The Relationship Between English Language Speaking Anxiety And Big Five Personality Factors: A Study Of University Students From The Twin Metropolitan Cities Of Pakistan

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Abstract

English language anxiety has exponentially increased for a few decades among adolescents, especially university students. This problem is, somehow, related to the big five personality factors that include extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. The present study investigates the relationship between English speaking anxiety and big five personality factors among university students. It conducted a survey of 400 students in different universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The study further divided the participants into the categories of males and females with an average age of 20 years. Each category includes 200 participants. The respondents completed the questionnaires on foreign language anxiety scale and big five personality factors scale. The results revealed that big five personality factors have a significant correlation with English speaking anxiety.

Keywords: English language anxiety, big five personality factors, university students, Pakistan

1. Introduction

Education in English language in the non-English countries continues to prevail and flourish. However, this lingua franca also continues to pose significant challenges and, thus, anxiety for its learners in assimilating and utilizing this language like any foreign language which "is learned in a place where the language is not typically used as the medium of ordinary communication" (Oxford & Shearin 1994, p). This language anxiety, which also stands as a barrier for learning foreign language is deemed as a negative and significant emotional condition so it can greatly affect the targeted language to learn.

At present, the English language enjoys the status of being lingua franca globally. In the non-English countries such

as Pakistan, this language proves a colossal challenge. The anxiety associated with this language, which varies from person to person, affects students' comprehension of their contents and thus results in their low performance. The present study explores the relationship of this language anxiety with personality factors.

The Big Five Personality Factors are extensive and thoroughly recreated set of characteristics categorization (Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 2003). This personality categorization has been controlling the domain of personality psychology since 1980s. Personality trait theories have long sought to investigate and formulate the total possible number of personality traits and their dynamics in an individual. According to Costa (1991), five major personality traits are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeability, and neuroticism.

Costa suggests that openness largely comprises creativity and imagination. These two qualities add to one's insight. People with a significant degree of this trait enjoy a broad variety of interests. They are intellectually curious about their surroundings, always feel anxious to understand new things and relish new thoughts and feelings. Contrarily, the individuals who lack in this trait of openness remain conventional and may face conflicts in their logical reasoning.

Conscientiousness involves increased rates of attentiveness, good emotional regulation, and goal-driven behavior. Highly conscientious people are more established. They plan forwards, think on how one's actions affect others, and are always focused on their targets. Extraversion encompasses action potentials, socialization, loquacity, self-confidence, and higher levels of emotional expressiveness. People superior in extraversion are sociable, and prefer to build independency in social settings. This trait helps them to feel delighted and motivated about getting more social. In contrast, the people who are introverted or lack in extraversion keep themselves socially reserved. Social activities may cause them exhaustion and they may also need loneliness to "charge up" (Costa, 1991).

According to him, agreeableness includes qualities such as honesty, selflessness, empathy, love, and other positive social behaviors. People higher in agreeableness are more collaborative. On the other hand, the individuals who lack this trait are more competitive and even, sometimes, deceptive.

Lastly, neuroticism is, in his opinion, a trait of sorrow, mood swings and emotional instability. Individuals with high neuroticism tend to have mood swings, anxiety, irritability, and sorrows. In contrast, people with a lower neuroticism are more durable and sustainable to emotions.

2. Literature review

Cognitive psychology, which studies the cognitive process of mind, propounds that determination of success in learning is highly associated with personality traits in an individual. It explores to identify these traits and the nuances related with them (Erfani, Mardan, 2017). The Big-Five personality characteristics were found to be directly linked with the students' performance in general (Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck, and Avdic (2011), while their academic achievement was specifically found to correlate significantly with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness (Poropat 2009).

Studies have concluded that Neuroticism is a solid positive indicator of anxiety (Ireland et al., 2014; Trull et al., 2001). Dewaele (2013) found that this trait is highly correlated with foreign language

anxiety. Moreover, the research found a direct relationship between Extraversion and Foreign language anxiety. However, in the same study, agreeableness appeared in no significant relationship with English language speaking anxiety. In its findings, this study remained consistent with the previous studies which also showed agreeableness had no critical relationship with English language test anxiety (Asmali, 2017; Ullah et al., (2022)

), statistics anxiety (Chew and Dillon, 2013), and individual instrument performance anxiety (Özdemir and Dalkiran, 2017). In addition, Zabihi (2011) found having such characteristics would not make an important contrast in students' test execution. A study by Noftle and Robins (2007) revealed that Openness was feebly related with academic performance.

Another study (Zabihi 2011) found among its findings a prescient capacity of IELTS capability test with respect to the academic achievements due to the critical relationship found between language ability and academic achievement of students. This study proves aligned with a research by Dooey and Oliver (2002), Feast (2002), Woodrow (2006), and Yen and Kuzma (2009), in which Negative correlation was found between Openness to Experience and foreign language anxiety (Gargalianou et al., 2015). Conscientiousness was not found to be related with English language anxiety.

The findings of the study by Timina (2015) uncovered that that the larger part of the students was hesitant to talk English loudly because of the fear of being misunderstood by the teachers. Mak (2011) stated that fear of negative assessment makes numerous foreign language learners encounter anxiety. The study by Tercan & Dikilitas (2015) showed that students experienced generally less anxiety in settings where they found themselves less debilitated. Bozavli &

Gulmez (2012) attested that in a language classroom, the action of talking by a learner before the class incites anxiety which suggests that the foreign language anxiety is closely related with the verbal perspectives of the language learning.

A study have found that the big five traits are also remarkably universal by McCrae and his colleagues. One investigation that took a gender at individuals from more than 50 unique societies found that the five personality dimensions could be precisely used to portray character. In light of this, numerous therapists presently accept that the five personality dimensions are not just all inclusive; they likewise have natural sources. Indeed a significant number investigations have announced absence of a connection between personality characteristics and language abilities, scholastic accomplishment, and different highlights such as in reading (Carrell, 1991; Bossers, 1991; Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995; Lee and Schallert, 1997; Mehrpour, 2004), composing (Yun, 2005), and tuning in (Vandergrift, 2006).The way that there was no significant relationship among extraversion and the speaking ability can be disclosed by alluding to what Dewaele and Furnham (2000) expressed. They proposed that the constructive outcome of extraversion shows itself most unmistakably in an exceptionally formal circumstance. In spite of the fact that the setting in this examination appeared to be distressing to a portion of the members, it might have been unbiased to the greater part of them, on the grounds that the speaking tasks which were given to the participants were fundamentally the same as the assignments their teacher would give them as class exercises; for example discussing themselves, a specific subject, or portraying a thing or spot. Accordingly, their commonality with the tasks kept them from being on edge on the speaking test.

Moreover, Dewaele (2005) found that extraversion had little impact on the oral discourse creation.

Guntzviller et al. (2011) found that Americans of Latin drop felt uplifted worry in a specialist's office where they were required to communicate in English rather than Spanish. Because of their FLA and the related unfriendly impacts, for example, sentiments of hesitance and disgrace, they would be at higher hazard to get deficient clinical consideration. Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is embedded into a more extensive structure of social tension (MacIntyre, 1995).

Social nervousness in a language taking in setting primarily gets from the social and informative parts of language learning. FLA may identify with agonizing over creation botches, perceived stress concerning one's own competency, dread of being adversely assessed, and tension about misconception of others and being misjudged. Speaking in and tuning in to an unknown dialect, for instance, in the study hall, have been demonstrated to be possibly exceptionally dangerous and to incite Foreign language anxiety (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994b; Price, 1991) conceivably in any event, setting off an endless loop from which the student finds it hard to get away: "Fitness can impact uneasiness, tension can impact execution, and execution can impact uneasiness" (MacIntyre, 1995, p. 95).

A few examinations discovered women to encounter less FLA than men (Campbell and Shaw, 1994; Kitano, 2001). Campbell and Shaw (1994), for instance, announced that boys felt higher FLA in the study hall setting than females.

Investigation by Margareta (2012), Ali and Bano (2012), and Aprianis (2008) discovered positive correlation between 'personality and English capability and

found no huge correlation like Shahab (2016), Ghazi, Shahzada, and Ullah (2013), Pareudi (2012), and Yahaya, Ramli, Boon, Ghafar, and Zakaria (2009). Conversely, different past related investigations demonstrated the conflicting consequences of every quality of personality.

Ali and Bano (2012, pp. 260-261) reveal that personality characteristics have impacted on understanding aptitude and another capacity of language learning. All qualities have positive relationships on the students, with the exception of neuroticism. The social butterfly understudies figure out how to communicate through words, both composed and spoken. They are always looking for people to rehearse with their newly discovered language capacities and tend to find more extensive associations with individuals that can assist them with speaking in learning language.

In a correlational study by Ali (2012), there was a low significant correlation among extraversion and reading, speaking and listening aptitude and no significant correlation between extraversion and writing skill. Contrarily, there was a significant correlation among agreeableness and reading, speaking, and listening skill, and frail relationship among agreeableness and writing ability.

2.1 Rationale

The present study examines the relationship between big five personality factors and English speaking anxiety among students of students from the twin metropolitan cities, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, of Pakistan.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

This research applies a cross sectional design to determine the relationship between big five personality factors and

English speaking anxiety among university students. It collected its data through a questionnaire using the convenient sampling technique.

3.2 Target Population

The sample comprised a total of 400 participants (200 male and 200 female) with average an age of 20 years. The study gathered its data from different universities in the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad, and an adjacent city, Rawalpindi, through the purposive sampling technique. The students who agreed to participate were asked to fill a consent form along with a demographic form and research questionnaires. The study applied correlational analysis, descriptive statistics and other statistical analysis for research data analysis on SPSS (V 23.0).

3.4 Sampling Technique

The study gathered the information for its research information through the purposive sampling technique and the participants had the complete right to be the part of the current study.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Only the individuals who agreed to participate in the study were given questionnaires. The researcher followed all the ethical considerations as determined by the Board of Advanced Studies. Moreover, the researcher also ensured to maintain the privacy of all respondents during and after the study.

3.6 Personal Information Form

The study used the following instruments to collect the data from the participants.

3.7 Demographic information form

The demographic form contains the respondent's details on age, ethnicity, schooling, relationship status, social and economic status, job, family income structure variables.

3.8 Informed Consent form

The participants' consent for their participation in the research was received on a consent form. The researcher ensured that the information obtained was entirely voluntary and that the respondents had the right to leave the research at any time.

3.9 The Big Five Inventory (BFI)

The study based the personality characteristics measures on the Big Five Inventory (BFI). A total of 44 measuring items were available. These measures were modified by the researchers because these were short methods and easy to comprehend by the respondents. Furthermore, BFI also illustrated high convergent validity with other Big Five self-report scales and peer reviews (Soto & John, 2009). The previously confirmed reliability of BFI's usually ranged from 0.79 to 0.88 (Soto & John, 2009).

3.10 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

The scale known as FLCAS for anxiety survey and evaluation was developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The scale has been extremely accurate amongst the raters (Aida, 1994). FLCAS is made up of thirty three items with a potential spectrum of 165; if the number is greater, it suggests a high level of anxiety. Internal consistency is recorded 93 by the survey of 108 research participants, while test reliability was found 83, which is extended to 8 weeks (Horwitz et al., 1986).

In the course of correlations, the anxiety in the classroom is validated to indicate the scale is distinctive from other styles (Horwitz, 2010). FLCAS is a self-reporting tool, a common tool for assessing anxiety.

This scale tests the level of fear understood in foreign languages through adverse consequences, peer comparisons, psychiatric signs, and actions of avoidance. Studies on students, clinical practice and analyses of the relevant instruments were the origins of FLCAS production. The analysis of similar anxiety literature was the key direction in which FLCAS was created.

3.11 Statistical Analysis

The study used the correlational analysis for its statistical analysis. Moreover, it applied descriptive statistics and other statistical analysis for the research data analysis on SPSS (V 23.0).

3.12 Procedure

The study collected data for its research from university students in the twin cities, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, of Pakistan. A written permission from the professors was sought to use the most recent 20 minutes during their classes to conduct the questionnaires. The consent of the participants was also formally obtained.

3.13 Results

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the Sample

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages %
Gender		
Male	200	50.0
Female	200	50.0
Socioeconomic Status		
Upper	72	18.0
Middle	316	79.0
Lower	12	3.0
Family Structure		
Joint	111	27.8
Nuclear	289	72.2
Mean Age =	**20.75 Std. Deviation =**	**2.321**

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Table 1: 2 Pearson Product Movement coefficients of correlation between big five personality factors and English speaking anxiety among University Students

Correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1-Anxiety of English Class		.250**	-.001	.213**	.647**	.083	.036	-.042	094	.107*
2-Communication Anxiety			-.006	.290**	.673**	-.276**	.066	-.065	.247**	.197**
3-Fear of Negative Evaluation				.029	.382**	-.117*	-.038	-.019	.035	-.043
4-Test Anxiety					.647**	-.100*	-.043	-.085	.022	.073
5-Total English Speaking Anxiety						-.160**	-.014	-.035	.152**	.153**
6-Extraversion							-.496**	.172**	-.444**	.340**
7-Agreeable								.249**	-.297**	.224**
8-Consiousness									-.204**	.183**
9-Neurotism										.198**
10-Openness										

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

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

DISCUSSION

The present study intended to explore whether any of five major personality traits including extraversion, agreeability, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism has any relationship with the English language learning anxiety among university students in Pakistan which is a non-English country. It conducted a quantitative analysis on a data collected from students of the universities in the capital, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi. It is pertinent to mention that students in these universities come from a diverse background. However, the English language, being a foreign or second language, poses challenges for them almost equally, which cause anxiety as well.

The study found no positive relationship between anxiety and extraversion which is a general tendency in individuals, which carries positive emotions. Hence, the study corresponds with Costa's perspective which asserts that people superior in extraversion are sociable, and prefer to build independency in social settings as this trait helps them to feel delighted and motivated about getting more social. Contrarily, the people who are introverted or lack in extraversion keep themselves socially reserved. Social activities may cause them exhaustion and they may also need loneliness to charge up.

Similarly, the study has witnessed that anxiety has also no positive relationship with agreeableness which, according to Costa, is a trait manifesting kind, considerate and cooperative behavioural characteristics. The study found that students possessing such positive qualities as honesty, selflessness, empathy and love were more collaborative in their approach, so they had no or very little anxiety. Moreover, with such findings, the study also endorses previous studies concluding that agreeableness finds no critical relationship with English language test anxiety (Asmali, 2017), statistics anxiety (Chew and Dillon, 2013), and individual

instrument performance anxiety (Özdemir and Dalkiran, 2017).

Likewise, the research also reveals that there exists no positive relationship between anxiety and conscientiousness validating Costa's idea which stresses that conscientiousness involves increased rates of attentiveness, good emotional regulation, and goal-driven behavior. Since highly conscientious people are more established and are always focused on their targets, they usually do no experience anxiety.

However, the study found a noticeably positive relationship between anxiety and neuroticism which, according to Costa, is a trait of sorrow, mood swings and emotional instability. Individuals with high neuroticism tend to have mood swings, anxiety, irritability, and sorrows. In contrast, people with a lower neuroticism are more durable and sustainable to emotions.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study examined the relationship between big five personality factors and English speaking anxiety among university students in a non-English country, Pakistan, where the English language, as a foreign language, has always been a challenge causing anxiety for its learners.

The research concluded by validating Costa's perspective that personality factors including extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism have direct relationship, either positive or negative, with the English language learning anxiety. The first four factors, which are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness, have a negative relationship, whereas the fifth factor, which is neuroticism, has a noticeably positive relationship with the language learning anxiety.

The study analyzed a data which had been taken from few universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, known as the twin cities in Pakistan. These two cities have comparatively a greater literacy rate than that in most of the other parts of the country. Moreover, the standard of English learning is also significantly better in these cities. Therefore, the study recommends that there should be further studies in this area, especially extensive ones, in the other parts of the country to find the degree of the relationship between these big five personality factors and the English language learning anxiety. Especially, studies in rural areas, where the English language learning anxiety is seemingly much more significant, need to be conducted. Moreover, since the English language is also flourishing with the help of the newer technology in the major and advanced cities such as Islamabad and Rawalpindi, broader and latest studies are recommended to the future researchers.

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