



## Personality Traits and the Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language: A Survey Study of Jordanian Students

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at examining the relationship between personality traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language. A sample of 50 students majoring in English as a second language at Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) was surveyed using a questionnaire to collect the data. Personality traits were measured by the 50-item version of Goldberg's [1] international personality traits, while the willingness to communicate in a second language was measured using the scale of MaCrosky and Richmond [2]. The findings show that the university students perceived their personalities as being somehow balanced where the grand mean of the 50 items measuring personality traits was 3.1 on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. As for the willingness to communicate, the students perceived their overall level as being moderate, where the grand mean of the 20 items measuring their willingness to communicate was 61 on a scale ranging from 0 to 100. However, the willingness to communicate in a second language with friends and acquaintances was found to be very high, while it was found low with strangers. In regard to the relationship between personality traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language, the findings show that there are significant positive correlations between three of the Big Five Personality Traits (i.e. extraversion, agreeableness, and openness) and the willingness to communicate in a second language.

However, the findings do not show significant correlations between the other two personality traits (i.e. neuroticism and conscientiousness) and the willingness to communicate. The study concluded with the argument that the realization of the nature of the personality traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language may have important theoretical and practical implications for linguistics, teachers and learners.

**Keywords:** *Personality traits, Willingness to communicate, Second language, University students.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Individuals are born without unique personalities or identities. In fact, our personalities are developed and shaped after we are born. Although some hereditary traits contribute to personality development, social, cultural and environmental factors shape personality and give each individual his/her own identity and uniqueness. Accordingly, personality traits determine to a great extent our attitudes and behaviours through our lives. In addition, personality traits influence people's attitudes, tendencies, desires and abilities of the process of learning in general, and the process of learning and acquiring new languages other than their native ones in particular. Having this in mind, this study attempts to shed light on the relationship between personality traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language. In other words, this study aims at exploring how personality traits of university students relate to their willingness to communicate with others during the process of learning a second language.

In order to achieve the said aim, a sample of 50 students majoring in English as a second language at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) is surveyed and analysed. Based on its aim, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the predominant personality traits of these students?
- 2) What are the perceived levels of the student's willingness to communicate in English as a second language?
- 3) Is there a significant relationship between the predominant personality traits of the students and their perceived level of willingness to communicate in English as a second language?

The rest of the study comes into six parts. The first part introduces a brief theoretical background of the study and its importance. In the second part, the study will clarify the meaning and dimensions of the variables of the study, i.e. personality traits and the willingness to communicate. In the third part, a literature related to the topic of the study will be

reviewed. In the fourth part, the methodology of the study will be outlined. The fifth part will deal with the data analysis and the findings of the study. Finally, the discussion of the findings, the conclusion and the recommendations of the study are presented.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Psycholinguistics may study many different topics, but these topics can generally be grouped into four major areas: language learning, language comprehension, language production and language acquisition. This study can be grouped within the last area, i.e. the second language acquisition. Second language acquisition is understood as the learning and adopting of a language that is not your native one. Actually, once one has acquired a foreign language, he/she attempts to master that language. However, in order for learners of a second language to actually master their new foreign language, their individual differences and their personality traits must be recognized and attended to. Theories of psycholinguistics argued that individual differences and personality factors significantly influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language [3]. Such arguments are based on the assumption that some personality traits of the learner might encourage or inhibit the second language acquisition [4] by enhancing certain facets of language learning while impeding others [5].

Personality traits of those who are aiming at learning foreign languages are crucial factors in a such learning process, i.e. how these learners handle the feeling evoking during the learning process? What kind of motivations, personal values, beliefs and attitudes the learners bring to the learning task? Do learners prefer to work alone or in groups? What kind of relationship the learners prefer to have with the teacher and other learners? In fact, such questions and issues are key factors in the learning process, especially in the process of learning a foreign language. In this regard, Blickle [6] argued that personality traits facilitate learning behaviour and motivate the person, and these traits are decisive for the person in insisting or giving up. In fact, an important body of research has established the importance of personal traits in the process of learning a second language where such traits can significantly determine the success of this process [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15].

Having established the importance of personality traits in the process of a second language acquisition, the significance of this present study emerges from theoretical and applied considerations. This study can contribute to the psycholinguistics theories and research on the area of second language acquisition. Specifically, this study is important in linking personality traits to the willingness to communicate in a foreign language where very few studies had done so. At the applied level, the findings of the study can be useful to teachers and students of second languages where teachers are encouraged to know the personality traits of their students in order to identify their individual differences. Furthermore, students should realize that the nature of their personality traits influence their process of learning a second language. Also, the study is important because it is for the best knowledge of the author, is the first study to explore the relationship between personality traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language at the Jordanian setting.

## **PERSONALITY TRAITS AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE: DEFINING THE TERMS**

The definition of personality varies from one scholar to another. However, most, if not all definitions of personality seem to agree that personality is a combination of the characteristics or traits of a person that distinguishes him/her from other people. Such characteristics and/or traits form a unique identity of every human being that reflects the person's orientations towards life, and his/her style of behaviors in various situations a person encounters [16, 17]. As far as the definition of personality traits is concerned, although there is no total agreement on these traits, most psychologists reach consensus at the broadest level over five universal factors that determine personality traits [18,19,20]. In such literature these are called the Big Five Personality Traits: Extraversion Agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism.

### ***Extraversion***

This personality trait reflects the extent to which a person is sociable, talkative, energetic, cheerful, assertive and caring to others, while individuals with low level of extraversion are timid, quiet, shy and preferring solitude.

### ***Agreeableness***

Agreeableness is a personality trait that reflects the extent to which a person is reliable, straightforward, self-sacrificing and humble, competitive, unreliable, stubborn, rude and sceptical.

### ***Conscientiousness***

Costa and McCrae [21] explained that conscientiousness as a personality trait is closely associated with responsibility, being organized and successfully orientation. Here, individuals with high responsibility are determined, ambitious and successfully oriented, while individuals with low personality are unplanned, liable to procrastinating and are considered to be undisciplined.

### ***Openness***

This personality trait indicates that the individuals with a high level of openness are imaginative, adventurous, original, creative, curious, self-reflecting and they have the desire to experience new things, while individuals with a lower level of openness are traditional, conservative and regarded as uncaring people according to Costa and McCrae [21].

### ***Neuroticism***

Highly neurotic individuals are anxious, insecure, withdrawn and angry, while low level of neuroticism are comfortable, confident and patient [21].

## **WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN A SECOND LANGUAGE**

Generally speaking, when presented with an opportunity to communicate, some people choose to speak up, while others tend to remain silent. This is what we generally mean by “willingness to communicate”. As a distinct concept, willingness to communicate was originally developed by McCrosky and Richmond [22] as an expansion of Burgoon’s [23] work on willingness to communicate where they maintain that people demonstrate regularity in their level of willingness to communicate across situations. McCrosky and Richmond [22] advanced the construct of “willingness to communicate” as a reference to an individual’s general orientation towards talking. While talking, people differ in the amount of talk in which they will choose to engage. Although willingness is seen as relatively constant across situations, situational variables may affect a person’s willingness to communicate at a given time in a given context. Such variables that may have a major temporary impact on willingness to communicate include how the person feels on a given day, previous communications with other persons, what person looks like, or what might be gained or lost through communicating with others.

In fact, willingness to communicate in the first language is different from willingness to communicate in a second language. MacIntyre et al [24] argued that willingness to communicate in the first language does not necessarily transfer to the second language. For the perspective of MacIntyre et al [24] “it is highly unlikely that willingness to communicate in a second language is a simple manifestation of willingness to communicate in the first language” (p.546).

In regard to willingness to communicate in a second language in particular, such willingness reflect the psychological preparedness of a person to use a second language when the opportunity arises. It is suggested that the choice to initiate communication in a second language is one of the primary facilitators of language use and, as such, may be an important predictor of a language survival.

MacIntyre et al [24] conceptualize the willingness to communicate as a situational construct reflecting the choice to a specific person or group. They argued that in a second language acquisition, willingness to communicate is the idea that language students who are willing to communicate in a second language actively look for a chance to communicate. Therefore, the ultimate goal of the learning process should be engendering in language education students. As such, it can be argued that the willingness to take advantage of the opportunities to use a second language reflects a level of success in language learning and language training.

Based on such importance, willingness to communicate has become a central theme in the literature of a second language acquisition. In this regard, Macintyre et al [25] argued that willingness to communicate offers the opportunity to integrate psychological, linguistic, educational and communicative approaches to second language research that typically have been independent. Willingness to communicate may be seen as both, an individual different factor facilitating the second language acquisition and as a non- linguistic outcome of the language learning process.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The literature dealing with the personality traits and the willingness to communicate on the one hand and the process of a second language acquisition on the other hand has been steadily growing. MacIntyre and Charos [26] have among others argued that personality traits, i.e. openness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness, significantly affect the acquisition of a second language (see also: Pavasic Takac and Pozega, Zoll, Yashima [27], and Dewael [10]). Similarly, willingness to communicate has also been viewed as crucial in a second language acquisition and proficiency [22, 26, 28, 14, & 15]. The following studies are reviewed as examples to show how personality traits and willingness to communicate in a second language are linked to a second language acquisition and proficiency.

In his study, Yashima [27], asked with whom and for what purposes Japanese will communicate in their second language. For many learners, English symbolizes the world around Japan, something that connects them to foreign and

foreigners with whom they can communicate by using English. Yashima called this desire by the Japanese to learn English to communicate with the world around them 'International Posture': A general attitude towards the International Community that influences motivation in learning a second language, which in turn, predicts proficiency and a second language communication confidence". 'International Posture', along with a second language confidence in communication was also directly influencing the willingness to communicate.

In their article, "A Chinese conceptualization of willingness to communicate in ESL," Wen and Clement [29] attempted something of a cultural anthropology of willingness to communicate in Chinese students concluded that the reluctance to verbally engage is rooted in two aspects that govern interpersonal relations: other- directed self and submissive way of learning. The "other-directed self" is based on the idea that Chinese culture, like many Asian cultures, values the collective over the individual. This value is traced back to the founding values of the Chinese culture. In regard to the submission in learning, this is related to the tendency of the Chinese teachers to play an authoritative role and of Chinese students to submit to the authority. This process of learning goes back to the Confucianism and the teaching of confusion classes.

In his study of the role of personality traits in a second language acquisition, Zhang [8] concluded that personality factors significantly influence the degree of success that individuals achieve in learning a second language. In particular, this study found that extroverts (or unreserved and outgoing people) acquire a second language better than introverts (or shy people).

Pavicic Taka, V. and Pozega, D. [30] examined the relationship between personality traits, willingness to communicate and oral proficiency in English as a foreign language. They found significant positive correlations between each of the personality traits of extroversion, agreeableness and openness and willingness to communicate in English as a second language. They also found that the participants in their study were more willing to communicate with strangers than with their acquaintances and friends.

Fazel [9] studies the role of personality traits of 213 Iranian female students in the choice and the use of the compensation category of English language learning strategies. He found that there is a significant relationship between personality traits of those students and their choice of using the compensatory English language learning strategies. Specifically, he concluded that personality traits like the conscientious and the openness traits best predicated the overall use of compensation strategies of the students.

Tandoc and Tandoor –Juan [31] look into the concept of personality traits and the choice of learning strategies as major influences in the success of learning English as a second language. They found a significant relationship between the predominant personality traits and the English language learning strategies of the 230 Philippine college students. In, particular, the study found that the most preferred language learning strategies of the students was social strategies. They concluded that it is very important to identify student's personality traits and the language learning strategies as bases for providing responsive instructions to the needs of learners.

In studying the relationship between the personality traits of 168 Turkish university students majoring in English as a foreign language and their willingness to communicate in English as a second language, Oz [13] found that 20% of the participants had a high level of willingness to communicate in a second language, 66% had a moderate and 14% had a low level. In regard to personality traits, Oz's study found that the personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience were significant in predicting and setting the psychological context for willingness to communicate in English. Then, the study concluded that personality traits may greatly contribute to the production and promotion of willingness to communicate in a second language.

In investigating the role of extrovert and introvert personality in a second language acquisition Suliman [12] handed out a questionnaire to 20 students in the English department at Misurata University in Libya to figure out the effect of their personalities on the learning process of English as a second language. The results of her study showed that personality traits, especially extroversion and introversion have a major effect on the second language acquisition process. The findings showed that extroverted learners, who use the second language to interact without inhibition, talk more fluently, tend to take actions with fewer reflections, work better in groups and excel during classes with high level of activity. Extroverted students easily communicate in the second language even though they might not produce accurate output. Introverted students, on the other hand, tend to be exerts talk less and reflect more before acting, like being quiet, working independently or with only one or two other people and they tend to be more passive than actively social.

Zarrinaabadi [28] indicated that the role of the teachers on learners' willingness to communicate in an Iranian context, and reported that teachers' errors correction, waiting time, decision on the topic and support, influences learners' second language willingness to communicate.

In another study, Karadağ and Kaya [14] indicated that employers have been shocked in recent years owing this matter to worse communication abilities of university graduates. They emphasized that it is important to develop the personality and the willingness to communicate before business life. Therefore, particularly in this age which is specified as a communication age and a personal achievement age, it is so important to make progress in developing the personality traits among the university students. The study concluded that further courses and programs related to behaviours and communication should be included in the curriculum in universities coupled with other applicable courses.

In a recent study by Ito [15] which targeted university students in Tokyo showed that the positive effect of general trust on willingness to communicate WTC in a second language (L2), mediated by perceived communication competence in L2. The study revealed that the significant effects of general trust as a personality trait positively affected WTC in English, while the mediation analysis showed that general trust positively influenced WTC in English via perceived communication competence in English.

On the basis of the above reviewed of the related literature, it is clear that both personality traits and willingness to communicate in a second language significantly affect the process of second language acquisition and proficiency. The reviewed of the related literature has also shown that -with the exception of Oz [13] and PavicicTakak and Pozega [30], most of the studies had dealt with personality traits and willingness to communicate in their relationships with second language acquisition independently of each other. This present study attempts to be different in examining the relationship between the personality traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language.

## **RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN**

### ***The participants***

The participants of this study are a class of 50 students majoring in English as a foreign language at the (JUST). Their ages range from 18 to 22 years (Mean = 20.4). The students composed of 12 (24%) males and 38 (76%) females. The students participated voluntarily and were asked not to provide their names when filling out the questionnaire for ethical consideration. The researcher herself administered the process of collecting the data for this study where she explained to the participants the aim of the study and the importance of taking part of it. Then, detailed instructions and clarifications were given to the participants to help them fill out the questionnaires as correctly as possible.

The participants were asked to answer all the items of the questionnaire honestly, giving their own perceptions about their personality traits and their own perceptions of their willingness to communicate in a second language. In fact, 54 questionnaires were handed out to the participants to fill them out and after collecting them, the researcher ruled out 4 of the questionnaire due to the uncertainty and un clarity of these respondents' answers. Therefore, the analyzed questionnaires are only 50 out of 54 initially distributed.

### ***Measurements of the study's variables: The measuring instruments***

For measuring personality traits, the 50- item version of Goldberg's [32] International Personality Item Pool, consisting of 10 items for each trait is used to assess the Big Five Personality Traits. Participants rated how well the items described them on the 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1= very inaccurate to 5= very accurate in the items phrased in the positive manner, while scores of the items phrased in the negative manner ranged from 1= very accurate to 5= very inaccurate. In fact, the questionnaire of the Big Five Personality Traits used in this study is one of the most widely used scales for personality assessment in the world. This is because the scale has proven to be fairly stable over time [33, 34]. This scale has also proven to be a useful tool in a number of applied fields due to its stable reliability with means of 78 across the Big Five Personality Traits [35]. Furthermore, as reported by Oz [13], the internal consistency of the five subscales ranged from  $\alpha = .85$  to  $\alpha = .93$ .

In regard to the measurement of the other variable of the study: willingness to communicate in a second language, the willingness to communicate scale developed by McCrosky and Richmond [2] was implemented to assess the participants' preparedness to initiate or avoid communication. This scale has proved its utility and credibility and, therefore, was used in several studies: [30, 36, 13, 14, & 15]. In this scale the participants are asked to indicate the percentage of times they would choose to communicate in each given situation ranging from 0 (never) to 100 (always). The internal consistency of the scale as reported by Oz [13] is  $\alpha = .92$ .

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The first question raised by this study is: What are the predominant personality traits of students majoring in English as a second language at Jordan University of Science and Technology? Descriptive statistics were used to answer this question to characterize the participants' perceived level of personality traits. The mean of each item of the 50 items used to measure personality traits was calculated. Then the mean of each of the items measuring each of the Big Five Personality Traits was also calculated, referred to as sub grand mean. Finally, the grand mean of all the 50 items measuring all the personality traits was calculated in order to know the descriptive equivalent of each item to the sub-grand mean and to the grand mean: whether the mean of each item or the sub-grand mean of the ten items measuring each of the big five traits is above the grand mean (AGM) or around the grand mean (ARGM) or below the grand mean (BGM).

Table (1) presents the findings related to the participants' perceptions of their personality traits. In fact, the findings related to each item measuring personality traits are self-explanatory where the mean scores of these items range from 2.0 to 4.8 on the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The grand mean of all items is 3.1. As shown in table (1), out of the total 50 items measuring personality traits, the mean scores of the 29 items (58%) are above the grand mean, the mean scores of 13 items (26%) are below the grand mean, and the mean scores of the other 8 items (16%) are falling within the grand mean.

In regard to each of the Big Five Personality Traits, the findings in table (1) show that the mean score of extraversion trait is 3.6 where 7 (70%) of those ten items measuring this trait are above the grand mean, 2 (20%) around the grand mean and only 1 (10%) is below the grand mean. The mean score of agreeableness trait is 3.8, where 8 (80%) of those ten items measuring this trait are above the grand mean and 2 (20%) are around the grand mean. The mean score of the conscientiousness is 3.7, where 8 (80%) of these items measuring this trait are above the grand mean and only 2 (20%) are falling below the grand mean. However, the findings show that the mean score of neuroticism is the lowest and is only 2.7, where only 1 item (10%) of these ten items measuring this trait is above the grand mean and 7 items (70%) are below the grand mean, while 2 (20%) are falling within the grand mean. Finally, the findings show that the mean score of the openness trait is 3.3, where 6 items (60%) of those ten items measuring this trait are above the grand mean, 2 items (20%) are below the grand mean and 2 (20%) are falling within the grand mean.

**Table (1):** Descriptive statistics of the predominant personality traits of the participants according to the Big Five Personality Traits

	<b>Items measuring extraversion traits</b>	<b>Mean score</b>	<b>Descriptive Equipment</b>
1.	I am the life of the party.	4.1	AGM
2.	I don't talk a lot.	3.1	WGM
3.	I feel comfortable around people.	3.8	AGM
4.	I keep in the background.	4.4	AGM
5.	I start conversations.	3.1	WGM
6.	I have little to say.	3.3	AGM
7.	I talk to a lot of different people at parties.	3.9	AGM
8.	I don't like to draw attention to myself.	3.4	AGM
9.	I don't mind being the center of attention.	3.7	AGM
10.	I am quiet around strangers.	2.9	BGM
	<b>Sub-grand mean</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>AGM</b>
	<b>Items measuring agreeableness traits</b>		BGM
11.	I feel little concern for others.	3.3	AGM
12.	I am interested in people.	3.1	WGM
13.	I insult people.	4.8	AGM

14.	I sympathize with others' feelings.	4.5	AGM
15.	I am not interested in other people's problems.	3.1	WGM
16.	I have a soft heart.	4.5	AGM
17.	I am not really interested in others.	3.2	AGM
18.	I take time out for others.	3.2	AGM
19.	I feel other's emotions.	4.1	AGM
20.	I make people feel at ease.	3.8	AGM
	<b>Sub-grand mean</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>AGM</b>
	<b>Items measuring conscientiousness traits</b>		
21.	I am always prepared.	3.8	AGM
22.	I leave my belongings around.	4.0	AGM
23.	I pay attention to details.	3.4	AGM
24.	I make a mess of things.	4.5	AGM
25.	I get chores done right.	2.6	BGM
26.	I often forget to put things back in their proper place.	3.6	AGM
27.	I like order.	2.7	BGM
28.	I shirk my duties.	4.0	AGM
29.	I follow a schedule.	4.0	AGM
30.	I am exacting in my work.	4.0	AGM
	<b>Sub-grand mean</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>AGM</b>
	<b>Items measuring neuroticism traits</b>		
31.	I get stressed out easily.	3.2	AGM
32.	I am relaxed most of the time.	3.1	WGM
33.	I worry about things.	2.0	BGM
34.	I seldom feel blue.	3.1	WGM
35.	I am easily disturbed.	2.4	BGM
36.	I get upset easily.	2.3	BGM
37.	I change my mood a lot.	2.4	BGM
38.	I have frequent mood swings.	2.8	BGM
39.	I get irritated easily.	2.7	BGM
40.	I often feel blue.	3.0	BGM
	<b>Sub-grand mean</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>BGM</b>
	<b>Items measuring openness traits</b>		
41.	I have a rich vocabulary.	3.0	BGM
42.	I have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.	3.1	WGM

43.	I have a vivid imagination.	3.5	AGM
44.	I am not interested in abstract ideas.	3.2	AGM
45.	I have excellent ideas.	3.1	WGM
46.	I do not have a good imagination.	3.4	AGM
47.	I am quick to understand things.	4.3	AGM
48.	I use difficult words.	2.3	BGM
49.	I spend time reflecting on things	3.7	AGM
50.	I am full of ideas	3.2	AGM
	<b>Sub-grand mean</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>AGM</b>

**AGM:** above grand mean

**WGM:** within grand mean

**BGM:** below grand mean

The second question of this study is about the willingness to communicate: What are the perceived levels of the respondents' willingness to communicate in English as a second language? In order to answer this question, descriptive statistics were used to characterize the participants' level of willingness to communicate in a second language. The mean score of each item of the 20 items used to measure the level of willingness to communicate in a second language was calculated and the grand mean of all these 20 items was also calculated to know the descriptive equivalent of each item to the grand mean of all items: whether the mean of each item is above and the grand mean (AGM) or below the grand mean (BGM).

Table (2) presents the findings related to the participants' perceived level of their willingness to communicate in a second language. The findings show that on the scale of the willingness to communicate in a second language used in this study ranging from 0 to 100, the mean scores of the 20 items range from 30 (willingness to talk in a large group of strangers) to 87 (willingness to talk in a small group of friends). The grand mean of all the 20 items measuring the level of willingness to communicate is 61 (grand mean =61) reflecting a relatively moderate level of willingness to communicate in a second language. Furthermore, the findings show that among the 20 items measuring the level of the willingness to communicate, the mean score of 8 items (40%) are above the grand mean and 12 items (60%) fall below the grand mean.

In looking to particular findings, it is clear that the participants' willingness to talk with strangers is found to be very low as reflected in 4 items (20%) of the total 20 items: these items are 3,8,12 and 17 where the mean score of these items are 40,35,42 and 30 respectively. However, their willingness to talk with friends and acquaintances is found to be relatively high as reflected in 8 items (40%) of the total 20 items: these items are 4,6,9,11,14, 15, 19 and 20 where the mean scores of these items are 76, 85,76,84,78, 87 and 77 respectively. In the other 8 items (40%), the participants' willingness to talk with people other than their friends and acquaintances such as a physician, a secretary, a police officer or a sales person ...etc. is found to be relatively moderate as reflected in 8 items (40%) of the total 20 items: these items are 1,2,5,7,10,13,16 and 18, where the mean score of these items are: 52,58, 58, 50, 58, 55, 45 and 56 respectively.

**Table (2):** Descriptive statistics of the items measuring willingness to communicate in a second language

ItemNo	The Items	Mean Score	Descriptive Equipment
1.	Talkwithaservice stationattendant.	52	BGM
2.	Talkwith aphysician.	58	BGM
3.	Presenta talktoa group ofstrangers.	40	BGM
4.	Talkwith an acquaintancewhilestandinginaline.	76	AGM
5.	Talkwith asalespersonin astore.	58	BGM
6.	Talkin alargemeetingof friends.	79	AGM
7.	Talkwith apoliceofficer.	50	BGM

8.	Talk in a small group of strangers	35	BGM
9.	Talk with a friend while standing in a line.	85	AGM
10.	Talk with a waiter/ waitress in a restaurant.	58	BGM
11.	Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.	76	AGM
12.	Talk with a stranger while standing in a line.	42	BGM
13.	Talk with a secretary.	55	BGM
14.	Present a talk to a group of friends.	84	AGM
15.	Talk in a small group of acquaintances.	78	AGM
16.	Talk with a garbage collector.	45	BGM
17.	Talk in a large meeting of strangers.	30	BGM
18.	Talk with a spouse (or girl/boyfriend).	56	BGM
19.	Talk in a small group of friends.	87	AGM
20.	Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.	77	AGM
	<b>grand mean</b>	<b>61</b>	

**AGM:** Above Grand Mean

**BGM:** Below Grand Mean

In regard to the third question raised in this study which is about if there are any relationships between the Big Five Personality Traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language or not?

As shown in table (3), the findings show that there are positive correlations between three of the Big Five Personality Traits, namely, extraversion, agreeableness and openness. The correlation between the personality traits of extroversion and the willingness to communicate in a second language is relatively strong, where  $r = 0.48$ ,  $p > .01$  (two-tailed), also the correlation between the personality traits of openness and willingness to communicate in a second language, where  $r = 0.37$ ,  $p > 01$  (two-tailed).

Furthermore, the findings reveal a correlation between the personality traits of agreeableness and the willingness to communicate in a second language, though the correlation is slight where  $r = .027$ ,  $p > .01$  (two-tailed). However, the findings presented in table (3) show that there are no significant relationships between the other two personality traits of neuroticism and conscientiousness on one hand and the willingness to communicate in a second language on the other hand.

**Table (3):** Correlations between the Big Five Personality Traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language

Willingness to communicate	1					
Extraversion	0.048**	1				
Agreeableness	0.27**	0.30**	1			
Conscientiousness	0.11	0.20*	0.32**	1		
Neuroticism	0.09	0.32**	-0.04	-0.09	1	
Openness	0.37**	0.15	0.46**	0.28**	0.08	1

\* $p > 05$  (two-tailed), \*\*  $p > 01$  (two-tailed)

## DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

As reflected in table (1), the findings of this study show that the grand mean of the 50 items measuring the Big Five Personality Traits is 3.1 on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. On the same scale, the sub-grand means of each of the Big Five Personality Traits: Extraversion Agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism are 3.6, 3.8, 3.7, 2.7, and 3.3 respectively. These findings imply that the participants' perceptions of their personality traits in general

can be looked at as being balanced, where the participants do not place themselves at the extreme end of the scale in general nor at the extreme end of each of the sub-scale measuring each of the Big Five Personality Traits in particular.

In regard to the participants' perceptions of their level of willingness to communicate in a second language, the findings reflected in table (2) revealed a satisfactory moderate level of willingness among participants, where the grand mean of the 20 items used to measure the participants' perceptions of the willingness to communicate in a second language is found to be 61 on a scale from 1 to 100. This general finding in this study is consistent with the findings of Oz's study [13] who found that 20% of the Turkish students participated in his study had a high willingness to communicate in a second language, 14% had low level, while 66% had a moderate level.

In fact, certain important findings of this study shown in table (2) reveal that the participants' willingness to communicate in a second language is very high when talking with friends and acquaintances, while it is very low when talking with strangers. These findings are not consistent with the findings of Takac and Pozega [30] who found that the participants in their study were more willing to communicate with strangers than with their acquaintances and friends. Moreover, the findings of this study are not consistent with the findings of Oz [13] who found that when communicating with strangers, 44% of the participants reported a high level of willingness to communicate in a second language, 6.5% reported low level while 49.5% reported moderate level.

This inconsistency between the findings of this study and Takac and Pozega [30] and Oz [13] may be due to the fact that the majority of the participants in this study are females who in our conservative culture tend generally to avoid talking with strangers and prefer to talk with friends and acquaintances.

In regard to the relationship between the Big Five Personality Traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language, the findings reflected in table (3) showed significant positive correlations between each of the three Big Five Personality Traits, i.e. extraversion, agreeableness and openness and the willingness to communicate, while no significant correlations were found with the other two personality traits, i.e. conscientiousness and neuroticism.

These findings which are consistent with the findings of Suliman [12], Takac and Pozega [30] and Oz [13] implying that the second language learners who are extraverted, open and agreeable are more likely to communicate in a second language than those who are conscientiousness and neuroticism. That is to say, the second language learners who are sociable, cheerful, imaginative, trusting, intellectually curious, caring, gentle and cooperative will be willing to interact and communicate with others in a second language. On the other hand, second language learners who are anxious, pessimistic, reserved, task-oriented, persistent, conventional and uncooperative will be less likely to engage in a communication with others using a second language.

It is clear that the scope and findings of this study are limited to determine the perceived personality traits of the participants and their perceived level of willingness to communicate in a second language. Moreover, to examining whether or not there are correlations between the Big Five Personality Traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language. It is rather important to build up on these findings to determine whether these correlations found in this study between the Big Five Personality Traits and the willingness to communicate in a second language hold when examining the effect of some control variables such as sex, income, education academic achievement on these correlations.

Furthermore, to build up on these findings in this study one needs to examine the extent to which the Big Five Personality Traits can function as predictors of the willingness to communicate in a second language and/or as predictors of second language acquisition. In fact, such process of building up on the findings of this study necessitates the use of more statistical methods like ANOVA and multiple regression analysis and necessitates the increase of the size of the sample. Definitely, further studies with larger samples of different groups and different statistical methods and variables can build up on the findings of this study and can, therefore, be more significantly to the related literature.

Finally, despite the limitation of the sample size in this study and the limited statistical methods used in it, the present study as it stands now can have valuable theoretical and practical implications for the teachers of second language learners in adopting their teaching methods, classroom techniques and strategies. It is important for teachers, to take into an account the dominant personality traits of their students and their preparedness to communicate in a second language. Learners of the second language themselves should realize that their personality traits and their willingness to communicate in a second language are crucial factors in a second language acquisition and proficiency.

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