

PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAIT

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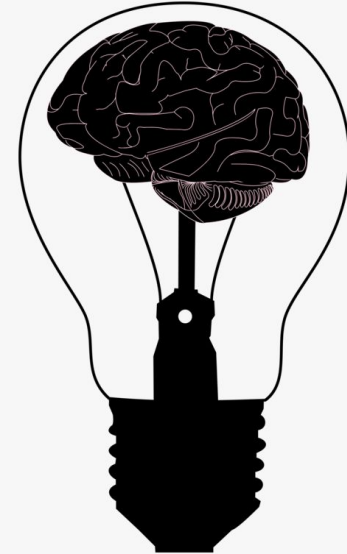
Theories of Language Development

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DISCUSSION

- Do you think personality traits can influence language learning?
- Make a list of traits that matter from your point of view



WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

- Write your ideas in the chat box

DEFINITION

- The Collins Cobuild Dictionary defines personality as one's **“whole character and nature”**

- Pervin and John (2001):

personality represents those characteristics of the person that **“account for consistent patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving”** (p. 4).



Personality theories

WHEN DID IT ALL START?

- Clark and Watson (2008): the concept of temperament originated in ancient history and is typically used to refer to a “characteristic emotional style” (p. 265)
- It is rooted in the biological substrate of behaviour and usually considered highly **heritable** (Snow et al., 1996)

Do you think temperament is heritable?



TEMPERAMENT ≠ PERSONALITY

- Temperament and personality can be seen as broadly overlapping domains, with temperament providing the primarily biological basis for the developing personality (Hogan, Harkness, & Lubinski, 2000).

PERSONALITY (nurture)



TEMPERAMENT (nature)

PERSONALITY TAXONOMY

- the Classic Greek taxonomy of personality was proposed over 2,000 years ago by Hippocrates and Galen, consisting of four temperamental types:
- **phlegmatic** (unflappable and slow to take action),
- **sanguine** (easily but not strongly excited and having short-lived interests), */'sæŋ.gwɪn/*
- **choleric** (impetuous and impulsive, often ambitious and perfectionist),
- **melancholic** (inclined to reflection).

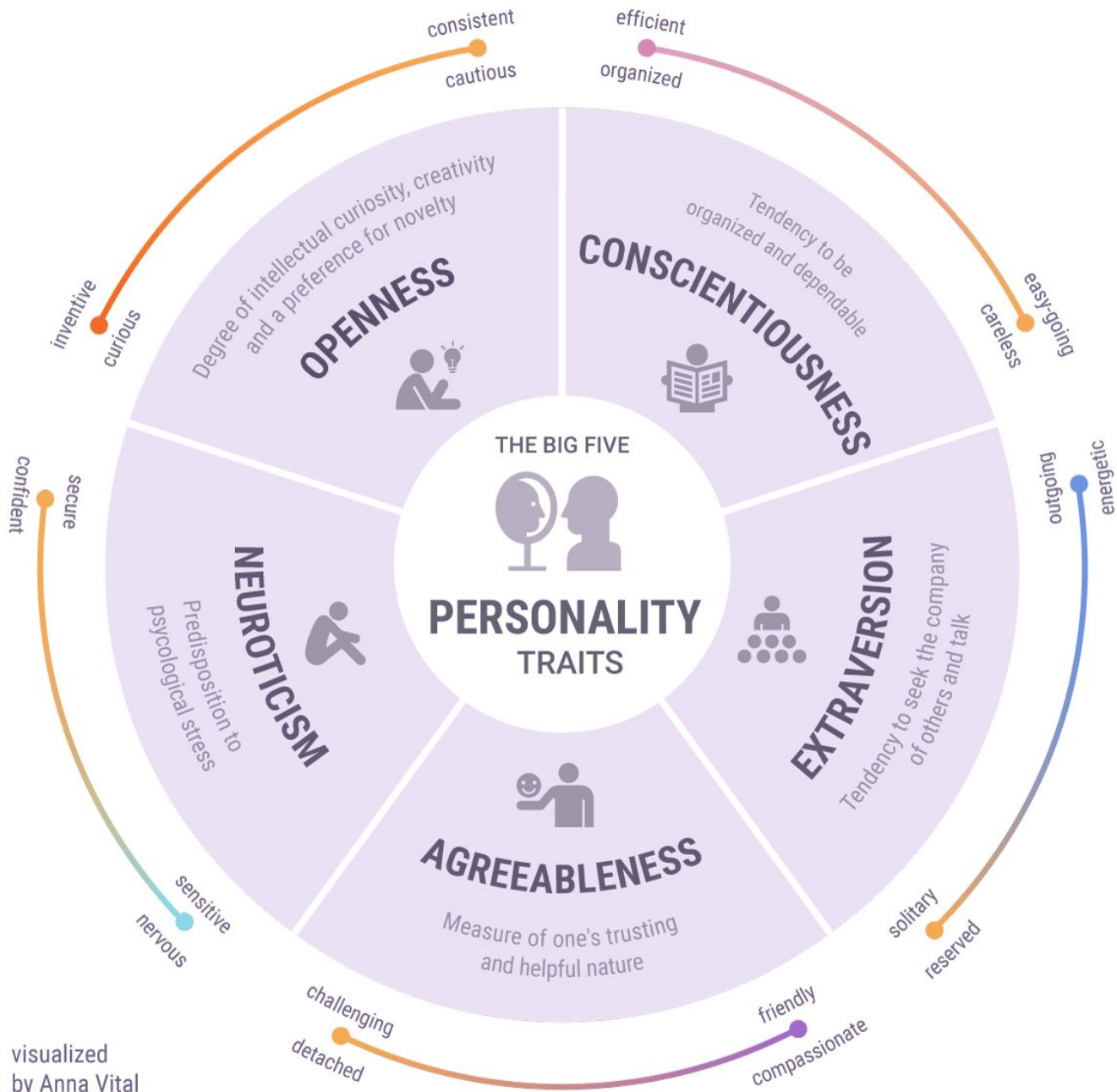


Type a + in comments if you have ever taken a test based on this

THE STRUCTURE OF PERSONALITY: THE BIG FIVE MODEL

- Originally coined by **Lewis Goldberg** (1981), but in recent years most closely associated with the work of **Robert McCrae and Paul Costa**.

O C E A N



visualized by Anna Vital

Source: J. M. Digman
Personality Structure: Emergence of the Five-Factor Model

TABLE 2.1 Descriptors for the components of the Big Five model

- *Openness*: High scorers are imaginative, curious, flexible, creative, moved by art, novelty seeking, original, and untraditional; low scorers are conservative, conventional, down-to-earth, unartistic, and practical.
 - *Conscientiousness*: High scorers are systematic, meticulous, efficient, organized, reliable, responsible, hard-working, persevering, and self-disciplined; low scorers are unreliable, aimless, careless, disorganized, late, lazy, negligent, and weak-willed.
 - *Extraversion–Introversion*: High scorers are sociable, gregarious, active, assertive, passionate, and talkative; low scorers are passive, quiet, reserved, withdrawn, sober, aloof, and restrained.
 - *Agreeableness*: High scorers are friendly, good-natured, likable, kind, forgiving, trusting, cooperative, modest, and generous; low scorers are cold, cynical, rude, unpleasant, critical, antagonistic, suspicious, vengeful, irritable, and uncooperative.
 - *Neuroticism–Emotional Stability*: High scorers are worrying, anxious, insecure, depressed, self-conscious, moody, emotional, and unstable; low scorers are calm, relaxed, unemotional, hardy, comfortable, content, even tempered, and self-satisfied.
-

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

CAN WE TRUST IT?

- Extensive empirical studies that have tested the model (for a recent review, see John et al., 2008) have generally confirmed that it provides a good representation of the central features of personality, attesting to the fact that “the Big Five personality structure is **a human universal**” (Pervin & Cervone, 2010, p. 265).

[HTTP://WWW.PERSONALITYTEST.ORG.UK/](http://www.personalitytest.org.uk/)

	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
1. Tend to vote for conservative political candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Have frequent mood swings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Am not easily bothered by things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Believe in the importance of art.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Am the life of the party.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Am skilled in handling social situations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Am always prepared.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Make plans and stick to them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Dislike myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
10. Respect others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Insult people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Seldom feel blue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Don't like to draw attention to myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Carry out my plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Am not interested in abstract ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Make friends easily.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Tend to vote for liberal political candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Know how to captivate people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Believe that others have good intentions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PERSONALITY AND SLA

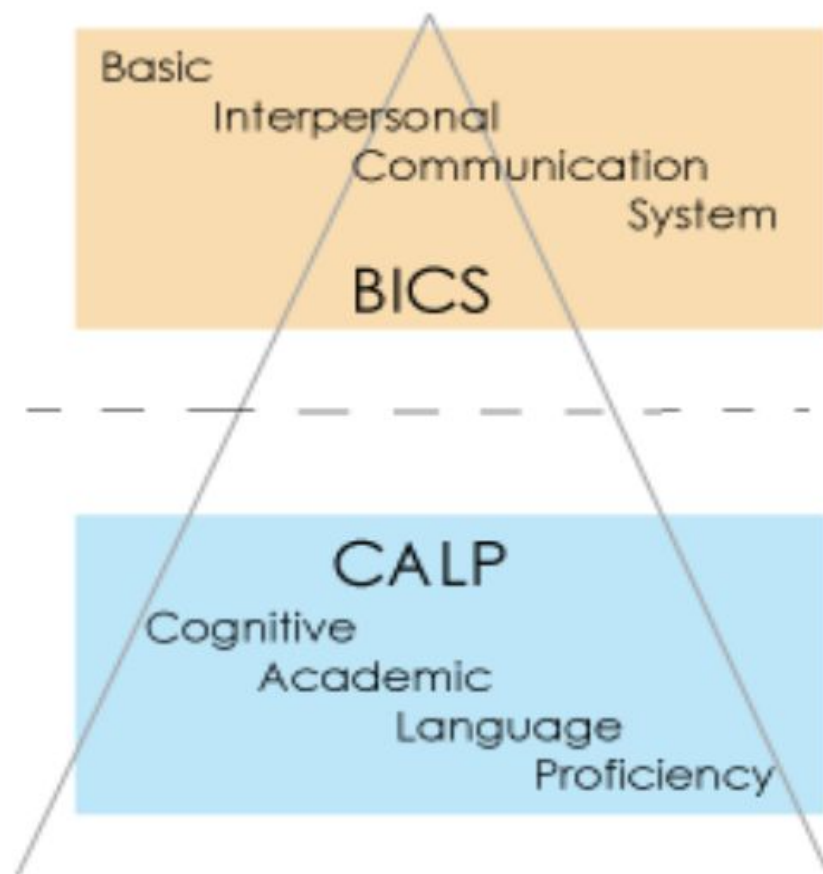
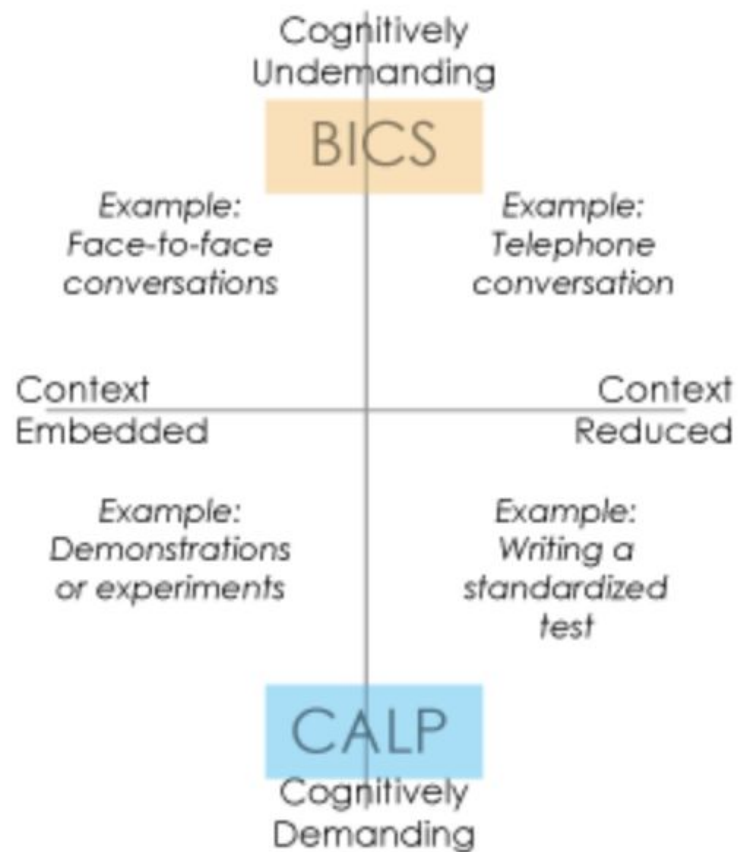
- Few significant relationships between personality measures and linguistic variables have been identified

“like Arthur’s knights, stumbling through the night, [personality researchers] are guided by a stubborn belief that something must be there, glimpsing tantalizing flashes of light from a distance, only to discover that their discoveries looked rather pale in the daylight” (Dewaele, 2009:625)

- Why might this be the case?

EXTRAVERSION / INTROVERSION

- Trait most investigated in terms of SLL. Two main hypotheses:
- More **introverted** learners will be better at developing Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) – **formal academic learning**: “the extent to which an individual has access to and command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling” (Cummins, 2000: 67)
- More **extraverted** learners will be better at developing Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) – social, **conversational language use** for oral communication: more context-embedded language



Naiman, N., Fröhlich, M., Stern, H.H. & Todesco, A. (1978).
The Good Language Learner.
Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

- Are 'good' language learners more extrovert?
- Canadian high school learners of L2 French
- Looked for correlation between scores on two written L2 tests and extraversion as measured by the **Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI)**
- Hypothesis : Extraversion = superiority in terms of SLL

THE EYSENCK PERSONALITY INVENTORY/QUESTIONNAIRE

- Measures two of the big five: Extraversion- Introversion and Neuroticism-Stability
- 57 Y/N items;
- **The 'SD score'** (out of 9) measures extent to which you are trying to be socially desirable. Those scoring 5+ trying to make themselves look good/not being 100% honest
- **The 'E score'** (out of 24) measures extent of extraversion
The 'N score' (out of 24) measures extent of neuroticism

RESULTS

- No positive correlation found between written test scores and extent of extraversion
- Perhaps finding not surprising given sole focus on written proficiency - does written proficiency adequately reflect BICS?

VERHOEVEN AND VERMEER (2002)

- This study was the first to use the Big Five personality construct in L2 research
- PURPOSE: to examine the **communicative competence** of teenage language learners in relation to their **personality characteristics**
- CONTEXT: The Netherlands

VARIABLES?

Organizational competence

discrete-point tests of vocabulary, grammar, and reading

Strategic competence

two rating scales for teachers to judge the children's planning of communicative behaviour

Pragmatic competence

student performance on eight different role-play tasks

RESULTS

- It was found that only **Openness to Experience** correlated substantially with the linguistic abilities of the children across all three competencies **WHY?**
- **Extraversion** was associated only with **strategic competence**,
- **Conscientiousness** had a moderate correlation with organizational competence **WHY?**
- the other two facets of the Big Five model (**Agreeableness and Neuroticism**) were unrelated to L2 communicative competence.

DEWAELE, J.-M. & FURNHAM, A. (1999). EXTRAVERSION:
THE UNLOVED VARIABLE IN APPLIED LINGUISTIC
RESEARCH. LANGUAGE LEARNING, 49: 509-544.

- **Meta-analysis** of extraversion in SLA research
- Argues that extraversion does affect communicative speech production
- States that lack of statistical relationship between extraversion and linguistic measures to this point a result of research design (i.e. they used written test scores as per Naiman et al., 1978)

- Studies that used **oral measures** have found relationships with **extraversion**; **the more complex the task, the stronger the correlations**

WHY?

- Relates this meta-finding to Eysenck's (1981) assertion that increased pressure (e.g. a more complex task) increases introverts' arousal level (stress; anxiety) to the point that the autonomous **processing components in speaking** (the Conceptualiser and Formulator) are negatively affected.

CONCLUSIONS