Personality Traits, Willingness to Communicate and Oral Proficiency In English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Požega, Dunja

Sveučilište J. J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet

Diplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i pedagogije

Dunja Požega

Personality Traits, Willingness to Communicate and Oral Proficiency In English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Diplomski rad

Mentorica: izv. prof. dr. sc. Višnja Pavičić Takač

Osijek, 2010.

Summary

This study examined the relationship between personality traits, willingness to communicate and oral proficiency in English as a foreign language. More precisely, the correlations between the variables were explored. Comparisons indicate that there are significant positive correlations between personality traits (except neuroticism and conscientiousness) and willingness to communicate (hereafter WTC). Particularly, openness, as one of the Big Five personality traits, correlates positively with all WTC groups, except interpersonal communication. When it comes to personality traits, only agreeableness correlates significantly but negatively with oral proficiency. Among WTC groups, only group discussion correlates significantly and positively with oral proficiency. Although the results of this study do not show causal connections between the variables, but only confirm their interrelationship, they imply that personality traits and WTC may influence students' oral proficiency. Therefore it is suggested that foreign language teachers should consider students' personality traits and WTC when assessing their oral expression and oral proficiency. Still, other factors should also be explored and taken into consideration. Teachers should consider all, or at least as many, students' individual differences when grading their students and organizing their classes.

Key words: second language acquisition, personality traits, WTC, oral proficiency

1. Introduction: Individual Differences as Factors Affecting Second Language Acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (hereafter SLA) is the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom (Ellis, 1997). SLA studies these ways, and its goal is the description of SLA, and the explanation, i.e. identification of the external and internal factors that affect it. In SLA, there are learner-dependent factors, also known as learner characteristics (motivation, age, intelligence, aptitude, personality, and language learning styles and strategies) and learner-independent factors (learning conditions, materials, teacher, and so on).

The field of psychology has two objectives: "to understand the general principles of the human mind and to explore the uniqueness of the individual mind, which has formed a subdiscipline in the field known as *individual difference* research, traditionally termed *differential psychology"* (Dörnyei, 2006: 42). Individual differences (hereafter IDs) have a great significance for the research field of second and foreign language acquisition because the span of language learning outcomes and learner proficiencies is mainly the result of various learner characteristics. According to Dörnyei (2006), IDs are dimensions of personal characteristics that apply to everybody and in which people differ. IDs significantly affect human thinking and behavior and this influence is in various ways described in educational contexts. Five most important second language (hereafter L2) ID domains are personality, aptitude, motivation, learning styles and learning strategies (Dörnyei, 2006).

IDs cannot be considered outside of the context of the human nature. According to Buss (1999), personality models of IDs must be founded on the specification of the human nature. Theories of personality should include both a specification of human nature and a description of the major ways in which individuals differ. Evolutionary psychology provides powerful ways for the discovery of both. Major IDs can originate from environmental sources of variation, genetic sources of variation, or a combination of the two. "The evolutionary psychology framework suggests that the most important IDs will be those linked with the major adaptive mechanisms that define human nature" (Buss, 1999: 53).

According to Arnold (1999), individual factors are internal factors that are part of the learner's personality. Language learning and language usage are interactive activities that depend on varying types of relationships with others and with the culture as a whole. SLA process is strongly influenced by individual personality traits of the learner, and the way we feel about ourselves and our capabilities can either facilitate or impede our learning. In other words, learner-intrinsic factors have either positive or negative influence. However, various emotions influencing language learning are intertwined and interrelated, and it is impossible to isolate the influence of any of them. Some of the especially important factors in SLA are anxiety, inhibition, extroversion-introversion, self-esteem, motivation, and learning styles.

One of the most important applications of humanistic psychology to education was performed by the Confluent Education movement, where theorists stressed the need for the unification of the cognitive and affective domains in order to educate the whole person (Arnold, 1999). Memory is one of the most important aspects of language learning, and links it very closely with emotion. “Current work on the neurobiological base of learning emphasizes the centrality of our emotional reactions in the learning process, and purely cognitive theories of learning will be rejected unless a role is assigned to affectivity” (Arnold, 1999: 7).

This paper focuses on the role of personality traits and willingness to communicate in SLA. These two factors are dimensions of IDs and they have been a part of many researches in the field of SLA; however their interrelationship still has not been explored. This paper deals specifically with the relationship between these two factors and oral language proficiency, as one aspect of SLA. These three aspects, as well as relevant research on their relationship, are discussed in the second, the third and the fourth chapter. The empirical research exploring the relationship between these three aspects is described in the final (fifth) chapter of the paper.

2. Personality

2.1. Theoretical Approaches to Personality

“Personality is a crucial aspect of psychology and therefore every main branch of psychology has attempted to broaden the knowledge in the area” (Dörnyei, 2006: 43). As all paradigms in psychology differ, naturally, their theories on personality are also diverse.

According to **evolutionary psychology**, humans, as all other species (Buss, 1999), have a nature; they have qualities which make them unique. Evolution is the only known causal process capable of producing the fundamental components of human nature, and that is why all psychological theories are evolutionary. Evolutionary psychology focuses on the analysis of the human mind as a collection of ***evolved mechanisms***, the contexts that activate those mechanisms, and the behavior that stems from and is caused by those mechanisms. Evolutionary perspective suggests that "human nature is extremely complex, and it will express itself in variable and context-dependent ways" (Buss, 1999: 41). The study of human nature is difficult, and the progress can be made sequentially and cumulatively by uncovering psychological mechanisms and the problems they were designed to solve.

Psychoanalytic Approaches to Personality emphasize the importance of unconscious processes, conflicts and defenses (Westen and Gabbard, 1999), but also the centrality of the sexual drive in the development of personality and neurosis. Psychologists who accepted some of Freud's premises but rejected some aspects of theory were not considered as psychoanalysts but rather belonged to the theory of psychodynamics. They believed in the importance of unconscious processes and conflicting forces within the mind. However, "the distinction between psychodynamic and psychoanalytic has disappeared since the 1980s because most mainstream psychoanalytic theorists rejected Freud's centrality of the Oedipus complex and the sexual drive" (Westen and Gabbard, 1999: 57). Freud defined psychoanalysis as (1) a theory of the mind or personality, (2) a method of investigation of unconscious processes, and (3) a method of treatment. Psychoanalytic theory studies the importance of unconscious cognitive, affective, and motivational processes, conflicting mental processes, defense and self-deception, the influence of the past and current functioning. Finally, the theory examines how all of these influence humans' thoughts, feelings, and behavior. "The concept of psychic reality is closely tied to the role of actual events, particularly traumatic events, in shaping personality" (Westen and Gabbard, 1999: 91).

Phenomenological theory is also known as Carl Rogers's person-centered theory of personality. The key structural concept in the Rogerian theory of personality is the self which states that "the individual perceives external objects and experiences, and then attaches meanings to them" (Pervin et al., 2005: 167). The self-concept represents an organized and consistent pattern of perceptions. The self changes, but still permanently keeps its quality; it is "a personality structure that characterizes the individual. Rogers's views emphasize self-actualization and the fulfillment of each individual's potential" (Pervin et al., 2005: 220). Although there are major differences in Freud's and Rogers's theories, both of them stated the great importance of conflict, anxiety, and defense in humans' behavior. The phenomenological approach represents psychologist's effort to come to terms with human experience as it occurs. However, it does not consider the role of unconscious forces in behavior.

Behavioral theories view the study of personality as merely a branch of the broader field of learning. According to behaviorists, "environmental forces determine the trajectories of humans' lives as they come into contact with them; people are influenced by environmental factors" (Pervin et al., 2005: 346). Hence, there is no need to explain people's behavior in terms of their attitudes, feelings, or personality traits. Instead, it explains people's actions, thoughts, and feelings in terms of environmental forces that shape the individual. According to Watson, the founder of behaviorism, "when exploring human personality, one should observe humans' behavior, not mental states" (Pervin et al., 2005: 350). Pavlov, a Russian psychologist, based the principle of learning on his theory of classical conditioning, which explains the behavior as a reaction that is caused by a certain stimulus. Humans' behavior is determined by situational specificity; if the situational forces change, so does the behavior.

According to social-cognitive theory of personality, people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, not just reactive organisms shaped by external events; they are intentional doers who select, construct, and regulate their own activities to realize certain outcomes (Bandura, 1999). In other words, people have the power to influence their own actions to produce certain results. Humans' capacity to control their thought processes, motivation, affect, and action operates through mechanisms of personal agency. Humans exercise their agency through their experiences. Their actions are socially situated, and thus products of a dynamic interplay of personal and situational influences. "To make their way successfully through a complex world, people have to make sound judgments about their capabilities, anticipate the probable effects of different events and actions, ascertain sociostructural opportunities and constraints, and regulate their behavior accordingly" (Bandura, 1999: 155). These belief systems enable people to achieve what they want and avoid what they dislike. People are agentic operators of their lives, according to social cognitive theory. The sensory, motor, and cerebral systems are tools people use to accomplish the tasks and goals that give meaning and direction to their lives.

2.2. Myers-Briggs Character Types

All individuals are unique and they act upon that uniqueness which stems from a person's character. As a result of the research performed by Isabel Myers and Katheryn Briggs (Brown, 1987) in the 1950s and 1960s, the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, commonly referred to as the "Myers-Briggs test", became widespread

worldwide. This test revived the work of Carl Jung, who said that "people are different in fundamental ways and individuals have preferences for functioning in ways that are characteristic for them" (Brown, 1987: 111).

The Myers-Briggs team tested four dichotomous styles of functioning in the Myers-Briggs test. Table 1 presents the definitions of these four categories. The Extroversion/Introversion category relates to one aspect of personality, that is the way we either turn inward or outward for our sense of wholeness and self-esteem. The Sensing/Intuition category has to do with the way we perceive and "take in" the world around us. The Thinking/Feeling category describes ways of arriving at conclusions and of storing reality in memory. Finally, the Judging/Perceiving category (the one that Myers and Briggs added to Jung's types) has to do with one's attitude toward the "outer world" (Brown, 1987).

Table 1: Myers-Briggs Character Types (Brown, 1987: 111-112)

EXTROVERSION	INTROVERSION
Sociability	Territoriality
Interaction	Concentration
External	Internal
Breadth	Depth
Extensive	Intensive
Multiplicity of relationships	Limited relationships
Expenditure of energies	Conservation of energies
Interest in external events	Interest in internal reaction

SENSING	INTUITION
Experience	Hunches
Past	Future
Realistic	Speculative
Perspiration	Inspiration
Actual	Possible
Down-to-earth	Head-in-clouds
Utility	Fantasy
Fact	Fiction
Practicality	Ingenuity
Sensible	Imaginative

THINKING	FEELING
Objective	Subjective
Principles	Values

JUDGING	PERCEIVING
Settled	Pending
Decided	Gather more data

Policy	Social values
Laws	Extenuating circumstances
Criterion	Intimacy
Firmness	Persuasion
Impersonal	Personal
Justice	Humane
Categories	Harmony
Standards	Good or bad
Critique	Appreciate
Analysis	Sympathy
Allocation	Devotion

Fixed	Flexible
Plan ahead	Adapt as you go
Run one's life	Let life happen
Closure	Open options
Decision-making	Treasure hunting
Planned	Open ended
Completed	Emergent
Decisive	Tentative
Wrap it up	Something will turn up
Urgency	There's plenty of time
Deadline!	What deadline?
Get show on the road	Let's wait and see…

2.3. The Big Five Personality Traits

Personality has been conceptualized from a variety of theoretical perspectives, and at various levels of abstraction. Each of these levels has made unique contributions to our understanding of IDs in behavior and experience, and one level that was frequently studied is personality traits. However, "there is a large number of personality traits and different types of scales designed to measure them" (John and Srivastava, 1999: 102).

What personality psychology needed was a descriptive model or taxonomy of traits. There was a need for the definition of domains within which large numbers of specific instances can be understood in a simplified way. After decades of research, the field is finally approaching consensus on a general taxonomy of personality traits, the "Big Five" personality dimensions. "These dimensions were derived from the analyses of the natural language terms that people use to describe themselves and the others" (John and Srivastava, 1999: 103). The Big Five taxonomy can represent diverse systems of personality description in a common framework.

2.3.1. Trait Approaches to Personality: Allport, Eysenck, and Cattell

Allport and Odbert conducted a study of the personality-relevant terms from an English dictionary, included the terms referring to the behavior which distinguished between human beings, and completed the list with almost 18 000 terms. They identified four major categories: "(1) personality traits, (2) temporary states, moods and activities, then (3) judgments of personal conduct and reputation, and finally (4) physical characteristics, capacities and talents" (John and Srivastava, 1999: 103). Allport and Odbert defined traits as "generalized and personalized determining tendencies, but also consistent and stable modes of an individual's adjustment to his environment" (Pervin et al., 2005: 226).

Their initial classification was elaborated and the domain was divided into seven content categories which illustrated that "the personality lexicon in the natural language includes a lot of concepts" (John and Srivastava, 1999: 103). These two classifications overlapped in categories and did not have clear boundaries. The categories should have been defined in terms of their clear cases, not their boundaries, and they applied this conception to traits, states, and activities. "Prototypical traits were long lasting, internally caused, and needed to be observed across a wider range of situations before being attributed to an individual" (John and Srivastava, 1999: 104).

Eysenck believed in the need for precise measure, and while constructing a trait theory, he used reliable measures of IDs. Eysenck emphasized the measurement and the development of a classification of traits and based it on the statistical technique of factor analysis in order to determine the basic traits. He identified patterns among a large set of correlated items. "Factor analysis is in fact the way in which trait theorists identify personality structures" (Pervin et al., 2005: 231). After his secondary factor analysis, Eysenck identified two basic dimensions of personality, or two central structures of human personality: introversion-extraversion and neuroticism. Eysenck added a third dimension, psychoticism. Altogether they make up Eysenck's Psychoticism Extraversion Neuroticism (PEN) three-factor theory of personality (Pervin et al., 2005).

"Taxonomy, to be of practical value, must provide a systematic framework for distinguishing, ordering, and naming IDs in people's behavior and experience" (John and Srivastava, 1999: 104). Cattell used the Allport and Odbert list as a starting point, worked on a subset of 4 500 trait terms, and reduced them to 35 variables. He conducted several factor analyses and identified 12 personality factors, which eventually became part of his 16 Personality Factor (16 P.F.) Questionnaire. Cattell's approach is called "the Factor-Analytic Trait Approach" (Pervin et al., 2005: 244). Cattell's work stimulated other researchers to examine the dimensional structure of trait ratings, and eventually, five relatively strong factors were found. This five-factor structure has been replicated by many researchers in lists derived from Cattell's 35 variables (John and Srivastava, 1999).

These five factors are typically labeled (John and Srivastava, 1999: 105):

1. Extraversion or Surgency (talkative, assertive, energetic)
2. Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful)
3. Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable)
4. Emotional Stability versus Neuroticism (calm, not neurotic, not easily upset)
5. Intellect or Openness (intellectual, imaginative, independent-minded)

These factors eventually became known as “the Big Five”, not to “imply that personality differences can be reduced to only five traits”, but to emphasize how abstract personality is by summarizing “a large number of distinct and specific personality characteristics into these five dimensions” (John and Srivastava, 1999: 105).

“The five-factor model of personality is a hierarchical organization of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience” (McCrae and John, 1990: 175). These dimensions are the most important ways in which individuals differ in their enduring emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal, and motivational styles. Research using both natural language adjectives and theoretically based personality questionnaires supports the comprehensiveness of the model and its applicability across observers and cultures. They state that the model should prove useful both for individual assessment and for the explanation of a number of topics of interest to personality psychologists (McCrae and John, 1990).

2.3.2. The Big Five Inventory (BFI)

In the early 1980s, Costa and McCrae were developing “the NEO Personality Inventory for measuring 3 personality dimensions: Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience” (John and Srivastava, 1999: 109). Costa and McCrae began their work with the analysis of the 16PF, and ended up with these 3 dimensions. They extended their model by adding scales for measuring Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and, eventually, demonstrated that their five questionnaire scales are very similar to the measures of the Big Five.

John, Donahue, and Kentle constructed “the Big Five Inventory (hereafter BFI), an instrument measuring the prototypical components of the Big Five that are common across studies” (John and Srivastava, 1999: 114). The 44-item BFI was comprised of the prototype definitions and allowed efficient and flexible assessment of the five dimensions. The BFI uses short phrases based on the trait adjectives known to be prototypical markers of the

Big Five. BFI scales include eight to ten items for each dimension and thus offer a measure of the core attributes of the Big Five dimensions (John and Srivastava, 1999).

2.3.3. The Five-Factor Model

Theorists such as Freud and Rogers analytically observed people to construct a model of personality. The five-factor model is built on a much simpler approach, i.e. investigators "analyzed the words used by ordinary people, not just psychologists, to describe people's personalities" (Pervin et al., 2005: 254). In this case, individuals rated themselves or others on a variety of traits taken from the dictionary. Five factors are necessary because they possess reliability and validity, and are stable throughout adulthood. The 'Big' in the expression the Big Five refers to the fact that each factor comprises of a large number of specific traits, and therefore all five factors are extremely broad and abstract in the personality hierarchy. The terms presenting these five factors are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. The first letters of the Big Five dimensions spell out the word OCEAN, which makes it easy to remember all five dimensions (Pervin et al., 2005).

Table 2 illustrates the meaning of the factors by listing trait adjectives that describe individuals scoring high or low on each factor. These factor definitions are based on the work by Costa and McCrae (Pervin et al., 2005).

Table 2: The Big Five Trait Factors and Illustrative Scales (Pervin et al., 2005: 255)

Characteristics of the High Scorer	***Trait Scales***	***Characteristics of the Low Scorer***
NEUROTICISM (N)		
Worrying, nervous, emotional, insecure, inadequate, hypochodriacal	Assesses adjustment vs. emotional instability. Identifies individuals prone to psychological distress, unrealistic ideas, excessive cravings or urges, and maladaptive coping responses.	Calm, relaxed, unemotional, hardy, secure, self-satisfied
EXTRAVERSION (E)		
Sociable, active, talkative, person-oriented, optimistic, fun-loving, affectionate	Assesses quantity and intensity of interpersonal interaction; activity level; need for stimulation; and capacity for joy.	Reserved, sober, unexuberant, aloof, task-oriented, retiring, quiet
OPENNESS (O)		
Curious, broad interests, creative, original, imaginative, untraditional	Assesses proactive seeking and appreciation of experience for its own sake; toleration for and exploration of the unfamiliar.	Conventional, down-to-earth, narrow interests, inartistic, unanalytical
AGREEABLENESS (A)		
Soft-hearted, good-natured, trusting, helpful, forgiving, gullible, straightforward	Assesses the quality of one's interpersonal orientation along a continuum from compassion to antagonism in thoughts, feelings, and action.	Cynical, rude, suspicious, uncooperative, vengeful, ruthless, irritable, manipulative
CONSCIENTIOUSNESS (C)		
Organized, reliable, hard-working, self-disciplined, punctual, scrupulous, neat, ambitious, persevering	Assesses the individual's degree of organization, persistence, and motivation in goal-directed behavior. Contrasts dependable, fastidious people with those who are lackadaisical and sloppy.	Aimless, unreliable, lazy, careless, lax, negligent, weak-willed, hedonistic

Other researchers also suggested similar definitions. Goldberg suggested an inventory of bipolar traits in which individuals rate their own standing on the Big Five dimensions. Here is an abbreviated version of this inventory.

Table 3: Goldberg's (1992) inventory of bipolar traits (Pervin et al., 2005: 256)

INTROVERSION VERSUS EXTRAVERSION										
	Very		Moderately		Neither		Moderately		Very	
Silent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Talkative
Unassertive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Assertive
Unadventurous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Adventurous
Unenergetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Energetic
Timid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Bold
ANTAGONISM VERSUS AGREEABLENESS										
Unkind	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Kind
Uncooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Cooperative
Selfish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Unselfish
Distrustful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Trustful
Stingy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Generous
LACK OF DIRECTION VERSUS CONSCIENTIOUSNESS										
Disorganized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Organized
Irresponsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Responsible
Impractical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Practical
Careless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Thorough
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Hardworking
EMOTIONAL STABILITY VERSUS NEUROTICISM										
Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Tense
At ease	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Nervous
Stable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Unstable
Contented	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Discontented
Unemotional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Emotional
CLOSEDNESS VERSUS OPENNESS TO NEW EXPERIENCES										
Unimaginative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Imaginative
Uncreative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Creative
Uninquisitive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Curious

Unreflective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Reflective
Unsophisticated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Sophisticated

2.3.4. The Fundamental Lexical Hypothesis

The Big Five include personality traits that people consider most important in their lives. According to Goldberg's fundamental lexical (language) hypothesis, "the most IDs in human transactions will come to be encoded as single terms in some or all of the world's languages" (Pervin et al., 2005: 257). The hypothesis is that humans have found IDs important in their interactions and have developed terms for easy reference to them. These terms are socially useful because they help us predict what others will do and thus control our life outcomes. They help predict how an individual will behave in a wide range of situations.

McCrae and Costa suggest that the Big Five personality structure is a human universal (Pervin et al., 2005). Their conclusion is based on their translations of their Big Five instrument (the NEO-PI-R) into many languages. However, the results often differ depending on whether the trait terms where translated or drawn from the language of the culture itself. Some authors selected the items directly from their language, Italian, and discovered that the three factors (extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) were more stable and thus more replicable then the other two components of the Big Five model. "Cultural variations in the perceptions of negative emotions, such as neuroticism, in different interpersonal settings may explain the difference between Italian and English language results" (Pervin et al., 2005: 259).

On the other hand, researchers have found the Big Five dimensions in the Turkish language even when working with indigenous linguistic terms. Even if particular trait dimensions are identified cross-culturally, this does not necessarily mean that the various cultures all think about human nature in the same way. Therefore, it is possible that in some cultures people do not typically think of others primarily in terms of personality traits, i.e. in terms of a person's typical behavioral tendencies (Pervin et al., 2005).

2.4. Personality Factors in SLA research

During the past 15 years experts on personality psychology have reached a consensus in the conceptualization of the main dimensions of human personality (Dörnyei, 2006). Current research in the field is dominated by two taxonomies focusing on personality traits: Eysenck's three-component construct and the 'Big Five' model. These two models overlap considerably. According to Eysenck, there are three principal personality dimensions: (1) *extraversion versus introversion*, (2) *neuroticism and emotionality versus emotional stability*, and (3) *psychoticism and thoughmindedness versus tender-mindedness.* In the Big Five construct, psychoticism is replaced with three additional dimensions: *conscientiousness, agreeableness* and *openness to experience*. Past research has provided evidence that personality factors influence educational achievement, including second and foreign language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2006).

"Despite personality being the most individual characteristic of a human being, the amount of research targeting personality in L2 studies has been minimal compared to the study of most other ID variables" (Dörnyei, 2006: 43). The most researched personality aspect has been the extraversion-introversion dimension because this trait is fundamental to three most significant personality theories: MBTI typology, Eysenck's model, and the Big Five construct. The general conclusion is that "both extraversion and introversion have positive effect on SLA, depending on the learning situation because language learning involves many different aspects, learning tasks and processes, and each of the two characteristics can be useful to some of them" (Dörnyei, 2006: 45).

Verhoeven and Vermeer's investigation has been "the first study that used the Big Five personality construct in L2 research" (Dörnyei, 2006: 45). They examined the communicative competence of young teenage language learners in the Netherlands in relation to their personality characteristics, and also compared these learners with a native-speaking sample. Communicative competence consisted of three main subclasses: *organizational, strategic,* and *pragmatic competence*. Only Openness to Experience correlated substantially with all three competencies. Extraversion was associated only with strategic competence and Conscientiousness with organizational competence (Dörnyei, 2006).

Hu (2004) examined the relationship between the Big Five personality traits, learning motivations and learning performance of the hospitality students in Taiwan. In this study, high scores in the conscientiousness and low scores in the openness dimension were significantly related with high learning performance, which means that conscientiousness is positively correlated and openness to experience demonstrates a negative correlation.

Extraversion was the least related to learning performance. Openness was the most related to learning motivation. The Big Five factors of extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience are especially educationally relevant. Also, the different Big Five personalities are related to different achievement motivation in higher education. Among the learning motivations, three of them (social communication, knowledge-skill and degree-fashion) are positively related with learning performance. When it comes to age and gender, there was a significant correlation with personality traits, learning motivation and learning performance. Older students had low scores in openness, and high scores in neuroticism and conscientiousness dimensions. When compared to male students, female students had higher scores in openness to experience and conscientiousness. Conscientiousness and openness to experience are likely to be high when students have high performance (Hu, 2004).

Onwuegbuzie et al. (2000) investigated the ability of cognitive, affective, personality, and demographic variables to predict SLA. The analysis of the data showed that variables from each of the four domains were important predicators of foreign language achievement. Cognitive variables exhibited the strongest correlations with foreign language achievement, followed by affective factors, and then personality variables. However, they did not examine how each of the variables relates to foreign language achievement in the presences of other factors. "Correlations of all variables should be examined simultaneously in order to predict or explain a dependent variable, in this case foreign language acquisition" (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000: 3). Onwuegbuzie et al. examined which variable domains best predict SLA among college students. Among personality variables, levels of cooperativeness and individualism were associated with foreign language achievement. Students with lower levels of achievement tend to be more cooperative and less individual. "Academic achievement, as a cognitive variable, has the greatest influence on foreign language achievement. The next best predictor of foreign language achievement is affective variable (foreign language anxiety)" (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000: 11).

3. Willingness to Communicate

3.1. Historical Development of the Willingness to Communicate Model

"The purpose of communicative language teaching approaches is to promote the learners' communicative competence in the target language" (Dörnyei, 2005: 207). Some people tend to avoid L2 communication, even

when they have a high level of communicative competence. This means that there are other mediating factors between the competence to communicate and putting this competence into practice.

According to Simic and Tanaka (2008), the concept of Willingness to Communicate (hereafter WTC) was first proposed three decades ago. McCroskey developed WTC constructs from three independent sources: *unwillingness to communicate, predispositions toward verbal behavior*, and *shyness*. At the beginnings, WTC was recognized as a personality-based, trait-like predisposition that is rather stable across contexts and receivers. From this perspective, "WTC was considered the tendency of an individual to begin communication when free to do so" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 71).

In the early 1990s, the first language (hereafter L1) communication studies had developed a construct called WTC (Dörnyei, 2005). After the development of a WTC construct in the first L1, an instrument for its measurement was also developed. The WTC scale has been applied in numerous empirical studies, and some researchers have studied it in the L1 from cross-cultural perspectives (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 72).

Richmond and McCroskey stressed the importance of WTC for an individual's well being, suggesting that individuals who are communicating more, are generally better appreciated in different contexts, such as school and other social groups in their local community. "Having a low WTC refers to communicational dysfunction that can diminish one's social and emotional happiness" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 71). McCroskey and Richmond suggested that WTC originates from two variables, and these are lack of anxiety and perceived competence. This means that people are willing to communicate when they are not apprehensive, or in other words afraid, and that they will perceive themselves as competent communicators. This assumption was first empirically proved by MacIntyre who developed a model which postulated that "WTC is based on a combination of greater perceived communicative competence and a lower level of communication apprehension" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 72). The model also hypothesized that anxiety influences the perception of competence.

There was a need to conceptualize an ID variable that would explain the willingness to talk. "When dealing with willingness, different learners have to talk in order to learn", and this led to a conclusion that "a non-cognitive ID would be more elusive for researchers" (Dörnyei, 2005: 207). MacIntyre and his associates started by examining WTC in L1 use, and then focused on the analysis of L2 WTC. "Individuals display tendencies toward or away from communication" (Dörnyei, 2005: 208). WTC is a stable personality trait when it comes to L1; it develops over years and results in a personality-based orientation toward talking. However, when it comes to L2 use, the level of one's L2 proficiency and L2 communicative competence, they are modifying variables. That is the reason why L2 WTC needs to be conceptualized as a situated construct that includes both state and

trait characteristics. Furthermore, WTC can be defined as "the individual's readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2" (Dörnyei, 2005: 208).

Accordingly, a multilayered 'pyramid' model (see 3.2.) was proposed which consisted of "a range of linguistic and psychological variables, parameters of the social situation, and various personality traits" (Dörnyei, 2005: 208). This model offers a clear representation of the multiple layers and variables that influence behavioral intention of WTC, but it fails to describe the interrelationship and importance of the components. MacIntyre and his colleagues conducted several studies which showed that "the two of the strongest predicators of WTC are communication anxiety and perceived communication competence" (Dörnyei, 2005: 208).

By linking the concept with *the theory of planned behavior*, one more important dimension was added to WTC. When people don't have complete control over their behavior, their behavioral intention, such as WTC, is not sufficient to explain their actions. A modifying component *perceived behavioral control*, which concerns the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, also needs to be considered. Behavioral performance can be predicted from the combinations of people's intentions to perform the behavior and their perceptions of control over their behavior. "Beliefs concerning opportunities, such as the opportunity for L2 communication, influence perceived control over behavior and behavioral outcomes. In this way learner beliefs are linked to WTC" (Dörnyei, 2005: 209). A unique feature of L2 WTC, in contrast to WTC in L1, is its situated nature, and therefore "the study of variables related to the social and psychological context of communication is particularly relevant when it comes to L2 WTC research" (Dörnyei, 2005: 210).

To conclude, WTC is an ID variable affected by many different learner variables which influence L2 acquisition and use. The construct has been subject to considerable empirical research, but there are still several open questions. MacInytire et al. raised an important issue, and that is how WTC correlates across various modalities of communication (reading, listening, speaking, and writing). Another question is whether WTC ends at the initiation of communication or whether it exerts its influence at the initiation of each conversational turn in an ongoing manner. MacIntyre et al. linked WTC to both L2 acquisition and use because SLA, as a learning process, relies heavily on learning through participatory experience in communication. "This is the reason why these two aspects of L2 need to be explored, in relation to WTC" (Dörnyei, 2005: 210).

3.2. The Pyramid Model

MacIntyre and his associates broadened MacIntyre and Charos' model of L2 WTC and illustrated it as a six layered pyramid (see Figure 1). First three layers of the pyramid (communication behavior, behavioral intention and situated antecedents) “consist of situational factors that are believed to affect immediate L2 communication” (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 73). However, they can vary in different contexts; they can depend on the subject of conversation or differences between interlocutors. The next three layers represent enduring influences, and work as independent variables in analyzing WTC in L2 (Simic and Tanaka, 2008).

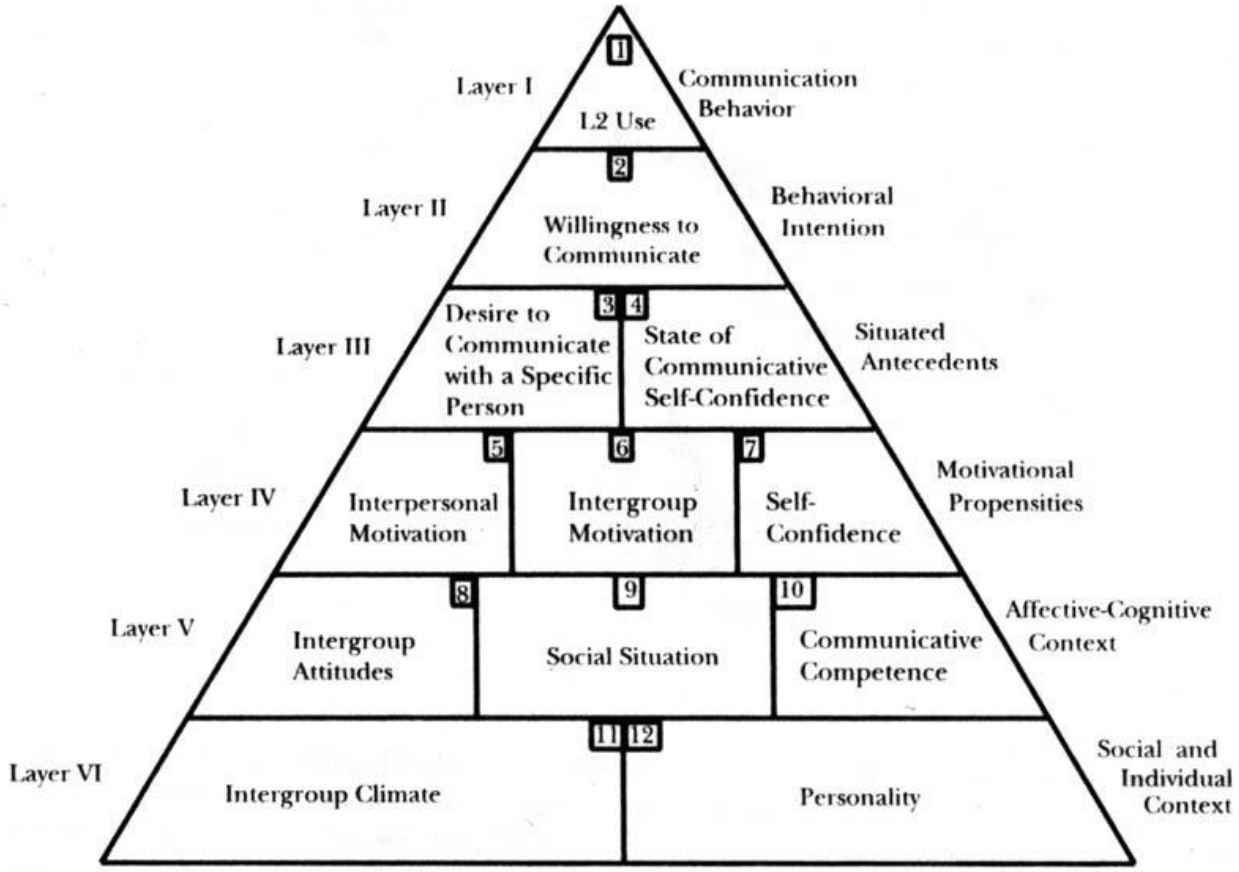

Figure 1: Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, as cited in Simic and Tanaka, 2008)

Layers of the Pyramid (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 74-76)

Layer 1 is *communication behavior*, and emerges as an outcome of the complex system of interrelated variables in the lower layers. Here, communication has a wide meaning, and refers to the *L2 Use*, such as reading the newspapers, speaking up in class, using the L2 at the workplace, and so on.

Layer 2 is *behavioral intention* and refers to *WTC*. It differs from a trait-like WTC because it additionally involves situation-specific factors. Here, WTC is defined as the readiness to enter discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2. For the WTC to exist the opportunity to communicate is not required; the vital purpose of language learning should be to stimulate the WTC.

Layer 3 includes two immediate *situated antecedents* of WTC: *desire to communicate with a specific person* and *the state of communication self-confidence*.

(3) Desire to communicate with a specific person is a result of a mixture of inter-individual and inter-group motivations, involving motives related to both affiliation (*integrativeness*) and control (*instrumentality*). Affiliation, or the concept of belonging to a group, may be the most important drive for communicating in an informal situation.

(4) State communicative self-confidence includes two factors: state perceived competence and lack of state anxiety. State perceived competence makes use of personal impression of self-ability in order to ensure effective communication at a particular time, but also increases WTC if a person has a satisfactory language and knowledge proficiency. Anxiety changes its intensity over time and decreases WTC.

Layer 4 termed *motivational propensities*, consists of *interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation* and *L2 self-confidence*.

(5) Interpersonal motivation is derived from the social role-playing within a group, and it is initiated by either control or affiliation. The role of control is to limit the cognitive, affective, and behavioral freedom of the communicators. Affiliation is encouraged by attractiveness, physical closeness, similarity, and repeated contact. Motives related to control and affiliation may occur at the same time.

(6) Intergroup motivation results from a membership of a particular group. Control and affiliation are also the basic components of the intergroup motivation. Here, control refers to the contact which results in the maintenance of the power established between groups. Affiliation motive occurs when the basis for contact is the desire to establish or maintain a rapport with a member of another group.

(7) L2 self-confidence is created by two components: self-evaluation of L2 skills and language anxiety. Anxiety and self-evaluation are highly correlated for the L2.

Layer 5, called *affective-cognitive context*, consists of *intergroup attitudes*, *social situation*, and *communicative competence*.

(8) Intergroup attitudes are influenced by integrativeness, which is related to (1) increased frequency and quality of contact with L2 speakers, (2) fear of assimilation which predicts less contact with the L2 community, and (3) attitudes toward the L2, which determines motivation to learn.

(9) Social situation is a complex category that describes a social encounter in a particular setting.

Factors that influence situational variation are: participants, setting, purpose, topic, and channel of communication.

(10) Communicative competence is the result of five main competences: linguistic competence, discourse competence, actional competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.

Layer 6, the last layer called *social and individual context*, illustrates relations between the society and the individual.

(11) Intergroup climate is defined by the structural characteristics of the community, and perceptual and affective correlates.

Structural characteristics of the community are understood through ethnolinguistic vitality and personal communication networks. Languages with high ethnolinguistic vitality will be more important and thus attractive to the speakers, and therefore are used more in a daily communication. Personal communication networks may strongly influence the effects of ethnolinguistic vitality.

Perceptual and affective correlates refer to the attitudes and values directed toward the L2 community. Generally, positive attitudes toward an ethnic group lead to positive interactions with that group, while negative attitudes will be associated with less positive interactions with that language group. Attitudes may also be mediated by the extent of contact between members of the two groups.

(12) Personality predicts reactions to communication, other people, stress, etc. Individual's character will affect whether one reacts positively or negatively to a different ethnic group. Intergroup context and personality, which may reinforce the social distance or closeness between groups, are placed at the bottom of the model as they are thought to determine the L2 WTC to a lesser degree than the other variables (Simic and Tanaka, 2008).

"Various communication experts later successfully applied the WTC heuristic model in the context of second or foreign languages" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 76). Most of those studies investigated how personality traits, and attitudes and motivation affected differences in WTC. One new dimension was added, and that is the role of culture, to the WTC theoretical concept. WTC model was mainly based on research conducted in the Western countries, and suggested that the model should be supplemented with the Chinese cultural context.

Chinese communication behavior is deeply rooted in Confucianism and the variety of aspects of its interpersonal relations. "Chinese cultural values and submissive way of learning have strong impacts on WTC in a L2, and these must be considered when conducting WTC L2 research among Chinese learners of a L2" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 76). Similar features can be observed in the Japanese cultural background, and therefore, the authors suggested that this model should be tested in a Japanese context too. This new model remained only theoretical, and it is not familiar whether it was applied empirically.

Another reconsideration of the WTC was contrary to previous researchers, because it applied a qualitative approach to examine how situational L2 WTC could dynamically emerge and change during a conversation.

“Situational WTC could change moment-to moment, with conversational context, under the mutual effect of the psychological conditions of excitement, responsibility and security. WTC in a L2 is individual's free will inclination towards active engagement in the communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, and other potential situational variables" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 77).

3.3. The Influence of the WTC in the SLA Research

The WTC model was first applied in the context of L2 by MacIntyre and Charos (Simic and Tanaka, 2008). They tested the Gardner’s socio-educational model and MacIntyre’s WTC model to predict the frequency of L2 use among Anglophone students learning French. They reported that “the students with greater motivation for language learning were using the language more frequently, and students who were more willing to communicate were more likely to do so” (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 72). Both language anxiety and perceived competence influenced WTC, and the predicted influence of anxiety on perceived communicative competence was also supported. Personality characteristics and social context have an indirect effect on L2 communication frequency through attitude, motivation, language anxiety, and perceived competence. These personality traits influenced motivation and WTC which in turn influenced L2 communication frequency. Regarding social context, it was found that having more opportunities for interaction in the L2 affected the frequency of L2 use directly, but also indirectly through perceived competence and WTC. These findings support the suggestions that context and personality are among the variables influencing the WTC. WTC was conceptualized in a L2 in a theoretical model in which “social and individual context, affective cognitive context, motivational tendencies, situated antecedents, and behavioral intention are interrelated in influencing WTC in L2 and L2 use” (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 73).

In L2 context, the target language is normally used for daily communication by the majority of people, and it provides continuous audio and visual stimulation for the learners. The difference between immersion and non-

immersion students is similar to the difference between foreign and L2 students. Like students in a L2 environment, immersion students have more contact with the target language and receive the kind of stimulation necessary in order to master communication in the target language more successfully. Therefore, L2 learners are classified based on the social context.

According to three MacIntyre's works, "the immersion program has a positive influence on WTC" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 79). In the case of the research conducted on high school students in Canada, they all spoke English as a L1, and were learning French as a L2. The immersion students had all their courses taught in French, they were higher in L2 WTC, lower in language anxiety, higher in L2 perceived competence and higher in frequency of communication in French than their non-immersion peers. Overall findings suggested that "the influences of the variables underlying WTC might change overtime as students gain greater experience in the L2, which means that experience is a significant aspect worthy of exploration in future studies" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 80).

In a qualitative study on WTC in the target language context the two characteristics of WTC in a L2 were investigated: trait-like and situational WTC. This study revealed a gap between trait and state WTC. Trait-like WTC could predict a tendency to communicate, whereas situational WTC highlighted actual behavior of students and the influence of contextual factors on the decision to engage in interaction with other students. The following factors were "perceived by learners to influence WTC behavior in class: group size, familiarity with interlocutor(s), interlocutor(s)' participation, familiarity with topics under discussion, self confidence, medium of communication and cultural background" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 81).

In another qualitative research, the affect of content and context on WTC of the international teaching assistants at U.S. University in their participation in the classroom was examined. The pyramid model was used to explore the different factors that affect this research context. The results suggested that perceived confidence does increase WTC in a L2. Additional significant variables were discovered that were not covered under the pyramid model, and these are: "shared topical knowledge has an effect when it comes to content, while for context, international posture and cultural factors were identified as important variables influencing the participant's WTC" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 81). These research findings suggest that the MacIntyre et al.'s heuristic model is not comprehensive enough for L2 learners in the context of target language learning.

On the basis of the literature review, Simic and Tanaka (2008) conclude that WTC should be measured differently in different language contexts. In the foreign language context, predominantly English, most of studies approached the WTC as a trait-like variable, stable across context and receivers. Much of the researches completely support MacIntyre's findings about the negative influence of anxiety and positive influence of

perceived competence on WTC. This means that in the foreign language context MacIntyre's model can explain WTC very well. Real communication in foreign language is rare outside of the language classroom. Students' language behavior is mainly guided by "international posture", and seldom by actual experience. For this context, MacIntyre's models are sufficient, they explain most of the WTC, and do not require any adjustment.

Regarding the research in L2 context studies, “the approach to the WTC is more state-like” (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 83). These studies suggested that the WTC variable is more situational than trait-like. The pyramid model explained WTC in L2 context only partially, with regards to the relationships between anxiety, perceived competence and willingness. However, the pyramid model seems to be insufficient to explain all the antecedents of the WTC. A multidisciplinary approach would be most fruitful for future research. Antecedents of the WTC are widely studied, but there are no empirical studies on the effects of WTC, other than the frequency of communication. Future research requires detecting sociological and psychological benefits of increased WTC (Simic and Tanaka, 2008).

MacIntyre et al. (2002) explored sex and age effects on WTC, anxiety, perceived communication competence and L2 motivation among junior high school French immersion students. Their results showed that students’ L2 WTC, along with perceived competence, and frequency of communication in French increased from grades 7 to 8, and was maintained between grades 8 and 9. “This personality-based orientation toward communication corresponds to WTC” (MacIntyre et al., 2002: 538). L1 WTC is dependent on both prior experiences in communication situations and personality characteristics such as anxiety, perceived competence, and a large number of social psychological characteristics maintaining the student’s communication behavior. Furthermore, these have been shown to affect WTC in the L2, thus extending the original L1 framework. WTC is a rather stable personality trait, but the variables determining it show differences related to sex and age (MacIntyre et al., 2002).

Researchers’ works on unwillingness to communicate, predisposition toward verbal behavior, and conceptualization of shyness were the foundation for the L1 WTC emergence. WTC is “the communication personality construct which affects completely every facet of an individual’s life and contributes significantly to the social, educational, and organizational achievements of the individual” (MacIntyre et al., 2002: 539).

Communication apprehension (or anxiety) and perceived competence are the two variables most closely related to L1 trait-level WTC. Communication apprehension refers to an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with communication with others and seen as having a trait-like quality. It is considered to be one of the best predictors of WTC in the L1. Research data from that field of study show significant correlations between communication apprehension, and both L1 and L2 WTC. It has been proved that people who experience high

levels of fear or anxiety about communication tend to avoid it. The potential to experience language anxiety in anticipated communication situations seems to affect the quality of L2 communication and lower L1 WTC. Anxiety is not the only reason why some people avoid communication. WTC can also be affected by perceived communication competence. “Lack of communication skills is sometimes the primary reason why some people are less willing to communicate than others” (MacIntyre et al., 2002: 540). Person’s perceptions of competence usually affect WTC.

The relation between anxiety and perceived competence, and how they contribute to WTC, is complex and varies over time, across situations, and among languages. Perceived competence was more strongly related to L2 WTC than was language anxiety among beginner adult learners. In another research, perceived competence and L2 WTC were strongly correlated among less advanced high school language learners, but among those of similar age with more L2 experience, WTC was better predicted by language anxiety. “When examining relations among variables influencing L2 communication behavior, it is important to take into consideration the learner’s experience and engagement with the target language” (MacIntyre et al., 2002: 541).

The conceptual scheme underlying situation-specific L2 WTC proposed by MacIntyre et al. shows that motivation contributes considerably to setting the conditions in which L2 communication becomes possible. However, the effects of motivation on authentic L2 communication are likely to be channeled through variables such as perceived competence and language anxiety as they arise in context. “Voluntarily initiating an L2 conversation with a native speaker or a more competent fellow student can be an informal language acquisition context if learners are willing to talk in order to learn” (MacIntyre et al., 2002: 542). However, the avoidance of communication because of immediate anxiety arousal seems likely to overrule the impact of language learning motivation. Therefore, though one might expect a correlation between motivation and L2 WTC, the relation is likely to be indirect (MacIntyre et al., 2002).

MacIntyre and Charos (1996) explored the importance of personality, attitudes and affect as predicators of success in L2 learning and communication. They investigated the impact of variables, such as attitudes, motivation, perceived competence and anxiety, on the frequency of L2 communication, and they also examined the role of global personality traits. Their results suggest that global personality traits and language-related affective variables set the psychological context for L2 communication.

There are two different points of view that explain relation between communication and SLA. According to *conversational approach to second language pedagogy*, one must use the language to develop proficiency, or in other words, one must talk to learn. On the other hand, “communication is more than a means of facilitating language learning, it is an important goal in itself” (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996: 3). As a result of these two

different streams of research, two different models were developed, and these are “Gardner's socio-educational model of language learning and MacIntyre's model of WTC” (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996: 3). The purpose of MacIntyre and Charos’s (1996) study was to test MacIntyre’s hybrid model of WTC using path analysis and to examine the role of the global personality traits, according to the idea that the Five Factor Model represents taxonomy of global traits.

According to Gardner’s model, there are two attitudes which contribute to the learners’ level of motivation, and these are integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation, and this interrelationship of the three factors is also known as the integrative motive. Integrativeness refers to “the desire to learn a L2 to meet and communicate with members of the target language community, and attitudes toward the learning situation refer to the evaluation of the language teacher and the course” (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996: 4). Integrative motivation influences learners’ level of activity in both formal and informal learning situations.

In addition to attitudes and motivation, anxiety about L2 communication has a significant effect on L2 learning in such a way that it correlates negatively with L2 course grades and the ability to take in, process, and output L2 information. Gardner and MacIntyre found that among attitudes, motivation, and anxiety, measures of language anxiety showed the strongest correlations with several indexes of L2 achievement (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996).

Communication apprehension, being one of the aspects of WTC, is conceptually similar to language anxiety; they both refer to anxiety about communicating. Research on communication apprehension in the native language has shown its potentially detrimental effects on the frequency and quality of communication. Communication apprehension results in a reduced desire to communicate. Unwillingness to communicate can be caused by many factors, such as anxiety, introversion, alienation, or a lack of communicative competence, and all of these variables have shown significant correlations with WTC (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996).

The influence of global personality traits has been examined in the research on WTC. MacIntyre and Charos (1996) tried to combine the work on language learning, WTC, and global personality traits. The main purpose was to test Gardner's socioeducational model and MacIntyre's WTC model and see whether they can predict the frequency of using the L2 in daily interactions. The second purpose was to examine the influence of global traits integrated into the model in ways that are consistent with previous research.

Both Gardner's socioeducational model and the WTC construct show relations with the frequency of L2 communication. Global personality traits are implicated indirectly, via their influence on language-related attitudes, language anxiety, perceived L2 competence, motivation for language learning, and WTC. The contribution of both personality traits and social context to predicting the frequency of L2 communication is

evident in MacIntyre and Charos's study. WTC was influenced by four direct paths, including one from the agreeableness trait, and indirect paths from extroversion and intellect. In light of these findings, research on native language WTC might examine the interaction of global traits in producing a WTC (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996).

Carrel et al. (1996) examined the relationship between personality types and various measures of academic performance of students of English as a foreign language in Indonesia. They used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator for measuring students' personality types. Other researchers examined "the relationship between a number of individual difference variables and end-of-training proficiency ratings in speaking and reading" (Carrel et al., 1996: 77). These individual variables were cognitive aptitude, learning styles and strategies, personality, motivation and anxiety. Their results showed low but significant correlations between MBTI and end-of-training measures in speaking and reading proficiency, but also the relationships among personality, aptitude, language learning and language learning program structure.

Before Carrell et al. (1996) research, no one has examined the role of personality in the acquisition of English as a foreign language (EFL) by a homogenous group of L1 speakers outside the United States. Their results showed that the students were almost evenly divided between Extraverts and Introverts; the ratio was not as even in other scales. For example, students were overwhelmingly Sensing as opposed to Intuitive, Thinking as opposed to Feeling, and overwhelmingly judging as opposed to Perceiving. Generally, personality variables showed low correlations with language performance measures. "In order to understand the influences of personality variables on language success, researchers have to include other variables as well, such as cognitive factors and aptitude. Relationships between these variables are not simple, but rather complex and interacting" (Carrell et al., 1996: 95).

Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica (2009) examined the relationship between WTC, foreign language learning success, period of foreign language learning, and self-evaluation of competence. There was no statistically significant correlation between WTC and foreign language learning success, period of foreign language learning, self-evaluation of competence, nor frequency of communication with friends-native speakers. WTC is usually defined as a general and stable personality trait, and not a situation-specific variable related to foreign language learning and usage. According to Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica (2009), WTC in foreign language classes does not necessarily have to be student's personality trait. Therefore, WTC in foreign language classes was reconceptualized and defined as willingness to risks in classes, the level of social behavior in classes and foreign language anxiety. The results showed statistically significant correlations between WTC in classes and foreign language learning success. The result also showed negative correlation between WTC in classes and

period of foreign language learning. The researchers conclude that WTC, in the context of oral communication in foreign language classes, should be reconceptualized as a situational variable, and not a general stable trait.

4. Oral Language Proficiency (OLP)

Oral language proficiency has been conceptualized in diverse ways in research on English language learning. It includes "receptive and expressive skills, and also knowledge or use of specific aspects of oral language which refers to phonology, vocabulary, morphology, grammar, discourse features, and pragmatic skills" (August and Shanahan, 2006: 55). The term can also refer to general aspects of language proficiency, and it has been assessed using self-ratings or teacher rating scales.

According to Yang (2007), oral language proficiency is important for language learners because it eventually becomes the most frequently used skill. Oral interactions make up most of our everyday communications. Therefore, the development of oral language skill in second and foreign language learners is of major importance. "Developing proficiency in oral English involves acquiring vocabulary, gaining control over

grammar, and developing an understanding of the subtle semantics of English, but also learning how to use the language to interact successfully with other speakers of the language" (Genesee et al., 2006: 14).

Proficient speakers of a foreign language are often termed as fluent, knowledgeable, competent, bilingual, or good. There are many factors that contribute to foreign language proficiency. While determining these factors, in order to establish the view of "the complex interactions amongst traits, the researchers focused on four key traits: syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy, lexical diversity, and fluency" (Iwashita, 2010: 32). Iwashita analyzed the four traits of oral proficiency of learners of English and Japanese as a foreign language, and how these traits contribute to oral proficiency.

Syntactic complexity refers to "the range of forms that surface in language production and the degree of sophistication of such forms" (Iwashita, 2010: 34). Researchers try to measure length of production unit, amount of embedding, subordination and coordination, range of structural types, and structural sophistication. The term *lexical diversity* refers to lexical richness. *Grammatical accuracy* can refer to global accuracy (identification of any and all types of errors) or specific types of errors. *Fluency* differs depending on the researcher. It can include the temporal features of speech (words or syllables per minute, the length or number of pauses, etc.), or the automaticity of language use (to what extent learners are able to produce a L2 without attending to rules of the target language grammar).

Some studies explored proficiency based on scores on rating scales and feedback on ratings collected from teachers and experts employing qualitative approach, while others conducted in-depth analyses of learner performance through objective assessment. In studies that use data in the form of ratings and feedback on ratings, grammatical accuracy is the principal determining factor for the global score, with some variation in the contribution of other factors depending on proficiency level. On the other hand, in studies that conduct in-depth analyses of learner performance, vocabulary and fluency are the principal factors, but, depending on the level, other features come into play. Nevertheless, the studies showed that different traits contribute to the global proficiency differently according to the proficiency level (Iwashita, 2010).

Speaking skills are an important part of language learning. However, assessing speaking skills is challenging because there are many factors that influence the assessment (Luoma, 2004). There are also many aspects of the speaking skill that should be assessed, and these are grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, appropriateness of expression, and so on (Madsen, 1983). The Council of Europe designed the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (hereafter CEFR), which is a guideline that describes achievements of learners of foreign languages, but also provides a method of assessing and teaching. The CEFR levels include the global scale of proficiency levels, and these are Basic User (A1 is *Breakthrough* and A2 is

Waystage), Independent User (B1 is *Threshold* and B2 is *Vantage*), and Proficient User (C1 is *Effective Operational Proficiency* and C2 is *Mastery*), where A1 is the lowest level, and C2 the highest level of proficiency. It also includes scales that present proficiency levels in all four skills, for all their aspects. In the scale of qualitative aspects of spoken language use, there are five aspects of the speaking skill, and these are range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence. Range refers to reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey shades of meaning. Accuracy represents grammatical control of the language. Fluency includes spontaneity, natural flow, and tempo of speaking. Interaction refers to easiness or difficulty which occurs when communicating with others, natural turntaking, and intonational cues. Coherence represents appropriate use of organizational patterns and connectors. These scaled descriptors are provided for aspects of linguistic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic competence (CEFR, 2001).

The following researches examined the relationship between several individual factors and oral language proficiency. Medvedeva (2007) examined the oral proficiency in English and non-English languages among children of immigrants in the United States. The primary goal of the study was to estimate the effects of psychological, individual, family, ethnolinguistic and school characteristics on a probability of being proficient in oral English and non-English languages, and on a probability of change in oral proficiency. Numerous sociodemografic factors facilitate or hinder change in language skills. Social linguists suggest that language development takes place in interpersonal interactions embedded in social networks and wider social structures. "Children develop affective relationship to the language under the influence of others; they construct a notion of prestige that is given to the language by a larger society, and that plays a crucial role in reinforcing or weakening motivational processes for language learning and maintenance" (Medvedeva, 2007: 7).

Kimura (2000) investigated the use of affective factors in the oral communicative tasks. Affective factors are believed to be closely related with proficiency. Two affective factors, anxiety and high self-esteem, and the strategy of risk-taking are discussed based on the self-reported data collected in the two communicative speaking tasks. The sample was divided into three proficiency groups (low proficiency, or less successful learners, middle proficiency learners, and high proficiency, or successful learners) based on the results of an oral communication proficiency test. Students answered five questions in English and their responses were recorded for evaluation. They were graded in three categories: (1) responsiveness, organization, length, (2) fluency, pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and (3) vocabulary, grammar, word usage. According to Kimura (2000), affective side has a great influence on language learning success or failure. The results of this study suggest that the successful

learners do not necessarily have higher self-esteem, but they do show more anxiety then the less successful ones in the oral communication tasks. However, successful learners tend to take risks more than the less successful ones.

5. Empirical Research

5.1. Aim

The global aim of this research was to examine the relationship between personality traits, willingness to communicate and oral proficiency in English as a foreign language. More precisely, the aim was to discover possible relationship between each of the five factors of the Big Five personality traits (i.e. extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) and each of the eight groups of the willingness to communicate (i.e. group discussion, meetings, interpersonal communication, public performance, strangers, acquaintances, friends, and total WTC) as both are affective factors. Furthermore, the aim was to discover the relationship between these two affective factors and oral language proficiency.

5.2. Methodology

5.2.1. Sample

The research was conducted in one high school in Osijek. The sample consisted of 324 learners of English as a foreign language. Table 4 summarizes the demographic data.

Table 4: Demographic data

	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	Total
Male	37	27	21	85
Female	95	76	68	239
Total	132	103	89	324

As can be seen from Table 4, the sample included 85 (26.23%) boys and 239 (73.77%) girls. If we look at the classes they were in, 132 (40.74%) students were in the 1st grade, 103 (31.79%) in the 2nd grade, and 89 (27.47%) students in the 3rd grade.

5.2.2. Instruments

The Croatian version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) was used for measuring personality traits (Appendix 1), which was a translated English version of the BFI (John and Srivastava, 1999). This instrument is made of 44 statements which include characteristics, each belonging to one of the Big Five traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness). It also contains a five-point Likert scale, in which number 1 stands for *Disagree strongly*, and number 5 represents *Agree strongly*. Students had to express the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement by circling one number from 1 to 5.

"The Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality has been of great utility to the field of personality by integrating and systematizing diverse conceptions and measures" (McCrae and Costa, 1999: 139). The findings on FFM prove its stability, heritability, consensual validation, cross-cultural invariance, and predictive utility. One of the apparent strengths of the Big Five taxonomy is that "it can capture the commonalities among most of the existing systems of personality traits, thus providing an integrative descriptive model for research" (John and Srivastava, 1999: 122).

The second questionnaire (Appendix 2) which was used in this study was the Willingness to Communicate scale, originally constructed by McCroskey and Richmond, and translated into Croatian by Mihaljević-Djigunović (2002). The scale consists of 20 situations in which people may or may not choose to communicate. Students had to indicate the percentage of times they would choose to communicate in each of the 20 situations. Willingness to Communicate questionnaire measures total WTC but also seven different groups of willingness to communicate, and these are group discussion, meetings, interpersonal communication, public performance, communicating with strangers, acquaintances and friends.

The span of values was from 0 to 100% for all the WTC groups. However, each group has a different division for measuring the levels of WTC. In other words, in each group there is a different border line between the levels of WTC (low, medium and high WTC), and these group margins are presented in Table 5. For example, the Friends group has the highest level borders (71% for medium WTC and 99% for high WTC level), and Strangers groups has the lowest level borders (18% for medium WTC and 63% for high WTC level).

In addition, the students were asked to write their name, class and gender.

Table 5: Group margins between the levels of WTC according to the percentages

%	Group discussion	Meetings	Interpersonal communication	Public performance	Strangers	Acquaintances	Friends	Total WTC
Low WTC	Below 57	Below 39	Below 64	Below 33	Below 18	Below 57	Below 71	Below 52
Medium WTC	57 - 89	39 – 80	64 – 94	33 – 78	18 – 63	57 – 92	71 – 99	52 – 83
High WTC	Above 89	Above 80	Above 94	Above 78	Above 63	Above 92	Above 99	Above 83

5.2.3. Oral Proficiency Levels

After the students have filled in the questionnaires, their grades in oral expression in English were extracted from the register and copied onto their questionnaires. Later, the mean values of these grades were calculated. Since these derived values were decimal numbers, they needed to be organized and categorized according to the Croatian grading system.

Final grades were obtained according to the criterion: grade 1 ≤ 1.4, grade 2 = 1.5 to 2.4, grade 3 = 2.5 to 3.4, grade 4 = 3.5 to 4.4, and grade 5 ≥ 4.5. In the Croatian grading system, the highest grade is 5 (descriptively ‘excellent’), and the lowest is 1 (descriptively ‘insufficient’, i.e. failing grade).

5.2.4. Procedure

The two questionnaires were administered as a single test battery during students' regular classes by the author of the paper. The students were acquainted with the aim and the nature of the study, and afterwards they filled in the questionnaires. It took them around 15 minutes on average to complete both questionnaires and write their personal data.

Students' grades from the grading element called oral expression in English were collected, and their average values were used as measure of their oral proficiency.

The data was entered and analyzed using SPSS for Windows. As far as the BFI scale is concerned, there were some negatively stated variables that had to be reversed before the data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, e.g. distribution of personality traits and WTC groups across the sample, mean values of the variables, and so on. Correlation analysis (Pearson product moment) was used to explore the relationship between personality traits, WTC groups and oral proficiency.

5.3. Results

5.3.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 6 shows oral proficiency values, i.e. grades, and their distribution across the grades, i.e. classes. Students' grades from the grading element called oral expression have been extracted from the register. Mean values of these grades were calculated, and since these values were decimal numbers, the values were transformed into whole numbers. Final grades, i.e. oral proficiency values, were obtained according to this criterion: grade 1 ≤ 1.4, grade 2 = 1.5 to 2.4, grade 3 = 2.5 to 3.4, grade 4 = 3.5 to 4.4, and grade 5 ≥ 4.5.

Table 6: Class and oral proficiency cross tabulation

		Oral proficiency					
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00	Total
Class	1st grade	5	20	23	35	49	132
	2nd grade	2	14	26	30	31	103
	3rd grade	3	28	32	15	11	89
Total		10	62	81	80	91	324

As for 1st graders, it is obvious that the biggest number of them have excellent oral proficiency, or in other words the highest grade. The number of the 2nd graders who have excellent and very good oral proficiency is almost the same; 30 students have very good oral proficiency, and 31 have excellent oral proficiency. However, the situation is different when it comes to 3rd graders. The biggest number of them (32 students) have good oral proficiency (or good grade), and 28 students have rather low oral proficiency (or sufficient grade).

Table 7 presents the distribution of students across the levels and groups of WTC. As for high level of WTC, the highest number of students belongs to the Public Performance group, and the lowest number of students to the Interpersonal Communication group. In low WTC level, the highest number of students belongs to the Interpersonal Communication, and the lowest number of students to the Public Performance group. The same goes for medium WTC level.

Table 7: The distribution across the groups and the levels of WTC

	Group discussion	Meetings	Interpersonal communication	Public performance	Strangers	Acquaintances	Friends	Total WTC
Low WTC	71	51	**95**	**30**	77	47	54	60
Medium WTC	201	204	226	195	203	202	210	225
High WTC	52	69	**3**	**99**	44	75	60	39

The Communicating with Acquaintances group follows with the second highest number of students in the high level of WTC, then the Meetings group, Friends group, Discussion group, Strangers group, and then total WTC. The Strangers group has the second highest number of students in the low level of WTC, then the Discussion group, total WTC, Friends group, Meetings group, and then Acquaintances group.

Table 8 shows descriptive statistics for all WTC groups. First of all, the table shows the mean values of the groups. As can be seen, the Communicating with Friends group has the highest mean value, and Communicating with Strangers group the lowest mean value. Median is the middle value in the list of all values with the increasing order of the values in the list. Again, the Communicating with Friends group has the highest median value, and Communicating with Strangers group the lowest median value. When the mean and the median are the same, distribution is symmetric (normal bell-shaped curve).

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for WTC groups

	Group discussion	Meetings	Interpersonal communication	Public performance	Strangers	Acquaintances	Friends	Total_WTC
Mean	70.56	61.17	68.07	63.58	36.28	75.78	85.48	65.85
Median	70.00	63.33	68.33	66.67	33.75	79.38	88.75	66.17
Mode	83.33	66.67	66.67	56.67[a]	30.00[a]	100.00	100.00	75.00
Std. Deviation	17.81	21.43	13.95	22.70	21.31	18.44	14.19	15.10
Minimum	6.00	5.00	16.67	1.00	.00	17.50	6.75	9.42
Maximum	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	97.50	100.00	100.00	98.33

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Mode refers to the value that occurs most frequently in the list of numbers. In this case there were several mode values in the Public Performance and Communicating with Strangers groups, and the table shows the smallest of them. This means that there were several values that occurred on the same multiple number of occasions. Communicating with Friends and Acquaintances groups both have the highest mode value, and the Communicating with Strangers group, again, the lowest mode value. Standard deviation shows how much dispersion there is from the mean. A low standard deviation indicates that the values tend to be very close to the mean, whereas high standard deviation indicates that the data is spread out over a large range of values. The mean and the median are the same in a normal distribution, i.e. distribution is symmetrical. If there are modes that are not the same as mean and median, again distribution is not normal.

The Communicating with Strangers group has the lowest possible minimum value, and six groups (Discussion, Meetings, Interpersonal Communication, Public Performance, Communicating with Acquaintances and Friends groups) have the highest possible maximum value.

Table 9 shows the distribution of dominant personality traits across the sample. As can be seen from the table, Openness is clearly the dominant trait among the highest number of students. Afterwards follows Agreeableness, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and finally Neuroticism. However, there are 62 students who have two dominant traits, and 13 students who have three dominant traits.

Table 9: The distribution of dominant personality traits across the sample

Dominant Personality	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism	Two Dominant	Three Dominant

Trait						Traits	Traits
Number of Students	143	15	32	48	11	62	13

Table 10 shows descriptive statistics for all five personality traits. First of all, the table shows the mean values of the traits. As can be seen, Openness has the highest mean value, and Neuroticism the lowest mean value. Median is the middle value in the list of all values with the increasing order of the values in the list. Again, Openness has the highest median value, and Neuroticism the lowest median value.

Table 10: Descriptive statistics for personality traits

	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Mean	3.72	3.35	3.45	3.46	3.08
Median	3.80	3.33	3.50	3.44	3.13
Mode	3.80[a]	3.44	3.38	3.44	3.13
Std. Deviation	.43	.36	.36	.44	.41
Minimum	2.30	2.22	2.13	2.44	2.00
Maximum	4.70	4.33	4.75	4.89	4.13

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Mode refers to the value that occurs most frequently in the list of numbers. In this case there were several mode values when it comes to Openness, and the table shows the smallest of them. This means that there were several values that occurred on the same multiple number of occasions. Again, Openness has the highest mode value, and Neuroticism the lowest mode value. The group Neuroticism has the lowest minimum value, and group Agreeableness has the highest maximum value.

5.3.2. Correlation analysis

The relationship between the Big Five personality traits and WTC groups was explored by correlation analysis. This analysis was conducted by using Pearson product-moment bivariate correlation coefficient. Pearson correlation coefficients (r) can range from –1 to +1.

In bivariate research, an independent variable is manipulated by the experimenter and a dependent variable is measured to observe the effects of the experimental manipulations (Pervin et al., 2005: 241). The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Correlations between the Big Five personality traits and WTC groups

	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Group discussion	.084	.080	.055	-.040	**.265****
Meetings	.100	**.177****	.108	-.039	**.312****
Interpersonal communication	.025	.054	.022	-.034	.102
Public performance	**.190****	**.166****	.090	-.003	**.298****
Strangers	**.124***	**.185****	.100	.037	**.254****
Acquaintances	.073	.061	.048	-.072	**.272****
Friends	**.156****	**.158****	.087	-.072	**.301****
Total WTC	**.137***	**.161****	.094	-.035	**.324****

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

As can be seen from the table, there are only statistically significant positive correlations between some of the variables, and there are no negative statistically significant correlations between the variables.

Extraversion correlates positively with several WTC groups, and these are public performance (r=.190, p<.01), strangers (r=.124, p<.05), friends (r=.156, p<.01), and total WTC (r=.137, p<05). Agreeableness correlates positively with five WTC groups, meetings (r=.177, p<.01), public performance (r=.166, p<.01), strangers (r=.185, p<.01), friends (r=.158, p<.01), and total WTC (r=.161, p<.01). When it comes to Conscientiousness and Neuroticism, there are no statistically significant correlations between these two personality traits and any of the WTC groups. Openness correlates positively with group discussion (r=.265,

p<.01), meetings (r=.312, p<.01), public performance (r=.298, p<.01), strangers (r=.254, p<.01), acquaintances (r=.272, p<.01), friends (r=.301, p<.01), and finally total WTC (r=.324, p<.01). The strength of significant correlations is either small (r=.10 to r=.29 or r=-.10 to r=-.29) or medium (r=.30 to r=.49 or r=-.30 to r=-.49) (Pallant, 2002).

The examination of the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and oral proficiency in English as a Foreign Language showed very little correlation between the two variables (Table 12).

Table 12: Correlations between the Big Five personality traits and oral proficiency in EFL

	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Oral proficiency	-.034	**-.152****	-.038	-.039	-.007

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

The only statistically significant correlation was between oral proficiency and Agreeableness, and that was a negative correlation (r=-.152, p<.01). This means that high levels of Agreeableness can be associated with the lower level of oral proficiency in EFL. The strength of this correlation is small.

Table 13: Correlations between Willingness to Communicate and oral proficiency in EFL

	Group discussion	Meetings	Interpersonal communication	Public performance	Strangers	Acquaintances	Friends	Total WTC
Oral proficiency	**.141***	-.065	-.051	-.015	-.018	.032	-.010	.001

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

The examination of the relationship between the oral proficiency and WTC groups mainly showed statistically insignificant correlations (Table 13). The correlation between group discussion and oral proficiency was the only statistically significant positive correlation ($r=.141$, $p<.05$). This means that the high level of WTC in group discussions indicates an association with the high level of oral proficiency in EFL. The strength of this correlation is also small.

5.4. Discussion

As can be seen from the results of the data collected using the Big Five Inventory, the dominant personality trait across the sample is Openness (dominant for 44.14% of the examinees), then followed by Agreeableness (14.81% of the examinees), and Extraversion (9.88% of the examinees). This means, according to the Big Five Model, that most students are creative, original, untraditional, and have broad interests. However, a considerable number of examinees (19.14%) has two dominant traits. This means that there are two among the five personality traits that characterize these examinees the most.

When it comes to Willingness to Communicate, the dominant WTC group across the sample is Public Performance where 30.56% of the examinees have high WTC. This means that these examinees feel competent and are willing to give a talk to either a group of strangers, friends or acquaintances. Afterwards follows the Communicating with Acquaintances group where 23.15% of the examinees have high WTC (it can be either group discussion, meetings, interpersonal communication, or public performance). As for the Total WTC, only 12.04% of the examinees have high WTC. Total WTC is the mean value of scores in groups Communicating with Strangers, Friends, and Acquaintances. What is a rather surprising result is that the highest number of examinees (29.32% of the students) has low WTC in the group Interpersonal Communication, which means that the examinees are least willing to communicate in a one-to-one conversation with either a stranger, a friend, or an acquaintance. This can also tell us that the students are not confident or relaxed when talking to their teachers, whether it is oral examination or just part of the questions-and-answers method in everyday class. Afterwards follows Communicating with Strangers group, where 23.77% of the examinees have low WTC, and then Group Discussion (21.91% of the examinees have low WTC).

The main aim of this research was to explore the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and eight different groups of Willingness to Communicate. Statistically significant positive correlation was found between personality trait Openness, and almost all WTC groups (except Interpersonal communication, which was the least dominant trait when it comes to high level of WTC). In other words, the higher the Openness the higher are almost all WTC groups. Students who are original, curious, ingenious, imaginative, inventive, artistic, and don't like routine, are likely to have a high level of Willingness to Communicate. Talking in general is not a problem for them; they will not feel inhibited or anxious; they will feel confident about their communicative competence. If we are talking about the high level of WTC in a Group Discussion, this means that the examinees will talk freely in either a group of friends, acquaintances, or strangers. If we are talking about the Communicating at Meetings group, this means that these examinees who have a high level in this group will confidently talk at meetings with friends, acquaintances, or strangers. When it comes to Public Performance group, these high scorers will not mind giving a talk or presenting their thoughts or ideas to friends, acquaintances, or strangers.

Extraversion correlates positively with Public Performance, Strangers, Friends, and Total WTC. This means that students who are talkative, full of energy, enthusiastic, assertive, outgoing, and sociable, are likely to have high scores in these three WTC groups and in Total WTC. Agreeableness correlates positively with Meetings, Public Performance, Strangers, Friends group, and Total WTC. Students who are helpful, forgiving,

trusting, considerate, kind, and cooperative, are likely to have high scores in these four WTC groups and in Total WTC.

The group Public Performance can be compared to class communication, i.e. oral expression in the classroom. It can be concluded that the students who have high scores in Openness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness should feel confident when speaking with or in front of their classmates, and should not be intimidated by classroom communication. Since 68.83% of the students have either Openness, Extraversion, or Agreeableness as their dominant traits, they should also have high scores in Willingness to Communicate, i.e. should feel confident about their communicating skills and oral proficiency in an EFL classroom.

The relationship between students' personality traits and their success, i.e. oral proficiency in English as a Foreign Language was explored by Pearson product moment correlation. The only statistically significant correlation found was a negative correlation between oral proficiency and Agreeableness. This tells us that the students who have high scores in Agreeableness, i.e. Agreeableness as their dominant trait, are likely to have low oral proficiency in EFL. Although there was a positive correlation between Agreeableness and four WTC groups and also Total WTC, the situation is different in the case of oral proficiency. In other words, students who are soft-hearted, good-natured, trusting, helpful, forgiving, gullible, or generous will probably have problems with communicating in English and will not have very high oral proficiency in EFL. These students probably easily fall in the shadow of others who are dominant, talkative, outgoing, they may even concede their opportunity to express themselves to others. They may not be autonomous enough to stand up for themselves.

When it comes to Willingness to Communicate and oral proficiency, the only statistically significant correlation found was a positive correlation between Group Discussion and oral proficiency. This means that the students who have high level of WTC when it comes to group discussion are likely to have high oral proficiency in EFL. In other words, students who talk freely in a group of people, who like discussions, feel confident about their arguments, and are not easily dissuaded against their opinions, beliefs or points of view, probably will not have problems when having to speak during their English classes. Also, these students will probably speak English fluently, with grammatical accuracy and a lot of lexical diversity. On the other hand, there are a lot of students who do not feel confident when talking in groups, or in front of the whole class, and this may affect their class performance, and subsequently their grades in oral expression. Although these students can have excellent language knowledge, their unwillingness related to group discussion may be the cause of their proficiency being less valued. Teachers should be aware of their students' willingness or unwillingness to communicate in different circumstances, and consider these facts when evaluating their students' knowledge. Also, students should be

observed, evaluated and graded in many different ways and classroom situations so that all students can have a chance to express themselves in ways that suite them best.

5.5. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore the relationship between personality traits, willingness to communicate and oral language proficiency in learning English as a Foreign Language. The results of the study indicate there is a relationship among all three research variables and several conclusions can be reached from these results. First of all, the results show that there are statistically significant positive correlations between willingness to communicate and personality traits, except conscientiousness (organized, ambitious, and hard-working) and neuroticism (nervous, emotional, and insecure). These are all positive correlations. In other words, if the students have high scores in extraversion (sociable, talkative), agreeableness (kind, cooperative) and openness (creative, original), their willingness to communicate will also be on a high level. If we can recognize that certain students possess these three traits, we should expect them to be communicative and not inhibited when speaking during their English classes. Also, if the students do not show these characteristics, we can conclude that these students will probably have low WTC. There are no significant correlations between interpersonal communication and personality traits. This means that, according to the results of the research, there is no relationship between one-to-one communication and willingness to communicate. There are probably other factors which influence this WTC group.

When it comes to personality traits and oral proficiency, the results only showed the relationship between high scores in agreeableness as a personality trait and low oral proficiency in EFL. In other words, students who are soft-hearted, good-natured, trusting, helpful, forgiving, gullible, or straightforward will probably have problems with oral expression. These students probably easily adapt and accommodate to others which may have a negative side effect, i.e. they may have problems when they have to decide and do things on their own, and be independent. On the other hand, students who do not show these characteristics, and who are maybe more independent and concentrated on their own success will probably have high oral proficiency, or their oral expression will we highly graded.

Finally, if we look at the relationship between willingness to communicate and oral proficiency, there is only significant positive correlation between group discussion and WTC. Students who are willing to talk in groups will probably easily share their ideas, defend their beliefs with good arguments, and are not easily dissuaded from their points of view. They also usually have high level of willingness to communicate. Students who are not willing to talk in groups are likely to have low oral proficiency, or at least their oral expression will be valued negatively.

Personality traits and willingness to communicate are two dimensions of individual differences. Individual differences have a great effect on SLA, and also on oral language proficiency, since it is a very important aspect of SLA. These findings tell us that teachers should take into consideration students' personality traits and willingness to communicate when grading their oral expression, and when evaluating their oral proficiency. Teachers should be aware of students' characteristics and individual differences when applying different methods and techniques, when organizing their classes, but also when approaching their students individually. Teachers of English as a Foreign Language should identify their students' individual differences, understand them, and apply that knowledge in order to perform their work effectively.

Future research should probably investigate more different variables and explore their interrelationships and influence on students' success in EFL. Future research should also investigate causal connections between the variables, not just confirm their interrelationship, but find out how and why some things influence the other ones. It is important to know which factors should be changed and adapted in order to facilitate language learning and to cater for all individual differences that influence learning English as a foreign language.

Literature

Arnold, J. (1999) Affect in Language Learning. Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press*

August, D. and Shanahan, T. (2006) Developing Literacy in Second Language Learners. *Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc*. New Jersey

Bandura, A. (1999) Social Cognitive Theory of Personality. In Pervin, L.A. and John, O.P. (eds) Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research. New York/London: The Guilford Press, 154-196

Brown, H.D. (1987) Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. *Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs*. New Jersey

Buss, D.M. (1999) Human Nature and Individual Differences: The Evolution of Human Personality. In Pervin, L.A. and John, O.P. (eds) Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research. New York/London: The Guilford Press, 31-58

Carrell, P.L., Prince, M.S. and Astika, G.G. (1996) Personality Types and Language Learning in an EFL Context. *Language Learning 46: 1*, 75-99

Council of Europe (2001) Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press*

Dörnyei, Z. (2006) Individual Differences in SLA. *AILA Review*, 19, 42-68

Dörnyei, Z. (2005) The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in SLA. *Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.*, Mahwah, New Jersey

Ellis, R. (1997) Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: *Oxford University Press*

Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, W.M., and Christian, D. (2006) Educating English Language Learners. *Cambridge University Press*. New York

Hu, M.L. (2004) The Relationship Between Big Five Personality Traits, Learning Motivations and Learning Performance of the Hospitality Students in Taiwan. Asia Pacific Tourism Association (APTA) www.ntnu.edu.tw/acad/docmeet/a8/a802.doc

Iwashita, N. (2010) Features of Oral Proficiency in Task Performance by EFL and JFL Learners. Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Second Language Research Forum: Exploring SLA Perspectives, Positions, and Practices. (ed.) Matthew T. Prior et al., 32-47. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

John, O.P. and Srivastava, S. (1999) The Big Five Trait Taxonomy: History, Measurement, and Theoretical Perspectives. In Pervin, L.A. and John, O.P. (eds) Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research. New York/London: The Guilford Press, 102-138

Kimura, M. (2000) Affective Factors of Japanese EFL Learners at Junior College in the Oral Communication Tasks. The Society of English Studies. 5 - 20 http://www.ses-online.jp/ronbun/30/b-kimura-5-20.pdf

Luoma, S. (2004) Assessing Speaking. Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press*.

MacIntyre, P.D. and Charos, C. (1996) Personality, Attitudes, and Affect as Predicators of Second Language Communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 15 (1), 3-24, Sage Publications Inc.

MacIntyre, P.D., Baker, S.C., Clement, R., and Donovan, L.A. (2002) Sex and Age Effects on Willingness to Communicate, Anxiety, Perceived Competence, and L2 Motivation Among Junior High School French Immersion Students. *Language Learning* 52:3, 537-564

Madsen, H.S. (1983) Techniques in Testing. Oxford: *Oxford University Press*.

McCrae, R.R. and Costa, P.T. (1999) A Five-Factor Theory of Personality. In Pervin, L.A. and John, O.P. (eds) Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research. New York/London: The Guilford Press, 139-153

McCrae, R.R., and John, O.P. (1990) *An Introduction to the Five-Factor Model and Its Applications.* www.bsu.edu/web/00t0holtgrav/623/ffmarticle.pdf

Medvedeva, M.A. (2007) Oral Proficiency in English and Non-English Languages Among Children of Immigrants in the United States
cas.uchicago.edu/workshops/immigration/.../20070328_pres.pdf

Mihaljević Djigunović, J. (2002) *Strah od stranog jezika: kako nastaje, kako se očituje i kako ga se osloboditi. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak*

Mihaljević Djigunović, J., and Letica, S. (2009) Willingness to communicate and foreign language learning. In Pavičić Takač, V., Bagarić, V, Brdar, M, and Omazić, M. (eds.) Public communication linguistics: Communication in classes and communicational grammar. Osijek: Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera, 1-11

Onwuegbuzie, A.J., Bailey, P., and Daley, C.E. (2000) Cognitive, Affective, Personality and Demographic Predicators of Foreign Language Achievement. *Journal of Educational Research* 94 (1), 3-15

Pallant, J. (2002) SPSS Survival Manual. Sydney: *Allen and Unwin*

Pervin, L.A., Cervone, D., and John, O.P. (2005) Personality: Theory and Research, Ninth Edition. New York: *The Guilford Press*

Pervin, L.A. and John, O.P. (1999) Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research. New York/London: *The Guilford Press*

Simic, M. and Tanaka, T. (2008) Language Context in the Willingness to Communicate Research Works: A Review. 71-88
ousar.lib.okayama-u.ac.jp/file/14186/20090106041457/26_71.pdf

Westen, D., and Gabbard, G.O. (1999) Psychoanalytic Approaches to Personality. In Pervin, L.A. and John, O.P. (eds) Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research. New York/London: The Guilford Press, 57-101

Yang (2007) Artificial Intelligence for Integrating English Oral Practice and Writing Skills. *Sino-US English Teaching*. 4 (4), 1 – 6

Appendix 1: Upitnik 1

Pred Vama se nalazi niz tvrdnji koje se mogu, ali i ne moraju odnositi u cijelosti na Vas.
Primjerice, slažete li se da ste *osoba koja voli provoditi vrijeme s drugim ljudima*? Vaš je zadatak da **zaokružite broj pored svake tvrdnje** koji odražava **stupanj u kojem se slažete ili ne slažete** s navedenom tvrdnjom.

Svoju procjenu dajete na priloženim skalama pri čemu brojevi znače sljedeće:

1 – U potpunosti se ne slažem
2 – Uglavnom se ne slažem
3 – Niti se slažem niti se ne slažem
4 – Donekle se slažem
5 – U potpunosti se slažem

Radite brzo i ne zadržavajte se predugo na pojedinoj tvrdnji! Pazite da **ne preskočite niti jedan odgovor**!

VIDIM SEBE KAO OSOBU KOJA:					
1. je razgovorljiva	1	2	3	4	5
2. pronalazi mane kod drugih ljudi	1	2	3	4	5
3. temeljito obavlja poslove	1	2	3	4	5
4. je depresivna i tužna	1	2	3	4	5
5. je originalna, smišlja nove ideje	1	2	3	4	5
6. je rezervirana i suzdržana	1	2	3	4	5
7. je prema drugima nesebična i sklona pomaganju	1	2	3	4	5
8. je pomalo nemarna prema obvezama	1	2	3	4	5
9. je opuštena i rijetko se živcira	1	2	3	4	5
10. je znatiželjna i radoznala kad je u pitanju nešto novo	1	2	3	4	5
11. je puna energije	1	2	3	4	5
12. lako započinje svađu s drugima	1	2	3	4	5
13. je pouzdan radnik	1	2	3	4	5
14. zna biti napeta	1	2	3	4	5
15. je oštroumna i duboko promišlja pojave oko sebe	1	2	3	4	5
16. oko sebe širi zanos i oduševljenje	1	2	3	4	5
17. po naravi nije zlopamtilo	1	2	3	4	5
18. je često neorganizirana	1	2	3	4	5
19. u pravilu zabrinuta i brine se	1	2	3	4	5
20. ima aktivnu maštu	1	2	3	4	5
21. nastoji biti tiha i neprimjetljiva	1	2	3	4	5
22. je općenito puna povjerenja u druge	1	2	3	4	5
VIDIM SEBE KAO OSOBU KOJA:					
23. pokazuje sklonost ka lijenosti	1	2	3	4	5
24. je emocionalno stabilna i ne uzrujava se lako	1	2	3	4	5
25. je dosjetljiva i sklona otkrivanju novoga	1	2	3	4	5
26. je probitačna i zna postići što hoće	1	2	3	4	5
27. može biti hladna i rezervirana	1	2	3	4	5
28. ne odustaje dok ne završi započeto	1	2	3	4	5
29. je sklona promjenama raspoloženja	1	2	3	4	5
30. cijeni nadahnuća i estetska iskustva	1	2	3	4	5
31. je ponekad sramežljiva i povučena	1	2	3	4	5
32. je obzirna i ljubazna prema gotovo svim ljudima	1	2	3	4	5
33. učinkovito obavlja stvari koje radi	1	2	3	4	5
34. u napetim situacijama ostaje mirna	1	2	3	4	5
35. preferira uobičajene i rutinske poslove	1	2	3	4	5
36. je po sebi otvorena i društvena	1	2	3	4	5

37. je ponekad gruba i nepristojna prema drugima	1	2	3	4	5
38. planira i izvršava napravljene planove	1	2	3	4	5
39. lako postaje nervozna	1	2	3	4	5
40. rado mašta i prepušta se idejama	1	2	3	4	5
41. ima općenito malo interesa za umjetnost	1	2	3	4	5
42. voli u poslu surađivati s drugima	1	2	3	4	5
43. je lako odgovoriti od započetog	1	2	3	4	5
44. ima istančan smisao za umjetnost, glazbu i književnost	1	2	3	4	5

MOLIM VAS PROVJERITE JESTE LI PROCIJENILI SVE TVRDNJE!

Appendix 2: Upitnik 2

Dolje je navedeno 20 situacija u kojima osoba može odlučiti **da komunicira ili ne komunicira**. Pretpostavite da imate **potpuno slobodan izbor**! Odredite **u postocima** koliko biste **puta izabrali da započnete komunikaciju** u svakoj navedenoj situaciji. **S lijeve strane** upišite postotak u kojem biste se odlučili komunicirati.
Izaberite bilo koju vrijednost između 0 i 100.

_____ 1. Razgovor s radnikom na benzinskoj stanici

_____ 2. Razgovor s liječnikom

_____ 3. Držanje govora grupi nepoznatih ljudi

_____ 4. Razgovor s poznanikom dok čekate u redu

_____ 5. Razgovor s prodavačem u trgovini

_____ 6. Govor na većem sastanku s prijateljima

_____ 7. Razgovor s policajcem

_____ 8. Razgovor u maloj grupi nepoznatih ljudi

_____ 9. Razgovor s prijateljem dok čekate u redu

_____ 10. Razgovor s konobarom u restoranu

_____ 11. Razgovor na većem sastanku s poznanicima

_____ 12. Razgovor s nepoznatom osobom dok čekate u redu

_____ 13. Razgovor s tajnicom

_____ 14. Držanje govora grupi prijatelja

_____ 15. Razgovor u manjoj grupi poznanika

_____ 16. Razgovor sa smetlarom

_____ 17. Razgovor na većem sastanku s nepoznatim ljudima

_____ 18. Razgovor sa suprugom (ili momkom ili djevojkom)

_____ 19. Razgovor u maloj grupi prijatelja

_____ 20. Držanje govora grupi poznanika

Ime i prezime: _____ **Spol: M / Ž**

Razred: _____