

Linguistic Anxiety, personality, and Willingness To Communicate in English among LGBTQI+ university students

ABSTRACT

Developing communicative competence is the primary goal in a foreign language classroom, and several variables influence this process. This study aimed to analyze personality dimensions, Linguistic Anxiety (LA), and Willingness To Communicate (WTC) in English among LGBTQI+ university students. Quantitative research with a cross-sectional design was conducted in a sample of 97 sexually diverse university students. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire, and the NEO Personality Inventory were administered. Findings demonstrate that 55.7% of sexually diverse individuals in this sample have a high level of LA, 32.0% show a tendency towards neuroticism, 22.7% towards extraversion, 44.3% towards introversion, and 41.2% present low WTC in the L2. A moderate positive correlation was found between LA and neuroticism, as well as a moderate negative correlation between LA and extraversion. Lastly, it was found that the neuroticism dimension is a significant predictor of LA, and that personality and LA are not predictors of the WTC. It is concluded that among LGBTQI+ individuals, the WTC is neither associated with LA nor with personality, yet the latter is linked to LA.

Keywords: Anxiety; Foreign language learning; Willingness To Communicate; LGBTQI+; Personality.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multiple factors play a role in the acquisition of a second language (L2). Those which hold the most relevance correspond to cognition, psychology, and individual differences (Gómez et al., 2022; Luo & Wei, 2021). From the aforementioned factors, motivation, aptitude, self-confidence, self-esteem, fear of making mistakes, and anxiety are variables of paramount importance in

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language learning (Qureshi et al., 2020). Willingness To Communicate (WTC) is another factor that impacts the development of L2 communicative competence, connected to personality, motivation, and learning context (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) states that the variables of WTC, anxiety in the language learning environment, and personality traits must be considered to achieve the objectives of L2 teaching and learning (Consejo de Europa, 2002).

In Colombia, a regulatory framework exists that prioritizes the implementation of an inclusive education model and unequivocally forbids any form of exclusion or marginalization, irrespective of its cause (García Castillo, 2020). The primary objective of this framework is to recognize the dignity of individuals who may be classified as disadvantaged due to their gender identity. The L2 classroom must address the important issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and content development in response to students' needs and expectations (Coda et al., 2020).

In the institution where this research was conducted, there is a significant number of students who make up the community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, and other sexual identities (LGBTQI+), who indicate that the videos, themes, and instructional materials used for learning English are exclusive, given that none of them shows the existence or participation of one of these individuals as a referent for the use of the language. There is no evidence of their existence in the language, and none of them show the existence or participation of one of these individuals as a reference for the use of the language. There is no evidence of their existence in the readings and exercises required for developing communicative competence in the L2. Furthermore, despite the implementation of a policy of inclusive and intercultural education in this university context, which aims to eliminate any discriminatory action against the population of sexually diverse individuals, there are still pedagogical practices where a heteronormative discourse is used, evidenced in the relationships between teachers and students, which takes place in the development of the foreign language curriculum in the various courses.

The aforementioned aspects result in an elevation of Linguistic Anxiety (LA) among sexually diverse students (Baros, 2021; Eisenmann & Ludwig, 2018; Rondón Cárdenas, 2012) and lead to a decrease in WTC in L2 (Cao, 2014; Heinz, 2018; Mitchell, 2018). Possibly for these reasons, in some cases, these factors contribute to the failure of the course, resulting in low academic performance or its cancellation, which in turn causes a delay in graduation, as proficiency in this language is a graduation requirement in all academic programs. Given the significance of psychological factors in language learning, such as linguistic anxiety (Ayedoun et al., 2019), personality traits (Šafranĵ & Zivlak, 2019), and willingness to communicate (Gómez et al., 2022), it is crucial to comprehend the behavior of these variables among learners with diverse sexual orientations within the research context. Additionally, no study was found in the literature that successfully combined LA, WTC, and personality traits with a sexually diverse population in the university context.

Thus, this research aimed to examine the correlation between personality dimensions, language anxiety, and willingness to communicate in English among university students belonging to the LGBTQI+ community.

To achieve this purpose, the following questions were posed: (1) What is the level of LA, neuroticism, and extraversion, and the degree of WTC in the L2 predominant in the sample of sexually diverse students who are part of the study? (2) What is the degree of correlation between LA, neuroticism and extraversion, and WTC in participants who are part of the LGBTQI+ population in this context? (3) What is the predictive value of personality and LA on WTC in L2 and of personality in LA?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), one of the primary objectives of L2 learning is to foster a positive disposition among learners towards engaging in communicative interactions and the willingness to communicate in various contexts. Gómez et al. (2021) define WTC as a psychological condition wherein individuals show an inherent inclination to engage in verbal communication in their L2 when given the opportunity, free from any external influences or contextual pressures associated with language acquisition. WTC is affected by several variables, including personality, the context of interaction, individual attitudes within the group, motivation, self-confidence, and communicative competence (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

As for the findings of Riasati and Rahimi (2018), the initial five aspects mentioned above align with the enduring factors that impact WTC during L2 learning, while the final one pertains to a situational variable. This variable represents the inclination to engage in conversation with a specific individual and the level of self-assurance in a communicative context. In their study, Vongsila and Reinders (2016) emphasize the significant role of anxiety and personality in WTC, motivating L2 learners to start and use the language for communicative purposes.

From a psychological point of view, anxiety is defined as an emotional reaction that occurs when an individual faces an uncertain situation accompanied by an expected threat and is shown by cognitive, emotional, and physiological symptoms (Cano-Vindel et al., 2011). Regarding the anxiety experienced during L2 learning, commonly referred to as LA, it is characterized by emotional tension and fear, specifically in the contexts where the L2 is used. Verbal competence, listening comprehension, and overall learning are all encompassed by this anxiety. This is a sensation of tension that is associated with LA and arises when a student anticipates that their linguistic abilities will be assessed in the presence of a collective of individuals (Horwitz, 2010). LA is linked to internal factors of L2 learners, namely Communicative Apprehension (CA), fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Horwitz, 2010). Negative effects on the communicative performance of L2 learners have been observed because of the use of LA (Gómez et al., 2021). An important outcome is the cognitive obstacle and bewilderment that arise when students are tasked with communicating in the target language in the presence of an audience, irrespective of their preexisting preparations (Ortega, 2014). Additionally, LA is linked to the personality traits of individuals (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015), which arise from the dynamic interplay

of diverse psychological and biological factors inherent to every individual, which enable differentiation among individuals.

Communicative performance is not only linked to knowledge, understanding, and skills in the target language, but also includes aspects concerning the type and personality traits of those who learn it (Consejo de Europa, 2018). As stated by Goldberg (1993), personality is structured around five significant dimensions or factors: openness to new experiences, responsibility, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. On the other hand, its antithetical extremes encompass proximity to experience, lack of order, introversion, uncooperative, and emotional stability. According to Šafranĳ and Zivlak (2019), the concept of “openness to new experiences” is associated with a favorable reception of new experiences, curiosity, imagination, and creativity. The “responsibility” trait encompasses the management of immediate impulses and desires, as well as the cultivation of self-discipline and orderly behavior. “Extraversion” is defined as the inclination to engage with others, express emotions openly, and possess strong communication skills. The attribute associated with “agreeableness” pertains to the inclination to display empathy, cooperation, and tolerance towards others. “Neuroticism” refers to the propensity to exhibit a low tolerance for frustration and to experience concern and anxiety regarding various situations.

The learning of a second language is influenced by the specific qualities and attributes that differentiate each individual from others, with these factors having either a positive or negative effect (Ghapanchi et al., 2011). As an illustration, when it comes to verbal production, extroverts exhibit a higher inclination towards expressiveness and fewer pauses, whereas introverts employ more formal speech and exercise greater caution in grammatical constructions (Dörnyei, 2005). The literature contains evidence from multiple studies regarding the occurrence of LA, personality, and WTC in university populations, with findings showing a focus on gender binarism (men and women). However, there is a significant scarcity of research examining the behavior of these variables among university students who identify as part of the LGBTQI+ population. Regarding this matter, Heinz (2018) investigated the degree of CA and WTC in a group of 44 transgender students attending a university in California, USA. Based on the author’s findings, the study showed elevated levels of CA and decreased WTC within the sample. The authors point out that the surveyed transgender individuals experience high levels of communication apprehension and feelings of loneliness and perceive the influence of a cisnormative sociocultural environment.

In a study conducted by Manipuspika (2018), an analysis was performed to investigate the relationship between LA and WTC. The sample comprised 98 students from Indonesia. The descriptive findings revealed that high LA and mid-range WTC were the predominant characteristics in the sample. Furthermore, a positive correlation has been established between LA and WTC. The fear of negative evaluation was found to be the most significant type of anxiety among the respondents, meaning they experience a high degree of nervousness caused by the perception others may have of their English-speaking ability. Therefore, it can be concluded that LA has a negative impact on WTC. Riasati (2018) investigated the relationship between LA and WTC in the Iranian context, using a sample of 156 students. A negative correlation

was apparent between LA and WTC. Additionally, the study found a positive association between LA and WTC. The study concluded that it is necessary to reduce passive learning, increase motivation, and create spaces for language use in small groups to have a favorable impact on critical thinking.

Babakhouya (2019) analyzed the relationship between the five personality dimensions and LA, using a sample of 257 students in South Korea. The results showed a positive correlation between LA and neuroticism, while also showing a negative correlation with extraversion. Furthermore, neuroticism exhibited a significant and positive effect on LA. Indeed, it was discovered that this dimension emerged as the most robust predictor of LA. The study revealed that more open and extroverted students perceive less LA in communicative practices. It was concluded that it is essential for foreign language teachers to identify the personality traits that tend to generate LA. The relationship between neuroticism, LA, and WTC was investigated by Piechurska-Kuciel et al. (2021) in a sample of 621 Polish students. According to the findings, there is a weak positive correlation between neuroticism and LA, as well as a weak negative correlation using WTC, and a weak negative correlation between LA and WTC. The authors concluded that individuals with a high degree of neuroticism may experience greater LA, which in turn leads to a decrease in their WTC.

The impact of personality dimensions and WTC on LA was investigated by Fatima et al. (2020) using a sample of 234 Malaysian students. According to the findings, a moderate negative correlation exists in WTC in LA, and a weak negative correlation is observed with extraversion. The regression model showed that the LA is significantly and negatively impacted by the WTC, while openness to experience also significantly and negatively influences WTC, and extraversion explains its variance by a margin of 16%. Itluded that personality traits (openness to experience and extraversion) and the classroom environment in which English is learned directly affect WTC.

Hussain et al. (2022) conducted their study in Pakistan and analyzed the correlation between personality and LA among a sample of 400 students. According to the findings, there is a weak positive correlation between LA and neuroticism, whereas weak negative emotions are associated with extraversion. The research concluded that personality traits have a significant impact on the anxiety perceived by English language learners. For this reason, it would be advisable for teachers to understand how each of these traits manifests itself, with the purpose of taking actions to reduce anxiety levels. Zohoorian et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between WTC and the five personality dimensions in 302 students from Iran. The findings revealed a positive correlation between WTC and extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness. The results showed that those individuals who are extroverted, more open to new experiences, and friendly tend to have higher levels of WTC. Shojakhanlou et al. (2022) investigated the predictive level of the five personality dimensions on CA in a sample of 179 students in Iran. The linear regression model revealed that neuroticism is the strongest predictor of CA as $\beta = 0.42$, $t = 6.57$, $p = 0.00$. The findings showed that extraversion and neuroticism contribute significantly to the development of speaking skills and their CA.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research aimed to analyze personality dimensions, linguistic anxiety, and willingness to communicate in English among university students who identify as part of the LGBTQI+ community. Descriptive, correlational, and predictive analyses were conducted by the researchers.

3.1. STUDY CONTEXT AND SAMPLE

The sample included 97 university students from the LGBTQI+ community. These students were studying English and enrolled in various technical, technological, and professional programs during the first semester of the year 2023 at a public university in Medellin, Antioquia, Colombia. There is no official characterization of the institution that would have allowed for determining the size of the community population. Even if there had been, it would have been challenging to access a statistically representative sample, as many of these individuals were reluctant to participate in the study. For this reason, it was decided to conduct a convenience sample with students whose sexual orientation was already known, as they had participated in an institutional program called “Pluridiversos”, a strategy aimed at dynamizing inclusion and interculturality policies.

The academic programs to which the respondents belong are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Academic programs and percentages

Academic programs	Percentage
Social work	28.1%
Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education	6.2%
Law	12.4%
Psychology	15.6%
Business Administration	7.3%
Public accounting	16.1%
Engineering	14.3%

Note. Authors' elaboration.

Table 2 below shows the percentages of participants according to their gender identity and sexual orientation.

Table 2
Percentages of participants according to gender identity and sexual orientation

Gender identity	Percentage
cisgender women	52.5%
cisgender men	18.6%
people with other identities	18.6%
non-binary people	4.1%
gender-fluid people	5.2%
transgender women	1.0%
Sexual orientation	Percentage
bisexual	22.7%
gay	18.4%
lesbian	58.8%
pansexual	6.1%

Note. Authors' elaboration.

The students in this sample are engaged in English language studies and are classified based on their course, proficiency level, as per the CEFR (Consejo de Europa, 2002), and the hours of language exposure they have had in previous courses. Participants are aged between 18 and 34 ($M = 24.3$; $SD = 6.3$).

3.2. INSTRUMENTS

The initial data collection instrument aligned with the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). This tool is used to determine the degree of linguistic anxiety an individual experiences while learning an L2 and consists of 33 statements measured using a Likert scale with scores ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "Strongly agree" and 5 indicates "Strongly disagree". These are distributed in three dimensions as follows: "Communicative apprehension" (11 items), "Test anxiety" (15 items), and "Fear of negative evaluation" (7 items). According to Pérez-Paredes and Martínez-Sánchez (2000), the degree of LA is determined by a score range from 33 to 165 points. The range 33–79 is considered low anxiety, 80–117 is normal anxiety, and 118–165 corresponds to high anxiety. Regarding the internal validity of the questionnaire in this population, Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated a value of 0.89.

The second instrument used for data collection pertained to the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). It aimed to find out the communicative scenarios and activities in which L2 learners would be inclined to engage with their teacher and classmates in

the classroom. The instrument was translated into Spanish by a scholar who specializes in the field of linguistics and subsequently verified by the researchers. A five-point Likert scale was used to present the 10 statements, with 1 indicating “I am almost never willing” and 5 “I am always willing”. The calculation of WTC degree is based on a scale ranging from 0 to 100, with the following categorizations: low readiness (below 52), medium readiness (53 to 82), and high readiness (above 83). The obtained Cronbach’s alpha value was 0.93.

Subsequently, the researchers employed the NEO-FFI Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 2008). The instrument used in this study is a modified rendition of the NEO-PI-R, comprising 60 items, with an equal distribution of 12 items per factor. The inventory employs a Likert scale that encompasses responses from 0 – “Strongly disagree” – to 4 – “Strongly agree”. The Latin American adult population has reported satisfactory psychometric properties (Martínez Uribe & Cassaretto Bardales, 2011). The study assessed the neuroticism factor and the extraversion factor by means of 12 items each. These were chosen based on literature findings, which show that they are the two personality dimensions most strongly linked to L2 learning (Babakhouya, 2019; Homayouni, 2011; Vural, 2019). For this sample, Cronbach’s alpha value corresponded to 0.78.

3.3. PROCEDURE AND ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION

The data collected from the instruments outlined in the preceding section were scored and analyzed by the researchers using the statistical analysis program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 28 for Windows). Initially, summary statistics (mean and standard deviation) were computed for the variables. Subsequently, participants were classified into different levels (low, medium, or high) based on the guidelines specified in the instrument manuals for interpretation.

In order to establish potential correlations between the variables, zero-order bivariate correlation coefficients were calculated through Spearman’s test, as the variables displayed a non-normal distribution (as per the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test). We adopted the ranges proposed by Hernández-Lalinde et al. (2018) to interpret the value of the correlation coefficient. Ultimately, two separate analyses employing multiple linear regression were conducted: the first analysis aimed to predict WTC using LA and personality variables, and the second one used personality variables to predict the LA variance.

4. RESULTS

The presentation of results follows a chronological sequence of the questions about the research aim. Regarding the former, 7.2% demonstrated a low level of LA, whereas 37.1% displayed a medium level (Table 1). Conversely, the scores showed that 55.7% fell within the high LA range. It can be inferred

from this data that 54 individuals who identify as LGBTQI+ in this sample show a high level of LA. In relation to the factor of neuroticism, it was found that 18.6% of respondents scored low, while 49.5% were categorized as being in the intermediate range (Table 1). The high score was achieved by 32.0% of the individuals. Within the context at hand, 30% of the LGBTQI+ population displays a high level of neuroticism.

Concerning extraversion, 22.7% of participants exhibited high levels, whereas 33.0% demonstrated moderate levels (Table 3). Additionally, it is worth noting that 44.3% of the respondents showed low scores on this factor, showing their classification as introverts. Interpreting this result suggests that 33.0 % of individuals in this sample of LGBTQI+ identify as extroverted, while 44.3 % identify as introverted. The findings unveiled that, within this sample, a high degree of WTC was present in 15.5% of participants, while 42.3% showed a medium level, and 41.2% had low WTC (Table 3). This outcome suggests that 40% of the individuals in this sample show a low level of WTC in L2.

Table 3
Summary measures and percentages categorized by variable level

	Level							
			Low		Medium		High	
	M	SD	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Communicative Apprehension	29.9	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Test anxiety	40.5	9.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Fear of negative evaluation	17.1	4.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Linguistic anxiety	87.6	19.0	7	7.2	36	37.1	54	55.7
5. Neuroticism	24.0	10.1	18	18.6	48	49.5	31	32.0
6. Extraversion	27.6	8.8	43	44.3	32	33.0	22	22.7
7. Willingness to communicate	28.8	10.6	40	41.2	41	42.3	15	15.5

Note. Authors' elaboration.

Regarding the second question, no association was found between LA and WTC, neither was it between the personality dimensions of neuroticism and extraversion and WTC (Table 4). This occurred as all results exceeded the boundaries of $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$. Based on the data presented in Table 4, a moderate positive correlation between LA and neuroticism was observed ($r = 0.360$; $p < 0.01$). Additionally, there were moderate positive correlations observed between neuroticism and CA ($r = 0.389$; $p < 0.01$), test anxiety ($r = 0.346$; $p < 0.01$), and a weak correlation with fear of negative evaluation (0.242 ; $p < 0.05$).

Similarly, a moderate negative correlation was found between LA and extraversion, given that $r = -0.328$; $p < 0.01$ (Table 4). In addition, there were moderate negative correlations detected between extraversion and CA ($r = -0.361$; $p < 0.01$) and test anxiety ($r = -0.321$; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, a weak correlation was established between test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation ($r = -0.212$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 4
The zero-order bivariate correlations among the variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Communicative Apprehension	1	0.815**	0.684**	0.914**	0.389**	-0.361**	0.051
2. Test anxiety		1	0.738**	0.958**	0.346**	-0.321**	0.07
3. Fear of negative evaluation			1	0.834**	0.242*	-0.212*	0.138
4. Linguistic anxiety				1	0.360**	-0.328**	0.066
5. Neuroticism					1	-0.651**	0.098
6. Extraversion						1	-0.053
7. Willingness to communicate							1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

Note. Authors' elaboration.

Regarding the third research question, the outcomes of the linear regression examination showed that personality and LA do not serve as predictors of WTC in L2 among this group of sexually diverse students. This conclusion is drawn as none of the variables attained significance values lower than 0.05, as presented in Table 5. Moreover, it was found that the personality dimension corresponding to neuroticism acted as a predictor variable, accounting for 15.0% of the variance in the LA. More precisely, the results presented in Table 5 reveal that neuroticism positively influences LA ($\beta = 0.302$; $t = 2.230$; $p < 0.001$) among the LGBTQI+ students in this sample.

Table 5
The results derived from the linear regression analysis

Dependent variable	Predictors	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
		B	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
WTC F = 0.509 p = 0.769 R2 = -0.027	(Constant)	22.759	10.471		2.173	0.032
	Communicative apprehension	-0.088	0.369	-0.052	-0.239	0.812
	Test anxiety	0.157	0.249	0.135	0.629	0.531
	Fear of negative evaluation	0.131	0.389	0.059	0.336	0.738
	Neuroticism	0.094	0.166	0.089	0.564	0.574
	Extraversion	-0.079	0.193	-0.064	-0.408	0.684
LA F = 9.394 p < 0.001 R2 = 0.15	(Constant)	93.496	13.308		7.025	< 0.001
	Neuroticism	0.570	0.256	0.302	2.230	0.028
	Extraversion	0.284	0.292	0.132	-0.975	0.332

Note. Authors' elaboration.

5. DISCUSSION

This research aimed to analyze the dimensions of personality, LA, and WTC in English among college students who identify as sexually diverse. Concerning the question about the determination of LA level, neuroticism and extraversion tendencies, and WTC degree in the primary L2 within the sexually diverse student sample, the descriptive findings reveal a prevalence of high LA level, which is aligned with Heinz (2018), Piechurska-Kuciel et al. (2021), and Šafranjanj and Zivlak (2019), and opposed to the findings of Babakhouya (2019) and Manipuspika (2018). There is a tendency towards neuroticism in a ratio of three individuals to 10, showing that one-third of the population exhibits anxious traits (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015; Hussain et al., 2022), experiencing adverse emotional states (Piechurska-Kuciel et al., 2021), and proactive apprehension regarding prospective failure during L2 learning. Additionally, the study revealed that only two out of 10 individuals exhibit extroverted traits, which suggests that these individuals experience lower levels of anxiety (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015). This finding also reveals that extroverted individuals also displayed higher self-confidence in communicating in a second language and, as a result, demonstrated more remarkable continuous professional development compared to those with tendencies towards neuroticism.

Additionally, it was found that four out of 10 individuals correspond to the opposite pole of this personality factor (introversion). Consequently, the convergence between inclinations towards the neuroticism factor and introversion is concurrent with a low WTC in this sample, found in four out of 10 individuals. The findings suggest that elevated levels of LA and certain personality traits, such as neuroticism and introversion, may contribute to the low WTC observed in this sample, as these variables are interconnected in L2 learning (Fatima et al., 2020; Piechurska-Kuciel et al., 2021). However, the results of the correlations obtained in the present study do not support this.

Besides personality, the low WTC and high anxiety in the English classroom in this context may be attributed to individual factors such as L2 proficiency, attitude, self-regulation, and motivation, as well as contextual factors like teaching methods, the teacher's role, and instructional materials, along with heteronormative practices that marginalize LGBTQI+ individuals. In this regard, Rondón Cárdenas (2012) argues that sexually diverse individuals often feel uncomfortable disclosing their sexual identity during the communicative practices necessary for developing communicative competence in a second language, which impacts their participation in and engagement with activities that foster the development of communicative competence in the L2. Additionally, a guide text and complementary materials framed in a binary conception, where only traditional male and female gender roles exist, are a way to invisibilize and marginalize LGBTQI+ individuals in the classroom where an L2 is learned, which produces an unfavorable impact on the learning process (Baros, 2021; Paiz, 2017).

According to Eisenmann and Ludwig (2018), the use of a language learning model that focuses solely on male and female genders can generate anxiety and discrimination, as it overlooks other gender identities, ultimately reinforcing a heteronormative educational system. In this line, the CEFR states that WTC plays a crucial role in language learning. WTC involves taking language risks to facilitate communication, allowing students to assess their language proficiency and teachers to provide corrective feedback on students' communicative performance (Consejo de Europa, 2018). Thus, it is crucial to minimize heteronormative practices and integrate a more inclusive approach that encompasses topics, debates, materials, audio resources, and a wide array of pedagogical tools that resonate with LGBTQI+ individuals. These resources can effectively foster the development of linguistic competence in the L2 (Castañeda-Peña, 2021; Paiz, 2017; Rhodes & Coda, 2017), and this might lead to a decrease in LA and an increase in WTC.

An alternative explanation for the elevated LA and diminished WTC in this sample could potentially stem from the unfavorable L2 self-assurance exhibited by these students. This observation aligns with the prevailing prevalence of neuroticism personality traits within the sample, consequently amplifying LA and WTC (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015; Hussain et al., 2022; Shojakhanlou et al., 2022). Riasati and Rahimi (2018) postulated that self-confidence in L2 learning aligns with perceived competence and low anxiety level (LA), ultimately positively impacting WTC (Fatima et al., 2020). Within this framework, a personality displaying a disposition towards neuroticism has a detrimental effect on WTC (Piechurska-Kuciel et al., 2021) because of heightened CA, thus diminishing their inclination to actively

participate in communicative tasks involving language use, particularly in the context of WTC. On the other hand, individuals inclined towards extraversion will actively seek opportunities to use the L2 in classroom settings designed to encourage communicative interaction (Shojakhanlou et al., 2022).

Additionally, these results show that the absence of correlation between low WTC and high LA may be attributed to a potential lack of motivation among the participants in the English course. In simpler terms, the low motivation observed in L2 learners could explain the presence of high LA and low WTC (MacIntyre, 2007; Riasati, 2018). The importance of motivation in L2 learning stems from its positive influence on WTC (Gómez et al., 2022; MacIntyre, 2007) and its impact on language frequency, which leads to the development of communicative competence (Subekti, 2019; Yousef et al., 2013).

Regarding the second research question aimed at establishing the correlation between LA, neuroticism, extraversion, and WTC among participants from the LGBTQI+ community in this particular context, it is clear that no relationship exists between LA and WTC. This finding contradicts the empirical evidence put forth by Babakhouya (2019), Fatima et al. (2020), Gómez et al. (2021), Manipuspika (2018), Piechurska-Kuciel et al. (2021), and Riasati (2018). Additionally, a lack of correlations between personality and WTC was identified, which contradicts the findings of Karadağ and Kaya (2019), Piechurska-Kuciel et al. (2021), and Zohoorian et al. (2022). These results suggest that a high level of LA does not lead to modifications in WTC in L2 among this group of LGBTQI+ students, and their inclination towards extraversion or neuroticism does not exert any influence on it either. According to Gómez et al. (2022), Kalsoom et al. (2020), and Riasati (2018), LA causes a decrease in WTC in the classroom where an L2 is learned, and this is because employing a foreign language for communicative purposes causes anxiety (Horwitz, 2010), and this is evidenced in physiological responses such as muscle tension and cardiac acceleration, and the production of blocks when speaking due to nerves and distress.

Multiple factors could account for this contradictory result. One potential explanation may lie in the fact that the study's participant pool was insufficiently large to establish a noticeable correlation between the two variables, specifically encompassing only 97 LGBTQI+ students. Secondly, the results suggest that personality is the most relevant variable in terms of its impact on target language learning in this sample, which is supported by Fatima et al. (2020) and Piechurska-Kuciel et al. (2021). Additionally, this discovery may validate the essence of WTC, which depends on the volition of the subject, functions, and adaptations based on circumstances, and it is influenced by internal and external factors (MacIntyre et al., 1998). In this regard, Kang (2005) emphasizes the association between WTC and personality traits, as well as its vulnerability to context, encompassing situational and time-specific elements.

In this case, there was a notable prevalence observed in the personality dimension associated with neuroticism, demonstrating a positive correlation with LA, consistent with the findings of Babakhouya (2019), Hussain et al. (2022), and Piechurska-Kuciel et al. (2021). Moreover, there was a negative correlation observed with extraversion, in line with the studies

conducted by Babakhouya (2019), Fatima et al. (2020), and Hussain et al. (2022). According to Fatima et al. (2020), Piechurska-Kuciel et al. (2021), and Zohoorian et al. (2022), neuroticism and introversion do not provide incentives for WTC in the target language. LA is an emotional factor that affects L2 learners (Gómez et al., 2021; Qureshi et al., 2020), regardless of their sexual orientation. However, the correlations showed that in this sample, the greater the tendency toward neuroticism, the higher the level of LA experienced by individuals who possess this personality trait. Furthermore, the correlations revealed that in this group of sexually diverse individuals, those with a greater tendency toward extraversion experience lower LA. In this regard, Kelsen (2019) states that neuroticism is associated with high levels of LA.

The third research question was aimed at determining the predictive value of personality and LA on WTC in L2 and of personality on LA. Based on the findings, personality and LA do not emerge as predictors of WTC in this particular sample of LGBTQI+ individuals, which contradicts previous studies by Dewaele (2019), Fatima et al. (2020), and Riasati (2018). Additionally, the dimension of neuroticism was established as a significant predictor of LA among these LGBTQI+ students, aligning with the findings of Babakhouya (2019), Dewaele (2019), and Shojakhanlou et al. (2022). The personality traits associated with neuroticism include tension, irritability, insecurity, and anxiety. As a result, individuals with these traits experience higher levels of CA (Shojakhanlou et al., 2022) and greater concern about potential judgments regarding their L2 performance (Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015). When considering the emotional state associated with neuroticism, individuals hesitate in using the target language for communication (Zohoorian et al., 2022), which aligns with the low reported rate of WTC in this study. Thus, it is crucial to foster an educational environment that enhances WTC, mitigates anxiety levels, and enables the cultivation of communicative competence through inclusive practices that resonate with students encompassing varied sexual identities. The pedagogical approach of incorporating audiovisual materials, readings, discussions, and non-binary themes in the L2 classroom aims at fostering inclusivity (Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2022). The proposed approach recognizes the L2 classroom as a setting in which individuals can critically analyze various cultural expressions and identities (Rhodes & Coda, 2017).

6. CONCLUSIONS

The results show that within this sample of sexually diverse individuals, there is a significant presence of LA and a low level of WTC. Moreover, it should be mentioned that approximately one-third of individuals tend towards neuroticism, whereas two out of 10 lean towards extraversion, and nearly half have a predisposition towards introversion. Additionally, the findings showed that WTC in L2 is not correlated with LA or personality, whereas LA is correlated with personality. The dimension of neuroticism was ultimately determined to be a significant predictor of LA, whereas neither personality nor LA was a predictor of WTC. Based on the information provided above, with these LGBTQI+ individuals, WTC in L2 is not linked to LA or personality. Never-

theless, the latter is strongly associated with LA.

The sample size, participant personality, and the presence of heteronormative discourse in the L2 learning context might influence the findings. This is clear in the instructional materials, as they do not sufficiently represent the identity of sexually diverse individuals. Moreover, these can be attributed to a lack of self-assurance in L2 proficiency within the sample, which aligns with the prevalence of neuroticism and introversion in their personalities, ultimately leading to an increase in LA. The high LA and low WTC demonstrated by these sexually diverse students might be attributed to the prevailing tendency towards neuroticism and introversion in the sample. In addition, the findings also propose the potential presence of a lack of motivation in the sample, which could be responsible for the observed low WTC.

The following are specific pedagogical implications derived from the study. Due to the high degree of LA and low level of WTC in the sample, it is considered important that foreign language teachers transform the heteronormative system that dominates the practices that lead to the learning of an L2 (Coda et al., 2020; Paiz, 2017) to favor and make visible the identity of students who are part of the LGBTQI+ population, despite the cultural paradigms and gender stereotypes that exist in the educational context (Rhodes & Coda, 2017). According to Baros (2021), the inclusion of themes, communicative practices, and materials that allow these people to express their identities and identify with them is a way to create inclusive classrooms for learning an L2. This L2 learning environment could contribute to the increase of WTC, which is required for the development of communicative competence (Fatima et al., 2020; Khajavy et al., 2016).

On the other hand, these results indicate that the personality of sexually diverse individuals is an important variable in English language learning that should be considered to promote WTC. In this sense, identifying that neuroticism leads to increased LA (Babakhouya, 2019; Hussain et al., 2022), as does extraversion (Fatima et al., 2020; Piechurska-Kuciel et al., 2021), allows teachers to adopt methods and techniques aimed at encouraging self-confidence in LGBTQI+ students learning an L2, which positively impacts WTC. For this to occur, an environment where teacher cooperation prevails and provides corrective feedback is required, which contributes to reducing the LA that occurs in the classroom where an L2 is taught (Horwitz, 2010).

The empirical evidence obtained from this research provides valuable insights into the behavior of personality, LA, and WTC in L2 among students who identify as LGBTQI+ in university settings in Colombia and other countries. Nonetheless, it is imperative not to make broad generalizations regarding the findings of the current study, because the participants are only from one university and belong to a predominantly marginalized socio-cultural context, characterized by censorship, discrimination, and heteronormative practices within the classroom where a second language is being taught and learned.

Regarding the limitations of the research, it is noted that this study could be expanded to include a larger sample of students from various universities in the region and the country. This research initiative would confirm the surprising findings regarding the non-existence of a relationship between

WTC, LA, and personality, with a sample of LGBTQI+ individuals learning English in the university context, or, on the contrary, confirm the empirical information reported in the literature that supports this relationship in populations circumscribed within a sexual binarism (Babakhouya, 2019; Fatima et al., 2020; Gómez et al., 2021; Karadağ & Kaya, 2019; Manipuspika, 2018; Piechurska-Kuciel et al., 2021; Riasati, 2018; Zohoorian et al., 2022). It is considered necessary to mention that this population of sexually diverse individuals was reluctant and apathetic to participate in the research and to fill out the instruments. Nevertheless, a sample of 97 individuals was obtained. Finally, including qualitative tools that enable researchers to understand students' perceptions regarding the study variables could enhance the robustness of the results obtained. In addition, the information collected in this research came from three self-administered instruments with closed polytomous statements. The results could be more robust if qualitative tools are considered that allow us to know the perceptions of the students in relation to the study variables.

For future studies, a control group of heterosexual students matching the other sociodemographic variables (age, social stratum, and level of English language proficiency) could be included to evaluate how the variables of the present research behave, considering the same statistical analyses. This would allow us to identify the effect of sexual orientation on LA, WTC, and personality traits. Given that there are additional factors that influence L2 learning, particularly WTC, it is necessary to count on future research to investigate the impacts of self-confidence, self-efficacy beliefs, communication strategies, and motivation using qualitative instruments.

AUTHORSHIP

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no external conflicts of interest, direct or indirect, personal or financial. or indirect, personal or financial interests related to this article.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

The authors declare that they have not made use of AI tools and technologies in the preparation, writing, revision and translation of the manuscript.

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Ansiedade Linguística, personalidade e Disposição Para se Comunicar em inglês entre estudantes universitários LGBTQI+

RESUMO

Desenvolver a competência comunicativa é o principal objetivo dentro de uma sala de aula de língua estrangeira e várias variáveis influenciam esse processo. O objetivo deste estudo foi analisar as dimensões da personalidade, Ansiedade Linguística (AL) e Disposição Para se Comunicar (DPC) em inglês entre estudantes universitários LGBTQI+. Pesquisa quantitativa com delineamento transversal foi realizada em uma amostra de 97 estudantes universitários sexualmente diversos. A Escala de Ansiedade em Sala de Aula de Língua Estrangeira, o Questionário de Disposição para Comunicar e o Inventário de Personalidade NEO foram administrados. Os resultados demonstram que 55,7% dos indivíduos sexualmente diversos nesta amostra apresentam um alto nível de AL, 32,0% apresentam uma tendência ao neuroticismo, 22,7% à extroversão, 44,3% à introversão e 41,2% apresentam baixo DPC na L2. Uma correlação positiva moderada entre AL e neuroticismo foi encontrada, bem como uma correlação negativa moderada entre AL e extroversão. Por fim, evidenciou-se que a dimensão neuroticismo é um preditor significativo de AL, e que personalidade e LA não são preditores do DPC. Conclui-se que entre os indivíduos LGBTQI+, o DPC não está nem associado à AL nem à personalidade, mas esta última está ligada à AL.

Palavras-chave: Ansiedade; Aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras; Disposição Para Comunicar; LGBTQI+; Personalidade.

Ansiedad Lingüística, personalidad y Disposición Para Comunicarse en inglés en estudiantes LGBTQI+

RESUMEN

Desarrollar la competencia comunicativa es la meta principal cuando se aprende una lengua extranjera, y existen variables que inciden en este proceso. El objetivo del estudio fue analizar las dimensiones de la personalidad, la Ansiedad Lingüística (AL) y la Disposición Para Comunicarse (DPC) en inglés en universitarios de la población LGBTQI+. Se realizó una investigación cuantitativa de corte transversal, de nivel predictivo con una muestra de 97 estudiantes universitarios sexualmente diversos. Se administraron la Escala de Ansiedad en la Clase de Lengua Extranjera, el Cuestionario sobre Disposición Para Comunicarse y el Inventario de Personalidad NEO. Los resultados indican que en esta muestra de individuos sexualmente diversos un 55,7% poseen un nivel elevado de AL, un 32,0% demuestran una tendencia hacia el neuroticismo, 22,7% hacia la extraversión, 44,3% hacia la introversión y un 41,2% presentan una baja DPC en la L2. Se halló una correlación positiva moderada entre la AL y el neuroticismo, y una negativa moderada entre la AL y la extraversión. Finalmente, se evidenció que la dimensión del neuroticismo es un predictor significativo de la AL, y que la personalidad y la AL no son predictores de la DPC. Se concluye que en las personas LGBTQI+ la DPC no está asociada a la AL ni a la personalidad, pero esta última está relacionada con la AL.

Palabras clave: Ansiedad; Aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera; Disposición Para Comunicarse; LGBTQI+; Personalidad.