

Character Traits and Foreign Language Anxiety on Foreign language studying

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Abstract: On the basis of systematically reviewing the relevant research literature on foreign language studying anxiety domestically and internationally, this paper focuses on four aspects: the identification of anxiety about studying a foreign language and the creation of evaluation methods, the impacts of studying a second language fear of acquiring a new language, the impact of personality on studying a new language, the connection between personality, anxiety related to studying a second language, and its consequences for teaching. Numerous findings imply that stress has a detrimental effect on second language studying. Additionally, some research has shown that anxiety has a detrimental influence on particular parts of studying a second language in addition to how well a person performs overall. In addition, the correlation of specific personality traits, like confidence, introversion, emotional stability, self-esteem, etc. with learning a second language has been demonstrated in numerous research. Finally, the paper discusses the pedagogical implications of these findings.

Keywords: Foreign languages anxiety, Personality trait, Foreign language studying

1. Introduction

Anxiety is the worry, anxiety and fear that arise after the human automatic nervous system is disturbed [1]. Anxiety, as a psychological variable, has been the focus of educational psychology research as early as the 1940s and 1950s. Among them, fear of studying a new language the focus of research, and its detrimental effect on academic achievement has been repeatedly confirmed. However, the study of anxiety about studying a second language emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, and due to the different perspectives and measurement tools adopted by researchers, the findings regarding the association between academic achievement and anxiety related to studying a second language were previously contradictory. Later, as a result of the advancement of language acquiring theory, both language anxiety theory and assessment techniques have advanced significantly. The weakly negative relationship between anxiety and academic proficiency in foreign languages has been repeatedly verified. Anxiety has also been subdivided from general anxiety to language learning anxiety and then to specific Skill learning a language anxiety, investigations on fear and studying a second language have been extended from the link between anxiety and academic excellence to the study of the connection between anxiety and second language acquirement, such as input, learning process, and output.

The term "personality" is a person's entire set of interests, attitudes, skills, and way of communicating, outward appearance, and environmental adaption[2]. Personality is considered as one of the most comprehensively studied theories in psychology. Each trait that helps describe a person gives us a chance to get familiar with and understand that person [3]. How personality affects language learning has long been studied. The link between introverted and extroverted personality factors and foreign language acquirement has been of interest to foreign language learners and researchers. The United Kingdom was the subject of the earliest studies on the connection between introversion and studying a second language, which were conducted in the 1950s and 1960s. Busch found a strong connection between phonological and introverted characteristics in Japanese students studying English ($p < 0.5$) [4]. Astika conducted a long-term follow-up survey of students studying English in Indonesia and found that the size of vocabulary (vocabulary learning) was negatively correlated ($p < 0.5$), introverted students had larger vocabularies[5]. Griffiths' study shows that English teachers generally acknowledge the important role of learner personality type in English learning[6]. According to Robinson et al., proactive personality and some language competency qualities are closely related[7]. Besides, many studies have shown that other personality variables such as self-confidence emotional stability, self-esteem, etc. are related to foreign language studying. Liu Meihua concluded students' low self-confidence in English speaking at the beginning of the semester can significantly and negatively predict their English learning performance at the end of the semester[8]; However, some studies have failed to support this finding, and some argue that introverts are not necessarily disadvantaged[9]. The importance of analyzing this field is thus clear—in particular, relationship bet L2 anxiety and personality traits.

In addition to the Western studies discussed above, China has also noticed the role of these two aspects in English learning. Chinese scholars started to study foreign language studying anxiety late. Hao Mei and Hao Ruoping studied the link between state anxiety, academic achievement, and motivational beliefs. The study found that anxiety will significantly affect academic performance, and the anxiety level of girls often taller than boys. Zhang Risheng and Yuan Limin examined the link among linguistic anxiety, self-efficacy and academic performance in 315 non-English majors. The research revealed a link between academic achievement and worry about studying a second language, nevertheless they discovered that there was a big gender gap between the two. There is no difference. Liu Meihua and Zhang Wenxia surveyed 934 freshmen with majors other than English and found that in English class, nearly one-third of respondents reported feeling worried[10]. and were afraid of being negatively evaluated. Additionally, research analysis revealed that the relationship between anxiety and self-esteem has very close connection. The interaction of other variables is a key factor affecting students' English performance. Researchers Yu Weihua, Shao Kaiqi, and Xiang Yizhen examined the relationship between emotional quotient, anxiety related to learning a new language, and English proficiency of non-English majors. The study found that most students have anxiety about English learning, and anxiety is related to emotional intelligence and test scores. acts as an intermediary. Fei Wei found that phobia of foreign languages was negatively correlated with academic performance when studying the effect of phobia of foreign languages on comprehensive ability in the Internet environment[11]. Based on meta-analysis, the connection between anxiety over studying a second language and academic performance was explored by Dong Lianqi [12].

Based on the above discussion, the effects of linguistic phobia and personal traits on language acquirement has been widely recognized, but there is no systematic understanding, and the results of many studies are even somewhat contradictory, so this article will review previous studies on anxiety and personality, so as to form a comprehensive and systematic understanding. This paper mainly discusses the following aspects: 1. Anxiety with foreign languages (the meaning of language

anxiety, classification of anxiety, evaluating foreign language ability studying anxiety, the influence of fear on second language studying) 2. Personality (some popular personality tests and the influence in foreign language studying) 3. link between FLA and personality (dread of being criticized and anxiety; Big five character traits and anxiety)

2. Foreign Language Anxiety

2.1. Definition of FLA

The first description of anxiety of studying a foreign language was given by American psychologist Horwitz. He believes that foreign language acquisition anxiety, which differs from ordinary worry, is brought on by the process of students learning foreign languages and is distinct in its own right [13]. A distinctive combination of self-perceptions, assumptions, feelings, and actions. Since then, numerous scholars have shared their insights into the meaning of worrying about studying a new language based on their own study. For instance, Aida believes that anxiety of studying a new foreign language is the blatant anxiety and strain of the learners in sentiment and action during acquisition of a second language. Foreign language studying anxiety, according to Li Jiongying and others, is "the anxiety or fear that learners experience when they are participating in activities involving foreign language communication."; According to Jiang Dongxia and He Jie, anxiety of learning a new language is "a type of anxiety and irritability of learners during studying a second language", frustration and fear of making mistakes".

Despite the fact that fear of learning another language has been interpreted differently by various studies, it still can be found that something in common from their comprehension of the meaning of acquisition anxiety for foreign languages: great majority them believe that anxiety related to studying foreign languages has its unique situational characteristics, which are primarily manifested in it refers to a variety of situational worries or fears voiced by students who are unaware of their own capacity for second language acquisition.

2.2. Classification of Anxiety

Three types of anxiety exist psychologically: anxiety in situations, states, and personality [14]. When a person has a persistent desire to be nervous, this is known as the characteristic perspective. Some scholars believe that anxiety is a character trait, a more persistent tendency to anxiety, and an aspect of personality. Anxiety that manifests as a state or one-time occurrence, such as right before an exam. One definition of situational anxiety is the anxiety aroused by personality anxiety in a specific situation, and it is a certain anxiety generated by an individual in a particular circumstance for an extended amount of time[15]. For example: nervousness and anxiety when speaking in front of a crowd, during an exam, or in a foreign language class.

According to how it affects students, Alpert and Haber categorize anxiety into two types: facilitative anxiety and inhibitory/impeding anxiety[16]. The former can keep learners alert, always think of ways to take their learning to a new level, stimulate students to take on new learning challenges, and exhort them to work hard to reduce anxiety; The latter has a significant detrimental effect on learners: a. On the one hand, worry and insecurity have an impact on language learning, and on the other hand, by reducing learners' participation in the classroom and producing too much resistance to language learning. This anxiety makes students avoid new learning tasks, causing learners to be anxious and terrified, squandering the effort and focus of students, thereby lowering the amount of mental and memory energy required[17].

Therefore, when studying anxiety, we should distinguish between these two kinds of anxiety. Some anxiety is beneficial for learning, and not all anxiety is bad. Most researchers accentuate how anxiety affects learning negatively, i.e., suppressing worry, while ignoring the beneficial impact of

facilitative anxiety when learning tasks are straightforward. But Horwitz believes that facilitation Anxiety is only appropriate for basic educational tasks, not suitable for more challenging educational tasks.

2.3. Measurement of FLA

The French Classroom Anxiety Scale was the first assessment tool specifically devoted to foreign language studying anxiety. However, because it only takes Canadian French-speaking students as the research object, the scope of application is limited. Horwitz and his coworkers established a scale named FLCAS in 1986, which has undergone numerous studies to demonstrate its internal consistency, reliability, and validity.

Further in-depth research will inevitably lead to the subdivision of research fields. Researchers are beginning to pay attention to learners' anxiety during the foreign language studying process of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as more and more of them become dissatisfied with the overall research on foreign language studying anxiety. Corresponding assessment tools have also gradually been developed. FLLAS, FLRAS, FLSAS are the three representative ones.

2.4. The Effect of FLA on The Learning of Foreign Languages

Numerous studies have revealed that worry hinders one's ability to learn a new language. For instance, Horwitz and colleagues discovered that worried students in foreign language classes do not take the initiative to speak out for themselves, do not actively participate in various classroom activities, or even avoid doing so; Forgetting what they would have known; other anxious learners focus on what they perceive as personal weaknesses, the likelihood of failure, or the consequences of failure, rather than on the learning task, which prevents them from assimilating the language enter.

Researchers have carried out several quantitative investigations of the impacts of anxiety in addition to general findings. Numerous researches has shown that pupils with greater anxiety levels typically score lower in foreign languages. According to MacIntyre and Gardner, tenseness has a damaging effect on some facets of second language acquirement except the overall performance in the language[18]. According to Phillip, anxiety levels are adversely correlated with speaking proficiency in a foreign language: the students who are anxious are far worse than the students who are in a relaxed mood, their speech is not only short, but also incoherent. Foreign language learners' writing skills are likewise impacted by anxiety [19], and Daly and Cheng found that the compositions of worried students were shorter and of lower quality[20]. Additionally, it was discovered that anxiety was inversely connected to reading level and listening comprehension.

Some research, however, have drawn very different or even opposing conclusions. Young discovered that, once the students' language proficiency was taken into account, there was no connection between worrying and speaking performance[21]. The findings of Backman's study also demonstrate that worry has no bearing on how well one learns a foreign language. Ironically, the information he gathered revealed that while one of the two students with the worst academic performance had significant levels of anxiety, the other had a relatively low anxiety self-assessment score. Therefore, Chastain contends that while little worry can aid in learning, excessive anxiety will have detrimental effects on it[22].

3. Personality Traits

Personality is important because personality traits affect how and what people learn [23]. Personality traits may also be important factors that influence language anxiety. The big five character traits is the most influential hypothesis when it comes to personality traits. These the five

major personality traits of people are described using this approach. In addition, there are many common personality tests, such as MBTI and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, although some voices have criticized these tests for being unreliable.

3.1. The Influence of Character Traits in Language Studying

Numerous studies have demonstrated a connection between studying a second language and certain personality traits like self-assurance, introversion, emotional stability, and self-esteem. Liu Meihua concluded that low English speaking self-confidence among students at the start of the semester can considerably and negatively predict how well they learn English at the conclusion of the semester; However, there was no direct link between their fear of performing well in class at the start of the term and their academic achievement at the final exam of the term. In addition, the link between introversion and foreign language studying is also the focus of research. For example, According to Robinson et al., there is a direct link between openness and specific language proficiency traits. However, some studies have failed to support this finding, and some argue that introverts are not necessarily disadvantaged.

4. Relationship Between FLA and Personality

4.1. FNE and Anxiety

Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) is "being worried with perceptions of other people, distressing about their unfavorable assessments, and expecting others to judge you badly." Schlenker & Leary believe that dread of being criticized is an aspect of social anxiety, which refers to the degree to which an individual is afraid of being negatively evaluated [24]. Nancy and Norman conducted a social phobia survey on a sample of 174 undergraduate students (124 women; 50 men). As expected, individuals with higher levels of social anxiety had lower expectations for reaching their goals, lower levels of self-worth, and fewer instances of self-reinforcing behavior [25]. Furthermore, It has been discovered that Social phobia and dignity, as well as self-reinforcement and social anxiety, are mediated by apprehension of unfavorable judgments [26]. However, studies revealing it is uncommon for there to be a connection between worry about foreign languages and fear of failure. Tzoannopoulou surveyed a group of Greek students to study the association between their language phobia and judgmental fear [27]. The study's conclusions found that gender and performance were significantly associated with foreign language studying anxiety and fear. Compared to male students at the same level, female students at the average or above-average level were more concerned about studying a second language and more likely to worry about receiving a bad grade.

4.2. Big Five Character Traits and Anxiety

Several researchers have studied the Big Five personality model for different constructs that consider foreign language studying. Verhoeven, L., & Vermeer, A. studied the relationship between skill in communication and five aspects of personality in 241 children in the Netherlands learning first and second languages. The findings showed that responsible behavior and emotional stability were related to the growth of basic organizational abilities, whereas openness to experience and pragmatic competence were related to broad personality traits and the learning of communicative techniques [28]. The development of fundamental organizing abilities, the development of practical abilities, and the creation of monitoring tactics, on the other hand, were found to be associated with mostly an openness to new things and, to a smaller degree, objectivity and extraversion, in second language learners. The combination of the big five character qualities may significantly help WTC's capacity to study and promote a new language, according to research by Oz. Huseyin into the

association between character factors and willingness to communicate (WTC) [29]. However, few researchers have investigated the connection between the big five character qualities and anxiety in studying a second language. Mehmet ASMALI conducted a questionnaire survey on the big five character traits and exam phobia of people who are studying Turkish English. Exam phobia was highly predicted by the personality qualities "emotional stability" and "imagination," according to regression analysis [30]. The impacts of the big five character qualities and anxiety over being poorly evaluated in a foreign language were examined by Jelisaveta afranj and Jelena Zivlak. The findings demonstrated that high levels of general linguistic anxiety were consistently predicted by insufficient self-confidence. Additionally, FLA is more common in students who are prone to the dread of receiving poor grades. A high level of communication fear was found to be specifically predicted with high conscientiousness.

5. Inspiration for Teaching

The above research shows that anxiety negatively affects the performance of language learners. Students who feel at ease in the classroom are more confident, active, and more likely to absorb the knowledge imparted by teachers. Conversely, students who feel anxious learn more passively and thus have little effect. The use of teaching techniques and the execution of teaching activities should not cause students to feel worried, therefore teachers should foster a peaceful and enjoyable learning environment in the classroom. Some scholars also put forward countermeasures in teaching. Tsiplakides, I., & Keramida, A. proposes project work, teachers improve tolerance for students' mistakes, teachers use indirect error correction instead of direct error correction, etc [31]. Young, D.J. proposed that in the classroom, teachers can encourage each learner to speak out about their anxiety, which helps students to accept the reality of foreign language studying anxiety. In addition, Young believes that teachers should encourage students more, not criticize students positively, and help students establish a correct understanding of themselves [32]. According to Philips, reducing students' anxiety about studying a second language can be accomplished by offering emotional support, fostering an interest in learning through flexible and diversified means, increasing extracurricular activities, and changing the format of exams.

Therefore, we also summarize some teaching implications: foreign language teachers should be good at spotting students who show anxiety. Once these kids have been identified, it is essential for teachers to motivate them to actively engage in a variety of language-related activities, to recognize their successes, and to assist them in developing confidence. In order to provide students with greater chances to use foreign languages, speak with one another, and learn from one another, as well as to progressively raise self-confidence and lessen nervousness in using it again, foreign language teachers must expand task communication in the classroom. In addition, ensuring that students can understand the input language information is a prerequisite for encouraging their active participation in classroom activities. To ensure that the majority of students can grasp the requirements, tasks, and purposes of teaching and activities, foreign language teachers should carefully choose language resources based on the actual language proficiency of their students and alter their teaching techniques accordingly.

For students, it is also very important to enhance communication. Actively confide in their anxiety to classmates and teachers. Others' learning experiences and different perspectives on problems can also help students resolve their anxiety. In addition, the key for students to overcome anxiety is to learn foreign languages well and improve their language level. Students must look for opportunities to use foreign languages as much as possible, to consolidate what they have learned through repeated practice, to build self-confidence, and to gradually reduce anxiety.

6. Conclusion

The findings mentioned above demonstrate that the detrimental effects of worry with foreign language acquirement have essentially been validated with the establishment of FLA theory and assessment techniques. Numerous studies have also found a connection between personality traits and learning a new language, however there is still disagreement over how introversion affects language learning. Furthermore, fear of negative evaluations can lead learners to have higher anxiety levels in foreign language studying classrooms. Some studies have shown that the Big Five are predictive of foreign language anxiety. The connection between personality and anxiety related to learning a new language, however, has not yet been sufficiently studied. Some studies have found that the five personality dimensions in the Big Five personality theory have corresponding effects on different abilities in foreign language studying. Some research suggests that "emotional balance" and "imaginative" character traits can predict test phobia. Anxiety in exam was investigated by Khosravi and Bigdely in relation to personality traits like neuroticism, extroversion, and introversion. The study's findings demonstrated a strong positive association between test anxiety and neuroticism. Furthermore, the research revealed no link between test anxiety and introversion or extroversion.

These studies therefore have important ramifications for teaching foreign languages. Teachers of foreign languages must adopt the right techniques to help students reduce their anxiety and fear, foster motivation, and enhance their proficiency in the target language. Students themselves should also actively communicate with teachers and other learners, solve anxiety in time, and formulate good foreign language studying strategies, so that personality characteristics have a positive guiding effect on foreign language studying.

In conclusion, we should use caution when drawing conclusions on Language phobia and how it affects learning because it is a fairly complex emotional variable. Repeated, multi-perspective, and multi-method investigations are required to investigate the association of language phobia and learning another language in order to strengthen the authenticity and dependability of the research findings.

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