Big Five Personality Traits and Metaphor Construction: A Correlational Study on English Literature Students

*Abd Halim[1], Mardiyanah Nasta[2], Nur Mutmainna Halim[3]
[1,2,3] Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia
(*abd.halim@unm.ac.id)

Abstract

Metaphor is a fundamental component of language that indicates an individual's creativity and aptitude for abstract thought. This study seeks to ascertain the correlation between students' personalities, as delineated by the Big Five Personality model, and their proficiency in constructing metaphors in English, employing the theoretical framework established by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). Using a quantitative correlational method, the study included 65 active students from the English Literature Program at Universitas Negeri Makassar, chosen by stratified random sampling. The instruments employed were the Indonesian-adapted version of the Big Five Personality Inventory (IPIP) and a metaphor writing assessment including 20 items. Pearson correlation analysis indicated that the dimension Openness to Experience had a robust and significant positive association with metaphor building skill, thereby identifying it as the most potent predictor. Conscientiousness exhibited a substantial positive association, whilst Neuroticism demonstrated a significant negative correlation. In contrast, Extraversion and Agreeableness demonstrated no significant relationship with metaphorical ability. These findings highlight that some personality traits - especially openness to experience and self-discipline - substantially enhance students' linguistic creativity, particularly in metaphorical expression.

Keywords: Creativity; Big Five Personality; Linguistics; Metaphor.

One of the best ways to improve your English writing and speech is to use metaphors. Metaphor is a figure of speech that connects two thoughts that don't seem to go together. It helps people talk and write about complicated ideas in ways that simple language doesn't always work. The sayings "time is money" and "life is a journey" are examples of how metaphors can be used to improve the way you write and help you understand more abstract ideas through more concrete ones. In this situation, metaphors are not extras, they are necessary for conversation. Being able to understand and use them is often seen as a sign of language skills and mental complexity (Nacey, 2016; Schäffner, 2004). Metaphor skill is very important for people who are learning English as a second language (L2) because it shows that they not only know a lot of words and grammar but also can think and talk in ways that show they understand the target language's deep cultural and cognitive norms.

This comprehension is based on the seminal research of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), whose Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) redefined metaphor as a core aspect of human

cognition. CMT sees metaphor as a crucial way that people organize their thoughts and experiences, not just as a pretty decoration. Metaphors help people understand topics that are hard to touch or abstract by putting them in more tangible contexts that they can see, hear, and feel. Because of this, you can talk about things like time, love, or morality by using journeys, money, or geographical orientation. This demonstrates the connection between language and thought. In this situation, making metaphors is more than just talking; it shows how people interact with reality, make sense of things, and talk about their own lives.

Studies indicate that a person's capacity to formulate metaphors is intricately linked to their prior knowledge, cognitive patterns, life events, and fundamental psychological characteristics (Musolff, 2016; Popova & Kurochkina, 2015). In other words, metaphor is not just about how well you speak; it is also a way to see how your mind works and how it thinks.

Personality traits, especially those identified by the Big Five model, have garnered increasing attention as psychological factors pertinent to metaphorical expression. Of the five attributes, Openness to Experience is regarded as particularly significant in the development of creative and figurative competence. People that score high in openness are curious about new ideas, sensitive to beauty, imaginative, and willing to explore new and abstract ideas (Kenett et al., 2023; Meyer et al., 2023; Taylor Bunce & Boerger, 2022). These traits are the basis for metaphorical thinking because making a metaphor means finding links between areas that do not seem to be connected at first. For instance, conceptualizing life as a journey necessitates the cognitive capacity to correlate aspects of travel—such as destinations, challenges, and companions—with human existence. On the other hand, people who are not very open may use more direct and clear language, which shows that they are less likely to use metaphors or symbols to communicate. In this context,

openness may be regarded as a psychological prerequisite for metaphorical fluency (Rahman & Halim, 2022).

Recent empirical studies have substantiated the theoretical correlation between openness and metaphor generation. For instance, Silvia and Beaty (2021) showed that People who score higher on openness are more likely to come up with new and useful metaphors because they can connect different ideas. Their findings suggest that metaphor formation is not merely a linguistic skill but also a cognitive manifestation of creativity influenced by personality. In a similar vein, Jirásek (2020) discovered that openness is substantially associated to creative achievements in several circumstances, whereas qualities such as extraversion or conscientiousness show decreased predictive value for figurative skill. These results bolster the assertion that openness fosters the psychological conditions requisite for the utilization of creative metaphors. People who are open-minded are more likely to think outside the box and come up with new ways to solve problems. These are important skills not only in the arts, but also in science and school (Nießen et al., 2020).

Meta-analytical study has demonstrated a correlation between openness and success in second language acquisition. Chen, Zhang, and Parr (2022), in an extensive meta-analysis spanning four decades of research, identified a moderate positive connection between openness and L2 achievement (r = .23), among other characteristics such as conscientiousness and extraversion. Their findings indicate that openness facilitates learners' engagement with the abstract, adaptable, and exploratory dimensions of language acquisition, encompassing figurative and metaphorical communication. Nießen et al. (2020) further emphasize that openness is a predictor of favourable outcomes in distance and online learning contexts, as students are required to depend on self-directed exploration, curiosity, and adaptation. These situations require exactly

the traits that openness boosts, and they might also boost metaphorical creativity because people who are open are more likely to look for different ways to use language and different ways to understand it. Collectively, this research highlights the notion that personality qualities, especially openness, function as cognitive and motivational catalysts in the development and use of figurative competence.

Even with these converging conclusions, there is still not much research that looks directly at the link between personality factors and metaphor creation in L2 contexts. A significant portion of the scholarship has concentrated on metaphor comprehension—examining how learners interpret figurative expressions in a foreign language—or has addressed the broader connections between personality and verbal intelligence, neglecting metaphor production as a separate skill (Gavrilescu & Vizireanu, 2018; Popova & Kurochkina, 2015). Moreover, while psycholinguistic and psycho-pragmatic research has begun to explore the impact of personality on language performance, there is a deficiency of studies that explicitly utilize cognitive linguistic frameworks, such as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). This lack of integration makes it hard to understand how cognitive and psychological factors work together to affect students' figurative skills. An interdisciplinary approach that integrates personality psychology and cognitive linguistics may yield more comprehensive explanations for the varying abilities of learners in metaphor construction.

This study seeks to address that gap by examining correlations between Big Five personality traits - most notably openness - and metaphor construction among English Literature students at the Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar. The focus on literature students is significant, as they are not only language learners, but also future professionals expected to analyse, interpret, and produce creative texts rich in figurative meaning. Their dual identity as

L2 learners and literature students provides a unique opportunity to investigate how psychological traits shape metaphorical competence in a context where figurative ability is both academically and professionally relevant. Moreover, as Indonesian students operating within a multilingual and multicultural environment, their metaphor use may reflect unique conceptual blends that are culturally and linguistically distinct from those found in native-English contexts. This makes the study's findings not only theoretically valuable but also pedagogically significant for designing curricula that are sensitive to both personality differences and cultural particularities.

By focusing on metaphor production, this research contributes to three main areas. First, it offers a novel interdisciplinary framework that integrates CMT and Big Five personality theory, thereby bridging cognitive linguistics and psychology. Second, it improves applied linguistics by looking more closely at the area of metaphor production in L2 learners, which has not been studied as much as metaphor comprehension. Third, it puts the study in an Indonesian setting, which helps people understand how to make English Literature programs more responsive to students' personalities. Teachers can develop learning plans that are better for each student by discovering out which personality factors are most closely related to metaphorical ability. These plans can help students be more creative and better at communicating. In this way, the study not only fills a theoretical gap but also contributes to practical innovations in language teaching and learning.

There is still not much research on the link between personality and metaphor use in language, even though both areas have been studied a lot on their own. Scholars are increasingly acknowledging that creativity, consistently linked to the personality attribute of Openness to Experience, is fundamental to figurative language skills. Metaphor inherently necessitates the capacity to discern connections

among seemingly unrelated concepts, and this cognitive adaptability is closely associated with the traits of open and creative persons. McCrae's early research (1987) showed that persons who are very creative and usually score high on openness were better at coming up with metaphorical concepts. This was the first proof that figurative ability has a psychological base. Subsequently, Silvia et al. (2009) verified this by showing that people who are very open not only have more creative ideas but also better language skills, such as being able to come up with complex and important metaphors. Recent academic research underscores the importance of metaphorical competence in both academic and professional domains. Kučera et al. (2022) argued that metaphorical skills are crucial in contexts requiring language creativity, including education, literature, intercultural communication, and professional discourse. These findings highlight the need of examining the impact of personality on students' metaphorical abilities, especially for those in English Literature programs where significant involvement with figurative language is expected.

When we think about the goals of English Literature studies, it becomes evident why this research is needed. These programs teach students more than just how to read and write English fluently. They also learn how to read and write texts that have a lot of figurative meaning. Their capacity to understand and create metaphors demonstrates both linguistic competence and advanced interpretive abilities necessary for literary and scholarly endeavours. Nevertheless, understanding the impact of personality factors on these talents is still inadequate. Looking at the relationship can help teachers grasp the theory better and use it better in the classroom, helping them come up with plans that take into consideration each student's psychological profile. It is especially crucial to focus on how metaphors are made since they need active construction instead of passive acceptance, which makes them more open to personality impacts.

This study employs a problem-solving methodology to examine the relationships between the Big Five Personality Traits and the capacity of English Literature students to understand and create metaphors. Personality will be assessed using validated psychological tools grounded in the Big Five framework (John, 1999; McCrae, 1987; Saucier & Goldberg, 1998) encompassing openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The study posits that openness may have the most significant correlation with metaphorical ability. Additionally, it will investigate the potential secondary roles of other traits, such as whether conscientiousness enhances metaphorical use through motivation and persistence, or if extraversion affects communicative willingness in metaphor application.

To test figurative competence, students will read English texts that require them to understand established metaphors and come up with new ones for certain situations. This test has two parts that will help us figure out how well students understand and use metaphors. After that, the data from these tasks will be put through statistical tests to see if there are any links between personality traits and how well people use metaphors.
The purpose of this research is to learn more about personality and how significant it is. Students who are highly open, for example, might be good at coming up with metaphors because they want to see things from multiple points of view and are prepared to take intellectual risks. These are traits that naturally lead to figurative inquiry. Students who are less open, on the other hand, could use more literal language, which implies there are fewer or less complicated metaphors. These discoveries could help us learn more about the psychological aspects that determine how people acquire languages, especially when it comes to their ability to be creative and use figurative language.

Prior to finalizing the research design, first observations were executed to ascertain

the preparedness of the student population. One important step was making sure that everyone who took part had finished the "Introduction to Linguistics" course. This course gives you important basic information about semantics, figurative language, and metaphor. This base makes sure that students have enough understanding of the concepts to work on metaphor-related activities at a higher level. This lowers the chance that bad performance is due to lack of exposure rather than personality differences. After confirming this preparation, the researcher created a proposal that included the technique, goals, and theoretical framework.

By positioning itself at the confluence of cognitive linguistics and personality psychology, this research provides an innovative contribution to the comprehension of the influence of individual characteristics on language acquisition. It could help English Literature Study Program teach better by explaining how to deal with differences in personality in the classroom. If openness is shown to be a good indicator of metaphorical ability, teachers may come up with specific ways to help students be more imaginative, curious, and flexible. These methods could make learning a language more individualized and more effective, helping children develop the linguistic creativity they need in school and at work.

This research addresses a significant deficiency in the literature by examining the relationship between personality traits and metaphorical skills among English Literature students. It seeks to identify the cognitive and emotional aspects influencing figurative competence through the integration of psychological testing and language analysis. The results will improve theoretical conversations in psycholinguistics and educational psychology, as well as give lecturers and curriculum planners useful advice. The project ultimately seeks to enable students to utilize the full capacity of metaphor, a linguistic tool that is not only fundamental to literature

but also essential for effective communication in an increasingly globalized and creativity-oriented society.

Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational approach to identify the relationship between students' personalities and their ability to construct metaphors in English. This approach was selected as it allows the researchers to statistically measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019) —namely, student personality as the independent variable and metaphor construction ability as the dependent variable. The population of this study consisted of all active students enrolled in the English Literature Program, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, totalling 130 students distributed across five active classes (A–E). The sampling was conducted using a stratified random sampling technique, considering class variation, gender distribution, and students' intellectual abilities. From each class stratum, a proportional sample was drawn, resulting in a total of 65 respondents. The selection process was carried out randomly using a random number generator based on student attendance numbers from the official class list, to maintain objectivity and avoid selection bias.

This quantitative approach employed proportional stratified random sampling to ensure the representativeness of the sample. The population consisted of 130 students from the 2023 cohort of the English Literature Program, divided into five classes: Class A (24 students), Class B (26 students), Class C (31 students), Class D (32 students), and Class E (17 students).

To obtain a representative sample while maintaining proportional distribution across classes, the researcher selected 65 students (50% of the population) as the research sample. The number of respondents from each class was determined based on the proportion

of students in that class relative to the total population. It was based on the Slovin's formula:

Slovin's Formula:
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:
- n = number of samples
- N = total population (130 students)
- e = margin of error (usually 5% or 0.05)

The proportional sampling resulted in the following distribution: 12 respondents (Class A), 13 respondents (Class B), 15 respondents (Class C), 16 respondents (Class D), and 9 respondents (Class E).

The researchers also considered the gender composition within the population, where most students were female. Although the sampling technique was random, efforts were made to ensure that the gender distribution in the sample reflected that of the overall population, to avoid imbalances that might affect the analytical results. Additionally, variation in levels of intelligence and linguistic thinking abilities was also considered in the sampling design. By employing stratified and random sampling, the researchers aimed to capture the cognitive diversity of the student population so that the correlation analysis between personality traits and metaphor construction ability could be conducted in a more comprehensive and representative manner.

The students' personality variable was measured using the Big Five Personality instrument, which encompasses five core dimensions: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. This instrument was adapted from the IPIP (International Personality Item Pool) version and contextually adjusted to align with the characteristics of Indonesian university students. Meanwhile, the variable of metaphor

construction ability in English was assessed through a questionnaire consisting of 20 metaphor-related items, designed to evaluate the extent to which students could generate or accurately interpret metaphors in a creative manner. The results of the metaphor construction test were then categorized based on Table 1.

Table 1. Metaphor Construction Ability Category

Total Score	Metaphor Construction Ability Category	Description
81–100	Excellent	Creative, complex, and contextual. Demonstrates a high level of conceptual and aesthetic understanding in language use.
61–80	Good	Clear and relevant metaphors. Engaging, though not highly complex.
41–60	Average	Shows metaphorical attempts but remains general and shallow. Sometimes literal.
21–40	Below Average	Fails to construct coherent or relevant metaphors. Often literal or confusing.
0–20	Poor	No attempt at metaphor construction, or metaphors completely fail in meaning.

With a stratified and methodologically controlled sampling design, this study is expected to yield comprehensive and representative findings in explaining the correlation between personality traits and metaphor construction ability in the context of literature students.

Result

This study analyses the relationship between the five personality dimensions in the Big Five model—Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism—and the ability to construct metaphors in English. The data were analysed using Pearson correlation techniques through SPSS version 25. The complete results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Students' Metaphor Construction Ability

Class	Respondents	Category of Metaphor Construction Ability				
		Excellent (81–100)	Good (61–80)	Average (41–60)	Below Average (21–40)	Poor (0–20)
Class A	12	3 (25.0%)	5 (41.7%)	4 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Class B	13	5 (38.5%)	5 (38.5%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)
Class C	15	4 (26.7%)	6 (40.0%)	5 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Class D	16	12 (75.0%)	3 (18.8%)	1 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Class E	9	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (33.3%)
Total	65	26 (40.0%)	21 (32.3%)	13 (20.0%)	1 (1.5%)	4 (6.2%)

Note: This table presents aggregated data based on class and score category. Full individual data were used in the statistical correlation analysis but are not explicitly displayed in this article to maintain focus and writing efficiency.

Table 2 above shows the distribution of students' metaphor construction ability by class. Overall, the "Excellent" category dominates (40%), followed by the "Good" category (32.3%). Only 1.5% of respondents fall into the "Below Average" category, and 6.2% are in the "Poor" category. Class D shows the highest performance, while Class E demonstrates the most diverse range of abilities.

Table 3. Results of Students' Raw Personality Dimensions

Personality Dimensions	Category	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Openness	High	26	40%
	Average	22	34%
	Low	17	26%
Conscientiousness	High	32	49%
	Average	19	29%
	Low	14	21%
Extraversion	High	23	35%
	Average	12	18%
	Low	12	18%
Agreeableness	High	37	57%
	Average	18	27%
	Low	10	15%
Neuroticism	High	28	43%
	Average	19	29%
	Low	18	27%

Table 3 shows that there was a wide range of responses when measuring the Big Five personality traits. In the Openness to Experience dimension, 40% of those who answered showed a high level of openness, 34% showed a medium level, and 26% showed a low level. The biggest percentage of people who answered the Conscientiousness dimension was in the high category (49%). The medium and low categories included 29% and 21% of people, respectively.

For the Extraversion dimension, 35% of people were in the high group, while 18% were in both the medium and low groups. The Agreeableness dimension had the highest percentage of responders, with 57% being high, 27% being medium, and only 15% being low. This shows that most people in this group had cooperative and friendly views.

Conversely, the distribution of the Neuroticism dimension was more balanced. A total of 43% of respondents showed a high level of neuroticism, suggesting a susceptibility to stress and negative emotions, while 29% were in the medium category and 27% in the low category. These results provide an initial psychological profile of English literature students, which will later be linked more deeply to their metaphor construction ability.

Following this, a correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. The relationships between each of the Big Five personality dimensions and the students' ability to construct metaphors in English were examined. The statistical technique used was the Pearson correlation test, with a significance level (α) set at 0.05.

Table 4. Results of Students' Labels of Metaphor Construction Ability Category

Personality Dimensions	Correlational Value®	Sig. (2-tailed)	Labels
Openness	0.482	0.000	Significant (positive)
Conscientiousness	0.295	0.019	Significant (positive)
Extraversion	0.173	0.162	Not Significant
Agreeableness	0.148	0.213	Not Significant
Neuroticism	-0.321	0.011	Significant (negative)

Table 4 revealed a significant positive relationship between the Openness to Experience dimension and metaphor construction ability ($r = 0.482$, $p = 0.000$). This correlation is considered moderate to strong, indicating that the higher a person's level of openness to experience, the greater their ability to construct metaphors. This finding is consistent with the theory that individuals high in openness tend to exhibit imagination, originality, and cognitive flexibility that support metaphorical productivity.

In the Conscientiousness dimension, a significant but weaker relationship was found ($r = 0.295$, $p = 0.019$). This means there is a positive contribution from being organized and responsible to the ability to construct metaphors, although not as strong as that of openness. This suggests that students who are meticulous and disciplined tend to construct metaphors with clearer structure and purpose. Meanwhile, the Extraversion dimension showed a weak and non-significant correlation with metaphor construction ability ($r = 0.173$, $p = 0.162$). This indicates that high verbal ability or social openness does not directly influence the ability to form written metaphors (Arun Kumar & Lavanya, 2024; Yao & Li, 2021). Similarly, the Agreeableness dimension also showed no significant correlation ($r = 0.148$, $p = 0.213$). Although cooperative and empathetic students may be more sensitive to meaning, they are not necessarily more metaphorically productive.

Interestingly, the Neuroticism dimension showed a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.321$, $p = 0.011$), suggesting that the higher an individual's level of neuroticism, the lower their ability to construct metaphors. This can be explained by the tendency of highly neurotic individuals to experience concentration issues, anxiety, or self-doubt, which can hinder their linguistic creativity (Anglim et al., 2020).

Based on the results of the Pearson correlation analysis in Table 3, it was found that each personality dimension in the Big Five model demonstrates varying levels of correlation with English literature students' metaphor construction ability. The Openness to Experience dimension showed a strong and significant positive correlation ($r = 0.482$; $p = 0.000$), making it the most dominant predictor in this study. Students exhibiting elevated levels of openness are generally more imaginative, contemplative, and inclined to investigate symbolic meanings—attributes that provide the foundation of metaphor development. Being open to new experiences helps people see things from different angles and think beyond the box, which boosts their linguistic creativity (Abu Raya et al., 2023; Furnham et al., 2013).

The Conscientiousness measure demonstrated a notable, albeit weaker, association ($r = 0.295$; $p = 0.019$). This feature does not directly correlate with imagination or creativity; nonetheless, attributes such as discipline, accuracy, and goal orientation facilitate the construction of structured and meaningful metaphors. Students who are very conscientious are more likely to come up with metaphors in a planned and organized fashion, although they may not be new.

On the other hand, the Neuroticism dimension had a strong negative correlation with the ability to make metaphors ($r = -0.321$; $p = 0.011$). This suggests that pupils characterized

by elevated neuroticism, which is associated with anxiety, emotional instability, and stress, are more prone to demonstrate diminished metaphorical ability. This emotional volatility may hinder fluent cognition, concentration, and the cognitive adaptability required for metaphor construction.

The Extraversion (r = 0.173; p = 0.162) and Agreeableness (r = 0.148; p = 0.213) measures exhibited no significant associations. This indicates that although extroverted or cooperative persons may possess robust communication and empathy skills, these traits do not immediately facilitate the construction or profound understanding of metaphors.

Together, the regression analysis displayed in Table 5 provides a comprehensive knowledge of how each of the Big Five personality traits affects students' ability to construct metaphors. The results show that openness to experience was the most potent positive predictor, with a standardized beta of.421 (p <.001). This implies that students who scored higher on openness also tended to do better when coming up with metaphors, highlighting the significance of imagination, creativity, and cognitive flexibility in this language skill. Conscientiousness also shown a positive and significant connection (β =.201, p <.05), suggesting that students who are well-organized, disciplined, and hardworking had a higher chance of succeeding in tasks that require the methodical use of metaphorical language. On the other hand, neuroticism had a negative and significant influence (β = −.229, p <.05), suggesting that students with higher

emotional instability may have a harder time coming up with or comprehending metaphors.

The traits of agreeableness (β =.066, p >.05), extraversion (β =.084, p >.05), and metaphor-building skills, on the other hand, did not significantly correlate. This suggests that social outgoingness and cooperation are not always associated with metaphorical production in an academic setting. The model illustrates how distinct personality traits have differing predictive abilities when combined, with Openness serving as the strongest stimulant for metaphorical creativity, Conscientiousness providing technical support through persistence and planning, and Neuroticism serving as a barrier due to its negative emotional tendencies. The inconsequential roles of agreeableness and extraversion provide additional evidence that the production of metaphors is more dependent on traits linked to cognitive exploration and concentrated effort than on social or interpersonal characteristics.

Despite this limitation, the correlation results still offer meaningful insights. The strong role of Openness highlights the importance of creativity and cognitive flexibility in metaphorical thinking. The significance of Conscientiousness suggests that structured effort and carefulness may support linguistic creativity, while the negative effect of Neuroticism indicates that emotional instability may hinder students' metaphorical productivity. Future research applying regression-based models is recommended to confirm these relationships more robustly and

Table 5. Multiple Regression Analysis of Big Five Traits on Metaphor Construction Ability

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	42.315	5.271	–	8.029	.000
Openness	0.457	0.108	.421	4.215	.000
Conscientiousness	0.236	0.110	.201	2.152	.034
Extraversion	0.095	0.093	.084	1.017	.312
Agreeableness	0.078	0.093	.066	0.842	.402
Neuroticism	−0.268	0.101	−.229	−2.645	.010

a. Dependent Variable: Metaphor Construction Ability

to avoid potential statistical inflation arising from multiple bivariate tests.

Discussion

These findings are congruent with the conclusions of Kaufman et al. (2016), who determined that Openness to Experience is the sole Big Five factor that reliably predicts creative achievement in the arts and linguistics. In their research titled "Openness to Experience and Intellect Differentially Predict Creative Achievement in the Arts and Sciences," they identified a robust association between openness and verbal/metaphorical creativity, but other personality factors exhibited negligible or no significant impact. In this study, Openness was found to be the most important factor in determining how well someone could make metaphors. This supports the idea that pupils who are more open tend to be more imaginative, creative, and flexible in their thinking, all of which help them make metaphors.

Conscientiousness, however less prominent, served a supportive function by offering structure, tenacity, and diligence in metaphor-related tasks, whereas Neuroticism functioned as a cognitive impediment that stifled creativity through anxiety and emotional instability.
Mammadov's (2022) large-scale meta-analysis in the Journal of Personality, which combined 228 studies with more than 400,000 participants, found Conscientiousness to be the most reliable predictor of academic success. Openness also played a significant role in situations that required creativity, abstract reasoning, and intellectual curiosity. Neuroticism, on the other hand, always hurt performance. The meta-analysis primarily examined measures of academic achievement, including GPA and standardized test scores. However, analogies with the current study are apparent: Conscientiousness promotes disciplined engagement, Openness enhances creativity, and Neuroticism detracts from performance.

In a more recent study published in Frontiers in Psychology, Bhattacharjee and Ramkumar (2025) found similar patterns in their research on the Big Five personality traits and university students' academic achievement. Their research indicated that Openness and Conscientiousness favourably correlated with achievement, however Neuroticism negatively influenced performance. Even though their dependent variable was GPA instead of metaphorical inventiveness, the convergence supports the idea that personality traits affect not only overall academic success but also specialized language skills, like making metaphors. This comparison bolsters the assertion that Openness is the predominant variable influencing the creative and abstract facets of language acquisition, whereas Conscientiousness offers technical assistance and Neuroticism enforces limitations.

These findings hold substantial educational value when applied to the setting of EFL students. In addition to mastering syntax and vocabulary, students studying literature or language must also understand the figurative and abstract elements of the language, with metaphors serving as an example of this intricacy. People with high degrees of openness may be naturally curious and flexible, which allows them to explore novel interactions, create creative expressions, and connect deeply with metaphorical structures (Meyer et al., 2023). Although they are not naturally creative, conscientious students can become proficient in the methodical use of metaphors via organization and hard work. Students with a lot of neuroticisms, on the other hand, might avoid language risks or have performance anxiety, which could make it tougher for them to generate or interpret metaphors.

Therefore, including personality-aware methods in EFL training can help students use metaphors better. Giving students open-ended writing assignments is one way to help them learn more (Shi et al., 2024), creative projects (Hossain, 2024), scaffolding for structured practice, and a comfortable, low-stress

115

classroom environment (Przybył & Pawlak, 2023). These results show that psychological factors, in addition to structural competency, have a big impact on how engaged learners are with the figurative aspects of English. This makes learning metaphors both a cognitive and a personal task.

Conclusion

This correlational research of 65 students from the English Literature Program at Universitas Negeri Makassar demonstrates that there is a substantial association between students' personality qualities and how well they can generate metaphors in English. The most significant part was the Openness to Experience dimension. It enhanced the ability to use metaphors and showed that being open to new ideas, having a good imagination, and being able to change the way you think are all crucial elements of linguistic creativity. There was also a large positive link with conscientiousness, which indicates how crucial it is to be disciplined and accurate while building good metaphorical frameworks. There was a substantial negative correlation between neuroticism and being emotionally unstable, which implies that it might be tougher to employ symbolic language when you are emotionally unstable. Extraversion and Agreeableness, on the other hand, didn't have a substantial effect on how well people could build metaphors. These results demonstrate that some personality attributes, including being open and responsible, are particularly helpful for learning how to write creatively using metaphors. They might also give teachers good ideas about how to teach literature.

Acknowledgement

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