

Understanding Leadership in Second Language Acquisition within 'The Big Five Model'

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Abstract

This study explores the psychological traits of twenty second language learners focusing on their engagement and success in acquiring English as a Second Language. Using Lewis Goldberg's Big Five Model, examine their personality traits to understand how these ideas influence their leadership in language acquisition. The analysis considers the interplay of "nature" and "nurture" in shaping learners' flexibility and development. The mixture of qualitative and quantitative study features—nine males and eleven females—all in their early twenties, offering insights into individual differences in second language learning and the role of psychological factors in their endeavors.

Keywords: Educational leadership; 'the big five model'; Lewis Goldberg; nurture;

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1.0 Introduction

Various human factors shape L2 interaction and success, underscoring personal differences in SLA. Educators must address classroom inequalities to create inclusive environments. This study explores theoretical and practical insights into SLA, emphasizing personality's role in learning and its connection to leadership as a culturally constructed phenomenon, often influenced by gender, race, and class (Wilkinson & Bristol, 2018). Guided by the Five-Factor Model, it highlights three key drivers of language change: anxiety, gendered spaces, and leadership. For South Asian immigrants, the intersection of language learning with gendered experiences in the West offers untapped research potential (Skehan, 1991; Norton, 2020). Cultural and geopolitical factors also shape L2 challenges, as noted in stereotypes and digital trends. Younger generations often approach language learning through cultural phenomena like K-pop, shifting focus from English to regional trends (Canagarajah & Ashraf, 2013). The digital lifestyle further impacts learners' motivations, with linguistic input interacting dynamically with identity and emotional states.

1.1 Rational of the Study

Personality's influence, as modeled by the Big Five (Goldberg), is central to understanding SLA. Emotional traits like anxiety significantly predict language performance, particularly in less common languages like Chinese (Wang, 2017). The socio-educational framework

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links language learning to social contexts, emphasizing personality and affective factors as critical to comprehension and pedagogy. The connection between personality and learning styles stems from a broader theory of cognitive styles. Varying cognitive styles such as analytical, intuitive, visual, and auditory, shape a learner's ability to receive and process information in a classroom. Educators can create a more effective learning environment and instill autonomy in their language acquisition process by understanding and accommodating diverse cognitive styles. Learners should also be intrinsically motivated to effectively enhance their language proficiency. While certain strategies can be implemented within certain personality groups quite easily, others might require more thought-out strategies. Bridging the gap between a learner's personality and their capability to master a second language, has become a significant role of educators. This research underlines the need for educators to balance rigorous SLA strategies with attention to individual learners' traits and their experiences with educational leadership.

1.2 Problem Statement

Like other countries where English is not the primary Language, Bangladesh is facing problems in teaching and studying English Language. The English education strategy also requires a monumental change for idiosyncratic identity development, considering their mental conditions and social barriers. In addition, the teaching methods, technological support, instructor quality, and syllabus are not standard. Students in the urban region convey more facilities but still face these problems with substantial mental pressure from parents. Because of the inconvenient environment, training tactics, and extreme stress, students contain idiosyncratic childhood fears of the English Language. Gradually, numerous students face communicative disorders like Speech-sound disorders, Social communication disorders, and Expressive language disorders, which generally cannot be realized.

Based on the Daily Star report, 165,323,100 people speak English in Bangladesh. Considering the interest and importance of the English Language, we cannot overlook the reasonable efforts to develop the English Language sector. Bangladesh's Government and other institutes should focus on profound research into the social, educational, psychological, and cultural barriers to English education development. This research proposal will discuss the issues of the English learning process in Bangladesh.

2.0 Literature Review

Acquiring a second language (L2) is a complex process shaped by various psychological and contextual factors. Studies on personality traits, such as anxiety, gendered spaces, and leadership, reiterate how these elements interconnect with the Big Five personality factors, which are crucial for shaping learning success and resilience (Raad, 1996).

2.1. The Big Five Framework

The Big Five personality traits—openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—are key predictors of L2 learning success. Individuals who encounter new experiences, often characterized by high levels of openness, tend to navigate the challenges of language learning more effectively. Openness, linked to curiosity, adaptability, and a preference for novel linguistic expressions, enhances learning outcomes and strengthens leadership qualities to acquire a second or foreign language (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015). Novikova et al. (2020) found that openness significantly predicted foreign language proficiency among linguistics students, emphasizing its relevance to L2 acquisition. Openness and extraversion are particularly associated with faster language acquisition, with traits such as willingness to communicate and perseverance contributing to improved language abilities (Öz, 2014). Neuroticism, conversely, impacts cognitive adaptability and stress reactivity, which are critical during language learning phases (Mugabat & Shahbaz 2014). Traits like extraversion and agreeableness encourage engagement, while emotional stability correlates with positive learning outcomes **that are seen among students** who not only prefer to learn but also help others (Zhang et al., 2020). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) connected multicultural personality traits with Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE), emphasizing the role of positive emotions in language acquisition and the interaction between FLE and anxiety. **None of the studies dealt with all the five factors together. Most of them deal with one or two traits together. This can be considered as the research gap of the previous studies. No studies have shown a comparative study of all these factors.**

2.2 Anxiety in SLA

Anxiety is a significant barrier to L2 learning, limiting motivation and reducing confidence (Dewaele et al., 2008). Fattahi Marnani & Cuocci (2022) explored its dual role as both a barrier and motivator, while Wu & Fakhruddin (2023) examined how sociocultural factors, digital lifestyles, and gender roles shape language learning experiences. According to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, anxiety hinders language input processing, confirming its negative effect on communicative competence (Nguyen, 2020; Sudina, 2023).

2.3 Gender in SLA

Gendered spaces also complicate SLA, as demonstrated by Bonetti (Liu et al., 2023) in her study of Bengali women's resistance to passive narratives through active learning (Li & Wei 2022), who showed how societal norms affect language acquisition in international student spouses while leading the charge to learn a new language for themselves and their family members.

2.4 Leadership in SLA

Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering inclusive language learning environments. Culturally responsive leadership values linguistic diversity and implements equitable policies. It addresses systemic biases and narrows achievement gaps through professional

development and reflective practices (Guillaume, 2024; Leadership Academy, 2022). Engaging with students, families, and communities ensures that educational practices meet diverse needs and promote a sense of belonging (Reimagining Migration, 2024).

3.0 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study uses a mixed-method design to explore the impact of personality traits, anxiety, gendered spaces, and technology on second language acquisition (SLA). By combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, it offers a comprehensive understanding of how these factors interact in various learning contexts. The research involves 20 adult second language learners, aged 20 to 23, from diverse sociocultural backgrounds, stratified by gender, personality traits, and technology usage. Participants come from both traditional classrooms and online environments, providing insights into how sociocultural contexts influence language learning (Bonetti, 2016; Klein et al., 2019). The study also includes learners with varying levels of language anxiety to assess its impact on performance and their educational leadership skills (Nguyen, 2020).

The study is informed by several theoretical frameworks. The Big Five Personality Traits Theory helps explain how traits like Extraversion and Openness influence leadership skills and language learning (Goldberg, 1990; Sundin et al., 2020). Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights how anxiety impacts SLA (Nguyen, 2020). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory underscores the role of social interactions and cultural contexts in SLA (Vygotsky, 1978). These frameworks collectively enhance the understanding of factors influencing second language acquisition.

3.1 Tools

Big Five Inventory: This is a standardized instrument used to measure the personality traits of participants. An important backdrop for this study is the Big Five personality traits — Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism— which have pronounced effects on language learning (Sundin et al., 2020; Bajwa et al., 2017). This measure is the BFI a valid and reliable instrument for measuring individual differences in learning outcomes, which are often used in SLA research (Sudina, 2023).

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. *Based Assessments of Foreign-Language Anxiety*. (1986) The FLCAS is a 33-item self-report instrument to measure language anxiety levels only in the context of learning. Such studies on affective filters were mainly about SLA with the main focus on determining how they influence language learning (Liu et al., 2023; Nguyen, 2020).

Data was collected through a custom-designed questionnaire which was shared with the participants in person and via digital tools. Through the use of multimodal instruments, we ensured that the participants provided unbiased and unaltered information.

We conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 members to explore their experiences. Focusing on the influence of gendered spaces on language learning trajectories, this study is situated in a framework that foregrounds sociocultural expectations and environments (like family/work/community) that enable or constrain particular ways of masculinity/femininity through together findings about language use. As such, the interviews reflect on Jake's emotional and psychological understanding of language learning, especially regarding anxiety or societal burdens when it comes to multi-course enrolment (Elfeel & Bailey 2018).

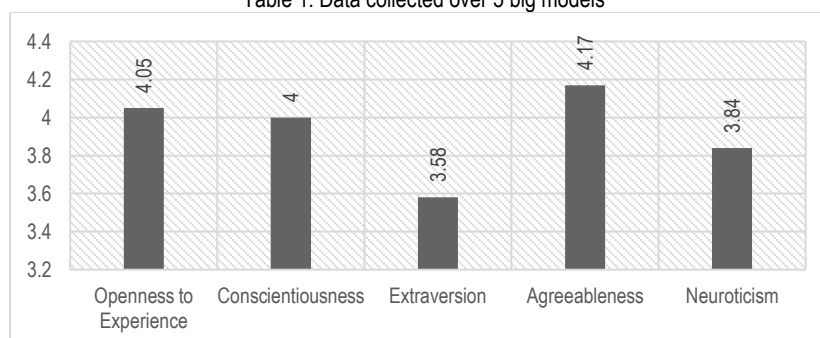
3.2 Data Sampling

Data collection occurred over two months. Participants initially completed the BFI and FLCAS, followed by the Technology Use Survey midway through the academic term. Interviews were administered after the study to enable participants to reflect on their experiences over time. Based on participants' preferences, data collection occurred both in-person and online.

Participants' personal information was anonymous to maintain confidentiality. All participants provided written consent and were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

4.0 Findings and Analysis

Table 1. Data collected over 5 big models



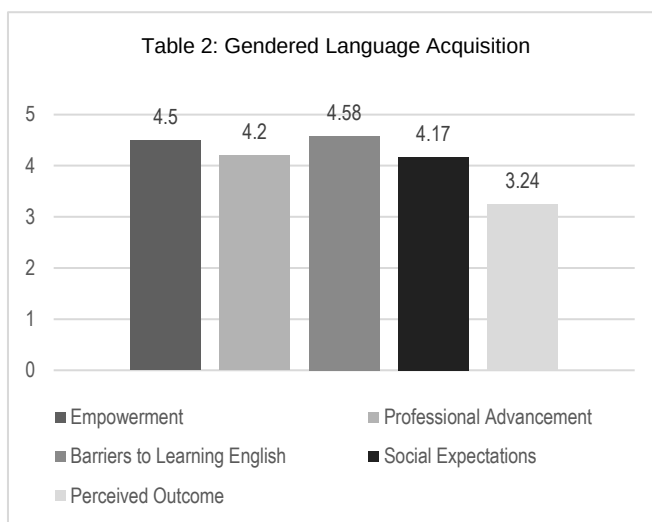
This study explores the intersections of personality traits, gendered spaces, and English language learning in the classroom through leadership skills among university students aged 20-23 in the Dhaka division of Bangladesh. The analysis focuses on the influence of

traits like openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism on language learning, alongside the impact of gendered spaces on learning outcomes.

Table 1 is an average of the data collected over a month from 20 participants including 55% Female and 45% Male. The results show that Bangladeshi learners exhibit high levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness (Table. 1), suggesting a cooperative and diligent approach to language acquisition. **These learners are ready to accept all sorts of cultural phenomena in a well-organized way as English provides them with a better present and future. Once learners are serious about this second language acquisition, they will have better job opportunities not only in the global market but also in the country.** Openness is also high, indicating curiosity and adaptability, while extraversion is moderate, with students feeling more comfortable in smaller groups with or without a leader. **This is because the culture of Bangladesh is way too different than the culture of the target language. This language is totally different in terms of grammar, system, pronunciation, cultural effect, and teaching style.** Moderate neuroticism scores point to anxiety, particularly in speaking English, suggesting areas of improvement in building confidence. **These learners are very much unfamiliar with the target language though they want to build a better future with this new system. That is why openness, consciousness, and agreeableness have a good score but they still lack extraversion and neuroticism. Their score started above 3 showing that none is negative about second language acquisition.**

4.2 Gendered Spaces and Language Acquisition

The data in Table 2 also elucidate how gendered spaces influence English learning. The slightly higher proportion of female students might suggest a trend where women are increasingly engaging in English language acquisition, possibly as a means of empowerment and social mobility. Excerpt 8, "People look at you when you speak in English. Especially the girls. Ha ha," points to the social pressures surrounding language use, especially for women, who may face different expectations and scrutiny compared to their male counterparts. Moreover, societal attitudes towards gender roles may also play a significant role in shaping learning environments. While women may be more inclined to learn English for social reasons, they also encounter barriers that can affect their confidence and engagement in language use (Awal, 2023). The comments from male respondents about the performance of their female relatives, such as Excerpt 6, "My brother speaks fluent English due to his education in the English medium school," highlight both competitive and comparative dynamics that can be gendered, affecting motivation and self-esteem.



4.3 Leadership for Language Learners

Participants provided various strategies for enhancing English learning leadership, emphasizing collaborative practices and individual approaches. Excerpt 10 states, "Practicing English with friends, siblings and cooperative with teachers," illustrating a community-based approach that can mitigate feelings of isolation and anxiety often experienced by language learners. Excerpt 11 further reinforces this to encourage confidence: "They need to stay confident, comfortable, cooperative." This resonates with the findings of Jenkins (2013), which stress the importance of social support in language learning. Additionally, the excerpts highlight diverse learning strategies also can be found in Table 2 shows the notions of professional advancements and perceived outcomes, such as engaging with media: "One must explore foreign documentaries, articles, movies..." (Excerpt 13). This reflects a broader understanding of multimodal learning, which can cater to different personality types and preferences, facilitating a more inclusive approach to language acquisition and leadership (A, 2019).

5.0 Discussions

Scores for openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion reflect learners' eagerness to explore new ideas and their structured approach to study. However, extraversion scores reveal some hesitancy in public speaking, possibly due to the collectivist culture, where English use in public settings can be seen as elitist. High agreeableness supports group learning, while moderate neuroticism scores

highlight anxiety as a barrier to language learning. Interviews further reveal that personality traits significantly affect language learning. Openness to experience is linked to a willingness to engage with complex language structures, while neuroticism, particularly a lack of confidence, negatively impacts learning outcomes (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). In terms of gender, the slight female majority in the study suggests women may increasingly view English as a tool for empowerment. However, societal pressures on women's language use create additional barriers, such as feelings of discomfort when speaking English in public. The competitive dynamics between genders also influence motivation, with male respondents noting the impact of educational background on language proficiency, especially among women.

5.1 Leadership

The convoluted bridge between personality traits and second language acquisition (SLA). It focuses on the importance of understanding individual disposition, particularly those defined by the Big Five Model. The article aspires to enhance learner autonomy and build educational leadership through teaching strategies. Personality traits such as openness to experience and conscientiousness foster curiosity and diligence among learners, creating a positive impact. Neuroticism highlights challenges like anxiety and lack of confidence, hindering progress. The research advocates for diverse teaching approaches and classroom environments that accommodate diverse learner profiles and promote autonomy and leadership. It hopes to bridge the learning gaps within a gendered space and address anxiety to maximize SLA outcomes.

5.2 Teachers' Role in Supporting Individual Differences

Understanding personality traits and enhancing leadership is crucial for educators aiming to support diverse student needs effectively. Excerpt 19 states, "If the teacher is familiar with the behavior of students individually, he/she can treat them according to what they need." **This underscores the importance of personalized teaching methods that take into account individual differences (Tomlinson, 2014). The students' acknowledgment of the need for more individualized attention, as noted by a respondent, "Our teacher cannot give proper time to most of us," suggests that larger class sizes may hinder effective teaching practices.**

Teachers should act as mentors, indicating that strong teacher-student relationships can significantly enhance learning experiences: "My teacher is the best counselor. He is so helpful..." This relationship can be especially beneficial in fostering resilience and a positive learning environment, which are critical for success in language learning (Hattie, 2009).

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the analysis of personality traits, gendered spaces, and the ability to lead their own learning process and their effects on English learning among university students in Bangladesh, several recommendations can be made to improve language acquisition. Educators should adopt personalized learning strategies to accommodate diverse personality traits, as differentiated instruction enhances student engagement and success (Tomlinson, 2014). Formative assessments can help tailor instruction to students' strengths and weaknesses (Hattie, 2009). Creating a supportive classroom environment is essential, particularly for students with higher levels of neuroticism or shyness. Group discussions and peer mentoring can foster a sense of community and help students feel more comfortable expressing themselves in English. Social support significantly reduces anxiety and promotes confidence (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). Collaborative learning, such as pair work, group projects, and language exchange programs, offers a less intimidating setting for language practice. Jenkins (2013) asserts that peer collaboration enhances language skills and interpersonal relationships. Teachers should integrate multimodal resources like films, podcasts, and online articles into their curricula to cater to different learning styles and make learning more engaging (Hockly, 2018). Content relevant to students' interests can also boost motivation. Educational institutions should address gender dynamics in language learning by ensuring equal participation opportunities and addressing biases. Awal (2023) highlights the importance of supporting female learners by addressing societal norms that may hinder their language acquisition. **Before everything, teachers should be properly trained to teach this second language in an appropriate way keeping the modern teaching styles in mind. This is a limitation in Bangladesh where proper teacher trainers are not available.**

This study underscores the complexity of second language acquisition (SLA), emphasizing how individual personality traits and sociocultural factors, particularly educational leadership in gendered spaces help influence language learning. Traits like openness and conscientiousness can positively impact language acquisition as they are positive factors to nurture language learning leadership, while neuroticism may cause anxiety and hinder progress (Wang, 2017). It highlights the need for educators to recognize students' diverse backgrounds and preexisting inequalities, advocating for inclusive environments tailored to individual needs, in line with the socio-educational model of SLA (Gardner, 2006). The study also emphasizes the importance of understanding the psychological aspects of SLA, such as anxiety and cultural stereotypes, to better support learners (Skehan, 1991; Canagarajah, 2012). Additionally, as digital media increasingly shapes language learning, educators should adapt their strategies to students' cultural interests and technological engagement, incorporating modern influences like K-pop and Manga to make learning more relevant and motivating (Hockly, 2018). Overall, this research shows that SLA is not just a linguistic challenge but a complex interaction of educational leadership that fosters personality, social context, and individual experience. By acknowledging these factors, educators can foster more effective language learning, contributing to the broader discourse on SLA and offering practical applications for improving language education in a digital world. More open-minded teacher trainers should be incorporated. The whole system of teaching should come out of that rigidity, and big-headedness that the traditional approach is no longer very helpful. Mental health should be equally given importance for a better outcome.

In the future, this research will have a broader longitude survey including other districts of Bangladesh with a bigger

sample size. The research has the limitation of surveying within a short area and with a short sample size.

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Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This paper is going to bring light to the educators' focus that only physical traits or comforts cannot make an SLA classroom successful but they need to take care of the mental health of the learners as well. Identifying learners' identities and leading them to leadership is a generation de-mand that will ultimately make the teaching-learning process greatly successful. Educators and management often ignore the main focus of the learning process and in a country like Bangladesh, people never consider psychological factors to be measurable in the teaching-learning process. Hence, this paper will draw attention to the need for psychoanalysis even before planning a successful classroom material.

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