T.C.

BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY, WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AND PERSONALITY TRAITS OF EFL LEARNERS

MASTER'S THESIS

MELİKE UBUZ

ISTANBUL 2023

T.C.

BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY, WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AND PERSONALITY TRAITS OF EFL LEARNERS

MASTER'S THESIS

THESIS ADVISOR

ENISA MEDE

ISTANBUL 2023

T.C.

BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

MASTER THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Program Name:	English Language Education
Student's Name and Surname:	Melike UBUZ
Name Of The Thesis:	The Relationship among Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, Willingness to Communicate and Personality Traits of EFL Learners
Thesis Defense Date:	08/06/2023

This thesis has been approved by the Graduate School which has fulfilled the necessary conditions as Master thesis.

Asst. Prof. Fatma Elif ÇETİN

Institute Director

This thesis was read by us, quality and content as a Master's thesis has been seen and accepted as sufficient.

	Title/Name	**Institution**	**Signature**
Thesis Advisor's	Assoc. Prof. Enisa MEDE	BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY	
Member's	Asst. Prof. Ali ÖZTÜFEKÇİ	BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY	
Member's	Asst. Prof. Nafiye Çiğdem AKTEKİN	ACIBADEM UNIVERSITY	

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Surname : Melike, UBUZ

Signature :

ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY, WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AND PERSONALITY TRAITS OF EFL LEARNERS

Melike, Ubuz

Master's Program in English Language Education

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Enisa MEDE

June 2023, 86 pages

This study aims to investigate the potential correlation between the Big Five personality traits, anxiety in a foreign language classroom, and willingness to communicate among EFL students enrolled in a preparatory program at a foundation university in Turkey. A total of 348 EFL learners completed the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) Scale, and the Quick Big Five Personality (QBFP) Test. Quantitative analyses revealed that the students exhibited a moderate level of willingness to communicate and anxiety, with agreeableness being the dominant personality trait among the learners. The results indicated a moderate negative correlation between foreign language classroom anxiety and willingness to communicate levels. Additionally, significant correlations were found between specific personality traits and anxiety as well as willingness to communicate. Furthermore, learners' gender and previous negative experiences in the foreign language classroom had a significant impact on

their FLCA and WTC levels. Based on these findings, the study provides recommendations and pedagogical implications for teachers, administrators, and future research to enhance English language instruction.

Key Words: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, Willingness to Communicate, Personality, English as a Foreign Language

ÖZ

İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEN ÖĞRENCİLERİN YABANCI DİL SINIFI KAYGI SEVİYESİ, İLETİŞİM KURMA İSTEKLİLİĞİ VE KİŞİLİK ÖZELLİKLERİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

Melike, Ubuz

İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Danışanı: Doç. Dr. Enisa MEDE

Haziran 2023, 86 sayfa

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki bir vakıf üniversitesinde hazırlık programına kayıtlı İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerde Beş Büyük kişilik özelliği, yabancı dil sınıfındaki kaygı ve iletişim kurma isteği arasındaki potansiyel ilişkiyi araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Toplam 348 EFL öğrencisi İletişim İstekliliği Ölçeği, Yabancı Dil Sınıf Kaygısı Ölçeği ve Hızlı Beş Büyük Kişilik Testini tamamladı. Nicel analizler, öğrencilerin iletişim kurmak için orta düzeyde isteklilik ve kaygı sergilediklerini ortaya çıkardı; öğrenciler arasında uyumluluğun baskın kişilik özelliği olduğu görüldü. Sonuçlar, yabancı dil sınıf kaygısı ile iletişim kurma isteği düzeyleri arasında orta düzeyde negatif bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Ek olarak, belirli kişilik özellikleri ile kaygı ve iletişim kurma isteği arasında önemli korelasyonlar gözlemlendi. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin cinsiyeti ve yabancı dil sınıfındaki önceki olumsuz deneyimleri, kaygı ve isteklilik seviyeleri üzerinde önemli bir etkiye

sahiptir. Bu bulgulara dayanarak, çalışma İngilizce dil eğitimini geliştirmek için öğretmenler, yöneticiler ve gelecekteki araştırmalar için öneriler ve pedagojik çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Dil Sınıf Kaygısı, İletişim İstekliliği, Kişilik, Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my deep appreciation to my esteemed advisor, Assoc. Prof. Enisa MEDE for her profound knowledge, invaluable expertise, and dedication to my academic growth. Your insightful feedback, constructive criticism, and patient guidance have shaped this research work and enriched my understanding. I sincerely appreciate your continuous encouragement and unwavering belief in my abilities throughout this journey.

I would also like to extend my sincerest thanks to my family for their unconditional love, understanding, and continuous encouragement. Their constant support and belief in my abilities have been the cornerstone of my academic pursuits. Their sacrifices and patience have given me the strength to overcome challenges and achieve my goals. I am profoundly grateful for their presence in my life.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support and contributions of all those who have directly or indirectly helped me in the completion of this thesis. Their assistance, whether in the form of valuable conversations, data collection, or research materials, has been crucial to the success of this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FFM	Five Factor Model
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
FLCA	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety
L2	Second Language
QBFP	Quick Big Five Personality
WTC	Willingness to Communicate

Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly establish the theoretical context of the current investigation by introducing key ideas. It then follows by stating the problem of the study and explains the significance of this research for the literature on EFL studies. The research questions of the present study as well as definitions for key terms are given at the end to provide a clear insight into the research topic.

1.1 Theoretical Overview

Where there is a will, there is a way is the saying. However, the way to communicate usually seems to be blocked in EFL classrooms. Most EFL teachers complain about the lack of willingness in the students when it comes to classroom activities that require communication. Either written or verbal, EFL students generally resist communicating. Teachers mostly find themselves pushing their students to talk and join in the activities, especially which include verbal communication.

According to MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donovan (2002), willingness to communicate (WTC) is "an underlying continuum representing the predisposition toward or away from communicating, given the choice" (p. 538). There are numerous factors that could affect how willing a learner is to communicate. Affective factors such as joy, anxiety, boredom, self-esteem, or self-efficacy are examples of such factors which have been a topic of interest in SLA studies for many years. As MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) posit, situational variables such as the level of acquaintance between the people, whether communication happens in a formal environment, the number of people listening, the topic that is being discussed, and many other factors also affect WTC.

The anxiety of a person speaking in a foreign language (L2) is another indicator of the general predisposition toward the willingness to communicate (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) define Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). Being closely linked to a person's self-confidence and self-efficacy, anxiety may occur in two different ways: trait anxiety and state anxiety. Trait anxiety is a more permanent inclination to being nervous while state anxiety is dependent on the circumstances or situation a person is in (Brown, 2014). The anxiety L2 learners experience is more associated with the situational context (e.g. the classroom environment). All these affective factors stem from the different personalities and emotions that learners bring with them into the classroom.

According to Brown (2014), one specific method of teaching a language is not enough to predict learning. On the contrary, some learners have achieved L2 learning regardless of the methods used in class. These observations have led to the exploration of the characteristics of good language learners, what kind of learners they are as well as what kind of strategies they employ while learning. As a result, a number of varieties among learners have emerged which have come to be known as individual differences.

Individual differences are known to greatly affect the learning outcomes in SLA. Research that has aimed to identify these variables has shown that there are a number of factors affecting a learner's success in learning a L2 (Andreou, Andreou, & Vlachos, 2006; Dewaele, 2009; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003; Öz, Demirezen, & Pourfeiz, 2015; Skehan, 1991). Learners' beliefs regarding language learning, affective factors, and other general factors such as their age, motivation, or personality are all known to influence L2 achievement (Ellis, 1992). All these factors are intertwined and together they are predictors of L2 achievement.

Among these factors the one that might be considered the basis of beliefs, learning styles, strategies, and affective factors is personality. As Ellis (1992) posited

"learners' beliefs and their affective responses to learning situations may be influenced by personality variables" (p. 473). Thus, the importance of personality traits and research on the relationship between these traits and L2 achievement cannot be denied. As Dörnyei and Ryan (2015, p. 16) stated, "personality is *the* key individual difference."

To sum up, communication in a foreign language is the end goal of language learning. Skehan (1989) highlights the importance of communication for L2 learning by maintaining that language teachers and researchers "may be dealing with the willingness different learners have to talk in order to learn, and this as a non-cognitive individual difference (variable), may be altogether more elusive for researchers" (p. 48). There are several antecedents that determine how willing a learner might be to engage in communication two of which are the focus of this study: foreign language anxiety and personality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As mentioned above, communication is an integral part and the main objective of learning a foreign language. Unfortunately, the Turkish education system adopts, in Freire's (2005) terms, a "banking concept of education" where the teacher is the authority in the classroom and the "depositor" of knowledge. The student, on the other hand, passively takes in the deposited knowledge acting as the "depositories" (p. 72) and cannot contextualise or personalise the information (Raddawi & Troudi, 2018).

After high school, students in Turkey are required to take the University Entrance Examination in order to continue with their education at the tertiary level. This high-stakes exam easily becomes the main focus of students, and language learning is of lesser or even, in some cases, of no importance for both students and teachers. It is, therefore, widely believed that this exam affects teaching and learning English in a negative way (Hatipoğlu, 2016). In most cases, even if there are regular English lessons at the high school level, the reading skill and the sub-skills, grammar, and

vocabulary, are taught more intensely while listening, writing, and especially speaking skills are ignored.

With such a background, when students start their English preparation education at university and are expected to use the language to communicate, they find it very challenging. Some students may feel anxious to talk in class, and therefore, are not motivated to speak in the L2. Personality is another factor likely to affect students' oral performance while learning the L2 in the preparatory program at university. As mentioned above, some personality traits make learners more open to conversing in a foreign language. Many studies have explored the relationship between extroversion-introversion traits and the L2 production of EFL learners. However, little research has been conducted that includes a more comprehensive approach to personality types and how they correlate with anxiety and willingness to communicate. The present study, therefore, aims to explore how classroom anxiety and personality as the basis of all individual differences correlate with each other and the willingness to communicate of Turkish EFL learners.

To conclude, oral production in the L2 is difficult for many learners, but it is especially challenging for Turkish EFL learners. The education system does not give priority to communicative skills but rather remains limited to grammar, vocabulary, and reading. Consequently, it is significant to find out about these learners' WTC as well as the factors that influence it.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The present study aims to explore whether the personality traits, such as extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness-to-experience, levels of anxiety, and willingness to communicate of EFL learners studying at a preparatory program in a foundation university correlate with each other.

Although there are various studies separately investigating EFL learners' WTC, their anxiety levels, and the relationship between personality traits and L2 learning,

empirical research on the relations between affective factors, such as motivation, anxiety, self-confidence, and grit, and WTC are limited (Lee & Hsieh, 2019). The present research aims to explore whether anxiety, different personality traits, and WTC correlate with each other. When compared with research on individual differences, studies investigating the personality factor in L2 learning seem to be low in number (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). This study will aim to add to the empirical studies that have been conducted thus far and help to fill this gap in the SLA literature.

The findings obtained from the present study will also provide an opportunity for the institution administration where the data is collected to design the overall curriculum and in-class activities in consideration of these findings so as to provide a tertiary-level language learning atmosphere that enables students to communicate more willingly. Last but not least, the results of the present study could also contribute to the existing literature and help EFL practitioners who would like to learn more about the correlation between personality types and affective factors. As WTC in L2 is a common problem in many schools and universities, the present study could shed light on the underlying factors and could help make necessary changes in curriculums and the education system. The present sample could be regarded as one small fraction of the wider and more comprehensive studies of language learning psychology.

1.4 Research Questions

In accordance with the previously stated purpose, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the (a) perceived levels of foreign language classroom anxiety, (b) levels of willingness to communicate, and (c) the most common personality traits of EFL learners studying at a preparatory program of a foundation university in Turkey?
2) Is there any correlation among personality traits, foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate levels of EFL learners?

3) Is there any significant difference between foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate and the following demographic features:
    a. gender
    b. prior negative experiences
    c. proficiency level?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This comprehensive study aims to address the question of whether there are any correlations between the Big Five personality traits, foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate levels of EFL learners studying at a preparatory school at a foundation university in Turkey. The significance of this study is three-fold.

First, as Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) maintain, "the curious situation is that while all parties to the language learning process agree that personality factors play a significant role in successful L2 learning, there has been a major disconnect between this perception and research findings" (p. 29). The present study, therefore, is of utmost importance because the findings will add to the existing literature and help to fill the gap that exists in this area.

Second, the investigations into the relationship between trait anxiety, i.e. neuroticism, and state anxiety, i.e. FLCA in the present study have yielded contrasting results. While some studies have discovered that there is no relationship between state anxiety and trait anxiety (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991), others have revealed conflicting results (Dewaele, 2002; Dewaele, 2011; Dewaele, 2013; Safranj & Zivlak, 2019). Furthermore, to the knowledge of the researcher, there are no studies conducted in Turkey on the correlation between trait anxiety and state anxiety in the SLA context. Another possible gap in the literature concerns the FLCA of adult learners. Dewaele (2013) asserts that studies examining

the relationship between personality traits and anxiety have been low in number and research focusing on adults or young adults has been even lower. Consequently, the present study will aim to contribute to the existing literature and attempt to shed light on the relationship between the two anxiety constructs in the Turkish context with adult learners.

Finally, it is undeniable that personality traits and WTC are interrelated constructs because both are regarded as parts of the individual differences domain (Öz, 2014). According to Lee and Hsieh (2019), there is a need for more empirical studies to further explore and explain how affective variables correlate with EFL learners' WTC. The present study aims to add to the existing body of literature in this domain.

In summary, it seems that it is not entirely evident how personality traits, foreign language anxiety, and willingness to communicate all interact with one another. To the knowledge of the researcher, only few studies have included all three constructs in the context of SLA (Başöz & Erten, 2019; Fatima, Ismail, Pathan & Memon, 2020; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018); however, did not look into the correlations among these variables. The present study is significant in this aspect and aims to contribute to the literature in this respect.

1.6 Definitions

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

SLA (Second Language Acquisition): "the language plays an institutional and social role in the community" (Ellis, 1992, pp. 11-12)

FLA (Foreign Language Acquisition): "learning takes place in settings where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom" (Ellis, 1992, p. 12)

WTC (Willingness to Communicate): "the intention to initiate communication, given a choice" (MacIntrye et al., 2001, p. 369)

FLCA (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety): “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feeling,s and behaviours related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128)

Personality: “the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments” (Larsen & Buss, 2009, p. 4)

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter gives a theoretical foundation for the important constructs that will be examined in this study. Personality traits with an emphasis on the Big Five Model, anxiety and its implications for foreign language classrooms, and the willingness to communicate in a foreign language will be examined in greater detail. This will be followed by a review of the relevant literature, with a focus on research conducted in the Turkish setting, as well as global studies that have addressed the variables in question.

2.1 Personality

Students carry with them a variety of traits that set them apart from their peers when they walk into the classroom. One may think of personality as the foundation upon which all these individual differences are constructed (Freiermuth & Ito, 2020). Our personality affects how we communicate, and deal with problems, whether we can welcome change or the challenges that we face, our attitudes and beliefs, and how we approach learning. Larsen and Buss (2009) define personality as "the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments" (p. 4). In other words, personality traits "summarize a person's typical behaviour" (Pervin & Cervone, 2010, p. 229). The five-factor model of personality, also known as the Big Five model, is one of the most widely used models to understand personality. The next section will provide a brief overview of the development of the Big Five model of personality, followed by its relevance to SLA, and finally a review of the literature of studies on personality in SLA.

2.1.1 The Big Five Model of personality traits. The discovery and development of the Big Five Model, or the five-factor model (FFM), of personality date back to the 1960s. According to McCrae and Costa (1985), Tupes and Christal (1961) were the first researchers to announce the existence of the FFM. However, it was the work of Allport and Odbert (1936) which suggested that the secret of human personality could be found by adopting a lexical approach by looking into the natural language. An extensive analysis of personality adjectives and factor analyses of lists of these adjectives have resulted in the creation of the Big Five personality traits. It was Lewis Goldberg (1981) who coined the term 'Big Five'; however, because Costa and McCrae's (1985) studies have been at the forefront in recent years, the model has been associated with them (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

"In a narrow sense, the five-factor model (FFM) of personality is an empirical generalization about the covariation of personality traits" (McCrae & Costa, 2008, p. 159). According to Costa and McCrae (1985), there are five broad indicators of human personality: openness to experience (or openness), conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism all of which constitute the acronym "OCEAN" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 18). The table below shows the most common adjectives that can be associated with each personality trait.

Table 1

Descriptors for the components of the Big Five model

	High Scorers	**Low Scorers**
Openness to experience	imaginative, curious, flexible, creative, moved by art, novelty seeking, original, and untraditional	conservative, conventional, down-to-earth, unartistic, and practical

Table 1 (cont.d)

	High Scorers	Low Scorers
Conscientiousness	systematic, meticulous, efficient, organised, reliable, responsible, hard-working, persevering, and self-disciplined	unreliable, aimless, careless, disorganised, late, lazy, negligent, and weak-willed
Extroversion	sociable, gregarious, active, assertive, passionate, and talkative	passive, quiet, reserved, withdrawn, sober, aloof, and restrained
Agreeableness	friendly, good-natured, likable, kind, forgiving, trusting, cooperative, modest, and generous	cold, cynical, rude, unpleasant, critical, antagonistic, suspicious, vengeful, irritable, and uncooperative
Neuroticism	worrying, anxious, insecure, depressed, self-conscious, moody, emotional, and unstable	calm, relaxed, unemotional, hardy, comfortable, content, even-tempered, and self-satisfied

Note. Table adapted from (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 18).

Although the model is widely accepted, there have been negative comments on it, as well. Researchers such as Ben-Porath (1992) and Widiger (1992), for instance, have criticised this model because some traits are perceived to be more positive than others; thus, making those the more desirable options (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). However, as Pervin and Cervone (2010) put it, "the Big Five personality structure is a human universal" (p. 265) which has been tested to be a "good representation of central features of personality" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 18) whether it being positive or negative. Furthermore, John and Srivastava (1999) posit that individuals' personalities do not consist exclusively of these five factors, and they "represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction, and each dimension includes a large number of distinct, more specific personality characteristics" (p. 105). Nevertheless, the Big Five Model has been widely accepted to the point of dominating personality

studies (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The model has also been adopted in SLA studies, and the next section will explicate how the traits are relevant to L2 learning.

2.1.2 The role of personality in SLA. According to Dörnyei and Ryan (2015), personality traits and types have a significant role in defining human behaviour in general, but from the standpoint of education, the key concern is how these traits impact learning. In this section, each personality trait will be discussed in relevance to foreign language learning.

Openness to experience, or only openness, "reflects proactive seeking and appreciation of experience for its own sake as well as a willingness to explore the unfamiliar" (Dewaele, 2012, p. 47). Studies have shown that openness is associated with general academic achievement (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2004, 2006, 2008) because individuals who are more open are more willing to participate in activities that promote the process of learning. They perform better in tasks that involve skills of interpreting meaning and pragmatic abilities. Their lexical, syntactic, and discourse abilities have also been found to be better (Verhoeven & Vermeer, 2002), and these learners are likely to be better readers, use the L2 more frequently, and have higher self-perceived L2 proficiency (Ehrman, 2008).

Conscientiousness is related to how hard-working, organised, systematic, and goal-oriented learners are (Dörnyei & Brown, 2015). Such L2 learners would tend to study harder than others. As Ehrman (2008) discovered, these learners think more strategically, employ meta-cognitive strategies more, tend to be unforgiving with their achievements, and strive for perfection in their production. It is also possible that conscientiousness can help compensate for lower levels of cognitive capacity if that is the case (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2004, 2006, 2008). One of the facets of this personality trait, "achievement striving" (Costa & McCrae, 1995, p. 28), has been found to correlate with better oral production (better fluency and pronunciation) and linguistic achievement (better grammar and vocabulary scores) (Ockey, 2011).

Extroversion may be the most researched personality trait as it suggests higher levels of social interaction and communication (Dewaele, 2012). In the case of L2 learning, having an extroverted character seems more favourable from the teacher's point of view (Brown, 2014). Extroverted students are usually the saviours of the lesson flow because they are the ones usually ready to venture their answers before the more introverted ones, thus preventing demotivating moments for students and teachers (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2018). Therefore, it is expected that these students will be good language learners, and cultural norms are usually disregarded in this sense. Research on extroversion and introversion has shown mixed results suggesting that extroversion does not equal L2 achievement. It was revealed in some cases that introverted learners did better in pronunciation (Bush, 1982), and were considered better language learners (Ehrman, 2008) whereas extroverts were better at employing learning strategies (Wakamoto, 2009), more fluent (Dewaele & Furnham, 2000), employed colloquial speech more often (Dewaele, 2004). Consequently, it is not possible to conclude that extroverts (or introverts) are better language learners. Both have particular qualities that, depending on the setting, help them facilitate learning.

Agreeableness is associated with compliance, altruism, modesty, trust, tender-mindedness, and straightforwardness (Costa & McCrae, 1995). It is therefore easy to imagine that a learner who scores high on this trait would be compliant trying not to cause any trouble in the classroom, be like a teacher's pet, and help the other students in group activities. However, as Dewaele (2012) noted, there is almost no research that explored this trait as an independent variable. Only a few studies have found that agreeableness had slight to moderate correlations with WTC (Öz, 2014; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002).

Neuroticism comprises facets such as anxiety, depression, impulsiveness, vulnerability, self-consciousness, and angry hostility (Costa & McCrae, 1995) among which anxiety has been the focus of SLA research. However, the relationship between anxiety as part of the personality trait, i.e. trait anxiety, and the one encountered in foreign language classrooms is not straightforward. However, there is research that indicated a relationship between the two (Dewaele, 2002; Dewaele, 2013; Safranj & Zivlak, 2019). Another research carried out by Robinson, Gabriel, and Katchan

(1994) revealed that learners who scored higher on the neuroticism trait exhibited better oral and written performance. However, another study by Dewaele (2007) showed that there was no correlation between neuroticism and learners' attitudes toward the foreign language or their grades.

In conclusion, the five-factor model of personality is a beneficial guide to understanding the personality of the learners, and how each of these traits affects their behaviours and preferences in the classroom. Personality traits are significant indicators of L2 learning as well as communication (Öz, 2014). It is, then, crucial to research how differences in personality may potentially impact the EFL classroom (Freiermuth & Ito, 2020). The following section will provide a brief review of the literature to demonstrate how personality has been studied in SLA contexts.

2.1.3 Previous studies on personality traits. In comparison to studies on individual differences, personality study in SLA remains scarce (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). There have been several studies carried out internationally, but few in the Turkish context. The international studies conducted in recent years included relationships between personality and preferred instruction types (Navidinia, Beidokthi & Hekmati, 2017), the challenges personalities of Gen Z undergraduate students pose in the EFL classroom (Sriprom, Rungswang, Sukwitthayakul & Chansri, 2019), whether personality may predict student engagement (Angelovska, Mercer & Talbot, 2021), how personality affects learners' performance in different skills (Anggraini, Cahyono, Anugerahwati & Ivone, 2022; He, 2019; Vafadar & Rouhi, 2019; Wuryantari Winasih, Cahyono & Ananto Prayogo, 2019), and the interplay between personality and WTC of learners (Başöz & Erten, 2019; Fatima et al., 2020; Freiremuth & Ito, 2020; Khany & Nejad, 2017; Lin, 2019; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018).

Recently, two studies have been conducted in Turkey (Akdemir & Takkaç, 2016; Sak, 2021). Akdemir and Takkaç (2016) explored extroversion in a qualitative study with five female EFL learners as listeners. The results of the semi-structured interviews showed that the participants of the study were extroverted learners, and two categories emerged related to extroversion: sociability and enthusiasm.

Sak (2021) investigated how directed motivational currents of learners correlated with the Big Five personality traits. This quantitative research was conducted with 172 undergraduate students, and the findings demonstrated that personality factors, which collectively accounted for 42% of the variance, significantly predicted variability in the DMC disposition. The best predictors were extroversion and conscientiousness.

In conclusion, a few SLA studies examine personality from a variety of angles. However, the amount of research appears insufficient when compared to other studies on individual differences. In addition, the absence of research on personality factors in Turkey enhances the need for additional study of this construct, especially in relation to lower-order personality traits such as anxiety. The section that follows will go into greater detail about foreign language anxiety in order to provide a better understanding of the concept.

2.2 Foreign Language Anxiety

Since the 1970s, a great amount of SLA research has focused on emotions, with anxiety being the most commonly studied emotion (MacIntyre, 1999; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991c; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b; Pae, 2013; Phillips, 1992; Scovel, 1978). It is undoubtedly an emotion that greatly impedes L2 achievement as well as performance, and might even cause the learner to forget what they already know or increase the chances of making mistakes (Brown, 2014). This section will investigate the various types and classifications of anxiety, explain its implications on language learning, and conclude with a literature review of anxiety-related studies.

2.2.1 Types and definitions of anxiety. Because anxiety is an intricate emotion, there have been various categorizations of the construct. One of these distinctions is made between Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) although the two terms are used interchangeably. MacIntyre (1999) defines FLA as “the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language” (p. 27). FLCA,

on the other hand, is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). In other words, whereas FLA is associated with L2 use in all contexts, FLCA additionally involves classroom-specific characteristics. In consideration of FLA, the following classifications have been developed.

2.2.1.1 The subdimensions of FLA. Horwitz et al. (1986) classify FLA as consisting of three subdimensions: (1) communication apprehension, (2) test anxiety, and (3) fear of negative evaluation. *Communication apprehension* is "a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people" (p. 127). That is, a learner with communication apprehension would prefer not to engage in communicative activities with others. Communication apprehension may manifest itself as speaking anxiety, listening anxiety, and stage fright. *Test anxiety* usually stems from unrealistic expectations that learners have of themselves and is associated with a fear of failure. Learners with test anxiety are more likely to forget the correct answers during a test, make mistakes they would normally not make, and they may be more inclined to overstudy for an exam. Finally, *fear of negative evaluation* is defined as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (p. 128). This type of anxiety may occur in any type of social situation where the learner might be evaluated. Speaking in a foreign language classroom could be given as an example of this evaluative situation. Among these subdimensions, communication apprehension is particularly significant to the present study as it is closely related to willingness to communicate (Horwitz et al., 1986). Indeed, research has exhibited that people with high levels of communication-related fear tend to disengage from conversations in the L2 or avoid them altogether (Başöz & Erten, 2019; Lee & Hsieh, 2019; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Öz, 2015; Zhou, Xi, & Lichtman, 2020).

2.2.1.2 Trait anxiety and state anxiety. Anxiety can also be categorised according to the various intensities it is experienced, which leads to the distinction between trait anxiety and state anxiety (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). *Trait anxiety* is related to the personality of an individual and is considered a "stable predisposition

to become anxious in a cross-section of situations" (Brown, 2014, p. 177). Therefore, trait anxiety might be associated with neuroticism, which comprises anxiety as mentioned in the previous section. *State anxiety*, on the other hand, manifests itself as "an emotional reaction to the current situation" (Brown, 2014, p. 177). People's levels of anxiety may rise as a consequence of a number of different circumstances, including unfavourable past experiences, the conflict between different groups, a heightened fear of being assimilated, an increase in the number of people listening, and other similar anxiety-arousing situations (MacIntyre et al., 1998). However, these circumstances are temporary and thus, the level of nervousness experienced by the learners is likely to fluctuate depending on the situation they are in.

Research has investigated whether a correlation between trait anxiety and state anxiety exists and contrasting results have been obtained. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1989), these two types of anxieties are independent concepts which means that people who have an anxious predisposition do not necessarily experience anxiety in their foreign language classrooms, a claim which has been supported by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1991). On the other hand, several other studies have revealed that there actually is a correlation between these two dimensions of anxiety (Dewaele, 2002; Dewaele, 2011; Dewaele, 2013; Safranj & Zivlak, 2019) which means that a person who scores high on the neuroticism trait would probably experience higher levels of FLCA.

2.2.1.3 Facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. The final categorisation of anxiety in this section is associated with the different impacts it has on the person experiencing it, either facilitating or debilitating learning (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Although anxiety is considered a negative emotion and is related to negative learning outcomes, it does not necessarily have to influence learning negatively. In some cases, the feeling of worry could promote learning, in which case it is considered as *facilitating* or *beneficial anxiety* (Brown, 2014). MacIntyre (2002) asserts that anxiety may actually increase the effort made by the learner and could have positive consequences when experienced at lower levels. For example, some anxious learners tend to be more attentive to instructions during lessons than learners who are less nervous (Oxford, 1999).

Finally, the type of anxiety which impedes learning or performance is called *debilitating* or *inhibitory anxiety*. Anxious learners are more likely to be forgetful, experience dread, show avoidance behaviour, and have problems concentrating on, listening to, and speaking in a foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986). Debilitating anxiety has a negative effect on the learners' willingness to communicate, and the fear of being misunderstood or being laughed at might impede their motivation to speak in the L2. They may feel worried, embarrassed, and self-conscious in their learning environments. All of these unpleasant emotions may lead to procrastination, and ultimately to avoidance behaviour resulting in complete withdrawal from the L2 learning process (Brown, 2014). Unlike facilitating anxiety, debilitating anxiety is more commonly observed and researched, and its implications on learning in general, and L2 learning, in particular, are numerous. The following section will briefly describe how anxiety might hinder L2 learning.

2.2.2 The effects of foreign language anxiety on foreign language learning. Anxiety undoubtedly influences learning adversely in most cases. According to Arnold and Brown (1999), "anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process" (p. 8). Horwitz et al. (1986) explain anxiety in the L2 context and posit that when it comes to learning a foreign language, some people tend to experience a "mental block" (p. 125). These people may be motivated to learn, have an interest in the language, and have no difficulties in learning other non-language-related subjects. However, what prevents them from learning a foreign language is their anxiety. Similarly, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) assert that "higher levels of language anxiety are associated with lower levels of language achievement" (p. 103) probably because "negative emotions cause a narrowing of focus and a restriction of the range of potential language input" (Dewaele et al., 2018, p. 678).

The negative effect of FLA on learning is related to the input and output of information. FLA inhibits short-term memory and impacts learners' comprehension skills which hinders the processing of incoming information (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b). According to the attentional control theory (ACT) proposed by Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, and Calvo (2007), anxiety has a disruptive influence on the

individual's attentional control, which decreases cognitive processing performance. As a result, the individual is more susceptible to being influenced by irrelevant stimuli or distractions. These anxiety-related distractions interfere with the learners' capacity to concentrate on the current activity since they take up cognitive space that could be used for other things. Anxiety also affects learners' long-term memories and hinders their production skills which concern the output of information. This, in turn, results in difficulties recalling the required information (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b).

Finally, another adverse impact of FLA involves learners' choice of communication strategies and the quality and length of their written products. Their performance in listening and reading is also influenced by the feeling of worry and dread. Consequently, L2 learning and performance are negatively affected (Dewaele, 2002; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2010).

In summary, it is obvious that feelings of nervousness affect learning in a variety of negative ways, and when it comes to learning a L2, the issue only becomes worse. At this point, it might be sensible to question why certain people feel more anxious than others. The next part will elaborate on the sources of anxiety.

2.2.3 Sources of anxiety. Thinking about the sources of anxiety, it is straightforward to think that the individual has an anxious disposition; that is, the feeling of nervousness stems from their personality (Dewaele, 2002). Daly (1991) asserts that it is possible that the negative experiences from childhood regarding communication may also have an impact on the level of anxiety felt in later years. Not only negative experiences but the amount of experience in communication may also affect how a person feels speaking. Having enough instances of communication in earlier years would lead to less apprehensive speakers in adulthood. A person's disposition may indeed influence their emotions; however, this may be true in some cases, but not in others. It is also important to consider the underlying reasons for state anxiety experienced in foreign language classrooms.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), one of the factors leading to anxiety in the foreign language classroom is the fear of being evaluated by others. In a language classroom, learners do not have the opportunity to choose their classmates. There may be instances where the learner does not feel comfortable among their peers. A similar fear may arise when the learner has been criticised by the teacher (Gregersen, 2003). Although error correction is inevitable in foreign language classrooms, the way this is done may influence how the learner feels. Even one instant where the learner has been corrected or criticised in an insensitive way might cause them to develop an apprehension towards speaking and participating in the classroom. Prior negative experiences as such have been researched in relation to FLCA (Dewaele, 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), and the present study aims to explore this phenomenon, as well.

To identify the reasons for Turkish students' anxiety levels in communicative contexts, Tekir (2021) conducted interviews with EFL learners studying at a preparatory school in a state university. The findings indicated nine reasons for anxiety reported by the interviewees which were as follows: (1) students were not familiar with the teaching methods, (2) they had unfavourable experiences before, (3) they had difficulties because of the differences between their L1 and L2, (4) they had a perfectionist personality, (5) they were afraid of being evaluated, (6) they had inadequate vocabulary knowledge, (7) they didn't have enough opportunities to speak, (8) they feared being humiliated in front of their peers, and (9) they felt anxious speaking to the teacher but not their peers. As it is evident in this study, Turkish EFL learners experience FLA for various reasons including linguistic as well as affective ones.

To summarize, foreign language anxiety can stem from various factors, spanning from individual predisposition to the positive or negative experiences in the classroom. The following section will provide a more thorough review of the literature and an overview of the research undertaken in recent years regarding foreign language anxiety.

2.2.4 Previous studies on anxiety. Because of its observable effects on L2 achievement, anxiety has been the most commonly studied emotion in SLA (MacIntyre, 1999). In the Turkish context, FLA has mainly been part of experimental studies where the aim was to lower learners' levels of anxiety observed in foreign language classrooms (Babacan & Güler, 2022, Çakmak, 2022; Çepni & Keleş, 2022; Kutuk, 2022). Few studies have explored foreign language anxiety and other variables (Aslan & Thompson, 2021; Durmaz & Aşık, 2022; Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022; Yükselir & Özer, 2022), and, to the knowledge of the researcher, none have investigated the relationship between FLCA, WTC, and personality together. The following section will summarise some studies to highlight Turkish EFL learners' anxiety levels and will follow with a few studies that have investigated FLCA and personality traits.

2.2.4.1 Studies on the anxiety levels of Turkish EFL learners. There are few studies carried out with Turkish EFL learners in order to explore their levels of anxiety (Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022; Yükselir & Özer, 2022). While researching anxiety levels, other variables have been included as well; however, for the purpose of the present study, only the results regarding anxiety will be mentioned.

Yeşilçınar and Erdemir (2022) aimed to research Turkish EFL learners' levels of foreign language anxiety and foreign language enjoyment. In this mixed method study, quantitative data was collected from 305 (58 male, 247 female) preparatory school students enrolled in English language teaching and English language and literature departments at various universities across Turkey. The proficiency level of the participants was reported to be B1/B2. According to the results, the participants exhibited medium-level foreign language anxiety. In terms of gender, a significant difference was found between males and females with female students exhibiting higher levels of anxiety.

Yükselir and Özer (2022) investigated EFL learners' anxiety levels and their views on learner autonomy. The study was conducted with 126 (52 male, 74 female) EFL learners studying at a preparatory school at two different state universities. The quantitative data was collected through questionnaires and the results indicated that

the participants felt different levels of anxiety. 73 of the 126 participants indicated moderate anxiety levels, whereas 13 reported high anxiety levels. No differences were found in anxiety levels in terms of the gender of the participants.

In conclusion, the present study highlights the limited number of studies conducted on Turkish EFL learners' anxiety levels. The findings from Yeşilçınar and Erdemir's (2022) study reveal that Turkish EFL learners experience medium-level foreign language anxiety, with female students exhibiting higher levels of anxiety compared to male students. Meanwhile, Yükselir and Özer's (2022) study indicates that participants reported different levels of anxiety with no significant difference between male and female learners. These results provide important insights into the anxiety levels of Turkish EFL learners and contribute to the existing literature on foreign language anxiety.

2.2.4.2 Studies on anxiety and personality. As the present study aims to explore correlations between anxiety and personality traits, it is important to provide a review of similar studies. To the knowledge of the researcher, one research was conducted internationally (Safranj & Zivlak, 2019) regarding the interplay between personality and foreign language anxiety.

Safranj and Zivlak (2019) aimed to investigate the predictive power of the Big Five personality traits on the FLCA of students. 296 (142 male, 154 female) from engineering departments at a university in Serbia participated in this study. Data were collected through questionnaires, and Horwitz et al.'s (1986) *FLCAS*, Goldberg's (2001) *Big Five Personality Traits from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP)*, and Leary's (1983) *Fear of Negative Evaluation* were employed. The results showed that there was a moderate negative correlation between emotional stability and FLCA, and low levels of emotional stability, i.e., high levels of neuroticism, were predictors of high levels of FLCA. Intellect, i.e., openness to experience, and FLCA also had a moderate negative correlation, and neither intellect nor extroversion predicted lower levels of FLCA. Conscientiousness was not a predictor of general FLCA but had an effect on the communication apprehension sub-dimension. Finally,

agreeableness did not have any predictive power on FLCA or any of its sub-dimensions.

Based on the literature review above, even though affective aspects and individual differences are prominent topics of research in SLA, there is a dearth of research on how anxious Turkish EFL learners are and how their personalities influence their anxiety. The interaction between these two variables and willingness to communicate has not been included here because it will be discussed in the following section.

2.3 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

It is commonly agreed that the most important objective of learning a language is communication (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Increasing learners' motivation to engage in conversations in the EFL context is not an easy undertaking. Especially, in contexts where learners in the classroom share the same mother tongue (L1), it is inevitable that they will find using their L1 as the easier way to express themselves the first moment they encounter a challenge or misunderstanding. Although communication in a L2 is regarded as the ultimate goal of language teaching and learning, it is a gruelling task to motivate students to avoid code-switching. This challenge applies to several contexts where English is taught as a foreign language and learners do not have the opportunity to practice outside the classroom and refrain from practicing inside (Freiermuth & Ito, 2020). It is, therefore, significant to understand L2 WTC and the underlying factors affecting this construct.

2.3.1 Definition of WTC. Initially conceived as a personality trait or a permanent individual difference variable (MacIntyre, Lanxi, & Khajavy, 2020), WTC is related to a person's likeliness to initiate communication in different contexts and situations (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). The construct of WTC originated from the study of Burgoon (1976) where it was referred to as unwillingness to communicate which was described as a predisposition to avoid oral communication and was in reference to the L1 context only (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). Although it can be argued that the situation in which the person is might also determine the desire to initiate

conversation, McCroskey and Richmond (1987) focused on the personality aspect of it to explain "why one person will talk and another will not under identical, or virtually identical, situational constraints" (p. 130). MacIntyre et al. (1998) have built upon the work of McCroskey and Bear (1985) in terms of its conceptualisation as a trait-like disposition. Consequently, MacIntyre et al. (1998) define WTC as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (p. 547).

At this point, an important distinction between L1 and L2 WTC needs to be made. MacIntyre et al. (1998) suggest that different cognitive processes are engaged in WTC in L1 and L2, hence a difference must be made between the two. Speaking in L2 entails greater ambiguity and necessitates a more advanced level of communicative proficiency than speaking in L1. Furthermore, social and political factors may influence the degree to which speakers of L2 are prepared for communication; however, these factors may not affect performance in L1.

As Öz (2015) maintains, L2 WTC is "indeed a multi-faceted construct that integrates affective, social-psychological, linguistic, and communicative variables and can describe, explain, and predict language learners' communicative behaviour in a L2" (p. 270). For learners, making the decision to communicate (or not) in language-learning situations can be easy or difficult at times. It is surprisingly complicated, and it may be the most important decision a person can make on a regular basis during the language-learning process (MacIntyre, 2020). This decision is made based on various factors which will be elaborated on below.

2.3.2 The pyramid model of WTC. To have a clearer understanding of a person's intention to converse, MacIntyre et al. (1998) have developed a heuristic model (see Figure 1) which illustrates the various aspects that are likely to have an impact on WTC.

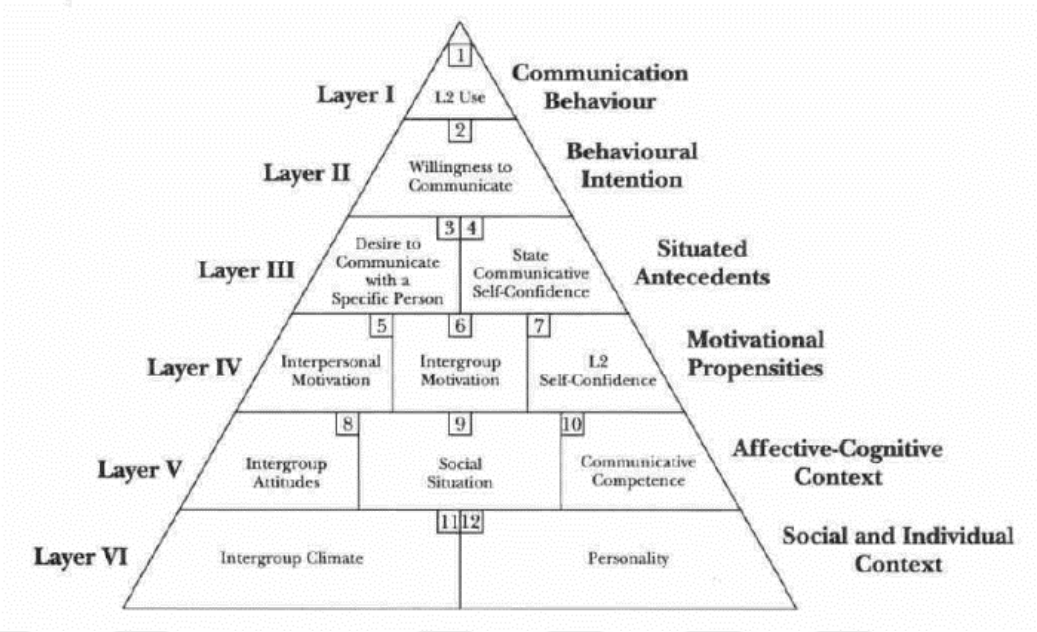

Figure 1. The pyramid model of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998)

As shown in Figure 1, six categories have been identified in this model. The top three layers indicate "situation-specific influences on WTC at a given moment in time" whereas the bottom three layers show "stable, enduring influences on the process" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). Respectively, these layers are named (1) Communication Behaviour, (2) Behavioural Intention, (3) Situated Antecedents, (4) Motivational Propensities, (5) Affective-Cognitive Context, and (6) Social and Individual Context. When an opportunity to communicate presents itself, a combination of these elements converges on a single moment at which a decision is made regarding whether or not to communicate. This behavioural purpose is influenced by a number of factors, some of which encourage communication and others which hinder it (MacIntyre et al., 2020). These factors are briefly explained below.

2.3.2.1 Communication behaviour. On the top of the pyramid is communication behaviour which is the act of being involved in a communicative activity such as speaking or participating in the lesson, reading, writing, or listening in the L2 or using the L2 at the workplace (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

2.3.2.2 Willingness to communicate. The second layer is the willingness to communicate. It is significant to point out that WTC also includes nonverbal communication such as raising the hand in class to venture an answer to the teacher's question. A combination of factors impacts students' WTC such as their self-confidence (including communicative competence and hence, the lack of anxiety), motivation (either integrative or instrumental) as well as differences in personality (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

2.3.2.3 Situated antecedents of communication. The third layer consists of two subcategories, one being the desire to communicate with a specific person and the other state communicative self-confidence. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), these two concepts are the most direct factors in determining WTC. The desire to communicate with a specific person is closely associated with interindividual and intergroup motivations. It is postulated that the need to interact with another person is driven by affiliation and control-related motivations. A person may choose to engage in a conversation for a variety of reasons, including the interlocutor's physical attractiveness, proximity to the person, frequent interactions with them, or resemblance to them in some way (Lippa, 1994).

The second box in the third layer pertains to state self-confidence, which is a temporary sense of confidence in a particular context. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), state anxiety and state self-confidence are interrelated in that an increase in anxiety leads to a fall in self-confidence, which in turn results in a decrease in WTC. Another notion related to state self-confidence is state perceived competence, which refers to an individual's ideas regarding their capacity to engage in communication effectively. Accordingly, it is not surprising that low levels of competencies and the inability to compensate for the lacking knowledge is likely to cause low levels of state competence. Consequently, new situations in which the individual is expected to communicate without building up their self-confidence have a negative impact on WTC.

2.3.2.4 Motivational propensities. From this category onward, the factors affecting WTC are more stable and enduring. Motivational propensities comprise

interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, and self-confidence. MacIntyre et al. (1998) assert that whether two people are willing to engage in interaction is related to interpersonal motivation and can either stem from the control motive (e.g. a teacher giving students a task) or from the affiliation motive (e.g. two students asking each other personal questions in a language classroom). Intergroup motivation, on the other hand, is associated with a sense of group membership, and is likely to be influenced by the intergroup attitudes and intergroup climate. The desire to build rapport and be part of another group is what enables interaction to start. The concepts on integrativeness that Gardner (1985) presented played a pioneering role in the study of intergroup motivation. Contrary to interpersonal and intergroup motivation, self-confidence is a cognitive and affective notion which, in turn, concerns the L2 speakers' self-evaluations of their communication competence and the anxiety or apprehension felt using the L2 (MacIntyre et al., 1998). As MacIntyre (2007) highlights, WTC is related to how self-confident the learner is as well as their communication competence which is listed under affective-cognitive context.

2.3.2.5 Affective-cognitive context. The affective-cognitive context includes a broader look into variables affecting WTC. This category comprises intergroup attitudes, social situations, and communicative competence. MacIntyre et al. (1998) maintain that the attitudes of one group towards another may vary depending on social variables. Integrativeness, fear of assimilation, and the motivation to learn the L2 are such variables. On the other hand, falling under the sociolinguistic research area, social situations may determine when and how L2 communication occurs. In other words, the social context in which the L2 speaker is may be the indicator of whether communication will take place and in what way it will. A person feeling comfortable initiating a conversation may not feel as confident in another social context. The last box under the affective-cognitive context category is communicative competence. It is significant, though, to emphasize that there is a difference between actual competence and perceived competence. Considering the readiness to initiate conversation, it is the individual's perceived level of communication that is more important than the actual capability to communicate (Öz, 2015). Indeed, according to McCroskey and Richmond (1987), the beliefs that a person has regarding their level of communication competence have a significant

impact on their WTC. Research yields similar results, emphasizing the importance of communication competence in WTC (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; Ghonsooly, Khajavy, & Asadpour, 2012; Öz, 2015; Yashima, 2002).

2.3.2.6 The societal and individual context. The bottom layer of the pyramid is associated with the context of the conversation at the societal level concerning intergroup climate as well as the individual level concerning personality. The intergroup climate is determined by how the L2 is viewed in the L1 society which either leads to a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards it. Personality is another important indicator of whether a person will engage in interaction or not. The Big Five traits of personality were found to have an impact on L2 WTC and/or L2 motivation (Khany & Nejad, 2017; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Öz, 2014; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018). Although it cannot be claimed that personality will affect communication, it does establish the context for language learning (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996).

To summarise, the pyramid model of WTC demonstrates the antecedents leading to or hindering communication in a foreign language. From the bottom starting with the more permanent factors such as personality, each layer influences the ones above until reaching the top of the pyramid where actual communication takes place. A great number of research has been conducted on L2 WTC, and the following part will provide an overview of the latest studies in this field.

2.3.3 Previous studies on WTC. The willingness to communicate of foreign language learners has been a prominent topic of research, probably because of its direct relationship with the outcome of L2 learning. Countless studies have been carried out both nationally and internationally. They addressed WTC from several viewpoints, including proficiency (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Mirici, 2021), motivation (Grant, 2022; Lao, 2020; Öz & Bursalı, 2018; Zulkepli, 2020), affective factors (Dastgoshadeh & Javanmardi, 2021; Lee & Drajati, 2019; Taherkhani & Moradi, 2022; Weda, Atmowardoyo, Rahman, Said & Sakti, 2021), oral production (Ducker, 2022; Nematizadeh, 2021), the ideal L2 self (Bal, 2021; Bursalı & Öz, 2017; Sak, 2020), and teachers' influence (Heidari, 2019; Kamdideh & Barjesteh, 2019;

Peng, 2020; Zare, Shooshtari & Jalilifar, 2022). For the purpose of the present study, a brief review of the studies conducted in Turkey will be included in this section.

Altıner (2018) aimed to determine Turkish EFL learners' WTC levels and collected quantitative data through questionnaires. 711 (282 male, 429 female) preparatory school students at a state university participated. The analyses of the data showed that the learners had moderate WTC in a classroom setting. In terms of their proficiency level, significant differences were found: higher levels of proficiency meant higher levels of WTC. Finally, the gender of the participants was significant with female students being more willing to engage in communication than males.

A study in the Turkish context was conducted by Başöz and Erten (2018) which explored the perceived levels of WTC among students both in and out of the classroom, and whether there was a significant difference between these two variables. The participants of this study were 701 students (274 male, 284 female) enrolled in the Faculty of Tourism at Balıkesir University. The data for this quantitative research was collected by employing an adapted version of MacIntyre et al.'s (2001). The results indicated that the participants had a moderate level of WTC inside and outside the classroom. Paired samples t-test analysis also revealed that there was a significant difference between WTC inside the classroom and WTC outside the classroom, which implied that the participants were more willing to communicate outside the classroom.

In their research study, Demir and Okyar (2021) set out to find out whether foreign language enjoyment, self-efficacy, and academic achievement could predict how willing students are to communicate as well as the level of each of these variables as reported by the participants. The study was conducted with 257 (143 male, 114 female) preparatory school students studying at a state university in Turkey. Quantitative data was collected, and the analyses showed that students who participated in this study reported a moderate degree of WTC with a mean score of 52.95% willingness. Their WTC among their friends had the highest percentage followed by conversations in small groups, talking with acquaintances, and talking to a small group of friends. The lowest percentages reported by the participants involved

contexts in which they were required to talk to strangers with the lowest being giving a presentation to a group consisting of strangers.

The studies listed here suggest that Turkish EFL learners exhibit moderate levels of enthusiasm when it comes to communicative interaction. Below, studies including both WTC and personality traits will be described.

2.3.3.1 Studies on WTC and personality. When it comes to personality variables in SLA, the number of research to be found is lower. Studies that have been carried out in the last ten years have been included in this part.

In a qualitative study, Freiermuth and Ito (2020) aimed to explore what kind of role personality and past experiences possibly have on the WTC of Japanese speakers of English who learned it as a L2. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The participants were 8 Japanese speakers of English studying international communication at a public university for women. These participants were chosen among 69 female students according to their proficiency levels based on their TOEIC exam results and their levels of WTC which were determined by asking the students to complete a WTC questionnaire before the study. The results of these pre-study questionnaires enabled to group the students according to their high or low WTC and high or low L2 competence in four different groups. Two participants from each group were asked to participate as interviewees in the actual research. Some striking results were gathered from these interviews in terms of the personality variable. Two participants from the low WTC group expressed that they were not open to living abroad without their families, exhibited introverted characteristics, and lacked communicative self-confidence which possibly stemmed from emotional instability. Participants in the high WTC group, on the other hand, expressed less anxiety towards opportunities to speak in the L2 and displayed extroverted personalities. Another personality variable that had a possible effect on high WTC for one of the participants was agreeableness. Finally, conscientiousness was a determining personality trait for some of the participants to predict their high levels of WTC.

Khany and Nejad (2017) employed a quantitative research design in order to identify the relationship between extraversion, openness to experience, L2 willingness as well as unwillingness to communicate. The participants were chosen from university students in Iran studying English Language and Literature. 217 (110 male, 100, 7 unidentified) students were asked to fill in a questionnaire. The correlation tests showed a strong significant correlation among extraversion, openness to experience, and L2 WTC. SEM analyses also indicated significant paths from the personality traits to WTC which means the more extroverted and open students are the more they are willing to speak in the L2.

Lin (2019) set out to find out how personality variables, international posture, motivation, and communication confidence influence the WTC of Taiwanese university students. The data for this quantitative research was collected from 701 (381 male, 320 female) undergraduate students enrolled in various departments. The results revealed significant correlations between all variables except for neuroticism. This study also replicated and tested the pyramid model of WTC and direct significant paths were found from the bottom to the top of the pyramid as a result of SEM analysis.

Another study by Öz (2014) investigated the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and WTC of EFL students in Turkey. This quantitative study was conducted with 168 undergraduate students (58 male, 110 female) at a state university in Ankara. International Personality Item Pool and WTC Scale were employed to collect data. After data analysis, it was found that students with high WTC made up 20%, moderate WTC 66%, and low WTC 14% of the total number of participants. The results changed when the interlocutor was a stranger with 44% of the students reporting high, 49.5% moderate, and only 6.5% low WTC. When communicating with acquaintances 8% reported high, 77% moderate, and 15% low WTC. Finally, when interacting with friends, 8.5% of the participants reported high, 62.5% moderate, and 29% low WTC. As for the relationship between personality traits and WTC, it was found that WTC correlated significantly with three of the personality traits. There was a strong positive correlation with extraversion, a moderate positive correlation with openness to experience, and a slight positive

correlation with agreeableness. No correlation was found between WTC and conscientiousness and neuroticism. It was also revealed that the extraversion trait and communicating with strangers correlated significantly and accounted for 16% of the variance. Regression analysis indicated that extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness are predictors of WTC and account for 32.1% of the variance. Finally, there was no significant difference in WTC in terms of the gender and age of the participants.

The studies reviewed above show a connection between personality and WTC. As can be observed, each of the Big Five personality qualities was shown to be associated with the learners' WTC.

2.3.3.2 Studies on WTC and anxiety. This part will provide a summary of research that investigated relationships between EFL learners' foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate.

Khajavy, MacIntyre, and Barabadi (2018) aimed to see how classroom environment and emotions such as anxiety and enjoyment influence WTC by employing a doubly latent multilevel analysis with Level 1 analysing at the individual level, and Level 2 at the classroom level. To this end, they collected data from 1,528 (846 male, 682 female) secondary school students who studied English as a compulsory subject and passed. According to the self-reported proficiency levels, 22.4% were beginner, 48.8% were low-intermediate, 17.7% were intermediate, 4.1% were upper-intermediate, and 3.2% were advanced level. Data analyses indicated that students possessed a moderate level of WTC, anxiety, and slightly high levels of enjoyment. A correlation between WTC and all other variables was also found with anxiety and WTC having a moderate negative correlation. The doubly latent multilevel analysis revealed that there was a meaningful relationship between enjoyment and WTC at both Levels 1 and 2. Anxiety was present at Level 1 but not at Level 2 which means that the levels of anxiety experienced in the classroom did not have a significant impact on the WTC of individual students.

Lee and Hsieh (2019) conducted research with Taiwanese learners of EFL in order to identify the relationship between certain affective variables and WTC. The affective variables were related to the learners' self-confidence, how motivated they were, their anxiety levels as well as how gritty these learners were. The participants of the study were 261 undergraduate students (84 male, 177 female) from various disciplines. All participants were at the B1 level at the time of the study. Data was collected through a questionnaire, and the results revealed that there was a significant correlation between WTC (in-class, out-of-class, and digital contexts) and the affective variables (positive correlation with self-confidence, motivation, and grit and negative correlation with anxiety) included in the study.

Drawing on the research of Lee and Hsieh (2019), Mulyono and Saskia (2021) aimed to identify the affective variables that could have possible effects on the WTC of Indonesian students. To this end, data were collected from 436 students (113 male, 323 female) from three different cohorts of education (81 lower-secondary, 96 upper-secondary, and 259 university students). Lee and Hsieh's (2019) questionnaire was employed and the results showed a high level of anxiety along with other affective factors (such as motivation, self-confidence, and grit), and high levels of WTC inside the classroom, outside the classroom, and in digital contexts. A slight negative correlation between speaking anxiety and WTC was also found. Regression analyses showed that self-confidence, motivation, and speaking anxiety were significant predictors of WTC inside and outside the classroom, and in digital contexts.

To identify the level of WTC of Turkish EFL learners, Öz, Demirezen, and Pourfeiz (2015) conducted a descriptive quantitative study with 134 learners (34 male, 100 female). The participants were volunteers in an EFL teacher education program at a state university. Data was collected through eight different scales measuring learners' WTC, self-perceived communication competence, perceived communication apprehension, integrativeness, attitudes towards learning situations, motivation, instrumental orientation, and ideal L2 self. The results revealed that 21.6% of the participants reported high levels of WTC and 17% low levels of WTC with the remaining reporting a moderate level. Whether gender had a role in learners' WTC was analysed and no significant difference was found in terms of WTC. On the

other hand, in terms of communication apprehension, there was a significant difference between the genders, with female participants being more anxious in communicative situations than their male counterparts. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to explore the relationship between the communicative and the affective variables, and a positive direct path was revealed from self-perceived communication competence and a negative direct path from communication apprehension to WTC.

A recent study by Zhou et al. (2020) investigated how anxiety plays a role in the relationship between Chinese students' WTC and L2 competence including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The research was conducted in Belgium with 129 Chinese students (49 male, 80 female) studying at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The data was collected through an online survey which obtained information about the IELTS scores, FLA, and WTC of the participants. The analyses of the data revealed that Chinese students reported high levels of WTC (80%) and low levels of FLA (51%) when communicating in an out-of-class context. The reason for these encouraging findings, according to Zhou et al. (2020), is that the participants of this study, studying in a foreign country, require to use their L2 more frequently. WTC was found to have a significant correlation with L2 competence including the overall as well as listening, speaking, reading, and writing competencies. Finally, regression analyses were conducted to identify how anxiety affects the relationship between WTC and L2 competence. According to the findings, FLA has a negative effect on the correlation between WTC and L2 competence. In other words, Chinese students with high competence levels were less eager to initiate communication if they reported higher levels of anxiety.

To sum up, there are several studies conducted in recent years which investigate and prove how FLA and WTC are intertwined constructs. As the findings of the above research suggest, it is possible to conclude that there is a negative correlation between WTC and FLA, meaning that high levels of WTC suggest low levels of FLA, and vice versa. The final section of this chapter will review studies that contained all three variables mentioned so far.

2.3.3.3 Studies on WTC, anxiety, and personality. The figures seem to be relatively lower when it comes to research that has taken WTC, FLA, and personality factors into account. The next three studies looked into all three variables.

Başöz and Erten (2019) conducted qualitative research to identify the factors that impact students' WTC. For this study, 32 undergraduate students (15 male, 17 female) from a Turkish state university were selected, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative content analysis was employed, and the results showed that there are a number of factors involved in students' WTC. The emerging categories were L2 classroom environment, affective factors, topic, personal characteristics, linguistic factors, self-perceived communication competence, and past communication experience. Three of the findings which are significant to the present study are L2 anxiety (F = 8), shyness (F = 3), and introversion (F = 2). Anxiety seemed to affect some students' in-class desire to speak while others expressed no anxiety. As for the personality factors, it was understood that introversion and shyness prevented some participants from speaking inside and outside the classroom context. Some also mentioned that this reluctance was not L2-specific, but a general personality trait.

Fatima et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study in Pakistan to investigate how the two personality variables openness to experience and extraversion, self-confidence, and classroom environment affect the WTC of EFL undergraduate students. Participants consisted of 234 students (126 male, 108 female) studying at various EMI departments at a university in Pakistan. Data was collected through questionnaires measuring WTC, openness to experience, extraversion, perceived communicative competence, communication anxiety, and English classroom environment. The collected data were analysed using SPSS and the findings revealed that openness to experience and extraversion had a medium positive correlation with WTC whereas there was a medium negative correlation between L2 speaking anxiety and WTC. The regression analyses also showed that speaking anxiety was a significant predictor of WTC and accounted for 33% of the variance. It was determined that openness to experience and extraversion contributed to the WTC of

participants and accounted for 16% of the variance. These findings imply that anxiety is a more accurate indicator of WTC than personality.

A study by Piechurska-Kuciel (2018) aimed to identify the relationship between one of the Big Five personality traits, openness to experience, and the L2 WTC of secondary grammar school students in Poland. 534 students (222 male, 312 female) participated in the study with a mean age of 18.5, and they were all intermediate level. To collect data, Goldberg's (1992) IPIP scale, MacIntyre et al.'s (2001) WTC Scale inside and outside the classroom, and Horwitz et al.'s (1986) FLCA Scale were adopted. The results showed a medium negative correlation between WTC and FLCA. There was also a positive moderate correlation between WTC and openness to experience. Multiple regression analyses indicated that L2 anxiety and perceived competence were predictors of WTC and accounted for 18% of the variance together with final grades (which accounted for 6%). Finally, openness to experience was added to the analysis and together they explained 45% of the variance.

Unlike the articles reviewed so far, the studies described here have included personality traits, willingness to communicate, and foreign language anxiety. As it was observed, the interplay between these variables is not always easy to demonstrate. Although these studies have touched upon the relevant variables, correlations between each dimension (and their subdimensions) have not been thoroughly analysed and described. The present study, therefore, aims to provide a more in-depth investigation of how these variables are associated with each other.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to give an in-depth understanding of the main constructs of this study; namely, personality traits, foreign language anxiety, and willingness to communicate. As mentioned above, personality is the underlying reason for learners' attitudes towards the foreign language, their choice of strategies to employ, the emotions they have throughout the learning process, and if, how, when, and how often to interact with other people using the L2. Therefore, it is possible to say that

personality is the foundation of the present study whereupon the affective variables anxiety and willingness to communicate are built upon.

In brief, as the extensive review of the existing literature demonstrated, in the context of foreign language learning, studies which have comprehensively explored each of these variables, providing their associations with each other and with their subdimensions seem to be low in number. The present study aims to contribute to the existing literature in this respect.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate the possible correlations among the Big Five personality traits, anxiety in a foreign language classroom, and willingness to communicate among EFL students enrolled in a preparatory program at a foundation university in Turkey. This chapter will describe the methodology employed in the current study, as well as the setting, participants, data collection procedure and instruments, and the tools and procedures for data analysis.

To investigate the potential relationship between the aforementioned variables, the following research questions are posed:

1) What are the (a) perceived levels of foreign language classroom anxiety, (b) levels of willingness to communicate, and (c) the most common personality traits of EFL learners studying at a preparatory program of a foundation university in Turkey?
2) Is there any correlation among personality traits, foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate levels of EFL learners?
3) Is there any significant difference between foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate and the following demographic features:
    a. gender
    b. prior negative experiences
    c. proficiency level?

3.1 Research Design

To answer the aforementioned research questions, a quantitative research design was employed in the present study. Quantitative research is based on the positivist or postpositivist research paradigm (Mackey & Gass, 2016). This philosophical approach to research is based on the belief that it is possible to

understand reality in an objective way and that it is quantifiable (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015). Quantitative research makes use of numbers and statistical measures in order to provide answers to the research questions that have been posed and usually necessitates that the sample size is large (Phakiti, 2015). There are two concepts that are related to quantitative research design. The first one is experimental design where the aim is to determine the effect of a treatment on a certain variable. The second is associational or correlational research where the goal is to identify whether there is a relationship between two variables and the strength of this relationship (Mackey & Gass, 2016).

In light of this, in the present study, a nonexperimental correlational research design was employed so that it was possible to seek and identify possible correlations among the variables. This approach allowed to investigate the relationships between the variables without manipulating any conditions or intervening in the natural setting. By using this design, the aim was to explore the existing associations and understand the degree to which changes in one variable could potentially influence another. Additionally, the nonexperimental nature of the study allowed for data collection from a larger group, providing a broader perspective. The correlational research design not only facilitated the examination of potential connections but also permitted the assessment of the strength of these relationships. By exploring these correlations, valuable insights into the complex interplay between the variables was aimed which would add to the existing literature in the field.

3.2 Setting and Participants

3.2.1 Setting. The present study was conducted in a preparatory program of a foundation university in Turkey in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The preparatory program aims to equip its students with the necessary skills in English to be successful both in their undergraduate programs and in other social contexts. Another goal of the program is to graduate students who have "excellent communication skills" ("Mission Statement," n.d.) among others. With such a goal in mind, the program offers students intensive English instruction for one academic year. Students who are going to study in an English medium instruction (EMI)

department are required to take a placement test to assess their levels. The placement test consists of reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary components at A1, A2, and B1 levels. Those students who score at the B1 level have a chance to take the proficiency exam, a B2 level exam, to be exempt from the preparatory program. If the students fail this exam or choose not to take it, they are placed to a level according to their placement test results. To minimize confusion caused by the level classifications of specific books used in the program, the levels are designated as elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and upper-intermediate.

Most of the students are placed at the elementary level at the beginning of the semester. The academic year consists of two semesters with two eight-week modules each. Students who get the benchmark through a series of assessment criteria including speaking and writing projects, online workbook assignments, classroom participation, a quiz, and two exams can move to the next level. The ones who fail must repeat the same level for another module. The two exams that students must take include a speaking component, which means that students are encouraged to improve their speaking performance starting from the very beginning of the semester.

3.2.2 Participants. The data for this study were collected during the second module of the fall semester in the 2022-2023 academic year. A total of 480 students were enrolled in the program when the data were collected which created the population of the study. Non-probability convenience sampling method was employed to collect data. In this method, "an important criterion of sample selection is the convenience of the researcher: members of the target population are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, easy accessibility, or the willingness to volunteer" (Dörnyei, 2011, pp. 98-99). Of the 480 students, 72.91% (N = 350) agreed to participate in the study; however, because of missing information or answering carelessly two questionnaires were eliminated. The remaining 348 (136 male, 212 female) participants' age ranged between 17 and 39, the mean age being 19.45. Because the data were collected in the second module, the majority of the participants were students at the pre-intermediate level (n = 200), which is considered the mainstream level for the second module. Other levels included elementary (n = 26),

intermediate (*n* = 68), and upper-intermediate (*n* = 54). The participants at the elementary level consisted of students who failed to pass this level in the first module, and, are therefore, called repeaters. The majority of the students spoke Turkish as their first language (*n* = 307), 32 of them reported Arabic to be their L1, and seven had a different mother tongue including Russian, Uyghur, and Kurdish. Two participants reported being bilingual, one having Turkish and Arabic and the other having Turkish and Russian as their mother tongues. The participants in this study were asked about their prior experiences regarding English language learning and using English abroad. 43 participants reported that they have had to use their English during time spent abroad. As for their prior English learning experiences, the participants were asked if they had any negative experiences while learning English, and 120 (34.5%) replied yes. The details of their experiences were not asked and are not included here as it would be out of the scope of the present study. The table below shows the participant demographics.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Participants

		n	%
Gender	male	136	39.1
	female	212	60.9
English Level	Elementary	26	7.5
	Pre-Intermediate	200	57.5
	Intermediate	68	19.5
	Upper-Intermediate	54	15.5
Experience travelling abroad and using English	yes	43	12.4
	no	305	87.6
Prior negative experience learning English	yes	120	34.5
	no	228	65.5
Total		348	100

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Data collection instruments. The data in the present study were collected by employing three different surveys. Before the surveys, students were asked to complete a short form including demographic information such as their age, gender, department, and previous experiences. After the demographic information part, students completed the WTC Scale, FLCA Scale, and the Quick Big Five Personality Scale. The following part will elaborate on the instruments that were employed in this study.

3.3.1.1 Willingness to communicate scale. For the purposes of this study, the WTC Scale by McCroskey (1992) was employed (see Appendix A). The scale consists of twelve items that measure how willing the participant is to communicate by indicating a percentage ranging from 0% (not willing at all) to 100% (always willing). The items present different contexts to communicate (within a small group of people, within a large group of people, and when giving a presentation) and different interlocutors (friends, acquaintances, and strangers). Some sample items are "*Talk in a small group of acquaintances in English"*, *"Present a talk to a group of friends in English"*, and *"Talk in a large meeting of strangers"*. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was .94.

To avoid confusion and to be able to collect data from a wider audience, the Turkish translation of the scale by Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2005) was adopted. The items from the original scale had been translated into Turkish, and the back-translation method had been used to ensure that the meaning of each item was not altered. In the pilot study conducted with 28 participants, the reliability score of the scale had been found to be .88.

3.3.1.2 Foreign language classroom anxiety scale. To measure students' anxiety levels, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale created by Horwitz et al. (1986) was employed. It is a well-established scale that has been used frequently to measure anxiety in SLA studies (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) (see Appendix B). This five-point Likert scale consists of 33 items. Participants are required to choose

an appropriate number for each item ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal reliability of the scale was achieved with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient being .93. The items on this scale portray communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in the foreign language classroom. Some sample items from the scale are "*I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in the language class*", "*In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know*", and "*I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make*".

The Turkish translated version of the FLCA Scale was employed in the present study. In her M.A. thesis, Gürsu (2011) asked nine instructors to translate the English scale into Turkish. The Turkish translation was asked to be translated back into English by a different instructor, and necessary corrections were made to the Turkish version. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .82 showed the internal reliability of the Turkish scale.

3.3.1.3 Quick big five personality test. The Quick Big Five Personality test was developed by Vermulst and Gerris (2005) to create a shorter and more easily applicable instrument to measure personality (Morsünbül, 2014) (see Appendix C). The instrument is a five-point Likert scale which consists of a list of 30 adjectives such as cooperative, talkative, organised, anxious, and innovative with six adjectives describing each personality trait. Participants are required to decide how appropriate the adjective is to their personality by choosing a number ranging from 1 (completely untrue) to 5 (completely true). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each personality trait was as follows: extraversion .81, agreeableness .80, conscientiousness .86, emotional stability .78, and openness to experience .73.

Morsünbül (2014) created the Turkish version of the scale. The internal consistency was measured for the Turkish version and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each personality trait was as follows: extraversion .81, agreeableness .73, conscientiousness .81, emotional stability .72, and openness to experience .71. The Turkish version was employed in the present study so that participants could have not difficulties understanding the items.

3.3.2 Data collection procedures. To start the data collection procedure, first a written permission was obtained from the Director of the Foreign Languages Department (see Appendix D). Then, a written application was made to the Scientific Research and Ethics Committee of the university where the study was conducted. The application was approved and found to be ethical (see Appendix E). To use the Turkish translation of the scales, each researcher was contacted and asked for permission to use their scales in this study. Permission was granted by all three researchers (see Appendix F). The data were collected through non-probability convenience sampling method. To this end, the first step was to create an online survey using Google forms. Then, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the reliability of the scales. Next, instructors were kindly asked to share the link to the questionnaire with their students. Students were required to check a box at the beginning of the questionnaire indicating that they consented to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. Completing the questionnaire took 10-15 minutes, and while some students did the survey during class hours, others completed it at home.

3.3.3 Data analysis procedures. As this study is a purely quantitative one, quantitative data analysis tools and measures were employed. To analyse the data, IBM SPSS (Version 25) was used. The table below displays the statistical tests that were utilized during the data analysis stage.

Table 3

Methods Used in the Analysis of the Data

Research Question	Data Analysis Method
1. What are the (a) perceived levels of foreign language classroom anxiety, (b) levels of willingness to communicate, and (c) the most common personality traits of EFL learners studying at a preparatory program of a foundation university in Turkey?	Descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores)

Table 3 (cont.d)

Research Question	Data Analysis Method
2. Is there any correlation among personality traits, foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate levels of EFL learners?	Pearson Correlation Test
3. Is there any significant difference between foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate and the following demographic features: a. gender b. prior negative experiences c. proficiency level?	Independent Samples t Test & One-Way ANOVA

The first step was to do the pilot study, the details of which are below. After that, the actual data for the study was prepared for analysis. The first step taken was to analyse the descriptive statistics. Information about the demographics of the participants as well as the mean scores and standard deviation for each item of the scales was examined in this step.

The next step was to recode certain items of the scales that had been reversely formulated. Below is a list of the items that required to be recoded:

- FLCA Item 2: I don't worry about making mistakes in my English class.
- FLCA Item 5: It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.
- FLCA Item 8: I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.
- FLCA Item 11: I don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes.
- FLCA Item 14: I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.

- FLCA Item 18: I feel confident when I speak in my English class.
- FLCA Item 22: I don't feel pressure to prepare well for English class.
- FLCA Item 28: When I'm on my way to my English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
- FLCA Item 32: I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.
- QBFPT Item 3: sloppy
- QBFPT Item 4: reserved
- QBFPT Item 9: quiet
- QBFPT Item 13: introverted
- QBFPT Item 21: bashful
- QBFPT Item 26: withdrawn

At this stage, the data set was ready for the inferential statistics. Inferential statistics helps to test "whether the results that we observed in our sample (for example, differences or correlations) are powerful enough to generalize to the whole population" (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 209). There are two types of inferential statistics: parametric tests and non-parametric tests, the distinction of which is made through statistical assumptions (Phakiti, 2015). According to Field (2013), to be able to employ parametric tests on SPSS, the assumption of a normal distribution needs to be made. Whether a data set has a normal distribution depends on the distance between data points and their mean (Phakiti, 2015), so "if we plot the data we get a symmetrical, bell-shaped curve, which has the greatest frequency of scores in the middle, with smaller frequencies towards the extremes" (Dörnyei, 2015, p. 208). In other words, a normal distribution means that some of the values are low, others are high, and the majority of the values are centered around the mean. To run the normality test on SPSS, first mean scores for the WTC scale, FLCA scale, and each personality trait were calculated. Next, normal distribution was tested, the results of which can be seen below.

Table 4
Normality Test

Scale	**Kolmogorov-Smirnov Sig.**	**Shapiro-Wilk Sig.**
WTC Scale	.028	.000
FLCA Scale	.019	.004
Openness to experience	.002	.000
Conscientiousness	.000	.001
Extroversion	.000	.001
Agreeableness	.000	.000
Neuroticism	.001	.023

The fact that the p values are below .05 suggests that there is no normal distribution. However, it is also necessary to check the skewness and kurtosis values. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2013), a skewness value ranging from -1 to +1, and according to George and Mallery (2010), to have a kurtosis value ranging from -1 to +1 means that the data is distributed normally. The table below shows the skewness and kurtosis values for each scale.

Table 5
Skewness and Kurtosis Values

Scale	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
WTC Scale	-.133	.131	.930	.261
FLCA Scale	.378	.131	-.033	.261
Openness to experience	-.272	.131	-.626	.261
Conscientiousness	-.207	.131	-.525	.261
Extroversion	-.086	.131	-.679	.261
Agreeableness	-.542	.131	-.153	.261
Neuroticism	-.113	.131	-.371	.261

As shown in Table 5, the skewness and kurtosis values for each scale is in the accepted range. This concludes that the dataset has normal distribution, and parametric analyses can be employed for further analysis.

Having completed the normality test, the next step was to run the parametric tests for the inferential statistics. For this purpose, to answer research question two which concerns the possible relationship among WTC, FLCA and personality traits, the Pearson Correlation test was run. The reason why this test was used is that it is a parametric test which allows researchers to examine whether there is a relationship between two variables, and to identify the direction and the strength of this relationship (Dörnyei, 2015).

Finally, the third research question, which investigated possible differences in WTC and FLCA levels depending on certain demographic factors, was answered employing independent samples t test and One-Way ANOVA. According to Mackey and Gass (2016), when comparing two groups such as males and females or a group with negative experiences and one without any, independent samples t test is the parametric test that is employed. This test is used when there is a need to compare the means of two independent groups while controlling for moderating variables. It provides a statistical analysis that allows to assess the significance of any observed differences and draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship between variables. One-Way ANOVA, on the other hand, is used when there are more than two groups to be compared (Dörnyei, 2015). In the present study, these groups were the proficiency levels of the students where there were four groups ranging from elementary to upper-intermediate level. However, this test alone is not adequate to indicate the source of the difference because it only reveals whether there is a significant difference between any two groups. Therefore, a post-hoc test needs to be run to obtain a clearer understanding of the groups where differences are observed. There are a range of post-hoc tests to choose from, each serving a different purpose. In the present study the Scheffe post-hoc test was utilized because the number of observations in each group is not the same (Güriş & Astar, 2015).

In brief, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data in this quantitative research. After reporting the descriptive statistics which include mean scores and percentages, and ensuring the normality assumption, inferential statistics were calculated by utilizing the Pearson Correlation test, independent samples t test and One-Way ANOVA.

3.3.4 Reliability and validity. Reliability of an instrument is related to the internal consistency of it (Mackey & Gass, 2016). To test the reliability of the scale, a pilot study was conducted with two classes. 36 students participated in the pilot study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was measured for each scale and the results are presented in the table below.

Table 6

Reliability Analyses

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
WTC Scale	.90	12
FLCA Scale	.92	33
Quick Big Five Personality Scale	.81	30

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient can range from 0 to 1. The closer this number is to 1, the more reliable the instrument is. According to Dörnyei (2011), a score of .90 or higher is desirable, but one that is.70 or higher is also acceptable. The instruments used in the present study are therefore considered to be reliable.

Apart from making sure that that the instruments used are reliable, it must be ensured that the results of the study are valid which means that they "reflect what we believe they reflect and that they are meaningful in the sense that they have significance not only to the population that was tested, but … to a broader, relevant population" (Mackey & Gass, 2016, p. 158). The instruments to be used in this study were chosen carefully so that the validity of the results would be ensured. For an instrument to be valid, it should be one "that accurately measures what it is supposed to measure" (Vogt, 1999, p. 301). To guarantee the content validity of the current study, expert-developed scales were utilized. In addition, moderating variables such as gender, proficiency level, the effect of the mother tongue of the learner, experiences travelling abroad and using the language, and finally, prior negative

learning experiences have been controlled for so that the study has internal validity. In terms of external validity, which is related to the generalisability of the findings, due to the sample size, it is possible to claim that the results are representative of the students studying at the university where data were collected. However, to generalise the results to all EFL learners at preparatory programs would not be correct as each preparatory program has a different system, instructors as well as different student profiles. This is one of the limitations of the present study which will be elaborated on in the next section.

3.4 Limitations

Several limitations must be considered when evaluating the results of this research study. First, it is a cross-sectional study, which means that data were collected from a single group of individuals over a brief period of time (Phakiti & Paltridge, 2015). The participants of the study are EFL learners studying at a preparatory program in a foundation university in Turkey in the 2022-2023 academic year. Replicating the study with different cohorts or age groups may yield varying results. Consequently, it is important to note that the results of this cross-sectional study cannot be generalized to a larger population. Another limitation concerns the instruments employed for data collection. Data collection in this study relied on self-report questionnaires to measure the variables. In such cases, it is not possible to be sure that participants have been completely honest with their answers. Finally, as a quantitative research design was adopted, qualitative data collection methods such as interviews or observations have not been employed in this study. These kinds of methods might prove useful in acquiring a more profound comprehension of the factors that are at the root of students' nervousness or readiness to speak in the L2.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study which aimed to explore possible correlation between personality traits, willingness to communicate, and foreign language anxiety. To address the proposed research questions, descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated. The first section of this chapter will present the descriptive statistics results that address the first research question, while the second section will offer the inferential statistics results that address the second and third research questions.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The first research question inquired about the perceived levels of foreign language classroom anxiety, the levels of willingness to communicate, and the most common personality traits of EFL learners studying at a preparatory program of a foundation university in Turkey. To answer this question, it is necessary to analyse descriptive statistics. As Dörnyei (2011) explained "descriptive statistics help us summarize findings by describing general tendencies in the data … [and these] statistics are indispensable when we share our results" (p. 213). The minimum and maximum values, mean scores, and standard deviation for each scale will be presented below.

4.1.1 Descriptive statistics of the foreign language classroom anxiety scale. The table below shows the mean scores, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum scores chosen by the participants. The lowest value for this scale was 1 "strongly disagree" and the highest was 5 "strongly agree". Except for the reversely-formulated items, a higher mean score means that the participants agree with those statements more.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for FLCA

Item		Min.	Max.	M	SD
	FLCA Total	1.18	4.76	2.87	0.66
1.	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.	1	5	3.22	1.13
2.	I don't worry about making mistakes in English class. (R)	1	5	3.32	1.17
3.	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	1	5	2.69	1.18
4.	It frightens me when I don't know understand what the teacher is saying in the English class.	1	5	2.82	1.26
5.	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes. (R)	1	5	3.48	1.24
6.	During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	1	5	3.19	1.11
7.	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	1	5	3.20	1.21
8.	I am usually at ease during tests in my English class. (R)	1	5	3.10	1.20
9.	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	1	5	3.32	1.16
10.	I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.	1	5	3.94	1.24
11.	I don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes. (R)	1	5	3.11	1.06
12.	In English class, I get so nervous I forget things I know.	1	5	2.60	1.17
13.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	1	5	2.58	1.20
14.	I would not be nervous speaking in English with native speakers. (R)	1	5	3.15	1.09
15.	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	1	5	3.23	1.17
16.	Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	1	5	2.66	1.16
17.	I often feel like not going to my language class.	1	5	2.70	1.17
18.	I feel confident when I speak in English class. (R)	1	5	3.31	1.00
19.	I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	1	5	2.52	1.07

Table 7 (cont.d)

Item		Min.	Max.	M	SD
20.	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class.	1	5	2.54	1.16
21.	The more I study for English class, the more confused I get.				
22.	I don't feel pressure to prepare well for English class. (R)	1	5	3.17	1.26
23.	I always feel that the other students speak in English better than I do.	1	5	2.90	1.26
24.	I feel very self-conscious about speaking in English in front of other students.	1	5	2.72	1.20
25.	English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	1	5	3.06	1.25
26.	I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	1	5	2.72	1.19
27.	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	1	5	2.85	1.11
28.	When I'm on my way to my English class, I feel very sure and relaxed. (R)	1	5	3.34	1.00
29.	I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	1	5	2.98	1.12
30.	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.	1	5	3.45	1.11
31.	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in English.	1	5	2.55	1.25
32.	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English. (R)	1	5	3.11	1.11
33.	I get nervous when my English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	1	5	3.02	1.16

As it is displayed in Table 7, for the total FLCA score, the highest value was 4.86, and the lowest was 1.18. The mean score for all the participants of this study was 2.87. As for the individual items of the scale, the highest mean scores were found for Item 10 ($\mu = 3.94$), Item 5 ($\mu = 3.48$), and Item 30 ($\mu = 3.45$). These items were "I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.", "It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.", and "I feel overwhelmed by the number of

rules you have to learn to speak English." respectively. The lowest mean scores were for Item 20 ($\mu = 2.49$), Item 19 ($\mu = 2.52$), and Item 21 ($\mu = 2.54$). These items were "I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class.", "I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.", and "The more I study for English class, the more confused I get." respectively.

4.1.2 Descriptive statistics of the willingness to communicate scale. The WTC scale consisted of 12 items where participants were asked how willing they would be to communicate in certain situations. They were informed that the choice to speak is up to them and they were asked to enter a percentage ranging from 0% (not at all willing) to 100% (completely willing). The table below displays the minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation for the total WTC scale and the individual items.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for WTC

Item		Min.	Max.	M	SD
	WTC Total	0	100	60.61	21.44
1.	Talk in a small group of acquaintances in English	0	100	63.33	26.51
2.	Present a talk to a group of strangers in English	0	100	50.2	27.83
3.	Present a talk to a group of friends in English	0	100	70.62	27.21
4.	Talk in a large meeting of strangers in English	0	100	44.78	28.91
5.	Talk in a small group of strangers in English	0	100	50.43	28.89
6.	Talk in a large meeting of friends in English	0	100	60.24	28.20
7.	Talk with friends in English	0	100	72.31	28.56
8.	Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances in English	0	100	59.11	27.47
9.	Talk with acquaintances in English	0	100	66.79	28.74
10.	Present a talk to a group of acquaintances in English	0	100	65.7	28.37
11.	Talk with strangers in English	0	100	56.5	29.18
12.	Talk in a small group of friends in English	0	100	67.38	27.60

As indicated in Table 8, the mean score for the WTC levels of the participants was 60.61. The minimum score for the whole scale was 0 which means that there is at least one participant who is not motivated to engage in conversation at all, whereas the maximum score was 100 which suggests the opposite. As for the individual items, the highest mean score was for Item 7 ($\mu = 72.31$) which is about talking with friends in English. This was followed by Item 3 ($\mu = 70.62$) which is about presenting a talk to a group of friends. The lowest mean score was for Item 4 ($\mu = 44.78$) which asks about talking in a large meeting of strangers, followed by Item 2 ($\mu = 50.2$), presenting a talk to a group of strangers in English.

4.1.3 Descriptive statistics of the quick big five personality scale. The QBFP scale consists of 30 adjectives in total, 6 adjectives representing each personality trait. Participants were asked to decide how true these adjectives are for their personalities on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being completely untrue and 5 completely true. Below are the descriptive statistics for each personality trait and the list of adjectives.

Table 9
Descriptive Statistics for QBFP

Item	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Openness to experience	2.5	5	3.97	.56
1. imaginative	1	5	4.32	.79
6. inquisitive	1	5	4.17	.91
14. sophisticated	1	5	3.83	.83
19. innovative	1	5	3.97	.85
23. artistic	1	5	3.47	1.23
30. creative	1	5	4.06	.9
Conscientiousness	1.5	5	3.5	.78
3. sloppy R	1	5	2.97	1.36
8. careful	1	5	3.71	.98
12. neat	1	5	3.65	1.1
17. prompt	1	5	3.49	1.19
25. organized	1	5	3.62	1.11
27. systematic	1	5	3.52	1.06

Table 9 (cont.d)

Item	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Extroversion	1	5	3.07	.91
4. reserved R	1	5	3.25	1.12
9. quiet R	1	5	3	1.29
13. introverted R	1	5	2.95	1.29
18. talkative	1	5	3.72	1.11
21. bashful R	1	5	3.07	1.25
26. withdrawn R	1	5	3.01	1.26
Agreeableness	2.33	5	4.19	.56
5. pleasant	1	5	4.21	.83
10. helpful	1	5	4.42	.74
15. kind	1	5	4.33	.75
20. cooperative	1	5	3.6	1.26
22. agreeable	1	5	4.23	.84
28. sympathetic	1	5	4.34	.75
Neuroticism	1	4.83	3.14	.74
2. irritable	1	5	3.07	1.2
7. high-strung	1	5	3.39	1.11
11. touchy	1	5	2.96	1.23
16. anxious	1	5	3.66	1.09
24. fearful	1	5	2.34	1.19
29. nervous	1	5	3.43	1.15

As it can be seen in Table 9, the big five personality traits reported by the participants from the most common to the least common were agreeableness (μ = 4.19), openness to experience (μ = 3.97), conscientiousness (μ = 3.5), neuroticism (μ = 3.14), and extroversion (μ = 3.07) respectively. The highest mean scores were found for the adjectives helpful (μ = 4.42), sympathetic (μ = 4.34), and kind (μ = 4.33) whereas the lowest mean scores were for the adjectives fearful (μ = 2.34), introverted (μ = 2.95), and touchy (μ = 2.96).

4.2 Inferential Statistics

To answer the second and third research questions, a look into inferential statistics is necessary. The second research question concerned whether there was a correlation among the WTC, FLCA levels, and the personality traits of the learners.

To answer this question, the Pearson Correlation Test was run, and the findings were reported in the first part of this section. The third research question inquired about the possibility of certain variables such as gender, English level, mother tongue, and previous experiences having an impact on the WTC, FLCA, and personalities of the participants. Independent samples t-test and One-Way ANOVA tests were run to answer this question, the results of which are presented in the second part of this section.

4.2.1 Correlation test results. The second research question of the present study inquired about the possible relationship among the willingness to communicate levels, the anxiety levels, and different personalities of the participants. The tables below show the findings of the Pearson Correlation analyses.

Table 10

Pearson Correlation Test for QBFP

		1	2	3	4	5
1. Extroversion	Pearson Correlation	1	-.04	.22**	-.45**	.24**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.43	0	0	0
	N	348	348	348	348	348
2. Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	-.04	1	.31**	-.06	.11*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.43		0	.29	.04
	N	348	348	348	348	348
3. Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	.22**	.31**	1	-.04	.38**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0		.45	0
	N	348	348	348	348	348
4. Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	-.45**	-.06	-.04	1	-.11*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	.29	.45		.05
	N	348	348	348	348	348
5. Openness	Pearson Correlation	.24**	.11*	.38**	-.11*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	.04	0	.05	
	N	348	348	348	348	348

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 displays the correlation results among the big five personality traits. According to the findings, extroversion had a significant relationship with agreeableness (r = .22, p = 0), neuroticism (r = -.45, p = 0), and openness to experience (r = .24, p = 0). Conscientiousness correlated significantly with agreeableness (r = .31, p = 0), and openness to experience (r = .11, p = .04). Agreeableness had a significant relationship with openness to experience (r = .38, p = 00). Finally, neuroticism had a significant correlation with openness to experience (r = 11, p = .05).

Table 11

Pearson Correlation Test for QBFP and FLCA

		Extr.	Cons.	Agr.	Neur.	Open.
FLCA	Pearson Correlation	-.26**	0	0	.37**	-.19**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	.94	.98	0	0
	N	348	348	348	348	348

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

As it is evident in Table 11, a significant correlation was found between FLCA and extroversion (r = -.26, p = 0), neuroticism (r = .37, p = 0), and openness to experience (r = -.19, p = 0).

Table 12

Pearson Correlation Test for QBFP and WTC

		Extr.	Cons.	Agr.	Neur.	Open.
WTC	Pearson Correlation	.16**	.14**	.16**	-0.1	.20**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	.01	0	.06	0
	N	348	348	348	348	348

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 12 illustrates the correlation results between WTC and personality traits. It is indicated that WTC correlates significantly with extroversion (r = .16, p = 0), conscientiousness (r = .14, p = .01), agreeableness (r = .16, p = 0), and openness to experience (r = .20, p = 0).

Table 13

Pearson Correlation Test for WTC and FLCA

		FLCA	WTC
FLCA	Pearson Correlation	1	-,43**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	348	348
WTC	Pearson Correlation	-.43**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	348	348

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

The final analysis concerns the relationship between FLCA and WTC. As it is displayed in Table 13, a significant negative correlation was found between anxiety and willingness to communicate (r = -.43, p = 0).

4.2.2 Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA test results. To answer the third research question which concerns the change in results according to certain demographic variables such as gender, proficiency level, prior experiences, and mother tongue, mean comparison tests on SPSS were run. To assess whether anxiety levels, personality types, and willingness to communicate differ according to the gender of the students, and their prior experiences, independent samples t test was employed. For the variables with more than two groups, such as proficiency level and mother tongue, One-Way ANOVA test was used. Below are the results of these analyses.

Table 14

Independent Samples t-test Results: Gender

Scale	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
WTC	Male	136	59	22.83	1.04	265.28	.28
	Female	212	61.5	20.50			
FLCA	Male	136	2.69	.58	4.55	322.76	.00
	Female	212	2.30	.69			
Extroversion	Male	136	3.09	.92	-.32	346	.75
	Female	212	3.05	.90			
Conscientiousness	Male	136	3.41	.74	1.88	346	.06
	Female	212	3.57	.78			
Agreeableness	Male	136	4.09	.60	2.52	346	.01
	Female	212	4.25	.53			
Neuroticism	Male	136	2.95	.73	4.02	346	.00
	Female	212	3.27	.72			
Openness	Male	136	3.93	.55	1.03	346	.31
	Female	212	3.99	.57			

As illustrated in Table 14, 136 male and 212 female students participated in the study. The mean scores for male and female students for each scale vary. In the WTC scale, where each item was scored between 0 and 100, the mean score for male students was 59, and for females, it was 61.5. The comparison between these two groups shows that there was no statistically significant difference in terms of their WTC ($p = .28$). As for FLCA, a 5-point Likert scale, the mean score for male students was 2.69 while for female students it was 2.30. There was a statistically significant difference between these two groups ($p = .00$). Among the big five personality traits, male and female mean scores for extroversion were 3.09 and 3.05, respectively with no statistical difference ($p = .75$); for conscientiousness, the mean scores were 3.41 and 3.57 with no statistical difference ($p = .06$); for openness to experience the scores were 3.93 and 3.99 with no statistical difference ($p = .31$). As for agreeableness, it is

seen that the mean score for male participants was 4.09 while it was 4.25 for female participants. These two groups were statistically different in terms of the agreeableness scores (p = .01). Similarly, for neuroticism, was also a difference between male and female students (p = .00) with a mean score of 2.95 for males and 3.27 for females.

Table 15

Independent Samples t-test Results: Having a negative experience learning English

Scale	Answer	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
WTC	Yes	120	55.56	22.10	-3.23	346	.001
	No	228	63.27	20.63			
FLCA	Yes	120	3.10	.63	4.70	346	.000
	No	228	2.76	.86			
Extrov.	Yes	120	3.03	.94	-.54	346	.59
	No	228	3.10	.70			
Consc.	Yes	120	3.46	.82	-.84	274.81	.40
	No	228	3.53	.52			
Agree.	Yes	120	4.19	.52	-.05	269.09	.96
	No	228	4.19	.58			
Neuro.	Yes	120	3.29	.71	2.58	346	.010
	No	228	3.07	.75			
Open.	Yes	120	3.94	.58	-.79	346	.43
	No	228	3.99	.55			

Participants were asked whether they had any negative experiences while learning English. Out of the 348 participants, 120 answered yes, and 228 answered no. Table 15 shows the mean scores of these two groups for each scale and the t test results. The obtained results reported that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores for these two groups in terms of their WTC, FLCA levels and the neuroticism trait. Those students who reported having a negative

learning experience had a mean score of 55.56 for WTC while the other group had a mean score of 63.27 and the p score was significant at .001. As for FLCA, the mean scores were 3.10 for those who said yes and 2.76 for those who said no and this difference was found to be statistically significant (p = .000). Another significant difference (p = .010) was found for neuroticism with a 3.29 mean score for the yes group and 3.07 for the no group. Although the mean scores for extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience also differed between these groups, these differences were not statistically significant with p scores above .05 for each.

Table 16

Descriptive statistics for WTC based on proficiency levels

Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*std. error*	*min score*	*max score*
Elementary	26	42.73	26.05	5.11	9.17	88.75
Pre-Intermediate	200	61.21	19.46	1.38	0	100
Intermediate	68	62.30	21.67	2.63	1.42	97.5
Upper-Intermediate	54	64.89	22.21	3.02	2.50	100
Total	348	60.61	21.44	1.15	0	100

Table 16 displays the descriptive statistics of the participants for the WTC scale based on their proficiency levels. The lowest mean score was observed at elementary level (μ = 42.73) followed by pre-intermediate level (μ = 61.21), intermediate level (μ = 62.30), and the highest mean score was found at upper-intermediate level (μ = 64.89).

Table 17

One-Way ANOVA Test Result for WTC

WTC	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9566.19	3	3188.73	7.32	0
Within Groups	149900.61	344	435.76		
Total	159466.80	347			

The One-Way ANOVA test results in Table 17 suggest that there was a statistically significant difference between at least one pair of the groups that have been compared. To understand which groups exhibited a difference, the Scheffe post-hoc test was run. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 18

Scheffe post-hoc test result for WTC

(I) English Level	(J) English Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Elementary	Pre-Intermediate	-18.48*	4.35	.001
	Intermediate	-19.57*	4.81	.001
	Upper-Intermediate	-22.16*	4.98	0
Pre-Intermediate	Elementary	18.48*	4.35	.001
	Intermediate	-1.09	2.93	.987
	Upper-Intermediate	-3.68	3.20	.724
Intermediate	Elementary	19.57*	4.81	.001
	Pre-Intermediate	1.09	2.93	.987
	Upper-Intermediate	-2.59	3.80	.927
Upper-Intermediate	Elementary	22.16*	4.98	0
	Pre-Intermediate	3.68	3.20	.724
	Intermediate	2.59	3.80	.927

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 18 illustrates that the WTC of students at elementary level differed significantly from the participants at the pre-intermediate (p = .001), intermediate (p = .001), and upper-intermediate (p = 0) levels.

Table 19

Descriptive statistics for FLCA based on proficiency levels

Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*std. error*	*min score*	*max score*
Elementary	26	3.07	.79	.15	1.76	4.27
Pre-Intermediate	200	2.94	.65	.05	1.58	4.76
Intermediate	68	2.78	.63	.08	1.18	4.52
Upper-Intermediate	54	2.64	.64	.09	1.21	4.18
Total	348	2.87	.66	.04	1.18	4.76

Table 19 indicates the mean scores for the FLCA scale for each proficiency level. The obtained results reported that the highest anxiety levels were at elementary level (μ = 3.07), which was followed by pre-intermediate level (μ = 2.94), intermediate level (μ = 2.78), and upper-intermediate level (μ = 2.64).

Table 20

One-Way ANOVA Test Result for FLCA

WTC	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.43	3	1.81	4.21	.006
Within Groups	147.66	344	.43		
Total	153.08	347			

Table 20 reports the result of the One-Way ANOVA test which provided a significant difference between at least two groups (p = .006). Scheffe post-hoc test

was run to elaborate on the differences between the groups the results of which are below.

Table 21

Scheffe post-hoc test result for FLCA

(I) English Level	(J) English Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Elementary	Pre-Intermediate	.13	.14	.823
	Intermediate	.29	.15	.307
	Upper-Intermediate	.43	.16	.057
Pre-Intermediate	Elementary	-.13	.14	.823
	Intermediate	.16	.09	.404
	Upper-Intermediate	.30*	.10	.031
Intermediate	Elementary	-.29	.15	.307
	Pre-Intermediate	-.16	.09	.404
	Upper-Intermediate	.14	.12	.694
Upper-Intermediate	Elementary	-.43	.16	.057
	Pre-Intermediate	-.30*	.10	.031
	Intermediate	-.14	.12	.694

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Scheffe post-hoc test results in Table 21 indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate levels in terms of anxiety levels (p = .031). No significant difference was found for the other levels.

Table 22

One-Way ANOVA Test Result for QBFP

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Extroversion	Between Groups	6.18	3	2.06	2.52	.058
	Within Groups	280.96	344	.82		
	Total	287.14	347			
Conscientiousness	Between Groups	2.66	3	.89	1.47	.223
	Within Groups	207.64	344	.60		
	Total	210.30	347			
Agreeableness	Between Groups	1.22	3	.41	1.31	.272
	Within Groups	107.48	344	.31		
	Total	108.70	347			
Neuroticism	Between Groups	1.76	3	.59	1.06	.365
	Within Groups	189.64	344	.55		
	Total	191.40	347			
Openness	Between Groups	2.53	3	.84	2.70	.046
	Within Groups	107.44	344	.31		
	Total	109.97	347			

Table 22 displays the One-Way ANOVA results for each personality trait, and no statistically significant differences were observed between students' proficiency levels for extroversion ($p = .058$), conscientiousness ($p = .223$), agreeableness ($p = .272$), and neuroticism ($p = .365$). As for the openness to experience trait, although the significance was at .046, the post-hoc test results did not show any significant difference between the groups.

4.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study attempted to evaluate the WTC, FLCA levels, and personality types of EFL students enrolled in a foundation university's preparation program, as well as the relationships between these variables and if certain demographic variables were significant. The findings revealed that the participants of this study had moderate WTC and FLCA levels, and the most dominant personality trait was agreeableness whereas the least dominant trait was extroversion. A positive weak correlation was found between WTC and extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience. A moderate positive correlation was found between FLCA and neuroticism, and there was a weak negative correlation between FLCA and extroversion as well as FLCA and openness to experience. A moderate negative correlation was also found between FLCA and WTC. As for the demographic variables, it was found that the gender of the students made a meaningful difference in students' FLCA, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. While the mother tongue of the participants did not make a significant difference in their WTC, FLCA, and extroversion scores, they differed in conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Having been abroad did not have a meaningful impact on any of the variables while negative experiences learning English affected students' WTC, FLCA, and their neuroticism scores. Finally, the proficiency levels of the participants made a difference in their WTC with elementary level students being significantly different from the other levels, and their FLCA with pre-intermediate students differing from the upper-intermediate level.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

The present study aimed to assess and determine the relationships between the willingness to communicate levels, anxiety levels, and personality types of EFL learners studying at a preparatory program in a foundation university located in Istanbul, Turkey. After presenting the study's findings in the previous chapter, this section will provide a discussion of those findings in relation to the research questions.

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

This study addressed the following three research questions:

1) What are the (a) perceived levels of foreign language classroom anxiety, (b) levels of willingness to communicate, and (c) most common personality traits of EFL learners studying at a preparatory program of a foundation university in Turkey?
2) Is there any correlation among personality traits, foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate levels of EFL learners?
3) Is there any significant difference between foreign language classroom anxiety levels, and willingness to communicate and the following demographic features:
    a. gender
    b. prior negative experiences
    c. proficiency level?

The findings for each research question will be discussed in detail in the following parts.

5.1.1 Discussion of findings for research question 1. The first research question inquired about the perceived levels of FLCA, WTC, and the dominant

personality types of the participants. Descriptive statistics of the scales showed that the participants reported a moderate level of foreign language classroom anxiety. This result corroborates the findings of studies conducted in the Turkish context (Özer & Akçayoğlu, 2021; Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022; Yükselir & Özer, 2022). However, Zhou, Xi, and Lochtman (2020) found different results where the participants reported low FLCA levels. There might be several reasons why Turkish EFL learners report some level of anxiety when it comes to learning a L2 some of which have been highlighted by Tekir (2021) such as unfamiliarity with teaching methods, prior negative experiences, inadequate vocabular knowledge, and so on.

A close look at the mean scores of the individual items in the FLCA scale revealed that the learners felt most anxious thinking about the consequences of failing the class. This suggests that the learners in this preparatory program are more exam-oriented. In other words, students feel so much pressure to pass the exams that they have forgotten the importance of learning English. Their sole aim seems to be passing levels rather than learning the language. On the other hand, the lowest mean scores were received for items related to error correction and classroom participation. Participants reported that they feel least anxious knowing that their teacher is ready to correct every mistake they make and that they feel comfortable when they are going to be called on during the lesson which contradicts Tekir's (2021) finding that students felt more anxious interacting with their teachers than their peers. The finding in the present study indicates that a positive learning environment has been established in the classroom where students know the importance of error correction and participation in the lesson. They do not feel that they are going to be judged by their teacher or by their peers and that they can make mistakes which is a part of the learning process.

The descriptive statistics for the WTC scale revealed that the participants have moderate motivation to communicate in English, a result which echoes previous studies (Başöz & Erten, 2018; Khajavy et al., 2018; Öz, 2014, Öz et al., 2015). On the other hand, there were studies where participants reported higher levels of WTC (Mulyono & Saskia, 2021; Zhou et al., 2020). There are many factors that play a part in a students' WTC such as motivation, self-confidence, personality and so son

(MacIntyre et al., 1998). Other reasons that could contribute to this finding are participants' language proficiency, cultural factors, and contextual influences. Factors such as average language skills, cultural values, limited exposure to English, and certain personal motivations may collectively contribute to the participants' moderate willingness to communicate.

Examining the mean scores of individual items of the WTC scale, it is possible to see that the highest mean scores were reported for items that involved talking with friends in English and presenting a talk to a group of friends. The fact that these items received the highest mean score might stem from the familiarity of the interlocutors (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Talking to friends rather than mere acquaintances or strangers in different situations would understandably be more comfortable. Similarly, even a stressful act like presenting a talk does not seem as daunting to students when the audience is their friends. On the other hand, when it comes to presenting a talk to a group of strangers, participants reported that they would not be willing to do it. In fact, this item received the lowest mean score followed by talking in a small group of strangers. This proves the importance of creating a friendly atmosphere in the classroom where students are friends with each other and have a good rapport with their teachers, as well.

The final descriptive analysis concerns the personality traits of the participants. With the highest mean score, the participants in this study were found to be agreeable people. Agreeableness is related to being good-natured, friendly, cooperative, modest, and generous (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Keeping in mind the student profile of the participants in this study and their socio-cultural backgrounds, this result is not surprising as they mostly come from families where they are raised to be modest and helpful. In terms of learning a L2, this personality trait is favourable as agreeable students are expected to create a kind and helpful learning environment (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). This proves useful in group activities where collaboration and teamwork are key. The adjective 'helpful' received the highest mean score for this personality trait, indicating once again that the participants place a higher value on aiding others than other things.

Following the agreeableness trait was openness to experience which is related to the creative and innovative mind. Students who are open to new experiences are more eager to be active during lessons, and their academic achievements are higher (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2004, 2006, 2008). Because these students are more curious and seek new experiences, they are more willing to take risks and delve into the unknown which proves beneficial for L2 learning which is uncharted territory for students (Dewaele, 2012).

Conscientiousness was the trait following agreeableness and openness. Having a conscientious disposition is significant in language learning because it involves being organised and systematic (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Such learners are usually hard workers and are able to manage their time and studies better which is vital in foreign language learning. These learners are also better in employing meta-cognitive strategies and strive for excellence in L2 production (Ehrman, 2008).

The second lowest mean score was reported for the neuroticism trait which suggests that the participants in this study are rather emotionally stable. When it comes to L2 learning, neuroticism is not a desired personality trait to possess as it involves anxiety, worry, a feeling of insecurity and self-consciousness as well as feeling depressed (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). All of these impact language learning in a negative way (Dewaele, 2002; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b; Horwitz et al., 1986). The fact that the participants of this study are calmer and more relaxed may be the result of a more positive classroom atmosphere where students are not afraid to speak up and participate. A supportive and inclusive classroom environment gives students the chance to share their opinions and ideas without fear of being judged or criticized. Students are more inclined to speak up when they feel that their contributions are acknowledged and respected. As a result, a positive classroom environment encourages participants to feel calm and relaxed, making them more engaged and effective communicators.

Finally, the least dominant personality trait reported by the participants was extroversion. Although the mean score indicates that this trait is the least dominant

one among the big five, it is not low enough to claim that the participants are more introverted than extroverted. It is still possible to say that the participants are extroverted, yet compared to other traits, it is not as dominant. As it is known, extroversion and L2 learning has been researched, and contrasting results were obtained. While some suggested that more extroverted students are les anxious when it comes to writing in the L2 (Khabooshan & Saeedirad, 2022), and proved to employ reading strategies more (Anggraini, Cahyono, Anugerahwati, & Ivone, 2022), others proved that introverted inclined to be academically more successful because of their remarkable ability to focus and adopt effective study habits (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), and that they were better language learners in general (Ehrman, 2008). In case of the participants of the present study, it is not possible to make such claims as it is beyond the scope of this study. However, this finding is relevant in terms of lesson planning and curriculum design.

To sum up, the first research question, which investigated the descriptive statistics, displayed that the participants of the present study reported moderate levels of FLCA and WTC. The most common personality trait observed was agreeableness followed by openness to experience and conscientiousness. The next part includes a discussion of the correlational analyses among the variables.

5.1.2 Discussion of findings for research question 2. The second research question inquired about possible correlations among the variables. According to Field (2013), a correlation is considered moderate when the value is +/- 3, weak when the value is around +/- 1, and strong when the value is around +/- 5.

5.1.2.1 Correlation results between FLCA and QBFP. The first correlation analysis was run for the different personality traits and anxiety. The results indicated that there is a weak negative correlation between FLCA and openness to experience, a finding which is parallel to the study done by Safranj and Zivlak (2019) who disclosed a moderate negative correlation. A negative correlation means that those students who are more innovative, curious, and open will exhibit less anxiety in a foreign language classroom. The pursuit of new experiences, a characteristic of this trait, entails entering the domain of the unknown which is one of the predictors of L2

learning and achievement (Dewaele, 2012). Because the learner is willing to explore the unknown and the unfamiliar, it is expected that the amount of nervousness experienced is low.

Second, there was also evidence of a moderately negative relationship between FLCA and extroversion which corroborates the findings of MacIntyre and Noels (1994) and MacIntyre and Charos (1996). However, Safranj and Zivlak (2019) revealed a contrasting result, noting that extroversion did not predict low anxiety. The contrasting findings regarding the relationship between FLCA and extroversion might stem from various factors. Cultural and contextual factors, including cultural norms and educational systems, could impact the relationship between extroversion and FLCA. Individual differences, such as language proficiency and the use of coping strategies, may also influence this relationship. As it is known, extroverted students are the ones who are more talkative and participate in the classroom activities (Brown, 2014). That's why, it is not surprising to find a negative correlation between FLCA and extroversion. This finding suggests that more extroverted students will be less anxious in the classroom, and vice versa. A similar finding was obtained by Dewaele and Furnham (1999) who have researched extroverted and introverted L2 learners and their anxiety and fluency levels during oral production. The results indicated that introverted learners' fluency was lower than extroverts' in an exam context.

Finally, the findings displayed a moderate positive correlation between FLCA and neuroticism. This relates to the debate over whether trait anxiety and state anxiety are experienced concurrently, where earlier studies produced contradictory findings. Some studies (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991) found no correlation between the two types of anxiety. The finding in the present study, on the other hand, is in line with previous research where a relationship between the two constructs were exhibited (Dewaele, 2002; Dewaele, 2011; Safranj & Zirvak, 2019). This finding corroborates the argument presented in those studies that students who have an anxious disposition (trait anxiety) would also feel nervous in a foreign language classroom setting (state anxiety). As mentioned before, trait anxiety refers to a general and more stable inclination to experience anxiety across various

situations, whereas state anxiety refers to the situation-specific anxiety experienced in a particular context (Brown, 2014). In the case of the present study, the foreign language classroom serves as the specific context where students with trait anxiety manifest their anxiety as state anxiety. This finding suggests that individuals with a predisposition towards anxiety, regardless of the specific source of anxiety, are more likely to experience nervousness in the foreign language classroom. Various factors, such as the fear of making mistakes, the pressure to perform well in a L2, concerns about negative evaluation by peers or teachers, or self-doubt regarding their language abilities, might be the reason (Horwitz, et al., 1986). The combination of these factors can contribute to an elevated state of nervousness in the foreign language classroom for students with trait anxiety.

In conclusion, the correlation between personality traits and foreign language classroom anxiety was explored, and the findings revealed that there was a weak negative correlation between FLCA and openness to experience. Additionally, a moderately negative relationship was found between FLCA and extroversion, indicating that more extroverted students tend to be less anxious in the classroom. The study also found a moderate positive correlation between FLCA and neuroticism. These findings have implications for language teachers and learners, as they highlight the importance of considering learners' personality traits in addressing anxiety in the foreign language classroom.

5.1.2.2 Correlation results between WTC and QBFP. The correlation between each personality trait and willingness to communicate was also analysed and several significant correlations were found. To preview, the results indicated that there are weak positive correlations between WTC and extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience. It is, however, important to state that the correlation between WTC and the openness trait was higher compared to the others.

In the present study, a weak positive correlation was noted between WTC and extroversion. Similar results were obtained in other studies. One such study was conducted by Öz (2014) who reported a positive correlation between these variables.

However, differently from the present study, a strong correlation was recorded by Öz (2014). Another study carried out by Başöz and Erten (2019) reported that there was a relationship between introversion and unwillingness to communicate. A path analysis by Asmalı (2016) displayed that there was an indirect path from extroversion/introversion to WTC through self-confidence. Finally, in their qualitative study Freiermuth and Ito (2020) expressed that the participants placed in the low WTC group were more introverted and the ones in the high WTC group had an extroverted disposition. Given that extroverted people display outgoing behaviour, a comfort in social interactions, and a tendency to express themselves verbally (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), it is understandable that in the context of language learning, extroverted students may feel more comfortable and motivated to actively participate in L2 conversations, as they enjoy such social interactions and the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions. They may feel energised by such conversations and find pleasure in using the language to connect with others, practice their language skills, and express themselves.

Another weak positive correlation was found between WTC and conscientiousness which is in line with previous research (Freiermuth & Ito, 2020; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). The qualitative study conducted by Freiermuth and Ito (2020) revealed that the participants placed in the high WTC group reported to be more motivated and committed to learning English. As MacIntyre and Charos (1996) argued, when language is learned in a structured setting such as a classroom environment, it is more advantageous for learners to be organised and goal-oriented which, in turn, results in more a favourable view of communicating in the L2. Similarly, the participants in the current study, who consider themselves as hardworking, organised and responsible (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015) would be more dedicated to improve their communication skills.

According to MacIntyre and Charos (1996), people who have a warmer and more agreeable disposition have a greater chance of having positive interactions with other speakers of the L2. The findings in the present study displayed a similar connection with a weak positive correlation between WTC and agreeableness which corroborates previous research (Freiermuth & Ito, 2020; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996;

Öz, 2014; Yashima, 2002). As Clement (1986) maintains, learners that have pleasant interactions in the L2 are more likely to develop self-confidence in communication which in turn would result in more willingness to speak in the L2 as well as lower levels of communication anxiety.

The final correlation in the present study was found between WTC and openness to experience, a result which echoes the studies by other researchers (Fatima et al., 2020; Freiermuth & Ito, 2020; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Öz, 2014; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018). As Dewaele (2012) asserts, the openness to experience trait "reflects proactive seeking and appreciation of experience for its own sake as well as a willingness to explore the unfamiliar" (p. 47). In the context of communication, people who are open to new experiences are inclined to engage in diverse and stimulating interactions, even if it involves using a L2. They are more likely to welcome opportunities to learn from others, share ideas, and acquire new knowledge through communication. Thus, it is expected that learners who score high on this trait, like the participants of this study, would be more likely to pursue new opportunities to engage in communication.

Finally, unlike the findings of Freiermuth and Ito (2020) who reported that the participants in the low WTC group displayed low emotional stability, no correlation was found between WTC and neuroticism in the present study which is in line with the findings by Öz (2014). This is a surprising result as a moderate correlation was found between neuroticism and the FLCA of the participants. According to Horwitz et al. (1986) FLCA comprises communication anxiety, one of the antecedents of WTC according to the pyramid model put forward by MacIntyre et al. (1998). Therefore, a correlation between the two variables was expected. The reason why there wasn't any relationship might be that neuroticism and WTC are not directly related and that other factors such as motivation, self-efficacy, and language proficiency may play a more significant role in predicting WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Additionally, it is possible that the measure of WTC used in the study may not have been sensitive enough to capture the relationship between neuroticism and WTC. Further research might be helpful to better understand the complex interplay between these variables.

To sum up, the study found weak positive correlations between WTC and extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience, with the correlation between WTC and openness being the strongest. Extroverted individuals are more likely to speak in the L2, while conscientious learners are more committed to improving their communication skills. Agreeable learners have more positive interactions with L2 speakers, which can increase self-confidence and decrease communication anxiety. Learners who are open to new experiences are more likely to pursue opportunities for communication. Finally, no correlation was found between WTC and neuroticism, despite the moderate correlation between neuroticism and communication anxiety.

5.1.2.3 Correlation results between WTC and FLCA. Last but not least, a correlation analysis between WTC and FLCA was run. The results displayed a strong negative correlation between these two variables as reported in previous research (Birjandi & Tabataba'ian, 2012; Dewaele, 2019; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Rastegar & Karami, 2015; Başöz & Erten, 2019; Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2018; Fatima et al., 2020). This finding can be attributed to several factors. Individuals with higher levels of FLCA may experience fear and self-doubt when using a L2, which can decrease their motivation and willingness to communicate. Perceived language proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, limited speaking opportunities, and previous negative experiences may all result in higher levels of FLCA and lower levels of WTC. This result also supports the findings of Mulyono and Saskia (2020) who found a negative correlation between face-to-face WTC and speaking anxiety. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2020) noted that anxiety has a negative effect on learners' WTC and their competence in the L2. Khajavy et al. (2018) also reported a moderate negative correlation between FLCA and WTC; however, it was also concluded that the general anxiety level of the class did not impact the individual learners' WTC.

In brief, the results indicated that in addition to a strong negative correlation between WTC and FLCA, correlations between certain personality traits and these two variables were observed in the current study.

5.1.3 Discussion of findings for research question 3. The last research question aimed to investigate whether the FLCA and WTC levels of the participants differed according to certain demographic variables such as gender, prior experiences and students' English levels. The first analysis was carried out to see if FLCA, WTC, and personality traits differ according to the gender of the participants. The results displayed a significant difference between male and female students in terms of their FLCA levels. Male students reported a higher mean score than females suggesting that male students are statistically more anxious in the foreign language classroom than their female counterparts which contradicts other studies where females were reported to be more anxious (Dewaele et al., 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Donovan & MacIntyre, 2004; Öz et al., 2015; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Yeşilçınar & Erdemir, 2022). Contrary to the result obtained in the present study, Bashosh, Nejad, Rastegar, and Marzban (2013) reported no significant difference between male and female participants in their study. The fact that male students reported higher FLCA levels than female students may be attributed to several factors. First of all, societal and cultural expectations of males to perform well and appear tough might be putting more pressure on them in the classroom context. The levels of confidence and self-esteem might also differ between the male and female students in this study. Finally, language proficiency and prior negative learning experiences should also be considered to fully understand the gender differences in FLCA levels.

As for the WTC scores, no significant difference was observed between male and female learners which is in line with other studies (Bashosh et al., 2013; Muloyono & Saskia, 2020; Öz, 2014). This finding suggests that both male and female students might be willing or unwilling to speak in the L2, and it is not dependent on their gender. Considering the pyramid model of WTC, it is important to highlight that gender was not listed as one of the antecedents of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Among the five personality traits agreeableness and neuroticism differed significantly between male and female students, with the latter reporting higher mean scores for both traits. This suggests that the female participants of this study are more cooperative and more anxious than their male counterparts. Cultural norms and

expectations might play an important role in obtaining this result. It is the cultural norm that females are raised to prioritise cooperation and empathy which helps explaining the higher mean score for agreeableness. As for neuroticism, it was observed that female students reported a higher mean score for trait anxiety, while male students reported a higher state anxiety level. One reason for this finding might be self-report bias. While reporting a higher anxiety level in classroom-specific situations did not feel strange, admitting to personality adjectives which are generally considered as negative might have affected the answers of male students. Another reason might be that females may be more likely to ruminate and internalise their anxiety, leading to higher trait anxiety scores, whereas males may exhibit more noticeable signs of anxiety in response to specific stressors, such as classroom interactions, resulting in higher state anxiety levels.

Another demographic factor that could affect the FLCA and WTC levels of students concerns prior negative experiences. In the survey, students were asked if they had any negative experiences while learning English. Students' answers made significant differences in their WTC and FLCA levels as well as the neuroticism trait. The mean score of WTC levels were higher among participants with no negative experiences while students who reported having prior negative experiences reported higher mean scores for FLCA and neuroticism. Similar results were obtained in a previous study conducted by Freiermuth and Ito (2020) where interviews with high WTC participants and low WTC participants were conducted. Those participants in the high WTC group reported having positive learning experiences while the ones in the low WTC group had negative experiences which resulted in low self-confidence in communicating in English. This finding is particularly valuable for classroom practice which is discussed in detail in the next part.

The last variable tested was students' proficiency levels. The participants of the present study were studying at different proficiency levels ranging from elementary to upper-intermediate. It was investigated whether FLCA and WTC differ according to proficiency level. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference in students' WTC between elementary and pre-intermediate, elementary and intermediate, and elementary and upper-intermediate. The mean scores gradually

increase at each level, with the lowest mean score being found at elementary level which echoes the results of Altıner's (2018) research conducted with Turkish EFL learners. As this finding suggests, as students improve their language skills from elementary to higher levels, they gain the ability to express themselves more effectively, understand others better, and navigate different communication situations with confidence. The growing self-confidence resulting from language proficiency and exposure to authentic language use further encourages students to take risks and participate in communication. These reasons collectively contribute to the observed increase in WTC levels at each proficiency level, promoting meaningful language use and development. Regarding FLCA, a significant difference in mean scores was observed between participants at the pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate levels, with students at the former reporting higher anxiety than those at the latter. Even though there are no statistically significant differences between the other groups, the trend of decreasing mean scores as proficiency levels rise suggests a general pattern of reduced anxiety with increasing language skills. As students progress from lower to higher proficiency levels, they become more familiar with the language and gain a better understanding of its structures, vocabulary, and usage. This increased familiarity and knowledge might contribute to a sense of confidence and competence in using the foreign language. Consequently, students at higher proficiency levels may experience reduced anxiety due to their growing proficiency and comfort in the language-learning environment.

In conclusion, the findings of the third research question indicated that male students reported higher FLCA levels than females, contrary to findings from other studies. However, no significant differences in WTC levels were observed between males and females. In addition, students who had previous negative experiences reported higher levels of FLCA and neuroticism, while those who had previously positive experiences reported higher levels of WTC. Lastly, there was a significant difference between WTC and FLCA levels based on proficiency levels, with mean scores of WTC rising and mean scores of FLCA decreasing gradually as the levels advanced. These findings have practical implications for language classrooms which will be further discussed in the following section.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

The present study has important implications for practitioners and curriculum designers. This section highlights key findings that can inform and improve teaching practices and curriculum design. Practitioners can use the findings to better understand their students' learning needs and to develop more effective teaching strategies. Curriculum designers can use the findings to create more relevant and engaging curricula that meet the needs of learners.

The first implication is related to the WTC. To increase students' communicative engagement, there are certain steps that could be followed. First, it is crucial to create a safe and supportive classroom environment. Making sure that students feel comfortable and supported in the classroom, and encouraging open communication and making it clear that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process is a message that teachers should give their students right from the beginning of the semester. Second, activities that encourage students to communicate with each other in the target language should be designed. Group discussions, debates, role-plays, and collaborative projects can all be effective ways to get students talking. Next, it is vital to provide students with meaningful feedback which helps them improve in the L2. This can include correcting errors, providing suggestions for improvement, and praising their efforts. Finally, teachers should foster a positive attitude. Encouraging a positive attitude towards language learning and helping students see the benefits of being able to communicate in another language is a good idea. This can motivate them to take risks and communicate more confidently.

There are also some implications related to foreign language classroom anxiety and how teachers can alleviate this negative feeling among their students. One idea is to create a relaxed and welcoming classroom atmosphere. Teachers can help students feel at ease by creating a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere in the classroom. Smiling, greeting students warmly, and creating a comfortable physical environment are some ways to create this positive atmosphere. Next, teachers should provide clear instructions and expectations for the classroom activities. When students do not understand a task, it is natural for them to feel lost and anxious.

Providing clear instructions, and making use of instruction check questions (ICQs) can help reduce uncertainty and anxiety among students, and increase their confidence in their ability to complete tasks successfully. Similar to the suggestion to increase WTC, teachers can help reduce anxiety by encouraging their students to take risks and make mistakes. By emphasizing that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process, teachers can create an environment where students feel comfortable experimenting with the language without fear of judgment or criticism. Another very important recommendation for teachers concerns using positive feedback. As the findings in the present study showed, students who have had negative experiences while learning English tend to be more anxious than others. This negative experience might stem from harsh criticism and error correction. It is, therefore, essential that teachers help build students' confidence by providing positive feedback on their language use by praising efforts, highlighting strengths, and providing constructive criticism in a supportive manner. Last but not least, relaxation techniques could be incorporated into the lessons. For example, deep breathing, stretching, and mindfulness exercises might help students reduce stress and anxiety, and feel more focused and engaged in their language learning. Overall, by creating a supportive and low-anxiety language learning environment, teachers can help students feel more confident and motivated to learn, leading to improved language proficiency and academic success.

Considering the fact that students reported high levels of anxiety related to exams is significant. It is essential for teachers to remind their students their aim should not be to pass exams, but they should remember the bigger picture. Teachers should emphasize the learning process and the importance of acquiring knowledge and skills, rather than just achieving a high grade on an exam. It would be advisable to spare time to talk about the goals and why they want or need to learn English. Setting goals beyond passing exams and starting to learn English for the sake of learning the language might relieve the students from exam stress, and the process of learning English could possibly turn into a fun activity for them. Another suggestion is to highlight the relevance of the material being taught and provide opportunities for students to apply what they have learned. Teachers and curriculum designers could also de-emphasize grades by providing alternative methods of assessment, such

as projects, presentations, and portfolios. This can help students see that learning is about more than just achieving a good grade on an exam, and that there are many ways to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Finally, understanding students' personalities in a foreign language class has some implications for L2 teaching, as well. It is important for teachers to know about the different personalities of their students as it can help them tailor their teaching methods and strategies to better suit each individual's learning style and preferences. Some students may be more introverted and prefer independent work, whereas others might thrive in group settings and enjoy more interactive activities. When it comes to communicating in the target language, some students may be inclined to be confident and outgoing, whereas others may be more anxious or reserved. By understanding these personality traits, teachers can create a classroom environment that is supportive and accommodating for all students. For example, teachers can provide opportunities for group work, but also allow students to work independently when needed. They can encourage more outgoing students to help their more reserved peers by pairing them up in activities or discussions, and can create a supportive atmosphere that encourages all students to take risks and make mistakes. All in all, understanding students' personalities in a foreign language class can help teachers create a more effective and engaging learning experience for all students, which can ultimately lead to improved language proficiency and academic success.

In brief, by taking these implications into consideration, teachers and curriculum designers can work together to a more comprehensive and cohesive learning experience for students that is aligned with their needs and goals. This can involve designing lessons that are engaging, relevant, and meaningful, and that promote critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Overall, the present study provides valuable insights that can inform and improve teaching practices to create a learning environment that fosters student success, motivation, and achievement, and prepares them for the challenges of the 21st century globalized world.

5.3 Conclusions

The present study aimed to explore the perceived levels of foreign language classroom anxiety and willingness to communicate, and to assess the dominant personality traits of EFL learners studying at a preparatory program at a foundation university based in Istanbul. It also proposed to reveal the relationship among these variables and to analyse whether personal factors such as gender and prior learning experiences affect these variables or not.

To meet the objectives of the study, a quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through an online survey. 72.5% of the students at the preparatory program studying at different levels ranging from elementary to upper-intermediate submitted their surveys. The analyses of the obtained data displayed that the participants were experiencing moderate levels of foreign language classroom anxiety and willingness to communicate. The most dominant personality trait of the participants was agreeableness followed by openness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and extroversion. The Pearson correlation tests revealed that a negative correlation exists between FLCA and extroversion, FLCA and openness, and a positive correlation was found between FLCA and openness to experience, WTC and extroversion, WTC and conscientiousness, WTC and agreeableness, and WTC and openness to experience. A strong negative correlation was also revealed between FLCA and WTC. As for the personal factors, the results indicated that female and male students differed in terms of their FLCA levels, and their agreeableness and neuroticism traits. WTC and the remaining personality traits; namely, extroversion, conscientiousness and openness did not differ according to the gender of the participants. Finally, it was revealed that FLCA, WTC and the neuroticism trait differed significantly according to whether the participant had a negative learning experience.

To wrap up, this study holds substantial significance as it adds to the current body of literature concerning personality factors, anxiety, and willingness to communicate in second language acquisition (SLA). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no other studies have explored the interplay between all three constructs.

The outcomes derived from this study are expected to offer valuable insights to educators and curriculum designers at the institution where the study was conducted and others.

5.4 Recommendations

The present study provides a number of recommendations for future research endeavours in this field. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the current research employed a quantitative methodology, centering on the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, willingness to communicate and personality traits among students attending a foundation university in Istanbul. Extending the scope of investigation to encompass multiple universities would enhance the generalizability of the findings and facilitate cross-university comparisons. By doing so, it may be possible to identify the differences in perceived levels of anxiety and communication willingness among students from state, foundation, and private universities.

Secondly, it may be beneficial to conduct a comparative analysis across different age groups to examine whether there are differences in FLCA, WTC, and personality traits as individuals age. The inclusion of multiple age groups would allow for a more comprehensive investigation of these constructs and enable researchers to examine the changes that occur over time. For instance, it may be interesting to explore whether the level of FLCA and WTC in younger individuals differs from that of older adults, and whether there are any notable differences in personality traits between these age groups.

Finally, as the current study solely adopted a quantitative approach, it may be worthwhile to incorporate a qualitative component to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between FLCA, WTC, and personality among students. A qualitative approach would enable researchers to delve deeper into the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of students towards FLCA and WTC, and the

ways in which personality traits shape their language learning processes. Incorporating a qualitative component would also allow for the examination of factors that are difficult to measure using quantitative methods, such as cultural and contextual influences, individual differences, and subjective experiences. Additionally, it would provide a platform for students to share their personal stories and experiences, and for researchers to gain insights into the complexities of FLCA and WTC and their relationship with personality.

In brief, this study highlights the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, willingness to communicate, and personality traits among university students in Istanbul. It is recommended that future research expand its scope to multiple universities and include a comparative analysis across different age groups. Additionally, qualitative research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between these factors. The current study's practical implications for language teachers and curriculum designers emphasise the need to address personality traits in language learning outcomes and alleviate anxiety to encourage communication. All in all, this study contributes to the literature on this topic and emphasizes the need for further research in this field.

References

Akdemir, A. S., & Takkaç, M. (2016). Extraversion and female EFL learners as listeners: A qualitative investigation. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *4*(8), 1802–1808. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.040809

Allport, G. W. (1937). *Personality: A psychological interpretation.* H. Holt.

Altiner, C. (2018). Turkish EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate in English. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, *5*(1), 40–49.

Anderson, N. J., & Skehan, P. (1991). Individual differences in second-language learning. *Language*, *67*(2), 420. https://doi.org/10.2307/415158

Andreou, G., Andreou, E., & Vlachos, F. (2006). Individual differences in second language learning among university students. In S. N. Hogan (Ed.), *Trends in learning research* (pp. 81–99). Nova Science Publishers.

Angelovska, T., Mercer, S., & Talbot, K. R. (2021). Personality traits as predictors of language learner engagement. *Language Learning in Higher Education*, *11*(2), 285–310. https://doi.org/10.1515/cercles-2021-2026

Anggraini, M. P., Cahyono, B. Y., Anugerahwati, M., & Ivone, F. M. (2022). The interaction effects of reading proficiency and personality types on EFL university students' online reading strategy use. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1-19.

Arnold, J., & Brown, H. D. (1999). A map of the terrain. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp. 1–24). Cambridge University Press.

Aslan, E., & Thompson, A. S. (2018). The interplay between learner beliefs and foreign language anxiety: Insights from the Turkish EFL context. *The Language Learning Journal*, *49*(2), 189–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2018.1540649

Asmalı, M. (2016). Willingness to communicate of foreign language learners in Turkish context. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 232*, 188-195.

Babacan, N., & Güler, E. (2022). The effects of Plickers on English vocabulary achievement, motivation and anxiety. *Education Quarterly Reviews*, *5*(2), 617–630. https://doi.org/10.31014/aior.1993.05.04.648

Bal, S. (2021). Analyzing the correlation between ideal L2 self and willingness to communicate in L2 among EFL learners. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *10*(1), 58-67.

Bashosh, S., Nejad, M. A., Rastegar, M., & Marzban, A. (2013). The relationship between shyness, foreign language classroom anxiety, willingness to communicate, gender, and EFL proficiency. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *3*(11), 2098-2106.

Başöz, T., & Erten, İ. H. (2018). Investigating Tertiary Level EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate in English. *English Language Teaching*, *11*(3), 78. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v11n3p78

Başöz, T., & Erten, İ. H. (2019). A qualitative ınquiry into the factors ınfluencing EFL learners' in-class willingness to communicate in English. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*, *13*(1), 1–18. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1214141.pdf

Bektaş-Çetinkaya, Y. (2005). *Turkish college students' willingness to communicate in English as a foreign language* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The Ohio State University.

Birjandi, P., & Tabataba'ian, M. S. (2012). The interrelationships among emotional intelligence, foreign language anxiety, and willingness to communicate. *Journal of American Science*, *8*(8), 725-730.

Brown, H. D. (2014). *Principles of language learning and teaching: A course in second language acquisition* (6th edition). Pearson.

Bursalı, N., & Öz, H. (2017). The relationship between ideal L2 self and willingness to communicate inside the classroom. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(4), 229-239. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n4p229

Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Furnham, A. (2004). A possible model for explaining the personality-intelligence interface. *British Journal of Psychology*, 95, 249–264.

Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Furnham, A. (2006). Intellectual Competence and the Intelligent Personality: A Third Way in Differential Psychology. *Review of General Psychology*, *10*(3), 251–267. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.10.3.251

Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Furnham, A. (2008). Personality, intelligence and approaches to learning as predictors of academic performance. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *44*(7), 1596–1603. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2008.01.003

Clément, R. (1986). Second Language Proficiency and Acculturation: An Investigation of the Effects of Language Status and Individual Characteristics. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *5*(4), 271–290. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927x8600500403

Clément, R., Baker, S. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2003). Willingness to communicate in a second language. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *22*(2), 190–209. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927x03022002003

Costa, P. T. Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (1985). *The NEO personality inventory manual*. Psychological Assessment Resources.

Costa, P. T. Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). *Revised NEO personality inventory (NEO-PI-R) and NEO five-factor inventory (NEO-FFI) professional manual*. Psychological Assessment Resources.

Costa, P. T. Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (2008). The revised NEO personality inventory (NEOPI- R). In G. J. Boyle, G. Matthews, & D. H. Saklofske (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Personality Theory and Assessment: Personality Measurement and Testing (Volume 2)* (pp. 179–199). SAGE Publications.

Çakmak, F. (2022). Chatbot-human interaction and its effects on EFL students' L2 speaking performance and anxiety. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language), 16*(2), 113-131.

Çepni, S. B., Keleş, N., & Çepni G. (2022). Can asynchronous video-mediated oral book reports be the solution for foreign language speaking anxiety?. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(2), 39-52.

Daly, J. (1991). Understanding communication apprehension: An introduction for language educators. In E. K. Horwitz, & D. J. Young (Eds.) *Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications* (pp.3-14). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Darasawang, P., & Reinders, H. (2021). Willingness to communicate and second language proficiency: A correlational study. *Education Sciences*, *11*(9), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11090517

Dastgoshadeh, A., & Javanmardi, P. (2021). Emotional intelligence as a predictor of EFL learners' willingness to communicate. *MEXTESOL Journal*, *45*(3), 1-10.

Demir, Y., & Okyar, H. (2021). A path-analytic study into foreign language enjoyment, willingness to communicate in English, self-efficacy, and academic achievement. *Excellence in Education Journal*, *10*(1), 33-69.

Dewaele, J. (2011). Reflections on the emotional and psychological aspects of foreign language learning and use. *Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies*, *22*(1), 23-42.

Dewaele, J. (2013). The link between foreign language classroom anxiety and psychoticism, extraversion, and neuroticism among adult bi- and

multilinguals. *The Modern Language Journal*, *97*(3), 670–684. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2013.12036.x

Dewaele, J. M. (2002). Psychological and sociodemographic correlates of communicative anxiety in L2 and L3 production. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *6*(1), 23–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/13670069020060010201

Dewaele, J. M. (2004). The acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in French as a foreign language: an overview. *Journal of French Language Studies*, *14*(3), 301–319. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0959269504001814

Dewaele, J. M. (2007). The effect of multilingualism, sociobiographical, and situational factors on communicative anxiety and foreign language anxiety of mature language learners. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *11*(4), 391–409. https://doi.org/10.1177/13670069070110040301

Dewaele, J. M. (2009). Individual differences in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *The new handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 623–646). Brill.

Dewaele, J. M. (2012). Personality: Personality traits as independent and dependent variables. In S. Mercer, S. Ryan, & M. Williams (Eds.), *Psychology for Language Learning: Insights from Research, Theory and Practice* (pp. 42–57). Palgrave Macmillan.

Dewaele, J. M. (2019). The effect of classroom emotions, attitudes toward English, and teacher behavior on willingness to communicate among English Foreign Language Learners. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 38*(4), 523-535.

Dewaele, J. M., & Dewaele, L. (2018). Learner-internal and learner-external predictors of willingness to communicate in the FL classroom. *Journal of the European Second Language Association, 2*(1), 24-37.

Dewaele, J. M., & Furnham, A. (2000). Personality and speech production: a pilot study of second language learners. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *28*(2), 355–365. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0191-8869(99)00106-3

Dewaele, J. M., & MacIntyre, P. (2019). The predictive power of multicultural personality traits, learner and teacher variables on foreign language enjoyment and anxiety. In M. Sato & S. Loewen (Eds.), *Evidence-based Second language pedagogy: A collection of instructed Second language acquisition studies* (pp. 263–286). Routledge.

Dewaele, J. M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *4*(2), 237–274. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2014.4.2.5

Dewaele, J. M., Witney, J., Saito, K., & Dewaele, L. (2017). Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety: The effect of teacher and learner variables. *Language Teaching Research*, *22*(6), 676–697. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168817692161

Dewaele, J. M., Witney, J., Saito, K., & Dewaele, L. (2017). Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety: The effect of teacher and learner variables. *Language Teaching Research*, *22*(6), 676–697. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168817692161

Dewaele, J. M., Witney, J., Saito, K., & Dewaele, L. (2018). Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety: The effect of teacher and learner variables. Language teaching research, 22(6), 676-697.

Donovan, L. A., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2004). Age and sex differences in willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, and self-perceived competence. *Communication Research Reports*, *21*(4), 420–427. https://doi.org/10.1080/08824090409360006

Dörnyei, Z. (2011). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learner revisited*. Routledge.

Ducker, N. T. (2022). Bridging the gap between willingness to communicate and learner talk. *The Modern Language Journal*, *106*(1), 216–244. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12764

Durmaz, B. N., & Aşık, A. (2022). Relationship between metacognitive awareness, listening anxiety and ambiguity tolerance of Turkish EFL learners. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, *22*(2), 92-107.

Ehrman, M. (2008). Personality and the good language learner. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from the good language learner* (pp. 61–72). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ehrman, M. E., Leaver, B. L., & Oxford, R. L. (2003). A brief overview of individual differences in second language learning. *System*, *31*(3), 313–330. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0346-251x(03)00045-9

Ellis, R. (1992). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford University Press.

Eysenck, M. W., Derakshan, N., Santos, R., & Calvo, M. G. (2007). Anxiety and cognitive performance: Attentional control theory. *Emotion*, *7*(2), 336–353. https://doi.org/10.1037/1528-3542.7.2.336

Fatima, I., Ismail, S. A. M. M., Pathan, Z. H., & Memon, U. (2020). The Power of Openness to Experience, Extraversion, L2 Self-confidence, Classroom Environment in Predicting L2 Willingness to Communicate. *International Journal of Instruction*, *13*(3), 909–924. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13360a

Field, A. (2013). *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. SAGE Publications Limited.

Freiermuth, M. R., & Ito, M. F. (2020). Seeking the source: The effect of personality and previous experiences on university students' L2 willingness to communicate. *Learning and Motivation, 71,* 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lmot.2020.101640

Freire, P. (2005). *The pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2010). *SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference, 17.0 Update*. Allyn & Bacon.

Ghonsooly, B., Khajavy, G. H., & Asadpour, S. F. (2012). Willingness to communicate in English among Iranian non–English major university students. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *31*(2), 197–211. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927x12438538

Grant, S. (2022). The influence of contextual and motivational variables on willingness to communicate in fully online EFL programmes. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (IJCALLT)*, *12*(2), 1-17.

Gregersen, T. S. (2003). To err is human: A Reminder to teachers of language-anxious students. *Foreign Language Annals*, *36*(1), 25–32. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2003.tb01929.x

Gregersen, T., & Horwitz, E. K. (2002). Language learning and perfectionism: Anxious and non-anxious language learners' reactions to their own oral performance. *The Modern Language Journal*, *86*(4), 562–570. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00161

Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (Eds.). (2021). *The Routledge Handbook of the Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching*. Routledge.

Gregersen, T., Macintyre, P. D., & Meza, M. D. (2014). The motion of emotion: Idiodynamic case studies of learners' foreign language anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, *98*(2), 574–588. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12084

Güriş, S., & Astar, M. (2014). *Bilimsel Araştırmalarda SPSS ile İstatistik* (2nd ed.). Der Yayınları.

Gürsu, F. (2011). *The Turkish equivalence, validity, and reliability study of the foreign language anxiety scale* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Yeditepe University.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. Prentice Hall.

Hatipoğlu, Ç. (2016). The impact of the university entrance exam on EFL education in Turkey: Pre-service English language teachers' perspective. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *232*, 136-144. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.038

He, T. H. (2019). Personality facets, writing strategy use, and writing performance of college students learning English as a foreign language. *SAGE Open*, *9*(3), 1-15.

Heidari, K. (2019). Willingness to Communicate: A predictor of pushing vocabulary knowledge from receptive to productive. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, *48*(4), 903-920. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09639-w

Horwitz, E. K. (2010). Foreign and second language anxiety. *Language Teaching*, *43*(2), 154-167. https://doi.org/10.1017/s026144480999036x

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, *70*, 125-132. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x

John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The big five trait taxonomy: history, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John

(Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 102-138). Guilford Press.

Kamdideh, Z., & Barjesteh, H. (2019). The effect of extended wait-time on promoting Iranian EFL learners' willingness to communicate. *International Journal of Instruction, 12*(3), 183-200. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12312a

Khabooshan, H. S., & Saeedirad, M. A. (2022). Exploring the relationship between efl learners' personality types and writing anxiety. *MEXTESOL Journal, 46*(3), 1-9.

Khajavy, G. H., MacIntyre, P. D., & Barabadi, E. (2017). Role of the emotions and classroom environment in willingness to communicate. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 40*(3), 605–624. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263117000304

Khany, R., & Nejad, A. M. (2017). L2 willingness to communicate, openness to experience, extraversion, and L2 unwillingness to communicate: The Iranian EFL context. *RELC Journal, 48*(2), 241-255.

Kutuk, G. (2022). Exploring the effects of stereotype threat on men's foreign language listening performance in a sample of Turkish university students. In D. L. Banegas, & N. Govender (Eds.) *Gender Diversity and Sexuality in English Language Education*. (pp. 85-104). Bloomsbury Academic. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350217591.ch-005

Lao, T. L. (2020). The relationship between ESL learners' Motivation, willingness to communicate, perceived competence, and frequency of L2 use. *Studies in Applied Linguistics & TESOL*, *20*(2), 36-56.

Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2009). *Personality Psychology: Domains of Knowledge About Human Nature, 4th Edition* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Lee, J. S., & Drajati, N. A. (2019). Affective variables and informal digital learning of English: Keys to willingness to communicate in a second language.

Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, *35*(5), 168-182. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.5177

Lin, Y. T. (2019). Taiwanese EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate in English in the Classroom: Impacts of Personality, Affect, Motivation, and Communication Confidence. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, *28*(2), 101–113. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-018-0417-y

Lippa, R. A. (1994). *Introduction to Social Psychology*. Brooks / Cole Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1604/9780534173883

Liu, M., & Jackson, J. (2008). An exploration of Chinese EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal, 92*, 71–86. http://10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00687

MacIntyre, P. (2020). Expanding the theoretical base for the dynamics of willingness to communicate. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *10*(1), 111–131. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2020.10.1.6

MacIntyre, P. D. (1999). Language anxiety: A review of the research for language teachers. In D. J. Young (Ed.), *Affect in foreign language and second language teaching: A practical guide to creating a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere* (pp. 24-45). Mc Graw-Hill.

MacIntyre, P. D. (2002). Motivation, anxiety and emotion in second language acquisition. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Individual differences in second language acquisition* (pp. 45–68). John Benjamins.

MacIntyre, P. D. (2007). Willingness to Communicate in the Second Language: Understanding the Decision to Speak as a Volitional Process. *The Modern Language Journal*, *91*(4), 564–576. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00623.x

MacIntyre, P. D., & Charos, C. (1996). Personality, attitudes, and affect as predictors of second language communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *15*(1), 3–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927x960151001

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1989). Anxiety and Second-Language Learning: Toward a Theoretical Clarification. *Language Learning*, *39*(2), 251–275. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1989.tb00423.x

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991a). Investigating language class anxiety using the focused essay technique. *The Modern Language Journal*, *75*(3), 296–304. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1991.tb05358.x

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991b). Language anxiety: Its relationship to other anxieties and to processing in native and second languages. *Language Learning*, *41*(4), 513-534. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1991.tb00691.x

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991c). Methods and results in the study of anxiety and language learning: a review of the literature. *Language Learning*, *41*(1), 85–117. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1991.tb00677.x

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning*, *44*(2), 283–305. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1994.tb01103.x

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gregersen, T. (2012). Affect: The role of language anxiety and other emotions in language learning. In S. Mercer, S. Ryan, & M. Williams (Eds.), *Psychology for language learning: Insights from research, theory & practice* (pp. 103–118). Palgrave Macmillan.

MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, *82*(4), 545-562. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x

MacIntyre, P. D., Lanxi, W., & Khajavy, G. H. (2020). Thinking fast and slow about willingness to communicate: A two-systems view. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 6*(3), 443-458. https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.834681

MacIntyre, P., Baker, S., Clément, R., & Conrod, S. (2001). Willingness to communicate, social support, and language-learning orientations of immersion students. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 23*, 369–388.

MacIntyre, P., Baker, S., Clément, R., & Donovan, L. (2002). Sex and age effects on willingness to communicate, anxiety, perceived competence, and L2 motivation among junior high school French immersion students. *Language Learning, 52*, 537–564. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9922.00226

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2016). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2016). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T., Jr. (2008). The five-factor theory of personality. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 159–181). The Guilford Press.

McCrae, R. R., & John, O. P. (1992). An introduction to the five-factor model and its applications. *Journal of Personality*, *60*(2), 175–215. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1992.tb00970.x

McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1987). Willingness to communicate. *Personality and interpersonal communication, 6,* 129-156.

Mirici, I. H. (2021). An investigation of interaction among willingness to communicate, academic achievement and L2-self guides. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, *8*(2), 653-661.

Morsünbül, U. (2014). The validity and reliability study of the Turkish version of Quick Big Five Personality Test. *Dusunen Adam: The Journal of Psychiatry*

and Neurological Sciences, 316–322. https://doi.org/10.5350/dajpn2014270405

Mulyono, H., & Saskia, R. (2021). Affective variables contributing to Indonesian EFL students' willingness to communicate within face-to-face and digital environments. *Cogent Education*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2021.1911282

Navidinia, H., Beidokhti, Z., & Hekmati, N. (2017). English language learners' big five personality characteristics and their preference for isolated or integrated form-focused instruction. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, *26*(1–2), 75–83. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-017-0328-3

Nematizadeh, S. (2021). Willingness to communicate and second language speech fluency: An idiodynamic investigation of attractor states. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, *3*(1), 26-49.

Ockey, G. (2011). Self-consciousness and assertiveness as explanatory variables of L2 oral ability: A latent variable approach. *Language Learning*, *61*(3), 968–989. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2010.00625.x

Okay, A., & Balçıkanlı, C. (2017). Belief patterns and anxiety levels of Turkish EFL students in relation to level of instruction. *Journal on Educational Psychology*, *11*(2), 18–28. https://doi.org/10.26634/jpsy.11.2.13784

Our Mission & Vision. (n.d.). FSMVU English Preparatory Program. Retrieved January, 16, 2023 from https://prep.fsm.edu.tr/Ingilizce-Hazirlik-Programi-Bolum--Misyonumuz--Vizyonumuz

Oxford, R. L. (1999). Anxiety and the language learner: New insights. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp. 58–67). Cambridge University Press.

Öz, H. (2014). Big Five Personality Traits and Willingness to Communicate Among Foreign Language Learners in Turkey. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, *42*(9), 1473–1482. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2014.42.9.1473

Öz, H., & Bursalı, N. (2018). The relationship between L2 motivational self system and willingness to communicate in learning English as a foreign language. *Journal of Language and Linguistic studies, 14*(4), 1-11.

Öz, H., Demirezen, M., & Pourfeiz, J. (2015). Willingness to communicate of EFL learners in Turkish context. *Learning and Individual Differences, 37*, 269–275. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2014.12.009

Öztürk, G., & Gürbüz, N. (2013). The impact of gender on foreign language speaking anxiety and motivation. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 70*, 654-665.

Pae, T. I. (2012). Skill-based L2 anxieties revisited: Their intra-relations and the inter-relations with general foreign language anxiety. *Applied Linguistics, 34*(2), 232–252. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/ams041

Paltridge, B., & Phakiti, A. (2015). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Resource (Research Methods in Linguistics)* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.

Paltridge, B., & Phakiti, A. (2015). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Resource (Research Methods in Linguistics)* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.

Peng, J. E. (2020). Teacher interaction strategies and situated willingness to communicate. *ELT Journal, 74*(3), 307–317. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaa012

Pervin, L. A., & Cervone, D. (2010). *Personality: Theory and research* (11th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Phakiti, A. (2015). Quantitative research and analysis. In B. Paltridge & A. Phakiti (Eds.), *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: A Practical Resource (Research Methods in Linguistics)* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.

Phakiti, A., & Paltridge, B. (2015). Approaches and methods in applied linguistics research. In B. Paltridge & A. Phakiti (Eds.), *Research Methods in Applied*

Linguistics: A Practical Resource (Research Methods in Linguistics) (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.

Phillips, E. M. (1992). The effects of language anxiety on students' oral test performance and attitudes. *The Modern Language Journal*, *76*(1), 14–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1992.tb02573.x

Raddawi, R., & Troudi, S. (2018). Critical Pedagogy in EFL Teacher Education in the United Arab Emirates: Possibilities and Challenges. *TESOL International Journal*, *13*(1), 79-99.

Rastegar, M., & Karami, M. (2015). On the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety, willingness to communicate and scholastic success among Iranian EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 5*(11), 2387-2394. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0511.25

Richmond, V. P., & Roach, K. D. (1992). Willingness to communicate and employee success in U.S. organizations. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 20*(1), 95–115. https://doi.org/10.1080/00909889209365321

Robinson, D., Gabriel, N., & Katchan, O. (1994). Personality and second language learning. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *16*(1), 143–157. https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(94)90118-x

Šafranj, J., & Zivlak, J. (2019). Effects of Big Five Personality Traits and Fear of Negative Evaluation on Foreign Language Anxiety. *Croatian Journal of Education - Hrvatski Časopis Za Odgoj I Obrazovanje*, *21*(1), 275–293. https://doi.org/10.15516/cje.v21i1.2942

Sak, M. (2020). The role of ideal L2 self in predicting L2 willingness to communicate inside and outside the classroom. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 6*(2), 189–203. https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.775798

Sak, M. (2021). Understanding the role of personality in explaining L2 learners' DMC disposition. *Foreign Language Annals, 54*(2), 429–451. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12524

Scovel, T. (1978). The effect of affect on foreign language learning: A review of the anxiety research. *Language Learning*, *28*(1), 129–142. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1978.tb00309.x

Sriprom, C., Rungswang, A., Sukwitthayakul, C., & Chansri, N. (2019). Personality traits of Thai gen Z undergraduates: challenges in the EFL classroom?. *PASAA: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning in Thailand*, *57*, 165–190.

Taherkhani, R., & Moradi, R. (2022). The relationships among self-regulation, emotional intelligence, willingness to communicate, and reading comprehension of Persian foreign language learners: Structural equation modeling. *Foreign Language Annals*, *55*(3), 742–768. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12610

Tekir, S. (2021). Dealing with Turkish EFL learners' speaking anxiety: Turkish EFL learners' speaking anxiety. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, *13*(3), 3424–3442.

Vafadar, H., Foo, T. C. V., & Rouhi, A. (2019). The effects of communication strategies on intermediate EFL low- and mid- willing learners' willingness to communicate: Personality types and learners' choice. *Taiwan Journal of TESOL*, *16*(2), 101–150.

Verhoeven, L., & Vermeer, A. (2002). Communicative competence and personality dimensions in first and second language learners. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, *23*(3), 361–374. https://doi.org/10.1017/s014271640200303x

Vogt, W. P. (1999). *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A nontechnical guide for the social sciences.* Sage Publications.

Wakamoto, N. (2009). *Extroversion/Introversion in Foreign Language Learning: Interactions with Learner Strategy Use (Linguistic Insights)* (New). Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften.

Weda, S., Atmowardoyo, H., Rahman, F., Said, M. M., & Sakti, A. E. F. (2021). Factors affecting students' willingness to communicate in EFL classroom at

higher institution in Indonesia. *International Journal of Instruction*, *14*(2), 719–734. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14240a

Winasih, W. W., Cahyono, B. Y., & Prayogo, J. A. (2019). Effect of project-based learning using e-poster on Indonesian EFL students' speaking ability across personality types. *Arab World English Journal, 10*(1), 73–83. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no1.7

Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language: The Japanese EFL Context. *The Modern Language Journal*, *86*(1), 54–66. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00136

Yashima, T., MacIntyre, P. D., & Ikeda, M. (2018). Situated willingness to communicate in an L2: Interplay of individual characteristics and context. *Language Teaching Research*, *22*(1), 115–137. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168816657851

Yeşilçınar, S., & Erdemir, N. (2022). Are enjoyment and anxiety specific to culture? An investigation into the sources of Turkish EFL learners' foreign language enjoyment and anxiety. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2022.2063295

Yukselir, C., & Ozer, O. (2022). EFL learners' views on learner autonomy and foreign language anxiety. *Acuity: Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature and Culture, 7*(2), 248-263.

Zare, M., Shooshtari, Z. G., & Jalilifar, A. (2020). The interplay of oral corrective feedback and L2 willingness to communicate across proficiency levels. *Language Teaching Research*, *26*(6), 1158–1178. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820928967

Zhou, L., Xi, Y., & Lochtman, K. (2020). The relationship between second language competence and willingness to communicate: the moderating effect of foreign language anxiety. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1801697

Zimbardo, P. G. (1977). *Shyness: What it Is, what to Do about it*. Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Zulkepli, N. (2020). L2 motivational self-system as predictors of out-of-class willingness to communicate. *Dil Ve Dilbilimi Çalışmaları Dergisi*, *16*(4), 1898–1908. https://doi.org/10.17263/jlls.851017