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УПЛИВ ОСОБИСТІСНИХ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИК

НА ВЕРБАЛЬНУ В ІНШОМОВНОМУ ОСВІТНЬОМУ ПРОЦЕСІ

ШОМІ КАТАЛІН ГЕЙЗІВНА

Студента(ки)_2_-го курсу

Освітня програма «Філологія» (мова і література англійська)
Ступінь вищої освіти: магістр

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Науковий керівник: **Гнатик Каталін Бейлівна**
                         доктор філософії

Завідувач кафедри: **Берегсасі Аніко Ференцівна**
                         д-р габілітований, доцент
                         професор кафедри філології

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**Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education
Department of Philology**

THE EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON VERBAL AND INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOURS OF EFL LEARNERS

Master's Thesis

Presented by: Katalin Somi
a 2nd year student

Professional Education program:
Philology (language and literature English)

Thesis supervisor: Katalin Hnatik
doctor of philosophy

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ЗМІСТ

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Individual learner differences in teaching and learning a foreign language is a special area. It includes many controversies among the experts around the world. Teaching foreign languages would be much easier if learners were identical in their characteristics, but we all know that this is far from reality. Cultural and linguistic diversity appear in secondary education. Each learner has his/her own individual characteristics, they differ in many aspects which affect the degree of success in foreign language acquisition. They also differ from one another in their cognitive abilities, background knowledge and learning preferences as well.

The issue of personal traits is being increasingly studied in the recent years because of the influence they can have on foreign language learning, performance and achievement.

The *relevance* of the current thesis is understanding individual differences and how they influence language acquisition. It might be important for language teachers in creating effective teaching materials and learning environments.

A considerable amount of academic literature has been published on the effects of personality traits on foreign language learning. A number of linguists has investigated the given topic like: Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), Ellis (1994), Robinson (2001, 2002), Dörnyei (2005), Arabsky and Wojtaszek (2011), Wolf (2011), Pawlak (2012). An explanation provided by Dörnyei (2005) states that individual differences, are '*enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree.*' Pawlak (Pawlak, 2012) points out that there is a consensus that the rate of foreign language acquisition and the level of achievement are affected by individual variation among learners, with a variety of cognitive, affective and social variables. However, in relation to the identification, description and classification of such elements, there are some variations between researches. Wolf (2011) points out that numerous studies include virtually the same list of personality traits in FLA. However, they are presented with different names or under different categories. Common important

areas in studies where the learners may show differences from each other include: age, gender, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality and learning strategies.

The *object* of the thesis is to give a brief theoretical overview of the different types of individual learner differences which contribute to the effectiveness of foreign language learning.

The *subject* of the thesis is to investigate the special factors which have positive affects on foreign language learning. The current study emphasizes the role of individual learner differences in foreign language learning in secondary education.

The *aim* of the present study is to better understand these learner differences and how they influence learning outcomes in order to be more equipped to form English lessons to the needs of learners.

The *objectives* of the thesis are as follows:

- Critical analysis of the relevant academic literature;

- Developing the theoretical study and conceptual framework to the given study;

- Studying language teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding to personality traits;

- Assessment of the effectiveness of individual characteristics in foreign language learning.

The *methods* used in the first two chapters are predominantly theoretical. The third part of the study is an analysis of interviews with FL teachers on the effects of personality traits on EFL learners' verbal and interactive behaviours.

The *novelty* of the thesis is establishing individual differences into FL teaching.

The *theoretical value* of the thesis is to collect information about different personality traits and their effects on successful language learning. The significance of the study can also be asserted with respect to its implication for foreign or second language pedagogy.

The *practical value* of the thesis is to be of considerable interest to language teachers and students because of the impact of characteristic features on the various domains of language performance and also on students' attitudes and perceptions of language learning in general.

The present research gives a detailed description by emphasizing that a language teacher must recognize the individual differences in his/her students in order to impart effective language learning.

The thesis consists of Introduction, Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Conclusions and Appendix. Part 1 focuses on general concepts to personality traits from a psychological point of view. Part 2 deals with the relationship between personality traits and EFL learning. It summarizes the most important aspects and gives a brief literature review of previous studies. Part 3 contains information about a practical research on the effects of personality traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners. Processing and analysing the data, comparing results and drawing conclusions are also included in this part.

The research is investigated with the use of qualitative method and conducting an interview as a research instrument. It also contains some suggested implications related to the findings.

The investigation of the given topic will hopefully broaden the insight into the issue of personal traits and will help language teachers in making the classroom environment more suitable for their learners.

PART 1

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON VERBAL AND INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOURS OF EFL LEARNERS

The first part of the thesis gives general concepts to personality traits from a psychological point of view. It also deals with personal traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners. This chapter reviews the literature concerning the theoretical foundations of different authors dealing with the connection between personality traits and FL learning. It also focuses on defining the most common types of personality traits.

1.1 The problem of classification of personal traits

Personality traits are somewhat long-lasting and constant qualities of people. Classifying personal traits is not an easy task, because they are abstract phenomena. The most common personal traits that affect EFL learning – such as age, sex, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, learning strategies, and personality are defined and classified. A detailed review of the studies conducted in relation to the variety of personal traits follows. Some other issues, such as learning aptitude, gender, culture, age and other personal traits are also mentioned. The above noted personal differences have an important role in language learning and they are interlocked with each other. Their effects should be well known by language teachers (Shahila Zafar, K. Meenakshi, 2012).

Based on other linguists theories there are two main categories: personal and general factors which have also subcategories. Others distinguish social background, biological an conditioned factors conducted by nature.

1.2 Psychological aspects of personal traits

Individuals can be portrayed regarding character qualities: specific patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. In the last few years, there has been an increasing interest in studying how personality traits affect significant life outcomes.

As indicated by trait psychology, individuals differ from each other in terms of where they stand on a set of basic characteristic aspects that endure over time and across circumstances.

Various studies have observed that personality traits are portrayed by three criteria:

1. consistency: To have a personality trait, individuals should be consistent across circumstances in their ways of behaving connected with the characteristic. For instance, assuming somebody is talkative at home, that person tends also to be talkative at work.

2. stability: Human beings with a trait are stable through the years in behaviours associated with the trait. If they're talkative at age thirty, as an instance, at age forty they will additionally have a tendency to be talkative.

3. individual differences: People range from one another on behaviours associated with the trait. They differ on how frequently they talk and how active they are, and for this reason personality traits such as talkativeness and activity level exist (Walters, 2020).

The most extensively used system of traits is named the Five-Factor Model or the Big Five Model. Researchers don't always agree on the exact labels for each dimension, however there is a significant amount of literature supporting this five-factor model of personality.

The Big Five Model resulted from the contributions of many independent researchers. The first serious discussions and analyses of personality traits emerged during the 1940s with Gordon Allport and Henry Odbert who first formed a list of 4500 terms relating to personality traits in 1936 (Vinney, 2018). Their work

furnished the foundation for other psychologists to start determining the basic dimensions of personality.

In the 1940s Allport's list was narrowed down to sixteen traits by Raymond Cattell and his colleagues. However, numerous psychologists found that Cattell's list could be further reduced to five traits. Among these psychologists were Donald Fiske, Norman, Smith, Goldberg, McCrae and Costa (Cherry, 2019).

The model used today was mainly advocated by Goldberg, McCrae and Costa. It became known as the "Big Five" and has received much attention (Ackerman, 2017).

This system incorporates five broad traits that can be recollected with the abbreviation OCEAN (Walters, 2020):

- Openness,
- Conscientiousness,
- Extraversion (Extroversion),
- Agreeableness,
- Neuroticism.

Big 5 Trait	Definition
Openness	The tendency to appreciate new art, ideas, values, feelings and behaviors.
Conscientiousness	The tendency to be careful, on-time for appointments, to follow rules, and to be hardworking.
Extraversion	The tendency to be talkative, sociable, and to enjoy others; the tendency to have a dominant style.
Agreeableness	The tendency to agree and go along with others rather than to assert one's own opinion and choices.
Neuroticism	The tendency to frequently experience negative emotions such as anger, worry, and sadness, as well as being interpersonally sensitive.

Figure 1.2.1 Descriptions of the Big Five Personality Traits (Walters, 2020)

It is now generally recognized that each of the five personality factors represents a range between two extremes. For example, extraversion represents a

continuum between extreme extraversion and extreme introversion. In reality, most people lie somewhere in between the two ends of each dimension.

It should be emphasized that these five terms should be perceived without positive or negative associations with everyday language, for example, agreeableness should not be viewed a good trait since people who have high agreeableness can be seen as erratic and insecure. These five dimensions of personality are generally used by researchers from various fields to predict students' academic performance (Poropat, 2009).

As Walters states, scores on the Big Five traits are mostly independent. That means that a person's status on one trait tells very little about their standing on the other traits of the Big Five. For instance, a person can be extremely high in extraversion and be either high or low on neuroticism. Similarly, a person can be low in agreeableness and be either high or low in conscientiousness. Thus, in the Five-Factor Model, it is needed to have five scores to explain most of an individual's personality (Walters, 2020).

Big 5 Trait	Example Behaviour for LOW Scorers	Example Behaviour for HIGH Scorers
Openness	Prefers not to be exposed to alternative moral systems; narrow interests; inartistic; not analytical; down-to-earth	Enjoys seeing people with new types of haircuts and body piercing; curious; imaginative; untraditional
Conscientiousness	Prefers spur-of the-moment action to planning; unreliable; hedonistic; careless; lax	Never late for a date; organized; hardworking; neat; persevering; punctual; self-disciplined
Extraversion	Preferring a quiet evening reading to a loud party; sober; aloof; unenthusiastic	Being the life of the party; active; optimistic; fun-loving; affectionate
Agreeableness	Quickly and confidently asserts own rights; irritable; manipulative; uncooperative; rude	Agrees with others about political opinions; good-natured; forgiving; gullible; helpful
Neuroticism	Not getting irritated by small annoyances; calm, unemotional; hardy; secure; self-satisfied	Constantly worrying about little things; insecure; hypochondriacal; feeling inadequate

Figure 1.2.2 Example behaviours for those scoring low and high for the big 5 traits (Walters, 2020)

As Figure 1.2.3 shows, each of the Big Five consists of six facets or subordinate traits (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2020).

Figure 1.2.3 The schematic representation of the big five model and its six facets.

Several studies agree that both nature and nurture have an affect on the Big Five. Researchers argue that our behaviour is not only influenced by our consistent traits, but situations also influence how a person behaves.

In conclusion, traits are important and interesting due to the fact they represent stable patterns of behaviour that persist for long periods of time. Importantly, these stable patterns can have broad-ranging consequences for many areas of our life (Caspi, Roberts, Shiner, 2005).

1.3 Various types of personal traits

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the connection between learner differences and foreign language acquisition. A considerable amount of literature has been published on this issue. Some researchers who have discussed the topic of personality traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners are Pawlak, Dörnyei, Robinson, Arabski, Woytasek and others.

Numerous studies have attempted to explain the definition of personality traits. Dörnyei provides a very clear explanation, (Dörnyei, 2005) he states that individual differences, are 'enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree.'

Robinson highlights that general theories of foreign language learning is incomplete without an explanation of how, and under what conditions, individual differences in each impact upon learning (Robinson, 2001).

Pawlak (Pawlak, 2012) points out that there is a consensus that the rate of foreign language acquisition and the level of achievement are affected by individual variation among learners, with a variety of cognitive, affective and social variables. However, in relation to the identification, description and classification of such elements, there are some variations between researches. As it is seen, the literature on individual differences in language learning touches upon a huge array of diverse factors.

According to Pawlak (Pawlak, 2012), there has been a tendency in many publications on individual differences to be selective in the choice of variables to be discussed and to avoid classifying the various factors in broader categories. It is due to the fact that a number of them is probably the outcome of the complex interaction between cognition, affect and social influences.

As it is said language learning varies depending on personality traits.

Dörnyei (Dörnyei, 2005) provides an overview on personality, aptitude, motivation, learning and cognitive styles, learning strategies, anxiety and self-esteem.

He also discusses five other individual differences variables in relation to language learning:

- language anxiety
- learner beliefs
- creativity
- self-esteem
- willingness to communicate

Robinson (Robinson, 2002) also has a similar characteristic of personal traits. He mentions that aptitude, awareness, and age are important learner variables (Robinson, 2001).

Arabski and Wojtaszek (Arabski, Wojtaszek, 2011) lists three major sub-fields, that traditionally comprises the area of personality traits:

1. learning styles

2. learning strategies

3. affective variables.

Other issues, such as learning aptitude, gender, culture, age and other variables are also mentioned in several publications.

The classification of the most significant factors suggested by Pawlak (Pawlak, 2012) is the following:

1. age

2. intelligence

3. aptitude

4. cognitive and learning styles

5. motivation

6. anxiety

7. beliefs

8. willingness to communicate

Ellis lists seven categories of personal traits which are as follows (Ellis, 1994):

1. Beliefs: learners have different beliefs how second and foreign language is learnt. Their learning process is affected by these beliefs.

2. Affective states, where learners may experience several affective and emotional states as a result of their L2 learning. For example, anxiety or dissatisfaction of their performance in the learning process has negative effects.

3. Age, where children may show faster learning rates than adults, and better performance especially in pronunciation.

4. Aptitude, which is composed of underlying language faculty and an ability to handle decontextualized language input.

5. Learning style, where learners show different learning styles and strategies, e.g. experimental vs. analytical.

6. Motivation: it is stated that motivation affects the learning process of a foreign language. Positive motivation may stem from students themselves, their teachers or from previous positive learning experience.

7. Personality, where shy learners have been reported to achieve less than the extrovert learners.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (Larsen-Freeman & Long , 1991) claim that the success of some students and the failure of others in FLA are due to several reasons, the most important of which are language aptitude, social-psychological factors, personality, cognitive style, hemisphere specialization, learning strategies, and some others. Their categories for personality traits among foreign language learners are as follows:

1. Age

2. Sociopsychological factors

    a. Motivation

    b. Attitudes

3. Personality

    a. Self-esteem

    b. Extrovertedness/Introvertedness

    c. Fear

    d. Empathy

    e. Timidity

    f. Cognitive style

4. Hemispheric specialization

5. Learning strategies

6. Other factors such as gender

Wolf (Wolf, 2011) points out that numerous studies include virtually the same list of personality traits in FLA. However, they are presented with different names or under different categories. Common important areas in studies where the learners may show differences from each other include: age, gender, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality and learning strategies. Below each personality trait is higlighted briefly.

1.3.1 Age

Age-related differences in personality have captured human attention for centuries.

Lenneberg popularized the idea in the 1960's that there is a certain age in which the child is capable of learning the language with ease. This period starts from birth and starts to decrease by the age of 8 years. Lenneberg's theory is called the Critical Period Hypothesis (Birdsong, 1999).

During this period, a child is able to learn several languages simultaneously. Beyond that, physiological changes cause the brain to lose its plasticity, or capacity to assume the new functions that learning language demands. Individuals who for some reason are deprived of the linguistic input which is needed to trigger first language acquisition during the critical period will never learn any language normally. One famous case that provides rare evidence for this point is that of Genie, an abused girl who was kept isolated from all language input and interaction until she was thirteen years old. In spite of years of intensive efforts at remediation, Genie never developed linguistic knowledge and skills for her L1 that were comparable to those of speakers who began acquisition in early childhood (Shahila Zafar, K. Meenakshi, 2012).

In the 1980's a more sophisticated version of the critical period hypothesis appeared. It is the concept of sensitive period for language learning by Slobin (Watorek, Benazzo and Hickmann, 2012). The sensitive period implies that there is a period in one's life (during childhood) when second language acquisition is optimized. The sensitive period of language learning is proven by the fact that the universal age of onset of production, rate of acquisition and age of completion of language learning is the same and it is relatively unaffected by the environmental variations and individual cognitive ability. (Shahila Zafar, K. Meenakshi, 2012).

1.3.2 Gender

When trying to define the word gender, Goddard and Patterson (2000:1) make a clear distinction between gender and sex so that the latter is about *'socially expected characteristics rather than biology'* and that gender has to do with behaviour, for example, masculine and feminine characteristics that people posses whether being biologically a male or a female. According to Goddard and Patterson (2000:27), *'gender is something that we do everyday as part of our social behaviour'*, rather than being a *'fixed and unalterable dimension that is imposed on us from on high.'*

It is clear that there is an emotional debate regarding a gender gap in different fields of science and even everyday life. For example, regardless of the way spatial information is learned, women seem to be less proficient than men in orienting themselves during navigation. Specifically, women and men use different navigation strategies (Halpern, 2000).

Some researches have suggested that while males are better than females in mathematics and visual-spatial abilities (Hyde and Linn, 1988), females generally surpass males at verbal skills (Kiss and Nikolov, 2005). Moreover, females remember words better than males (Halpern, 2000), and they are also superior in reading tasks (Chavez, 2001). This female verbal advantage appears quite early in first language acquisition, but in many cases it disappears with age.

1.3.3 Aptitude

For many years, aptitude has been isolated from the wider area of foreign language learning and acquisition. As Dörnyei states (2003), the study of aptitude became a marginal activity over the last 40 years.

According to Dörnyei (2005), aptitude, ability, and intelligence are commonly used terms to refer to the same thing. Aptitude and ability have been mostly used interchangeably.

Kormos (2013) concludes that language-learning aptitude is *'aimed to describe students' readiness to learn another language in instructed foreign language settings.'*

1.3.4 Motivation

There is no consensus in the definition of motivation. As Dörnyei says *'Although 'motivation' is a term frequently used in both educational and research contexts, it is rather surprising how little agreement there is in the literature with regard to the exact meaning of the concept'* (Dörnyei, 1998:117). Later Dörnyei

(2001:7) ironically named it *'as no more than an obsolete umbrella that hosts a wide range of concepts that do not have much in common'*. The complexity of motivation can be unified since them all intended to explain nothing less than the reasons for human behaviour (Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh, 2006).

From observations of Dörnyei (2001:8), most scholars agree, at least, that motivation provides a source of energy that is responsible for *'the choice of a particular action,' 'the persistence with it,'* and *'the effort expended on it'*.

One popular definition proposed by Gardner (1985:10) regarded motivation as *'the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language.'*

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998:65) presented a rather well-rounded definition. They concluded that motivation is a *'dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out'*.

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972) the following two types of motivation exist:

– **Integrative:** found in individuals who are interested in the foreign language in order to integrate with and become a part of a target community/culture; here the learner wants to resemble and behave like the target community.

– **Instrumental:** found in individuals who want to learn a foreign language with the objective of getting benefits from the foreign language skill. Objectives, such as business advancement, increase in professional status, educational goals etc. motivate an individual to learn a language in this case.

The instrumental motivation is more frequent than the integrative one. Both types of motivations have different roles to play. Both can lead to success.

Extrinsic motivation, considered by most scholars to be the same as instrumental motivation, derives from a number of outside factors such as winning

a prize or avoiding punishment. Alternatively, **intrinsic motivation**, partly resemble integrative motivation, originates from learners internal needs (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

1.3.5 Cognitive style

Cognitive style refers to individuals' preferred way of processing (perceiving, conceptualizing, organizing, and recalling) information.

There are categories according to which learners are classified. These categories are listed in the following table. A learner may not be in one category or the other. They usually fall in between the continuum.

Cognitive styles		
Field-dependent	⟷	Field-independent
Global	⟷	Particular
Holistic	⟷	Analytic
Deductive	⟷	Inductive
Focus on meaning	⟷	Focus on form

Figure 1.3.5.1 Cognitive styles (Dörnyei, 2005)

Chapelle & Green (1992) suggested the taxonomy of field-dependent (FD) and field-independent (FI) learners. FD learners need the context in learning, whereas FI learners do not. FD learners are considered more global and holistic in processing new information. They are thought to achieve more success in L2 acquisition via highly contextualized interactive, communicative experiences because that fits better with their holistic cognitive style. Foreign language learners profit from decontextualized analytic approaches and formal instruction.

Deductive vs. inductive dimension is another category of learners.

Deductive (top-down) processing begins with prediction or rule and then applies it to interpret particular instances of input. Inductive or bottom-up processing begins with examining input to discover some pattern and then

formulates a generalization of rule that accounts for it and that may then in turn be applied deductively (Dörnyei, 2005).

Another dimension sometimes considered as a matter of cognitive style is sensory preference for processing input: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (movement-oriented), or tactile (touch-oriented). Apparently, no one means of processing has an inherent advantage over others, but L2 learners reportedly feel more comfortable when teachers' instructional strategies are congruent with their sensory preference. This dimension may also be age-related, with younger learners showing more preference for kinesthetic and tactile modalities.

1.3.6 Personality

The idea that the way individuals learn is related to their personality is not new. Personality studies have been the core of the study of human psychology for more than 150 years.

Vanpatten and Benati (2015:126) states that *"Every learner brings a set of personality and psycho-emotive characteristics to the task of learning something. Those characteristics have the potential to influence learning, specifically how learner explicitly goes about learning as well as how quickly they learn and how far they get in their learning"*.

Briefly, the type of personality may be correlated with the learning outcome, success or failure. Researchers classify learners into categories which represent the ends of continua. The most important personality traits are shown in the table below (Vanpatten & Benati, 2015):

Personality traits		
Anxious	←——————→	Self-confident
Risk-avoiding	←——————→	Risk-taking
Shy	←——————→	Adventurous
Introvert	←——————→	Extrovert
Inner-directed	←——————→	Other-directed
Reflective	←——————→	Impulsive
Imaginative	←——————→	Uninquisitive
Creative	←——————→	Uncreative
Empathetic	←——————→	Insensitive to others
Tolerant of ambiguity	←——————→	Closure-oriented

Figure 1.3.6.1 Personality traits

1.3.7 Learning styles and strategies

Learning styles and learning strategies affect the nature and quality of learning, whether or not the learner knows anything about these concepts or not. Learning styles are habitual patterns of perceiving, processing or reacting to information.

Some students are comfortable with theories and abstractions, others feel much more at home with actualities and observable phenomena, some choose active learning and others lean toward introspection, some prefer visual presentation of information and others prefer verbal explanations. One learning style is neither preferable nor inferior to another, but is essentially distinctive, with distinctive characteristic qualities and shortcomings.

The most famous learning style model is Jung's Theory of Psychological Type, embodied in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI evaluates personality types, but it is known that MBTI profiles have a strong impact on learning styles (Lawrence, 1993; Pittenger, 1993).

On the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) people are classified on four scales according to their preferences (Lawrence, 1993):

- *extraverts* (try things out, focus on the outer world of people) or *introverts* (think things through, focus on the inner world of ideas).

- *sensors* (practical, detail-oriented, focus on facts and procedures) or *intuitors* (imaginative, concept-oriented, focus on meanings and possibilities).

- *thinkers* (skeptical, tend to make decisions based on logic and rules) or *feelers* (appreciative, tend to make decisions based on personal and humanistic considerations).

- *judgers* (set and follow agendas, seek closure even with incomplete data) or *perceivers* (adapt to changing circumstances, postpone reaching closure to obtain more data).

Lawrence describes the preferences, strengths and weaknesses of each of the 16 MBTI types in many areas of student functioning, and offers many recommendations for addressing the learning needs of all types of students (Lawrence, 1993).

The learning strategies are the strategies a learner selects for studying. They are the specific actions or techniques one takes or uses in order to learn (Leaver, Ehrman, Shekhtman, 2005).

Brown (2000) argues that the choice of learning strategies is strongly influenced by the nature of the learners' motivation, cognitive style, and personality, as well as by specific contexts of use and opportunities for learning.

A strategy is useful under these conditions:

(a) the strategy is well connected to the L2 task at hand,

(b) the strategy suits the learning style preferences of a student determined to one degree or another, and

(c) the student uses the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies (Ehrman, 2003).

Strategies that meet these requirements make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990).

According to Oxford's (1990) identification, there are six major groups of learning strategies:

1. *Cognitive strategies* enable the learner to process language material directly, for example, by thinking, analyzing, and writing notes and synthesis.

2. *Metacognitive strategies* (e.g., identifying individual preferences and needs, planning, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success) are used to manage the learning process overall.

3. *Memory-related strategies* (e.g., acronyms, sound similarities, images, key phrases) assist learners link one L2 item or concept with another but do not necessarily involve deep understanding.

4. *Compensatory strategies* (e.g., guessing from the context; circumlocution; and gestures and pause words) help make up for missing knowledge.

5. *Affective strategies*, such as identifying one's mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself, and using deep breathing or positive self-talk, help learners manage their emotions and motivation level.

6. *Social strategies* (e.g., asking questions, asking for clarification, asking for help, talking with a native-speaker, and exploring cultural and social norms) enable the learner to learn through interaction with others and understand the target culture (Oxford, 1990).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) identified the following strategies:

a. Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies 'operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning'. Some of these strategies are:

- Repetition: imitating other people's speech overtly or silently;

- Resourcing: making use of language materials such as dictionaries;

- Directed Physical Response: responding physically 'as with directives';

- Translation: using the first language as a basis for understanding and/or producing the L2;

- Grouping: organizing learning on the basis of 'common attributes';

- Note-taking: writing down the gist etc. of texts;

- Deduction: conscious application of rules to processing the L2;

- Recombination: putting together smaller meaningful elements into new wholes;

- Imagery: visualizing information for memory storage;

- Auditory Representation: keeping a sound or sound sequence in the mind;

- Key Word: using key word memory techniques, such as identifying an L2 word with an L1 word that it sounds like;

- Contextualization: placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence;

- Elaboration: relating new information to other concepts in memory;

- Transfer: using previous knowledge to help language learning;

- Inferencing: guessing meanings by using available information;

- Question for Clarification: asking a teacher or native speaker for explanation, help, etc..

b. Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies are skills used for planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning activity; "they are strategies about learning rather than learning strategies themselves". The following are some of the metacognitive strategies:

- Advance Organizers: planning the learning activity in advance;

- Directed Attention: deciding to concentrate on general aspects of a learning task;

- Selective Attention: deciding to pay attention to specific parts of the language input or the situation that will help learning;

- Self-management: trying to arrange the appropriate conditions for learning;

- Advance Preparation: planning the linguistic components for a forthcoming language task;

- Self-monitoring: checking one's performance as one speaks;

- Delayed Production: deliberately postponing speaking so that one may learn by listening;

- Self-evaluation: checking how well one is doing against one's own standards;

- Self- reinforcement: giving oneself rewards for success.

c. Social and affective strategies

Social and affective strategies involve interacting with another person to assist learning or using control to assist a learning task. These strategies are:

- Questioning for Clarification: Asking for explanation, verification, rephrasing, or examples about the material; asking for clarification or verification about the task.

- Cooperation: Working together with peers to solve a problem, pool information, check a learning task, model a language activity, or get feedback on oral or written performance.

- Self-talk: Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to do the learning task.

In conclusion, Dörnyei (2005) remarks that language learning strategies have traditionally been included in the taxonomy of individual differences. Yet on a closer look they may not be individual factors at all. After all, language learning strategies constitute an aspect of the learning process rather than being learner attributes proper.

PART 2

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
PERSONALITY TRAITS AND EFL LEARNING

This part of the thesis deals with the relationship between personality traits and EFL learning. It summarizes the most important aspects and gives a brief literature review of previous studies.

2.1 The main principles of personal traits on verbal and interactive behaviours on EFL learners

Character qualities and their relationship to outcome in various exercises and tasks have long been a particular focus of interest in education because personality traits have an effect on how people learn and what they learn.

The significance of individual differences in language learning has been recognised as an important area of research. The rate of foreign language acquisition and the level of achievement are affected by individual variation among learners. It can be concluded that there is a need of the development of individualized foreign language teaching. Language teachers should modify their teaching methodology according to these factors to achieve better results in foreign language teaching (Dörnyei, Skehan, 2003).

2.2 The effects of personal traits on EFL learning

The relationship between personality traits and FL success has been widely investigated. As it was mentioned before, the most important categories for personality traits among foreign language learners are age, gender, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality and learning styles and strategies.

It is a common belief that young learners are more successful in L2 learning than adult learners. However, the results of research in this area are conflicting. Some researchers attribute success to near-native pronunciation while others define success as the native grammatical competence.

Carroll (2008) believes that, in general, young children learn L2 better than older children and adults. He says that although *'older learners seem to do better initially but they reach a plateau; younger learners eventually catch up and pass them'* (Carroll, 2008:331).

According to Romero (2006) it seems that for adults it is very difficult to learn to speak a new language simply because they feel they need to cope with many different aspects at one time, and in real conversation that seems to be impossible. The author believes that the differences between young learners and adult learners and the circumstances under which they learn a second language are quite obvious and therefore the results could also differ.

There are advantages for both children and adults in FLA. Children can make the benefit of brain plasticity. Children are not analytical, and they have fewer inhibitions. Children do not build strong group identity and they use simplified input to L2. On the other hand, adult learners have more learning capacity and analytical ability. They have pragmatic skills and greater knowledge of first language which helps them learning the L2.

Older learners make use of real-world knowledge too. Younger learners are more successful in informal and naturalistic settings. Older learners are more successful in formal and controlled settings.

Researchers adopted the Critical Period Hypothesis (see in PART 1) and applied it to second and foreign language learning, resulting in a host of studies.

Lenneberg's critical period stretched to puberty (which he posits at about 14 years of age), whereas other scholars have drawn the cutoff point at 12, 15, 16 or 18 years of age (Muñoz, Singleton, 2011). Unlike Lenneberg, most researchers today do not define a starting age for the critical period for language learning. Some, however, consider the possibility of the critical period (or a critical period

for a specific language area, e.g. phonology) ending much earlier than puberty (e.g. age 9 years, or as early as 12 months in the case of phonology (Ruben R. J., 1997)).

Singleton and Leśniewska argues that *'after a certain maturational point the L2 learner is no longer capable of attaining to native-like levels of proficiency, and/or needs to expend more conscious effort than in earlier L2 acquisition and/or makes use of different mechanisms from those deployed in L2 acquisition during childhood, and, in any case, there is a sharp decline in L2 learning potential (different in nature from the more gradual age-related declines in the organism's general learning capacity)'* (Singleton & Leśniewska, 2012:99).

In the past decades, the relationship between gender and language acquisition has been approached from multiple angles.

Gender is a variable that can affect language use and acquisition as a result of biological, psychological effects, or socio-cultural influences.

Research studies claim that females are better than males both in foreign and first language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Many studies have found that gender can have a significant impact on how students learn a language. Studies of individual language learner differences related to sex or gender have shown that females tend to show greater integrative motivation and more positive attitudes to L2, and use a wider range of learning strategies, particularly social strategies (Oxford, Nyikos & Ehrman, 1988).

According to Skehan (1989), aptitude has also consistently been linked with L2 success, but remains one of the under investigated areas of FLA.

Many scholars believe that aptitude alone does not determine the language learning ability of an individual. However, the assumption that there is a talent for learning language has been held for years.

Many language aptitude tests like TOEFL, IELTS have been used for a long period to test the aptitude of a language learner of English. Carroll (1963), who along with Sapon created the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) which was

designed to predict success in foreign language learning, provides the following four types of abilities that constitute aptitude:

- **Phonemic coding ability** (discriminates and encodes foreign sounds)
- **Grammatical sensitivity** (recognizes functions of words in sentences)
- **Inductive language learning ability** (infers or induces rules from samples)
- **Memory and learning** (makes and recalls associations between words and phrases in L1 and L2).

Recent research shows that a talent in all the above four skills is not necessary for successful learning of language. A learner may be successful because of one or more of these skills.

Among factors determining L2 learning achievements, motivation gains widespread acknowledgement as the most influential.

Motivation largely determines the level of efforts which learners put at various stages in foreign language development. Dörnyei (2005) enumerates several reasons why motivation is important in SLA/FLA:

1. It provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning.

2. It drives the force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process.

3. All other factors involved in foreign language acquisition presuppose motivation to some extent.

Regarding motivation, Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system is highly relevant. According to him, L2 motivation is assumed to originate from three sources: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience.

Ideal L2 self represents learners' aspirations, and idealized end-states in language learning (e.g. learners who imagine themselves being able to speak English). *Ought-to L2* self refers to the obligation/responsibility necessary to prevent negative outcomes. *L2 learning experience* features learners' attitudes towards foreign language learning which are influenced by their learning context and environment (textbook, course design, peers and L2 teacher etc.) (Dörnyei, 2005).

In SLA and FLA the study of the relation of personality and language learning has been the subject of scholars like Krashen , Skehan and others.

There are a number of personality characteristics that may affect foreign language learning, such as:

1. Extroversion vs. introversion

There are two different hypotheses on the relation between extroversion-introversion and foreign language learning. They each focus on different contributions of extroversion and introversion to FLA.

It is assumed that extroverted learners do better in acquiring 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' and are more successful in acquiring L2 (Ellis, 1994). The reason behind this belief is that sociability, which is an essential feature of extroversion, helps learners create more opportunities to practice the target language and leads them to more input and more success in L2 communication. It means that the tendency of extroverted students to be more sociable and interactive are suggested to create opportunities for them to practice the language they are learning (Krashen, 1981).

Ehrman and Oxford (1990) also agree that since extroverted students like to interact with others, they learn foreign language better.

Ellis states that introverted learners are predicted to do better in developing 'cognitive academic language ability'. According to the results of some studies, it is indicated that introverted learners enjoy more academic success. However, there is no strong support for this hypothesis (Ellis,1994).

2. Self-esteem

Self-esteem is one of the emotional variables accounted for by many researchers. The core of self-esteem is an unconditional appreciation of oneself, meaning an appreciation of both our negative and positive potentials in its fullest sense. An acceptance of this enables us to take responsibility for ourselves and become accountable for our actions. It also means that we can be more realistic about our achievements and shortcomings (Alexander, 2001).

Many researchers claim that no successful learning activity can take place without some self-esteem and self confidence. It is concluded that they are important factors in foreign language acquisition.

Brown (2000) proposes that no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence and self – efficacy – belief in your own capabilities to successfully perform that activity.

Researches have shown that the learner who feels good about himself is more likely to succeed.

3. Inhibition

Inhibition is the set of defenses an individual builds to protect himself/herself.

4. Risk-taking

Beebe (1983) described some of the reasons that create fear of risk-taking:

- In the classroom: a bad grade in the course, a fail on the exam, a reproach from the teacher, a smirk from a classmate, punishment or embarrassment imposed by oneself.

- Outside the classroom: fear of looking ridiculous, fear of the frustration coming from a listener's blank look etc.

Dufeu (1994) suggests teachers need to establish an affective framework so that learners feel comfortable in the world of a foreign language.

To achieve this teachers have to create a climate of acceptance that will

- stimulate self-confidence,

- encourage participants to experiment and to discover the target language.

Though risk taking is useful to some extent, high risk-taking will not always yield positive results in foreign language learning.

5. Anxiety

Anxiety is a factor that is closely related with self-esteem, inhibition and risk-taking. Anxiety can play an important role in L2 learning if it interferes with the learning process.

Language anxiety can be described as a subjective sense of tension, fear, nervousness, and worry that occurs when learning a foreign language, or more precisely as a fear experienced when we are required to use a foreign language which is insufficiently mastered (Spielberger, 1983).

It is often affected by the number of people present, the topic of conversation, and the formality of the circumstances.

Researchers distinguish between three types of anxiety: state anxiety, trait anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety.

State anxiety refers to the particular anxious feeling that surfaces at a specific point in time (Spielberger, 1983). It is an instant and not always present trait, e.g. it is manifested before an important exam (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Trait anxiety is defined as a personality trait of feeling anxiety in any situation and as a permanent predisposition to the feeling (Spielberger, 1983). People with a high level of trait anxiety tend to get anxious in various situations.

Situation-specific anxiety is the third type of anxiety, and it is defined as unpleasantness that respondents feel at a certain time as their reaction to a particular situation (Woodrow, 2006).

While negative emotions like foreign language anxiety have been the focus of research interest for decades, positive emotions as a research topic in positive psychology (PP) have only recently drawn the attention of FLA researchers. Researchers of PP are interested to find out how language learners can 'develop and maintain their motivation, perseverance, and resiliency' (MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014). Positive emotions are believed to have positive effects on language learning.

Brown (2000) states that three components of foreign language anxiety have been identified. They are:

– *Communication apprehension*, arising from learners' inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas;

– *Fear of negative social evaluation*, arising from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others;

– *Test anxiety* or apprehension over academic evaluation.

Fear of feedback by peers and teachers is a broader concept, since it does not depend on the situation. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) suggest that when students are uncertain about what they are saying, they are afraid of losing their public image, and begin to doubt their ability to leave a positive impression. The above authors suggest that due to this fear, students often react passively, refusing to participate in any activity that could affect the improvement of their linguistic abilities.

As it was mentioned in Part 1, cognitive style refers to individuals' preferred way of processing (perceiving, conceptualizing, organizing, and recalling) information. People learn and process new information in different ways. However, the evidence that cognitive style affects L2 learning is not well-established.

For decades researchers have been studying and comparing the personality traits and cognitive learning styles of students to discover any distinguishing trait patterns. Moreover, many believe that if the classroom environment and the teacher's teaching style can meet the students' learning styles, learning as well as the student's self-concept as a learner will increase.

Researchers have been exploring possible relation between learning style and foreign language acquisition, and the implications for the FLA classroom.

For example, researchers have discovered that both field-independence (FI) and field-dependence (FD) are linked to FLA. FI is believed to involve 'analysis, attention to details, and mastering of exercises, drills, and other focused activities'. FD learners, who are usually more social, empathetic and perceptive of others, are better at acquiring communicative skills. (Brown, 2000).

Studies also have found that children, who are predominantly FD, acquire functional language subconsciously, where adults learn by paying more attention to form (e.g. grammar).

As Salvisberg states (2005), the challenge for the teacher in the L2 classroom is to discover each learner's general inclination, and encourage them to

be flexible in selecting the style which is most appropriate for a particular context (Salvisberg, 2005).

Just as learners have various cognitive style preferences, they may employ different learning strategies depending on the situation.

When learning a foreign language, the learner might select the best strategies (e.g. actions, behaviors) for apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2. Good L2 learners have a strong drive to communicate, they are often uninhibited, are willing to make mistakes, focus on form by looking for patterns and analyzing, take advantage of all practice opportunities, monitor their speech as well as that of others, and pay attention to meaning (Oxford, 1990).

Research studies indicate that a number of factors influence the foreign language learner's choice of strategies: motivation, gender, cultural background, attitudes and beliefs; age and L2 stage; learning style; tolerance of ambiguity (Oxford, 1990).

Salvisberg suggests that the purpose is not to require all students to use the same strategies, but to become more active, autonomous, self-directed, and discerning of the strategies which are best for them (Salvisberg, 2005).

PART 3

PRACTICAL RESEARCH
ON THE EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY TRAITS
ON VERBAL AND INTERACTIVE BEHAVIOURS OF EFL LEARNERS

The present part of the thesis contains information about a practical research on the effects of personality traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners. The research was carried out in Transcarpathia. 15 FL teachers were interviewed in order to introduce their point of views on the given topic. Processing and analysing the data, comparing results and drawing conclusions are also included in this part.

3.1 Aims

The major purpose of the research is to find out and analyze how and to what extent personality traits effect verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners. In other words, what the most important factors are that influence language acquisition. The study seeks to discover the previous findings of this topic. The second most important aim of this study is to find out and suggest some strategies for language teachers in order to overcome features that stand as language barriers. It is examined by interviewing experienced FL teachers.

In addition, integrating the findings of this research to the existing literature is also an underlying consideration of the study.

3.2 Hypotheses and resesarch questions

In respect to qualitative method no specific presuppositions as well-defined assumptions were made, since it was not possible to know what the actual data would provide the researcher with.

The research is seeking to understand what teachers understand and how they feel about the topic under investigation.

Research questions that the present study seeks to answer:

- What are the most common personality traits mentioned by FL teachers?

- Are these traits similar to or different from the traits described in previous researches? How?

- Do these traits create challenges in the EFL classroom?

3.3 The process of the research

To date various methods have been developed and introduced to measure the effects of personality traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of FL learners.

Personality traits are aspects that cannot be measured by numbers. That is why in this study the qualitative method of analysis was used. Interviews provided insight into teachers' understanding of the relationship between the personality and L2 development of their learners.

3.3.1 Participants

The research was carried out in Transcarpathia. 15 experienced FL teachers were interviewed during the process. Their teaching experience ranged between 4 to 29 years in various contexts. 3 respondents have got BA degree and 12 of them have got MA degree.
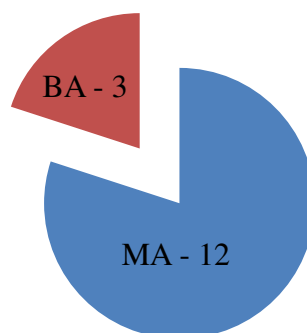

Diagram 3.3.1.1 Academic qualification of participants

The research was done in the form of face-to-face interviews, aiming to gather in-depth opinions and to identify new issues and perspectives that may have been overlooked in the literature review.

In an attempt to make each interviewee feel as comfortable as possible, the use of the mother tongue of the participants was suggested.

Teachers were individually interviewed within the period of three weeks. The interview lasted approximately 20-25 minutes. During the initial contact with the participants, the nature of the study was explained. They were ensured that all the information referring through them would be anonymous.

Code of the interviewee	Highest academic qualification	Classes	Number of FL lessons/week	Years of experience
I-1	MA	5-11	23	19
I-2	MA	9, 10, 11	22	17
I-3	MA	7, 8, 10, 11	23	6
I-4	MA	1-2	6	11
I-5	MA	5-11, adults	22	10
I-6	MA	adults	18	5
I-7	MA	6-9, 11	10	4
I-8	MA	6-11	14	22
I-9	MA	1-4	28	14
I-10	BA	1-9	18	15
I-11	MA	9-11	18	15
I-12	MA	7-11	22	29
I-13	BA	5-8	20	6
I-14	MA	5-11	18	14
I-15	BA	1-5	23	8

Figure 3.3.1.1 Basic information of the participants

3.3.2 Research instruments

Qualitative method involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth

insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. For these reasons it was decided that the best method to adopt for this investigation was to make interviews. An interview is a more personal form of research compared to questionnaires.

The questions are semi-structured, they serve as a framework for the interview (See Appendix A for the interview questions). Semi-structured interviews offer the possibility to deepen specific points that emerge during the discussion with the respondent. The interviews were conducted in Hungarian. It is suggested by experts (Whiting, 2008) that interviews should be conducted in the mother tongue of the participants. Such way they tend to express their thoughts more sincerely and overtly.

The first questions of the interview refer to basic information about the interviewee, such as highest academic qualification, classes he/she teaches, number of lessons/week, years of teaching experience. After the personal part, twelve questions were prepared to ask information about characteristic features that have an impact on FL learning.

3.4 Analysis of the research

For the purpose of analysis, important segments were extracted from each interview. These segments, opinions of interviewees support or contradict the literature previously discussed.

In response to Question 1, all participants agreed that learning a foreign language is a unique process for everyone but there are many factors that influence it, such as personality, motivation, age etc. But there are many frustrating challenges too students face in the classroom. Most of those interviewed suggested that the following issues can hinder the learners' language learning progress:

- lack of motivation and confidence

    'Lack of interest and motivation is a problem. They do not feel that the knowledge they have acquired is of any value, so most of them do not pursue it.' (I-4)

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'I would say that lack of confidence and motivation, and lack of opportunities to use the target language are the main obstacles.' (I-2)

- frustration

'I think frustration is a major problem for FL learners. When they are relaxed and having fun, they'll be less likely to get frustrated and more likely to absorb what we're teaching them. It is the teacher's responsibility to promote a classroom environment where students are comfortable expressing their thoughts, asking questions, participating in lessons, and making mistakes.' (I-5)

- demotivating environment

'Demotivating classmates, learners who do not want to participate can create a demotivating learning environment for eager students.' (I-7)

- fear of speaking in the target language

'Many students, especially those who are already shy in their native language, often lack the confidence to practice their speaking skills.' (I-14)

- learning style
- personality of the learner and the teacher

' Every student is unique, it is the teacher's job to find the right path for each one. So the personality of the teacher is also important. Obviously you can't please everyone, but you have to teach in a way that benefits all students.' (I-3)

One teacher added that the level difference within the group can also cause problems in progressing without anyone losing motivation because the material is too easy or too difficult for them. So it also leads to motivational difficulties.

If we take into account previous studies, it can be seen that the answers of the teachers interviewed show many similarities in the factors that influence successful language learning.

When the age factor was asked, the majority commented that age does not make a big difference in the learning process. However there are differences between younger and older learners, age is not the most important characteristic feature connected to FL success. It was stated by many that young learners tend to be more enthusiastic and playful. They can acquisite a foreign language more naturally and effortlessly and they are easy to motivate. However, it might be more difficult to coordinate them in pair- or group work. Older learners are more passive, more anxious to speak, but more purposeful when they realise that speaking a FL is really useful to them.

'If I think about the relation between language learning and age, in my opinion the motivation is the biggest issue between young and older learners. Young learners sometimes progress without a conscious attempt to do so. They just pick up the language because the enjoy it. While for older learners the motivation is different. They want to travel or get a job or something like that. So they study a language consciously and they put much effort in it.' (I-11)

One participant shared a story about an old language learner who was one of the most diligent students in her group.

'I have more experience with older learners and I find them more enthusiastic and active. For example, I had a student who was around 80 years old. She started to learn a foreign language in order to keep her mind fresh and prevent herself from mental decline. She was one of the most diligent students I had. So I think that age is just a number.' (I-6)

Although it is a common belief that young language learners are more successful than older ones, this assumption has not been confirmed either by previous studies or by the interviewees' experience.

Only three interviewees mentioned the fact that after a certain age learners are not able to produce native-like pronunciation, however one participant partly disagreed with that statement:

'According to studies, there is a critical period after which native-like pronunciation cannot be acquired. I think this also depends somewhat on the

individual. I mean, I don't fully agree with that statement, because I know people who started learning later and still have very good pronunciation.' (I-3)

Almost all of those interviewed agreed that gender does not play a crucial role in language acquisition, however there might be some differences.

'I did not find a general gender difference. Maybe girls are a bit more hardworking, but that's not always true.' (I-4)

'I can't prove it with anything, but my observation is that boys are better at speaking tasks than girls. Perhaps the reason is that they are less shy.' (I-3)

'In terms of gender, I do not see a clear correlation between sex and foreign language learning. Girls are said to have a wider vocabulary, but when I think about my pupils, I have an approximately equal number of successful learners of both sexes.' (I-15)

Taking into account the responses to that question, it can be concluded that there are more important features than age connected to FL success, such as motivation, personality, anxiety. These responses are consistent with previous findings on gender and FL success.

All participants agreed, that however there is an inborn talent for learning languages, it does not garantee successful progress on its own.

It was stated that there are learners who are able to acquire a foreign language without much effort. They can pick up words and phrases easily. And then there are those who are not able to do it like the former in spite of their effort. What is it if not a talent for language? Of course, it cannot be seen in such extreme terms: if someone has a talent for a language, they will be successful, if not, they will fail. There are many other factors that influence language learning. And aptitude alone is not enough if it is not combined with diligence and perseverance. It was mentioned that the greatest factor in success is how much effort learners are prepared to put in the learning progress.

Diagram 3.4.1 Factors that influence language learning success according to the interviewees

Only a small number of respondents indicated that there are learners who are not able to acquire a language because of the lack of this talent. Others said that talent alone without diligence, persistence, motivation does not make a successful FL learner.

'Some students are more receptive to foreign languages and acquire words/phrases more easily, but with diligence and the right learning methods, students without that 'talent' can surpass them.' (I-4)

'I think everyone can learn any language to a certain level, everyone can get there, the difference is the effort they need to put in to reach that stage. Someone needs more work and there are learners who need less. But language learning ability alone is not enough.' (I-3)

'I think everyone can be good at languages but definitely there is a talent that helps learners to acquire the language easier and faster.' (I-6)

'Students who possess greater aptitude for language learning might easier look for opportunities to interact in the target culture. That is why they might be more successful. But still, language learning is not just about talent.' (I-2)

Most of the answers are consistent with the earlier studies stating that however there is a talent for learning language, aptitude alone does not determine the language learning ability of an individual.

The overall response to the question connected to motivation was very identical. All participants agreed that motivation is one of the most important, if not the most important factor among all personal traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners. Motivation influences the success or failure of foreign language learning. To motivate learners, their interests should be triggered.

'Motivation has a big impact on effective learning and good performance. First of all, the most important things are the role of the teacher, his/her behaviour, the atmosphere and the relationship between students and parents. Since we are talking about teaching a foreign language, it is important to communicate realistic expectations to the pupils. The teacher becomes a communication partner and an organiser, transforming live impressions of reality into an object of communication in the classroom.' (I-1)

As it was stated by reasearchers, two types of motivation are distinguished: integrative and instrumental (see in Part 1). It is clear from the responses that the interviewees are aware that their students may have different motivational backgrounds in certain situations. However, they do not use terms to distinguish between types of motivation, their descriptions are fully in line with previous academic definitions.

For example, the following extract describes instrumental and integrative motivation:

'Some people are motivated to do well in a test, or because they want to take exams or entrance exams, while others study for the sake of studying.' (I-3)

According to the interviewees, they use a variety of techniques to motivate their learners, such as positive feedback, different activities, games, calm environment, positive attitude to the target language and culture and so on:

'Motivation is also provided by discussion, where the teacher outlines the issues to be discussed in class, while giving interesting examples of the target

language and culture, involving the children's experiences. A wide variety of motivational techniques are known and used in the classroom: songs, poems, stories, role-plays, riddles, etc. I use these techniques during my lessons too.' (I-1)

'Motivation is a key factor. I try to motivate children by playing as many games as possible. To motivate older learners I introduce interesting topics to them.' (I-4)

'Motivation is perhaps one of the most important factors in learning a foreign language. I think it is important that learning should be a positive experience for all participants. Learners should have fun in class. To achieve this, I try to use a variety of techniques, different types of activities.' (I-13)

Some of the responses showed that to motivating learners is important to create emotional ties to the language. Interest can help learners' process in the target language. Positivie attitude should be created with the help of teaching the target culture, music, art and so on.

'When I teach about London, I offer my pupils English tea with milk. While they are drinking it, we talk about tea traditions in England. They might not remember all information about the sights of London, but they definitely remember the taste of tea, the tradition, thus creating a positive attitude toward the target culture and language.' (I-15)

All participants agreed that it is very important to vary activities during lessons according to the cognitive style of the learners. The teachers interviewed stated that they vary their activities during the lessons, they use different tasks to involve all students.

'I try to vary activities according to the needs of the learners. Although I use movement activities less often with older learners than with children.' (I-4)

'I always try to vary activities during my lessons according to the cognitivie style of my learners. I teach young pupils, so I use lots of pictures, objects for visual learners, listening activities, songs for auditory ones. For kinesthetic learners I use a variety of games, when they have to run, jump, touch objects and so on.' (I-9)

Questions 7-10 referred to the personality of learners, highlighting extroversion, introversion, self-esteem and anxiety.

All participants agreed that personality has a big impact on language learning. They suggested that extroverted learners might be more successful than introverted ones due to their talkative and courageous behaviour. When speaking, it is important to try to find a balance between fluency and accuracy. Extroverted learners focus more on fluency, while introverted ones worry about minor points of grammar and it cause them to hesitate unreasonably. Extroverted pupils try to keep the conversation going not paying attention to accuracy. They ask lots of questions. It helps them to develop. However, some interviewees mentioned that being an extroverted can cause problems too during the lesson because they tend to be overactive and too much to handle.

'Personality has a big impact on foreign language learning. As I think the focus in FL teaching should be on communication, extroverted learners are more successful and achieve more in this area. They are the ones who often speak without thinking, without considering whether what they are saying is right or correct. So they practice much more, they get used to speaking in a different language, in front of others. Because of this, their anxiety is also relieved. After a while, the introverted learners can fall behind the extroverted ones in their communication skills.' (I-15)

'Although extroverted learners may be more successful in communication, introverted learners are more thorough and precise in their studies. They pay more attention to the correctness of their sentences etc. However extroverted learners make active use of what they have learned easier than introverted ones.' (I-5)

'Extroverted learners are attentive, enthusiastic and ambitious. But overambition can backfire and stunt the student's progress as well as negatively affect the classroom.' (I-8)

'In my opinion, extroverted learners are more couregous to use the target language. They also might get embarrassed because of their mistakes, but they

learn from them, and they have the courage to keep on going. While the same mistakes might stop introverts to continue.' (I-11)

'During an English lesson learners need to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word, a phrase etc. Extroverted learners are not afraid to guess, even if their attempts are wrong at first. But part of the truth is that extroverts tend to be too much during class, they are not easy to handle. The teacher has to give the same attention and the same possibilities to introverted learners too and overactive extroverts doesn't make it easy.' (I-14)

Other responses to these questions included that self-esteem and confidence are important factors in the process of language learning. These features help learners to try new things and to not stop after failures.

'I think confidence is fundamental to communication. Confident learners are willing to try new things and do not consider failure as a reason to stop.' (I-10)

Talking about anxiety responses stated that language anxiety is a crucial factor for EFL learners in learning and speaking English. It makes learners less active in communication because they are afraid of making mistakes. Participants find speaking activities the most anxiety- provoking for the students. The possible causes are fear of using grammar incorrectly, mispronouncing words, fear of being laughed at.

'Many students feel anxious when they have to speak a foreign language. Increasing the motivation to speak in class helps to solve this problem. I find communication tasks, role-play the most anxiety provoking activities for my learners. Their anxiety is caused by the fear of using grammar incorrectly, mispronouncing words, suddenly not remembering the phrase etc.' (I-1)

'I think anxiety can make pupils feel discouraged about language learning. Thus anxiety is a barrier for enhancing learning and performance.' (I-12)

'Learners with higher language anxiety have the tendency to avoid communication in the classroom more often than less anxious learners.' (I-13)

'Foreign language anxiety can make pupils lose their faith in language learning. It can also influence their self-esteem and confidence. Confidence comes

primarily from practising speaking, but it also causes the highest level of anxiety.' (I-7)

However, speaking activities are the most anxiety-provoking for the students, some participants mentioned listening tasks as anxiety-provoking too.

'In connection to anxiety, I think speaking tasks cause the highest level of anxiety in pupils. But it also happens that learners get anxious when they do not understand every single word in a context. While they are trying to puzzle out every word, the conversation might move on and they miss the next part. Those who can listen for gist or specific detail and concentrate on what they really need to understand are more successful than those who freezes under stress because they don't understand something.' (I-15)

'Anxiety is mainly observed in speaking tasks, but some learners also have problems with listening activities. In oral tasks there is no room for improvement, and they have to speak in front of others. These can be the causes of anxiety. And learners might feel anxious before or during tests too.' (I-3)

These answers lend strong support to previous studies stating that anxiety is often affected by the number of people present, the topic of conversation, and the formality of the circumstances. For teachers it is important to raise awareness that making mistakes is inevitable and they are opportunities for developement.

'One of the possible causes of students' anxiety while speaking English is the fact that they don't want to make mistakes in front of others. However, it is important to make it clear for them that mistakes are very important and will actually help them learn English.' (I-10)

'They are afraid of being laughed at by their classmates (they may have been laughed at before), they don't understand that making mistakes is natural and that mistakes are opportunities for improvement.' (I-4)

The next question intended to clear out the background to a successful language learner. The respondents' answers correspond to previous studies. They named factors such as

- age,

- language learning ability,
- motivation,
- learning style,
- personality.

In addition to personality traits external factors were added to the list such as

- family backround and support,
- circumstances,
- the role of family and friends.

This list contains similarities with previous academic studies examining the effect of personal traits on FL learning. However, the participants of the interviews added external factors to the list such as background and circumstances.

Almost half of the respondants claimed that the personality and behaviour of the teacher is an important factor too in the learning process. Further research might explore their role in learning success.

'Many factors influence the learning progress of pupils, for example, the age group. But I think, the most important factors are family and the right circumstances. The circle of friends have a big influence on the learners too, they can motivate or demotivate each other. And last but not least, the student's language learning ability is an important aspect too.' (I-1)

'I think extroverted people are more successful in learning languages. But whatever your personality is, the important thing is that you are hardworking. It's also necessary not to be anxious, to have language learning ability, to take advantage of opportunities. A teacher who motivates learners also helps successful learning. It's important to recognise the students' personality. It is a positive thing. Of course, there's not always time to differentiate during the lesson, but if the teacher is a good judge of character, it helps a lot.' (I-3)

'I think successful language learners are deeply motivated, whether they need the target language to get a better job, to get a good grade, to travel to a foreign country or simply watch films in English. They take language learning

seriously. They enjoy learning the target language. It's fun for them and not an obligation.' (I-14)

'I think succesful language learners are self-reliant, motivated, enthusiastic and ready to work independently.' (I-11)

'In addition to some important personal traits, such as motivation, aptitude, personality, succesful learners have a positive view of the target language and its culture. These learners play an active part in class activities, they are not afraid of making mistakes and practise as much as they can.' (I-13)

'In addition to all of these personal traits of the learners, the teaching and learning process can be also influenced by the teacher's personality and mentality either positively or negatively. Learners can be of any age and from any background, the role of a teacher is to inspire, motivate, encourage and educate them.' (I-6)

The overall responses to Question 12 about suggestions they have for developing personal traits were poor. However, it was stated by all participants that personal traits are important and have a great affect on FL learning, there are other external factors that influence a language learner's success. So just having the right personality traits is not enough for successful language acquisition. It was stated that teachers are recommended to create a supportive and friendly classroom environment that encourages learners to speak and participate in oral communication activities without fear.

'My suggestions: Diligence, perseverance, don't be afraid to make mistakes, look for opportunities to use the language, don't use the language only in class, watch films, listen to native speakers.' (I-4)

'I think it might be useful to prepare activities that enables students of all levels and personalities to feel confident and topics that are familiar to them.' (I-2)

'Teachers should consider their students' personalities as something that needs special care. They need to be aware of the needs of their learners and create an environment which addresses those needs.' (I-11)

'Learning how to effectively correct student errors is another important aspect of building learners' confidence in the classroom. Negative feedback doesn't help our work.' (I-6)

'In my opinion anyone can become a good language learner!' (I-13)

3.5 Results and implications

There is no end of research on a socio-psychological topic like personal traits. But there should be a conclusion of a research presenting its results and few suggestions for further research and implementation.

Since the interviewed teachers were very honest and serious when answering the interview questions, most of their answers clearly indicate the effects of personality traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners.

Although the existing research has provided a valuable insight into the given topic, because of its complicated nature, the issue requires further exploration from a variety of perspectives and approaches. This study, conducted through individual interviews, was such an attempt to apprehend the true nature of the phenomenon from a different perspective.

The produced results corroborate the findings of researchers like Pawlak, Dörnyei, Robinson, Arabski, Woytasek who found that age, gender, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality and learning strategies have the biggest effects on language learning. Among these factors, participants named motivation, aptitude and personality that have the greatest impact on FL learning.

These emerging issues should provide a framework to the future researchers in the area of personal traits for further in-depth and detailed studies to fill the gaps that this study misses out.

As stated previously, this research was conducted to investigate the effects of personality traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners. As this is a very broad topic, it is impossible to fully explore all personality traits in one

study. Therefore, this thesis can serve as an introduction to further research in which specific attention can be paid to different personality traits individually.

This research was conducted involving a very limited number of participants, so it may not be reasonable to draw very definite conclusions and to make generalizations out of the findings. For this reason, the number of the subjects can be increased, so that more valid results can be gathered and generalizations can be made from the conclusions.

However, this study focused on personal traits of the learners, many participants mentioned that the role of language teachers is highly crucial whose particular beliefs and attitudes towards language learning and teaching process have the potential of both causing positive or negative effects on the learners.

Further experimental investigations are needed to assess the effect of the personality and behaviour of the teacher on the progress of language learning. More information on this issue would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter.

The results of the current study may have a few pedagogical implications for both FL teachers and students. Some of the recommendations mentioned below do not present a final solution to the idea of effective language teaching and learning. Yet, some of them might be helpful to English teachers and students for understanding the idea of effective FL teaching and learning according to personality traits.

- The outcomes of this study may possibly highlight the need for FL teachers to better analyze and understand the most important personality traits of their learners.
- The findings of this study highlight the requirement for FL teachers to understand the importance of differentiated teaching for further improvement of the teaching and learning process.
- The outcomes of this research study may also suggest that the effect of home environment and positive input from parents play a major role in students' improvement in language learning.

CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the relationship between personality traits and successful language learning.

This investigation is able to help to see in what way and to what extent individual differences affect overall communication behaviors of learners. Such knowledge then can be used to adapt language teaching methodology to the needs of learners of all kinds.

Part 1 of the thesis discussed general concepts of personality traits from a psychological point of view. It also dealt with personal traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners. This chapter reviewed the literature concerning the theoretical foundations of different authors dealing with the connection between personality traits and FL learning. It focused on defining the most common types of personality traits such as age, gender, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality, learning strategy. A number of linguists has investigated the given topic like: Ellis, Robinson, Dörnyei, Arabsky and Wojtaszek, Wolf, Pawlak.

Part 2 of the thesis dealt with the relationship between personality traits and EFL learning. It summarized the most important aspects and gave a brief literature review of previous studies.

It has become a well-known fact that personality traits have an effect on how people learn and what they learn. It can be stated that the rate of foreign language acquisition and the level of achievement are affected by individual variation among learners. It can be concluded that there is a need of the development of individualized foreign language teaching. To achieve better results in foreign language teaching, language teachers should modify their teaching methods according to these factors (Dörnyei, Skehan, 2003).

In Part 3 information about a practical research on the effects of personality traits on verbal and interactive behaviours of EFL learners is found. The research

was carried out in Transcarpathia. 15 FL teachers were interviewed in order to provide insight into their point of views on the given topic.

Based on the interviews, all participants agreed that learning a foreign language is a unique process for everyone but there are many factors that influence it. The produced results corroborate the findings of researchers like Pawlak, Dörnyei, Robinson, Arabski, Woytasek who found that age, gender, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality and learning strategies have the biggest effects on language learning. Among these factors, participants named motivation, aptitude and personality that have the greatest impact on FL learning.

In addition to personality traits external factors were added to the list such as family backround and support, circumstances, the role of family and friends. It was also claimed that the personality and behaviour of the teacher is an important factor in the learning process. Further research might explore their role in learning success.

Based on the outcomes of the research it can be concluded that it is needed to better analyze and understand the most important personality traits of learners and to understand the importance of differentiated teaching for further improvement of the teaching and learning process.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

У даному роботі досліджується зв'язок між рисами особистості та успішним вивченням мови.

Ця дослідження може допомогти побачити, яким чином і якою мірою індивідуальні відмінності впливають на загальну комунікативну поведінку учнів. Ці дані потім можуть бути використані для адаптації методології навчання мови до потреб учнів усіх видів.

У Розділі I дипломної роботи розглядалися загальні поняття про риси особистості з психологічної точки зору. У ньому також розглядалися особистісні риси вербальної та інтерактивної поведінки учнів, які вивчають іноземну мову. У цьому розділі також розглядається література щодо теоретичних основ різних авторів, та зв'язок між рисами особистості та навчанням іноземної мови.Робота зосередилося на визначенні найбільш поширених типів рис особистості, таких як: вік, стать, здібності, мотивація, когнітивний стиль, особистість, стратегія навчання. Ряд лінгвістів досліджували дану тему, як: Елліс, Робінсон, Дьорней, Арабскі та Войташек, Вольф, Павляк.

У ньому узагальнено найважливіші аспекти та дається короткий огляд літератури попередніх досліджень.

Стало загальновідомим фактом, що риси особистості впливають на те, як люди навчаються і чого вони вчаться. Можна констатувати, що на рівень засвоєння іноземної мови та рівень досягнень впливають індивідуальні відмінності серед учнів. Можна зробити висновок про необхідність розвитку індивідуалізованого навчання іноземних мов. Щоб досягти кращих результатів у викладанні іноземної мови, вчителі повинні модифікувати свої методи навчання відповідно до цих факторів (Dörnyei, Skehan, 2003).

У Розділі 3 міститься інформація про практичне дослідження впливу рис особистості на вербальну та інтерактивну поведінку учнів, які вивчають

іноземну мову. Дослідження проводилося на Закарпатті. Було опитано 15 вчителів іноземних мов, щоб зрозуміти їхню точку зору на дану тему.

За результатами інтерв'ю всі учасники погодилися, що вивчення іноземної мови є унікальним процесом для кожного, але на це впливають багато факторів. Отримані результати підтверджують висновки таких дослідників, як Павлак, Дьорньей, Робінсон, Арабскі, Войтасек, які виявили, що вік, стать, здібності, мотивація, когнітивний стиль, особистість та стратегії навчання мають найбільші впливи на вивчення мови. Серед цих факторів учасники назвали мотивацію, здібності та особистість, які мають найбільші впливи на навчання іноземної мови.

На додаток до рис особистості до списку були додані зовнішні фактори, такі як родинне минуле та підтримка, обставини, роль сім'ї та друзів. Також стверджувалося, що особистість і поведінка вчителя є важливим чинником процесу навчання. Подальші дослідження можуть вивчити їхній роль в успішності навчання.

За результатами дослідження можна зробити висновок, що необхідно краще проаналізувати та зрозуміти найважливіші особистісні риси учнів, а також зрозуміти важливість диференційованого навчання для подальшого вдосконалення процесу навчання.

Appendix A

The effects of personality traits on verbal and interactive behaviours

of EFL learners

Questions for teachers

Highest academic qualification: BA/MA/PhD

Classes you teach:

Number of lessons:

Years of teaching experience:

1.   According to you what are the most important problems that hinder the students' progress in the lesson?

2.   Is age a crucial factor for EFL learners? Are there any differences between young and older learners in the aspects of FL learning?

3.   How does your students' progress differ according to their gender?

4.   Please comment the following statement: There is a talent for learning language.

5.   How does motivation affect your EFL learners? What techniques do you use developing their motivation?

6.   Do you vary activities during your lessons according to the cognitivie style of your learners?

- visual

- auditory

- kinesthetic

7.   How does personality affect the progress of EFL learners?

- extroversion

- introversion

- self-esteem

8.   Is language anxiety a crucial factor for EFL learners in learning and particularly speaking English?

9.   What kinds of situations and language classroom activities have you found more anxiety- provoking for the students?

10.   What are the possible causes of students' anxiety while speaking English?

11.   From this point of view, what can be the background to a successful language learner?

12.   What suggestions do you have for developing these personal traits? To what extent do any of them influence English learning?

NYILATKOZAT

Alulírott, Somi Katalin angol szakos hallgató, kijelentem, hogy a dolgozatomat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskolán, a Filológia tanszéken készítettem.

Kijelentem, hogy a dolgozatot más szakon korábban nem védtem meg, saját munkám eredménye, és csak a hivatkozott forrásokat (szakirodalom, eszközök stb.) használtam fel.

Tudomásul veszem, hogy dolgozatomat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola könyvtárának Kézirattárában helyezik el.

Beregszász, 2022. június 1.   _____

                                                                              Somi Katalin