

LANGUAGE

If you use these types of words frequently, you are an extrovert

CW Headley February 22, 2021



- Facebook
- Flipboard
- LinkedIn
- Email
- Pocket
- Twitter

Introversion has a negative connotation in the popular understanding of the term—perhaps unfairly. On its face, and in comparison with its counter dimension (extroversion), it simply denotes one who more easily derives **joy from solitary experiences**.

New data published in the *Journal of Research in Personality* identifies the social and emotional verbal cues that consistently demarcate the two.

The authors found that extroverts more often use positive emotion words like “happy,” “love,” and “nice,” and social prowess words like “talk,” “share,” and “we,” compared to introverts. This was determined to be consistent irrespective of gender.

“Past literature has shown that extraversion is related to the use of positive emotion and social process words. However, the strength of the relationships

varies substantially across studies. In this research, we conducted a meta-analysis to estimate the overall effect size of the two linguistic correlates of extraversion,” the authors wrote in the new report.

“Our random-effects models revealed a small correlation between extraversion and positive emotion words and a small correlation between extraversion and social process words. In addition, the strength of the relationship between extraversion and positive emotion words varies across communication contexts, while the relationship between extraversion and social process words remains consistent across contexts.”

The meta-analysis subsumed 37 independently conducted studies, which themselves included a collective 82,132 participants.

Each analysis relied on a measure of extraversion called the EPI scale, which employs “a reasonable mix of impulsivity and sociability.” In addition, the authors used text analysis tools in order to assess word usage patterns.

Extraversion as a true social dimension is sometimes hard to distinguish from its tactical application. Case in point—the authors noted that extroverts were more likely to use positive emotion words when speaking publicly (social media, in large groups, etc.). This tendency was reduced in private communications (emails, texts, etc.).

It’s fair to infer then, that introversion can be a preference as often as it can be a genuine social dysfunction, given some extroverts seem to turn it on at their convenience.

“We are passionate about how personality could be reflected in language use, and we found substantive variations in existing studies regarding the associations between extraversion and use of social process words as well as positive emotion words,” explained study author Jiayu Chen of [Nanyang Technological University](#).

“Thus, it is important to further confirm whether the two links exist and estimate the actual strengths of the associations, which can help identify robust and accurate linguistic markers of personality and improve personality prediction accuracy.”

This new study, not unlike the musings of the psychoanalyst who introduced the two central dimensions, Carl Jung, rejects the idea that they exist on a continuum. Most people are likely imperfect mixtures of traits belonging to both extraversion and introversion.

Jung denoted introversion as an “attitude-type characterized by orientation in life through subjective psychic contents”, and extraversion as “an attitude-type characterized by concentration of interest on the external object.” You’ve likely identified with both definitions depending on the context.

“Companies could identify people’s personality via language use more accurately and display personality-congruent ads/content to attract customers,” Chen concluded. “In addition, it could help big companies quickly identify job seekers with personality traits that fit their needs. For example, when recruiting sales, a company may wish to recruit people who are good at socializing with others. By using personality prediction via language use, the company could efficiently identify extraverts from introverts without collecting people’s self-report personality.”