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THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN EFL

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Student: Nuša Varšić

Mentor: dr.sc. Renata Geld, doc.

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University of Zagreb

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English

TEFL Section

THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN EFL

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Student: Nuša Varšić

Supervisor: assistant professor Renata Geld

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Examining Committee:

Assistant professor Renata Geld

Ivana Bašić, senior lector

Professor Višnja Josipović Smojver

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ABSTRACT

Personality is one of the IDs affecting an individual's learning and the overall process of education. When personality and FLL are in question, there are two ways in which studies can be conducted. They can either deal with the influence of personality on FLL or with the influence of FLL on personality. FLL usually takes place in a classroom setting, therefore, some situation-specific personality traits also have to be taken into consideration. Ely (1988) defined three situation-specific personality constructs – Language Class Risktaking, Language Class Sociability and Language Class Discomfort which he then connected to activities taking place in a language classroom.

This study also tackles the connection between the three situation-specific personality traits and seven common activities taking place in CEL classes at the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. Five hypotheses were put forward, namely that the participants who score high in LCR and in LCS prefer "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" and that participants who score high in LCD prefer the "Structured activities". Other two hypotheses dealt with gender and age differences in attitudes toward the activities. The data analysis provided only partial confirmation of the hypotheses. However, the findings do not diminish the role of personality in language acquisition and instruction.

KEY WORDS: *personality, FLL, situation-specific personality traits, language class risktaking, sociability, discomfort, language class activities, CEL*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, psychology started to develop, numerous research was conducted in order to explore people's mind and personality. People have always wondered to what extent our personality defines us and how it impacts our everyday life, our education or any other aspect of our lives. Besides that, who we are justifies our actions and the way we do something. Nowadays, globalization, economic development, students and workers mobility have made language learning an imperative. These symbols and sounds which a language consists of represent the most important means of communication. Learning a foreign language might open many international doors that one would not dare to open without knowing how to communicate in that specific language. Both foreign languages and one's personality are of great importance. The connection between personality traits, attitudes and FLL is discussed in this study. FLL is usually set in a classroom, therefore everything that takes place in the classroom influences learners' proficiency. It is known that learners do not usually enjoy the same activities. To what extent can we ascribe our actions, participation and liking/disliking some classroom activities to our personality and how can our personality influence our FLL? This study attempts to find the answers to these questions.

At the beginning of the second part, definitions of the main individual differences are provided, as well as the research history and most important researchers. The following chapter focuses only on personality as an individual difference and it is discussed in more detail. After that, the connection between personality and FLL is established. The chapter deals with learning in general, FLL, FLL setting and common language classroom activities. The second part of the paper is concluded with an overview of previous studies dealing with the subject. In the third part, the procedures and methods of the study are discussed as well as the results derived from it. At the end of the paper a conclusion is provided.

2.0 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Psychology has always tried to understand some "general principles" that are shared by humankind on the one hand, but has explored the *uniqueness of individuals* on the other, since there are no two human beings that are the same. The discipline dealing with the latter was named *differential psychology*, but is now, according to Dörnyei (2005), referred to as

individual differences. Individual differences are actually characteristics or traits that have been defined by psychologists and can be applied to every individual. Dörnyei gives a seemingly simple definition when he states that individual differences "concern anything that marks a person as a distinct and unique human being" (2005:4). The problem with defining individual differences is their broad concept. In order to avoid the inclusion of anything differing from person to person, i.e. things that are of less importance to psychology (such as tendencies or preferences when discussing clothes), scientists assume that there is some stability in those differences. There are numerous individual differences that could be listed. Descriptive words that were initially listed and argued to present IDs have been put into different categories, so nowadays we distinguish between the core variables and optional ones (2005:7). Still, the research on individual differences ranges "from analyses of genetically coded to the study of sexual, social, ethnic, and cultural differences and includes research on cognitive abilities, interpersonal styles, and emotional reactivity" (Revelle, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:7). This statement shows us the actual broadness of this field and implies that there must be difficulties and obstacles when trying to give some theoretical basis which could enable studying the IDs in practice. Since this paper deals with the connection between language learning and some aspects of one's personality, Dörnyei's definition in which he states that "individual differences are the most consistent predictors of L2 learning success" (2005:2) presents the initial assumption of the importance of one's personality traits in mastering a FL or L2. In foreign language learning, the individual differences that authors mostly consider are learners' *aptitude* and *motivation*. However, a great amount of studies deal with learners' personality variables which can either influence FLL or be influenced by FLL.

2.1.1 Motivation and attitudes

Based on personal experience, one could say that motivation for accomplishing any task is of great importance. There are always some things that a person likes doing, and things that make a person feel uncomfortable, unwilling and even angry. In other words, we have certain attitudes toward particular activities which can either motivate or demotivate us. We encounter such situations in everyday life. Learning a language is a process that requires more attention, time, sometimes money, and certainly, more motivation. The following quote sums up the importance of motivation:

Motivation "provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in SLA presuppose motivation

to some extent. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement. (...) High motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one's language aptitude and learning conditions (Dörnyei, 2005:65).

It is important to specify three phases of L2 motivation research. The first phase is *the social psychological period* which focuses on a language affected by sociocultural factors, such as attitudes toward the language and cultural stereotypes. In this phase, the acquisition of the language of community is the "primary force responsible for (...) hindering intercultural communication" (Dörnyei, 2005:67). The second phase is *the cognitive-situated period,* which is characterized by two trends, namely, the switch from macrosphere (community) to microsphere (classroom) and the desire to import some new concepts from *motivational psychology,* such as the importance of one's self-perception. In other words, focus has been set on the *situation-specific factors* that mainly relate to classroom setting, and different types of *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* motives for language learning.[1] One of the novelties of the period was the *attribution theory,* which links people's experiences with future achievement efforts "by introducing causal attributions as the mediating link" (Weiner, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:79). The third phase is the *process-oriented period* which takes into consideration the dynamic character and temporal variation of motivation, in other words, the change of motivation over time. Authors in the motivation field emphasize the importance of *integrativeness,* as well as the *language self system* or "individual's ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming" (Dörnyei, 2005:99). The learners always try to imagine the ideal results, which then motivate them to either study harder and dedicate more time, or enjoy the whole language learning process to a greater extent. The conceptions of the ideal self, argues Schmidt (16), are individualistic, but "also heavily influenced by cultural values".

Whatever be the focus of a period, motivation is, in our opinion, influenced by all of the abovementioned factors. For example, if a lower grade is considered to be a situation-specific factor, getting a bad one can motivate a learner to study harder, or disappoint and demotivate them. Therefore, the FLL setting and context need to be emphasized.

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[1] *Extrinsic motives* focus on the material and monetary rewards of an education. *Intrinsic motives* refer to the perception of language learning process, i.e. whether it is fun, challenging, competence-enhancing... The theory that focuses on extrinsic/intrinsic motives is called the self-determination theory. (Dörnyei, 2005:76-79)

2.1.2 Language Aptitude

It can often be heard that someone has a "talent" or "knack" for languages. Language aptitude is connected to language learning ability. Dörnyei (2005) says that "we have a number of cognitive factors making up a composite measure that can be referred to as the learner's overall capacity to master a foreign language" (2005:32-34). Early research in psychology dealt with measuring and testing language aptitude in order to identify talented and untalented students. Later, most tests and batteries, such as MLAT and PLAB[2] measure one's prediction of success in mastering a language. A central component of language aptitude is the *working memory* for language, which involves a temporary storage and manipulation of information. A question that is often proposed is whether this capacity and intelligence for mastering a foreign language is innate or it could be developed over the years. Another question is the importance of the age factor, in other words, whether language aptitude fades with age. The explanation for this is offered by *Critical Period Hypotheses* (CPH).[3] One would argue that foreign languages can be mastered only, or more easily, during the critical period. However, some findings have shown that language aptitude is a relatively fixed and stable trait, and that it does not fade (Deary et al., 2000; Carroll and Sapon, 1959[4]). All in all, scholars look at language aptitude as a form of developing expertise rather than an ability fixed at birth.

2.1.3 Learning Styles and Strategies

The way we learn something or perceive information is also a trait that makes us unique. More precisely, different learners can have different approaches to the same learning task. Our learning styles and strategies are very important in mastering a foreign language. Dörnyei brings Reid's definition which refers to learning styles as "an individual's natural, habitual and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills" (Reid, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:121). They do not distinguish talented learners from

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[2]   MLAT (The Modern Language Aptitude Test) and PLAB (The Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery) are the most familiar language aptitude tests. Although some of the tasks are similar, according to Dörnyei (2005:36), there are significant differences. For example, PLAB emphasizes auditory factors more than memory factors, which is not the case with MLAT. For more information see Dörnyei (2005).

[3]   According to Birdsong (2009:1), CPH „states that there is a limited developmental period during which it is possible to acquire a language, be it L1 or L2, to normal, nativelike levels. Once this window of opportunity is passed, however, the ability to learn a language declines". For more information see Birdsong, D. (2009). *Second language acquisition and the critical period hypothesis*. Taylor & Francis e-Library. *

[4]   For more information see Dörnyei (2005), p. 44-45.

the untalented, but rather refer to personal preferences. Also, the presumption is that they have "a psychological basis and are fairly fixed for the individual" (Riding, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:122). Experts have developed models that can be applied to learners and measure their styles. One of the models is Kolb's model of learning styles which distinguishes four learner types: *divergers, convergers, assimilators* and *accommodators*.[5] When language learning is in question, the concepts of *field-dependence* and *field-independence* are often discussed. Field independents are, argues Dörnyei, "better at focusing on some aspects of experience or stimulus, separating it from the background, and analyzing it unaffected by distractions". On the other hand, scholars say that field dependents "are more responsive as they interact with the environment and, thus, tend to have a stronger interpersonal orientation and greater alertness to social cues" (2005:137-138). Research has shown that field dependents performed better on L2 tasks that emphasized communicative rather than formal aspects of language proficiency. Learning style categories that are perhaps more familiar are those that distinguish *visual*, *auditory*, *kinaesthetic* and *tactile* learners. Measuring and defining one's learning style fostered many questionnaires, learning style indicators and surveys (Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire, Oxford's Style Analysis Survey, Ehrman and Leaver's Learning Style Questionnaire). However, there is still a need for defining genuine L2 styles which would explain individual differences of a L2 learner, as well as "increase face validity, which would make it easier for teachers to recognize and deal with them" (Dörnyei, 2005:141-154).

Learning strategies, according to Oxford, refer to "specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques that students use to improve their own progress in developing skills in a second or foreign language. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language" (Oxford, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:163). Those learning strategies include identifying material that needs to be learned, distinguishing it from other material, having contact with that material several times and memorizing it when it does not happen naturally. Some learners are reported to use these strategies more often, which might be connected with the notion of *self-regulation*. *Self-regulation* describes to which degree

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[5] *Divergers* are the learners who prefer concrete situations that require brainstorming, generation of ideas, and who learn best through experience, have broad cultural interests and prefer working in groups. *Convergent* learners prefer abstract thinking that can generate ideas and theories, deal with active experimentation and solve specific problems. Then he mentions *assimilators*, who understand a wide range of information and put them into logical forms. They are theoretical types more than practical. Finally, Kolb distinguishes *accommodators*, who like both concrete experience and experimentation, and often follow their instinct rather than logical analysis (Dörnyei, 2005:129-131)-

individuals actively participate in their own learning. The main taxonomies of learning strategies consist of four main components: *cognitive* strategies, *metacognitive* strategies, *social* and *affective* strategies. In order to measure them, several questionnaires have been invented, namely the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, Language Strategy Use Inventor and Index and so forth. Since language teaching has become more learner-focused, the introduction of strategy training is (highly) advised, in other words, language strategies should be integrated into the process of learning. Some of the studies show positive results, whereas others have not shown improved performance after the strategy instruction. Cohen and Dörnyei have come up with *style and strategies-based instruction* (SSBI), an initiative to integrate strategies into language instruction. Cohen explains that:

> The underlying premise of the styles- and strategies-based approach is that students should be given the opportunity to understand not only what they can learn in the language classroom, but also how they can learn the language they are studying more effectively and efficiently.[6]

Strategy training inclusion in the process of learning would be helpful to students, as well as the teachers. It is often suggested that different subjects should be learned in different ways. Regarding mathematics, physics or chemistry, one should practise and do exercises with numbers, whereas for memorizing some facts or years, it is useful to make maps and use different colours. Vocabulary can, for example, be learnt by heart or by using each item in a context. Those are some of the examples that we can suggest from our own experience. Thus, helping learners by suggesting to them to use some of the tested strategies cannot be harmful.

2.1.4 Foreign Language Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) and willingness to communicate (WTC) are not defined as independent IDs, but could be connected to various components of personality. We all know, from our own experience, that anxiety in general can affect our performance. FLA, thus, has a great impact on language performance, since it is defined as "a worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (MacIntyre, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:199). Capan and Simsek state that "FLA is specific to language learning classrooms, because the FL classroom imposes serious threats on learners." They continue that "anxiety in general stems from a perception of threat" and the FL classroom is often

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[6]   For more information see: CARLA (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition) http://www.carla.umn.edu/strategies/SBIinfo.html

perceived as threatening, since there is the risk of being humiliated by other students, scorned by the teacher if you make a mistake, but there is also the fear of public speaking (2012:117). However, not all anxiety is necessarily bad. Dörnyei distinguishes *beneficial* or *facilitating anxiety* which is a part of emotionality, and *inhibitory* or *debilitating anxiety* which includes worry. As he adds, beneficial anxiety can sometimes promote performance. He brings another distinction, namely, the distinction between *trait* and *state anxiety*, explaining that trait anxiety is "a stable predisposition to become anxious in a cross-section of situations", whereas state anxiety refers to "a transient experience of anxiety (...), an emotional reaction to the current situation" (Dörnyei, 2005:198). FLA was found to be a relatively independent factor and uniquely L2-related variable. Language anxiety can depend on perfectionism, introversion, self-confidence and social milieu. WTC (Willingness to Communicate) is another construct that affects our L2 use. It is important because it promotes communicative language instruction and is considered the ultimate goal of L2 instruction. The experts distinguish between L1 WTC and L2 WTC, saying that in one's first language WTC is a fairly stable personality trait that develops over the years, the result of which is a "personality-based orientation toward talking" (MacIntyre et al., as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:208). The best predictors of L2 WTC are actually communication anxiety and one's perceived communication competence. WTC could therefore be defined as one's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:208). Kang, who conducted a qualitative research on WTC, defined it as

[a]n individual's volitional inclination toward actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables (Kang, as cited in Cameron, 2013:177).

This definition implies that WTC also depends on social, psychological contexts, as well as situational variables. The main model of L2 WTC was constructed by MacIntyre and it represents all the layers that play an important role in L2 communication. WTC was placed to the 2nd layer.[7]

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[7]   MacIntyre's model is a pyramid model and includes six layers (bottom-up): *social and individual context* which include intergroup climate and personality; *affective-cognitive context* which includes intergroup attitudes, social situations, communicative competence. Layer 3 includes *motivational propensities* , or interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, L2 self-confidence. Layer 2 refers to *behavioural intention*, i.e. WTC, and Layer 1 refers to *communication behaviour* or L2 use. (MacIntyre, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:209)

2.2 PERSONALITY

2.2.1 Defining personality

Prior to establishing a connection between personality and FLL, a definition of the term should be provided. "Personality represents those characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving" (Pervin and John, as cited in Dornyei, 2005:11). A similar, but simplified definition can be found in Cambridge Dictionary where personality is defined as "the type of person you are, shown by the way you behave, feel, and think". Scientists in the field of *personality psychology* refer to personality as to "the complexity of psychological systems that contribute to unity and continuity in the individual's conduct and experience, both as it is expressed and as it is perceived by that individual and others" (Caprara, Cervone, 2000: 10). Dörnyei focuses on the individuality of personality, saying that it represents "the most individual characteristic" of people (Dornyei, 2005:10). According to Caprara and Cervone (2000:65) this individual characteristic that distinguishes people from one another is represented by "consistent, stable patterns of experience and action" that people exhibit. Those stable patterns are actually the before-mentioned feelings we manifest in various social contexts, our thoughts and behaviour in different situations. Experts imply that each person has different feelings and thoughts, behaves differently in a similar situation and that is what makes us unique. Scientists and experts in the field of *personality psychology*, such as Capara and Cervone, agree that personality incorporates one's temperament, character, and that it is fairly stable and constant feature of a person. They also agree that a simple and, at the same time, short and accurate definition of personality cannot be provided since the term has many implications and is very general. This statement can be confirmed by other authors, too. For example, Medved Krajnović and Juraga explain that due to difficulties of defining the term, "wise authors simply use it as a title of a chapter and avoid providing a clear-cut one-sentence definition" (2008:350). Moreover, Dornyei (2005) points out how different perceptions of the term *personality* among the scientists can sometimes result in quite inconclusive and contradictory understandings of the subject.

Alongside discussions dealing with the definition of the term personality, discussions about whether personality is innate or it can be developed during the course of a lifetime are also "on the agenda". Caprara and Cervone dedicate a whole chapter to this issue and conclude that the complexity of theoretical and empirical issues presents the great obstacle in establishing the latter. These issues consist of the factors called "substantial continuity", which constitute a starting point and basis in studying the issue. However, other factors such

as "person-situation transactions (...), cultural and historical contexts in which these transactions occur" have to be taken into consideration as well. The authors also state that an individual can "contribute in an agentic manner to their own development". They list age, cognitive capability and life experience, which increase over the years, as factors that influence one's self-regulation and, thus, modify emotional states, courses of action and self-reflection (2000:155). The above-mentioned issues in the field of personality psychology require more research and studies, but the discoveries and results we have achieved so far imply that some ways for measuring personality traits already exist.

2.3 TAXONOMIES OF PERSONALITY

Scientists' different approaches to the issues in the field of personality have defined many factors that describe the term of personality. Due to numerous approaches, there had to be a consensus in the field of personality psychology, the result of which is the domination of two taxonomies that focus on personality traits, namely *Eysenck's three-component construct* and the *Big Five* model. The reason that these two models are mostly used is, as Matešić and Zarevski (2008) state, "good theoretical and methodological foundation". Although the authors focus on the *Big Five* model, the two models are quite similar. Eysenck's three-component model contrasts three main personality dimensions: (1) *extraversion-introversion*, (2) *neuroticism-emotional stability*, (3) *psychoticism and tough-mindedness − tender-mindedness*, and the *Big Five* model replaces psychoticism with three other dimensions: *conscientiousness*, *agreeableness* and *openness to experience* (Dornyei, 2005:13). According to Matešić and Zarevski, "people can evaluate well within the system of 5 basic dimensions of personality which as core traits organize thousands of narrower personality characteristics". The five basic dimensions are usually in normal distribution, meaning that most people are positioned in the middle of a personality dimension, whereas a smaller percentage of people are at the poles (2008:370). All of these dimensions are rather broad, therefore scientists have provided many adjectives or facets that describe dimensions and people's personality and explain which dimension stands for what. Matešić and Zarevski's conclusion that the five-dimension model serves the scientists quite well is based on many arguments. However, some authors favour other inventories or indicators.[8] Therefore, a successful indicator will be

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[8]   According to Dornyei, the term *indicator* is related to the „various aspects of one's psychological set-up, and depending on their combinations, every type can have positive and negative effects in a specific life

mentioned, namely, the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)* that was based on Carl Jung's theory of „three bipolar types: extraversion-introversion, sensing-intuiting, thinking-feeling". The authors of the indicator, Myers and Briggs, added the fourth dimension „judging-perceiving"(Donryei, 2005:18). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is, as cited in Chen and Hung's article, „a personality inventory designed to examine individuals' basic preferences for perceiving and processing information"(2012:1503). Despite the fact that in this paper none of the three inventories were used, they are mentioned here because one dimension is common to all three of them − *extraversion-introversion.* This dimension can easily be connected to language learning process and the language use itself. According to MBTI, extraversion-introversion dimension distinguishes people by their attention focus and energy sources. Extraverts find that in the outer world of people and activity, whereas introverts in their inner world of ideas and experience (Dörnyei, 2005:19). In Costa and McCrae's NEO-PI-R[9] description, extraversion includes warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking and positive emotions (Dörnyei, 2005:16). Experts in the field of educational psychology, Matešić and Zarevski, add socialization, assertiveness and talkativeness to this list, and continue that "in their relationship with other people extroverts are amicable and warm, they talk fast and usually become group leaders. On the other hand, introverted persons are reticent, independent and balanced" (2008:371). The following chapter focuses on the relations between personality dimensions, especially extraversion-introversion dimension, and language learning process.

2.4 PERSONALITY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING (FLL)

Education represents one of the key elements predicting one's future, employment, standard of living. Among all the external factors influencing one's education (educational opportunities, social context), one's personality can also affect their learning. Caprara and Cervone confirm the connection between personality and educational achievement:

Many theories of personality have explored relations among personality functioning and educational processes. Trait theories have examined stable dispositions that may promote scholastic achievement.

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domain", whereas the term *inventory* relates to the „traditional scales ranging from positive to negative". (Dornyei, 2005:19)

[9]   The NEO-PI-R is a self report paper and pencil questionnaire, covering the five domains of the Big Five Model, each represented by six lower level facets.

Cognitively oriented dispositional theories highlight thinking styles such as field independence versus field dependence, cognitive complexity versus simplicity, levelling versus sharpening, and reflection versus impulsivity (2000:215).

Dörnyei writes about connection between learning and personality and reports that the personality dimensions *openness to experience* and *conscientiousness* are most closely related to learning, whereas *extraversion-introversion* dimension was most researched in connection with language learning. Diseth quotes McKenzie (1989) when he writes that "it is generally acknowledged that extraversion correlates negatively with success in higher education (...)" (2003:144). Dörnyei's (2005) explanation for this could be "the introverts' greater ability to consolidate learning, lower distractability, and better study habits" (21). Another explanation for the extraverts' lower academic success is provided by Wangowski, who says that extraverts tend to be more interested in extra-curricular activities, and, thus, spend less time studying (Diseth, 2003:145). Introverts are reported to use more cognitive strategies (including analyzing expression, using formulas and patterns, repeating, and formally practicing with sounds and writing systems), than the extrovert students (Kayaoğlu, 2013). On the other hand, extraverts are reported to be better in language learning. From the above-mentioned, it is obvious that not all learners are equally proficient in all subjects. The reason for this can be found in one's personality or affective variables, such as motivation, anxiety and attitude. When language learning is discussed, extraverted students are thought to be more engaged in communicative activities, speaking and asking question, whereas introverted learners prefer grammatical exercises.

Languages, in general, are referred to as systems of communication. In order to learn how to communicate, it is necessary to learn or, in other words, acquire a language. According to Caprara and Cervone, "languages are not just abstract symbol systems", but are rather "the most common medium for (...) communication with others". This „makes the study of language a part of the study of interpersonal behaviour and personality development" (2000:198-199). The authors emphasize the importance of connecting language and personality. This claim is supported by Vygotsky, who contended that "a key to the development of personality was the development of language" (as cited in Caprara, Cervone, 2000:198). There is obviously evidence for the influence of a language on personality.

What about the influence of one's personality on FLL? Fazeli writes about a two-way relationship between personality and second language learning:

There is a general belief that the relationship between personality and second language acquisition is as a two-way process which they modify each other (Ellis, 1985), and there are enough evidences that show personality factors can facilitate acquisition of second language[10] (2012:2652).

When the influence of personality on FLL is in question, Dörnyei says that extraverts are usually more fluent in both L1 and L2, while introverts can feel increased pressure and hesitate more often, tend to make more errors and are unable to produce longer utterances (2005:27). Extraversion is usually connected to people who are ready to start a conversation, not afraid to speak in public and feel comfortable in other people's company. Introverted people, on the other hand, are not that comfortable with public exposure or feel more comfortable and relaxed while not taking part in communication, i.e. they are less sociable. In order to conduct a study which would provide a real picture, one has to take into consideration the situation-specific variables that influence personality and then, indirectly, the FLL process. Hence, one should bear in mind the distinction between FLL and SLA.[11] The context and setting in which a FLL process takes place can present one of the key elements influencing the process. Alongside all the before-discussed IDs that should be induced in a language learning setting, personality variables can also depend on the context. Capara and Cervone suggest that

[w]hatever one's personality theory, the effects of personality variables cannot be examined in isolation from the social and interpersonal contexts within which they are embedded. The same personality processes may have differential effects in different educational context (2000:215).

Since FLL setting is usually presented by a classroom, it can be seen as a microsphere where one learns a language in order to be able to use it in other social contexts. Dörnyei (2005) agrees on the importance of considering the connection between a language learning context and situation-specific variables. He sees the interaction with situation-specific variables that are inherent to the social context of the learning situation as one of the reasons for the inconclusive results in the research of personality. Affective and personality variables interact with a certain situation variable and result in a specific language performance. Ely

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[10]   Fazeli refers to studies conducted by Ely (1986), Reiss (1983), Strong (1983).

[11]   FLL is related to learning and acquiring a language in an institutional setting such as schools, universities and foreign language schools. An example of that is learning English or German in Croatian schools. SLA, on the other hand, refers to acquiring a language while living in the community that speaks that specific language. Medved Krajnović and Juraga (2008) list an example of second language acquisition where a member of a minority group learns the official majority language. Therefore, the connection between personality and FLL cannot be observed without situation-specific factors that occur in a FL classroom.

(1986) writes about the importance of exploring the ways in which affective variables influence L2 achievement. He suggests that affective variables are connected to learners' voluntary classroom participation, which then, indirectly, affects language proficiency (1986:4).

Although personality traits are defined as being fairly stable, it is obvious that different situations have different effect on them, which consequently initiates changes in one's behaviour, thoughts or feelings. Moreover, a language classroom can, according to Capan and Simeck, sometimes be seen as a threat, which puts extra pressure on a learner. In order to explore second language learning in a classroom context, Ely (1986) defines the three constructs, which, he hypothesizes, could predict one's language learning. The three constructs are connected to a learner's personality and its interaction with situation-specific variables. Language Class Risktaking and Language Class Sociablity are related to personality dimension extraversion-introversion, which is considered to be promotive of L2 proficiency. Morris writes about extraversion-introversion component and describes it as "risk taking and adventuresomeness; spontaneity and flexibility in social behaviour, contrasted with social inhibition and restraint." Social activity, which is also connected to extraversion is referred to as "the intensity of one's activities in social contexts, time spent in social encounters and talkativeness" (Morris, as cited in Ely, 1986:3). Language Class Risktaking is described as "an individual's tendency to assume risks in using the L2 in the second language class" (1986:3). The third construct, Language Class Discomfort refers to the degree of anxiety that is often affected by the self-perception of proficiency. It manifests itself in the embarrassment felt when one speaks in an L2 classroom. These constructs could easily be applied to any language classroom, so in order to investigate the influence of personality traits in a language classroom, we have to take into consideration activities taking place in the classroom.

In a foreign language classroom, different activities take place in order for the learners to practice and improve their reading, listening, writing and speaking skills, as well as vocabulary and grammar. Alongside other factors, the learners' proficiency depends on the type of activities and their attitudes toward those activities. In her study, Nikolov (2001) listed several common language classroom activities: conversations, reading aloud, language games, translation, grammar activities and grammar drills. Ely listed similar activities: asking questions, answering questions, speaking in pairs, reading aloud, presenting dialogues, skits

or speeches and highly-structured grammar practice (1988:26). In our research some of the mentioned activities were used as well.

2.5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Many studies dealing with the relationship between personality and FLL in general have so far been conducted. However, there are still some unresolved issues that require further tapping into the subject. The studies about personality and FLL were operationalised in two ways, since there is evidence that personality variables can influence FLL and vice versa.

The effect of FLL on personality has been the subject of many studies. For example, Medved Krajnović and Juraga (2008) found that language learners "became more or less extraverted in the foreign language they spoke" and did not ignore "changes in behaviour they perceived in the use of different languages." The authors of the study provided an explanation by Mihaljević-Djigunović, saying that "speaking in a foreign language allows speakers to feel like a different person" and could help speakers "express certain things that they would find difficult to talk about in their mother tongue" (2008:364-365). On the other hand, a study on foreign language classroom anxiety showed that students who have trouble speaking in their L1 are likely to have even more difficulties speaking in L2, since they have less control on the communicative situation especially when their performance is monitored (Horwitz et al., 1986).

The influence of personality on FLL can depend on one's personality traits in more ways. Many studies analyzed the extraversion-introversion dimension of personality. Kayaoğlu (2013) confirms that it would be logical to anticipate that extroverts create more opportunities and social situations for themselves to engage in conversation in the target language. There are two major hypotheses presented in Kayaoğlu's study concerning language learners' success. The first hypothesis is that extraverts are more successful language learners, because they are "better at basic interpersonal communication strategies." On the other hand, it is stated that introverts are better language learners since "they have developed cognitive academic ability" (2013:820). The difference in the frequency of using language learning strategies was also investigated. For example, Chen and Hung quote Eherman and Oxford's findings about extraverts using affective and social strategies more frequently than introverts, while introverts use metacognitive strategies for planning upcoming language tasks more frequently than extraverts. However, their findings indicate that extraverts used compensation, metacognitive, cognitive, memory, affective and social strategies more than introverts (Chen

& Hung, 2012). Kayaoğlu (2013) also presents opposite findings, namely that introverted students use all the strategies more often than extraverted learners. Many studies premise their arguments about introverts being less successful learners on the connection between introversion and reserved, unsociable and passive behaviour. Kayaoğlu concludes that it is incorrect to assume that extraverts are better learners on the basis of their readiness to engage in conversations and communication. One should take into consideration comprehension and internal mechanism in language learning (Kayaoğlu, 2013).

In this study the focus is on the connection between personality and specific FLL context, the FL classroom context. Horwitz et al. investigated the foreign language classroom anxiety that occurs with introverted learners mostly. They refer to difficulty in speaking in class as to the most frequent concern of the language students. A drill or delivering a prepared speech was reported to be a fairly comfortable activity, whereas a "role-play situation" caused students to "freeze" (1986:126). Authors also report that students hesitated to speak before they were sure that the utterance would be correct and that guessing an unknown word in a foreign language was not acceptable. They concluded that anxiety was inevitable in those cases, "since students are expected to communicate in the second tongue before fluency is attained" (Horwitz et al., 1986:127). Another study dealing with language classroom and classroom activities is the study on unsuccessful learners conducted by Mariane Nikolov. Among other issues, she investigated the influence of pleasant and unpleasant classroom experiences on attitudes toward FL studies. Unpleasant experiences were mostly concerned with oral and written examination, rote-learning, grammar drills and were reported demotivating. Nikolov concluded that negative classroom experiences had not supported the learners' FL development (2001).

Finally, studies that dealt both with personality variables and specific classroom activities were Ely's studies. He first defined the constructs that are connected to extraversion-introversion personality dimension, namely Language Class Risktaking, Language Class Sociability, Language Class Discomfort and Strength of Motivation. In the operationalization of the first construct, Ely suggested the following constructs: a lack of hesitancy about using a newly encountered linguistic element; a willingness to use linguistic elements perceived to be complex or difficult; a tolerance of possible incorrectness in using the language. Language Class Sociability assumed that students use L2 for the purpose of getting acquainted with others, that they preferred learning situations with many people as opposed to individualized programs and that they want to create and maintain friendliness with the classmates.

Language Class Risktaking and Language Class Sociability were hypothesized to increase classroom participation, and, consequently, proficiency. The third construct, Language Class Discomfort, included the feeling of embarrassment, difficulties with speaking in FL, feeling relaxed, less self-conscious and awkward. It was hypothesized that Language Class Discomfort decreases both Language Class Risktaking and Sociability. Indeed, Language Class Risktaing was found to be a positive predictor of voluntary classroom participation. Language Class Sociability was not found significant, and Language Class Discomfort only affected classroom participation indirectly (Ely, 1986). Ely believes that such situation-specific scales could be a good alternative to the use of the global psychological measures. Since Language Class Risktaking was found to promote classroom participation and proficiency, teachers might encourage it, but Ely suggests that persuading learners to take more risk might not be effective.

In another study, Ely (1988) tried to see whether there is a relation between the three personality constructs and learners attitudes toward certain classroom activities and what kind of relation is that. [12] Ely hypothesized that Language Class Risktaking positively affects attitudes toward activities that involve relatively free language use. Language Class Sociability was hypothesized to have a positive influence toward activities involving sharing ideas or performing for the class. Both of the constructs were hypothesized to negatively affect attitudes toward highly-structured grammar practice (1988:26-27). Although not all hypotheses were proven, the findings indicated that there is certain significance in situation-specific personality factors influencing attitudes toward classroom activities. For example, Language Class Risktaking was found to positively affect attitudes toward activities that include relatively free language use and highly-structured grammar practice, which is contrary to the initial hypothesis. Language Class Sociability was found to have positive influence on attitudes toward activities involving sharing information, but there was no significant relationship between Sociability and attitudes toward highly-structured grammar practice, initially hypothesized to be negative.

Liu and Zhang (2011) conducted a study with 934 Chinese EFL university students over a term and wanted to see whether Risk-taking and Sociability change during a term. According to the authors, "it was believed that learners who risked using the target language more often

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[12]   The activities were mentioned before. They included: asking questions, answering questions, speaking in pairs, reading aloud, presenting dialogues, skits or speeches and highly-structured grammar practice (Ely, 1988:26).

were more willing to communicate with others in class or vice versa" (2011:1218). Majority of the participants were found to be moderately or even not risk-taking, and moderately or even strongly sociable both at the beginning and toward the end of the term. Also, male students became more risk-taking toward the end of the term. The two constructs were found to be positively correlated with each other. Based on their findings, the authors suggested creating a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom that would foster language risk-taking and sociability in order to promote FL proficiency.

3.0 RESEARCH

3.1. AIM

The central idea of this study was to establish a connection between participants' situation-specific personality traits and their attitudes toward certain classroom activities. More accurately, the purpose was to see whether they score higher or lower in risk-taking, discomfort and sociability in the language class and how these results correlate with their liking or disliking of activities taking place in CEL classes.[13] In order to design the questionnaire, the following hypotheses were put forward:

1. Students who score high in risk-taking prefer relatively unstructured communicative activities (asking and answering personal questions, speaking in pairs) over highly structured grammar practice, speaking exercises and written expression. It was reasoned that activities that are structured and controlled make students higher in risk-taking feel bored, whereas the activities including the free language use encourage students to experiment with the language.

2. It is hypothesized that students who score high in sociability enjoy activities that are somewhat unpredictable and in which they can find out more about the fellow students or share information about themselves (asking and answering personal questions, speaking in pairs).

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[13] Contemporary English Language. The courses CEL 1, CEL 2, CEL 3, Analysis of English Texts, Cultures of the USA and the UK and Translation Exercises are obligatory subjects in the undergraduate programme at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Zagreb. They focus on normative grammar of the contemporary English language, placing special emphasis on syntactic units and their features, and on the reading of texts in order to expand vocabulary and develop written and oral communication skills, basic translation procedures, textual analysis and customs, institutions and values of the USA and the UK. (http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/anglist/?page_id=428&lang=en) In this paper the mentioned subjects will be referred to as CEL.

3. Students who score higher in discomfort have more positive attitudes toward the "Structured activities" (grammar practice, reading aloud, oral and written expression) than toward the activities including relatively free language use (asking, answering personal questions, speaking in pairs).

4. Male participants will score higher in risk-taking, whereas female participants will score higher in sociability.

5. Participants enrolled in the first year will get the highest scores in discomfort and the lowest in sociability and risk-taking. Second-year students will score lower in discomfort, but higher in sociability and risk-taking than the first-year students. The participants enrolled in the third year will have the highest scores in risk-taking and in sociability. Their scores on discomfort are hypothesised to be low.

3.2. METHOD

3.2.1. Participants

The total of 174 students participated in the study. The students were enrolled in the undergraduate programme of English language and literature at the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. Among the participants, 70 of them were enrolled in the first, 63 in the second and 41 in the third year of study. There were 33 male students and 141 female students. All of the participants passed at least CEL 1 exam. The students of the second year passed CEL 1 and CEL 2, while the third year students passed CEL 3 and Analysis of English Texts. The mentioned subjects include activities stated in the questionnaire. The basic data about the participants are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Participants

		YOS			Total
		1	2	3	
Gender	Male	15	11	7	33
	Female	55	52	34	141
Total		70	63	41	174

*YOS – year of study

3.2.2. Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was partly based on Ely's questionnaire (1988). Some items in this questionnaire were changed due to differences in the activities taking place in the CEL classes. The two-part questionnaire was administered to students who were asked to indicate their preferences, and circle the options that were true for them. The first part of the questionnaire referred to preferred activities. Seven activities common to all three years and subjects were identified: speaking in pairs, asking personal questions, answering personal questions, reading aloud, highly structured grammar practice, written expression and structured speaking exercises. The activities were listed on a questionnaire and students were asked to indicate their attitudes toward these activities on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, 1 referring to "dislike very much" and 5 referring to "like very much", with intermediate points "dislike slightly", "neither like nor dislike" and "like slightly". The mentioned activities were also divided in two subscales, namely the "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" and "Structured activities". The subscales were formed on the basis of factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis) where two principal components were retained based on Kaiser-Guttman criterion and Screet test criterion, and rotated by Varimax rotation. Two retained components clearly saturated two distinctive sets of items referring to the preferences toward the communicative activities and toward the structured activities.

The second part of the instrument dealt with the items referring to situation-specific personality traits, namely, Language Class Risktaking (LCR), Language Class Discomfort (LCD) and Language Class Socability (LCS)[14]. This part contained fourteen statements that described certain classroom situations relating to the three traits. 5-items Likert scale was applied here as well. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree", with intermediate points "slightly disagree", "neither disagree nor agree" and "slightly agree". The situation-specific personality traits were described as follows:

LCR contained five items:

1. At this point, I don't like trying to express complicated ideas in English in class.
2. In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it.
3. I don't like trying out a difficult sentence in class.
4. I prefer to follow basic sentence models rather than risk misusing the language.
5. I like to wait until I know exactly how to use an English word before using it.

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[14] Abbreviation by the author.

LCS contained the following items:

1. I enjoy talking with the teacher and other students in English.
2. I think learning English in a group is more fun than if I had my own tutor.
3. I don't really enjoy interacting with the other students in the English class.
4. I'd like more activities where the students use English to get to know each other better.

LCD contained five items:

1. I don't feel very relaxed when I speak English in class.
2. I sometimes feel awkward speaking English.
3. Based on my class experience so far, I think that one barrier to my future use of English is my discomfort when speaking.
4. At times, I feel somewhat embarrassed in class when I'm trying to speak.
5. I think I'm less self-conscious about actively participating in English class than most of the other students.

All of the fourteen statements were presented randomly in the questionnaire, in order for the participants to give more accurate answers. The structure of the instrument was confirmed by factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis) where three principal components were retained based on Kaiser-Guttman criterion and Screet test criterion, and rotated by Oblimin rotation. Three distinctive sets of items, according to the theoretical assumptions, were highly saturated with the retained components (LCR, LCS, LCD), confirming expected scale structure.

3.2.3. Procedure

In order to include as many participants as possible, professors teaching obligatory courses, where students' attendance was monitored, had been contacted and asked to allow conducting the research in the first 10 minutes of their classes. Students were given the questionnaire and it was pointed out that the questionnaire was anonymous and that they should decide on the answer without too much contemplation. The research was conducted on three separate occasions, with the first-year students, second- and third-year students separately.

The scores were calculated separately for the activities and situation-specific personality traits using the arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The scale structure was confirmed by factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis). In the second phase, correlations between the

preferred activities and situation-specific personality traits were calculated and analysed, then presented with the Pearson correlation coefficient. The correlations were analysed between the situation-specific personality traits and each activity separately and again with the activities divided in two subscales. In order to obtain the results for the hypothesized gender differences, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation were calculated, and the differences were calculated using the t-test. The hypothesized differences between the years of study were calculated using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), since the three groups of student were compared.

3.3. RESULTS

The first phase of data analysis refers to the items of the questionnaire. Therefore, the mean and standard deviation, minimum and maximum for each of the activities were calculated.

TABLE 2. Descriptive statistics of Activities items

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Asking personal questions (asking other students about what they do, what they like...)	1	5	3.07	1.037
Answering personal questions (regarding "people I know", "things that I do", "what I like"...)	1	5	3.05	1.036
Speaking in pairs	1	5	3.17	1.135
Reading aloud	1	5	3.20	1.001
Highly structured grammar practice (substitution exercises, sentence completion exercises...)	1	5	3.58	1.998
Written expression (essays, summarizing, paraphrasing)	1	5	3.05	1.260
Speaking exercises (oral examination, tutorial)	1	5	3.02	1.254

The activities were divided in two subscales. The first subscale was named "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" and included the following items: "Asking personal questions", "Answering personal questions" and "Speaking in pairs". The second subscale was named "Structured activities" and referred to the activities that have a particular structure that needs to be followed. The second subscale included the following items: "Highly structured grammar practice", "Reading aloud", "Written expression" and "Speaking

exercises". In Table 3, the analysis of the two subscales and situation-specific personality traits was made.

TABLE 3. Descriptive statistics of activity scales and situation-specific personality traits

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ACTIVITIES				
Relatively unstructured communicative activities	3	15	9.29	2.503
Structured activities	5	20	12.85	2.783
SITUATION-SPECIFIC PERSONALITY TRAITS				
Language Class Risktaking	5	24	15.02	4.148
Language Class Sociability	6	20	13.26	3.058
Language Class Discomfort	5	24	13.76	4.402

The mean and standard deviation were calculated again. The results presented in Table 3 show that none of the variables showed a significant difference, similar points were achieved for each variable.

Since the main purpose of the study was to see whether personality traits, in this case, situation-specific personality traits, are correlated with students' attitudes toward certain classroom activities, the correlation between the activities and personality traits was analyzed and calculated. The three situation-specific personality traits (LCR, LCS and LCD) were described before. At this point it has to be mentioned that the variables LCR and LCS are positively related to attitudes toward the described activities, whereas LCD is negatively related to someone's attitudes toward the activities. Therefore, the results of correlations for this variable are marked with the minus sign (-). The results for correlations between the situation-specific personality traits and preferred activities are presented in Table 4. In this table, each of the activities was analyzed separately.

TABLE 4. Correlations between preferred activities and situation-specific personality traits

		LANGUAGE CLASS RISKTAKING	LANGUAGE CLASS SOCIABILITY	LANGUAGE CLASS DISCOMFORT
Asking personal questions (asking other students about what they do, what they like...)	Pearson Correlation	.016	.264**	-.004
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.836	.000	.962
Answering personal questions (regarding "people I know", "things that I do", "what I like"...)	Pearson Correlation	.145	.398**	-.141
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.056	.000	.064
Speaking in pairs	Pearson Correlation	.088	.285**	-.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.249	.000	.214
Reading aloud	Pearson Correlation	.222**	.199**	-.315**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.009	.000
Highly structured grammar practice (substitution exercises, sentence completion exercises...)	Pearson Correlation	.032	-.084	-.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.671	.273	.153
Written expression (essays, summarizing, paraphrasing)	Pearson Correlation	.095	.150*	-.150*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.213	.049	.048
Speaking exercises (oral examination, tutorial)	Pearson Correlation	.210**	.299**	-.328**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.000	.000

**p<.01; *p<.05

The data presented in Table 4 show that not all correlations are statistically significant. The variable "Asking personal questions (asking other students what they do, what they like)" was found to be statistically significant in correlation with LCS (r=.264). This result implies that students who scored higher in sociability like asking other students personal questions and inquire about them more than students who scored somewhat lower. As far as other two

personality variables are concerned, no statistically significant correlation was found. The second variable of the first part of the questionnaire was "Answering personal questions (regarding "people I know", "things that I do","what I like"..)" and was also found to be in correlation with LCS (r=.398; p<.01) which is a higher correlation than the variable "Asking personal questions" and LCS. The results show that students who scored higher in sociability, on average, like activities such as answering people's questions about themselves and sharing personal information more than students who scored lower in sociability. For the variable "Speaking in pairs", the statistically significant correlation appeared again only with LCS (r=.285; p<.01), implying that sociable students are more likely to engage in the activities including speaking in pairs, or presenting a dialogue in the language classroom than those who scored lower in sociability. The correlation between LCR (r=.88) and LCD (r=-.95) again did not show a significant relation (p>0.5). The variable "Reading aloud" was found to have a significant correlation with all three situation-specific personality variables. The correlation between the activity and LCR is r=.222, which means that students who scored higher in risk-taking like the activity and engage in it more often than those who have lower scores on risk-taking. Students who scored high in sociability are also considered to like this activity more, since the results show the correlation between LCS and "Reading aloud" is r=.199. The highest, but still moderate, correlation, was found to be between "Reading aloud" and LCD (r=-.315). Since LCD negatively correlates with students' attitudes toward particular activities, the results imply that students who scored higher in discomfort do not like or more rarely engage in the mentioned activity than the students who scored lower. The correlation between "Highly structured grammar practice (substitution exercises, sentence completion exercises...)" and LCR is r=.032, between the mentioned activity and LCS r=-.084, and between the activity and LCD r=-.109. The LCS result indicates that students higher in sociability have a bit more negative attitude toward highly structured grammar practice, the arguments for what can be supported with the fact that sociable students prefer activities requiring communication, which was shown by the results of correlations between LCS and those activities. Correlation between "Written expression" which includes writing essays, summarizing and paraphrasing and LCR was not found to be statistically significant, whereas the correlations between the mentioned activities and LCS and LCD were. The correlations were found to be the same (LCS r=.150 and LCD r=-.150), except LCD having a minus sign, meaning that students scoring high in discomfort have somewhat more negative attitudes toward these activities. Although the correlations are low, they are considered significant. Another variable that correlated with all three personality variables was "Speaking exercises"

which included oral examination and tutorial. The data presented in the Table 4 show that the correlations are moderate. The correlation between "Speaking exercises" and LCR is r=.210. This means that students who do not mind taking risk in the classroom have more positive attitudes toward these activities. Students high in sociability also have positive attitudes toward these kinds of exercises, as it was shown by the results (r=.299). The highest, but still, moderate correlation was found between "Speaking exercises" and LCD (r=-.328) which implies that students who feel discomfort in language classroom have, on average, more negative attitudes toward the mentioned activities.

Since the activities were divided in two subscales, Table 5 displays the results of correlations between the subscales and situation-specific personality variables. It is not surprising that the highest correlation was found between "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" and LCS (0.403; p<0.1). The correlation between LCR and those activities is 0.106, whereas the correlation between LCD and the mentioned activities is -0.103. The second category of activities includes activities that are more structured ("Reading aloud", "Highly structured grammar practice", activities including "Written expression" and structured "Speaking exercises").

TABLE 5. Correlations between preferred activity scales and situation-specific personality traits

		LANGUAGE CLASS RISKTAKING	LANGUAGE CLASS SOCIABILITY	LANGUAGE CLASS DISCOMFORT
Relatively unstructured communicative activities	Pearson Correlation	.106	.403[**]	-.103
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.162	.000	.178
Structured activities	Pearson Correlation	.229[**]	.244[**]	-.368[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.001	.000

**p<.01; *p<.05

The second subscale of activities was found to have statistically significant correlation with all three situation-specific personality traits. The correlation between the structured activities and LCR is r=.229, which implies that students high in risk-taking have somewhat more positive attitudes toward the mentioned activities and usually do not have negative feelings while engaging in them. Students high in sociability were also found to have more positive attitudes toward structured activities, as well as toward the activities requiring

communication. The correlation between LCS and the "Structured activities" is low as well as between LCS and "Relatively unstructured communicative activities". The highest, but still moderate, correlation was found to be between LCD and the structured activities (r=-.368). This means that students who feel discomfort in the language classroom are more likely to have negative attitudes toward all of the structured activities.

The fourth research question dealt with the possible gender differences among the participants of the study. Table 6 includes the results of gender differences on preferred activities scales and situation-specific personality traits. The mean, standard deviation and t-test were calculated. The t-test showed that the only statistically significant difference between the means was the one in LCR variable in favour of male participants (t=2.383; p<.01). The difference between the two means was bigger than 1 scale point which is considered statistically significant. There were no significant differences between male and female preferred activities. Moreover, there are no significant differences between male and female in LCD and LCS either.

TABLE 6. Gender differences in preferred activity scales and situation-specific personality traits

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	P
Relatively unstructured communicative activities	m	33	8.76	2.151	-1.369	.173
	f	141	9.42	2.569		
Structured activities	m	33	12.85	2.874	-.005	.996
	f	141	12.85	2.772		
LANGUAGE CLASS RISKTAKING	m	33	16.55	3.700	2.383	.018
	f	141	14.66	4.178		
LANGUAGE CLASS SOCIABILITY	m	33	12.55	3.042	-1.494	.137
	f	141	13.43	3.048		
LANGUAGE CLASS DISCOMFORT	m	33	13.27	4.296	-.703	.483
	f	141	13.87	4.433		

The last research question was generated with possible correlations between different years of study and preferences in terms of activities and situation-specific personality traits.

The results presented in Table 7 show that there are no significant differences in neither preferred activities nor situation-specific personality traits ($p > .05$ for all F-tests). The mean results are quite similar, without a significant difference.

TABLE 7. Age differences in preferred activities and situation-specific personality traits

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P
Relatively unstructured communicative activities	1	70	9.37	2.600		
	2	63	9.57	2.241	1.463	.235
	3	41	8.73	2.684		
Structured activities	1	70	12.69	2.800		
	2	63	13.17	2.888	.671	.512
	3	41	12.63	2.605		
LANGUAGECLASS RISKTAKING	1	70	14.54	4.393		
	2	63	15.56	3.640	.988	.374
	3	41	15.00	4.444		
LANGUAGE CLASS SOCIABILITY	1	70	13.24	3.151		
	2	63	13.57	3.171	.780	.460
	3	41	12.80	2.713		
LANGUAGE CLASS DISCOMFORT	1	70	14.54	4.373		
	2	63	13.05	4.144	2.021	.136
	3	41	13.51	4.718		

3.4. DISCUSSION

In this study, certain situations occurring in a language classroom and students' preferences of activities taking place in the classroom were analyzed. Personality is a wide term, but using deductive reasoning it was possible to connect the situation-specific personality traits and the context of a language classroom. Although in this study the three personality traits refer to the situations taking place in the English language classroom, those traits can be found in other contexts as well. Moreover, they are constituent parts of bigger personality dimensions such as extraversion-introversion, openness to experience and so forth.

The results of the study indicate that the participants do not prefer any of the mentioned activities. As far as the situation-specific personality traits are concerned, according to the results, their occurrence is equally frequent. This can be explained by the fact the CEL courses are obligatory and, since various activities take place in a single class, students are expected to engage in all of them. However, emotions that are aroused while engaging in an activity can influence students' attitudes toward them, but they cannot avoid them. For this reason the correlations between the activities and situation-specific personality trait were calculated and analyzed.

It was hypothesized that students who score high in LCR have positive attitudes toward "Relatively unstructured communicative activities", since they are more dynamic and sometimes unpredictable. Moreover, students who like to take some risk are usually willing to communicate and should not hesitate when using new linguistic elements. However, the correlation between LCR and "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" was not found to be significant. Also, the variables including grammar practice and exercises, as well as writing exercises did not show a significant correlation with LCR. The variable "Speaking exercises" refers to activities that are structured to a certain extent and that have a particular pattern. They include oral examination and tutorial among others. Since they are lead and structured they were included in the subscale of the "Structured activities", rather than in the subscale of "Relatively unstructured communicative activities". Speaking exercises, especially oral examination, require a certain level of proficiency and preparation. In a situation when a student is not prepared these activities can require certain risk-taking. The results show that the participants, on average, do not hesitate to use new linguistic elements while engaging in speaking exercises, although those are often perceived as difficult. Moreover, they do not mind possible situations where those elements might be used

incorrectly. This can be interpreted as a positive finding for the participants of the study, saying that they are confident in their language production, and at the same time aware that their engagement in the activities is inevitable for their further progress. The results indicate that the participants who scored high in LCR have more positive attitudes toward the structured and controlled activities. Having in mind that enrolment into the English language and literature department requires a relatively advanced level of proficiency, we may conclude that the participants are experienced language users and that their communication skills are somewhat higher compared to non-language students or inexperienced language users. Another factor influencing their knowledge and experience is using and acquiring the language in their free time, through various media and social networks. Due to their knowledge and experience, the participants do not perceive the unstructured communicative activities as risk-taking.

The second hypothesis was that students who had high scores on sociability enjoyed engaging in "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" more than in the other activities. The correlations between LCS and all of the unstructured activities, although moderate, were considered statistically significant. Correlation between "Answering personal questions" and LCS had the highest coefficient which means that more sociable students have more positive attitudes toward this particular activity. These results are logical, since LCS is a trait that applies to people who use the L2 for the purpose of getting to know other people and communicate as well as to people who like being surrounded with others, in this case, the fellow students, and who want to maintain friendliness. However, somewhat significant correlations were found between LCS and some of the "Structured activities", the activities "Reading aloud" and "Speaking exercises". "Speaking exercises", although structured, imply communication and a degree of sociability which could explains the correlation. Despite the statistically significant correlations between LCS and the subscale "Structured activities", the correlation between LCS and "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" is slightly higher. The results have partly proven our hypothesis. Studying a language entails communication, asking questions, exchanging information, which means that language students are aware of the function of language and engage in the activities accordingly. The fact that there is correlation with some of the structured activities implies that sociable participants not only enjoy taking part in personal interaction, but also in discussions taking place in the language classroom and engaging in the structured activities that improve their language. We can say that the structure and pattern do not diminish their openness and

talkativeness. Considering the language learner profile, these results confirm the positive connection between sociability and communicative activities.

According to Ely (1986) LCD negatively affects attitudes toward certain classroom activities. Students who score high in LCD usually feel embarrassment, anxiety or have difficulties speaking and using a FL. Taking everything into consideration, it was presumed that students who scored high in discomfort had negative attitudes toward "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" and preferred the "Structured activities". The results did not support our hypothesis, but were rather quite opposite to our initial predictions. An explanation for this can be found in the fact that the structured activities usually require a certain level of proficiency, as well as preparation and that they include examination which is itself a stressful situation and makes students feel uncomfortable. Another explanation was mentioned at some point in the paper, namely, the language classroom being perceived as a threat or as a place where one can feel embarrassment or discomfort in front of other students or teachers. This can emerge while engaging in any of the mentioned structured activities. However, the question of the relation between discomfort and communicative activities still stays unanswered. How come that there were no correlations between those variables? One answer could be the positive "classroom climate", which means that the classroom does not represent a threat. Also, the participants who scored high in discomfort obviously do not perceive personal interaction as a situation in which they could feel stressed, anxious. This is an indicator of their readiness and willingness to communicate and could be ascribed to their liking of the language and engaging in similar activities more often, and in situations where correctness of their production is not monitored. The situations where one's proficiency and skills are examined and where rules, patterns and structure need to be followed might, on the other hand, instigate the feeling of discomfort.

According to Merchant (2012), women use communication to create or enhance some relationships and contacts, whereas men usually use a language to express their dominance and achieve some tangible outcomes. In the same study it was stated that women are more "social-emotional in their interactions with others, whereas men are more independent and unemotional." (2012:19) Based on these conclusions, the hypothesis was put forward that female participants would be more sociable or have higher scores in LCS, while male participants would have more scores in LCR. The results have shown no statistically significant relations, except a moderate score in LCR in favour of men. Although the score is not very high, we can say that the hypothesis is partly proven and that male participants do

not mind taking risk in a language classroom and do not hesitate when using the language. As shown in the results, male and female participants do not differ considerably. The small number of male students (33) might affect the results. However, female language students, in general, outnumber male students, which might lead to the conclusion that females like studying languages more than males.

When years of study and age difference are in question, there were, again, no significant correlations found. This could indicate a stable level of confidence in all three years of study, both with male and female participants. The fact that no differences were found in LCD in the years of study can be a good indicator of the freshmen's confidence.

Somewhat ambiguous results were found regarding the variable "Reading aloud" and all three situation-specific personality variables. Several explanations for that can be provided. Reading aloud is, in general, perceived as a stressful activity since students engaging in it need to process the form and the production of a text at the same time, which requires certain effort. Since our results indicate that students who score higher in risk-taking like this activity, we might say that those students are either more experienced or not concerned with the possible incorrect production. Students high in discomfort do not like this activity or engage in it more rarely, which is quite logical considering the effort and stress connected to it. Therefore, listing this activity in the subscale of "Structured activities" was not the best solution. However, it is not perceived as a communicative activity either. On the other hand, in CEL classes students usually do the exercises at home and then read their answers aloud in the class in order to check and comment on them. If we take this into consideration then "Reading aloud" has somewhat different meaning. In this case, reading aloud is also a stressful activity, but the risk and anxiety can depend, to a greater extent, on students' preparation, learning strategies and self-regulation, rather than situation-specific personality traits. Since neither a specification nor a description of the activity was provided in the questionnaire, the interpretation of the results might lead to incorrect conclusions. This confirms that in further studies, better solutions in defining the activities and subscales should be found.

3.5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to explore the connection between certain situation-specific personality traits and the participants' attitudes toward some activities in a language classroom, more accurately in CEL classes. Many studies dealing with personality traits and language classroom activities already exist, but there are not many studies concerning the connection between these two themes. Therefore, further research on the topic should be carried out. In this study 174 participants were administered the questionnaire which required them to indicate their preferences and agreement/disagreement with the statements. The result analysis has shown some statistically significant correlations, which have not displayed high scores, but rather moderate correlations. Not all of the statistically significant correlations have supported our hypotheses.

As shown in the results, LCR does not correlate with the "Relatively unstructured communicative activities", which leads to the conclusion that personal interaction in L2 is not considered risk-taking nor do participants perceive those situations as demanding, or requiring preparation. However, the fact that the correlation was found in relation to "Speaking exercises" indicated that these activities can include unpredictable situations, improvisation and experimenting with the language to a certain extent. The perception of the "Structured activities" listed in this study as not so risk-taking as the "Relatively unstructured communicative activities" should be redefined according to the results. Regarding LCS, the results have supported our hypothesis. They indicate a positive relation between the sociable participants and the unstructured communicative activities and confirm that the activities included in this subscale imply relatively free language use and communication. The results have not supported our hypothesis about participants scoring higher LCD preferring "Relatively unstructured communicative activities", but were opposite to our prediction. The reason why some of the hypotheses were not supported could be the misperception of certain activities taking place in CEL classes, since the overall findings show that the participants perceive the "Structured activities" as more risk-taking and causing discomfort than the "Relatively unstructured communicative activities".

Despite the unexpected findings, it is obvious that certain situations in CEL classes can influence students' affinity and participation in the activities, and, consequently, their attitudes toward certain activities. What university professors can do is try to alleviate students' discomfort in their classes regardless of the ongoing activities. In order to achieve that, constructive criticism and detailed explanation are more welcome than a harsher,

negative feedback. This would most certainly encourage students to actively participate in more activities and might, consequently, influence changes in their attitudes toward the activities. Moreover, positive changes in attitudes and classroom participation could result in ever more productive discussions and facilitate language improvement. In any case, affective variables must, in our opinion, be taken into consideration, because personality can play a big role in the foreign language learning, especially when negative emotions or attitudes are in question.

3.6. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Even though some findings in this study are considered significant, limitations and suggestions for further research must be acknowledged. First of all, the study might have shown more significant results had it been conducted with younger students and not university students, since the enrolment at the Department of English requires a certain level of proficiency, which means that the students had already dealt with and surpassed possible negative emotions when using the language. Moreover, they had already encountered similar activities during their education and learnt how to engage in them. It would be interesting to see how students at different levels perceive the statements in the questionnaire. However, the activities would not be completely the same at different levels.

Another limitation of the study is the frequency of particular activities. For example, the written activities occur more often in the second year when students' obligatory course is "Analysis of English Texts". Therefore, second-year students have better chances to engage in the activities including writing exercises. In order to tap into gender differences, more male participants should be included in the research. Future research on the subject could require some changes in the instrument as well. For example, LCD is defined with the constructs referring mostly to speaking, whereas discomfort might include written expression and reading as well. The results obtained in this study support this suggestion. It would also be useful to take into consideration the participants' success and their grades in a particular subject and include those facts in the research. In this way we could obtain better insight into the interrelation of personality traits, proficiency and attitudes toward certain activities. Finally, further research on the subject might require active participation and cooperation of psychologists, language teachers and linguists.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire

This questionnaire focuses on the role of personality in learning English as a foreign language.

Please circle the option that is true for you.

SEX: - male   - female

YEAR OF STUDY: - 1st   - 2nd   - 3rd

PART 1

Here are seven types of activities that are done in your practical language classes (CEL1, CEL2 CEL3, Analysis of English Texts, Societies and Cultures of the USA and UK).Please circle the number that best describes your preferences for different activities.

	islike very much	islike slightly	Neither like nor dislike	Like slightly	Like very much
Asking personal questions (asking other students about what they do, what they like...)			3	4	5
Answering personal questions (regarding "people I know", "things that I do", "what I like"...)			3	4	5
Speaking in pairs			3	4	5
Reading aloud			3	4	5
Highly structured grammar practice (substitution exercises, sentence completion exercises...)			3	4	5
Written expression (essays, summarizing, paraphrasing)			3	4	5
Speaking exercises (oral examination, tutorial)			3	4	5

PART 2

Here are fourteen statements that describe certain situations in class. Please circle the number that best describes you.

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
At this point, I don't like trying to express complicated ideas in English in class.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy talking with the teacher and other students in English.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't feel very relaxed when I speak English in class.	1	2	3	4	5
In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it.	1	2	3	4	5
I think learning English in a group is more fun than if I had my own tutor.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't like trying out a difficult sentence in class.	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer to follow basic sentence models rather than risk misusing the language.	1	2	3	4	5
I don't really enjoy interacting with the other students in the English class.	1	2	3	4	5
I like to wait until I know exactly how to use an English word before using it.	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes feel awkward speaking English.	1	2	3	4	5
I'd like more activities where the students use English to get to know each other better.	1	2	3	4	5
Based on my class experience so far, I think that one barrier to my future use of English is my discomfort when speaking.	1	2	3	4	5
At times, I feel somewhat embarrassed in class when I'm trying to speak.	1	2	3	4	5

I think I'm less self-conscious about actively participating in English class than most of the other students.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you!! ☺