

The Relationship Between Personality Traits and English Language Speaking Anxiety among Faculty of Economics And Management Undergraduates in UKM

Perhubungan antara Tret Personaliti dan Keresahan Terhadap Pertuturan Berbahasa Inggeris di Kalangan Pelajar Prasiswazah Fakulti Ekonomi dan Pengurusan di UKM

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ABSTRAK

Peranan personaliti dalam pembelajaran bahasa kedua dan bahasa asing diakui dan dilihat sebagai peramal bagi kejayaan dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Personaliti berkebolehan untuk menggalakkan ataupun menghalang pembelajaran bahasa, dan keresahan bahasa dalam kalangan pelajar seringkali berpunca dari situasi percakapan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti sifat-sifat personaliti dan keresahan terhadap pertuturan berbahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan pelajar Prasiswazah, Fakulti Ekonomi dan Pengurusan (FEP) di UKM. Selain itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan mengkaji sebarang perhubungan antara sifat-sifat personaliti dan keresahan terhadap pertuturan berbahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan mahasiswa FEP UKM. Sejumlah 104 pelajar FEP daripada program Pentadbiran Perniagaan, Ekonomi, Perakaunan, dan Keusahawanan dipilih melalui kaedah persampelan rawak. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif. Dua soal selidik yang diadaptasi daripada Big Five Inventory (BFI) dan English Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (ELSAS) telah digunakan untuk mengenal pasti tret-tret personaliti dan tahap keresahan berbahasa Inggeris. Perisian SPSS telah digunakan untuk menganalisa data bagi memperolehi matriks korelasi. Hasil kajian mendapati tret personaliti tertinggi dalam kalangan pelajar prasiswazah FEP adalah Keterbukaan, Kepersetujuan dan Kehematan. Kebanyakan pelajar prasiswazah FEP mempunyai tahap keresahan sederhana untuk bertutur Bahasa Inggeris. Korelasi Pearson menunjukkan perhubungan positif antara Kebimbangan Berkomunikasi dan Takut akan Penilaian Negatif dengan tret Neuroticism dan perhubungan negatif dengan tret Extraversion.

Kata kunci: *Tret Personaliti, Keresahan Bahasa, Keresahan Pertuturan Berbahasa Inggeris, Kebimbangan Berkomunikasi, Takut akan Penilaian Negatif*

ABSTRACT

The role of personality in second and foreign language learning are acknowledged and are viewed as useful predictors of language learning success. Personality can either encourage or inhibit language learning, and language anxiety among students often stem predominantly

from speaking situations. The present study investigated the personality traits and English language speaking anxiety among Faculty of Economics and Management (FEP) undergraduates in UKM. Additionally, the study examined any significant relationship between the personality traits and English language speaking anxiety among FEP UKM students. A total of 104 FEP undergraduate students from Business, Economics, Accounting, and Entrepreneurship majors across different years of study were selected using purposive random sampling to participate as respondents to this quantitative study. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) and English Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (ELSAS) were used to identify personality traits and levels of English language speaking anxiety respectively. Results were tabulated and run through SPSS to obtain a correlation matrix. The results show Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness as the most recurring personality trait of FEP undergraduates. A majority of FEP undergraduates have moderate level of Communication Apprehension and Fear of Negative Evaluation. Pearson Correlatives show a positive relationship between Communication Apprehension and Fear of Negative Evaluation with Neuroticism, but a negative relationship with Extraversion.

Keywords: *Personality traits, Language Anxiety, English Speaking Anxiety, Communication Apprehension, Fear of Negative Evaluation*

1. Introduction

The role of English as a second language in Malaysia, with reference to its education system, is acknowledged (Gill, 2002). In alignment with the education policy, the existence of English is implied as being “*side by side with strong indigenous languages, wide use in speaking, and intranational outstanding, sometimes official functions, as the language of politics, the media, jurisdiction, higher education, and other such domains,*” (Thirusanku & Melor, 2012, p. 2) which justifies it being made a compulsory subject at all levels of education. The urge for English language proficiency and communicative competency among students and in the workforce reflects the independent ability to communicate in the target language as a component of undergraduate marketability. However, despite the status of the English Language being an acknowledged medium of instruction in tertiary level education, there is still a persistent endeavour and struggle among students – including final year graduates – to communicate effectively in the target language (Wan Zumusni, Noriah, Deepak & Suhaidi, 2009).

Personality trait determines how an individual deal with new information and views situations (Jung, 1971; Myers & McCauley, 1989). According to Phares (1991), personality is defined as an inborn temperament and features arising in different situations and a combination of the characteristics of a person which separate him/her from other people. On the other hand, the element of language anxiety is defined as a feeling of worry “*associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system*” which may bring about severe limitations to the performance of Foreign Language learners in the classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). According to Campbell, McCabe, Troup, and Davalos (2011), inspecting the dimensions of personality and individual differences can further enrich a better understanding of the cognitive system. However, Tianjian (2010) affirmed that the comprehension of learner differences in either second or foreign language learning is not merely dependent on the cognitive factors like language aptitude and learning styles, but also pivots upon affective factors like motivation and anxiety. Relating personality traits and language anxiety, the notion of both elements being more or less independent from one another has emerged from multiple studies by MacIntyre et al. from the late 1980s and 1990s.

The importance of acknowledging individual differences in the process of second or foreign language learning has been established (Dörnyei, 2005, 2006; Gregersen &

MacIntyre, 2014) and regarded as a dominant objective of research in educational psychology. Sanotska (2014) postulated the importance of students to be able to identify their self-concept – representing deeper understanding of themselves, their skills and capabilities – in the process of foreign language learning. Personality, or the concepts of ‘self’, as suggested by Higgins (1987), functions efficiently as self-guides in directing current motivational behavior.

The progress towards a consensus surrounding contemporary studies pertaining to personality trait theory and language anxiety, or Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), has grown significantly in the last few years, with both internal and external sources of FLCA examined in various studies (Dewaele, 2012; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012).

Problem Statement

The struggle to communicate effectively in English persists among students across different years of study, although the target language has been the medium of instruction in tertiary level education (Wan Zumusni, Noriah, Deepak & Suhaidi, 2009).

In the existing literature, studies investigating language anxiety and the cognitive and affective factors that might affect is not relatively new. Personality variables are linked to the success in second or foreign language learning (cf. Dörnyei, 2005; Ehrman, 2008; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995), but personality factors remain on the sidelines of research on foreign language aptitude, despite the need for such analysis. Regardless, a majority of said studies conducted have investigated from the perspective of personal variables involved in acquiring a language and communicative competence in the second language (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) rather than the anxiety induced from using the second language itself. On the other hand, some important learner variables such as personality factors, notably Big Five personality traits (Goldberg, 1992) have not been investigated adequately enough in the L2 literature within the framework of individual differences. While Horwitz’ model of FLCA has been linked to various psychological variables in contemporary studies, the relationship between FLCA and all high-order personality traits have yet to be considered (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015), and thus remains unclear how far a learner’s foreign or second language anxiety is linked to his or her complete personality profile.

As a response to such lack in the literature, the relationship between personality traits and language acquisition anxiety amongst learners should be a subject requiring further examination (Abu-Rabia et al., 2014).

Research Objectives

This research explored the relationship between personality trait and language anxiety in speaking English as a second language. The study served three objectives:

1. To identify the different personality traits of FEP undergraduate students in UKM.
2. To determine the levels of English language speaking anxiety among FEP undergraduate students in UKM.
3. To examine the relationship between FEP undergraduate students’ personality traits and their English language speaking anxiety.

Research Questions

With the objectives mentioned above, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the personality traits of undergraduate students in FEP, UKM?
2. To what extent are the levels of English language speaking anxiety among undergraduate students in FEP, UKM?

3. What is the relationship between the FEP undergraduate students' personality traits and the language anxiety experienced when speaking English as their second language?

2. Literature Review

Personality Type and Language Learning

In the context of learning a second language, an individual's personality and emotions are accounted and affects their acquisition of the language. In other words, how a person handles his or her emotions that emerge during the learning process, his or her level of motivation in completing a task, as well as beliefs, learning attitudes and personal values: whether one prefers working in solitude or engage in groups, the relationship preferences the learner has towards teachers and other learners, these all play a role in their learning process.

In the study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the link between personality and language learning has been a peak of interest of scholars like Krashen (1985), Skehan (1989), Gass & Selinker (1994) and many others for several decades already. In the literature, scholars have agreed with Ehrman (1996) who postulated that there is an evident link between personality and SLA, given that personality is a predictor of what people find themselves comfortable with. Consequently, people often choose what they are comfortable with and improve themselves on their skills, hence it can be perceived that L2 learners strategize and acquire skills according to the dynamics of his or her personality.

Extrovert and Introvert Language Learners

With regards to the link between personality and language learning, the question of which side of the personality spectrum make better language learners has been a debatable consensus of introverts versus extroverts. Although there have been conventional claims of extroverts outstanding introverts in terms of learning language (Van Daele et al. 2006), the relationship between extraversion and learning was first hypothesized by Eysenck who affirmed a negative correlation between the two, concluding that introverts actually make better language learners than extroverts.

The claim however was met with disagreement among SLA theorists, who strongly argued the case for extroverts as better suited to language learning. Extraverts' preference for communicative approaches (Cook, 2001), and higher tendency to join group activities (McDonough, 1986), rooted in their habitual traits of being outspoken and self-driven to communicate, increases the input and comprehensible language output (Krashen, 1985; Swain, 1993), which then becomes conducive to yield better language proficiency as an outcome. Lightbown & Spada (1993) also believe that extroverts have an advantage in their second language communicative ability, as well as having more success in foreign language learning.

Echoing earlier hypotheses on extroverts in language learning, many researchers assert that learners with extravert features are successful L2 students (Dewaele, 2012; Dewaele & Pavlenko, 2002; Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Talkative, optimistic and sociable learners prefer social strategies, for example, cooperation. They also tend to take risk in language studies more frequently than introverts. They eagerly use new vocabulary and "engage in risky emotional interactions" (Dewaele, 2012: 46).

Dewaele and Furnham (2000) found that Extraversion correlates positively with oral fluency measures in an L2, especially in stressful situations. Moreover, extraverts, due to their risk-taking ability, are more willing to use colloquial and emotion words than introverts. Risk-taking traits in L2 learners, as claimed by Ely and Dewaele, has a significant link to their

class participation, which sequentially foretells their proficiency in the language (Ely, 1986; Dewaele, 2012: 48).

Young (as cited in Dewaele, 2009) discovered that Open Mindedness (a concept similar to Openness to Experience) is a good predictor of foreign language learning outcomes. Openness to Experience is the factor the most strongly related to intellectual functioning. Its correlation with verbal intelligence was estimated by McCrae (as cited in Nosal, 1999, p. 256) at .30. Openness is a relatively stable factor that is believed to have a strong genetic component; the influence of genetic factors on Openness is estimated at .61 (Nosal, 1999).

In SLA research, language attitudes are background issue of second language teaching, having major ramifications for language teaching policy (Allwright & Bailey, 1991), and openness is highly related as a language attitude, and the openness to new language as well as to experience, and risk taking, are prime factors of successful L2 acquisition.

Language Anxiety

In the last few years, researchers have examined both internal and external sources of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) in different studies (Dewaele, 2012; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012), contributing to the substantial growth of studies pertaining to FLCA and its link to psychological and sociographical variables. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is defined as “the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language” according to MacIntyre (1994, p. 27).

Derived into FLCA, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) postulated FLCA as a distinctive form of anxiety that narrows more towards foreign language learning contexts, as compared to other common types of anxiety. FLCA is further explained as a feeling of distress or concern “associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (p. 125), with the ability to have a negative effect to the classroom performance amongst FL learners. The authors have also defined FLCA more specifically as a unique complex of self-consciousness, judgement, emotions, manners and behaviors that arise from the intricacy of the language learning process.

In recent research in understanding language anxiety, there has been an evident focus more specifically on the situational nature of state anxiety, apart from the general trait anxiety (Brown, 2000), in which the three components of foreign language anxiety have been identified as: i. Communication apprehension, in which the learner is inadequate in expressing and articulating mature thoughts and ideas, ii. Fear of negative social evaluation, in which the learner feels the need to socially impress others positively to avoid bad remarks, and iii. Test Anxiety where the learner feels apprehension over a formal academic assessment on the language itself (Brown, 2000).

English Language Anxiety among Malaysian Undergraduates

The unsatisfactory attainment of the English language in the scene of Malaysian education has led to not only substandard communication competency (Mohamed, Goh & Wan, 2004; Othman & Shah, 2013), issues of employability (Azam, Chin & Prakash, 2011; Roshid & Chowdhury, 2013; Koo, Pang & Mansur, 2009; Singh & Singh, 2008), but also the feeling of general discomfort towards the language (Veerappan & Habsah, 2011).

Studies pertaining to English language anxiety among Malaysian students have led to a shared consensus by researches in various studies. In an earlier study examining the levels of English language anxiety among 1215 students from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), findings indicate an apparent pattern of negative perceptions towards English language learning (Rahil Mahyuddin, Noran Fauziah Yaakub and Habibah Elias, 1994). Students

experienced anxiety in communicated and anticipated encounter, and refusal to speak in English classes, showing apprehension in embarrassment, discomfort, and overall lack of confidence.

The consensus is corresponded in a study conducted on 205 Malaysian undergraduates of a public institution by Darmi and Albion (2012), which reported findings indicating fear of negative social evaluation and communication as the most frequent factor of language anxiety.

A similar study on 125 Malaysian undergraduates has also revealed that a majority of university students scored moderate levels of self-perceived anxiety in English language classes (Siti Faridah Kamaruddin and Nabilah Abdullah, 2015). The findings are replicated in later study examining English language anxiety among UiTM Sarawak undergraduates by Chin, Lih & Yih (2016), whose results report a great number of students have a moderate level of English language anxiety. In the same study, the sources of the respondents' language learning anxiety are identified with anxiety of English classes being the primary factor, followed by test and evaluation anxiety, communication apprehension, and lastly negative evaluation.

In summary, local literature pertaining to SLA research on language anxiety proposes that Malaysian students' second language anxiety is generally high, if not moderate. Of the three sources of FLCA outlined by Brown (2000), communication apprehension is identified as the major component of students' second language anxiety, despite being acculturated into English as a second Language (ESL) circumstances, whereby using the language in different domains is a common practice.

The Relationship between Personality Traits and Language Anxiety

The link between factors of personality and SLA has been well established and become a study of interest of scholars like Krashen (1985), Skehan (1989), Gass & Selinker (1994) and many others. Narrowing the role of personality factors onto the affective element of language anxiety, the notion of both variables being more or less independent from one another has emerged from multiple studies by MacIntyre et al. from the late 1980s and 1990s.

Some of the common instigators of foreign language anxiety, especially among learners with high anxiety levels, were identified to be personality factors, fear of negative evaluation, lack of preparation and pressure from parents, instructors as well as examinations (Jen, 2003). A range of social, educational, and sociobiographical variables have been associated to the levels of FLCA, however so, relatively few research has emphasised on the impact of personality traits on FLCA (Horwitz, 2010; Shao, Yu, & Ji, 2013). Regardless, recent studies have emerged and discovered prominent links between LA and (i) *Extraversion and Neuroticism* (Dewaele, 2002; Dewaele, 2009; Dewaele, 2013), contrary to earlier studies (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), (ii) *Emotional Intelligence* (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham, 2008), and (iii) *Perfectionism* (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Dewaele, 2013).

Speaking Anxiety among Introverts and Extroverts

With reference to the increasing awareness of personality differences being practical predictors of second language success as well as being a significant contribution to language teachers' performance and strategies in facing individual differences in the classroom, studies by psycholinguists have majorly inscribed the effect of personality facets on learners' natural communicative oral performance (e.g., Socan & Bucik, 1998; Dewaele & Furnham, 1999, 2000).

In language learning, speaking situations seem to be a predominant stem of students' language anxiety (Koch & Terrell, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Price, 1991). Relating to the spectrum of personality facets, with regards to speaking, extroverted pupils are often

perceived by their talkativeness and fluency, whereas introverted pupils are characterized by their tendency to adopt a more formal speech, with distinct care in grammatical constructions (Dornyei, 2005), although FLA can highly affect the acquisition of fluent production of foreign languages (Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; Andrade & Williams, 2008).

Hamedi (2015) investigated speaking anxiety among extroverts and introverts in English classes and discovered a strong negative correlation between extraversion level and public speaking anxiety, as well as a strong positive correlation between extraversion level and speech fluency. Hamedi's findings aligns with that of Dewaele and Furnham (1999), in which a strong positive correlation was reported between the extraversion degree and speech rate. The correlation is implied by introverts' speech tendency towards exhibiting more hesitation markers and break downs.

Dewaele and Furnham (1999) clarified that introverts' inhibition of the automaticity of their speech production is due to their vulnerability to higher pressure conditions, since their arousal levels often exceed the optimum. Consequently, they resort to controlled serial processing, wherein slower speech production, hesitation, and errors ensue. Similarly, the findings also echo that of Dornyei's (2005), who affirms extroverts to outperform introverts, depending on the fluency of their speech.

Extraversion, Neuroticism and Language Anxiety

Dewaele (2002) discovered that Extraversion and Neuroticism predicted levels of foreign language anxiety in English L3 production, explaining 20% of the total variance. High levels of Extraversion and low levels of Neuroticism were linked to lower levels of anxiety in English. The same author also presented evidence that psychological studies have consistently shown extraverts' superiority over introverts at short-term and working memory (Dewaele, 2009). In the same study, a negative but statistically insignificant correlation between Extraversion and foreign language course marks were found (Dewaele, 2009).

Comparative to earlier studies, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) concluded a significantly negative relationship between the trait of Extraversion and L2 anxiety in French language learning among Anglo-Canadian students. A similar result was reported by Dewaele (2002), who also found a negative relationship between Extraversion and L3 FLA levels in English among 100 Flemish students. Much later Dewaele (2013) reported the same emerging pattern, in a group of students from the University of Les Iles Balears in Mallorca, Spain, with more extravert English L2 learners having significantly lower levels of FLCA. Studies and results on the link between Extraversion and levels of FLCA were linked to aspects of risk-taking and optimism, belonging to the trait of Extraversion.

In the same study, Dewaele (2013) found a significantly positive relationship between the trait of Neuroticism and L2 FLCA of 86 multilingual students in the University of London. An identical relationship was replicated in a study of L3 FLCA among 66 students. Conclusively, The relationship between Neuroticism and FLCA were discovered to be significant in students' L2, L3, and L4. From the study, presumably, participants with higher scores of Neuroticism have the tendency to worry more about how their linguistic competence in FL would be perceived.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study used the quantitative research design, in the form of survey questionnaires to determine the personality traits and levels of English language speaking anxiety among FEP undergraduate students, as well as to examine the relationship between personality traits and levels English language speaking anxiety. The quantitative research design employs a survey

method by utilising a set of questionnaires, which serves to identify prominent beliefs and perceptions of the second language learners of English (Creswell, 2008). The rationale of choosing the aforementioned research design is to gather information numerically and collect basic data from the participants and to examine underlying data patterns that may meet the objectives of the research. Conclusively, the present study took the form of a descriptive research, as it is wholly based on the individuals' opinions and beliefs about their own habitual patterns of personality traits and English language speaking anxiety.

Research Sample

In this study, 104 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Economics and Management (FEP) UKM, situated in Bangi, Selangor were selected as the research sample. The selection of participants was done by purposive, random sampling, wherein every student possessed an equal probability of selection from the target population (Creswell, 2008). The participants were randomly selected from among students studying in FEP, ranging from different programme majors and years of study, while serving the purpose intended for this study, which is to study the patterns of personality trait and English language speaking anxiety among FEP students.

Research Instruments

Data pertaining to FEP students' personality type and English Language Speaking Anxiety were collected using an adaptation of the Big Five Personality Questionnaire and the English Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (ELSAS) adapted from Horwitz & Horwitz (1986) FLCAS to fit the needs and context of local students here in UKM. Both instruments are self-reporting inventories designed to help individuals identify their personality trait and their English language speaking anxiety respectively. In the field of education and psychology, self-report instruments are widely used (Harrington & O'Shea, 1993).

Data Collection Procedure

The design of the study is descriptive and inferential, quantitative in nature. Hence, questionnaires were used as a form of measuring instrument in this study. Self-administered questionnaires were physically distributed randomly to 50 students studying in FEP, ranging from different programme majors and years of study. The questionnaire contains sections on personality traits as adapted from The Big Five Personality Questionnaire, and English language speaking anxiety as adapted from FLCAS by Horwitz & Horwitz (1986).

Data Analysis Procedure

The data for this research was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23. The scores for Section A on personality type were calculated using raw scores, with and the dominant personality type for every respondent determined by the highest mean score in the five facts of the Big Five Inventory. The scores for Section B on English language speaking anxiety were also calculated by raw scores. The levels of English language speaking anxiety of the respondents were determined by their total scores, with different ranges classified as low, moderate, and high.

A correlation matrix between the two variables was run in SPSS for further analysis of the study to determine the relationship between both personality traits and English language speaking anxiety.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic of the respondents

From the questionnaires, the demographic information of the participants was acquired. The demographic findings concerning the age, gender, year of study, and programme majors of the respondents is shown and tabulated accordingly in Table 1.

Aspect	Details	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	Age group		
	20	22	21.2
	21	37	35.6
	22	29	27.9
	23	15	14.4
	24	1	1.0
	Total	104	100.0
Gender	Male	22	21.2
	Female	82	78.8
	Total	104	100.0
Year of study	1st Year	23	22.1
	2nd Year	46	44.2
	3rd Year	33	31.7
	4th Year	2	1.9
	Total	104	100.0
Programme Respondents	Major of		
	Business	25	24.0
	Economics	12	11.5
	Accounting	65	62.5
	Entrepreneurship	2	1.9
	Total	104	100.0

Among 104 FEP undergraduate students, a total of 22 (21.2%) are aged 20, 37 (35.6%) are aged 21, 29 (27.9%) are aged 22, 15 (14.4%) are aged 23, and 1 (1.0%) is aged 24. The respondents comprised a majority of female, which is 82 (78.8%) and males, 22 (21.2%) make up a minority approximately by one-fifth. Among the 104 respondents, 23 (22.1%) are first years, 46 (44.2%) are second years, 33 (31.7%) are third years, and 2 (1.9%) are fourth years. Second years make up the majority of respondents, while fourth years recorded the least number.

From the demographic findings, Accounting majors make up the highest number of 65 (62.5%) students, followed by Business majors as many as 25 (24.0%) students, Economics majors with a number of 12 (11.5%) students, and Entrepreneurship make up the smallest number of 2 (1.9%) students among the 104 respondents. Accounting majors make up more than half of all the respondents acquired for this study.

4.2 Personality Traits of FEP Undergraduate Students

In the distributed questionnaire, Section A covered on the students' personality traits, in which Big Five Inventory by Goldberg (1992) was adapted as an instrument of measure. The section contained 44 questions, each answered by numerical rankings from 1 – 4. The

distribution of questions pertains to individual facets of personality such as Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness, and Neuroticism.

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations acquired for the personality traits of FEP students.

TABLE 2. Personality Traits of FEP Undergraduate Students

	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Openness	Neuroticism
Mean	21.3173	26.5000	23.5865	27.3654	20.9038
Std. Deviation	2.18230	2.96582	2.59428	2.68783	2.94783

Based on the mean and standard deviations generated for FEP students personality traits, a majority of FEP students are reported to have the personality trait of Openness, with the highest recorded mean (27.37), followed by Agreeableness (26.50), Conscientiousness (23.59), Extraversion (21.32), and lastly Neuroticism (20.90).

4.3 English Language Speaking Anxiety of FEP Undergraduate Students

To interpret the implications of the statistics, the possible levels of English language speaking anxiety among the students were classified into three categories: low, moderate, and high levels. For Communication Apprehension (CA), raw scores falling within the interval of 11 to 22 are low, 23 to 33 are moderate, and 34 to 44 are high. For Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), raw scores falling within the interval of 7 to 14 are low, 15 to 21 are moderate, and 22 to 28 are high. The overall results for levels of English language speaking anxiety are tabulated as follows shown in Table :

TABLE 3. Levels of English Language Speaking Anxiety of FEP Undergraduate Students

		Frequency	Percent
Level of English Language speaking anxiety	Low	10	9.6
	Moderate	83	79.8
	High	11	10.6
	Total	104	100.0

Generally, in 104 FEP students, 10 (9.6%) have low levels of speaking anxiety, 83 (79.8%) have moderate levels, and 11 (10.6%) have high levels of speaking anxiety.

To examine the distributions of the levels of CA and FE in English language speaking anxiety, the frequency of the scores falling within each category was calculated separately.

4.4 Communication Apprehension (CA) Levels

The result for levels of CA scored by the students are tabulated and shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Levels of Communication Apprehension of FEP Undergraduate Students

		Frequency	Percent
Level of Communication Apprehension	Low	4	3.8
	Moderate	89	85.6

High	11	10.6
Total	104	100.0

From the table above, it shows that 4 (3.8%) of the respondents are categorised in the low level, 89 (85.6%) in the moderate, and 11 (10.6%) in the high level. The distribution suggests that more than half of the participants reported moderate levels of CA in their English Language speaking anxiety.

Based on the above ranks, the components were presented to examine which items in each component obtained the highest mean and SD. The results are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5. Mean and SD of Communication Apprehension items

Statement	Mean	SD
C1 I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	2.62	.612
C3 It frightens me when I do not understand what the lecturer is saying in English.	2.70	.681
C6 I start to panic when I have to speak in English without being prepared.	2.75	.821
C7 I would not be nervous to speak English with native speakers.	2.54	.667
C8 I feel confident when I speak English in class.	2.43	.587
C10 I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of others.	2.75	.498
C11 I get nervous and confused when I speak English in class.	2.73	.578
C12 I get nervous when I do not understand every word that a person is saying in English.	2.65	.604
C13 I am overwhelmed by the grammar rules I have to learn to speak English.	2.81	.523
C15 I get nervous when the lecturer asks me questions in English.	2.41	.719
C17 I'm afraid people do not understand me when I speak in English.	2.65	.734

Table 5 shows items C13, C6, and C10 to be the most dominant trigger of Communication Apprehension among FEP students, with respective means of 2.81, 2.75, and 2.75. From the data acquired, the overwhelming need to learn grammar rules to be able to speak English is the most prominent cause of FEP students' CA. Situations where students are required to speak English without much preparation and to speak in front of others increases their self-consciousness, which contributes to their CA in their anxiety to speak the language.

Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) Levels

The result for levels of FNE scored by the students are tabulated and shown in Table 6.

Table 6 – Levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation of FEP Undergraduate Students

		Frequency	Percent
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Low	16	15.4
	Moderate	77	74.0
	High	11	10.6
	Total	104	100.0

The result shows that 16 (15.4%) of the respondents fell in the low level, 77 (74.0%) in the moderate, and 11 (10.6%) in the high level. The distribution suggested that more than half of

the participants reported moderate levels of Fear of Negative Evaluation in their English Language speaking anxiety.

Based on the above ranks, the components were presented to examine which items in each component obtained the highest mean and SD. The results are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Mean and SD of Fear of Negative Evaluation items

Statement	Mean	SD
C2 I do not worry about making mistakes in English when I speak.	2.37	.639
C4 I keep thinking that the other students are better at speaking in English than I am.	3.10	.718
C5 I get embarrassed when I have to speak English in class.	2.43	.833
C9 I am afraid that my English lecturer is ready to correct any mistake I make.	2.37	.654
C14 I'm afraid others will laugh at me when I speak in English.	2.51	.750
C16 I feel like my friends do not prefer it if I speak in English.	2.41	.745
C18 I feel like people would judge me if I choose to speak in English.	2.62	.728

Table 7 shows items C4 and C18 to be the most dominant trigger of Fear of Negative Evaluation among FEP students, with recorded means of 3.10 and 2.62 respectively. Based on the acquired data, the constant assumption that other students are more superior in their English-speaking abilities and persistent belief of inferior proficiency in the language contributes to their Fear of Negative Evaluation in speaking the language. Additionally, the default presumption that they would be judged if they choose to speak in English rather than their mother tongue, hence their fear of negative evaluation inhibits their willingness to communicate in the target language. Finally, the mean and the SD of the components of ELSAS were calculated to explore which component generated higher mean and SD.

TABLE 8. Mean and SD of CA and FNE Levels

	CA_Level	FNE_Level
Mean	2.0673	1.9519
Std. Deviation	.37558	.50971

From the statistics above, CA reports a higher mean of 2.07 than FNE, which reports a mean of 1.95 (Table 8). Inferably, FEP students' English language speaking anxiety are more likely rooted in CA, whereby students lack the ability to articulate mature communication skills despite having mature thoughts and ideas (Shabani, 2012).

4.3 Relationship Between Personality Traits and English Language Speaking Anxiety

To find the relationship between personality traits and English language speaking anxiety, the correlation matrix between the elements of BFI and ELSAS were run and examined, and the results are shown in Table 9.

From the correlations generated above, significant correlations were found between the Extraversion and Neuroticism of BFI and CA and FNE of ELSAS. Extraversion reported a significant negative correlation with both CA and FNE, which means a negative relationship is established between Extraversion and English language speaking anxiety.

TABLE 9. Pearson Correlations between BFI and ELSAS

		Communication Apprehension	Fear of Negative Evaluation
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	-.224*	-.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.003
	N	104	104
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	-.095	-.168
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.338	.088
	N	104	104
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	-.185	-.338**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.060	.000
	N	104	104
Openness	Pearson Correlation	-.025	-.018
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.798	.853
	N	104	104
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	.229*	.250*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.011
	N	104	104

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

On the other hand, Neuroticism reported a significant positive correlation with both CA and FNE, which means a positive relationship is established between Neuroticism and English language speaking anxiety. A significant negative correlation was also found between the personality trait Conscientiousness and FNE, but found a relatively insignificant correlation with CA. Hence, no clear relationship can be established between Conscientiousness and English language speaking anxiety.

5. Discussion

The present study indicates that the most dominant personality trait among FEP undergraduate students is Openness, which is a trait characterised by one's receptivity towards learning, brand new experiences, unconventionality and innovative change. The second dominant personality trait is Agreeableness, followed by Conscientiousness. The personality trait Extraversion is not a significantly dominant personality trait among FEP undergraduate students. The findings of the present study contradict that of Lounsbury et al. (2014), where a high number of business students scored highly on Extraversion, but relatively lower on agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness. Comparatively so, Business majors only make up a small number in the present study, however other factors contributing to such traits are less obvious.

It is also worthy to note that among the facets of personality in BFI, Neuroticism is the least dominant personality trait among FEP undergraduate students. With further reference to the findings of Lounsbury et al. (2014), the present study shows comparable results in terms of the personality trait Neuroticism and Emotional stability, whereby each trait is the opposite of one another. Conceptualised as the inverse of neuroticism, emotional stability is one's entire level of emotional resilience and adjustment when encountered with stress and pressure. In the present study, lowest mean was recorded with the trait Neuroticism, which means the students score relatively high on emotional stability. Although the aspects of one's personality is contributed by a complex range of factors, the career path into business occupations insists emotional stability as a crucial functional attribute for students studying in the respective major, as the pervasion of stress and pressure is

synonymous to the industry. Supportive to the present findings, The U.S. Small Business Administration (2006) also ranked emotional stability to be a prominent personality trait shaping effective managers and leaders.

The present study also reports that a majority of FEP undergraduate students have moderate levels of English language speaking anxiety in both elements of CA and FNE. Firstly, addressing English communication apprehension among FEP undergraduate students, 10.6% have high levels of CA and only 3.8% have low levels of CA. Results of the present study may report a smaller population margin than anticipated by previous studies, whereby McCroskey (1997) suggests that by norm, up to 20% of the student population are usually highly apprehensive in oral communication, and Stanga & Ladd (1990) reported 19% to be highly apprehensive.

Comparing CA and FNE, the present study also found that CA is a higher determinant of FEP undergraduate students' English language speaking anxiety than FNE. Findings of the present study is in line with previous research pertaining to Malaysian students' English language speaking anxiety levels, in which Chin (2016) concluded that CA is a predominant factor of English language speaking anxiety among Malaysian students, despite being enculturated as an ESL speaker.

The present study also established the relationship between personality traits of FEP undergraduate students and their English language speaking anxiety. A significant negative relationship was found between the trait Extraversion and English language speaking anxiety, which means inferably, a person who is extroverted is less likely to be anxious when speaking to others in English. As extroverts are often spontaneous people, it is unlikely that they would encounter speech anxiety, where in the case of FEP students, usually roots from the situation of 'feeling unprepared' to speak in English. Evidently, the present study replicates the findings of previous research, which also discovered strong negative correlation between extraversion levels and speaking anxiety levels (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Dewaele, 2002; Dewaele, 2013; Hamed, 2015).

A significant positive relationship was also found between the trait Neuroticism and English language speaking anxiety, presumably that a person who has neurotic traits is more likely to experience high levels of anxiety when speaking to others in English. The association between Neuroticism and language anxiety levels is not uncommon, as the element of Neuroticism possesses the attributes of feeling worrisome, therefore having the higher tendency to be more anxious about how the linguistic competence would be perceived. The present study reflects the findings of Dewaele (2013), in which a significant positive relationship was found between the trait of Neuroticism and second language anxiety.

6. Conclusion

This study shows that FEP undergraduate students' personality traits are Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness, whereby Extraversion and Neuroticism are the least dominant personality traits among FEP undergraduate students, which contradicts conventional findings from previous research. Results of the study also indicates a majority of FEP undergraduate students have moderate levels of English language speaking anxiety, with CA being a more likely determinant of their anxiety. Finally, two relationships are established in this study, where (a) a negative relationship between Extraversion and English language speaking anxiety, and (b) a positive relationship between Neuroticism and English language speaking anxiety, of which both relationships are consistent with the findings of earlier studies by MacIntyre & Charos (1996), Dewaele (2002: 2013) and Hamed (2015).

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