Personality and Emotional Intelligence in Second Language Learning

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

PREFACE

The main purpose of the book entitled *Personality and Emotional Intelligence in Second Language Learning* is twofold. Firstly, it is to provide a comprehensive, up-to-date overview of the studies in the field of second/foreign language learning and L2 use that focused mostly on personality traits and emotional intelligence. Secondly, it is to present the results of a mixed method study researching the possible influence of mentioned variables on the process of learning a second language. It is believed that focusing on both higher-order "Big Five" personality traits of Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992a), as well as on the lower-order personality trait of Emotional intelligence (Petrides & Furnham, 2001) while examining various aspects of second language acquisition (SLA) will help to elucidate the very process of second language learning. Consequently, presenting results from the standardized national secondary school-leaving examination concerning both written and oral L2 proficiency as well as informants' preferences related to the acquisition of L2 skills of listening, writing, reading, speaking, but also such language subsystems as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and spelling is expected to shed some more light on the complex relationship between personality and language learning. At the same time, this is the first empirical study, to the best of our knowledge, that also takes into account Emotional intelligence as a potential variable that might influence the process of second/ foreign language learning while relating it to various L2 skills as well as written and oral L2 proficiency.

This book is composed of six chapters. Chapter One focuses on defining the constructs of personality and emotional intelligence. It also introduces a brief overview of different personality structures according to various theories and models like Eysenck's (1947, 1990) "Big Three", the "Big Five" (Costa & McCrae, 1985, 1989, 1992a, 1992b), as well as Trait Emotional intelligence (TEI) by Petrides and Furnham (2001). After the overview of the constructs, it concentrates on the detailed description of the NEO-FFI personality inventory by Costa and McCrae (1992a) and Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) by Petrides and Furnham (2001) which were used in the present study.

Chapter Two concentrates on the personality traits with regard to various aspects of language learning, starting from the classroom context and gradually moving to semi-structured and naturalistic settings. It presents studies that have researched both higher and lower-order personality traits among L2 learners, study abroad students and immigrants living in the L2 country. At the same time, it addresses various issues concerning SLA but also L2 use, L2 speaking anxiety, and acculturation. It is hoped that the overview of the up to date literature concerning both higher-order and lower-order personality traits and second/foreign language learning and L2 use in different educational and cultural settings will provide an interesting background for the present study.

Chapter Three focuses on the methodology of the study, research questions and hypotheses, as well as the participants and research instruments. The present contribution examines the complex interaction of such factors as personality traits and Emotional intelligence and the processes connected to L2 learning as well as L2 use from the qualitative and quantitative point of view. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods was justified by dominant trends in applied linguistics research, which show that the combination of both perspectives overcomes the limitations of narrowing frameworks and enriches the analysis by allowing for greater diversity in the type of data gathered (Dewaele, 2008). To be able to shed some more light on the quantitative data analysis results, it was decided to incorporate an open question that invited the informants of the study to share their thoughts and opinions concerning the most difficult aspects of foreign language learning. When it comes to the quantitative part of the questionnaire, it is important to mention that written and oral skills in English (L2) were measured using the national secondary school-leaving examination results making sure that they are both standardised, objective and identical for all informants taking part in our study. Other presented results are based on participants' grades from practical use of English classes focusing on grammar, writing and integrated skills as well as self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking but also grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation. It is believed that different types of measures introduced in the present research will help to show what are the possible influences of the personality traits and emotional intelligence on SLA when both objective measures of L2 proficiency, as well as subjective perceptions concerning preferences related to the acquisition of L2 skills, are taken into account.

Chapter Four presents the results of quantitative data analyses. It focuses mostly on the correlation, multiple stepwise regression and t-test analyses' results concerning higher and lower-order personality traits and measured aspects of SLA. Among these, we could enumerate L2 written and oral proficiency test results, grades from grammar, writing and integrated skills classes as well as informants' preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills, self-perceived L2 proficiency and L2 use as well as self-reported L2 anxiety.

Chapter Five focuses on the results of qualitative and quantitative data analysis concerning participants' views on the most challenging aspect of the language learning. All of the answers are analysed qualitatively with the use of inductive category development (Mayring, 2001). The criterion is derived from theoretical background as well as research question. Following this criterion, the material is worked through, and categories are deduced. Later on, they are revised and reduced to main categories and analysed quantitatively regarding frequencies as well as personality traits.

Chapter Six presents discussion of the findings linking it to the presented literature overview as well as some implications and limitations of the study.

I would like to conclude the preface by thanking Professor Jean-Marc Dewaele and Professor Mirosław Pawlak, who read an earlier version of the present book and made valuable critical comments and suggestions for improvement.

I would also like to thank my husband Daniel and my children, Julia and Bruno, for their love, patience, understanding and unstinting support.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONCEPT OF PERSONALITY

1.1 Introduction

The aim of the present chapter is to provide a brief overview of various definitions of personality as well as different personality questionnaires. We are to present the most dominant approaches to the measurement of personality and Emotional Intelligence as well as other popular personality constructs used in SLA. However, before focusing on specific traits it is important to explain the very concept of personality.

1.2 What is personality?

To answer "What is personality?" question several meanings and implications of the word "personality" need to be addressed. The concept of personality is relatively recent and has undergone some significant changes (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 4). At the very beginning, personality referred to our shared humanity, the capacities that were believed to distinguish us from animals (Williams, 1979). Over time, however, it came to refer more to the characteristics of the individual human being: the "person". The word "person" came from the Latin word "persona", which referred to the mask worn by an actor. This individuality of a person was understood as roles and characters that a given individual assumes in life (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 4). Currently, the personality psychology perspective on personality refers to those individual differences that are psychological, fall outside the intellectual domain, are enduring dispositions rather than transient states, and form some relatively broad patterns (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 6). Even though psychologists agree that personality is fundamentally a matter of individual human differences in personal characteristics other than intelligence (Crozier, 1997), we can still come across many definitions of the concept. Child (1986, p. 239) has defined personality as: "the more or less stable and enduring organisation of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique which determines his unique adjustment to the

environment". The American Psychological Association described it as "individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving" (Kazdin, 2000). However, probably the most often cited definition of personality is the one proposed by Allport (1961, p. 28) describing it as "the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behaviour and thought". This definition was built on the meticulous research of many previous definitions of personality and reflected Allport's emphasis on incorporating various characteristics of personality into one definition (Feist & Feist, 2009). Personality was presented by Allport as both stable and growing, physical and mental, conscious and unconscious, product and process (Feist & Feist, 2009, p. 378). Carducci (2009, p. 260) explained that although personality is an organised system of components, this system is in a constant state of change. Within such a state, each experience modifies various aspects of the individual's personality (Caspi & Roberts, 1999, cited in Carducci, 2009, p. 260). Additionally, its psychophysical nature suggests that it integrates aspects of the mind such as feelings, ideas and beliefs as well as the aspects of the body like a nervous system. The fact that personality was defined as a determinant of behaviour emphasises that it might serve both an activating and directive function in the individual's adaptive and expressive thought and behaviour (Wiggins, 1997, cited in Carducci, 2009, p. 260). Allport's definition also clarified the nature and purpose of the concept of personality as an expression of uniqueness. The phrase "characteristic behaviour and thought" refers to people's thoughts and reflections while adjusting to the environment (Elms, 1993, cited in Carducci, 2009, p. 260).

As it can be seen from the above, personality is a broad concept that refers to various aspects of an individual's unique characteristics that are:

> "(…) relatively enduring behavioural and cognitive characteristics, traits, or predispositions that people take with them to different situations, contexts, and interactions with others and that contribute to differences among individuals. They are the qualities or collection of qualities that make a person a distinctive individual, or the collective aggregate of behavioural and mental characteristics that are distinctive of an individual" (Matsumoto & Juang, 2008, p. 255)

The definitions presented above describe the notion of personality but fail to characterise it in a more detailed manner. Therefore, the next section focuses on the description of the structure of personality and

different approaches that aim to illustrate the individual differences that make up people's personalities.

1.3 Personality traits and Emotional Intelligence

In psychology, the principal unit for describing personality is the *trait*, and personality is said to be the organisation of traits. The concept of *trait* is a characteristic form of thinking, feeling and behaving and was defined as habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotion (Kassin, 2003). According to this perspective, traits are relatively stable over time, differ among individuals, and influence our behaviour. It is important to mention that traits are dispositions. That is, they should be best thought of as a "probabilistic tendency that a person has to act in a certain way when placed in a certain kind of situation" (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 19). Allport and Odbert (1936) were early pioneers in the study of *traits*, which they also referred to as *dispositions*. In their approach, *central traits* are basic to an individual's personality, whereas *secondary traits* are more peripheral. Traits also vary in their generality, as some traits represent only narrow domains of life, and others are relevant to a substantial proportion of it. Therefore, they can be organised in a certain hierarchy, with relatively specific traits that relate to a small number of behaviours falling under broader traits (Allport & Odbert, 1936). Even though there is a large number of traits that could be used to describe personality, the statistical technique of factor analysis, has demonstrated that particular clusters of traits reliably correlate together forming "The Big Five Factor Model".

1.3.1 The "Big Five" personality traits

The search for the fundamental trait dimensions started decades ago with Fiske (1949). Over time, researchers began recognising regularity in factor analyses suggesting that personality ratings often converged on five broad factors. As a result of various approaches to psychological traits analysis, a dominant "The Big Five Factor Model" has evolved. It has developed from Allport and Odbert's (1936) attempts to compile trait-related terms that have mainly focused on situational-based approaches offering greater flexibility in explaining a person-specific environment and using the lexical analysis of trait adjectives in natural languages as the classification of all the major sources of individual differences in personality (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1988, 1992a, 1992b; Digman, 1989, 1990; Fiske, 1949; Goldberg, 1981, 1990, 1992; John, Angleitner, & Ostendorf, 1988 cited in Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2013). However, it was

Goldberg (1981) who proposed five main personality factors naming his findings "The Big Five". He started with the lexical hypothesis that: "the most important individual differences in human transactions will come to be encoded as single terms in some or all of the world's languages" (Goldberg, 1990, p. 1216). Within Goldberg's taxonomy, terms were grouped and organised according to their culturally-shared meaning, as determined by the meaning-similarity ratings of native speakers, dictionary definitions, the co-occurrence of adjectives and self-rating (Peabody & Goldberg, 1989, cited in Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2013). Although he started the research on the "Big Five", the founders of the theoretical background were Costa and McCrae. Mentioned researchers decided to reduce Cattell's (1957) theory of 16 traits to conform with Eysenck's 'PEN' theory (Eysenck, 1990). According to Eysenck, personality consists of temperament and intelligence represented by three major personality traits of Psychoticism, Extraversion and Neuroticism (PEN) (Strelau, 2000, p. 535). Costa and McCrae added the Openness to experience to Extraversion and Neuroticism from the Eysenck "PEN" model and in this way created the Three Factor Model of Personality. The NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) originally measured only Neuroticism, Extraversion and Openness to experience. It was not until 1989 that the NEO model (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience) was enlarged by adding two more factors: Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. These five factors represent the five fundamental ways along which people's personalities vary. What is important to highlight is the fact that the "Big Five Factor Inventory" measures ten personality factors instead of five as each of the "Big Five" personality traits has its counterpart presented on the linear scale. The reason for pairing these factors is that a high score for one of the pair, e.g. Extraversion, entails a low score for its counterpart, in this case Introversion. Scores on the various dimensions follow a normal (Gaussian) distribution, meaning that a majority of people are situated between the opposite poles, and are called "ambiverts" on the Extraversion-Introversion dimension (Ożańska-Ponikwia & Dewaele, 2012). Consequently, the "Big Five" personality traits are Extraversion vs Introversion; Agreeableness vs Antagonism; Conscientiousness vs Undirectedness; Neuroticism vs Emotional Stability; Openness to experience vs. Not Open to Experience. All the five dimensions that form the construct are rather broad, comprising several essential facets, which are usually referred to as primary traits (Dornyei, 2005, p. 15). Below we are to present some major characteristics that could be associated with the high and low scorers on each trait.

Extraversion is best exemplified by traits involving sociability, encompassing traits that involve energy and activity levels, sensation-seeking, interpersonal dominance, and tendency to experience positive emotional states (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 26). In Costa and McCrae's NEO-PI-R (1992a), the six facets of activity level which define Extraversion are Assertiveness, Activity, Excitement Seeking, Positive Emotions, Gregariousness, and Warmth. In other words, extraverts are people who are sociable, outgoing and good in interpersonal contacts. They are also characterised by the quantity and intensity of interpersonal interaction, their activity level, their need for stimulation and capacity for joy. Extraversion also implies an energetic approach to the social and material world and includes traits such as Assertiveness and Positive emotionality. On the other hand, introverts, who represent the opposing pole of this factor, can be defined as serious, shy, avoiding meeting people, self-sufficient, passive, quiet, reserved, withdrawn, sober, aloof, and restrained. Their domain is more of thought than of action. Introversion is understood as "the tendency to be quiet and reserved with other people, to shun crowds and excitement, and to act on thoughtful consideration rather than impulse" (Plotnik & Mollenauer, 1986, p. 647).

Agreeableness, just like Extraversion, is primarily linked to interpersonal qualities but involves cooperativeness, altruism, as well as a warm and compliant stance towards others (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 26). The six facets of activity level which define Agreeableness are Trust, Straightforwardness, Altruism, Compliance, Modesty and Tender-mindedness (Costa & McCrae, 1992a). Therefore, high scorers could be described as friendly, good-natured, likeable, kind, forgiving, trusting, cooperative, modest, and generous. Low scorers are characterised as cold, cynical, rude, unpleasant, critical, antagonistic, suspicious, vengeful, irritable, and uncooperative.

Conscientiousness is linked to self-control, planfulness, as well as being organised, efficient and deliberate in one's approach to tasks. The six facets of activity level which define Conscientiousness are Competence, Order, Dutifulness, Achievement striving, Self-discipline and Deliberation (Costa & McCrae, 1992a). Unconscientious people tend to be impulsive, disorganised, and careless towards their responsibilities. Therefore, Conscientiousness seems to reflect one's approach to long-term goals and interests, resisting impulses that threaten to sabotage them, as well as harnessing one's efforts to accomplish these goals and interests competently (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 26).

Neuroticism has to do mostly with people's emotional stability referring to a wide range of negative emotions including anger, sadness,

shame, and embarrassment. Neurotic people are more prone to experience negative emotions, to be psychologically maladjusted and vulnerable as well as reporting low self-esteem. On the other hand, people who are low scorers on the trait Neuroticism are emotionally stable, calm, and able to cope well with stress (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 27). The six facets of activity level which define Neuroticism are Anxiety, Angry Hostility, Depression, Self-consciousness, Impulsiveness and Vulnerability (Costa and McCrae, 1992a).

Openness to experience could be characterised by such facets of activity level as Fantasy, Aesthetics, Feelings, Actions, Ideas and Values (Costa and McCrae, 1992a). High scorers could be described as imaginative, curious, flexible, creative, moved by art, novelty seeking, original, and untraditional. In contrast, low scorers are conservative, conventional, down-to-earth, unartistic, and practical (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 15). Openness to experience is, therefore, a matter of willingness to adopt novel and unconventional ways of thinking and behaving. High scorers on the trait are heavily invested in cultivating new experiences, whereas its low scorers are conventional and narrow in their interests as well as conservative and sometimes rigid in their approach to life's challenges and opportunities (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 27).

Research suggests that there are four major levels of the trait hierarchy such as meta-traits, domains, aspects and facets (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 51). Major trait domains that represent the dimensions of personality could be located somewhere within the multidimensional "Big Five" domains. As a matter of fact, for some time the "Big Five" was thought to lie at the highest level of the personality hierarchy. However, from the late 1990's evidence began to accumulate for two even broader meta-traits of Stability and Plasticity (DeYoung, 2006 cited in Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 51). These have been suggested to reflect broad processes common to Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Emotional stability on the one hand and Extraversion and Openness to experience on the other. DeYoung, Quilty and Peterson (2007) suggest that in trait hierarchy each trait domain can be divided into two aspects and further on into facets which could be understood regarding specific behaviour (such as talkativeness in the case of Extraversion) and whose exact number and identity was not specifically determined. Consequently, according to DeYoung (2015), two meta-traits of Stability and Plasticity were divided into "Big Five" domains of Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Extraversion and Openness to experience (Costa & McCrae, 1992a). These domains were further divided into ten aspects which are: Orderliness and Industriousness (Conscientiousness); Compassion and

Politeness (Agreeableness); Volatility and Withdrawal (Neuroticism); Assertiveness and Enthusiasm (Extraversion); Openness and Intellect (Openness) (DeYoung, 2015). This hierarchical nature of traits shows that each "Big Five" domain "is a complex composite that can be unpacked in terms of increasingly more finely grained constructs" that describe "coherent patterns of basic psychological processes" (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, pp. 51-52). According to Hampshire (1953), all these basic psychological processes could be classified regarding affect, behaviour, and cognition. Consequently, Haslam, Smilie & Song (2017, p. 52) conclude that:

> "While psychology as a whole can be defined as the study of affect, behaviour, and cognition, personality psychology can be defined as the study of regularities in, or stable differential patterns of these processes, usefully organized in terms of the Big Five."

The set of the "Big Five" personality factors is the most dominant model of personality structure in contemporary personality psychology that measures the higher-order personality traits by means of the NEO-PI-R personality questionnaire (Costa & McCrae, 1992a). Below we are to focus on a trait Emotional Intelligence (EI) that is closely related to the "Big Five" personality traits. De Raad (2005) located trait EI within the abridged "Big Five" circumplex and found that it comprises scattered aspects of the "Big Five" domain and correlates with at least four of the five basic traits. Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki (2007) performed two joint factor analyses to determine the location of trait EI in Eysenckian and "Big Five" factor space. The results showed that trait EI is a compound personality construct located at the lower levels of the two taxonomies and therefore was termed a lower-order personality trait (Petrides, Furnham & Mavroveli, 2007).

1.3.2 Emotional Intelligence as a lower-order personality trait

Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a non-cognitive aspect of intelligence has its roots in Thorndike's (1920) idea of *social intelligence* as the ability to understand and handle interpersonal situations and Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences focusing on *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* intelligence. However, it was Mayer and Salovey (1997) who proposed that EI encompasses social intelligence but is distinct from a more traditional understanding of intelligence (Newsome et al., 2000) as it focuses on the ability to reason about emotions and to use that knowledge in order to help with thinking through problems (Mayer, Roberts &

Barsade, 2008 cited in Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 310). Petrides and Furnham (2001) proposed to distinguish between EI constructs, depending on whether the operationalisation process was based on self-report (as in personality questionnaires) or maximum performance (as in IQ tests). As a result, they came up with "trait EI" (or trait emotional self-efficacy) and "ability EI" (or cognitive-emotional ability). The ability view, also known as "information-processing EI" (Petrides & Furnham, 2001) considered emotional intelligence as a cognitive ability that involves emotional information processing. In contrast, the trait view described it as a dispositional tendency to behave in particular ways (Haslam, Smilie & Song, 2017, p. 310). Consequently, Trait EI was investigated with reference to personality hierarchies, while ability EI was investigated with reference to cognitive ability hierarchies (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe & Bakker, 2007). It should also be emphasized that trait EI and ability EI are two different constructs conceptually, methodologically and empirically (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe & Bakker, 2007), and that trait EI is explicitly hypothesized to lie outside the realm of human cognitive ability (Carroll, 1993), which was confirmed in many independent studies reporting near-zero, or even negative, correlations between trait EI questionnaires and IQ tests (Derksen, Kramer, & Katzko, 2002; Newsome, Day, & Catano, 2000; Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004; Saklofske, Austin, & Minski, 2003; van der Zee, Thijs, & Schakel, 2002; Warwick & Nettelbeck, 2004 cited in Petrides, Furnham & Mavroveli, 2007, p. 154). At the same time, some other studies (De Raad, 2005; Petrides & Furnham, 2001; Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007; Saklofske, Austin & Minski, 2003) researching the hierarchical trait structures located trait EI within the "Big Five" domain and reported correlations with at least four of the five basic personality dimensions. Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki (2007, p. 283) concluded that:

> "the factor location analyzes demonstrates that trait EI is a distinct (because it can be isolated in personality space), compound (because it is partially determined by several personality dimensions) construct that lies at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (because the trait EI factor is oblique, rather than orthogonal to The Giant Three and The Big Five). This conclusion enables us to connect our trait emotional self-efficacy conceptualization of EI to the established differential psychology literature. This is a major conceptual advantage of trait EI theory because it integrates the construct with the mainstream models of personality. Moreover, this conceptualization appears to be consistent, not only with hierarchical but also with circumplex models of personality."

As presented above, the trait EI framework aims to provide a comprehensive coverage of personality facets relating to affect. Trait EI (or emotional self-efficacy) itself concerns a constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions (Davey, 2005: 306) measured by the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) developed by Petrides and Furnham (2003). The TEIQue is a self-report inventory that covers the sampling domain of trait EI comprehensively measuring 15 distinct facets, four factors of Emotionality, Self-control, Sociability and Well-being as well as global trait EI. According to the hierarchical structure of the TEIQue, the facets are narrower than the factors, which, in turn, are narrower than the global trait EI (Petrides, 2009, p. 5). Below short descriptions of high and low scorers on all factors and facets are provided.

Individuals with high scores on Emotionality are in touch with their feelings and can understand well other people's feelings. They can also perceive and express emotions and use these qualities to develop and sustain close relationships with others. Individuals with low scores on this factor find it difficult to recognise their internal emotional states and to express their feelings to others, which may lead to less rewarding personal relationships (Petrides, 2009, p. 10).

High scorers on Self-control have a healthy degree of control over their urges and desires. In addition to controlling impulses, they are good at regulating external pressures and stress. They are neither repressed nor overly expressive. In contrast, low scorers are prone to impulsive behaviour and may find it difficult to manage stress (Petrides, 2009, p. 10).

The Sociability factor differs from the Emotionality factor above in that it emphasises social relationships and social influence. The focus is on the individual as an agent in social contexts, rather than on personal relationships with family and close friends. Individuals with high scores on the Sociability factor are better at social interaction. They are good listeners and can communicate clearly and confidently with people from diverse backgrounds. Those with low scores believe they are unable to affect others' emotions and are less likely to be good negotiators and networkers. They are unsure what to do or say in social situations and, as a result, they often appear shy and reserved (Petrides, 2009, p. 10).

High scores on Well-being reflect a generalised sense of well-being (a good or satisfactory condition of existence; a state characterized by health, happiness, and prosperity), extending from past achievements to future expectations. Overall, individuals with high scores feel positive, happy, and fulfilled. In contrast, individuals with low scores tend to have low self-regard and to be disappointed about their life as it is at present (Petrides, 2009, p. 10).

Apart from the four factors of broad relevance presented above, TEIQue also measures fifteen facets of Adaptability, Assertiveness, Emotion perception, Emotion expression, Emotion management, Emotion regulation, Impulsiveness, Relationships, Self-esteem, Self-motivation, Social awareness, Stress management, Trait empathy, Trait happiness, and Trait optimism. A brief description of all the facets is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1 The adult sampling domain of trait emotional intelligence (Petrides, 2009)

Facets	High scorers perceive themselves as…
Adaptability	flexible and willing to adapt to new conditions
Assertiveness	forthright, frank and willing to stand up for their rights
Emotion perception	clear about their own and other people's feelings
Emotion expression	capable of communicating their feelings to others
Emotion management (others)	capable of influencing other people's feelings
Emotion regulation	capable of controlling their emotions
Impulsiveness (low)	reflective and less likely to give in to their urges
Relationships	capable of having fulfilling personal relationships
Self-esteem	successful and self-confident
Self-motivation	driven and unlikely to give up in the face of adversity
Social awareness	accomplished networkers with excellent social skills
Stress management	capable of withstanding pressure and regulating stress
Trait empathy	capable of taking someone else's perspective
Trait happiness	cheerful and satisfied with their lives
Trait optimism	confident and likely to "look on the bright side" of life

What is important to highlight is the fact that all of the fifteen specific facets are linked to their corresponding factor of broad relevance. More specifically, Emotionality comprises the following facets: trait Empathy, Emotion perception, Emotion expression and Relationships. The Sociability factor of broad relevance consists of Emotion management, Assertiveness and Social awareness. Well-being includes such facets as trait Happiness, trait Optimism and Self-esteem. The last of the four factors, Self-control, encompasses Stress management, Impulsiveness (low) and Emotion regulation. It is important to note that the facets of Adaptability and Self-motivation were not keyed to any factor, but feed directly into the global trait EI score (Petrides, 2009).

1.4 Other personality constructs used in SLA research

Although the set of the "Big Five" personality factors is the most dominant model of personality structure in contemporary personality psychology, there are some other personality constructs that are also very popular in SLA research. Among these we could enumerate the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), which is a self-report instrument that is based on Eysenck's theory of personality (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). It is based on Eysenck's three-component construct (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975), which identifies three principal personality dimensions, contrasting (1) Extraversion with Introversion, (2) Neuroticism and Emotionality with Emotional stability, and (3) Psychoticism and Tough-mindedness with Tender-mindedness (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 13). There is some overlapping between the Eysenckian personality model and the "Big Five" as the "Big Five" construct retains Eysenck's first two dimensions, but replaces Psychoticism with three additional dimensions of Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness to experience. A wide variety of empirical studies have tested these models and found that they provide a good representation of the central features of personality (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 13).

Another very popular construct in SLA is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) based on Jung's theory of three bipolar types: Extraversion–Introversion, Sensing–Intuiting, and Thinking–Feeling (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 18). However, the MBTI constructed by Myers and Briggs (1976) consists of four dichotomies as the Judging-Perceiving one was added by the authors to Jung's taxonomy. The four dichotomies targeted by the MBTI are as follows: *Extraversion–Introversion,* referring to where people prefer to focus their attention and get their energy from: the *outer world* of people and activity or their *inner world* of ideas and experiences; *Sensing–Intuition,* referring to how people perceive the world

and gather information; *Thinking–Feeling,* referring to how people prefer to arrive at conclusions and make decisions; *Judging–Perceiving,* referring to how people prefer to deal with the outer world and take action (Ehrman, 1996). The MBTI requires people to make forced choices and decide on one pole of each of the four preferences. The permutation of the preferences yields sixteen possible combinations called *types*, usually marked by the four initial letters of the preferences (because two components start with an 'I,' 'intuition' is marked with the letter 'N') Dörnyei (2005, p. 20). As a result, each informant might be assigned to one of the sixteen groups (ISTJ, ISFJ, INFJ, INTJ, ISTP, ISFP, INFP, INTP, ESTP, ESFP, ENFP, ENTP, ESTJ, ESFJ, ENFJ, ENTJ); for example, Myers' own type preference was Introversion–Intuition–Feeling–Perceiving (INFP). The 16 MBTI types have been found to be remarkably valid because, as Ehrman (1996) explained, the combinations are more than the sum of the parts. They outline real, recognizable character types and thus the inventory has proved to be useful in a wide variety of contexts (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 20). What is important to note is that the use of the term *indicator* in the title of the MBTI, is related to the fact that the dimensions of the MBTI do not refer to traditional scales ranging from positive to negative. Rather, they indicate various aspects of one's psychological set-up and, depending on their combinations, every type can have positive or negative effects in a specific life domain (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 20). Ehrman (1996) noted that the MBTI personality dimensions have cognitive style correlates and called the MBTI factors *personality styles* and not *personality traits.* Consequently, it was highlighted that within the domain of psychology the MBTI is considered a personality type inventory and not a personality test (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 20).

1.5 Conclusions

The aim of the present chapter was to provide some definitions of personality as well as a brief overview of the most popular personality constructs used in SLA research. We have focused mostly on the "Big Five" personality model as it is currently the most dominant model of personality structure (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). Trait EI was another personality construct that was discussed in a great detail since it has been conceptualised as a lower-order personality trait, which correlated well with several higher-order personality traits from the "Big Five" domain (Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki, 2007). When it comes to other very popular personality constructs used in SLA, both the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator were presented.

The next chapter is aimed to present the overview of the literature concerning the possible relationship between higher and lower-order personality traits and various aspects of second language (L2) learning taking into account different measures and social contexts of L2 use.

CHAPTER TWO

PERSONALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND USE

2.1 Introduction

It has been widely acknowledged that personality traits are important factors in determining our behaviour. Within the realm of educational research, the main question that has been posed concerned a possible relationship between personality traits and the effectiveness of learning. Although it is to be highlighted that personality scales are not scales of ability, personality might determine our preferences and "what we feel comfortable with" (Ehrman, 1996, p.101). Consequently, as a result of practice, we might develop skills associated with these preferences that are at the same time deeply encoded in our personality profile (Bielska, 2006, p. 14). Even though personality has been listed as the variable potentially related either directly or indirectly to both the process and the product of the learning process, studies conducted over the years reported results that were often varied and inconclusive (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Below we are to have a closer look at these studies and discuss the relationship between personality traits and second language learning and use while taking into account various settings and contexts of SLA.

2.2 Personality and learning

Before focusing solely on the relationship between personality traits and second language learning it is important to start our considerations with a brief overview of studies that have investigated the link between personality and the process of learning in general. Many researchers (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003a, 2003b; Farsides & Woodfield, 2003; Lounsbury, Sundstrom, Loveland, & Gibson, 2003) have tried to address the question of how psychological dispositions could affect learning, but the emerging overall picture was rather blurred. One of the reasons explaining this situation could be the fact that the relationship

between personality factors and learning achievement is often indirect as it is mediated by various modifying contextual variables. Dörnyei & Ryan (2015, p. 28) noted that:

> "One can argue that we should not expect many strong linear relationships (expressed, e.g., by correlations) between individual personality and achievement because successful learners can combine their personality features to best effect by utilizing their specific strengths and compensating for their possible weaknesses in adjustment to the particular learning environment."

As suggested above, there is some considerable evidence that personality factors interact with numerous variables inherent to the social context or the learning situation itself, which consequently might lead to potential problems in reaching conclusive results (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Another important reason for getting inconclusive results might be the fact that when it comes to the relationship between personality traits and academic success "we find differences among the interrelated primary traits in terms of their impact on learning" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 27), reporting for example only a marginal relationship between Neuroticism and learning outcomes, but failing to address the fact that the mentioned relationship is typically much stronger when considering Anxiety as a facet of Neuroticism. Another important issue raised by Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), concerned operationalisation of academic achievement as there is no consensus on how to measure it. Consequently, different studies have used different criteria for defining and measuring academic success as well as different perspectives (psychological vs linguistic) while addressing the topic. Aiken (1999, p. 161, cited in Dörnyei, 2005) pointed out that we are unlikely to achieve more accurate predictions because:

> "For the most part, what we have in psychology, and in the psychology of personality in particular, is a collection of interrelated assertions concerning human behaviour, cognition, and feelings, but far less than a systematic structure from which unerring predictions and explanations can be made."

At the same time, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) found that global personality traits were implicated in the learning process primarily not via their influence on general academic achievement and learning outcomes but rather through language-related attitudes, anxiety, perceived competence, and motivation.

Although the emerging overall picture is rather mixed, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p. 25) noted that some patterns did seem to emerge over the

years. Within the "Big Five" paradigm, the two dimensions that are intuitively most closely related to learning in general terms were Openness to experience and Conscientiousness (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2012). There is some evidence for these positive associations, and especially Conscientiousness has produced consistent results (Kappe & van der Flier, 2012). Leeson, Ciarrochi and Heaven (2008, p. 630) report that some research findings also suggest that such "Big Five" factors as Conscientiousness and Agreeableness account for unique variance in achievement after IQ has been taken into account (Conard, 2006; Farsides & Woodfield, 2003; Laidra, Pullman, & Allik, 2007). Extraversion, on the other hand, has been found to have a negative relationship with academic success (O'Connor & Paunonen, 2007) due to the introverts' greater ability to consolidate learning, lower distractibility, and better study habits. Similarly, Neuroticism has also displayed a negative relation with learning achievement due to the anxiety factor that it subsumes (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 25). Some other studies (Farsides & Woodfield, 2003) found a positive correlation between Agreeableness and enhanced grade point averages or reported a consistent positive relationship between Conscientiousness and examination performance and a negative correlation with academic performance (Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham, 2003). Komarraju, Karau, Schmeck, & Avdic (2011, p. 472) investigated the relationship between the "Big Five" personality traits, learning styles, and academic achievement in the case of 308 college students. They found that Conscientiousness and Agreeableness positively related with all four learning styles, that is synthesis analysis, methodical study, fact retention, and elaborative processing, while Neuroticism negatively correlated with all of these four learning styles. At the same time, Extraversion and Openness to experience were reported to correlate positively with elaborative processing.

Additionally, Leeson, Ciarrochi and Heaven (2008) highlighted the fact that a large body of evidence suggests that school achievement might be related not only to some major personality dimensions such as the "Big Five" but also to lower-order personality traits (cf. Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2005). They further claimed that it is possible to identify various "classes" of factors associated with school performance (Johnson, McGue, & Iacono, 2006) including, for example, intelligence, family factors, peers, motivational factors, and others. The results of their longitudinal study that aimed to predict grades of six hundred and thirty-nine high school students by using the cognitive ability and three positive thinking variables – self-esteem, hope, and attributional style proved the importance of personality in predicting academic achievement as hope, positive attributional style and

cognitive ability predicted higher grades. At the same time, self-esteem was reported to be a less consistent predictor of academic performance. Structural equation modelling revealed some significant paths from cognitive ability, gender, and a second-order positive thinking factor to grades suggesting that intelligence, gender, and positive thinking each play a unique role in predicting academic performance in youth (Leeson, Ciarrochi & Heaven, 2008, p. 630).

Below we present an overview of the resent research on personality traits narrowing it down to the field of second language acquisition (SLA). It focuses exclusively on studies that researched possible relationships between higher and lower-order personality traits and various aspects of SLA as well as L2 use. At the same time, we will take into account different social and learning contexts in the hope of presenting a more clear picture of a very complex dynamics between personality traits and a process of second language learning and L2 use.

2.3 Personality and SLA

One of the central tasks of SLA research is to try to explain the great individual variability that exists in the rate and outcome of L2 acquisition (Gass, 1988). Dewaele (2009, p. 623) noted that:

> "One common observation is that some people seem to be better at learning and using second languages than others. The intriguing question is why? Traditional individual differences (ID) researchers tried to pin down internal characteristics of a person as the cause of the observed differences. A more dynamic perspective is emerging that acknowledges the complexity of second language acquisition (SLA). Internal characteristics may play a role, but only in interaction with the context. People are never in the same context from the start, and their previous histories shape their future trajectories."

It has frequently been observed that learners attain highly different levels of L2 proficiency even though the circumstances in which these learners acquire a target language are very similar (van Daele, Housen, Pierrard & Debruyn, 2006, p. 213). Researchers within the field of SLA as well as foreign language teachers will know from experience that equal exposure to a foreign language will not result in equal levels of competence in L2. As a result, they were always interested in the causes of this variation in order to manipulate them and stimulate the development of the foreign language. Researchers were also interested in the search for scientifically viable constructs or categories that will characterise what is

variant and invariant in the acquisition and use of a foreign language (Dewaele, 2009, p. 624). Even though we are still in the process of searching for categories and variables that are common to L2 learners as those which clearly differentiate them, there seems to be a wide agreement on the fact that the inter-individual variation can be accounted for by learner-internal factors among which we can enumerate cognitive, affective and personality variables (Johnson, 2001). Cognitive factors include various forms of mental information processing (Ellis, 1990), affective ones involve among others motivation and anxiety (Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003), whereas personality variables are mostly associated with a set of personality traits (Skehan, 1989 cited in van Daele, Housen, Pierrard & Debruyn, 2006). However, we need to bear in mind that when it comes to personality traits and linguistic measurement in the second language only a few significant relationships have been identified even though the intuition that certain stable and distinctive personality traits may be linked to success in SLA has prevailed among many applied linguists over recent decades (Dewaele, 2013a). This search for the psychological sources of individual differences in SLA has been compared to the search for the Holy Grail where researchers:

"like Arthur's knights, stumbling through the night, are guided by a stubborn belief that something must be there, glimpsing tantalizing flashes of light from a distance, only to discover that their discoveries looked rather pale in the daylight" (Dewaele, 2009, p. 625).

Dewaele (2013a) further explains that:

"The fact that findings have been relatively meagre may be linked to the intrinsic interdisciplinary nature of SLA and the need to combine considerable theoretical knowledge and methodological skill in personality psychology and social psychology, as well as in applied linguistics, educational psychology, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics (p. 625). Moreover, the personality variables of language learners interact with a complex and dynamic socioeducational context, which means that it becomes very difficult to disentangle the effect of personality among a multitude of cognitive, social, and situational factors that contribute to SLA and L2 production. Indeed, the effect of some personality traits can remain invisible in some situations or tasks but may surface in other circumstances " (Dewaele, 2013a, p. 1)

For quite some time there has been a widespread perception that good language learners are characterised by certain personality traits. Lalonde, Lee and Gardner (1987) found that a vast majority of teachers pointed to

some prominent personality features that the good learners are equipped with. Among these characteristics described were: sociability, flexibility, assertiveness, perseverance, imagination, independence, involvedness, as well as being organised, meticulous, inquisitive and active. Naiman et al. (1978) also reported some of these traits (meticulous, persevering, sociable and independent) as characteristics of a good language learner. It could be noted that all mentioned dispositions are in fact facets of the higher and lower-order personality traits. Sociability and Assertiveness could be linked to the "Big Five" personality trait of Extraversion as well as trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) as Sociability is one of four TEI factors of broad relevance and Assertiveness is one of the 15 facets of TEI. Flexibility, involvedness, imagination and being active falls well into "Big Five" facets describing Openness to experience. When it comes to perseverance, inquisitiveness as well as being organised and meticulous, we could relate these characteristics to the "Big Five" trait of Conscientiousness, and independence could be linked to TEI facet of Self-esteem. This is in line with general tendency reported by Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) that Conscientiousness, Openness to experience and Extraversion seem to be the most often reported dimensions that influence the process of leaning. Ehrman (2008) analysed the psychological profile of the top two percent of best language learners out of 3,145 informants taking part in her study. The results showed that the only type that was significantly overrepresented was introverted-intuitive-thinking-judging (INTJ in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) types. Apparently, the best learners in the researched sample were intuitive, logical and precise thinkers, who were able to exercise judgment and tended to have introverted personalities (Ehrman, 2008), a finding which runs contrary to much of the literature, and, even, to pedagogical intuition (Dewaele, 2013a). In line with the previous study, Biedroń (2011) reported that two personality factors of Openness to experience and Extraversion had the strongest effect on foreign language aptitude. Openness to experience had a positive effect on foreign language aptitude, whereas Extraversion affected foreign language aptitude negatively.

Dewaele (2013a) noted that while there is abundant evidence that both higher and lower-order personality traits determine behaviour in general, it is less clear to what extent they affect SLA and L2 production. Therefore, a short overview of some of SLA research findings linked to personality traits will be presented below.

2.3.1 Extraversion/Introversion

The personality trait that has undoubtedly received the greatest attention in SLA is Extraversion (Ellis, 2004). However, before presenting the results of the studies that have investigated this personality trait in relation to language learning it is important to present some biological characteristics that differentiate extraverted and introverted personality types. According to Wilson (1977) and Ajzen (1988), Extraversion is most probably the only personality trait to be tied to specific neurophysical mechanisms. In the same line, Eysenck (1981) suggested that introverts possess a higher level of arousal in the autonomous nervous system and in the cortex. As further explained by Dewaele & Furnham (1999, p. 512):

> "This difference in arousal level would explain the different behavior and preferences of extraverts and introverts. Extraverts are underaroused; introverts are overaroused. Because any individual operates ideally with a moderate level of cortical arousal, the more extraverted will be inclined to look for external stimulation to reach an optimal level, whereas the more introverted people do not need this stimulation and will thus rather try to avoid overarousing situations."

Cortical arousal mentioned above has a direct influence on the verbal learning and memory (Wilson, 1977) as speech production involves both short-term and long-term memory (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999). Some studies (Eysenck, 1981; Kleinsmith & Kaplan, 1963; Matthews, 1992) reported that extraverts were superior to introverts on verbal learning tasks involving short-term memory, whereas introverts outperformed extraverts on long-term recall. These differences were explained by the levels of the arousal that could affect the parallel processing in introverts. It has been further suggested that extraverts' superior verbal processing functions may help in conversation with others (Matthews & Deary, 1998) and that superior short-term memory might be reinforced by other factors such as better physiological stress resistance and lower levels of anxiety (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999, p. 515). Shapiro and Alexander's (1969) study showed extraverts' better resistance to stress, which was later confirmed by Eysenck (1974) in the study researching the effects of stress and time pressure on oral fluency in a word association task. It was reported that high activation enhanced performance for extraverts but reduced it for introverts. Some other research also suggested that type of task might be of crucial importance as extraverts were fast but less accurate in complex cognitive tasks whereas introverts were slower but more accurate (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). Similar results were suggested by Helode

(1985) and Rawlings and Carnie (1989) who found that extraverts were superior on verbal processing tests only under conditions of time pressure. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) pointed out that the fact that anxious person tries to compensate for the reduced efficiency by increased effort (Eysenck, 1979) might have some important linguistic consequences. Another study by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) that investigated the role of global personality traits on the self-perceived frequency of communication in a second language found that Extraversion correlated negatively with second language anxiety, suggesting that extraverts were reported to be more anxious while communicating in the second language (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999, p. 516). Dewaele and Furnham (1999, p. 518) have also noted that more recent research suggests that there are some differences in cortical blood flow patterns between extraverts and introverts (Stenberg, Risberg, Warkentin, & Rosen, 1990; Stenberg, Wendt, & Risberg, 1993) reporting that extraverts exhibit a greater left-hemisphere activation (Berenbaum & Williams, 1994), which might have direct linguistic consequences as left-hemisphere stores the main language modules. Dewaele and Furnham (1999, p. 518) highlighted that there is:

> "a clear evidence of a link between physiological characteristics of introverts and extraverts and differences in social behaviour. The extraverts' superior short-term memory, their lower social anxiety, their lower language anxiety, and their better resistance to stress in environments with high information flows (particularly of verbal stimuli) and time pressure may not necessarily affect the process of language learning but these factors certainly influence extraverts' speech production."

For a long time extraverts were expected to be better language learners as they are linguistically more active outside the classroom, thus potentially increasing the amount of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) as well as comprehensible language output (Swain, 1985, 1993). However, a majority of studies that focused mainly on the effect of extraversion on language learning typically showed no correlation with language test results (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999). Whenever Extraversion scores were correlated with results from written tests in the second language (Busch, 1982; Carell et al. 1996; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995), no significant correlations were reported. Nevertheless, introverts have been found to do slightly better on L2 vocabulary tests (Carrell, Prince, & Astika, 1996; van Daele, Housen, Pierrard, & Debruyn, 2006). At the same time some significant correlations between Extraversion and linguistic variables appeared when oral communicative speech was addressed in the

study (Dewaele, 1993a, 1993b, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1998; Dewaele and Furnham, 2000; Hassan, 2001; Ockey, 2011; Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2016, 2017; van Deale et al. 2006).

Dewaele's studies (1993a, 1993b, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1998) on variation in L2 French interlanguage reported some systematic links between Extraversion and L2 fluency, formality and complexity. Informants of these studies were recorded in an informal (relaxed chats about participants hobbies, studies etc.) and formal (oral exam) situation. In general, correlation analyses revealed that the differences between extraverts and introverts were the strongest in formal situations where extraverts were reported to have higher speech rates and their speech styles were more implicit when compared to introverts. According to Dewaele and Furnham (2000, p. 360) the choice of speech style depends on the need of the speaker to be unambiguously understood. Consequently, it was reflected in the proportion of deictical word classes in the speech extracts and was measured by a separate factor analysis performed on the proportion at token-level of nouns, determiners, prepositions, verbs, pronouns, adverbs and conjunctions. The nouns, modifiers and prepositions obtained strong negative loadings on this factor, as opposed to the pronouns, adverbs, and verbs which obtained high positive loadings. Therefore, the nouns, modifiers and prepositions were situated near the explicit end of this dimension, in contrast to the pronouns, adverbs, and verbs on the implicit end on the continuum (Dewaele & Furnham, 2000, p. 360). The authors noted that a speaker who wants to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation of his/her words relies as little as possible on the spatio-temporal context they share with the interlocutor(s). This is achieved by explicit and precise description of the elements of the context needed to disambiguate the expression, hence the decrease of deictical words. As these deictical words are short and of high-frequency, they can be retrieved and articulated more quickly. As a result, any decrease of deictical words will inevitably hamper fluency (Dewaele & Furnham, 2000, p. 360). Dewaele and Furnham (2000) reported that a measure of implicitness-explicitness in their study showed that the implicitness dimension was found to correlate with Extraversion both in the informal and formal situation. At the same time, extraverts omitted "ne" in negation in a formal situation more often than the introverts and their lexical richness scores were significantly lower in comparison to introverted informants of the study. Extraverts were also found to commit more semantic errors in the formal situation. What is important to mention is that oral exam grades did not correlate significantly with Extraversion, which was explained by the fact that even tough extraverts' higher fluency provided them with a slight advantage

during oral exams, the overall score relied mostly on morpholexical accuracy which was not significantly higher for extraverts (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999, p. 531).

Another study on L2 oral proficiency and the personality trait of Extraversion by Ożańska-Ponikwia (2016) also examined potential links between the personality trait in question (measured by NEO-FFI by Costa and McCrae, 1989) and L2 oral fluency in two verbal tasks that were an informal conversation (typically about everyday topics like hobbies or plans for the future) and abstract description (describing abstract pictures) among 43 Polish high-school students. In both situations, informants of the study were recorded and rated by independent judges based on the national guidelines for scoring L2 oral performance during the national school-leaving examination. The results of the study showed that there were no statistically significant differences between extraverts and introverts in L2 oral fluency scores when taking into account an informal conversation part of the data. However, during the abstract description part extraverts scored significantly higher, which could suggest that their lower L2 anxiety and superior short-term memory allowed them to be more fluent in the foreign language in comparison to introverted participants of the study. These results are also in line with some previous findings of MacIntyre, Clément, and Noels (2007) which showed that the learning situation interacts with learners' degree of Extraversion as introverts were found to perform best after having studied in a very familiar situation, while the extraverts performed best in conditions involving a moderate degree of novelty. Similar results were also reported by Dewaele and Furnham (2000) who researched French oral interlanguage of 25 Flemish university students and related this to their Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) scores. The correlational analyses between Extraversion scores and six linguistic variables reflecting fluency and accuracy revealed that extravert multilinguals are more fluent than introvert multilinguals, especially in stressful interpersonal situations. The authors suggested that the formality of the situation, or rather the interpersonal stress that it provoked, had the strongest effect on the speech production process of the introverts.

Another two studies that we are to present also investigated personality traits of Extraversion-Introversion in relation to L2 speaking fluency and pronunciation accuracy but this time among Arabic and Japanese L2 learners of English. Hassan (2001) reported that Extraversion-Introversion positively correlated with English pronunciation accuracy. In this study, personality traits of Extraversion-Introversion were analysed with regard to speaking proficiency among 45 Arabic speaking Egyptian college

students. Extraverted students were more accurate in their English language pronunciation than the introverted ones, and Extraversion was found to be a significant predictor of pronunciation accuracy in English. Ockey (2011) investigated the extent to which self-consciousness and assertiveness are explanatory variables of L2 oral ability among three hundred sixty first-year Japanese university students who were studying English as a foreign language. In his study personality was measured with the Japanese version of the NEO-PI-R (Shimonaka, Nakazato, Gondo, & Takayama, 2002), and L2 oral ability was assessed with an institutionalized group oral discussion test in which performances were judged for pronunciation, fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills. An analysis of covariance indicated that Assertiveness is a significant explanatory variable of L2 oral ability. At the same time, Ockey (2011, p. 987) reported that several facets of Extraversion such as Assertiveness, Warmth, Activity and Excitement seeking were significant explanatory variables of English L2 fluency ratings of Japanese learners.

Some interesting results were also reported in another study by Ożańska-Ponikwia (2017) that aimed to research the relationship between Extraversion-Introversion, measured by NEO-FFI personality test and various aspects of the L2 learning and L2 use. The results of the study showed that Extraversion was linked to variables that favour L2 speaking both inside the classroom (speaking skills, pronunciation skills, active participation in the EFL classes) as well as outside of it (L2 use, starting a conversation in the L2). Notably, Extraversion was also linked to EFL grades, however, only when speaking skills were focused on during the EFL classes. This suggests that links between Extraversion scores and linguistic variables might depend on the type of linguistic material used as well as the specific FL skills practiced during the EFL classes (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2017, p. 103).

When it comes to Extraversion-Introversion and learning strategies, there is a number of studies that have focused on the relationship between learners' language learning strategies and their personality traits. A study by Bielska (2006) that used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator when researching various aspects of foreign language learning among 381 secondary school students, noted that extraverts reported a higher frequency of stress-related affective strategies use (such as using relaxation or making positive statements) as well as contextualization and social strategies (such as starting a conversation in English, asking questions in English, or asking for help English speakers) in comparison to the introverted informants of the study. The author explained that such results could reflect extraverts' orientation towards the outside word manifesting

itself in their preference to communicate, their lack of inhibition in initiating conversations, and their tendency to take the initiative in their work and relationships (Bielska, 2006, p. 174). Wakamoto (2000) studied the relationship between Extraversion-Introversion and language learning strategies among 222 female students. He found that Extraversion significantly correlated with functional practice strategies and social-affective strategies where the focus of practice is on actual language use, not on the forms of the language. Functional practice strategies such as starting conversations in English or asking questions in English are the practices taking place in real and naturalistic settings. Extraversion was also positively correlated with social-affective strategies, those that mediate the relationships between people or control one's affective domain. Some research linking Extraversion with functional practice strategies in real communicative L2 situations has shown that extraverts tend to prefer social strategies, comprising cooperation with others or asking for clarification, and also use more functional practice strategies such as seeking opportunities to use a foreign language outside the class environment (Wakamoto, 2009 cited in Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2017, p. 98). A study by Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) also reported some significant correlation between Extraversion and strategic competence use that involves the planning and monitoring of communicative behavior among young teenage L2 learners in the Netherlands.

To conclude, is important to note that the theoretical considerations concerning neurophysical differences among extraverted and introverted learners, addressed in this section, were clearly reflected in findings reported by a number of empirical studies presented above.

2.3.2 Neuroticism

Unfortunately, little research has examined the potential effect of Neuroticism on second language learning. Emotional-stability that is the opposite trait on the Neuroticism vs Emotional-stability continuum was reported to strengthen some basic L1 skills, but this tendency was not reported for the second language acquisition (Verhoeven & Vermeer, 2002). Biedroń (2011) reported that Neuroticism was negatively correlated to foreign language aptitude. Williams (1971) found that the group of students who were nonparticipating in the classroom activities scored significantly higher on insecurity and Neuroticism and significantly lower on self-esteem and intellectual productivity in comparison to students who were characterised as active participants or intermediate participants. Dewaele (2009) suggested that there is every reason to believe that this

relation holds for the foreign language classroom, however, no research confirming this hypothesis was reported so far. The higher-order personality trait of Neuroticism was not often reported to influence SLA significantly. However, the situation is quite different when we take Anxiety, which is a lower-order facet of Neuroticism, into consideration. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, p. 284) noted that Foreign-language anxiety (FLA) was defined as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with the second language (L2) contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning". It was further explained that, foreign-language classroom anxiety (FLCA) can be defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 128). It was noted by Daubney, Dewaele & Gkonou (2017, p. 1) that:

> "Among other things, it can impede the learning of the target language and hinder academic success; lead learners to abandon their studies; engender negative attitudes towards the target language and its respective culture(s); diminish the willingness to communicate; create counterproductive tensions among a class of language learners; sow the seeds of self-doubt in the minds of learners regarding their identity, feelings of competence and degree of self-esteem; and have a corrosive influence on the very lifeblood of L2 learning itself –the enthusiasm and motivation necessary to engage and embrace another language other than one's own".

What is more, anxiety can be conceptualised at various levels of abstraction, which leads to multiple perceptions of the construct. Consequently, Şimşek & Dörnyei (2017, p. 51) noted that some scholars regard it as part of personality (e.g. Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Simpson, 1980), others as a primary emotion (e.g. Dewaele, 2010; Gray, 1982; Spielberger, 1972), and it has also been mentioned as a key motivational component (e.g. Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

When it comes to personality and FLA, a number of studies investigated the possible link between Neuroticism, language anxiety and different variables related to FLA. MacIntyre and Choros (1996, p. 11) linked language anxiety with Emotional stability (the positive end of the Neuroticism dimension) and noted that the individuals with lower Emotional stability might be more prone to language anxiety. In another study, Dewaele (2002) reported a link between Neuroticism and foreign language anxiety (FLA) among Flemish learners of French and English. Even though Neuroticism was found to be unrelated to foreign-language attitudes and foreign-language grades of Flemish students (Dewaele, 2007), a tendency toward a positive relationship was observed in the

English L3 of Flemish learners (Dewaele, 2002). In his next study that investigated the link between Psychoticism, Extraversion and Neuroticism and levels of FLCA in L2, L3 and L4, Dewaele (2013b) reported a positive link between Neuroticism and FLCA in the L2, L3 but not in the L4. Another study (Wang, 2010) that focused on the effect of personality variables on FLA among Chinese learners of English found that learners with higher levels of English speaking anxiety scored higher on trait Anxiety as well as on unwillingness to communicate with others. Additionally, high level of speaking anxiety was negatively correlated with L2 English achievement (Dewaele, 2017). In line with previous studies, Şimşek and Dörnyei (2017) confirmed a strong positive association between Neuroticism and language anxiety variables, which indicated that the stronger someone's general anxiety tendency, the more likely he/she was to realise it in the language classroom setting; in other words, emotionally stable individuals were likely to suffer less from language anxiety.

Even though FLCA could be linked to any activity in the foreign language, it is most typically highest for speaking as L2 production and reception impose higher demands on short-term memory, which was further explained by Dewaele (2009, p. 632):

> "Dewaele (2002b) argued that the effect of introversion on the catecholamine system is similar to that generated by anxiety. Anxiety seems to be linked to levels of norepinephrine, which also seems to affect the capacity and/or efficiency of the short-term memory. Excessive levels of dopamine and norepinephrine impair performance. Introverts have been found to be more anxious, which could further reduce the available processing capacity of working memory (Gershuny, Sher, Rossy, & Bishop, 2000). The cumulated effects of both introversion and anxiety could seriously affect fluency in L2 production. Communicative Anxiety tends to co-occur with high stress, short-term memory overload, and breakdown in automatic processing".

Research on FLA/FLCA has strong pedagogical implications, as language anxiety has been reported to interfere negatively with L2 learning and L2 performance (Horwitz, 2001 in Dewaele, 2013a). Dewaele (2013a, p. 5) also mentioned that :

> "variation in FLA and FLCA has been linked to various sociobiographical variables, quality and quantity of affordances through the knowledge of typologically related or other languages, age, gender, academic achievement, prior history of visiting foreign countries, prior high-school experience with foreign languages, expected overall average for a current

language course, perceived scholastic competence, and perceived self-worth (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; Dewaele, 2010)".

What also needs to be highlighted is the fact that although anxiety was presented as a variable negatively influencing L2 proficiency, especially when taking speaking in foreign language into account, it was also reported to interact with enjoyment in L2 learning process (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) found that a lack of anxiety did not imply high levels of enjoyment but instead that more successful and active L2 learners tended to have higher levels of enjoyment that were interspersed with some degree of anxiety.

2.3.3 Openness to experience

Openness to experience encompasses aspects of intellectual curiosity, creativity, imagination, and aesthetic sensibility (Dewaele, 2009, p. 629). Individuals with high scores on Openness to experience have "a greater predisposition to engage in intellectually stimulating activities that lead to higher knowledge acquisition" (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2006, p. 81). At the same time, Ehrman (2008, p. 66) noted that learners who score high on Openness to experience "concentrate on meaning, possibilities, and usually accept constant change". They are typically seeking hidden patterns, are high ability readers, and can pick up native-like ways of self-expression. Even though it seems to be a good predictor of foreign-language learning achievement, there is surprisingly little research examining the effect of Openness to experience on SLA. One of the studies that focused on the "Big Five" personality traits in relation to L2 communicative competence was the one by Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002). The purpose of this investigation was to examine the communicative competence of young teenage language learners in the Netherlands in relation to their personality characteristics. Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) operationalised communicative competence in terms of three main constituents of organisational competence, strategic competence, and pragmatic competence based on the theoretical framework for communicative competence developed by Bachman and Palmer (1996). In their model organizational knowledge includes both grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge includes both knowledge of sociolinguistic rules and functional knowledge. Strategic competence involves the ability to make the most effective use of available abilities to carry out a given task. Strategic competence is therefore conceived of "as a set of metacognitive components, or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive

management function for language use, as well as in other cognitive activities" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 70). In Verhoeven and Vermeer's (2002) study the organisational competence was measured by standardised discrete-point tests of vocabulary, grammar, and reading; Strategic competence was measured by two rating scales judging the children's planning of communicative behaviour and monitoring communication, whereas pragmatic competence was assessed by student performance on eight different role-play tasks. The results of the study showed that only Openness to experience correlated substantially with the linguistic abilities of the children across all three competencies. Extraversion was associated only with strategic competence, Conscientiousness had a moderate correlation with organisational competence, whereas Agreeableness and Neuroticism were unrelated to L2 communicative competence (Verhoeven & Vermeer, 2002). Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p. 31) note that these findings indicate that if scholars include in their research paradigm a more elaborate conception of L2 proficiency than a global L2 proficiency measure, stronger and more meaningful relationships can be identified with various facets of personality.

Another interesting study by Öz (2016) sought to investigate the role of personality traits on metacognitive awareness among 102 pre-service English teachers in a Turkish context. The International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 2001) and the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI; Schraw & Dennison, 1994) were used to measure the participants' perceptions of their personality traits and metacognitive awareness. The results revealed a significant relationship between personality traits and two major components of metacognitive awareness. Openness to experience was the strongest predictor of both knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition, followed by Extraversion that was linked to knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. Neuroticism was found to be negatively correlated with both metacognitive knowledge and regulation. These findings are important as they confirm previous findings showing a significant correlation between frequency of metacognitive strategies used and L2 English proficiency of college students in China (Sun, 2013) as well as academic achievement (Öz, 2015). When it comes to other aspects of L2 learning, Kaufman et al. (2010) investigated the association of individual differences in implicit learning with a variety of cognitive and personality variables. Structural equation modeling revealed that implicit learning was independently related to academic performance on two foreign language exams (French, German). Further, implicit learning was significantly associated with aspects of self-reported personality, including intuition, Openness to experience, and impulsivity

(Kaufman et al., 2010, p. 321). At the same time, quite recent study by Piechurska-Kuciel (2018) posits that Openness to experience may have a dual effect on students L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) levels. Her study reported that Openness to experience directly influenced L2 WTC through its stable character, shaping one's cognition, affect and behaviour. However, it was also noted that Openness to experience had a possible dual indirect impact on L2 WTC by mediating perceived communicative competence and language anxiety. Piechurska-Kuciel (2018, p. 190) concluded that Openness to experience could be regarded a significant predictor of L2 WTC.

2.3.4 Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness refers to the degree of organisation, persistence, and motivation in goal-directed behaviour (Costa & McCrae, 1992a). Consequently, individuals who score high on Conscientiousness and tend to be well organised, reliable, hard-working, self-disciplined and persevering could be expected to be also hard-working language learners (Dewaele, 2013a). Nevertheless, there is, once again, very limited research that would confirm or reject anticipated effect of Conscientiousness on learners' success in SLA. Kang (2012) examined the relationship between personality traits and language learning strategies of 250 Korean university students and reported that personality traits significantly correlated with six strategy groups in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). These results further indicated that Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, and Extraversion had strong positive relationships with most of the language learning strategies, with Conscientiousness and Openness to experience as the strongest significant predictors. Another study by Ayhan and Türkyilmaz (2015) investigated the relationship between the use of metacognitive strategies and personality traits among Bosnian university students. They found that Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Openness to experience, and Agreeableness significantly correlated with metacognitive strategy use. Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) in their study described in detail in section 2.2.3. reported that Conscientiousness had a moderate effect on organisational competence measured by standardised vocabulary, grammar, and reading tests. Another study that showed some effect of Conscientiousness on success in SLA was the one by Wilson (2008) and reported that British students studying French L2 who scored higher on Conscientiousness were more likely to complete the course successfully (Wilson, 2008).

2.3.5 Agreeableness

Dewaele (2013a, p. 5) noted that "Agreeableness assesses the quality of one's interpersonal orientation along a continuum from compassion to antagonism in thoughts, feelings, and actions". Therefore, individuals who score high on this dimension are soft-hearted, good-natured, trusting, helpful, forgiving, gullible, and straightforward. In a recent study, Öz (2014) explored the relationship between the "Big Five" personality traits and prospective English teachers' willingness to communicate (WTC) in Turkey. His findings showed that Agreeableness, Extraversion and Openness to experience emerged as strong predictors of L2 WTC, explaining even 32.1% of the variance in participants' tendency to engage in communication. Another study by Pavičić, Takač and Požega (2011) that has also examined personality traits in relation to WTC, but this time among Croatian L2 learners, reported a significant relationship between personality traits (except for Neuroticism and Conscientiousness) and WTC. Pourfeiz's (2015) study sought to explore the relationship between global personality traits and language learners' attitudes towards foreign language learning in a Turkish context. It was reported that Agreeableness and Openness to experience emerged to be predictors of attitudes toward foreign language learning and explained 33% of its variability. Pourfeiz (2015, p. 427) noted that this might suggest that people with higher levels of Agreeableness as well as individuals being more open to new experiences, and also helpful and straightforward, are expected to display more positive attitudes toward foreign language learning and show more willingness to identify and interact with the members of L2 community. Consequently, it might encourage them to envisage themselves as being more competent in L2 and to manifest greater L2 achievement. Therefore, it could be concluded that although attitudes toward L2 learning, integrativeness, and motivation are considered by some researchers as central to successful learning a foreign language, personality traits can, in fact, help students to use their specific strengths, e.g. their cognitive abilities, to balance and compensate for their weaknesses (Dewaele, 2013a in Pourfeiz, 2015, p. 427).

2.3.6 Emotional intelligence

In the last few years, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been the object of intensive research in personality psychology. The EI construct was based on the potential individual differences in the extent to which people attend to, process, and utilise affect-laden information of intrapersonal (e.g.,

managing one's own emotions) or interpersonal (e.g., managing others' emotions) nature (Petrides & Furnham, 2003, p. 39). Even though the construct is very popular, relatively little research was done on the potential effect of the EI on various aspects of SLA. One of the studies that have investigated the potential link between higher-order personality traits (the "Big Five") as well as lower-order EI trait and frequency of L2 use was the one by Ożańska-Ponikwia (2016). In her study on Polish L2 learners of English, she found that self-reported degree of L2 use significantly correlated with the higher-order personality trait of Openness to experience and lower-order EI traits of Emotional stability, Emotion regulation, Assertiveness and Empathy. It was suggested (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2016, p.185) that since Openness to experience reflects the degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity and a preference for novelty and variety, it could be speculated that informants who are open to new experiences, as well as those who are capable of taking someone else's perspective into account (Empathy), will actively seek situations where their L2 could be used. At the same time it was reported that informants who tend to experience pleasant emotions and have a stable and calm personality (Emotional stability), as well as those who are capable of controlling their own emotions (Emotion regulation) and are forthright and frank (Assertiveness), seem to be using their L2 more often than those who do not possess such personality traits.

Dewaele, Petrides, and Furnham (2008) investigated the link between levels of trait EI and levels of communicative anxiety (CA) in the L1, L2, L3, and L4 of adult multilinguals. A significant negative relationship emerged between trait EI and CA in the different languages. This was interpreted as an indication that participants with higher levels of trait EI are better at regulating stress levels and emotional reactions in communicative interactions. The capacity to express oneself clearly and the ability to read an interlocutor's emotional state will therefore lead to lower levels of CA. On the whole, these results corroborate the hypothesis that the constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions that trait EI encompasses is related to the frequency of L2 use as well as inversely related to CA/FLA levels.

2.4 Personality in the study abroad and immigrant context

As it could be observed in the above section, higher-order and lower-order personality traits might have some direct or indirect influence on the process as well as the product of SLA. Even though the research findings presented above were linked to various aspects of L2 learning, they have

not differentiated contexts in which a foreign language cloud be acquired
and used. In this section, we will have a closer look at the studies that
researched potential effects of personality traits on SLA and language use
in study abroad and immigrant contexts.

2.4.1 Personality and Emotional intelligence
in the study abroad context

As noted by Hessel (2017), study abroad research has shown that the
linguistic gains made by study abroad participants are often subtle and
subject to substantial individual differences (Collentine, 2009; Freed,
1995; Kinginger, 2015; Sanz, 2014). As a consequence, there has been
considerable research interest in identifying factors that can account for
differential linguistic progress during study abroad to understand why
some students make substantially greater gains than others. Baker-Smemoe et
al. (2014) noted that second language gains during study abroad have been
related to several variables including length of stay (Llanes, 2011),
language use (Martinsen, Baker, Dewey, Bown, & Johnson, 2010), and
social network development (Isabelli-García, 2006), among others.
However, most studies have focused on only a few predictors in single
study abroad programs. Consequently, Baker-Smemoe et al. (2014) have
addressed various predictors of L2 gain of more than 100 native English
speakers participating in study abroad in Mexico, Spain, France, Egypt,
Russia, and China. Informants' language gains were correlated with
several predictors like personality (measured by the NEO Five-Factor
Inventory), social networks (size, dispersion, density, etc.), intercultural
sensitivity (measured by the Study Abroad Social Interaction Questionnaire
(SASIQ) developed by Dewey et al., 2013), amount of second language
use, gender, and age. The results demonstrated that pre-program competence
variables (pre-program proficiency and intercultural sensitivity) and
social/contextual variables (social network development) were greater
predictors of language gains than were learner attribute variables (age,
gender, or personality). In fact, results suggested that the development of
social networks as well as the pre-departure level of cultural sensitivity
were the variables that predicted most of the variance between gainers and
non-gainers in the researched sample. Additionally, although the
development of the social network played the greatest role, it is interesting
that two of the three variables that set gainers apart from non-gainers
(initial proficiency and cultural sensitivity) were related to preprogram
competence (Baker-Smemoe et al. 2014, p. 477). Another very interesting
finding that needs to be highlighted is that high gainers scored lower on

the preprogram proficiency measure than did the non-gainers, which was explained by potential difficulties in progressing up the proficiency scale once the proficiency level is high. The authors also reported that intercultural development prior to students' departure for their experiences abroad also predicted gains in their L2 skills, which was in line with evidence from the other studies that have uncovered a relationship between L2 acquisition and culture learning while abroad (Martinsen, 2010; Martinsen & Alvord, 2012; Vande Berg et al., 2009). This might suggest that students' abilities to deal effectively with other cultures affect their L2 learning, at least in the study abroad context (Baker-Smemoe et al.2014, p. 477). Yashima et al. (2002, cited in Dewaele, 2009, p. 636) showed that frequency and amount of L2 communication by Japanese students who participated in a study abroad program in the United States was related to satisfaction in the sojourn experience, and satisfaction in friendship with hosts. A higher perceived quality of human relationship with host family members was linked to more interest in intercultural communication. This, in turn, motivated students to put more effort into learning the L2, which led to further improvement in communicative skills and self-confidence. Basow and Gaugler (2017) have reported that sociocultural adjustment at the end of the study abroad semester was best predicted by a combination of individual and social factors. In particular, those who had less difficulty with sociocultural adjustment had stronger language skills initially as well as higher levels of social interactions with locals during their sojourn. A higher level of social interactions, in turn, mediated the effects of higher levels of open-mindedness and more positive homestay experiences. Some earlier studies also showed that developing social networks with the L1 users while abroad can facilitate language acquisition (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006; Whitworth, 2006). Dewaele (2009, p. 636) noted that research on immersion education and study abroad showed that increased contact with L2 typically boosts the acquisition of different areas of L2, including sociolinguistic competence (Mougeon, Rehner, & Nadasdi, 2004; Regan, 2005), sociopragmatic competence (Kinginger, 2004), and grammatical competence (Howard, 2005; Nadasdi, Mougeon, & Rehner, 2003). However, even if it was said to impact various aspects of L2 gain while studying abroad, it might still be insufficient to explain all the variance (Dewaele, 2009). Consequently, it could be speculated that personality characteristics that aid both adaptation as well as intercultural communication could also be considered important factors affecting study abroad outcomes, which are among many: broadening of one's world-view, greater cultural sensitivity, increased creativity and complex thinking, the development of new neural networks, and better career out-

comes (Clarke, Flaherty, Wright, & McMillen, 2009; Fischer, 2013; Kitsantas, 2004; Maddux, Bivolaru, Hafenbrack, Tadmor & Galinsky, 2014; Redden, 2016 cited in Basow & Gaugler, 2017).

Savicki et al. (2004) investigated contrasts, changes, and correlates among study abroad students and found that clusters of personality traits (e.g., Anxiety, Extraversion, Openness to experience, and Agreeableness) and coping strategies (e.g., active, planning, denial, and behavioural disengagement) were significantly related to intercultural adjustment. Harrison and Voelker (2008) researched cross-cultural adjustment of study abroad students and indicated that three sub-dimensions of EI were significantly related to a general adjustment in a host culture. Individuals with the higher Self-emotional appraisal, higher Others' emotional appraisal and higher Use of emotion exhibited stronger general adjustment than those who scored lower on these dimensions. Shu, McAbee and Ayman (2016) reported that traits related to engagement in interpersonal (i.e., Extraversion) and task-related (i.e., Conscientiousness) domains were related to higher levels of interaction and school-related adjustment, respectively. Another interesting study by Zimmermann and Neyer (2013) demonstrated that the residence abroad (RA) participants' pre-departure levels of Extraversion and Conscientiousness predicted their choice of a short-term exchange, whereas Extraversion and Openness to experience predicted long-term residence. Also, the RA participants were found to have increased their Openness to experience and Agreeableness, along with a decrease in Neuroticism. Another study by Tracy-Ventura et al. (2016) investigated to what extent some aspects of university students' personalities change after spending an academic year abroad. Results from the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2001) administered before and after participants went abroad demonstrated a significant change in the Emotional Stability. A study by Niehoff, Petersdotter and Freund (2017) also attempted to answer similar research questions of who chooses to study abroad and how study abroad possibly impacts personality. A total of 221 students from a German university were researched with the "Big Five" personality test. Those students (n = 93) who studied abroad were found to rate higher in Agreeableness and Openness to experience prior to the international experience than their fellow students who did not sojourn. In turn, sojourning evoked increases in both Extraversion and Agreeableness and a decrease in Neuroticism. Therefore, it could be concluded that certain higher-order and lower-order personality traits might influence not only the adjustment to the host culture or intensity of intercultural communication while being abroad but also the decision of whether to

sojourn or not. At the same time, it is important to highlight that the very experience of study abroad and being immersed in the foreign language and culture might also influence informants' personality traits. Consequently, it could be claimed that the relationship between personality and study abroad gains is in fact bidirectional and very complex in nature as personality both shapes some aspects of the sojourn like cross-cultural adjustment or cross-cultural communication that were reported to have an impact on the study abroad outcomes and at the same time is shaped by the immersion in the foreign language and culture during the study abroad experience.

2.4.2 Personality and emotional intelligence in the immigrant context

Since personality could influence cross-cultural adjustment, as presented in the above section, it might be worth examining what is the effect of higher and lower-order personality traits on the frequency of L2 use in the immigrant setting. Shu, McAbee and Ayman (2016) mentioned that several of the "Big Five" traits have been shown to predict successful performance in expatriate samples (e.g., Ones & Viswesvaran, 1997) with those who scored higher on Conscientiousness and Extraversion also receiving higher performance evaluations in their overseas assignments (Mol et al., 2005). Moreover, some of the "Big Five" traits (e.g., Extraversion, and Openness to experience) were directly linked to successful cross-cultural adjustment (e.g., Huang, Chi, & Lawler, 2005; Zhang, Mandl, & Wang, 2010). When it comes to the lower-order personality traits, Gabel et al. (2005) found EI to play an important role in the explaining cross-cultural adjustment and expatriate employee success. Furnham, (2017) examined differences between middle to senior managers who had and had not worked abroad in relation to personality traits and showed that those who had worked abroad tended to be more Open and Conscientious, and less Neurotic. Regression analysis showed that those with work experience abroad tended to be Extraverted, Open, and Conscientious with a tendency to move towards as opposed to away from people. Additionally, the length of time spent aboard was also related to certain personality traits as those who had spent longer time abroad were reported to be more Open and Diligent and less Agreeable. Even though personality characteristics were considered among the most important factors affecting the adjustment of expatriate employees (Huang, Chi & Lawler, 2005; Jassawalla, Truglia, & Garvey, 2004), there is relatively little research on how they might influence L2 proficiency and the

frequency of L2 use in the immigrant setting. One of the studies that researched various factors pertaining to L2 proficiency in the immigrant setting was the one by Hammer and Dewaele (2015). The authors researched Polish-English migrants living in the UK and reported that self-reported L2 proficiency was linked to acculturation level, length of domicile, the age of onset, the frequency of L2 use and age. Hammer and Dewaele's (2015) study showed that highly acculturated immigrants rated their L2 proficiency significantly higher than moderately or less acculturated informants. At the same time, the level of acculturation proved to be tightly linked to self-reported proficiency levels in the second language, which in turn was related to the frequency of L2 use. Participants of the study that used L2 more frequently reported significantly higher L2 proficiency levels than participants who reported less frequent use of English. These results were in line with some other studies on Polish immigrants living in the UK and Ireland by Ożańska-Ponikwia (2015a, 2015b). Ożańska-Ponikwia's (2015a) results showed that immersion in the L2 culture had an influence on both self-perceived L2 proficiency as well as the degree of L2 use, with informants living in the UK and Ireland for a longer period of time reporting higher levels of L2 proficiency and L2 use in comparison to those who spent a shorter amount of time abroad. Another study by Ożańska-Ponikwia (2015b) reported that self-perceived acculturation level, as well as reported dominance in the foreign language were determined mostly by the type and intensity of exposure to a foreign language and culture. Therefore, it was concluded that highly acculturated participants of the study were exposed to L2 language and culture to a higher degree what possibly resulted in their self-reported dominance in the L2. At the same time, a study by Panicacci and Dewaele (2017) linked different aspects of acculturation to personality traits and suggested that participants' (468 Italian migrants living in English-speaking countries) personality characteristics determined their sense of belonging to either the heritage or host cultural scenarios. Migrants reporting to feel different when using the local language scored significantly lower on Emotional Stability and Social Initiative and were less attached to the host culture compared to those who reported feeling no change. More specifically, respondents' Emotional Stability and attachment to host culture practices constrained their sense of feeling different when using the local language (Panicacci & Dewaele, 2017, p. 1). These results were in line with the previous studies on "feeling different" when using L2 (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2012; Wilson, 2008) that reported a statistically significant link between migrants' self-perceptions and personality dimensions.

When it comes to the relationship between personality and emotional intelligence and self-perceived L2 proficiency and L2 use in the immigrant context, the study by Ożańska-Ponikwia and Dewaele (2012) was probably the first one to address mentioned factors in this specific context. The correlation of the "Big Five" personality factors, the EI factors, and the scores on L2 use revealed a complex and interesting picture. The first series of correlation analyses between L2 use and the "Big Five" personality traits showed that Polish migrants living in the UK and Ireland who scored high on Extraversion and Openness to experience reported using English L2 more often than participants who scored lower on these personality traits. However, linear stepwise regression analysis revealed that Openness to experience was the only significant predictor of L2 use and it was speculated that participants who are open to new experiences, who are friendly and cooperative in social interactions were more likely to seek opportunities for interaction in L2 English. The second series of correlation analyses between L2 use and trait EI showed that some EI components like Self-esteem, Stress management, Adaptability, Well-being, and Global EI were linked to L2 use. Another aspect that was addressed in the study was related to the possible influence of the higher and lower-order personality traits on self-perceived L2 proficiency. The authors reported that Self-esteem, which was a significant predictor of L2 use, turned out to be unrelated to self-perceived L2 proficiency. At the same time correlation analyses showed some positive relationships between Agreeableness, Openness to experience, Empathy and the self-reported level of proficiency in L2 English. However, linear stepwise regression analysis indicated that Openness to experience was the only significant predictor when it comes to L2 proficiency (Ożańska-Ponikwia & Dewaele, 2012, pp.128-129).

Another study by Ożańska-Ponikwia (2016) also investigated the link between the "Big Five" personality traits and Emotional intelligence (EI) and frequency of L2 use but this time in an immigrant and non-immigrant context. The first researched group was the non-immigrant group, consisting of Polish L2 users of English who had never been abroad; the second was an immigrant group that comprised Polish L2 users of English who had immigrated to the UK and Ireland. Statistical analysis showed that Openness to experience, Empathy, Emotional stability, Emotional regulation and Assertiveness were linked to the frequency of L2 use in the non-immigrant context. In the immigrant setting Openness to experience, Empathy, Emotion expression, Emotionality and Adaptability were correlated with the degree and frequency of L2 use. It was speculated that such outcomes might suggest that actively seeking an opportunity to use

L2 for reading, writing, or conversing was related to Openness to experience and Empathy in both mentioned settings. It was also related to lower-order EI traits. However, different traits were more pronounced in both contexts. Among immigrants Emotion expression, Emotionality and Adaptability seemed to influence the very process and for non-immigrants Emotional stability, Emotional regulation and Assertiveness were more highlighted (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2016, p. 187) Another reported finding was linked to some difference in personality scores in the immigrant and non-immigrant group, with the immigrant group scoring significantly higher on Openness to experience, Self-esteem and Wellbeing. Since all these traits were related to using L2 on an everyday basis in the immigrant context, it was speculated that they might potentially influence developing social networks and adaptation in the host culture.

2.5 Conclusions

The literature overview presented above showed that both higher and lower-order personality traits seem to influence different aspects of SLA. Even though some inconsistencies in the reported findings were noted, it is important to highlight that personality is a very important factor influencing various aspects of SLA. Presented above overview of the current studies concerning the effect of personality and EI on foreign langue learning and use showed that these effects vary depending on the measured skills as well as the context of language learning and language use. When it comes to the structured setting of SLA, the literature overview presented above clearly showed that certain patterns or trends could be observed when we take into consideration the relationship between personality and SLA. The personality trait of Extraversion tended to correlate with communicative speech, oral proficiency scores as well as measures focusing on self-reported frequency of L2 use. When it comes to Neuroticism, it was not reported to influence SLA directly. However, Anxiety, which is the lower-order facet of Neuroticism, was shown to have a profound negative influence on foreign language use. Another personality trait of Openness to experience was reported to correlate with SLA only when communicative competence or linguistic abilities came to the foreground. It was also linked to L2 WTC and attitudes toward foreign language learning. Studies that have incorporated the higher-order psychological trait of Agreeableness into the research design linking it to L2 achievement measured by written or oral production tests reported no significant correlations between Agreeableness and measured variables. However, when examining its potential effect on WTC or attitudes toward

foreign language learning, some significant correlations were noted. The very last higher-order personality trait of Conscientiousness was a strong predictor of language learning strategies and L2 organisational competence. The lower-order personality trait of EI was also shown to have some effect on L2 use in the structured setting. Such EI facets as Emotional stability, Emotion regulation, Assertiveness and Empathy were correlated with the self-reported frequency of L2 use. Additionally, trait EI was reported to negatively correlate with communicative anxiety, thus showing that EI might facilitate frequency of L2 use.

When it comes to the semi-structured SLA setting that could be described as the study abroad context, some more consistency in the reported findings was noticed. In general, sociocultural adjustment as well as developing social networks while abroad were reported to be the best predictors of the language gains among the study abroad students. At the same time these variables were noted to be very strongly influenced by personality traits of Openness to experience, Extraversion or Agreeableness which tend to be reported in most of the reviewed study abroad studies as significant factors influencing both the adjustment to the host culture or intensity of the intercultural communication while being abroad but also the very decision of whether to take part in the sojourn or not.

The very last type of the setting that was analysed was the immigrant one which could be defined as the natural SLA and L2 use context. Here both higher and lower-order personality traits also seemed to be recognised in the majority of the reviewed studies. It could be noticed that highly acculturated informants tend to report more frequent L2 use and higher levels of self-perceived L2 proficiency, which in turn was most often correlated with such "Big Five" and EI traits as Extraversion, Openness to experience, and Empathy.

It could be concluded that personality traits have a direct and indirect influence on the process of second language learning and use in all mentioned contexts; however, more conclusive results and tendencies could be noted while examining the study abroad and immigrant settings. We could speculate that the relationship between personality and EI was more clear-cut when cross-cultural communication and adjustment came into play. At the same time, some traits like Openness to experience and Empathy were related to L2 use in both immigrant and non-immigrant settings. We have to bear in mind that the relationship between personality traits, EI, and SLA as well as the frequency of L2 use is very complex and nuanced, with various mediating variables that need to be taken into account. The literature overview showed that mentioned relationship depended mostly on the type of linguistic material used in a given study as

well as various situational and social contexts that apparently shape this relationship. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) noted that some important and significant results were found only where researchers have attempted to look more globally at the effects of personality traits on various aspects of L2 learning achievement, and used a more complex approach toward operationalization of the researched variables as well as a non-linear relationship between personality traits and SLA which was also visible in the presented literature overview.

The next chapter aims to present the methodology of the present study that is to research the relationship between the higher and lower-order personality traits and various aspects of SLA in the structured setting taking into account different L2 skills as well as different types of measures while trying to examine this very complex relationship.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The review of the literature presented in the previous chapters suggested that both higher and lower-order personality traits should be taken into consideration while researching various aspects connected to foreign language learning. As a result, the present contribution aims to examine the complex interaction of such factors as personality traits and emotional intelligence and the variables connected to L2 learning and L2 use from the qualitative and quantitative point of view. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods is in line with trends in applied linguistics research, which show that the combination of both perspectives overcomes the limitations of narrowing frameworks and enriches the research by allowing for greater diversity in the type of data gathered (Dewaele, 2008). To be able to shed some more light on the quantitative data analysis results, we have decided to incorporate an open question that invites the informants of our study to share their thoughts and opinions concerning the most difficult aspects of foreign language learning. Additionally, due to the very limited research on the effect that emotional intelligence might exert on foreign language learning and its use in the classroom setting, this contribution is the first one, to the best of our knowledge, to incorporate emotional intelligence (EI) as one of the variables potentially influencing L2 use as well as preferences concerning the acquisition of specific language skills like speaking, writing, reading, listening or those linked more specifically to grammar, pronunciation, spelling, or vocabulary among Polish L2 learners of English. It is important to mention that different types of measures were introduced in the study. Consequently, written and oral skills in English (L2) were measured using the national secondary school-leaving examination results making sure that they are standardised, objective and identical for all informants taking part in our study. Other presented results represent participants' self-reported preferences. The main question that is to be addressed in the present study is whether higher-order personality traits

and emotional intelligence might influence, either directly or indirectly, foreign language learning. Below some detailed descriptions concerning research questions and hypotheses as well as research instruments and participants of the study are presented.

3.2 Research questions and hypotheses

The present study is to address the following research questions:

1. Is personality correlated with written and oral scores from the national secondary school-leaving examination?
   It is hypothesised that higher–order personality traits of Extraversion and Openness to experience might be correlated with the results from the oral part of the national secondary school-leaving examination. At the same time, it is also speculated that Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) could also be linked to the oral results of the national secondary school-leaving examination. When it comes to the written part of the national secondary school-leaving examination, it is speculated that Introversion might correlate with high scores obtained during this part of the exam.
2. Is personality correlated with the grades concerning grammar, writing and integrated skills?
   It is hypothesised that extraverts, will obtain higher scores as far as integrated skills are concerned. On the other hand, introverts, and high scorers on the trait Conscientiousness will outperform other informants as far as grammar and writing grades are concerned.
3. Is personality correlated with self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of the certain skills in the L2?
   It is suggested that extraverts might prefer to acquire and practice speaking and pronunciation over other enumerated skills. At the same time, introverts are hypothesised to opt for grammar, listening and reading more often than for other skills. When it comes to Emotional intelligence, it is speculated that informants who scored higher on Sociability, Emotionality and global Trait Emotional Intelligence would prefer to focus on speaking rather than on other mentioned skills.
4. Is personality correlated with self-perceived L2 proficiency?
   It is hypothesised that introverts and those who scored higher on Conscientiousness would tend to report higher L2 proficiency than informants who scored lower on these variables.

5. Are there any distinguishable differences in the self-perceived L2 proficiency and personality profiles of those informants who reported living in an English speaking country for some period of time?

   It is speculated that among the participants who reported living in the English speaking country personality trait of Openness to experience will be more pronounced than other higher and lower order personality traits.

6. Is personality related to self-perceived L2 anxiety?

   It is speculated that informants who scored higher on Neuroticism would also score higher on the self-perceived L2 anxiety. It is also expected that L2 anxiety would be linked to both objective measures as well as self-reports concerning L2 proficiency.

7. What is the most difficult aspect of foreign language learning reported by the informants of the present study? Are their answers somehow related to their personality profile?

   It is speculated that the participants of this study will point to different aspects causing difficulties in the process of foreign language learning; however, their responses will reflect main characteristics of their personality profiles.

3.3 Participants

One hundred and forty informants took part in this study. In this group, there were 105 females and 35 males. The imbalance between males and females is speculated to be the result of the preponderance of women in education (Pavlenko 2006), which is also the case in the Polish setting. At the same time reported overrepresentation of females is also typical for the humanistic departments at which this study took place. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 32 (Mean = 21.3 SD = 1.8); however, the majority of informants (68%) were in the 19-21 age group. The remaining 32 % belonged to the following groups: 26% were in the 22-24 age group, and last 6% (8 respondents) belonged to 25-32 age group. The informants of this study reported learning English as their L2 from 5 to 19 years (Mean = 13.5, SD = 2.4) with 15% learning it up to 10 years, two-thirds reporting learning their L2 from 10 to 15 years and remaining 20% acquiring English from 15 to 19 years. When it comes to the educational level of the researched sample, all participants were first and second year BA students at the department of English at the University of Bielsko-Biala, Poland. All of the participants declared that English is their L2. Their self-perceived L2 proficiency was measured on a 5-point Likert scale and varied from beginner to fully fluent. The Mean score reported as

far as self-perceived L2 proficiency is concerned was 3.7 (SD = 1.2) with a third of participants rating themselves as intermediate language learners, nearly 60% as upper-intermediate language learners, 10 % as being fully fluent and 2% as pre-intermediate language learners. Their results from the written part of the national secondary school-leaving examination were as follows: the lowest reported score was 58% and the highest 100% (Mean = 90, SD = 9,1). 11% of respondents scored below the 80% threshold; one third reported scores between 80%-90% and almost 60% of the researched sample scored between 90% and 100%. The results from the oral part of the national secondary school-leaving examination were as follows: 11% of the respondents scored below 80%, 20% scored between 80% and 90% and the remaining 70% reported scores from 90% to 100% (Mean = 93.3, SD = 8.7). In the researched sample there were also thirty-eight participants who reported living in the English-speaking country (most often the UK and Ireland) from half a month to ten years (Mean = 9.7, SD = 25,4).

3.4 Research instruments

The present study was based on a questionnaire measuring both higher-order and lower-order personality traits and various aspects linked to foreign language learning. It invited respondents to supply socio-biographical details together with information about their L2 and respond to a series of questions about different aspects of their second language acquisition and use. It consisted of five sub-questionnaires and one open question:

1) Personal background questionnaire, measuring such variables as age, gender, self-perceived L2 proficiency, length of L2 instruction, and length of stay in an English-speaking country (if applicable).
2) Sub-questionnaire measuring various self-perceived aspects connected with L2 use.
3) Sub-questionnaire measuring grades and preferences concerning L2 acquisition.
4) The NEO-FFI questionnaire which is a personality test measuring such higher–order traits as Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to experience and Neuroticism.
5) TEIQue (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire) providing scores on emotional intelligence as well as on four factors of broad relevance: Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality, and Sociability.

6) An open question concerning the most difficult aspects of foreign language learning.

All questionnaires were used in a Polish version (informants' L1) to avoid possible comprehension difficulties especially when it comes to filling in the personality questionnaires as well as expression of thoughts and opinions in the open-ended section. Detailed descriptions of all sub-questionnaires as well as the results of the reliability analyses are presented below.

3.4.1 Personal background questionnaire

The personal background questionnaire comprised six questions measuring age, gender, length of L2 instruction, self-perceived L2 proficiency, and length of stay in an English-speaking country (ESC).

3.4.2 Sub-questionnaire measuring various aspects of L2 use

This sub-questionnaire scale consisted of twelve statements to which the participants were required to respond by choosing from five options for dis/agreement with statements: 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly agree; and one of five following options for questions dealing with frequency: 1-Never, 2-Sometimes, 3-Often, 4-Very often, 5-Everyday, depending on the question type. The first set of questions considered frequency of L2 use in different contexts, and it comprised four questions: "How often do you use English in social media?", "How often do you use English while talking to your friends?", "How often do you use English outside of the classroom setting?", "How often do you establish new contacts in English?". The second set of statements was also related to L2 use but this time required dis/agreement on the part of the respondent. It comprised eight statements: "I often interact in English", "I feel at ease while speaking English", "Being afraid of making mistakes in English makes me very anxious", "I have no problems with establishing new contacts", "I'm very nervous while using English", "I actively participate in my English classes", "I have a feeling that other students speak better than me", "I really like using English". The Cronbach's α for the 12 statements mentioned above equalled .850. Additionally, five of the items presented above: "I often interact in English", "I feel at ease while speaking English", "Being afraid of making mistakes in English makes me very anxious", "I'm very nervous while using English", and "I actively participate in my English

classes" formed a composite variable of L2 anxiety. The Cronbach's α for the five statements that composed a new variable of L2 anxiety equalled .837.

3.4.3 Sub-questionnaire measuring grades and preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills

This sub-questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions, the first eight of which were scored on a 5-point Likert scale: 1-I don't like it at all, 2-I don't like it, 3-I don't mind, 4-I like it, 5-I like it a lot. The questions were as follows: "To what extent do you like practising writing in your L2?", "To what extent do you like practising reading in your L2?", "To what extent do you like practising listening in your L2?", "To what extent do you like practising speaking in your L2?", "To what extent do you like practising grammar in your L2?", "To what extent do you like practising vocabulary in your L2?", "To what extent do you like practising pronunciation in your L2?", "To what extent do you like practising spelling in your L2?". Other included questions were: "What was your score on a written part of the national secondary school-leaving examination?", "What was your score on an oral part of the national secondary school-leaving examination?" It needs to be remembered that the written part of the national secondary school-leaving examination includes listening comprehension tasks, reading comprehension tasks, writing tasks and tasks concerning the use of language as well as the use of grammar. Therefore it was impossible to distinguish all of the mentioned skills as separate entities as the final score includes scores from all of these skills. To be able to make up for this fact we have included the following three questions concerning marks from classes focusing exclusively on grammar, writing and integrated skills: "What was the mark that you received last semester in the practical use of English focusing on grammar?", "What was the mark that you received last semester in the practical use of English focusing on writing?", "What was the mark that you received last semester in the practical use of English focusing on integrated skills?". The Cronbach's α for the thirteen statements mentioned above equalled .712.

3.4.4 NEO-FFI personality questionnaire

According to McCrae and Costa (2004, p. 587), the 60-item NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) used in this study was developed to provide a concise measure of the five basic personality factors of Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1989). The authors described that for each scale, 12 items were selected from the pool of 180 NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI) items based on their correlations with valid factor scores (McCrae & Costa, 1989). The instrument uses a five-point Likert response format from 1-Strongly disagree to 5-Strongly agree. In the present study, it was used in the Polish adaptation by Zawadzki, Strelau, Szczepaniak and Śliwińska (1998). The Cronbach's α for the investigated sample is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Reliability analysis results for the NEO-FFI traits

No.	Trait	No. of items per dimension	Cronbach's α
1	Extraversion	12	.784
2	Openness to experience	12	.727
3	Agreeableness	12	.796
4	Conscientiousness	12	.855
5	Neuroticism	12	.880

The most common measure of scale reliability is Cronbach's α that calculates a variance-covariance matrix of all items (Field, 2005). Kline (1999) notes that although the accepted value of .8 is appropriate for cognitive tests such as intelligence tests, for ability tests a cut-off point of .7 or slightly below is accepted. He also claims that as far as psychological constructs are concerned, values below .7 can be expected because of the diversity of constructs being measured (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2013 p. 64). The Cronbach's α for the separate NEO-FFI traits varied from .727 to .880 which would suggest that the research instrument is reliable.

3.4.5 Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)

A short form of the TEIQue questionnaire was designed to measure global trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) and four factors of broad relevance: Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality, and Sociability (Petrides & Furnham 2003). It was based on the long form of the TEIQue (Petrides

& Furnham, 2001). Two items from each of the 15 subscales of the
TEIQue were selected for inclusion, based primarily on their correlations
with the corresponding total subscale scores. This procedure was followed
to ensure adequate internal consistencies and broad coverage of the
sampling domain of the construct. Items were responded to on a 7-point
Likert scale from "Completely disagree" to "Completely agree" with a
mid-point of "Neither agree nor disagree". In this study, it was used in the
Polish adaptation created by Wytykowska and Petrides (2007). The
Cronbach's α for the separate traits in the investigated sample is presented
in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Reliability analysis results for the short form TEIQue traits

No.	Trait	No. of items per dimension	Cronbach's α
1	Total TEIQue	30	.865
2	Well-being	6	.811
3	Self-control	6	.793
4	Emotionality	8	.705
5	Sociability	6	.709

As it could be noted, the Cronbach's α for all TEIQue traits varied
from .705 to .865, which would suggest that the research instrument is
reliable.

3.4.6 Reliability analyses of all used questionnaires

In order to perform statistical analyses, all individual scores were
entered into the SPSS, and composite variables were created. The
reliability analysis for the investigated sample was also performed. The
Cronbach's α for the sub-questionnaires varied from .712 to .865 which
indicated that the research instrument is reliable and further analysis that
will be presented in some more detail in the following sections could be
performed. Table 4 presents results of the reliability analyses concerning
all the questionnaires used in the present study.

Table 4 Reliability analysis results for all the questionnaires

No.	Trait	No. of items per dimension	Cronbach's α
1	L2 use questionnaire	12	.850
2	L2 acquisition preferences questionnaire	13	.712
3	L2 anxiety questionnaire	5	.837
4	NEO-FFI personality questionnaire	60	.808
5	TEIQue	30	.865

All variables under consideration were checked for normal distribution using the Shapiro-Wilk's test which compares the scores in the sample to a normally distributed set of scores with the same mean and standard deviation (Field, 2005, p. 93). In the case of the mentioned variables, the *p*-value suggested that the distribution of the sample is not significantly different from a normal distribution. Therefore, parametric tests could be used.

3.4.7 Question concerning the most difficult aspects of the foreign language learning

The item contained one open question the purpose of which was to see what were participants' perceptions concerning the most difficult aspects of foreign language learning. It was designed to provide a detailed insight into the process of foreign language acquisition and to shed some more light on the quantitative data analysis results. The question was: "What, from your point of view, is the most difficult in foreign language learning? Explain why". The informants were asked not only to enumerate these aspects which they consider the most difficult in foreign language learning but also to try to explain what causes such difficulties. All of the answers were analysed qualitatively with the use of inductive category development (Mayring, 2001). First the criterion was derived from the theoretical background. Following this criterion, the material was worked through, and categories ware deduced. The qualitative analysis was based on the first element reported by each informant of the study. Later on, categories were revised and reduced to main categories and analysed regarding frequencies and personality traits.

3.5 Procedure

The data collection took place in April 2017. Participants were recruited from the first and second year BA students at the department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Bielsko-Biala. We are fully aware of the fact that they are likely to represent a narrower range of ages, abilities and linguistic background (Wilson, 2008, p. 115). However, for the purpose of the study, we were mostly interested in young adults who were within similar range of age, whose L2 was English and who passed oral and written national secondary school-leaving examination. Additionally, they should have been enrolled, at least for one semester, in L2 classes focusing mostly on integrated skills, writing and grammar as the score from the written national secondary school-leaving examination does not differentiate these skills but comprises them all together. Bearing that all in mind we have decided to opt for the convenience sampling procedure that allowed us to obtain data from a relatively homogeneous sample of participants.

3.6 Conclusions

The present chapter outlined the methodology of the study and presented both research questions and hypotheses as well as detailed descriptions of research instruments, procedures and participants. It could be noted that although different measures were incorporated into the study, all research instruments were reliable, which was indicated by the results of the reliability analyses determined by obtaining the proportion of systematic variation in a scale. The next chapter will focus on quantitative data analyses that address research questions with the use of various statistical tests and procedures.

CHAPTER FOUR

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

To find out whether both higher-order and lower-order personality traits were correlated with various aspects of SLA, we have performed statistical analyses of the mentioned items, detailed results of which are presented below.

4.2 Personality and L2 written and oral proficiency

Both higher and lower-order personality traits were correlated with the results obtained on a written and oral part of the national school-leaving exam concerning L2 English. Table 5 presents detailed results of these analyses.

Table 5 Personality traits and written and oral production in L2 (Pearson's r)

	Written test results	Oral examination results
Extraversion	**-.258** p< .002**	**.215* p< .011**
Openness to experience	-.008 p< .929	**.201* p< .018**
Agreeableness	-.108 p< .203	**.175* p< .038**
Conscientiousness	-.144 p< .089	.001 p< .995
Neuroticism	-.053 p< .534	.010 p< .911
Global trait EI	.046 p< .592	.099 p< .242
Well-being	-.047 p< .579	.032 p< .711
Self-control	.108 p< .203	-.010 p< .909
Emotionality	.061 p< .477	.133 p< .118
Sociability	-.035 p< .678	.129 p< .130

As it could be noticed above three higher–order personality traits of Extraversion, Openness to experience and Agreeableness were significantly correlated with written and oral proficiency in L2 showing a small effect size (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). When it comes to the Extraversion, it was negatively correlated with written test results ($r = -.258$, $p = .002$). It means that those who scored lower on the Extraversion trait at the same time scored significantly higher on the written part of the national secondary school-leaving examination. At the same time correlation results suggested that the situation is reversed for the oral part of the examination ($r = .215$, $p = .011$) as those who scored higher on this trait also obtained significantly higher scores from the oral exam. Therefore, it could be concluded that introverted participants of the study, who could be characterised as quiet and task-oriented, outperformed extraverts when it comes to the written proficiency in L2 measured by means of the results obtained from the national secondary school-leaving examination. However, extraverts, who are sociable, talkative and person-oriented, scored significantly higher in the oral part of the examination, at the same time outperforming introverted respondents of the study. Other higher-order personality traits that correlated with the oral proficiency in L2 were Openness to experience ($r = .201$, $p = .018$) and Agreeableness ($r = .175$, $p = .038$). It could be observed that in both cases mentioned traits were positively correlated with the oral proficiency in the L2. Consequently, high scorers on these traits, who could be characterised as creative and open-minded (Openness to experience) as well as cooperative, and good-natured (Agreeableness) were also high scorers on L2 oral part of the national secondary school-leaving examination. Therefore, it might be hypothesised that being friendly and cooperative in social interactions also facilitates communication in the foreign language and results in higher scores on oral proficiency in the L2.

What is very important to highlight is the fact that presented results do not consider the Bonferroni correction. Had we applied a Bonferroni correction, to reduce the risk of type I error (a false positive), only one correlation would have reached significance (with $p < .002$). Therefore, we decided against a Bonferroni adjustment because it is fairly conservative and produces a slightly more elevated risk of type II errors overall. A type II error refers to the situation where "no statistical difference is found between scores, even though the difference exists within the population as a whole" (Loewen & Plonsky, 2016, p. 12). Instead, we opted for the multiple stepwise regression that assesses whether one continuous dependent variable can be predicted from a set of independent (or predictor) variables. Consequently, it aims to explain how much variance

in a continuous dependent variable is explained by a given set of predictors (Field, 2005). Results of the multiple stepwise regression for the L2 written part of the national school-leaving exam are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Higher and lower-order personality traits and written test results (multiple stepwise regression)

	R^2	F	Beta	t	p
Extraversion	.060	9.876	-.258	-3.143	.002

The multiple stepwise regression analyses of higher and lower-order personality traits revealed Extraversion as the only significant predictor for written test scores that explained 6% of the variance. To have a closer look at these results, we decided to perform a t-test analysis that will compare the test results, with a special focus on the high and low scorers on Extraversion and their L2 written proficiency results. To be able to do so, we have chosen only those informants whose scores on mentioned personality trait were either one standard deviation above or one standard deviation below the mean. Consequently, we have created a group of high scorers that consisted of 29 participants and a group of low scorers that comprised 20 informants. By doing so, we have excluded from the analysis all the respondents with average scores on the personality trait under consideration. As a result, the number of the informants in each group was smaller, but at the same time, it allowed performing more detailed analysis focusing only on the high and low scorers and shedding some more light on the complex interplay of the personality factors and second language proficiency. Detailed results of the t-test analysis are presented below.

Table 7 Extraversion and L2 written proficiency (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Written	**Introverts**	**91.55**	**8.88**	**3.48**	**47**	**.001**
test results	Extraverts	83.17	7.82			

As presented in Table 7 above, extraverts and introverts scored significantly different on variables measuring written L2 proficiency, as introverts received significantly higher scores in comparison to extraverts. Calculated Cohen's d equalled 1.001 which suggests a large effect size for mean differences between groups (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014). What is also

worth pointing out is the fact that the standard deviation in both measured groups was almost the same, which means that the distribution of scores in those groups was similar.

When it comes to the results obtained from the oral part of the exam the multiple stepwise regression analyses of higher and lower-order personality traits, presented in Table 8, revealed Extraversion and Openness to experience as the significant predictors for the oral test scores, once again explaining 6.6 % of the variance.

Table 8 Higher and lower-order personality traits and oral test results (multiple stepwise regression)

	R^2	F	Beta	t	p
Extraversion	.066	5.905	.199	2.413	.017
Openness to experience					

Detailed t-test analysis for Extraversion and oral proficiency measured using the national school-leaving exam scores presented in Table 9 showed that once again scores of extraverts and introverts differed considerably when it comes to the obtained scores.

Table 9 Extraversion and L2 oral proficiency (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Oral examination results	Introverts	89.05	11.79	-3,63	47	.001
	Extraverts	**97.62**	**3.96**			

In the case of the oral examination results, the situation was reversed, as this time extraverts scored significantly higher showing large effect size with Cohen's d equal .974. What also needs to be highlighted is the fact that standard deviations were different among introverted and extraverted informants of this study, showing us that extraverts' scores were more similar and were clustered more closely to the mean in comparison to the introverts' scores which were clustered more widely around the mean. Therefore, it could be noted that extraverts' are more homogeneous as far as their scores on oral production are concerned in comparison to the introverts researched in this study. It could be concluded that introverts who tend to be "quiet and reserved with other people, to shun crowds and excitement, and to act on thoughtful consideration rather than impulse"

(Plotnik & Mollenauer, 1986, p. 647) receive higher scores on a written L2 production tests and lower ones on L2 oral production tests in comparison to the extraverts, who quite reversely, tend to be sociable, are more likely to join groups and are more inclined to engage in conversations both inside and outside the classroom setting. This tendency to seek social interaction, in the case of the extraverts, and to avoid social interaction, in the case of introverts, might contribute to their scores on an L2 oral proficiency test.

Another t-test analysis presented in Table 10 showed that the personality trait of Openness to experience was also related to oral production in the foreign language (medium effect size with Cohen's d = .663). The presented results show that informants (n = 32) who scored higher (upper quartile) on this trait also obtained higher scores in the oral part of the national secondary school-leaving examination in comparison to the scorers (n = 20) of the lower quartile. It could be hypothesised that informants who are open-minded and actively seek new experiences felt more at ease while conversing in a foreign language; therefore, received higher scores in L2 oral production tasks. The standard deviation in this group was also more clustered around the mean, suggesting that their results were more homogenous than in the group who has received lower scores on this personality trait.

Table 10 Openness to experience and L2 written and oral proficiency (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Oral examination results	Low scorers	88.93	11.65	**-2.35**	**45**	**.021**
	High scorers	**95.25**	**6.75**			

Based on the presented data analyses, it could be noted that some of the personality traits were linked to L2 written and oral proficiency scores obtained by the informants of the study. What is important to highlight is the fact that while performing the correlation analysis three higher-order personality traits of Extraversion, Openness to experience and Agreeableness were shown to correlate with L2 proficiency results. However, after performing multiple regression analyses, only two of the mentioned traits were reported to be significant predictors of the analysed results, in both cases explaining a small percent of the variance. Among these traits were a higher-order personality trait of Extraversion, related to both oral and written L2 proficiency scores, and Openness to experience being related only to the oral part of L2 proficiency exam. In the case of

other higher and lower-order personality traits, some tendencies in the t-test analyses could be observed for Agreeableness and Conscientiousness being related to L2 written proficiency, and Emotionality and Sociability being related to the oral L2 proficiency results; however, after applying the Bonferroni correction these results could not be reported as they were not statistically significant. Nevertheless, we could speculate that this tendency might come to the foreground while researching a larger sample of informants.

Since the written part of the national secondary school-leaving examination, which comprised such skills as writing, listening, reading, vocabulary and grammar provided only a combined score for all the mentioned skills it would be interesting to see whether both higher and lower-order personality traits might influence some of the enumerated skills and subsystems. To be able to do so, we performed another set of analyses but this time concentrating only on final grades that our informants received during practical use of English classes focusing respectively on grammar, writing and integrated skills.

4.3 Personality in relation to L2 grammar, writing and integrated skills

In the present section, we present the results of another set of analyses that were performed to verify whether personality traits might correlate with certain L2 skills that have not been examined separately by previous statistical analyses. To find out what is the possible link between higher-order and lower-order personality traits and such L2 skills like grammar, writing and integrated skills we have decided to take into account informants' university subjects' grades in classes focusing on those skills. Table 11 shows the results of the correlation analysis performed on the variables mentioned above.

The results presented in Table 11, showed that only higher-order personality traits of Extraversion and Conscientiousness correlated with some of the skills under examination. The personality trait of Extraversion correlated negatively with the grades received during the grammar classes and positively with the marks received during the integrated skills classes. This might suggest that introverts (low scorers on the trait), who could be described as shy, avoiding meeting people, self-sufficient, and task-oriented tend to receive higher scores on tasks related to grammar and lower on the ones that require integration of all four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. At the same time, extraverts seem to score higher on tasks that also require, among many, speaking skills. Another

interesting finding was that the personality trait of Conscientiousness was correlated with marks from grammar classes. It might be suggested that these participants of the study who are well organised, persistent, highly motivated and goal-directed tend to receive higher scores on grammar tasks in comparison to those who are less motivated and weak-willed.

Table 11 Personality traits and L2 grammar, writing and integrated skills scores (Pearson's r)

	Grammar	Writing	Integrated skills
Extraversion	**-.276** p < .001**	-.040 p < .637	**.312** p < .000**
Openness to experience	-.123 p < .149	.057 p < .506	.083 p < .332
Agreeableness	-.077 p < .365	-.071 p < .407	.150 p < .078
Conscientiousness	**.181* p < .033**	.057 p < .506	.083 p < .332
Neuroticism	.162 p < .057	-.022 p < .793	-.142 p < .095
Global trait EI	-.142 p < .094	.048 p < .577	.120 p < .156
Well-being	-.103 p < .227	-.011 p < .895	.066 p < .435
Self-control	-.150 p < .076	-.012 p < .885	.018 p < .836
Emotionality	-.116 p < .172	.033 p < .699	.128 p < .132
Sociability	-.128 p < .132	.060 p < .484	.059 p < .247

The multiple stepwise regression analysis results presented below in Table 12 showed that only one trait of Extraversion was a significant predictor of the grades from L2 grammar and integrated skills classes, each time explaining a small amount of the variance (6.9% in the case of grammar and 9.7% in the case of integrated skills).

Table 12 Higher and lower-order personality traits and L2 grammar, writing and integrated skills scores (multiple stepwise regression)

	R^2	F	Beta	t	p
Grammar					
Extraversion	.069	11.347	-.276	-3.369	.001
Integrated skills					
Extraversion	.097	14.850	.312	3.854	.000

The results of the t-test analyses of high and low scorers concerning personality traits under investigation are presented below in Table 13.

Table 13 Extraversion and L2 grammar and integrated skills scores (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Grammar	**Introverts**	**3.92**	**.755**	**3.22**	**47**	**.002**
	Extraverts	3.37	.415			
Integrated skills	Introverts	4.10	.680	**-5.31**	**47**	**.000**
	Extraverts	**4.82**	**.241**			

The reported findings showed that high scorers on the trait Extraversion also obtained higher marks from the integrated skills classes showing a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.411). It could be explained by the fact that they tend to focus on social interactions, which is also reflected in their scores from the integrated skills classes, which also require speaking, among other practised skills. We can also notice that their scores were more homogeneous and were clustered close to the mean in comparison to the introverts' scores which were clustered more widely around the mean. On the other hand, introverts' grades from the grammar classes were higher than those of the extraverts (medium effect size with Cohen's d = .902), as they are self-sufficient and tend to work on their own. At the same time, because of the mentioned characteristics, introverts tend to avoid social interaction, and as a result, they might receive lower scores on the integrated skills tasks.

Even though, Conscientiousness was reported in the Person's r correlation concerning L2 grammar grades it was not a significant predictor in the multiple stepwise regression analysis and therefore, was not further analysed.

The present section aimed to offer some more insight into the potential influence of personality and TEI on the specific L2 skills and subsystems of grammar, writing and integrated skills. We decided to perform these analyses as the results of the national L2 written secondary school-leaving examination have not separately accounted for any of these skills. As a result, we could see that among all ten personality traits under consideration only one higher-order personality trait of Extraversion was reported to correlate positively with L2 integrated skills and negatively with L2

grammar skills. These results support previous analyses concerning L2 written, and oral proficiency scores (see section 4.2) as Extraversion was mentioned in the context of both L2 written and oral examination results. Another important thing to highlight is that none of the TEI factors correlated with the measured L2 skills. It could be speculated that traits that concern emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions (Davey, 2005, p. 306) that focus mostly on emotion-related skills and social interaction are more pronounced during authentic oral interaction rather than acquiring L2 skills of grammar, writing or integrated skills.

4.4 Personality and self-reported preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills

All previous analyses were concerned with objective measures of L2 proficiency, be it either at the national level (the national school-leaving L2 examination) or at the university level (marks from subjects dedicated to specific L2 skills). In this section, we focus on self-reported preferences concerning L2 acquisition of specific skills of writing, reading, listening, speaking, but also grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and spelling. We asked the informants in our study to rate on a Likert scale from 1-I don't like it at all to 5-I like it a lot, their preferences as far as the acquisition of the mentioned skills and subsystems in the foreign language is concerned. Firstly, we present results of the statistical analyses related to higher-order personality traits and later on to the emotional intelligence and its possible correlations with self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills.

4.4.1. Higher-order personality traits and self-reports concerning acquisition of L2 skills

All higher-order personality traits of Extraversion Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Neuroticism were correlated with results from self-reports regarding the acquisition of L2 skills preferences. Detailed results of the statistical analyses are provided below.

Table 14 Personality traits and self-reported preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills (Pearson's r)

	Extra-version	Openness to experience	Conscien-tiousness	Agreea-bleness	Neuro-ticism
Writing	.147	.040	**.227****	**.167***	.007
Reading	**-.218****	.113	**.194***	.083	-.022
Listening	-.135	.141	.007	.100	-.011
Speaking	**.477****	**.221****	-.059	.105	-.165
Grammar	-.123	-.133	**.147***	.031	.049
Vocabulary	.118	.061	.078	.019	-.041
Pronunciation	**.278****	.027	.503	**.182***	-.025
Spelling	.143	-.132	**.213***	.114	.007

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The results of correlational analysis's presented in Table 14 showed that almost all higher-order personality traits were correlated with some of L2 skills under consideration. Consequently, the multiple stepwise regression analyses were performed concerning every skill under consideration to find the most significant predictors. The results of these analyses are presented below.

Table 15 Higher-order personality traits and L2 writing (multiple stepwise regression)

	R²	F	Beta	t	p
Conscientiousness	.051	7.477	.227	2.734	.007

Table 15 shows results of the multiple stepwise regression for the self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 writing. Both Conscientiousness and Agreeableness were reported to correlate with the preferences to practice this skill in the foreign language, but the results of the regression analyses showed that the only significant predictor was Consciousness. At the same time, it needs to be highlighted that it explained only 5 % of the variance.

Table 16 Higher-order personality traits and L2 reading (multiple stepwise regression)

	R²	F	Beta	t	p
Conscientiousness	.099	7.528	.230	3.059	.003
Extraversion					

Table 16 shows the results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis for the acquisition of reading in the foreign language and both Conscientiousness and Extraversion seem to be the most significant predictors explaining almost 10 % of the variance.

Table 17 Higher-order personality traits and L2 speaking (multiple stepwise regression)

	R²	F	Beta	t	p
Openness	.150	20.561	.360	4.535	.000
Extraversion					

The results of the stepwise regression analysis concerning L2 speaking presented in Table 17 showed a similar pattern to the correlation analysis results as both higher-order traits of Extraversion and Openness to experience were also reported to be significant predictors of the preferences to practice speaking in the L2. It needs to be noted that both traits explained 15% of the variance.

Table 18 Higher-order personality traits and L2 grammar (multiple stepwise regression)

	R²	F	Beta	t	p
Conscientiousness	.030	4.324	.174	2.081	.039

When it comes to preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 grammar, only one higher-order personality trait of Conscientiousness was a significant predictor and explained 3% of the variance.

Table 19 Higher-order personality traits and L2 pronunciation (multiple stepwise regression)

	R²	F	Beta	t	p
Extraversion	.077	11.592	.278	3.405	.001

The results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis presented in Table 19 showed that even though both Extraversion and Agreeableness were reported to correlate with self-reported preferences to practice L2 pronunciation, Extraversion was the only significant predictor of acquisition of pronunciation in the foreign language and explained almost 8% of the variance.

Table 20 Higher-order personality traits and L2 spelling (multiple stepwise regression)

	R²	F	Beta	t	p
Conscientiousness	.046	6.579	.213	2.565	.011

The very last stepwise multiple regression analysis concerning the acquisition of spelling in L2 presented in Table 20 showed that the only significant predictor that explained almost 5% of the variance was a higher-order trait of Conscientiousness. In the case of L2 vocabulary acquisition and L2 listening, none of the higher-order traits seemed to correlate with the mentioned skills.

The results of the statistical analyses concerning higher-order personality traits and self-reported preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills showed some interesting patterns. Extraversion was positively correlated with L2 speaking and pronunciation and negatively with L2 reading. It could be speculated that extraverts who are friendly, warm-hearted, and tend to engage more frequently in social interactions prefer practising speaking and pronunciation. At the same time introverts, who are low scorers on the trait, and could be characterised as being quiet, task-oriented and shunning crowds, tend to prefer reading in the foreign language rather than the other mentioned skills. Another trait under examination, Openness to experience, was reported as a significant predictor but only when it comes to speaking in the second language. High scorers on that trait that could be characterised as curious, creative and tolerant reported preferring practising speaking over other investigated skills. Conscientiousness, on the other hand, correlated positively with writing, reading, grammar and spelling. This trait denotes thoughtfulness,

self-discipline, and reliability; therefore, its high scorers who prefer planned and structured behaviour to spontaneity and creativity reported to favour mostly L2 skills of writing, reading, grammar and spelling. It could be hypothesised that while practising those skills, their self-discipline, motivation, and goal-orientation can come to the foreground. Another examined trait was Agreeableness, and even though it was correlated with writing and pronunciation, the multiple stepwise regression failed to report it as a significant predictor in both cases. The last higher-order personality trait of Neuroticism was not reported to correlate with any of L2 skills under consideration. It is also important to highlight that in all mentioned cases described personality traits explained a relatively small amount of the variance (from 3% to 15%).

To see what were the preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills among high and low scorers on each personality trait, we performed a series of t-test analyses whose results are presented below. However, because of the large number of the examined skills we present only these results that were statistically significant.

Table 21 Extraversion and preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Reading	**Introverts**	**4.40**	**.681**	**2.22**	**47**	**.050**
	Extraverts	3.83	1.00			
Speaking	Introverts	3.25	1.33	**-6.43**	**47**	**.000**
	Extraverts	**4.90**	**.310**			
Pronunciation	Introverts	3.30	1.08	**-3.72**	**47**	**.013**
	Extraverts	**4.34**	**.769**			

As shown in Table 21, introverts, who are low scorers on the trait Extraversion, preferred reading (medium effect size with the Cohen's d = .66) over other examined skills. On the other hand, Extraverts tended to opt more frequently for speaking (very large effect size with Cohen's d = 1.70) and pronunciation (large effect size with Cohen's d = 1.10). It could be hypothesised that extraverts who are sociable, talkative and person-oriented, prefer practising skills that allow them to use these characteristics to their full potential. At the same time introverts, who are not that keen to develop interpersonal contacts, opt for language skills that do not require such interactions.

Table 22 Openness to experience and preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Speaking	Low scorers	4.27	1.03	-2.50	45	.016
	High scorers	**4.81**	**.471**			

Openness to experience was reported to correlate with preferences concerning practising speaking (medium effect size with Cohen's d = .67). As can be observed in Table 22, its high scorers, who are described as flexible, intellectually curious, creative and imaginative, preferred speaking activities significantly more often than the lower scorers on the trait, who represent a more down-to-earth approach and could be described as more conventional and less tolerant for the unfamiliar.

Another examined trait was Conscientiousness, and the results of the t-test analysis presented in Table 23 showed that its high and low scorers differed as far as their preferences concerning the acquisition of three language subsystems and skills: grammar (medium effect size with Cohen's d = .67), writing (medium effect size with Cohen's d = .72) and spelling (medium effect size with Cohen's d = .74) are concerned. In all mentioned cases, high scorers on the trait, who could be described as well-organised, reliable, hard-working and self-disciplined opted for practising grammar, writing and spelling more frequently than the representatives of the low scorers on the trait. It could be speculated that the skills mentioned above predispose highly conscientious learners to acquire grammar, writing and spelling as these skills require persistence and goal-directed behaviour on the part of the learner.

Table 23 Conscientiousness and preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Grammar	Low scorers	2.10	.831	-2.38	47	.021
	High scorers	**2.79**	**1.19**			
Writing	Low scorers	3.14	1.23	-2.52	47	.015
	High scorers	**3.93**	**.940**			
Spelling	Low scorers	3.00	.837	-2.605	47	.012
	High scorers	**3.68**	**.983**			

Summing up the presented results, it is important to mention that informants' self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills were in line with the results of the statistical analyses based on the more objective measures of L2 proficiency. When it comes to the correlation analyses concerning results of L2 written and oral secondary-school leaving examination Extraversion and Openness to experience were positively correlated with the scores of the L2 oral part of the examination. Additionally, Extraversion was negatively correlated with the written part of the L2 examination. The next set of analyses based on the marks received from classes that focused solely on grammar, writing and integrated skills also showed that Extraversion was positively correlated with marks from the integrated skills classes and negatively correlated with the marks from grammar classes. When it comes to the results of the self-reports related to preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills of writing, reading, listening, speaking but also grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling, similar pattern could be observed. Extraversion was positively correlated with preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills of speaking and pronunciation and negatively with the acquisition of L2 skill of reading. Openness was correlated with the preferences concerning the acquisition of speaking in the foreign language just like in the analyses concerning L2 oral proficiency measured by means of the national school-leaving exam. However, apart from the results that confirmed analyses based on more objective measures, while examining informants' preferences concerning the acquisition of certain L2 skills, a higher-order personality trait of Conscientiousness came to the foreground. It was reported to correlate with the preferences related to the acquisition of L2 skills of writing and reading as well as the acquisition of L2 subsystems of grammar and spelling.

The results of all the analyses showed that there might be a certain pattern when it comes to the personality traits and SLA. It could be observed that higher-order personality traits of Extraversion and Openness correlated positively with speaking in the foreign language. When it comes to other personality traits, Conscientiousness seemed to be related to participants' preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 writing, reading, grammar and spelling. We can not forget that Extraversion correlated negatively with the scores of L2 written secondary school-leaving examination as well as with the grammar scores. Table 24 presents a detailed summary of findings of all three multiple stepwise regression analyses.

Table 24 Personality traits and SLA-summary of findings (Pearson's r)

	Extraversion	**Openness**	**Conscien-tiousness**	**Agreea-bleness**	**Neuro-ticism**
L2 secondary school-leaving examination	- written part + oral part	+ oral part			
L2 grades	- grammar + integrated skills				
Self-reported preferences	- reading + speaking +pronunciation	+ speaking	+ writing + reading +grammar + spelling		

4.4.2. Lower-order personality traits and self-reports concerning acquisition of L2 skills

The lower-order personality traits of Trait Emotional Intelligence, Well-being, Self-control, Emotionality and Sociability, were correlated with results from self-reports regarding the acquisition of L2 skills preferences. Detailed results of the statistical analyses are provided in Table 25 below.

Table 25 Emotional intelligence traits and self-reported preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills (Pearson's r)

	TEI	**Well-being**	**Self-control**	**Emotionality**	**Sociability**
Writing	-.012	-.112	.000	.003	-.002
Reading	081	-.008	.078	.069	-.020
Listening	.035	.058	.069	.058	-.112
Speaking	**.229****	**.245****	.059	.119	**.262****
Grammar	-.108	-.027	-.011	-.076	-126
Vocabulary	.060	.050	.036	.011	.000
Pronunciation	.102	.029	.001	.124	.121
Spelling	-.064	-.135	-.085	.091	-.004

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The results of the statistical analysis showed that three lower-order personality traits of global TEI, Well-being and Sociability were significantly correlated only with one L2 skill of speaking. The informants of this study who scored higher on these lower-order personality traits reported strong preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skill of speaking over the other researched skills. When it comes to the global TEI that relates to the process of perception and utilisation of affect-laden information, it could be suggested that such skills are of crucial importance in any social interaction. However, when it comes to speaking in a foreign language, the ability to recognise and understand emotions of our interlocutor, seems to be of even greater significance. The Well-being factor that reflects a generalised sense of well-being, extending from past achievements to future expectations, was also shown to correlate with informants' preferences concerning practising speaking in the foreign language. It could be speculated that those participants who feel positive, happy, and fulfilled are more eager to interact in the L2. Another lower-order personality trait that was reported to correlate with self-reported preferences related to the acquisition of L2 skill of speaking was Sociability. It emphasises social relationships and social influence. Therefore, it could be one of the most important factors determining both willingness to speak in a second language and frequency of these interactions.

In order to determine the most significant predictors, a multiple stepwise regression analysis was performed. Its results presented in Table 26 showed that all three traits reported in the correlation analysis were also showed to be significant predictors and explained 10% of the variance.

Table 26 Lower-order personality traits and L2 speaking (multiple stepwise regression)

	R^2	F	Beta	t	p
TEI					
Well-being	.105	5.308	.278	2.465	.015
Sociability					

Since self-reported preferences concerning practising L2 speaking seemed to be linked to both higher and lower–order personality traits, explaining 15% and 10% of the variance respectively, it was decided to perform another multiple stepwise regression analysis but this time including both mentioned types of traits.

Table 27 Higher and lower-order personality traits and L2 speaking (multiple stepwise regression)

	R²	F	Beta	t	p
Extraversion					
Openness to experience	.230	30.062	.423	8.565	.000
Sociability					

The results of the multiple stepwise regression presented in Table 27 showed that two higher-order personality traits of Extraversion and Openness to experience, as well as a lower-order personality trait of Sociability, were significant predictors explaining 23% of the variance. Therefore, it could be speculated that taking into account both higher and lower-order personality traits while examining certain aspects of SLA might result in a higher proportion of the variance explained.

To see what were the preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills among high and low scorers on each lower-order personality trait, we performed a series of t-test analyses whose results are presented below.

Table 28 TEI and preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Speaking	Low scorers	3.68	1.24	-3.46	39	.001
	High scorers	**4.68**	**.568**			

As it can be seen from Table 28 high scorers on the TEI preferred practising speaking in the foreign language in comparison to the low scorers on the trait (large effect size with Cohen's d = 1.03). It could be hypothesised that informants who are emotionally intelligent and able to identify their own emotions accurately are more willing to focus on practising speaking and pronunciation in the foreign language. Their personality helps them to communicate freely not only in their L1 but also in the L2.

Table 29 Well-being and preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
	Low scorers	3.88	1.16	-2.38	44	.026
Speaking	High scorers	4.62	.677			

The Well-being factor of the TEI was also reported to differentiate its high and low scorers as far as speaking is concerned (medium effect size with Cohen's d = .77). As shown in Table 29, those informants who scored higher on the trait and therefore could be characterised as cheerful and satisfied with their lives, tend to opt for the acquisition of the speaking skill more often than low scorers on the trait.

Table 30 Sociability and preferences concerning acquisition of L2 skills (t-test)

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
	Low scorers	3.71	1.23	-3.09	45	.005
Speaking	High scorers	4.62	.571			

Another Emotional Intelligence factor under investigation was Sociability. The data analysis presented in Table 30 suggested that higher scorers on the trait preferred focusing on speaking skills while acquiring a second language (large effect size with Cohen's d = .94). It could be concluded that those informants who can communicate clearly and confidently with people from very diverse backgrounds opt for practising speaking in the foreign language more often in comparison to the low scorers on the trait Sociability.

While summing up the results of the analyses concerning lower-order personality traits and self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of the certain L2 skills, it has to be highlighted that mentioned results were the first ones to report some correlations between lower-order personality traits and preferences concerning practising speaking in the L2. At the same time, it is important to remember that none of the previous analyses based on more objective measures outlined any statistically significant results between variables in question. The results of both analyses, based on L2 school-leaving written and oral examination as well as on L2 grades concerning grammar, writing and integrated skills showed no correlations on the part of the lower-order personality traits.

Table 31 Emotional intelligence traits and SLA-summary of findings (t-test)

	TEI	Well-being	Self-control	Emotionality	Sociability
L2 secondary school-leaving examination					
L2 grades					
Self-reported preferences	+ speaking	+ speaking			+speaking

As showed in Table 31, high scorers on some of the lower-order personality traits scored significantly higher but only as far as speaking in the foreign language is concerned. While examining self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of certain skills in the foreign language, high scorers on Emotional intelligence, Well-being and Sociability were reported to prefer to focus on speaking and pronunciation while acquiring a second language. It is important to highlight that when the analysis considered L2 grades in grammar, writing and integrated skills, no statistically significant results were reported. Therefore, it could be suggested that Emotional intelligence traits come to the foreground only when measuring speaking in the foreign language by focusing on more subjective self-reports. At the same time, it was reported that taking into account both higher and lower-order personality traits might result in a higher proportion of variance explained.

4.5 Personality and emotional intelligence and self-reported L2 proficiency

To be able to see whether higher-order personality traits, as well as TEI, were correlated to self-perceived L2 proficiency, a correlation analysis was performed. It was also followed by the multiple stepwise regression analysis that aimed to present only the significant predictors as well as the proportion of variance explained. The results of mentioned analyses are presented below.

Table 32 Personality and emotional intelligence and self-reported L2 proficiency

	Self-reported L2 proficiency
Extraversion	.076 p< .374
Openness to experience	-.017 p< .844
Agreeableness	.022 p< .799
Conscientiousness	.013 p< .877
Neuroticism	-.152 p< .074
Global trait EI	**.179 * p< .034**
Well-being	.133 p< .117
Self-control	.132 p< .122
Emotionality	.093 p< .272
Sociability	.153 p< .071

The findings presented in Table 32 showed that only one personality trait of EI correlated with the self-reported L2 proficiency. However, the multiple stepwise regression analysis showed that none of the higher and lower-order personality traits were significant predictors. Therefore, it could be speculated that personality traits come to the foreground only when specific L2 skills are being measured. At the same time, it needs to be noted that different traits might be linked to various aspects of L2 proficiency but not necessarily to the overall foreign language proficiency. It is an important finding as it points to the fact that we might get no statistically significant correlations between personality traits when it comes to the general L2 proficiency but at the same time get some interesting results while examining various L2 skills and subsystems separately. It also shows that in the same group of informants we might get incongruent results concerning personality variables due to the introduction of different types measures (more objective and standardized vs subjective, self-reports), which focus on measuring different L2 skills.

4.6 Personality and emotional intelligence, L2 proficiency and living in the English-speaking country

Among the informants of this study, there were some who reported living in the English-speaking country (ESC) (in the majority of cases it was the UK and Ireland but also the USA and Canada) from half a month to ten years (Mean in months = 9.7, SD = 25,4). It was decided to include

such a question as the very fact of living in the country where L2 is used on an everyday basis might influence the results of both secondary school-leaving L2 proficiency examination as well self-reported L2 proficiency ratings. Table 33 presents detailed results of the statistical analyses.

Table 33 Living in the ESC and L2 proficiency (t-test)

Variable	ESC	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
L2 oral proficiency	No	92.81	8.89	-.916	138	.361
	Yes	94.34	8.49			
L2 written proficiency	No	89.82	9.59	-1.55	138	.122
	Yes	92.53	7.73			
Self-perceived L2 proficiency	No	3.69	.645	-1.47	138	.143
	Yes	3.87	.665			

No statistically significant differences were found in all L2 proficiency scores between those who lived in the ESC and the rest of the sample. It was a quite puzzling result. Therefore, it was decided to run another set of analyses, this time concentrating on the frequency of L2 use, results of which are presented below.

Table 34 Living in the ESC and L2 use (t-test)

Variable	ESC	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Social media	No	3.12	1.19	-.541	138	.589
	Yes	3.24	1.05			
Talking to friends	No	2.32	.935	-.694	138	.489
	Yes	2.45	.950			
Outside of the classroom setting	No	3.01	1.16	1.05	138	.294
	Yes	2.79	.905			
Establishing new contacts	No	2.23	.855	-.855	138	.394
	Yes	2.37	.942			

The results presented in Table 34 show that there were no differences in reported L2 use among those informants who have lived in the ESC and those who have not. Once again these findings were a bit unexpected as it

was hypothesised that informants who had experienced living abroad and used English, their L2, on an everyday basis would report more frequent use of that language even after their return to Poland. One of the possible explanations of such results could be that once the informants arrive back they do not maintain contacts established during their stay abroad to such an extent as while being away. Another important factor that could influence presented findings is the length of stay in the ESC. As mentioned earlier the mean length of stay abroad was 9.7 months but when we had a closer look at the data, we found out that 50% of the informants who reported living abroad were there for up to 2 months, another 20% from 2 to 4 months, 19% claimed to live abroad from 4 to 8 months, and the remaining 11% lived there from 36 to 120 months. Based on that information it could be hypothesised that the period of time our participants spent abroad might not be long enough to exert a measurable effect on L2 proficiency and L2 use scores. Another important thing we have to keep in mind is the fact that there was no question asking about the frequency of English use while being abroad, which also could influence our findings.

Since there were no reported differences concerning L2 proficiency and L2 use among participants who had lived abroad and those who have reported never having lived in the ESC, it was decided to run another set of the t-test analyses, however, this time with a special focus on the higher and lower-order personality traits.

Table 35 Living in the ESC and higher-order personality traits (t-test)

Variable	ESC	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Extraversion	No	26.40	7.21	-.227	138	.821
	Yes	26.71	6.96			
Openness to experience	No	27.36	6.29	**2.054**	**138**	**.043**
	Yes	**29.57**	**5.43**			
Conscientiousness	**No**	**29.80**	**7.70**	**2.023**	**138**	**.045**
	Yes	26.86	7.43			
Agreeableness	No	28.97	6.72	1.120	138	.265
	Yes	27.47	7.80			
Neuroticism	No	25.95	9.76	-1.406	138	.162
	Yes	28.44	8.08			

As shown in Table 35, those informants who reported living in the ESC also scored significantly higher on the higher-order trait of Openness to experience (small effect size with Cohen's d = .37) and significantly lower on the trait of Conscientiousness (small effect size with Cohen's d = .36) in comparison to those who had never lived abroad. However, the multiple stepwise regression analysis showed that none of the mentioned personality traits were reported to be statistically significant.

Table 36 Living in the ESC and lower-order personality traits (t-test)

Variable	ESC	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
TEI	No	4.54	.738	.734	138	.464
	Yes	4.44	.814			
Well-being	No	4.68	1.16	.843	138	.400
	Yes	4.49	1.32			
Self-control	No	4.09	1.14	1.23	138	.220
	Yes	3.83	1.08			
Emotionality	No	4.91	.828	.427	138	.670
	Yes	4.83	1.01			
Sociability	No	4.40	.937	-.640	138	.523
	Yes	4.51	.847			

When it comes to lower-order personality traits, results presented in Table 36 show that none of the mentioned traits were more pronounced among informants who lived abroad or those who have reported not to spend any time in the ESC.

In general, statistical analyses' results concerning stay abroad and L2 proficiency and L2 use revealed that there were no statistically significant differences among researched groups. The reported results were a bit unexpected, and it has been speculated that the possible reason for such a situation might be linked to the relatively short amount of time spent abroad and lack of additional information related to the nature of the stay as well as the frequency of L2 use while living in the ESC. Another thing that was missing in the gathered data and could shed some more light on reported results was the exact time when the mentioned stay in the ESC took place. When it comes to personality traits, once again none of the

higher and lower-order personality traits were related to measured variables.

4.7 L2 anxiety, personality and second language acquisition

One of the questionnaires used in the present study measured self-perceived L2 anxiety of the researched informants. To be able to see what is the correlation between L2 anxiety and second language acquisition among participants of this study, a correlation analysis was performed whose results are presented in Table 37.

Table 37 Self-reported L2 anxiety and second language acquisition (Pearson's r)

	Self-reported L2 anxiety
Self-perceived L2 proficiency	-.402 p< .000
L2 oral proficiency	-.472 p< .000

As shown in Table 37, self-reported L2 anxiety correlated with some L2 proficiency measures that included L2 oral proficiency and self-perceived L2 proficiency. To be able to analyse these results in a more detailed manner, a series of the t-test analyses were performed. The results of these analyses, presented in Table 38, showed that highly anxious informants scored significantly lower on self-perceived L2 proficiency as well as on more objectively measured L2 oral proficiency tests. Reported effect sizes were medium for self-perceived L2 proficiency (Cohen's d = .86) and large for L2 oral proficiency where the effect size was large (Cohen's d = 1.6). Another analysis of the correlation between self-reported L2 proficiency and preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills showed that L2 anxiety is correlated only with L2 speaking (r = -.375, p = .000), with highly anxious informants reporting a tendency to avoid practising L2 speaking (large effect size with Cohen's d = 1.01). Therefore, it could be concluded that L2 anxiety has the greatest impact on the acquisition of the productive skills with a special emphasis on L2 speaking. These skills require active use of the target language, which might be problematic for the highly anxious participants of this study.

Table 37 Self-reported L2 anxiety and second language acquisition (t-test)

Variable	L2 anxiety	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Self-perceived L2 proficiency	**Low**	**4.00**	**.707**	**3.488**	**138**	**.001**
	High	3.39	.704			
L2 oral proficiency	**Low**	**97.94**	**4.21**	**6.331**	**138**	**.000**
	High	87.39	8.32			

After the statistical analyses concerning the possible influence of the self-reported L2 anxiety on second language acquisition, another set of analyses were performed to see whether self-reported L2 anxiety might be linked to some higher and lower order personality traits. The results of the correlation analysis presented in Table 38 showed that indeed L2 anxiety was linked to some personality traits.

Table 38 Self-reported L2 anxiety and higher and lower order personality traits (Pearson's r)

	Self-reported L2 anxiety
Extraversion	-.044 p< .606
Openness to experience	.005 p< .953
Agreeableness	.078 p< .350
Conscientiousness	-.092 p< .279
Neuroticism	**.386 p< .000**
TEIQue total	**-.309 p< .000**
Self-control	**-.339 p< .000**
Emotionality	**-.201 p< .017**
Sociability	**-.214 p< .011**
Well-being	-.091 p<.283

Self-reported L2 anxiety was correlated with only one higher order personality trait of Neuroticism and with lower-order personality traits of Emotional Intelligence, Self-control, Emotionality and Sociability. However, the results of the multiple stepwise regression analysis presented in Table 39 showed that Neuroticism was the only significant predictor explaining 15% of the variance.

Table 39 Higher and lower-order personality traits and L2 anxiety (multiple stepwise regression)

	R²	F	Beta	t	p
Neuroticism	.149	24.208	.386	4.920	.000

Therefore, highly anxious L2 users could also be characterised as nervous, worrying and feeling insecure while operating in a foreign language. Bearing all that in mind, we could speculate that low scores on Neuroticism might also be the reason why highly anxious L2 informants of this study tend to avoid social interactions in the foreign language as well as practising L2 productive skills. This, in turn, might result in significantly lower scores on oral proficiency tests as well as self-perceived L2 proficiency. Apparently, the personality profile of the L2 learner might be significantly linked to the preferences concerning acquisition and practice of certain L2 skills and consequently, have an impact on the L2 proficiency scores.

4.8 Conclusions

The quantitative data analyses results presented in this chapter highlighted the fact that the relationship between personality traits and SLA is quite complex and nuanced. Nevertheless, the reported results showed that certain personality traits were linked to various L2 skills and subsystems. Among the traits that correlated with written and oral L2 proficiency were Extraversion and Openness to experience. Extraversion was related to both oral and written L2 proficiency scores, and Openness to experience was related only to the oral part of L2 proficiency exam. When it comes to the specific L2 skills and subsystems of grammar, writing and integrated skills only one higher-order personality trait of Extraversion was reported to correlate positively with L2 integrated skills and negatively with L2 grammar skills. Another important thing to highlight is that none of the TEI factors correlated with measured L2 skills and subsystems. Hence, it could be speculated that traits that concern emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions are more pronounced during authentic social interactions. At the same time, the results of the analyses focusing on participants' preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills and subsystems showed that higher-order personality traits of Extraversion and Openness correlated positively with speaking in the foreign language whereas Conscientiousness was related to participants' preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 writing, reading, grammar and spelling.

Concurrently, high scorers on Emotional intelligence, Well-being and Sociability were reported to prefer to focus on speaking and pronunciation while acquiring a second language. Therefore, it could be speculated that certain personality traits come into play only when specific L2 skills and subsystems are measured. At the same time, it needs to be noted that different traits might be linked to various aspects of L2 proficiency but not necessarily to the overall foreign language proficiency. Consequently, we might get no statistically significant results while focusing on the general L2 proficiency but be able to report some more interesting findings while examining L2 skills and subsystems separately. To conclude, it should be noted that personality profile of the L2 learner might be significantly linked to preferences concerning acquisition as well as practicing of certain L2 skills and consequently have an impact on the process of SLA.

CHAPTER FIVE

OPEN QUESTION DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

The questionnaire used in the present study contained one open question which was aimed to tap participants' perceptions concerning the most difficult aspects of foreign language learning. The question was: "What, from your point of view, is the most difficult in foreign language learning? Explain why". Informants were asked not only to enumerate all aspects which they considered the most difficult while acquiring a foreign language but also to provide some more detailed descriptions and explanations which could shed some more light on the very process of foreign language learning. Detailed analysis of the findings is presented below.

5.2 Findings

Among 140 researched informants only 11 respondents decided not to answer the open question concerning the most difficult aspect of the foreign language learning. The remaining 129 participants reported that they consider speaking in the foreign language (52%), talking with L1 users of the foreign language (27%) or conversing in the foreign language (12%) as the most challenging aspects of foreign language learning. At the same time, 3% of participants reported not experiencing any difficulties linked to foreign language learning. The majority of the answers were very homogeneous and focused exclusively on speaking as a factor causing most problems while acquiring a foreign language. It was a very surprising finding as it is very rare to receive identical answers from all the respondents of the study despite the fact that they differ significantly when it comes to personality traits, emotional intelligence, L2 proficiency, or L2 preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skills. However, while having a closer look at the second part of the question in which they were to provide more details as well as explanations concerning enumerated difficulties, some more variation could be noticed. Consequently, all the

responses addressing the second part of the question and providing some more detailed explanation were carefully analysed and divided into eleven categories that seemed to emerge from data provided by the informants of the study. Among these categories were: vocabulary, understanding the interlocutor, lack of fluency, grammar, accent and pronunciation, switching to the foreign language "mode", not being able to express oneself, stress, low self-confidence, being afraid of making mistakes and no reported difficulties. Detailed results are presented in Table 40 below.

Table 40 Detailed answers to "What, from your point of view, is the most difficult in foreign language learning? Explain why"

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response to the open question	11	7.9	7.9
Vocabulary	24	17.1	25
Understanding the interlocutor	11	7.9	32.9
Lack of fluency	17	12.1	45
Grammar	16	11.4	56.4
Accent and pronunciation	5	3.6	60
Switching to the foreign language "mode"	4	2.9	62.9
Not being able to express oneself	12	8.6	71.4
Stress	15	10.7	82.1
Low self-confidence	5	3.6	85.7
Being afraid of making mistakes	16	11.4	97.1
No reported difficulties	4	2.9	100
Total	140	100	100

The results presented in Table 40 suggest that the majority of the respondents (17.1%) focused on problems linked to vocabulary while speaking in the L2. The second largest category (12.1%) pointed to by the

informants of this study was the lack of fluency while speaking in the foreign language. An identical number of answers (11.4 %) was linked to the next two categories of grammar and being afraid of making mistakes. The fifth most often mentioned category (10.7%) was stress that accompanies conversing in the foreign language. Almost 9% of the answers were assigned to the category that focused on not being able to express oneself. Eight percent of the answers were linked to problems with understanding the interlocutor while using a foreign language. Another two categories that had the identical amount of answers (3.6%) were problems connected with foreign accent and difficulties in pronunciation as well as low self-confidence of the respondents. The last two, least frequent, categories mentioned by respondents were difficulties with switching to the foreign language "mode" (2.9%) and reporting no difficulties while acquiring a second language (2.9%). Examples from each of these eleven categories are presented below.

5.2.1 Vocabulary

Twenty four informants of the study (17.1%) mentioned vocabulary as the most difficult aspect of conversing in the foreign language. Below are several of the more elaborate responses:

"Lack of the appropriate vocabulary and getting stressed out because of it is the most difficult aspect of speaking in the foreign language as my utterance isn't clear and my interlocutor is unable to understand it" (participant no. 7; female; age 23).

"Limited vocabulary and not being used to everyday use of the foreign language influences my fluency and is the most difficult part when it comes to speaking in English" (participant no. 32; male; age 21)

"Limited vocabulary linked to some technical aspects or other topics of conversation that directly influences my fluency in the L2" (participant no. 101; male, age 24).

"Using the right word is the most difficult as words might change their meaning depending on the context and if you're not sure of what you're saying, then the person you're talking to might have some huge problems in understanding your utterance" (participant no. 17; female; age 21).

"Forgetting the right word and having to explain what I mean influences my fluency and makes me very nervous" (participant no. 3; female; age 19).

"The right choice of vocabulary and grammatical correctness are the most difficult for me while talking in the L2 as it seems that I'm not as fluent as I would like to be" (participant no. 44; female, age 22)

As can be seen from the above excerpts, limited vocabulary was not the only aspect mentioned by the informants of the study when it comes to difficulties while speaking in the L2. Apart from problems with choosing the right word, they seemed to be also worried about the grammar and L2 fluency that is directly linked to reported problems with L2 vocabulary. However, as mentioned before, the qualitative analysis was based on the first element reported by each informant of the study. Therefore, all of the presented answers were assigned to the *vocabulary* category even though they were also linked to the *grammar* and *fluency* one.

5.2.2 Lack of fluency

The second largest category (12.1 %) consisted of seventeen answers that focused mostly on the lack of fluency while speaking in the foreign language. Some of these answers are presented below:

> "Fluency while talking is the most difficult thing. How am I to start a conversation in a foreign language if I don't know much about small talk in English. I will just make a full of myself."(participant no. 21; female; age 21)
> "Not being as fluent as I would like to is the major problem while speaking in English." (participant no. 121; male; age 21)
> "L2 fluency is my major problem when the person I'm talking to is speaking very fast or using slang expressions which I don't know then I don't know how to respond and have an impression that I'm not as fluent as I would like to be" (participant no. 11; female; age 25).
> "L2 fluency is a major problem as I have difficulties in understanding the context, limited vocabulary and problems with keeping the conversation going" (participant no. 18; female; age 27).
> "Fluency in English is my major problem as I know that speech that comes out of my mouth is worse in comparison to what I could expect, and it is so frustrating for me" (participant no. 1; female; age 19).

The presented examples showed that informants were fully aware of their shortcomings concerning L2 fluency but also pointed to an important aspect that is linked to the frustration that is caused by it. The majority of the answers in this category highlighted the fact that L2 fluency is crucial when it comes to successful communication in the foreign language and that problems with being fluent might lead to some negative feelings as well as avoiding conversing in the L2.

5.2.3 Grammar

The next category that was reported by sixteen participants (11.4%) of this study was concerned with L2 grammar:

"Using the right tense and being grammatically correct is the most problematic in L2 speaking as it affects my fluency" (participant no. 34; male; age 20).

"I don't know which tense to use, and I have a limited knowledge of everyday expressions or slang expressions what causes some problems when it comes to fluency in speaking English" (participant no. 81; female; age 20).

"When I speak English I have huge problems with choosing correct grammatical construction of a sentence what influences the meaning of my words and L2 fluency. It is so embarrassing not to be able to use the right tense" (participant no. 74; female; age 30).

"While speaking English the most difficult thing is to choose the right tense to convey the meaning. Quite often I mix it all up, and I can see that my addressee does not understand me what is quite embarrassing" (participant no. 22; female; age 19).

"The lack of grammatical correctness influences my fluency as when you can't use the right tense you can't communicate fluently in the foreign language" (participant no. 100; female; age 24).

The testimonies presented above showed that the knowledge of L2 grammar is of great importance when it comes to fluent communication in the foreign language. The informants pointed to the fact that without such knowledge it is virtually impossible to convey the right meaning, what could have an impact on the fluency of speech in the L2.

5.2.4 Being afraid of making mistakes

Another category that was created based on the qualitative data analysis of answers to the open question highlighted the notion of being afraid of making mistakes while speaking in the second language. Below we present some of the sixteen answers illustrating this very category:

"Being afraid to make a linguistic or grammatical mistake as well as mispronouncing words petrifies me to such extent that I am almost unable to have a conversation in the foreign language" (participant no. 91; female; age 21).

"The most difficult aspect of speaking in the foreign language is being afraid of making mistakes or saying something stupid and being laugh at" (participant no. 15; male; age 20).

"I am terrified of making some basic mistakes while speaking English and not being understood by my addressee. If you make such mistakes, native speakers will probably think that you are stupid and not worth talking to" (participant no. 6; female; age 19).
"The most difficult part of speaking in the foreign language in my case is connected with being afraid of making a grammatical or linguistic mistake, and not being able to get the message across" (participant no. 50; female; age 19).
"Being afraid of making mistakes in English is the worst part of conversing in the L2. Additionally, knowing that my interlocutor speaks better than me and he might judge me and my L2 proficiency worries me a lot. I prefer talking in English to other L2 learners than to native speakers to avoid being laugh at or judged. I'm still very nervous and worry about making mistakes, but it is a bit easier" (participant no. 48; female; age 20).

As it could be observed based on the examples presented above, some of the informants were focusing a lot on the possibility of making different types of mistakes while using a foreign language. Some of them were petrified by the fact that they might not be grammatically or linguistically correct while talking in a foreign language as well as being judged by the L1 speakers. One of the respondents wrote that the fear of making mistakes while conversing in L2 scares her to such extent that she is almost unable to have any conversation in the foreign language. These statements are very important as they present the participants' point of view concerning potential drawbacks and obstacles to successful communication in the foreign language, showing a link to some other variables, such as communicative anxiety, measured in this study.

5.2.5 Stress

The fifth most often mentioned category (10.7%) was connected with the stress that accompanies conversing in the foreign language:

"Getting stressed out while talking in English is the worst thing ever. Because of this, my utterances aren't clear, and my addressee is unable to understand me" (participant no. 78; female; age 20).
"When I'm stressed out, and I'm often very stressed while speaking in the L2, I forget all the words, and it is difficult for me to construct even a simple sentence. It is very nerve-wracking and affects my fluency" (participant no. 36; female; age 19).
"The most difficult thing about speaking in the L2 is the stress factor that accompanies it and makes me almost unable to have a normal conversation in English. I have to choose the right word or grammar structure in a very

limited amount of time, and quite often I'm unable to do so as the level of stress is simply too high for me" (participant no. 13; female; age 20).

"Being stressed out and shy is the most difficult aspect of speaking in the foreign language. Additionally, I often try to overcome an impression that the person I'm talking to speaks better English than me and that I probably sound like an idiot, but when you are so stressed it simply doesn't work" (participant no. 9; female; age 19).

"Stress that accompanies my speaking in the foreign language often causes some obstacles to spontaneous expression in the L2" (participant no. 95; male; age 21).

The presented above examples show that speaking in the foreign language could be perceived as a highly stressful situation for L2 users. Some of the informants of the study point to the fact that it might cause some serious obstacles in the communication process as they tend to forget words or grammatical structures. Some other informants claim that it influences their fluency in the foreign language and might have a profound impact on their willingness to speak in the L2, which is also in line with results of the quantitative analysis reporting that highly anxious learners tend to avoid social interactions in the foreign language.

5.2.6 Not being able to express oneself

Nine percent of the informants pointed to another category that might influence communication in the foreign language. This time it was linked explicitly to a situation when they are not able to express themselves in a foreign language. Below we present some examples of such situations reported by the respondents of the study:

"It is very difficult to express what I think while speaking in a foreign language. It is difficult to find appropriate vocabulary/phrase that would reflect what I mean in English" (participant no. 2; female; age 24).

"It is difficult to express exactly what I mean. Therefore, I try to limit myself to short sentences because I'm afraid I might get lost while constructing longer ones" (participant no. 123; male; age 21).

"The most difficult thing is to express my thoughts in English. I feel that I'm not proficient enough as I face huge problems while trying to express myself in English. Whatever comes out of my mouth is so simple that the person I'm talking to might think that I'm not capable of some more complicated or abstract thinking processes" (participant no. 61; female; age 20).

"I'm afraid of not being able to express myself and get the message across. It is so frustrating as it seems that I can't express my thought in English. Maybe it is the lack of vocabulary and not being very fluent, but I'm afraid

that I just won't say what I want to say and it will all sound very stupid" (participant no. 85; female; age 19).
"I'm always afraid that I will have some problems with sentence construction, use of the appropriate words and phrases and won't express what I want to express" (participant no. 117; female; age 28).

The examples presented above pointed to the fact that even though the respondents were proficient in their foreign language, they still faced some problems with expressing their thoughts in the L2. What is more, they were fully aware of this fact as it caused, from their point of view, some serious problems while speaking in the foreign language.

5.2.7 Understanding the interlocutor

Some informants (8%) of the study reported that when it comes to speaking in the foreign language understanding the interlocutor is one of the most difficult tasks. Below we present some of these reports:

"I'm always afraid that because of the speed at which my interlocutor is speaking I won't be able to understand anything" (participant no. 88; female; age 21).
"Some native speakers talk in a way that is making all my attempts to continue the conversation fail as it is simply impossible to understand them" (participant no. 53; female; age 20).
"The most difficult aspect of speaking in the foreign language is understanding your speaker. When you aren't able to do that, you can't keep the conversation going" (participant no. 25; male; age 23).
"I'm focusing so much on what other people say, to understand them, and the conversation is very trying for me" (participant no. 41; female; age 19).
"Whenever I talk to the native speaker I'm afraid of not being able to understand new words or a fast pace of the conversation" (participant no. 71; female; age 20).

As presented above, for some L2 users, understanding the interlocutor, especially when it comes to L1 users, seemed to be one of the major difficulties while speaking in the foreign language. Respondents were afraid that the fact that they will not be able to understand all words will result in a situation in which further conversation will not take place.

5.2.8 Accent and pronunciation

Only five participants of the study reported some difficulties connected with their accent and pronunciation as potential obstacles to successful

communication in a foreign language. Below we present all of these reports:

> "I have an impression that my pronunciation and accent seems to be a bit of a problem and that native speakers can't understand me" (participant no. 3; male; age 22).
> "The most difficult thing while talking in a foreign language is to pronounce things correctly. I often mispronounce words, and it leads to some confusion on the side of my addressee" (participant no. 28; female; age 21).
> "The most difficult part is the pronunciation and accent. I often face huge problems while conversing in English as the words I'm saying sound different then they should and therefore mean something else" (participant no. 21; female; age 20).
> "There's something wrong with my accent because people often don't understand me and ask for clarification. It is so embarrassing for me" (participant no. 105; female; age 19).
> "I face some problems with correct pronunciation of words as sometimes they just don't sound the way they should, and it affects my L2 fluency" (participant no. 131; female; age 19).

The presented above examples pointed to another important issue connected with successful communication in the foreign language, that is accent and pronunciation. What is interesting is the fact that all of the respondents focused exclusively on their own accent or problems with pronunciation that might influence the conversation in the foreign language. They seem to be aware that the reported problems with pronunciation and accent might have some direct influence on their speaking fluency in the L2.

5.2.9 Low self-confidence

Another category that was mentioned by five informants of the study was low self-confidence. Below we present all reported answers concerning this very category:

> "I don't feel self-confident while speaking in a foreign language and it makes me feel stressed out" (participant no. 135; female; age 28).
> "It is so hard for me to talk to strangers as I'm very shy and lack self-confidence. Somehow I don't see myself as a person who can keep the conversation going, especially when it comes to native speakers" (participant no. 58; female; age 20).

"I'm not self-confident. I don't believe in my L2 abilities, and I'm very shy therefore I'm afraid that my interlocutor won't understand me and that I will make a full of myself" (participant no. 39; female; age 19).

"Low self-confidence is the biggest issue when it comes to speaking in English. I'm aware that I often use the wrong tense, have limited vocabulary and poor fluency in English and this prevents me from practising speaking with some other L2 users, not to mention native speakers" (participant no. 3; female; age 21).

"I'm afraid of speaking in the L2 as I lack self-confidence that helps you to start a conversation" (participant no. 27; female; age 25).

It was quite interesting to see that participants were explicitly pointing to their low self-confidence as a main obstacle in L2 communication. They were able to explain why it is challenging for them to start a conversation in the foreign language, especially with L1 users of that language. They reported that because of the low self-confidence it was very difficult for them to practice speaking in the second language. Once again, informants' responses were directly linked to personality traits suggesting that some traits might have a direct influence on the preferences concerning practising speaking in the foreign language as well as L2 speaking proficiency.

5.2.10 Switching to the foreign language "mode"

Four informants of this study mentioned that while conversing in English the most difficult part consisted of switching to the foreign language "mode":

"Starting to think in a foreign language is the most difficult part while talking in that language. When you talk in English but still think in Polish it results in some direct translation of your thoughts which might be a bit awkward for your interlocutor. You just need to take some time and switch to that English way of thinking" (participant no. 83; female; age 23).

"The most difficult part is when you have to start thinking in English" (participant no. 126; male; age 21).

"It is difficult to switch to the English 'mode', I'm afraid that people might not understand me if I'm not thinking in English. Sometimes I think in Polish and talk in English, and it sounds a bit strange. You have to change to the English 'mode' to make yourself clear" (participant no. 65; female; age 30).

"It takes me some time to get to that English 'mode'. It is difficult for me as it doesn't happen straight away. I need some time to switch to English way of thinking" (participant no. 89; male; age 24).

The examples presented above showed that some informants were very much aware that switching languages might change the way of expressing their thoughts and feelings. Additional analyses showed that all the respondents who mentioned switching to the foreign language "mode" category lived for some time in the English speaking country and experienced direct immersion in the L2 language and culture, which consequently could influence their answers to the open question.

5.2.11 No reported difficulties

The very last category consisted of four answers highlighting that respondents do not face any difficulties when it comes to second language acquisition. Below we present all of the reported answers:

> "I don't face any difficulties while learning a foreign language. If you don't understand something, you can always ask for some explanation or clarification" (participant no. 99; male; age 24).
> "Nothing is difficult in foreign language learning. It is the matter of your attitude. If you have the positive one you can overcome all obstacles" (participant no. 107; male; age 21).
> "I don't feel that anything is particularly difficult in foreign language learning. If I make a mistake, I try to correct it and learn from it. No one is perfect. Even native speakers make mistakes" (participant no. 103; female; age 29).
> "I don't have any difficulties. When I start a conversation in the FL, it flows even if I make lots of mistakes. I don't feel anxious about it. Sometimes I make mistakes while talking in my L1 and it doesn't mean that I'm not fluent in it" (participant no. 5; female; age 22).

The answers presented above were very interesting as they showed that the most important thing about self-perceived difficulties connected with SLA is directly linked to our attitudes towards possible difficulties and not to their existence as such. The informants reporting facing no difficulties while acquiring a foreign language also highlighted that even when they face some problems, they do not perceive them as drawbacks but as a natural process of learning. They have mentioned that making mistakes is something natural even for L1 users so we should learn from these mistakes instead of seeing them as a failure.

5.3 Analysis of findings-broad categories

Detailed examples of the answers assigned to the eleven categories elicited from the qualitative data analyses showed that some of the

answers could, in fact, be related to more than one category. While analysing the answers to the open question, it could be noticed that even though all of them point explicitly to mentioned above categories, they could also be grouped into some broader categories. Therefore, if we were to choose some major "umbrella" categories that include reported difficulties, it would most certainly be L2 fluency and L2 anxiety. When it comes to the first main category of the L2 fluency that accounts for 58% of responses, it would include such reported difficulties as: vocabulary, grammar, accent and pronunciation, lack of fluency, problems with switching to the L2 "mode" and stress that directly influences informants' fluency in the L2. The second broad category is L2 anxiety (30.4%) that could include such mentioned categories as being afraid of making mistakes, being afraid of not understanding the interlocutor, low self-confidence or being afraid of not being able to express oneself fully in the foreign language. Table 48 presents answers assigned to the main "umbrella" categories.

Table 41 Answers to "What, from your point of view, is the most difficult in foreign language learning? Explain why"-broad categories

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No response to the open question	11	7.9	7.9
L2 fluency	81	57.8	65.7
L2 anxiety	44	30.4	96.1
No reported difficulties	4	2.9	100
Total	140	100	100

As presented in Table 41 above, almost all of the answers to the open question concerning major difficulties in the process of language learning could be additionally assigned to some broad categories of L2 fluency and L2 anxiety. Since all of the answers were classified into more detailed categories presented in Table 40 based on the first enumerated item, such analysis would not reflect an overview of the overlapping items that could be assigned to more than one category. Therefore, additional qualitative analyses allowed us to create such broad categories that reflect, in a more general manner, informants' perceptions concerning potential difficulties encountered while acquiring the second language. It could be concluded

that the majority of the informants were concerned with possible obstacles to their L2 fluency that were reflected in their self-perceived problems with correct use of grammar, limited vocabulary, problems with an accent as well as issues related to the proper pronunciation of L2 words, self-reported lack of fluency, problems with switching into the English way of thinking and stress that accompanied speaking in the foreign language. The second, smaller group of answers pointed to high levels of L2 anxiety reflected in self-reported low self-esteem, being afraid of making mistakes or not being able to express oneself in the L2 as well as being afraid of some problems with understanding the interlocutor.

5.4 Analysis of findings based on personality and emotional intelligence traits

The qualitative analyses of answers to the open question presented in the previous sections showed that informants' attitudes towards possible difficulties encountered while foreign language learning are of crucial importance. These reports concerning no experienced difficulties while learning a foreign language (see section 5.2.11) showed that participants' personality might play a crucial role in the process of assessment and reaction to potential SLA problems. Therefore, another set of qualitative analyses was performed, this time to see what were the answers of the respondents when taking into account their personality profile.

5.4.1 Higher order personality traits

The first set of analyses considered higher order personality traits of Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism. To be able to see possible differences in participants' responses, we took into account only high and low scorers on each personality trait. Detailed analysis of the findings concerning all mentioned traits will be presented below.

The qualitative data analysis was started by examining the responses given to the open question by extraverted and introverted participants of the study. Table 42 presents a detailed analysis of the findings.

Table 42 Answers to the open question based on the personality traits-Extraversion

	Extraverts Frequency	ExtravertsPercent	Intorverts Frequency	Intorverts Percent
No response to the open question			3	15
Vocabulary	10	34.5		
Understanding the interlocutor			2	10
Lack of fluency			2	10
Grammar	11	37.9		
Switching to the foreign language "mode"	4	13.8		
Not being able to express oneself			5	25
Stress			5	25
Low self-confidence			3	15
No reported difficulties	4	13.8		
Total	29	100	20	100

The results presented in Table 42 highlight some major differences between the answers of extraverted and introverted participants of the study. The first thing that could be observed is that there was no single category that was mentioned by both groups of informants. In the researched sample extraverts and introverts tended to focus on different aspects that cause some difficulties while speaking in the foreign language. Extraverts mentioned problems with vocabulary and grammar as the most challenging issues that accompany conversing in the second language. Other enumerated categories were switching to the foreign language mode and reporting no difficulties while speaking in the foreign language, that gathered four answers each. When it comes to introverted

informants of the study, they seem to perceive potential problems that accompany L2 speaking in a slightly different way. The most frequent answers reported by this group were related to two categories of stress and not being able to express oneself. Each category gathered 25% of all the answers. The remaining four categories mentioned by the introverted informants of the study were: low self-confidence (15%), lack of fluency (10%), problems with understanding the interlocutor (10%) or avoiding answering the question (15%). What was quite striking in the responses of both high scorers and low scorers was that they tended to focus on entirely different aspects that were in line with their personalities. In the case of extraverts who could be described as talkative, sociable and person-oriented, no difficulties considering fluency, low self-confidence or not being able to express oneself fully were reported. Instead, they have focused mostly on grammar and vocabulary as well as problems with switching to the foreign language "mode". When it comes to introverts, they seem to be facing lots of difficulties when it comes to the interaction with other people. They pointed to stress, low-self-confidence and being afraid of not expressing themselves fully while using a foreign language. In general, these responses were in line with their personality type which could be described as reserved, quiet and avoiding intense interpersonal interactions.

The next personality trait examined as far as the responses given to the open question are concerned was Openness to experience. Table 43 presents a detailed analysis of the findings.

As presented in Table 43, there were some significant differences related to how low and high scorers on the trait Openness to experience perceived potential difficulties that accompany speaking in the L2. It could be observed that there was only one shared category among mentioned respondents: the lack of fluency. However, when it comes to a number of reported answers, some differences could be noted as high scorers mentioned it only twice (6.5%), whereas in the case of low scorers it was the most frequently enumerated category (47%). The second most commonly reported answer in the group of informants who scored low on the Openness to experience personality trait was "not being able to express oneself", and the lest frequent one was "understanding the interlocutor". High scorers focused mostly on problems with grammar (40.4%) and vocabulary (28.1%). The third most frequently reported category was "switching to the foreign language mode" (12.5%) and "no reported difficulties" (12.5%). We could conclude that low scorers on the higher-order personality trait of Openness to experience who tend to be rather conventional and traditional in their outlook and behaviour might have

problems with fluency, expressing oneself in the foreign language and understanding the interlocutor. It could be directly linked to the fact that they prefer familiar routines to new experiences, and speaking in the foreign language could be perceived as a new experience where their reported shortcomings might play a crucial role. On the other hand, those informants who scored high on the trait, and could be characterized as open to new experiences, focused on specific problems with grammar and vocabulary or reported some problems with switching to the foreign language mode or no such difficulties whatsoever. In most of the reported cases, they focused on more technical aspects of L2 use rather than an expression of thoughts or feelings or understanding the interlocutor in the second language what could be linked to the fact that they have a general appreciation for unusual ideas and situations.

Table 43 Answers to the open question based on the personality traits-Openness to experience

	High scorers Frequency	High scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
Vocabulary	9	28.1		
Understanding the interlocutor			3	20
Lack of fluency	2	6.5	7	47
Grammar	13	40.4		
Switching to the foreign language "mode"	4	12.5		
Not being able to express oneself			5	33
No reported difficulties	4	12.5		
Total	32	100	15	100

Another higher-order personality trait examined with respect to the responses given to the open question are concerned was Agreeableness. Table 44 presents a detailed analysis of the findings.

Table 44 Answers to the open question based on the personality traits-Agreeableness

	High scorers Frequency	High scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
No response to the open question			6	27.2
Vocabulary	2	6.5	8	36.4
Understanding the interlocutor	7	22.6		
Lack of fluency	7	22.6	4	18.2
Grammar	2	6.5	4	18.2
Not being able to express oneself	10	32.3		
No reported difficulties	3	9.5		
Total	31	100	22	100

The presented above results show that in the case of the higher-order personality trait of Agreeableness there were three categories mentioned by both high and low scorers. These categories were "vocabulary", "grammar" and "lack of fluency". When it comes to problems with vocabulary while speaking in the foreign language, low scorers seemed to report them more often (36.4%) than the high scorers (6.5%). A similar situation could be observed with grammar as low scorers mentioned it four times (18.2%) and high scorers only twice (6.5%). On the other hand, problems with L2 fluency were reported more frequently by high scorers on the trait Agreeableness (22.6%) than by the low scorers (18.2%). At the same time, it is important to mention that almost one-third of the low scorers decided not to answer the open question at all. Quite conversely, the most frequently reported difficulty in the group of high scorers was "not being able to express oneself" (32.3%), followed by problems with understanding the L2 interlocutor (22.6%) as well as already mentioned "lack of fluency". At the same time, we have to note that some of the low scorers decided not to answer the question at all, whereas almost ten percent of the high scorers reported no experienced difficulties when it

comes to speaking in the foreign language. It could be concluded that low scorers on the trait Agreeableness were more reluctant when it comes to answering the open question as almost one third decided not to do it. Among those that decided to answer the question, very limited answers concerning problems with vocabulary, grammar and fluency in L2 were reported. It could be linked to the fact that, in general, low scorers are characterised as unfriendly, uncooperative and distant, and their characteristics were directly reflected in their answers. When it comes to the high scorers, who could be described as friendly, tactful, optimistic about human nature and getting along well with others, these people-oriented characteristics could also be seen in their responses as they focused mostly on being afraid that they will not be able to express their thoughts and feelings, as well as the lack of fluency and problems with understanding the interlocutor. From their point of view, interaction with other people is the most critical and challenging aspect of L2 speaking. When it comes to the low scorers, who are more self-oriented, only aspects connected with limited vocabulary or problems with grammar that could influence their fluency, were highlighted.

The personality trait of Conscientiousness was the next one to be examined in light of the responses given to the open question concerning possible difficulties that accompany foreign language learning. Table 45 presents a detailed analysis of the findings.

The reported results below show that there were some significant differences in the way both high and low scorers on the trait Conscientiousness perceive difficulties while conversing in the foreign language. Once again, there was no single category reported by both mentioned groups. Instead, low scorers focused mostly on problems with vocabulary (42.8%), grammar (14.2%) or switching to the foreign language "mode" (9.5%). The remaining 34.3% of the group decided to either not provide the answer at all (24.8%) or report no encountered difficulties while speaking in the foreign language (9.5%). When it comes to the high scorers on the trait Conscientiousness, the majority of the answers were categorized as "being afraid of making mistakes" (35.8%). The second largest category was linked to the stress that accompanies speaking in L2 (28.6%). The next, most frequently mentioned category was "not being able to express oneself" (21.4%), followed by the last two, least frequent, categories of "lack of fluency" and "low self-confidence". The reported findings could be linked to the personality profiles of the respondents as low scorers on the trait Conscientiousness tend to be easy going, spontaneous and not very disciplined or organised. Therefore, in the case where they decide to give an answer, they concentrate mostly on

vocabulary and grammar as well as switching to the foreign language mode. Since they were described as easy going and spontaneous, they do not seem to be bothered by problems with fluency or low self-confidence reported by the high scorers. The informants of the study who score high on Conscientiousness were characterised by a high level of self-discipline, carefulness, methodic planning and perseverance what makes them highly successful L2 learners. They do not like spontaneous situations that they might have a problem to plan or control. Therefore, their answers were focused mostly on the aspects that were linked to a spontaneous exchange of thoughts and feeling in the L2 that they cannot control. They reported being afraid of making mistakes as well as being stressed out by the fact that they have to converse in the foreign language knowing that their fluency might not be high as well as facing some problems with low self-confidence.

Table 45 Answers to the open question based on the personality traits-Conscientiousness

	High scorers Frequency	Hight scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
No response to the open question			5	24.8
Vocabulary			9	42.8
Lack of fluency	2	7.1		
Grammar			3	14.2
Switching to the foreign language "mode"			2	9.5
Not being able to express oneself	6	21.4		
Stress	8	28.6		
Being afraid of making mistakes	10	35.8		
Low self-confidence	2	7.1		
No reported difficulties			2	9.5
Total	28	100	21	100

The last higher-order personality trait analysed in the present section was Neuroticism. The findings presented in Table 46, that concern the most frequently mentioned categories by both high and low scorers on the trait Neuroticisms, showed that an almost equal number of respondents in both groups decided not to provide any answer at all. When it comes to the other reported responses, some apparent differences could be observed. High scorers focused mostly on two categories of "being afraid of making mistakes" (25%) and "stress" (25%) followed by less frequent reports concerning not being able to express oneself in the foreign language (21.9%) and low self-confidence (15.6%). When it comes to the low scorers on the trait Neuroticism, some other categories were reported to be most problematic while using a foreign language. These categories were: "vocabulary" (29.1%); "grammar" (29.1%); "understanding the interlocur"

Table 46 Answers to the open question based on the personality traits-Neuroticism

	High scorers Frequency	Hight scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
No response to the open question	4	12.5	3	12.5
Vocabulary			7	29.1
Accent and pronunciation			2	8.5
Grammar			7	29.1
Understanding the interlocutor			5	20.8
Not being able to express oneself	7	21.9		
Stress	8	25		
Being afraid of making mistakes	8	25		
Low self-confidence	5	15.6		
Total	32	100	24	100

(20.8%); "accent and pronunciation" (8.5%). The reported results could be linked to the personality profiles of the learners. High scorers on the trait Neuroticism were described as people who easily experience stress and negative emotions. The type of responses given by this group directly reflected mentioned characteristics also when it comes to speaking in the second language as they have focused mostly on stress that accompanies using a foreign language as well as being anxious about making mistakes and being afraid of problems with self-expression in the L2. Low scorers, on the other hand, tended to focus on some different aspects that caused difficulties while using L2 but in all reported cases they did not mention stress or anxiety but rather problems with vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar as well as potential obstacles linked to understanding the interlocutor.

5.4.2 Lower order personality traits

The second set of analyses considered lower-order personality traits of Emotional Intelligence, Self-control, Emotionality, Sociability and Well-being. To be able to see possible differences in participants' responses, we took into account only high and low scorers on each lower-order personality trait. Detailed analysis of the findings concerning all mentioned traits is presented below.

The analysis of the findings based on high and low scorers on lower-order personality traits was started by examining the responses given to the open question by highly emotionally intelligent participants of the study as well as those who scored quite low on the trait of Emotional intelligence. Table 47 presents a detailed analysis of the findings which shows some differences in the reported difficulties that accompany L2 use in both mentioned groups. High scorers could be described as open-minded people who can not only recognise emotions in themselves and others but also are good listeners. All of these characteristics could be seen in the type of categories reported by the high scorers on the TEI as they tended to focus on things that are not directly related to the interaction with other people. They concentrated mostly on difficulties caused by L2 grammar (46.3%) and limited vocabulary (40.1%). Two of the informants decided to report no encountered difficulties, and one mentioned some problems with an accent and pronunciation. By contrast, lower scores on the trait tended to focus mostly on the aspects connected to direct communication with the interlocutors. The majority of their answers (42%) were linked to the stress factor that was highlighted especially during conversing in the foreign language. The second largest category (31.6%) was "not being able to

express oneself". The last two categories comprised answers assigned to the following groups: "being afraid of making mistakes" (10.5%) and "low-self-confidence" (10.5%). It could be noted that the low scorers tended to focus on the characteristics that were not assigned to their personality profile. They reported facing problems with stress as well as being afraid of not expressing their thoughts and feelings appropriately in the foreign language. The very fact that they are characterized as not excelling in emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions that result in poor ability to understand emotions of their interlocutor as well as to express their feelings might be directly linked to the reported difficulties as well as the stress caused while conversing in the foreign language. It seems plausible to conclude that the ability to regulate one's own emotions and understand the emotions of others is of crucial importance while interacting with people, and those who are not well equipped with such abilities tend to highlight problems concerning the very fact.

Table 47 Answers to the open question based on the lower-order personality traits-TEI

	High scorers Frequency	Hight scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
No response to the open question			1	5.4
Vocabulary	9	40.1		
Accent and pronunciation	1	4.5		
Grammar	10	46.3		
No reported difficulties	2	9.1		
Stress			8	42
Not being able to express oneself			6	316
Being afraid of making mistakes			2	10.5
Low self-confidence			2	10.5
Total	22	100	19	100

The lower-order personality trait of Self-control was the next one to be examined in light of the responses given to the open question concerning possible difficulties that accompany speaking in the foreign language. Table 48 below presents analysis of the findings.

Table 48 Answers to the open question based on the lower-order personality traits-Self-control

	High scorers Frequency	High scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
No response to the open question	4	14.8	1	3.6
Vocabulary	9	33.3	2	7.2
Understanding the interlocutor			4	14.4
Lack of fluency	2	7.4		
Grammar	6	22.3		
Switching to the foreign language "mode"	2	7.4		
Not being able to express oneself			4	14.4
Stress			8	28.1
Being afraid of making mistakes			5	17.9
Accent and pronunciation	2	7.4	4	14.4
No reported difficulties	2	7.4		
Total	27	100	28	100

As presented in Table 48 above, the responses of the high and low scorers on the trait of Self-control were heterogeneous and covered seven out of eleven different categories each. Only in three cases, did the informants choose the same categories related to the possible difficulties

with L2 vocabulary, accent and pronunciation as well as not giving any response to the open question. The answers provided by the high scorers on the trait Self-control were quite dispersed. They encompassed such categories as: "vocabulary" (33.3%); "grammar" (22.3%); "no response" (14.8%); "switching to the foreign language mode" (7.4%); "lack of fluency" (7.4%); "accent and pronunciation" (7.4%) ; and "no reported difficulties" (7.4%). As can be seen, there were no responses concerning stress, being afraid of making mistakes or not being able to express oneself, as these would not be in line with the personality traits of respondents representing high scorers. When it comes to the lower scores of the Self-control personality trait, the situation is quite different. They might face some problems with self-regulation and management of emotions, which is visible in the categories reported to cause most difficulties while speaking in the foreign language. Among these categories the most frequent were: "stress" (28.1%); "being afraid of making mistakes" (17.9%); "not being able to express oneself" (14.4%); "understanding the interlocutor" (14.4%); and problems with accent and pronunciation (14.4%). Therefore, it could be noted that while conversing in the second language the lack of specific skills and abilities concerning regulating pressure and stress, especially when it comes to interaction with native speakers, seems to be highlighted in the responses of the low scorers.

Another lower-order personality trait examined as far as the responses given to the open question are concerned was Emotionality. Table 49 presents analysis of the findings.

The analysis of the findings presented in Table 49 showed that both high and low scorers on the lower-order personality trait of Emotionality tended to report similar categories when assigning major difficulties linked to L2 speaking. In both cases, almost all categories were represented, with the only exception of the "switching to the foreign language mode" that was not reported by any high scorer on the trait Emotionality. It is important to highlight that even though almost all categories concerning potential difficulties were reported, the frequency of these reports differed among high and low scorers. Consequently, the most frequently reported category in the group of high scorers was "grammar" (22.3%). It was followed by "vocabulary" (11.5%), "understanding the interlocutor" (11.5%), "lack of fluency" (11.5%), and "not being able to express oneself" (11.5%). The third larger group of responses was linked to possible problems with foreign accent and pronunciation (7.7%) as well as stress (7.7%). One informant in this group also reported being afraid of making mistakes (3.8%). The remaining two respondents decided to either

Table 49 Answers to the open question based on the lower-order personality traits-Emotionality

	High scorers Frequency	High scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
No response to the open question	1	3.8	3	12
Vocabulary	3	11.5	3	12
Understanding the interlocutor	3	11.5	1	4
Lack of fluency	3	11.5	2	8
Grammar	6	22.3	3	12
Switching to the foreign language "mode"			1	4
Not being able to express oneself	3	11.5	6	24
Stress	2	7.7	2	8
Being afraid of making mistakes	1	3.8	2	8
Accent and pronunciation	2	7.7	1	4
No reported difficulties	1	3.8	1	4
Total	26	100	25	100

report no difficulties connected with speaking in the second language (3.8%) or not responding to the question at all (3.8%). When it comes to the low scorers, a similar pattern of responses could be observed. However, in this group the most frequently mentioned category was "not being able to express oneself" (24%). Other frequently mentioned categories were linked to problems concerning vocabulary (12%) and grammar (12%), closely followed by the "lack of fluency" (8%), "being afraid of making mistakes" (8%) and "stress" (8%). The least frequently mentioned categories included: "understanding the interlocutor" (4%), "accent and pronunciation" (4%), "switching to the foreign language mode" (4%), and "no reported

difficulties" (4%). The reported results seem not to be directly related to the personality trait of Emotionality. It needs to be remembered that high scores on Emotionality might suggest a range of emotion-related skills and abilities that help to develop and sustain close relationships with important others, which consequently might not often be highlighted in the process of communication in the foreign language.

The lower-order personality trait of Sociability was the next one to be examined when it comes to possible difficulties that accompany speaking in the foreign language. Table 50 presents analysis of the findings.

Table 50 Answers to the open question based on the lower-order personality traits-Sociability

	High scorers Frequency	High scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
Vocabulary	7	26.9		
Accent and pronunciation	2	7.7	1	4.8
Lack of fluency			9	42.9
Grammar	8	30.8		
Switching to the foreign language "mode"	2	7.7		
Not being able to express oneself			7	33.3
Stress			2	9.5
Being afraid of making mistakes	7	26.9		
Low self-confidence			2	9.5
Total	26	100	21	100

The analysis of the findings presented above point to some differences in perception of potential difficulties that accompany L2 speaking reported by respondents assigned to both examined groups. High scorers on the trait that could be characterised as excelling in social interactions in different

social contexts as well as having excellent listening skills tended to focus mostly on reporting problems with grammar (30.8%), vocabulary (26.9%) or being afraid of making linguistic or grammar mistakes (26.9%). On the other hand, those informants who face some problems with social interactions and communicating confidently with people from very diverse backgrounds highlighted the lack of L2 fluency (42.9%) as well as not being able to express oneself (33.3%) as the most challenging aspects that accompany communication in the foreign language. Therefore, it could be noted that in the case of the low scorers on the trait, reported difficulties were directly linked to problems with interacting with other people. We could also speculate that mentioned obstacles might also influence communication in their first language as they were closely related to skills needed for confident interaction with people that the low scorers on the trait Sociability were lacking.

The last lower-order personality trait qualitatively analysed in the present study was Well-being. Table 51 presents analysis of the findings.

The results presented in Table 51 showed no major differences in the type of reported difficulties that accompany L2 use among high and low scorers on the trait Well-being. In both cases, almost all categories were mentioned by the respondents, except for "low self-confidence" that was not reported by the group of high scorers. Another three categories of "no response to the open question", "stress" and "no reported difficulties" were not mentioned by the low scorers. When it comes to the distribution of the answers in both groups, we could note that it was fairly similar and none of the categories gathered the majority of answers. The high scorers reported most frequently problems that were related to understanding the interlocutor (17.2%), lack of fluency (13.8%), grammar (13.8%), vocabulary (10.3%), not being able to express oneself (10.3%) or stress that accompanies L2 speaking (10.3%). When it comes to the low scorers on the Well-being trait, problems with vocabulary were the most frequently mentioned (23.5%). Other reported categories were "being afraid of making mistakes" (17.6%), "low self-confidence" (11.8%), "not being able to express oneself" (11.8%), "lack of fluency" (11.8%) and problems with grammar (11.8%). It could be concluded that generalised sense of Well-being that extends from past achievements to future expectations is not directly linked to possible interactions with other people in the L1 or L2. Therefore, it was not causing any differences in the reported responses to the open question focusing mostly on the potential difficulties that accompany speaking in the foreign language.

Table 51 Answers to the open question based on the lower-order personality traits-Well-being

	High scorers Frequency	High scorers Percent	Low scorers Frequency	Low scorers Percent
No response to the open question	4	13.8		
Vocabulary	3	10.3	4	23.5
Understanding the interlocutor	5	17.2	1	5.9
Lack of fluency	4	13.8	2	11.8
Grammar	4	13.8	2	11.8
Accent and pronunciation	1	3.4	1	5.9
Not being able to express oneself	3	10.3	2	11.8
Stress	3	10.3		
Low self-confidence			2	11.8
Being afraid of making mistakes	1	3.4	3	17.6
No reported difficulties	1	3.4		
Total	29	100	17	100

5.5 Conclusions

While analysing the answers to the open question, some important findings were reported. The first one, concerned identical answers of almost all informants, who pointed exclusively to one L2 skill of speaking as causing the most problems while acquiring a second language. However, some further analyses showed that even though all the informants reported conversing in the L2 as the most difficult aspect of SLA they tended to focus on different obstacles that impede successful communication in a

foreign language. What was also very interesting to note was the fact that the major obstacles reported by the respondents of this study were in fact directly linked to their personality profiles. Additionally, it was reported that high and low scorers on higher-order personality traits of Extraversion, Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, as well as high and low scorers on such lower-order personality traits as Self-control, Sociability and global trait Emotional intelligence, seemed to perceive potential problems that accompany L2 speaking in a different way as they focused in their responses on entirely different aspects, which were at the same time very much in line with their personalities. Therefore, it could be concluded that that participants' personality might play a crucial role in the process of assessment as well as reaction to potential obstacles encountered during the process of SLA.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to establish the possible effects of the higher and lower-order personality traits on various aspects of SLA and L2 use. More than a decade ago Dörnyei (2005) noted that inclusion of the "Big Five" model in L2 studies is very likely to shed new light on the relationship between personality and language learning, particularly if elaborate attainment measures are employed as criterion variables. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, personality was indeed an important factor reported to influence some aspects of SLA and L2 use; however, mentioned findings typically lack consistency. Furnham (1990) noted that the complexity of selecting the most suitable measures and procedures has served as a deterrent both for linguistics and psychology, and so did the fact that various combinations of the selected measures often produced mixed results, making the interpretation of the findings problematic. Similarly, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p. 29) explained that there is a multitude of instruments and ways of measuring both personality and SLA, which typically tap into different aspects and yield different results, which makes the general picture rather blurred. At the same time it was suggested that even if personality factors do not directly determine the degree of an individual's academic success, they certainly shape the way people respond to their learning environment, which was also addressed in the literature overview. Studies presented in Chapter Two highlighted the fact that "different personality types pursue differential behavioural patterns, which will have an impact on their participation in a range of learning tasks, from classroom activities to real-life practices of intercultural communication" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 30). Additionally, it was shown that past research had provided sufficient evidence that personality factors are heavily implicated in the L2 learning process but only when different aspects and social contexts of language learning are taken into account. Consequently, the present study was to focus on the complex relationship between personality and L2 learning and L2 use in the

structured setting taking into account various L2 skills, subsystems and measures. At the same time, this is the first study, to the best of our knowledge, that has incorporated a lower-order personality trait of Emotional intelligence into research on L2 learning and use in the L2 classroom setting. Aside from seeking to establish whether personality and EI influence various aspects of SLA, the study also sought to examine whether there are any differences while comparing results obtained from objective and subjective measures introduced in the study. Below the findings detailed in the previous empirical chapters are summarized and discussed with reference to the main research questions of this investigation. Next, limitations of the empirical study are detailed and discussed with regard to the design of the survey instrument, the recruitment of participants and the constraints of the research design. Finally, suggestions are made for future investigations.

6.2 Summary of findings

Seven research questions and hypotheses were tested concerning the possible effect of the higher and lower-order personality traits on various aspects of L2 learning and L2 use taking into account different L2 skills as well as different types of measures. Below each of the research questions is evaluated and discussed.

The first research question concerned possible correlation between higher and lower-order personality traits and scores from written and oral parts of the national secondary school-leaving examination. It was hypothesized that higher–order personality traits of Extraversion and Openness to experience might be correlated with the results from the oral part of the national secondary school-leaving examination. It was also speculated that Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) could be linked to the oral results of the national secondary school-leaving examination. These hypotheses were only partly confirmed as results of the statistical analyses showed that only two higher–order personality traits of Extraversion and Openness to experience were significantly correlated with written and oral proficiency in the L2, showing large and medium effect size. Extraversion was negatively correlated with the written test results and positively correlated with the oral part of the exam. It means that introverts scored significantly higher on the written part of the national secondary school-leaving examination, whereas extraverts obtained significantly higher scores on the oral exam. Another higher-order personality trait that correlated with the oral proficiency in the L2 was Openness to experience. The results concerning the written part of an exam were in line with some

previous research showing that the best language learners tend to be described as introverted ones as in the study by Ehrman (2008) where introverted-intuitive-thinking-judging types were overrepresented in the group of the most successful language learners. It was also reported that Extraversion had a negative effect on foreign language aptitude (Biedroń, 2011), suggesting that personality trait of Introversion was more significant while general L2 language aptitude was measured. The results of correlation with the oral exam scores were also in line with previous research (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999; Eysenck, 1981; Howarth & Eysenck, 1968; Kleinsmith & Kaplan, 1963; Matthews, 1992) that showed an explicit link between Extraversion and speaking in the foreign language suggesting that extraverts, in general, were superior to introverts on L2 verbal production and L2 verbal learning tasks and that this better verbal processing functions might help in conversation with others (Matthews & Deary, 1998). Extraversion was also explicitly linked to variables that favour L2 speaking both inside the classroom (speaking skills, pronunciation skills, active participation in the EFL classes) as well as outside of it (L2 use, starting a conversation in the L2) (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2017). When it comes to Openness to experience, the study by Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) showed that Openness to experience was the only higher-order personality trait that correlated with all measures related to communicative competence and linguistic abilities in their study. What was interesting to note was the fact that the same personality traits of Extraversion and Openness to experience were reported as strong predictors of L2 WTC (Öz, 2014; Pavičić, Takač & Požega, 2011), explaining even 32.1% of the variance in participants' tendency to engage in communication (Öz, 2014). Further statistical analyses were performed in order to see what were the answers of the high and low scorers on each personality trait reported as a significant predictor in the multiple stepwise regression analyses. The results of the t-test analyses showed that extraverts and introverts scored significantly different on variables measuring written and oral production but this time showing in both cases a large effect size. Openness to experience was related to oral production in the foreign language with high scorers receiving significantly higher marks concerning oral L2 proficiency (medium effect size).

   The second research question aimed to investigate whether higher and lower-order personality traits correlated with the grades concerning grammar, writing and integrated skills. It was hypothesized that extraverts will obtain higher scores as far as integrated skills are concerned and introverts and high scorers on the trait of Conscientiousness will outperform other informants as far as grammar grades are concerned. The hypothesis

was only partially confirmed. Even though both mentioned traits of Extraversion and Conscientiousness were reported to correlate with variables in question, the multiple stepwise analysis showed that Extraversion was the only significant predictor in the case of grades from both grammar and integrated skills classes. It correlated negatively with the grades received during the grammar classes and positively with the marks obtained during the integrated skills classes suggesting that introverted learners gain higher scores when the L2 grammar is concerned and lower ones when it comes to the integrated L2 skills. It is important to note that a similar pattern was observed when more objective measures of national school-leaving L2 oral and written exams were analysed. The presented results are in line with previous literature concerning the possible effect of Extraversion on specific aspects of SLA. It was reported by a number of studies (Eysenck, 1981; Kleinsmith & Kaplan, 1963; Matthews, 1992) that extraverts were superior to introverts on verbal learning tasks involving short-term memory, whereas introverts outperformed extraverts on long-term recall. The mentioned long-term recall is characteristic of the grammar acquisition and therefore, introverted informants of our study were reported to gain higher scores when it comes to written L2 proficiency and L2 grammar scores. Some other research also suggested that type of task might be of crucial importance as extraverts were fast but less accurate in complex cognitive tasks whereas the introverts were slower but more accurate (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). The study by Ehrman (2008) reported that the best language learners in the researched sample were intuitive, logical and precise thinkers, who were able to exercise judgment and tended to have introverted personalities. On the other hand, some ample evidence exists that extraversion is primarily linked to speaking in the foreign language (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999). When it comes to the L2 grades, Ożańska-Ponikwia (2017) reported that Extraversion was linked to the EFL grades, however, only when speaking skills were focused on during the EFL classes. This might suggest that links between Extraversion scores and linguistic variables might depend on the type of linguistic material used as well as the specific FL goals of instruction.

The next research question addressed in this study aimed to examine a possible correlation between personality traits and self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of the productive and receptive L2 skills. It was suggested that extraverts might prefer to acquire and practice speaking and pronunciation over other enumerated skills. At the same time, introverts were hypothesised to opt for grammar, listening and reading more often than for other skills. When it comes to Emotional intelligence, it was

speculated that informants who scored higher on Sociability, Emotionality and global Trait Emotional Intelligence would prefer to focus more on speaking rather than on other researched skills. Once again the research hypothesis was only partly confirmed as multiple stepwise analyses results showed that just three higher-order personality traits of Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience were linked to some L2 skills under consideration. When it comes to Extraversion, it was positively correlated with speaking and pronunciation and negatively with reading. Openness to experience correlated positively with speaking in the second language. Conscientiousness, on the other hand, correlated positively with writing, reading, grammar and spelling. When it comes to Extraversion, some previous studies reported similar findings (Dewaele & Furnham, 1999, 2000; Hassan, 2001; Ockey, 2011; Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2017; van Deale et al. 2006) showing that extraverts favoured many aspects of the L2 speaking like practicing speaking skills, pronunciation skills, and active participation in the EFL classes (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2017); were more fluent in the foreign language than introverts (Dewaele & Furnham, 2000; Ockey, 2011) as well as more accurate when it comes to pronunciation (Hassan, 2001). Extraversion was also linked to the communication strategies measured by means of communicative behaviour of informants (Verhoeven & Vermeer, 2002). Similarly, Openness to experience was linked to L2 communicative competence, but it was reported to be related mostly to strategic competence, organisational competence and pragmatic competence (Verhoeven and Vermeer, 2002) and to the frequency of L2 use in both structured and immigrant contexts (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2016; Ożańska-Ponikwia & Dewaele, 2012). When it comes to Conscientiousness, it was shown to be moderately correlated with organizational competence measured by standardized discrete-point tests of vocabulary, grammar, and reading (Verhoeven & Vermeer, 2002), which is exactly in line with the self-reported preferences mentioned by the informants of this study.

Lower-order personality traits of global TEI, Well-being and Sociability were significant predictors of the preferences for speaking in the foreign language, however, explaining a small amount of the variance. After further analyses, it was reported that high scorers on all of the mentioned traits preferred to focus on speaking while acquiring a second language. It is important to highlight that when the analysis considered L2 grades on grammar, writing and integrated skills, no statistically, significant results were reported. Therefore, it could be suggested that Emotional intelligence traits come to the foreground only when self reported preferences concerning speaking in the foreign language are concerned. Similar results were reported in some earlier studies measuring

the frequency of L2 use in the immigrant context (Ożańska-Ponikwia, 2016; Ożańska-Ponikwia & Dewaele, 2012).

What is important to highlight is the fact that some of the presented results were similar to those reported while correlating personality with the results from written and oral part of the national school-leaving exam, however, some others were not. Therefore, it might be speculated that the differences in reported findings could be assigned to different types of measures (objective vs subjective self-reports) as already mentioned by Dewaele and Furnham (1999) or Dörnyei and Ryan (2015). Additionally, respondents' self-reports shed some more light on the relationship between personality and various aspects of SLA and showed that more fine-grained results could be obtained by focusing on separate L2 skills instead of overall L2 proficiency.

A possible link between higher and lower-order personality traits and self-perceived L2 proficiency was analysed in the fourth research question. It was hypothesised that introverts and those who scored higher on Conscientiousness would tend to report higher L2 proficiency than informants who scored lower on these variables. The reported findings did not support the research hypothesis as the only personality trait that correlated with the self-reported L2 proficiency was a lower-order global trait of EI. However, the results of the multiple stepwise regression showed that it was not a significant predictor of self-perceived L2 proficiency. The fact that none of the higher and lower-order personality traits were a significant predictor of the L2 proficiency could suggest that personality traits are more pronounced when separate L2 skills are measured. It is in line with MacIntyre and Charos (1996) who found that global personality traits were implicated in the learning process primarily not via their influence on general academic achievement and learning outcomes but rather through language-related attitudes, anxiety, perceived competence, and motivation.

The fifth research question was related to possible differences in the self-perceived L2 proficiency and personality profiles of those informants who reported living in the English speaking country for some period of time. It was speculated that among the participants who reported living in the ESC personality trait of Openness to experience will be more pronounced than other higher and lower order personality traits. The results of the statistical analyses showed that there were no significant differences in the self-perceived L2 proficiency among both researched groups. It could be speculated that since the investigated sample consisted of quite proficient participants, such results were not as pronounced as while examining more diverse groups of informants. It was also hypothesised

that the period of time the participants spent abroad might not have been extended enough to exert a measurable effect on the L2 proficiency and L2 use scores. Dewaele (2009) noted that research on immersion education and study abroad showed that increased contact with the L2 typically boosts the acquisition of different areas of the L2, including sociolinguistic competence (Mougeon, Rehner, & Nadasdi, 2004; Regan, 2005), sociopragmatic competence (Kinginger, 2004), and grammatical competence (Howard, 2005; Nadasdi, Mougeon, & Rehner, 2003. However, when it comes to its possible impact on the L2 gain while studying abroad, it might still be insufficient to explain all the variance.

Another analysis regarding potential differences in the personality profiles of both mentioned groups showed that those who lived abroad scored significantly higher on Openness to experience and significantly lower on Conscientiousness in comparison to those who never lived abroad. These findings are in line with previous literature reporting Openness to experience as one of the main personality traits influencing both the outcomes of the sojourn abroad as well as the very decision to undertake it (Niehoff, Petersdotter & Freund, 2017; Zimmermann & Neyer, 2013). However, none of the mentioned traits were reported to be a significant predictor while using the multiple stepwise regression.

The next research question was to examine whether self-perceived L2 anxiety was related to various measures concerning L2 proficiency as well as to personality traits. It was speculated that informants who scored higher on Neuroticism would score higher on the self-perceived L2 anxiety. It was also expected that L2 anxiety would be linked to both objective measures as well as self-reports concerning L2 proficiency. The hypothesis was partially confirmed as the statistical analyses showed that self-reported L2 anxiety correlated only with self-perceived L2 proficiency and L2 oral proficiency. The t-test analysis showed that high and low scorers on the L2 anxiety differed mostly as far as L2 speaking is concerned (large effect size) with highly anxious informants reporting a tendency to avoid practising L2 speaking. Therefore, it could be claimed that L2 anxiety has the most significant impact on the acquisition of the productive skills with a particular emphasis on L2 speaking. These results are in line with some earlier studies highlighting the fact that L2 anxiety interferes negatively with the L2 learning and L2 performance (Horwitz, 2001) and is typically highest for speaking (Dewaele, 2009). Self-reported L2 anxiety researched in this study was also correlated with high and low-order personality traits and showed to be linked to only one higher order personality trait of Neuroticism and with lower-order personality traits of Emotional Intelligence, Self-control, Emotionality, and Sociability.

However, the multiple stepwise regression analysis suggested that Neuroticism was the only significant predictor of L2 anxiety. Similar results were reported by Şimşek and Dörnyei (2017) who confirmed a strong positive association between the Neuroticism and language anxiety variables what indicated that the stronger someone's general anxiety tendency, the more likely he/she is to realise it in the language classroom setting. Some other studies (Dewaele, 2002; Wang, 2010) also pointed to the significant link between FLCA and Neuroticism, suggesting that highly anxious L2 users could be characterised as nervous, worrying and feeling insecure while operating in the foreign language. Bearing all that in mind, we could speculate that it might be the reason why highly anxious L2 informants of this study tended to avoid social interactions in the foreign language as well as practising L2 productive skills. This, in turn, might result in significantly lower scores on oral proficiency tests as well as self-perceived L2 proficiency. Apparently, the personality profile of the L2 learner might be significantly linked to the preferences concerning acquisition and practice of specific L2 skills and consequently, have an impact on the L2 proficiency scores.

The last research question concerned the most challenging aspect of foreign language learning and was analysed based on the informants' responses to an open question. It was speculated that the participants of this study would point to different aspects causing difficulties in the process of foreign language learning. However, to our surprise, the responses were almost identical and concerned speaking in the foreign language (52%), talking with L1 users (27%) or conversing in the foreign language (12%) as the most difficult aspects of foreign language learning. However, after some more detailed analyses of the second part of the question in which participants were to provide more details as well as explanations concerning enumerated difficulties, some more variation could be noticed. Consequently, all the responses were analysed and divided into eleven categories that seemed to emerge from data provided by the informants of the study. Among these categories were problems with L2 vocabulary, understanding the interlocutor, lack of fluency, grammar, accent and pronunciation, switching to the foreign language "mode", not being able to express oneself, stress, low self-confidence, being afraid of making mistakes and no reported difficulties. Additionally, there were some more broad "umbrella" categories elicited based on the given responses that included L2 fluency (58%) and L2 anxiety (30.4%). Apart from the analyses mentioned above, all answers to an open question were also analysed taking into account personality profiles of the respondents. The qualitative data analyses results highlighted the fact that

participants' personality might play a crucial role in the process of assessment of and reaction to potential problems while acquiring a second language as some clear personality differences were noted in the type of given responses.

6.4 Limitations of the study

The present study has a number of limitations. The first one concerns the sample size which is relatively small and consists of students that were enrolled in a specific program at the department of English, thus representing a relatively proficient group of the L2 learners. We are fully aware of the fact that they are likely to represent a narrower range of ages, abilities and linguistic background (Wilson, 2008, p.115). However, we had to opt for convenience sampling as we were mostly interested in young adults who were within similar range of age, whose L2 was English, who passed L2 oral and written national secondary school-leaving examination and were enrolled in L2 classes focusing on the integrated skills, writing and grammar in order to gather the necessary data from the relatively homogeneous sample of participants. In future, a replication study should be conducted with a larger, more balanced and linguistically diverse sample to make the results more generalisable. Another thing to remember is that the reported findings might be influenced by linguistic and socialisation experiences that were not researched and controlled in the present study. Additionally, we should also acknowledge some other methodological shortcomings related to the lack of objective measures of the L2 reading, speaking, writing and listening comprehension that were not introduced in the present study due to time limitations. Therefore, a replication study should take into account some more objective measures like practical English proficiency exams and compare these results to the national school-leaving L2 exams' scores. At the same time, it needs to be remembered that analysing exam results, which are elicited under pressure, might also influence the findings.

6.5 Conclusions

The present research was the first one to empirically address the complex relationship between the "Big Five" personality traits as well as Emotional intelligence and various aspects of SLA. Apart from addressing general L2 proficiency, it focused on different L2 skills of speaking, writing, listening, reading as well as grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation. It also incorporated different types of measures that

included objective and standardised measures of L2 oral and written proficiency, self-reported grades from L2 classes focusing on grammar, writing and integrated skills as well as self-reported preferences concerning the acquisition of all mentioned L2 skills. What was interesting to note was the fact that different higher and lower-order personality traits might be linked to L2 proficiency depending on the type of measure used by the researcher. It was a crucial finding as it highlighted the fact that in the same group of informants we might get incongruent results concerning the same variables due to the introduction of different types measures (more objective and standardised vs subjective, self-reports).

The findings of the study also showed that the relationship between higher and lower-order personality traits is very complex and quite often reciprocal. It was noted that the inter-individual variation in the process of SLA could be accounted for by learner-internal factors (Johnson 2001) and that personality variables influence both cognitive and affective variables. Both the literature overview as well as the empirical results of the study demonstrated that cognitive factors that include various forms of mental information processing (Ellis, 1994) as well as affective ones that involve among others motivation and anxiety (Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003) could be influenced by personality traits, which in turn could shape the whole process of foreign language learning.

Another important thing to highlight is the fact that a particular pattern in the relationship between both higher and lower-order personality traits and different aspects of SLA could be noticed. After the analyses of data from various types of measures, we could conclude that Extraversion and Openness to experience seem to be positively related to speaking in the L2 while Conscientiousness is somewhat linked to writing, reading and grammar. At the same time, Extraversion was reported to correlate negatively with written L2 proficiency score as well as with grammar, suggesting that introverts tend to score significantly higher on the mentioned aspects of SLA. When it comes to the lower-order personality traits, global trait EI, Well-being and Sociability were related to preferences concerning the acquisition of L2 skill of speaking. Therefore, it could be suggested that Emotional intelligence traits come to the foreground only when self reported preferences concerning speaking in the foreign language are concerned. Apparently, the personality profile of the L2 learner might be significantly linked to the preferences concerning acquisition and practice of particular L2 skills and consequently, have an impact on the L2 proficiency scores. At the same time, qualitative data analysis showed that the way L2 learners perceive and account for

potential obstacles in the process of the foreign language learning is also dependent on their personality profiles.

Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p. 34) noted that even though virtually everybody who has ever taught or learned a foreign language will affirm that aspects of personality determine the extent of success, relatively little research shed new light on various possible relationships between personality and foreign language learning. We hope that the present book, even if is only able to give a limited glimpse into the role of both higher-order and lower-order personality traits in SLA, shows that personality is implicated in the L2 learning process. At the same time, we strongly believe that including more diverse measures of L2 skills and subsystems in different language learning settings as well as working within more nuanced and dynamic frameworks will lead to some more consistent findings concerning the role of personality traits in the process of SLA. Ultimately, then, personality deserves more study to broaden our knowledge and understanding of successful language acquisition.

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AUTHOR INDEX

Subject Index