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Iranian EFL Learners' Use of Interactional Methods Across Type A and Type B Personality Profiles

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Abstract: Personality is a key individual-difference variable in Second Language (L2) learning, yet research has rarely examined how Type A/Type B personality patterns relate to learners' interactional methods in EFL classrooms. This study investigated whether Iranian EFL learners with Type A and Type B profiles differ in their use of three interactional methods—coping, controlling, and channeling—and whether personality type is associated with interactional tendencies. Participants were 100 female Iranian high school EFL learners (ages 15–19) from Esfahan province. Data were collected using the Type A/B Questionnaire (Yan, 2024) and the QAMIC Interactional Methods Questionnaire (Mongeau & Tremblay, 2014). Descriptive statistics and inferential analyses were used to examine group differences and associations. Results confirmed a clear separation between Type A and Type B learners in personality scores, supporting the validity of the classification. However, no significant differences were found between Type A and Type B groups in coping, controlling, or channeling scores, and no significant relationship emerged between personality type and overall interactional method use. These findings suggest that Type A/B personality patterns alone may not predict EFL learners' interactional method preferences in structured school contexts. Implications for classroom support and future research using more fine-grained personality models and mixed-method designs are discussed.

Keyword: Type A/Type B personality, interactional methods, coping, controlling, channeling, Iranian EFL learners, classroom interaction

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INTRODUCTION

Personality psychology has been practiced since humans began asking questions about their dispositions. Research on personality psychology began to flourish in the early 19th century when people began to be seen as important and unique individuals, not only as members of families, races, and corporations but as special individuals with their own characteristics. Allport (1961) considered personality to be one of the most abstract concepts in English and, therefore, very difficult to define. He (1961) asserts that it is impossible to fully define personality without identifying how an individual's personality affects others and how other people's actions elicit responses in that person's personality. Personality has long been a central area of research and is generally defined as a complex set of psychological traits that influence an

individual's behavior across time and circumstances. Personality is a determinant that influences how a person interacts with others. Individual differences have long been central to the definition of personality and help us better describe individuals and predict their future behavior (Hassanpour & Norouzi, 2022).

Personality is a set of distinctive behaviors (including thoughts and feelings) that characterize an individual's adaptation to life situations. Personality comprises the behavioral patterns a person exhibits in situations, as well as the psychological characteristics that lead to those patterns (Chatterjee & Kacker, 2023).

Personality comprises the psychological attributes and processes that determine an individual's consistency across time and situations. It is shaped by biological, situational, and psychological processes within sociocultural and developmental contexts. It is also influenced by genetic factors, but the role of the environment in shaping us should not be underestimated (Mitrowska-Guźmińska et al., 2023).

Personality can be understood as a set of psychological mechanisms and traits within an individual that are organized, relatively permanent, and influence the individual's interactions and adaptation to the mental, physical, and social environment. Within this system, we can identify what Mayer (2015) calls "personality parts" or "traits," which are essential detectors for understanding personality. The Personality System Framework proposes that this trait system (i.e., an individual's personality) interacts with one's internal and external environments, including the social environment, attitudes, and resulting psychological states. Personality is thus understood as experiential, negotiating between an individual's inner needs and resources and the external demands of the social environment in order to help people "survive and thrive."

The classroom is an example of a social environment that demands motivation from learners. Personalities need to negotiate between the external demand to continue learning in the face of difficulty and the learner's internal need for motivation to drive that continuation. Understanding the nature of interactions between personality traits and motivational orientations is important for clarifying the role that learners' unique resources play in facilitating motivated learning and ultimately for a better understanding of why some learners "survive and thrive" (Leung, 2020).

Students' success in learning does not just rely on how smart they are but also on their personality. For instance, students who are willing to consider different ideas and thoughts are often able to come up with more inventive ideas and are good at understanding and absorbing new information. Friendly students are more likely to go to classes often than less friendly students. When people work together as a team, the specific people in the group are really important for how well the activity goes. According to Kleinmuntz (1967), personality is how someone is organized and acts in their own way, which determines how they interact with the world (Herrera et al.,2023).

Each student has a different and special personality. In relation to language, some personality traits have been suggested to have an impact on how students learn a second language (Capellan,2017).

The "Big Five" personality traits are emotional stability/neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, and are considered to be fundamental aspects of personality. The Big Five personality traits refer to behavioral patterns that individuals with certain personality traits exhibit over time. According to the sociogenetic model, personality traits are defined as relative, persistent, automatic patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that distinguish individuals from one another.

Many researchers have investigated the relationship between coping strategies and the Big Five personality traits. Some studies have demonstrated that non-adaptive personality traits such as neuroticism are positively associated with avoidant coping. In contrast, adaptive personality traits such as conscientiousness are positively correlated with positive coping styles (such as planning and problem-solving) (Agbaria & Mokh, 2022).

The present study examined the personality traits of Iranian EFL learners and investigated the interactional strategies they employ according to their A and B personality types. Specifically, the present study seeks to examine the A and B personality traits of the Iranian EFL learners, to investigate the interactional methods that the Iranian EFL learners apply according to their personality types, and to find the relationship between the traits of personality types and the interactional methods, i.e., coping, controlling, and channelling.

In this respect, to fulfill the objectives of the study, the following research questions were posed:

1. Are there significant differences between A and B personality types of Iranian EFL learners in terms of their learning methods?
2. Do Iranian EFL learners apply interactional methods (coping, controlling, channeling) according to their personality types?
3. Is there any significant relationship between personality types and the ways of learning of Iranian EFL learners?

Literature Review

1. Personality and Language Learning

Personality is commonly defined as a relatively stable pattern of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours that distinguishes individuals and influences how they interact with their environment (Allport, 1961). In educational contexts, personality has been widely recognized as a significant individual-difference variable shaping learning behaviours, strategy use, academic engagement, and achievement,

particularly in second and foreign language learning (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Mercer, 2019).

Among various personality frameworks, the Type A and Type B personality theory originally proposed by Friedman and Rosenman (1974) remains influential in research on stress, motivation, and achievement-related behavior. Individuals with Type A personalities are typically competitive, achievement-oriented, time-conscious, impatient, and highly driven, whereas Type B individuals are generally more relaxed, patient, cooperative, and less affected by time pressure (Deary, 2009; Samaras & Galanakis, M. (2022, 2022). Research suggests that these contrasting personality orientations influence learners' approaches to academic tasks, stress management, and classroom participation, with Type A–oriented learners tending toward task-focused and performance-driven behaviors and Type B learners demonstrating more adaptive coping and collaborative engagement (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014; Putwain et al., 2021).

In EFL contexts, personality traits have been shown to affect learners' motivation, anxiety levels, willingness to communicate, and preferred learning methods (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; Dewaele & Li, 2021). Learners with more driven and competitive traits often adopt goal-oriented and task-focused learning approaches, whereas more relaxed learners tend to favor cooperative and reflective learning experiences (Teimouri, Plonsky, & Tabandeh, 2019). However, findings across studies are mixed, indicating the need for context-specific investigations, particularly in underexplored EFL settings such as Iran.

2. Personality Types and Learning Methods

Learning methods refer to the preferred ways learners process information, engage with instructional content, and manage learning tasks (Entwistle & McCune, 2004; Oxford, 2017). Prior research indicates that learning methods are closely associated with individual differences, including personality traits (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014). Studies have reported significant relationships between personality dimensions and learners' preferences for structured, analytical, collaborative, or experiential learning approaches (Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker, 2000; Furnham, Jackson, & Miller, 1999).

In language education, learners' personality types influence how they approach language tasks, regulate their learning, and respond to instructional demands (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). For example, learners with more structured and achievement-driven personality profiles often demonstrate higher levels of persistence, organization, and task orientation, whereas learners with more flexible personality profiles may prioritize understanding, cooperation, and enjoyment in learning (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014; Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck, & Avdic, 2011). Several studies have found associations between personality

traits and academic performance, although the strength and direction of these relationships vary across contexts and learner populations (Poropat, 2009; Teimouri, Plonsky, & Tabandeh, 2019).

Despite extensive research on personality and learning outcomes, fewer studies have directly examined differences between Type A and Type B learners in terms of learning methods, particularly in EFL contexts. This gap highlights the need to investigate whether Iranian EFL learners with different personality types adopt distinct ways of learning and whether these differences are statistically significant (Samaras & Galanakis, 2022).

3. Interactional Methods in Language Learning

Interaction plays a central role in second language acquisition, as emphasized by interactionist theories such as Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1981), which argues that language learning is facilitated through meaningful interaction, negotiation of meaning, and feedback (Long, 1996; Gass & Mackey, 2015). Classroom interaction provides learners with opportunities to practice language, develop communicative competence, and construct knowledge collaboratively (Ellis, 2008; Walsh, 2011).

Learners differ, however, in how they engage in interaction, and these differences are partly shaped by personality. Research has shown that more outgoing and confident learners tend to initiate interaction, seek clarification, and collaborate actively, whereas more reserved learners may limit participation or adopt indirect strategies (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Dewaele & Furnham, 2000).

Within interactional approaches, coping, controlling, and channeling have been proposed as key interactional methods:

a. Coping refers to learners' strategies for managing academic and communicative stress, including problem-focused and emotion-focused responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989).
b. Controlling involves learners' perceived control over learning situations, decision-making, and regulation of behavior, often linked to locus of control and self-regulation (Rotter, 1966; Zimmerman, 2000).
c. Channeling refers to directing cognitive, emotional, and communicative resources toward interaction, often associated with openness, engagement, and responsiveness to contextual demands (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Dewaele & Li, 2021).

Previous studies suggest that personality traits influence learners' preferred interactional methods. Learners with more driven and competitive personality profiles tend to exhibit higher levels of control and active coping, whereas more relaxed learners are more likely to employ adaptive coping strategies and collaborative forms of interaction (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014; Vollrath &

Torgersen, 2017). However, empirical evidence linking Type A and Type B personalities specifically to coping, controlling, and channeling strategies in EFL classrooms remains limited, indicating a need for further context-specific research.

Personality, Interaction, and Learning in the Iranian EFL Context

In Iran, EFL learning largely occurs in formal instructional settings, where opportunities for authentic language use may be limited. Learners often experience anxiety, stress, and communication apprehension, making personality-related differences in learning and interaction particularly salient (Teimouri, Goetze, & Plonsky, 2019). Previous research in Iranian and comparable EFL contexts has demonstrated that personality traits are associated with language anxiety, classroom participation, strategy use, and academic success, although findings remain inconsistent across studies (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

Given these mixed results and the scarcity of research integrating Type A/B personality theory with learning methods and interactional strategies, further investigation is warranted. Specifically, examining whether Iranian EFL learners differ in their learning methods and interactional approaches based on personality type can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of individual differences in language learning (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014).

The reviewed literature highlights that personality is a key factor influencing learning methods, interactional behavior, and language learning outcomes (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Mercer, 2019). While previous studies have explored personality traits broadly, comparative research focusing on Type A and Type B personalities in relation to learning methods and interactional strategies (coping, controlling, and channeling) remains limited, particularly in the Iranian EFL context. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates differences between Type A and Type B Iranian EFL learners in their learning methods, examines how personality types relate to interactional methods, and explores the relationship between personality types and ways of learning.

METHOD

Participants

One hundred female Iranian EFL high school students aged 15–19 from one high school in the Tiran region of Esfahan province participated in the present study. All participants were learning English as a foreign language as part of their standard curriculum. Convenience sampling was used due to accessibility constraints. Learners participated voluntarily and provided consent for their data to be used for research purposes. Based on their scores on the personality questionnaire, students were classified into Type A and Type B personality groups using established cutoff points.

Instruments

Two standardized instruments were employed in this study. The first was the Personality Type A and B Questionnaire (Yan, 2024), which consists of 25 yes/no items designed to distinguish between Type A and Type B personality patterns. This questionnaire also collects basic demographic information. Scores above 13 indicate a Type A tendency, whereas scores below 13 indicate a Type B tendency. Previous research in Iran has reported reliability coefficients ranging from .77 to .86, and internal consistency in the present study was acceptable (Cronbach's alpha = .73).

The second instrument was the QAMIC Interactional Methods Questionnaire (Mongeau & Tremblay, 2014), which contains 25 Likert-scale items tapping three interactional methods: coping, controlling, and channeling. Respondents indicate the extent to which each statement describes how they handle problems or stressful situations. Internal consistency for this instrument in the present study was also satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha = .77).

Procedure

Data collection took place over two sessions within a three-week period. In the first session, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. They then completed the personality questionnaire online via the Porsline platform. In the second session, the same students completed the Interactional Methods Questionnaire via Porsline. The researcher was present to clarify instructions and answer questions; however, no time limit was imposed on completing the questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

In order to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants, such as personality and interaction scores, age, and type of education, central tendency and dispersion indicators were used (Table 1).

Table. 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Interactional	66	125	94.2727	11.4444
personality	5	23	12.4949	3.91067
Age	15	19	16.98	0.94444
*x	.0	1	.3402	.47624

Source: Research findings, *- For personality type A, the number 1 and for personality type B is 0

As can be seen in Table 1, the lowest interaction score is 66, and the highest is 125, with an average of 94.27 and a standard deviation of 11.4. For the personality variable, the lowest is 5, and the highest is 23. Those who have a personality score higher than 13 were identified as personality type A, and those with a score less than 13 were introduced as type B.

Findings

The first question examined whether there were significant differences between Type A and Type B personality groups in terms of their personality scores. An independent-samples t-test revealed a substantial difference between the two groups: Type A learners (n ≈ 33) had a mean personality score of 17.06 (SD = 2.50), whereas Type B learners (n ≈ 64) had a mean of 10.13 (SD = 1.90).

Table 2.
Group Statistics of The Personality Variable

Variable	Personality type	N	Average	standard deviation
Personality	A	33	17.06	2.5
	B	64	10.13	1.9

Table 3.
T-Test Results of Personality Scores

		Mean difference test of two independent populations					
						95,/. confidence limits	
		t	Significance level	mean difference	The standard deviation of the difference	the lower limit	the higher limit
personality	Assuming equality of variances	14.8	.000	6.9	.46688	6	7.86
	Assuming inequality of variances	13.8	.000	6.9	.50153	5.9	7.94

According to the results presented in Table 3, the studied samples are different in terms of personality type, and this difference is 6.9. People whose score was above 13 were considered as personality type A, and people whose score was less than 13 were divided as personality type B. Then, the average scores of these two groups were compared. It was found that there is a significant difference between them. Therefore, the first hypothesis is confirmed (the significance level is close to zero and less than 5%).

The second question investigated whether Iranian EFL learners with Type A and Type B personality patterns applied different interactional methods (coping,

controlling, channeling) according to their personality types. To address this question an independent samples t-test was employed to test the difference between the samples in terms of the type of interactive method, and the results are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4.
T-test Results of Interaction Scores

		Mean difference test of two independent populations					
						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		t	Significance level	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
personality	Assuming equality of variances	-1.1	.281	-3.54	3.27	-10.05	2.950
	Assuming inequality of variances	-1.2	.240	-3.54	2.99	-9.50	2.408

According to the results presented in Table 4, there is no significant difference between the studied samples in terms of interaction. However, the difference in the interaction score of personality type A is 3.54 less than that of personality type B, though this difference is not significant.

The third question examined whether there was a significant relationship between personality scores and interactional method scores. To test the existence of a relationship between personality types and learning methods, the correlation coefficients between personality types and interaction were estimated, and the results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.
Correlation Between Personality Scores and Interaction Scores

		Interaction	Personality
Interaction	correlation coefficient	1	-.076
	Significance level		.454
	Number of data	100	100
Personality	correlation coefficient	-.076	1
	Significance level	.454	
	Number of data	100	100

According to the results presented in Table 5, the correlation coefficient between the two calculated variables is equal to -0.076, but the coefficient is not significant because the significance level is equal to 0.454 and greater than 0.05. Pearson correlation analysis yielded a small, negative correlation ($r = -.076$), but this coefficient was not statistically significant, $p = .454$. To further explore the association, a chi-square test was conducted by categorizing interaction scores into high and low

groups using a cutoff of 90. The chi-square statistic was 1.565, with a corresponding significance level of .21, which is above the conventional alpha level of .05. Therefore, no significant association between personality type and interactional method scores was detected. Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study was to examine the interactional methods of coping, controlling, and channeling among Iranian EFL learners with Type A and Type B personality patterns, and to determine whether personality type is associated with learners' interactional tendencies in the classroom. The findings revealed clear and statistically significant differences between Type A and Type B learners in terms of personality scores, thereby confirming the internal validity of the personality classification. However, the absence of significant differences between the two groups with respect to interactional methods, as well as the lack of a significant correlation between personality type and interaction, suggests that personality type alone may not be a sufficient predictor of how learners manage interactional demands in EFL classrooms.

This finding aligns with a growing body of research in second language acquisition, indicating that while personality traits influence learners' general orientations toward learning, their effects on observable classroom interaction and strategy use are often indirect, context-dependent, or weak (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Teimouri et al., 2019). Meta-analytic and large-scale studies have similarly reported inconsistent or modest relationships between personality variables and learning behaviors, particularly when contextual constraints are strong (Poropat, 2009). From this perspective, the present results contribute to the literature by reinforcing the view that interactional behavior in EFL settings cannot be explained solely through dispositional personality frameworks.

One plausible explanation for the null findings relates to the sociocultural and educational context of Iranian high schools. Previous studies have characterized Iranian EFL classrooms as highly structured, exam-oriented, and teacher-centered, with limited opportunities for spontaneous or learner-initiated interaction. In such environments, classroom norms and institutional expectations may exert a stronger influence on learner behavior than individual personality differences. As a result, learners—regardless of whether they exhibit Type A or Type B tendencies—may adopt similar interactional strategies in order to meet academic requirements, comply with teacher expectations, and avoid negative evaluation. This contextual pressure may effectively attenuate individual variation in coping, control, and channeling behaviors.

A second explanation concerns the situational nature of interactional methods. Research grounded in interactionist and sociocognitive perspectives suggests that

classroom interaction is shaped dynamically by task type, teacher feedback, peer relationships, and moment-to-moment communicative demands (Ellis, 2008; Walsh, 2011). Coping and control strategies, in particular, have been shown to fluctuate depending on perceived task difficulty, emotional climate, and instructional support, rather than remaining stable across contexts (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). Therefore, while personality may influence learners' general dispositions, interactional methods may function more as adaptive responses to immediate classroom conditions than as direct manifestations of personality type.

The absence of significant personality–interaction relationships may also reflect limitations of the Type A/B framework itself. Although this dichotomous model has been widely used in research on stress, achievement, and behavior, several scholars have argued that it lacks the sensitivity needed to capture subtle individual differences in educational and learning contexts (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014; Matthews et al., 2009). In contrast, multidimensional models such as the Big Five have demonstrated stronger and more consistent associations with learning strategies, emotional regulation, and academic engagement, particularly traits such as conscientiousness, neuroticism, and extraversion (Poropat, 2009; Kim et al., 2019). From this standpoint, the present findings suggest that while Type A/B personality distinctions are meaningful at a descriptive level, they may be too coarse-grained to predict specific interactional methods such as coping, controlling, and channeling.

Finally, the exclusive focus on female learners represents an important contextual factor. Gender has been shown to interact with personality, anxiety, coping strategies, and classroom participation in complex ways (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Teimouri et al., 2019). It is therefore possible that gender homogeneity in the sample reduced variability in interactional behaviors or masked personality-related effects that might emerge in mixed-gender or male samples. This limitation underscores the need for caution in generalizing the findings and highlights the importance of examining gender–personality interactions in future research.

Taken together, the findings of this study support contemporary views in SLA that emphasize the interaction between personality, context, and task demands, rather than linear or deterministic relationships between personality traits and learning behavior. By demonstrating that Type A and Type B Iranian EFL learners do not differ significantly in their interactional methods, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of individual differences and highlights the importance of contextual and methodological considerations in personality research in EFL settings.

Like all studies, this research has several limitations. The sample was limited to 100 female high school learners from a single region, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Data were collected exclusively through self-report questionnaires, which may be subject to response biases. The cross-sectional design

precludes conclusions about developmental changes over time. Furthermore, the use of the Type A/B model may not capture the full complexity of personality.

Future research could address these limitations by including larger and more diverse samples, incorporating male and mixed-gender groups, and employing longitudinal designs. Mixed-methods approaches that combine classroom observations, interviews, and stimulated recall could yield richer insights into how personality and interaction intersect in real-time classroom practice. Researchers might also explore the role of specific Big Five traits, motivational orientations, and teacher–learner personality matches in shaping coping, controlling, and channeling strategies in EFL contexts.

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