

The Linguistic Mapping of MBTI Feeling and Thinking Personalities in Sensibility and Rationality

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Abstract: This study explores the differences in linguistic expression between Feeling (F) and Thinking (T) personality types within the MBTI framework, and how these differences map onto their respective thinking styles. Grounded in Humboldt's theory on the relationship between language and thought and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, this paper compares the linguistic characteristics of these two personality types in terms of lexical choice, syntactic structure, and rhetorical devices. Through the analysis of textual samples describing the Chinese New Year's Eve dinner, the study finds that Feeling types tend to use emotionally charged, metaphorical, and empathic expressions, focusing on conveying emotional experiences and interpersonal connections. In contrast, Thinking types prioritize objective listing of facts, logical reasoning, and structured expression, demonstrating a preference for rational analysis and critical evaluation. The findings not only validate language as a tool for externalizing and reinforcing thought but also offer insights into optimizing language strategies in education and workplace communication based on different personality characteristics.

Keywords: MBTI; Feeling Personality; Thinking Personality; Language and Thought; Textual Analysis

1. Research Background

Humboldt's theory on the relationship between language and thought posits that language is not only the form of thought but also its materialized expression—that is, language takes thoughts and feelings as objects to be expressed. He proposed that some languages focus more on intuitive, perceptual expression, while others tend toward intellectual qualities or excel at dispassionate conceptual analysis. Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between the discourse

styles of Feeling (F) and Thinking (T) personalities in personality psychology and their respective thinking styles. In the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality theory, Feeling and Thinking types describe individuals' tendencies and preferences in language use when making decisions and evaluating matters. [1] By exploring the differences in language patterns between Feeling and Thinking personality types within Humboldt's theoretical framework of the "relationship between language and thought," this study aims to deepen the understanding of "how language maps thinking styles" and to strengthen the application of Humboldt's theoretical system in understanding modern language and thought [2].

2. Research Questions

2.1 Differences in Language Patterns between Feeling and Thinking Personalities

Language is the externalization of thought, and individuals with different personality traits often exhibit distinct stylistic differences in their modes of expression. [3] According to the MBTI classification, Feeling (F) types tend to be affect-oriented, more frequently using emotionally charged vocabulary, metaphors, and subjective judgments, whereas Thinking (T) types lean towards rational analysis, emphasizing logic, precision, and structured expression. In concrete linguistic practice, these differences manifest across multiple levels. In terms of lexical choice, Feeling types are more likely to use emotional terms such as "warm," "touched," and "heartfelt," while Thinking types tend to use words expressing logical judgment like "objective," "reasonable," and "effective." Regarding syntactic structure, Feeling types may employ more emotionally colored modifiers, imperative sentences, or rhetorical questions to enhance emotional expression, whereas Thinking types prefer short sentences, passive constructions, or causal complex sentences to

strengthen argumentation. In terms of rhetorical devices, Feeling types may more frequently use metaphors, personification, and other techniques to enhance resonance, while Thinking types are more inclined towards direct statements and data support to ensure accuracy of expression. Furthermore, differences in language patterns may adjust according to the communicative context. For example, in daily conversations, Feeling types focus more on emotional exchange, possibly using more exclamatory sentences, onomatopoeia, or subjective evaluations, while Thinking types concentrate more on information transmission, favoring clearly structured and logically organized expression. In written expression, Feeling types may adopt narrative or lyrical styles, whereas Thinking types tend towards argumentation or exposition. In decision-making discussions, Feeling types tend to consider interpersonal relationships and emotional impact, expressing themselves in a softer manner, while Thinking types focus more on logical reasoning, with a more direct, even critical, linguistic style [4].

2.2 How Language Reflects the “Sensibility/F” and “Rationality/T” Thinking Styles

Sensibility and rationality are two core modes of human cognition. The manifestation of this difference in language not only originates from individual personality but also reflects distinct thinking styles. The language of Feeling types is often emotional and subjective, reflecting their affect-driven cognitive mode. In contrast, the language of Thinking types is more logical and conceptual, emphasizing causal relationships and analytical reasoning. This difference not only influences modes of expression but may also affect the understanding of the world. For instance, when describing the same event, Feeling types may focus more on people’s feelings and the situational atmosphere, while Thinking types tend to analyze the causes and consequences of the event. For example, when describing a meeting, a Feeling type might say, “The discussion atmosphere was very good, everyone was very engaged.” A Thinking type might say, “The meeting reached three key decisions and clarified the follow-up plan.” Language is not only a tool for communication but also carries individual thinking patterns. Studying the linguistic differences between Feeling and Thinking personality types helps to

gain a deeper understanding of how sensibility and rationality shape people’s cognitive styles and influence their expression strategies in different contexts [5].

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Humboldt’s Theory of Language and Thought

Humboldt emphasized that language is not merely a tool for communication but a decisive factor in shaping the mode of thought. He argued that different linguistic structures influence how people perceive and understand the world, with each language representing a unique cognitive perspective. Humboldt’s ideas were further developed in the 20th century by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which posits that language exerts a profound shaping influence on thought: the grammar and vocabulary of a language directly affect an individual’s cognitive habits. The differences in language use between Feeling and Thinking personality types can thus be viewed as a manifestation of the interaction between language and thought. For example, Feeling types’ tendency to use emotionally charged language (such as metaphors and affective vocabulary) reflects their affect-dominated cognitive mode, whereas Thinking types’ preference for logical and conceptual language embodies the influence of rational thought. Humboldt further pointed out that not only does language shape thought, but thought also influences linguistic expression in return. The language patterns of different personalities and their corresponding thinking characteristics form a dynamic cycle: language externalizes an individual’s cognitive traits while simultaneously reinforcing specific modes of thinking through use.

3.2 Feeling and Thinking Types in MBTI Personality Theory

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a developmental personality model based on Jung’s theory of psychological types, classifying human psychological traits into four pairs of dimensions [6]. Among these, the Feeling (F) and Thinking (T) types represent a key distinction in individual decision-making and value orientation [7]. The characteristics of these two personality types in language use are as follows:

3.2.1 Feeling type

Feeling types are characterized by a perceptive, subjective, and people-oriented approach. They base their decisions on emotions, tending to consider interpersonal relationships and personal values, and their language often contains emotionally charged vocabulary such as “like” and “moved,” employing metaphors and rhetorical devices to express subjective experiences. Consequently, in communication, they focus on emotional resonance, preferring to share viewpoints through stories and descriptive language, and in written expression, they tend to convey nuanced emotions and attitudes through complex sentences and rhetorical expression.

3.2.2 Thinking type

Thinking types are defined by a logical, objective, and fact-oriented approach. They base their decisions on objective analysis and logical reasoning, with their linguistic style placing greater emphasis on accuracy and structure. They frequently use logical connectives such as “because” and “therefore” while avoiding emotional expressions. Consequently, in communication, they focus more on problem-solving, preferring concise declarative sentences and logically coherent grammatical structures, often employing conditional sentences and causal relationships to strengthen argumentation.

3.2.3 Typical cognitive and behavioral manifestations of feeling and thinking types

Feeling and Thinking types exhibit distinct patterns across cognitive preferences, language style, and decision-making. In terms of cognitive preferences, Feeling types are driven by emotion, tending toward empathy and subjective judgment, whereas Thinking types are motivated by rationality, favoring systematic analysis and logical reasoning. Regarding language style, Feeling types emphasize emotional expression and personalized narration, while Thinking types lean toward clearly structured and rigorously argued language patterns. As for decision-making style, Feeling types tend to evaluate issues from emotional and interpersonal perspectives, in contrast to Thinking types, who are more inclined to draw conclusions based on facts and data.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The research subjects were a sample group of individuals aged 20–30 with different MBTI

types, comprising 22 participants in total. Data were collected from textual communication.

4.2 Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis was conducted on frequently used vocabulary, syntactic structure, tone, and thematic preferences [8].

5. Textual Data

The following are descriptions of this year’s Chinese New Year’s Eve dinner provided by Feeling and Thinking types respectively (randomly selected samples).

5.1 Discourse Analysis of Thinking (T) Personalities

INTJ1: “Braised pork hock, prawns, daylily, fried glutinous rice balls, hairtail, canned peaches, small chicken stewed with mushrooms, spare ribs.”

INTJ2: “Poor value for money, rather plain, seeing relatives I haven’t seen in a while was a bit awkward, lavish but flashy and without substance, no New Year’s atmosphere.”

ENTP: “As always, just a obligatory meal for getting red envelope money, and as always, they made me drink alcohol. This year I forced myself to finish a glass of baijiu, and then they said ‘you’ve finally grown up,’ which really annoyed me.”

5.2 Linguistic Characteristics

5.2.1 Priority on facts and efficiency

T-type language prioritizes facts and efficiency through direct listing, critical evaluation, and purpose-oriented deconstruction. INTJ1 simply enumerates dishes using nouns such as “braised pork hock, prawns” without emotional embellishment, reflecting a focus on objective information. INTJ2 deconstructs the value of the New Year’s Eve dinner using terms like “poor value for money” and “flashy and without substance,” applying rational criteria such as cost-effectiveness and practicality. ENTP defines the dinner as an “obligatory meal,” emphasizing its utilitarian nature of “getting red envelope money” while stripping away traditional emotional significance [9].

5.2.2 Emotional detachment and logic dominance

T-type descriptions exhibit emotional detachment and logic dominance by avoiding emotional embellishment and maintaining clear logical chains. The descriptions hardly involve

emotional vocabulary such as “warmth” or “reunion”; INTJ2’s use of “awkward” functions as a negative evaluation rather than emotional resonance. The NT individuals explain emotional reactions through causal relationships—for instance, “forced myself to drink → was told ‘you’ve finally grown up’ → annoyance”—rather than directly expressing feelings.

5.2.3 Language style: concise, critical, rational

The language style of T types is characterized by conciseness, criticalness, and rationality. They frequently use logical vocabulary such as “value for money,” “obligatory meal,” and “forced myself” (as seen in ENTP’s account). Moreover, T types explicitly resist the emotional coercion of traditional rituals, exemplified by INTJ2’s criticism of the “lack of New Year’s atmosphere” and ENTP’s resistance to the demand to drink alcohol.

5.3 Discourse Analysis of Feeling (F) Personalities

ISFP1: “In previous years, our New Year’s Eve dinner was always hot pot... there were plenty of drinks I love, like fruit punch, coconut water, that sort of thing. Anyway, the New Year’s Eve dinner needs to have some special dishes we don’t usually eat as a reward.”

ISFP2: “There was chicken, turbot, and oyster omelet... that evening I went to the bank to withdraw money, and by the time I got back, everyone had almost finished eating, so there wasn’t that atmosphere of reunion.”

ENFJ: “Although it looks quite simple, it was prepared by my grandparents starting from very early on, and each dish has its own unique meaning.”

INFP: “I’m a country girl, so it was simple food, but because the family gathered together for the New Year, the atmosphere was still quite warm.”

5.4 Linguistic Characteristics

5.4.1 Emotions and relationships at the core

F-type language places emotions and relationships at its core through prioritizing subjective experience, expressing regret over lack of emotional connection, and attributing symbolic meaning. ISFP1 emphasizes “drinks I love” and “as a reward,” linking the New Year’s Eve dinner to personal emotional needs. ISFP2 expresses the importance of interpersonal connection through “didn’t have that atmosphere

of reunion,” rather than simply complaining about food quality. ENFJ focuses on “my grandparents’ effort” and “each dish’s unique meaning,” treating food as a vehicle for emotions [10].

5.4.2 Perceptual language style

The perceptual language style of F types is marked by dense use of emotional vocabulary, inclusivity and empathy, and metaphor with detailed rendering. Examples of emotional vocabulary include “reward,” “warm,” “atmosphere of reunion,” and “meaning” (as seen in ENFJ’s account). INFP downplays material simplicity with “simple food,” instead emphasizing the emotional value of “family gathering.” ISFP1’s phrase “as a reward” metaphorically compares the dinner to a prize, while ENFJ’s mention of “my grandparents prepared” implicitly conveys familial devotion.

5.4.3 Language structure: loose but emotionally coherent

F-type language structure tends to be loose yet emotionally coherent, featuring non-logical digressions and details that serve emotional expression. ISFP1 abruptly shifts from listing dishes to mentioning “drinks,” reflecting the fluidity of perceptual thinking. ISFP2’s description of “going to the bank to withdraw money” serves not to explain an event but to set up the introduction of “lack of reunion atmosphere.”

5.5 Analytical Conclusions

The textual descriptions reveal distinct differences between T-type and F-type discourse. T-type discourse calmly reviews facts, critiques efficiency, and strips away emotion, whereas F-type discourse sensitively renders atmosphere, embraces imperfections, and emphasizes connection. The key distinction lies in how each type approaches the New Year’s Eve dinner: T types use logic to deconstruct it, while F types use emotion to elevate it.

5.5.1 T-type language closely aligns with the externalization of "Rational Thinking"

T-type language closely aligns with T-type language strips away emotion and focuses on facts and efficiency, as demonstrated by INTJ1’s pure enumeration of dishes and ENTP’s utilitarian deconstruction of the dinner. Critical evaluation reflects a logic-dominated decision-making mode, exemplified by INTJ2’s assessment of “poor value for money.”

5.5.2 F-type language highly aligns with the externalization of “Perceptual Thinking”

F-type language frequently employs emotional vocabulary and metaphors, as seen in terms like “reward” and “meaning.” Language serves interpersonal connection, illustrated by ISFP2’s emphasis on “atmosphere of reunion” and INFP’s focus on “warmth.”

5.5.3 Comparative validation of Humboldt’s Theory

The logical structure of T-type language reinforces rational cognitive pathways, such as ENTP explaining emotions through causal relationships. Conversely, the emotional expression of F-type language externalizes perceptual cognitive modes, as exemplified by ENFJ conveying familial affection through “grandparents’ preparation.”

6. Discussion and Analysis

6.1 Clarification on Excluding Interference from Other Personality Dimensions

6.1.1 S/N (Sensing/Intuition) differences

Sensing types, such as ISFP and ISTJ, tend to focus on concrete, perceptible details like specific dishes such as “braised pork belly” or “sweet and sour fish,” whereas Intuitive types like ENFJ and INTJ may pay more attention to overall impressions or symbolic meanings, such as the idea that “each dish has a meaning.” However, the T/F distinction lies in whether these details are used to support emotional expression or logical analysis. For instance, ISFP1 lists beverages and special dishes, but the purpose is to express personal preference through phrases like “I love” and “as a reward,” reflecting an F-type discourse style. In contrast, INTJ1 also lists dishes, but this is merely a factual enumeration without emotion or evaluation, representing a T-type expression [11].

6.1.2 J/P (Judging/Perceiving) differences

Judging types like INTJ and ENFJ tend to express their views in an organized manner, while Perceiving types such as ISFP and INFP may exhibit looser, more casual discourse. Nevertheless, the core difference between T and F lies in critical logic versus emotional experience. For example, INTJ2’s expression is relatively structured, but its core is rational critique through terms like “poor value for money” and “flashy and without substance,” thus it is classified as T-type. Conversely,

INFP’s expression, though relatively casual with phrasing such as “it was simple food,” focuses on the warmth of family reunion, thus belonging to the F-type.

6.1.3 I/E (Introversion/Extraversion) differences
Introverted (I) discourse is typically more reserved and personal, while Extraverted (E) types may be more inclined towards social interaction. However, the key distinction for T/F remains whether the expression is emotionally driven or logic-dominated. For example: ENFJ’s expression, though more extraverted in nature and emphasizing family members’ efforts (“my grandparents started preparing very early”), is still primarily emotional, hence it is classified as F-type.

In summary, although S/N, J/P, and I/E may influence modes of expression, the distinction between T and F remains fundamentally based on whether language is centered on logical analysis or emotional experience.

6.2 Analysis of Factors Contributing to Linguistic Characteristics of Feeling and Thinking Types

6.2.1 The influence of cognitive modes on language

Feeling and Thinking personality types exhibit fundamental differences in information processing, which in turn affect their linguistic characteristics. Feeling types rely more on emotions, empathy, and interpersonal relationships to organize language, tending to describe things from the perspective of individual experience or social relations rather than from pure facts or logical frameworks. Consequently, F-type language is often rich in emotional coloring and emphasizes connections between people. For example, when describing the New Year’s Eve dinner, ISFP1 focuses on the food they like, mentioning “like fruit punch, coconut water,” and the perceptual concept of “reward,” rather than offering an objective evaluation of the food itself. In contrast, Thinking types lean more toward objective analysis, logical deduction, and structured thinking, typically expressing views in a rational, systematic manner rather than basing them on personal emotions. Therefore, T-type language tends to state facts, analyze cause and effect, or make critical evaluations. For instance, when describing the New Year’s Eve dinner, INTJ2 uses terms like “poor value for money” and “flashy and without substance” to analyze

the food's value, rather than expressing personal preference or emotional experience.

6.3 Manifestations of Sensibility and Rationality in Language

6.3.1 Emotional expression vs. logical analysis

F-type language typically revolves around subjective feelings, tending to use emotionally charged vocabulary such as "warm," "reward," and "meaning." By contrast, T-type language focuses more on the objective characteristics of things, tending to use logical vocabulary like "value for money," "obligatory meal," and "as always." This contrast can be illustrated by comparing how each type might discuss symbolic meanings: an F-type speaker might say, "The New Year's Eve dinner has many symbolic meanings; for example, fish represents abundance year after year," emphasizing symbolic meaning and cultural emotion, whereas a T-type speaker might state, "The arrangement of dishes for the New Year's Eve dinner doesn't have much practical value; it's mainly symbolic consumption," emphasizing analysis and evaluation.

6.3.2 Loose vs. rigorous language structure

F-type language often appears relatively loose, with word order that may not be strictly organized and may exhibit considerable fluidity, yet it remains coherent in emotional expression. In contrast, T-type language is more structured, logically clear, and typically contains causal relationships and systematic reasoning. An F-type description might be, "First, we had hot pot, then I drank fruit punch. Anyway, the New Year's Eve dinner is supposed to be about having something special," reflecting a casual, perceptual style based on personal experience. A T-type description, by comparison, might be, "The structure of this meal is unreasonable; too many hot dishes cause palate fatigue, and the overall pairing lacks a sense of hierarchy," demonstrating a logically clear, analysis-based approach [12].

6.3.3 Tendency towards empathy vs. tendency towards criticism

F-type language rarely contains negative evaluations, typically exhibiting inclusiveness and even actively seeking positive emotional angles. For instance, INFP emphasizes "family gathering" while downplaying "simple food." In contrast, T-type language more readily expresses critical views and focuses on deconstructing and analyzing phenomena, as seen when INTJ2

directly points out that the dinner is "flashy and without substance." This difference is evident when comparing perspectives: an F-type might say, "Although the New Year's Eve dinner dishes were very simple, I still feel that having the family together is what matters most," emphasizing emotional value, whereas a T-type might assert, "The meaning of the New Year's Eve dinner has long since deteriorated; now it's just a consumer habit," emphasizing phenomenon analysis and critique.

6.3.4 Metaphor and symbolism vs. direct description

F-type language favors the use of metaphors, symbolism, or vivid expressions to enhance emotional resonance, such as when ENFJ mentions that "each dish has its own unique meaning." T-type language, by contrast, tends toward direct description of facts, using concise language without deliberately embellishing emotions. An F-type speaker might express, "My grandparents started preparing very early, and every dish carries their thoughtfulness," employing symbolic expression to emphasize emotion. A T-type speaker, however, might state, "This meal took three hours from preparation to serving, but the food quality is not proportional to the time invested," offering objective analysis without emotional embellishment.

7. Conclusion

Language is not only an external manifestation of thought but also exerts a reciprocal influence on an individual's cognitive patterns and personality development. The different linguistic expressions of Feeling (F) and Thinking (T) types reflect their respective thinking styles while simultaneously reinforcing their habitual ways of thinking. This bidirectional interaction is primarily manifested in the following aspects:

7.1 How Language Shapes Thinking Patterns

Feeling-type individuals tend to use emotional language such as "warmth," "meaning," and "reunion" in communication, and through this habitual usage, their brains continuously strengthen their focus on emotional experiences and interpersonal relationships. This means that in the process of expression, F-type individuals become more sensitive to group atmosphere and further reinforce their reliance on perceptual experience. For example, when an ENFJ describes the New Year's Eve dinner,

mentioning “the grandparents’ efforts” and the “meanings of the dishes” is not merely an expression of emotion but also a way to further reinforce their own emotional cognition through language, directing their attention toward interpersonal interaction rather than objective facts.

In contrast, Thinking-type individuals habitually use analytical language. In the process of expression, they consciously organize information and establish causal relationships, thereby continuously strengthening their logical reasoning abilities. For instance, when NT types describe the New Year’s Eve dinner using concepts such as “value for money,” “obligatory meal,” and “habit,” they are not focusing on emotion but rather structuring and deconstructing the experience, which further sharpens their critical thinking skills. Long-term use of logic-oriented language makes T-type individuals more accustomed to understanding the world through analysis, induction, and deduction rather than centering on emotional experience.

7.2 How Thought Reciprocally Influences Language

Because Feeling-type individuals are more concerned with empathy and interpersonal relationships, they not only lean toward emotional expression but are also more easily influenced by the emotional content of language. For example, when an F-type individual hears the comment “This meal is really shabby,” they may first focus on the negative emotional connotation of “shabby” rather than evaluating its objective accuracy. This also leads F-type individuals to favor tactful, implicit, or conciliatory expressions in communication to avoid direct conflict. For instance, instead of the T-type statement “This dish offers poor value for money,” an F-type might say, “This dish is quite special, but I personally prefer the other one.” The thinking patterns of T-type individuals determine their tendency toward direct, precise, and critical modes of expression. They are less concerned with the emotional impact of language and more focused on whether language conveys accurate information. For example, when a T-type individual hears “This meal is really shabby,” they may first analyze whether the statement is true and by what standard it is considered shabby. The reciprocal influence of thought on language in T-type individuals leads

them to favor precise expression, reducing ambiguity and perceptual rhetoric, which may also cause them to appear overly direct in social situations and lacking emotional nuance.

7.3 Implications and Recommendations for Application

Based on the bidirectional interaction of Feeling and Thinking types in language use, targeted applications and optimizations can be implemented across different domains:

7.3.1 Applications in education

For F-type students, classroom interactions should incorporate emotional language, such as asking “What were the feelings of the people behind this historical event?” rather than simply asking “What happened in this historical event?” These students should be allowed to respond using perceptual modes of expression such as metaphors and analogies, rather than being held to absolutely precise conceptual formulations. When providing feedback, it should be delivered in an encouraging and supportive manner; for example, saying “Your perspective is very warm and insightful” rather than “Your viewpoint could be more rigorous.”

For T-type students, instructional design should incorporate more tasks involving logical analysis, such as asking them to compare the causal relationships between two events. They should be trained not only to focus on logic in expression but also to consider the social impact of language, such as learning how to express the same critical viewpoint using more moderate language. Additionally, they should be encouraged to try using perceptual modes of expression, such as reflecting on their intuitive feelings about a topic aside from rational analysis.

7.3.2 Applications in workplace communication

For F-type communicators:

For F-type communicators, during presentations or discussions, they may focus excessively on relationship maintenance while downplaying facts. Therefore, they should be trained to incorporate more data support in their expression. For instance, when expressing recognition for a task, they could try saying “This project achieved a 30% increase in user satisfaction” instead of “This project was great, everyone liked it.” When receiving feedback, they should be guided to focus on logic rather than emotion; when hearing criticism, they should be reminded that the feedback is directed

at the proposal itself rather than at them personally.

For T-type communicators, as they may be overly direct in expression and lack emotional nuance, they should be trained to incorporate more emotional language in communication. For example, they might say, “I understand your perspective, but from a cost standpoint, we may need to optimize further.” In team collaboration, they should be encouraged to consider things from the other person’s perspective. If a colleague is an F-type, they may care more about team atmosphere and recognition, so adding a sentence like “I appreciate your effort, and at the same time, I have a suggestion...” can facilitate smoother communication.

Understanding the linguistic characteristics of Feeling and Thinking types across different contexts can help us better adapt our communication styles. This not only enhances the effectiveness of expression but also promotes mutual understanding and cooperation across different personality types.

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