



The Relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC) in Persian and WTC in English, Perceived Communication Competence in Persian and Perceived Communication Competence in English

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the correlation between willingness to communicate (WTC) in Persian and WTC in English, Perceived Communication Competence in Persian and Perceived Communication Competence in English to see whether students with high willingness to Communicate (WTC) and Perceived Communication Competence in Persian have high willingness to Communicate (WTC) and Perceived Communication Competence in English, too, or not. Correlation analysis in this study indicated that when perceived communication competence in Persian increases, perceived communication competence in English increases, too, and vice versa. In addition, by the increase in willingness to communicate in Persian the willingness to communicate in English will increase, too, and there is a direct relationship between them.

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Introduction

Non linguistic outcomes

The first non-linguistic outcome discussed here is willingness to communicate (WTC). In modern language teaching the attention has been drawn into the significance of cultivating communicative competence in second language (L2) learners (Canale & Swain, 1980). In communicative language teaching approach (CLT) "authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks" (Brown, 2001: 42) are emphasized and considered significant. For an authentic task WTC is considered highly important. Hence, the teacher-students and students-students interaction are encouraged and for each successful interaction students must possess a high level of *willingness to communicate*.

The concept of "willingness to communicate" (WTC) was originally developed by McCroskey and associates (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). And afterward it has been applied in second language contexts by MacIntyre and associates (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre, Dornyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998). It is also found that L2 WTC can be related to social support (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001), personality traits (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), and gender (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2002).

Most L2 WTC research, however, has been conducted in Western countries, in particular amongst Canadian Anglophone students learning French, who live in a typical SLA context (Peng, 2007). But this research has been carried out in Iran with students learning English as a foreign language.

Willingness to communicate: Measures the average percentage of time that students would initiate communication in English in a variety of situations (MacIntyre and Blackie, 2012). An example item is: "Talk with a secretary".

Perceived communication competence: Measures the average percentage of time that students felt competent in using English to speak in L2 situations (MacIntyre and Blackie, 2012). An example item is: "talking to a small group of friends".

Willingness to communicate

One of the individual difference variables which has recently been introduced in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research is willingness to communicate (WTC). Dornyei and Skehan (2003) viewed L2 WTC as an extension of the motivation construct. Peng (2006) states that L2 WTC is a variable that "approach(es) the topic of motivation from different directions." (Dornyei and Skehan, 2003). Based on the results of factor analysis Dornyei and Skehan (2003) suggested that L2 WTC is strongly related to the motivational process. Over the last two decades, SLA researchers such as MacIntyre, Clément, Dornyei, and Noels (1998), Yashima (2002), Kang (2005), MacIntyre (2007), and MacIntyre and Legatto (2011), have all pointed out the importance of WTC as a crucial component of modern language instruction. The notion of WTC was originally conceptualized in the field of L1 communication and general psychology by McCroskey and Baer in the 1980s.

A number of factors have been investigated over the last two decades as to their influence on WTC, but Zeng (2010) introduced a range of factors which were perceived by the interviewed respondents as factors that influence willingness to communicate. These factors are familiarity with the environment, the effect of the relaxing classroom, teacher support, personality, self-confidence, fear of making mistakes and hence getting embarrassed, fear of leaving a bad impression as a result of making mistakes, losing face, one's perception of his or her speaking ability, topic familiarity and degree of familiarity with interlocutor. On the other hand, more recently MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) have suggested Kuhl's (1994) theory of action control, which has as its basis hesitation, preoccupation, and volatility, as a precursor for WTC. These Action Control factors are considered by MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) to be more the result of stable individual differences (traits) rather than dynamic situational reactions to events inside or outside the classroom.

Definitions provided for willingness to communicate:

- Willingness to communicate (WTC) is the idea that language students who are willing to communicate in the second language (L2) actually look for chances to communicate; and furthermore, these learners actually do communicate in the L2. Therefore, "the ultimate goal of the learning process should be to engender in language education students" *the willingness to communicate* (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels:1998).
- WTC is conceptualized as a construct referring to individuals' tendencies to engage in communication in the L1, when given the free choice (McCroskey & Baer, 1985).
- WTC represents the psychological preparedness to use the L2 when the opportunity arises. This requires a focus on the specific moment of decision where a L2 learner chooses to become a L2 speaker (MacIntyre, 2005).
- WTC is an individual's volitional inclination toward actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables (Kang, 2005, p. 291).

Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC

Macintyre et al. (1998) conceptualized WTC in an L2 in a theoretical model in which social and individual context, affective cognitive context, motivational propensities, situated antecedents, and behavioral intention are interrelated in influencing WTC in an L2 and in L2 use. A pyramid model has been established that describes learners' use of the L2. As the learner moves up the pyramid, the learner has more control over the act of communicating in the target language. The model, with six layers, has a total of twelve constructs. The layers, from top to bottom, are:

- communication behaviour
- behavioural intention
- situated antecedents
- motivational propensities
- affective-cognitive context
- social and individual context

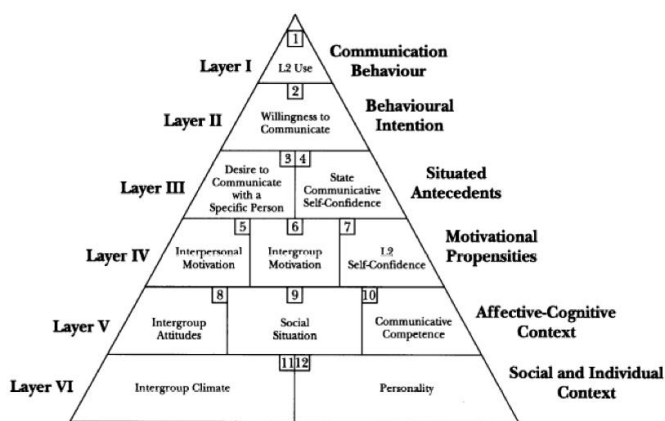


Figure 1.1. Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (Macintyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998, p. 547)

Macintyre (1994) developed a path model that postulates that WTC is based on a combination of greater perceived communicative competence and a lower level of communication apprehension. The model also postulates that anxiety influences the perception of competence. Baker and Macintyre (2000) examined the effects of an immersion versus a non-immersion program on various dependent variables including perceived competence, WTC, self-reported frequency of communication, communication anxiety, and motivation of students who have English as their L1 and are studying French as their L2. It was

found that anxiety and perceived competence were key factors predicting WTC and self-reported frequency of communication.

Method

Design

The current study enjoys correlational research design. It is a quantitative research in which we can find a survey methodology; a method for collecting quantitative information about items in a population. Furthermore, in the present study we can see a cross-sectional grouping which means it involves observation of all of a population, or a representative subset, at one specific point in time.

Participants

The population from which the participants of this study are selected is both male and female students learning English as a foreign language in Academic Center for Education Culture and Research "Jahad Daneshgahi Isfahan". Language learners participating in this study are from 16 to 47 years old with an intermediate level of proficiency. The whole population is about 1000 students learning English from which I have selected 100 students of intermediate level randomly.

Table 2.1 shows the frequency and percentage of people who participated in this research according to their sex. As it is shown 36 people, %36.4, of participants are males and 63 people, %63.6, are females. In the following part the chart regarding this table is presented.

Table 2.1. Details of the participants of the study

	Frequency	Percent
Gender	male	36
	female	63
		36.4
		63.6

According to table 2.2 among participants of this study (97 people have mentioned their age) the youngest person is 16 and the oldest person is 47. The average age of participants is 26 and its standard deviation (SD) is 5.36.

Table 2.2. Details of the participants of the study

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	97	16	47	25.89	5.362

Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study is a non-linguistic questionnaire including two separate parts; willingness to communicate, perceived communication competence. The questionnaires were administered in an Iranian context to intermediate students of English. In the following parts these questionnaires and their reliability will be discussed in more details.

Table 2.3. Reliability of the non-linguistic questionnaire

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Perceived communication competence English	0.975	12
Willingness to communicate English	0.96	20

According to table 2.3, the Cronbach's alpha for perceived communication competence is 0.975 and for willingness to communicate is 0.96. As far as they are close to 1 we can infer that the questions regarding these two variables have high reliability.

Results and discussion

3.1. Is there a significant relationship between WTC in Persian and WTC in English, perceived communication competence in Persian and perceived communication competence in English?

Table 3.1 demonstrates the correlation and significance between the variables including perceived communication competence in Persian, perceived communication competence in English, willingness to communicate in Persian, and willingness

to communicate in English. As it is indicated in the table the significance between perceived communication competence in English and perceived communication competence in Persian is less than 0.05 (0.033) which signifies a significant linear correlation between these two variables. Correlation between them is 0.213 which shows a direct relationship between them. It means as perceived communication competence in Persian increases, perceived communication competence in English increases, too, and vice versa.

Also by considering the table it is manifested that there is a meaningful linear correlation between willingness to communicate in English and willingness to communicate in Persian, since the significance concerning the correlation of these two variables is less than 0.05. The correlation between these two variables is 0.269 and there is a direct correlation between these two variables. In other words, by the increase in willingness to communicate in Persian the willingness to communicate in English will increase, too. However, there is no significant relationship between perceived communicative competence in English and willingness to communicate in Persian, and also between perceived communicative competence in Persian and willingness to communicate in English, because the significance is more than 0.05. By the correlation we can conclude that the higher the perceived communicative competence in English, the higher willingness to communicate in Persian and vice versa. Also by the increase in perceived communicative competence in Persian, willingness to communicate in English will increase, too, and the other way is also true.

Table 3.1. Correlation between perceived communicative competence and willingness to communicate in English and Persian

		Perceived communication competence Persian	Willingness to communicate Persian
Perceived communication competence English	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.213	0.056
Willingness to communicate English	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.118	0.269
		0.241	0.007

Conclusion

In this article the relationship between WTC in Persian and WTC in English, perceived communication competence in Persian and perceived communication competence in English, is investigated. Table 3.1 signifies a significant linear correlation between perceived communication competence in Persian and perceived communication competence in English variables which means as perceived communication competence in Persian increases, perceived communication competence in English increases, too, and vice versa. Also regarding WTC this table discusses that there is a meaningful linear correlation between willingness to communicate in English and willingness to communicate in Persian. In other words, by the increase in willingness to communicate in Persian the willingness to communicate in English will increase, too, and there is a direct relationship between them.

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Appendix A

Directions: Below are 12 situations in which you might need to communicate. People's abilities to communicate effectively vary a lot and sometimes the same person is more competent to communicate in one situation than in another. Please indicate how competent you believe you are to communicate in each of the situations described below. Write

