflective learning environments. Introverted students typically excel in activities requiring sustained attention and deep processing, such as reading comprehension and academic writing (Anugrah, Idayani, & Kunci, 2025; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2005). Their strength lies in their capacity for introspection and critical thinking, which supports detailed and well-structured written outputs.

Cognitive psychology literature (Costa & McCrae, 2010; M. W. Eysenck, 2012) highlights that introverts possess higher levels of cortical arousal, which enhances vigilance and depth of cognitive processing—beneficial for complex language tasks like writing and analysis. However, introverted learners may experience discomfort in communicative or spontaneous activities, such as debates or impromptu discussions, which



are often central to EFL classroom practices. As reported by Azis, Putri, & Fajriani (2025), introverted Indonesian learners often experience anxiety in oral communication but manage it through preparation and gradual exposure. Hence, teachers need to create psychologically safe learning environments that build introverts' communicative confidence through supportive peer collaboration and scaffolded speaking tasks. This aligns with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which asserts that reducing anxiety facilitates input processing and language acquisition—especially important for introverted learners who are more sensitive to affective variables.

Implications for EFL Pedagogy

The personality distribution observed in this study provides valuable implications for EFL pedagogy. Since most students are ambiverts, classroom activities should balance communicative and reflective modes of learning. For instance, instructors can alternate between group-based interaction (favoring extroverts) and individual reflective writing (favoring introverts), thereby catering to all personality types (Oxford, 2017).

Additionally, understanding students' personality profiles allows educators to adopt differentiated instructional strategies. Extrovert learners may benefit from tasks that develop self-regulation and deeper cognitive engagement, while introverted learners should be encouraged through structured opportunities for verbal participation in low-stress settings (Dörnyei, 2014; Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck, & Avdic, 2011). For ambiverts, varied task designs that integrate both social and independent learning elements can further enhance engagement and achievement (Citra & Zainil, 2021).

From a broader theoretical stance, the concept of personality-responsive teaching aligns with contemporary learner-centered approaches and positive education frameworks (MacIntyre et al., 2016; Oxford, 2016). These frameworks emphasize emotional well-being, adaptability, and learner agency—factors closely tied to personality traits in EFL contexts. Finally, this study highlights the importance of personality awareness in EFL teacher education. Teachers who recognize the personality diversity of their students are better equipped to design inclusive classrooms that promote balanced participation, mutual respect, and equitable learning outcomes. This aligns with pedagogical models advocating for learner-centered and culturally responsive approaches in Indonesian higher education (Astika, 2014; Sulistiyo, 2016).

In summary, the findings show that the majority of ELESP students are ambiverts, followed by extroverts and a smaller group of introverts. This balanced personality distribution reflects the adaptable nature of Indonesian EFL learners, who navigate between social and reflective learning preferences. By connecting personality theory, affective factors, and sociocultural learning models, this study confirms that acknowledging personality differences can significantly inform pedagogical strategies in EFL teaching, promoting more inclusive, responsive, and effective language learning environments.

CONCLUSION

The present study set out to identify the dominant personality types—extrovert, ambivert, and introvert—among students of the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo and to examine how personality diversity contributes to effective EFL pedagogy. The results revealed that the majority of students were ambiverts, followed by extroverts and introverts. This distribution indicates that most Indonesian EFL learners demonstrate a balanced disposition that allows them to participate



actively in collaborative classroom activities while maintaining the ability to engage in reflective, independent tasks.

The predominance of ambivert learners emphasizes that adaptability and balance between social interaction and introspective processing are key traits that support language learning in culturally and pedagogically diverse settings. Meanwhile, extrovert learners contribute dynamism and energy to communicative activities, whereas introverted learners bring depth and precision to reflective tasks. Such diversity enriches the classroom environment, allowing for multiple modes of engagement and participation.

These findings underscore the importance of recognizing personality as a crucial factor in instructional design. Personality-responsive pedagogy, which harmonizes collaborative and individual learning experiences, can enhance students' motivation, engagement, and linguistic performance. By understanding learners' personality orientations, teachers can structure classroom interactions more equitably and create psychologically supportive environments where both outgoing and reflective learners thrive.

While this study contributes valuable insights, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may not fully capture the nuances of learners' behavioral and affective traits. Furthermore, the study's scope, limited to one institution, restricts broader generalization. Future research could integrate qualitative data through interviews, classroom observations, or learner diaries to provide deeper insights into how personality traits interact with language learning processes. Cross-institutional or cross-cultural comparisons are also recommended to identify broader trends in personality distribution and pedagogical adaptation across different educational contexts.

In conclusion, this study affirms that personality diversity plays a meaningful role in shaping EFL learners' engagement and learning outcomes. Recognizing and accommodating such diversity can lead to more inclusive, balanced, and effective English language instruction, fostering both academic achievement and emotional well-being among university students.

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