

## Perceptions of Willingness to Communicate Orally in English among Iranian PhD Students

Uranus Saadat\*, Jayakaran Mukundan

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang Selangor, Malaysia

Corresponding Author: Uranus Saadat, E-mail: uranus.17nov@gmail.com

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history

Received: March 16, 2019

Accepted: May 11, 2019

Published: July 31, 2019

Volume: 8 Issue: 4

Advance access: June 2019

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

### ABSTRACT

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in second Language (L2) has received substantial consideration in modern language research and instruction. This study intends to investigate how oral L2 WTC of a group of EFL Iranian PhD students in a public university in Malaysia has changed during their stay in this country and what factors have resulted in their willingness to communicate. A qualitative case study method was implemented to obtain information from 8 participants through semi-structured interview as the main method, followed by focus group discussion and solicited journal diaries of the participants. The analyses of data derived from the first research question yielded five major themes: lack of exposure to L2 oral communication, cultural values, low L2 self-confidence, L2 extrinsic motivation, and enabling behaviors. Analysis of the second research question revealed six major themes as: raised awareness, cultural background, personality, exposure to L2 oral communication, extrinsic L2 motivation, and increased L2 self-confidence. The findings of the study concluded that rare exposure to English oral communication in Iran resulted in having little practice of English language in authentic settings that led to low L2 WTC among the respondents of the study before coming to Malaysia. Besides, the respondents suffered from lack of L2 WTC upon arrival to Malaysia. However, by understanding their deficiencies and importance of L2 oral communication, they gradually changed their attitude toward L2 oral communication and tried to improve it. This study also provides theoretical and practical implications for designing teaching methods to maximize language learners' L2 WTC in the classroom that leads to their L2 oral communication improvement.

**Key words:** L2 Willingness to Communicate, Iranian Students, Perceptions, Malaysian Public University

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays due to globalization, having English language communication skills have become a ticket to success in different aspects of life. In line with the increasing demand of learning English language for communicative purposes for international students, looking for opportunities to establish communication would extensively enhance the chances for L2 communication practice (Larsen-Freeman, 2007) as well as comprehensible input (Krashen, 2003). In fact, the final aim of second language learning should be to create willingness in language learners to search for opportunities to communicate as well as the willingness to engage in communication tasks (MacIntyre, Dornyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998). Therefore, it is essential to identify the aspects that improve or constrain language learners' willingness to communicate inside/outside the classroom in authentic settings.

The conceptualization of willingness to communicate (WTC) initially referred to first language (L1) verbal communication and was proposed in the field of communication by McCroskey and Richmond (1987). McCroskey and Richmond (1987) primarily referred WTC as a stable

predisposition toward talking that is constant within different communication settings and interlocutors; in other words, they conceptualized L1 WTC as a trait-like construct. On the other hand, MacIntyre et al. (1998) claimed that WTC in L2 could not be the same as L1 WTC. MacIntyre et al. (1998) postulated a heuristic model of L2 WTC construct embracing communicative, linguistic, psychological, and social variables that could have influences on an individual's L2 WTC. MacIntyre et al. (1998) defined L2 WTC as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a second language." Consequently, the conceptualization of WTC from a trait-like construct in L1 evolved into a situational variable in L2, which contains both enduring and transit impact.

In educational contexts, scrutinizing L2 WTC is becoming of special significance in decoding L2 learners' communication psychology as well as increasing communication engagement (Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Even though the construct of L2 WTC is somewhat a new concept, several studies have been implemented to investigate its influential components and its empirical results in L2 communication

areas. Different variables such as communication, personality, affective, and social psychology were explored in order to understand their relationship with WTC (e.g. Kang, 2005; MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2010; Yashima, 2002).

L2 WTC was proposed as one of the ways to establish communication could foster ESL/EFL oral communication by increasing international university students' interactions in academic areas. Besides, among international students, barriers in spoken language are more common than problems in written language (Alavi & Mansor, 2011). This problem could be similar for EFL Iranians who undertake their study in Malaysia where English is the medium of instruction in the majority of public and private universities. According to Shahban (2010), although Iranian students have already obtained IELTS or TOEFL degree or participated in the compulsory English courses provided by public and private universities in Malaysia; however, most of them still face problems in communicating effectively and delivering their intended message across to the listener (Shahban, 2010).

Few studies are conducted using the qualitative paradigm (e.g., Cao, 2011; Léger & Storch, 2009; MacIntyre, Burns, & Jessome, 2011; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2010). This is an important issue, because applying qualitative methodology in L2 WTC studies could support in finding extra factors contributing to L2 WTC and calls for novel insights into the nature of WTC (Dörnyei, 2007). In this vein, this study conducted a case study in qualitative paradigm by using in-depth interview as the main method in order to investigate and unveil new findings regarding L2 WTC. Additionally, in spite of emphasizing on the essential role of WTC as a key concept in L2 pedagogy, related literature review demonstrates that L2 WTC has not been investigated on EFL learners adequately (Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2009; Fallah, 2014; Nagy, 2007; Jung, 2011; Yashima, 2002). Majority of these studies are conducted in contexts where the target language was a second language (Xie, 2011; Yu, 2009).

Besides, L2 WTC has not investigated into Iranian context sufficiently (Barjesteh, Vaseghi, & Neissi, 2012; Ghonsooly, Khajavy, & Asadpour, 2012; Zarrinabadi & Abdi, 2011). In addition, most of these studies concentrated on EFL Iranians inside Iran and few of them have been carried out for the EFL Iranian students studying overseas (e.g., Cameron, 2015). Particularly, to the knowledge of the researcher, insufficient study conducted on EFL Iranian students who study in a country where English is not the first language like Malaysia. A qualified international EFL PhD student must have the ability to clearly and forcefully articulate their ideas in person by using English language. Once they made a discovery, they have to convince experts that they have made a legitimate, meaningful contribution. They may have to go for international conferences and engage in presentations to get people known about their research. Thus, they have to learn how to balance clarity and precision, so that their ideas come across without any ambiguity. Therefore, there is a need for them to improve their L2 WTC which could eventually facilitate their L2 oral communication skills. Accordingly, this study targeted EFL Iranian PhD

students to investigate their L2 WTC as an important element of their academic success.

To the knowledge of the researcher, no qualitative case study has been conducted on L2 WTC among EFL Iranian PhD students studying at a public university in Malaysia. Through investigating L2 WTC among these participants, the mentioned gaps in the existing literature can be addressed and contribute to the scholarship of research in L2 learning and teaching.

The current study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What were the EFL Iranian PhD students' perceptions about the factors influencing their WTC orally in English when they were living in Iran, before coming to Malaysia?
- 2) What were the EFL Iranian PhD students' perceptions about the factors influencing their trait-like L2 WTC orally after they moved to Malaysia?

As the demand for pursuing higher education overseas increased in recent years, understanding the factors improve or deter L2 WTC is significant, particularly for EFL international PhD students. Data gathered from this study may provide EFL international Iranian students, ESL/EFL teachers and practitioners in Iran and Malaysia with information regarding how L2 WTC and its related antecedents could influence L2 oral communication improvement. Therefore, this study is significant because it tries to shed light on the changes that a new learning context would make on EFL learners' L2 WTC by living in a foreign country, as well as investigating trait-like and situational aspects that could inhibit or enhance their L2 WTC.

## LITERATURE

WTC initially was conceptualized in L1 communication discipline by the work of McCroskey and Baer (1985) grounded. They defined WTC as the probability that an individual will choose to communicate, specifically to talk, when free to do so. They conducted a study to positively depict the valid measure of personality-trait predisposition toward communication to prove that a trait-like tendency exist in individuals' communication which is stable across different contexts and types of interlocutors. The results were promising and demonstrated a correlation among different contexts and interlocutors that a person communicate (Munezane, 2014). Within 1980s, a number of studies were conducted to employ WTC scale constructed by McCroskey and Baer (1985) to provide validity for the scale (e.g., McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987).

In order to understand why individuals, exhibit various level of willingness to communicate, a wide range of variables that would influence WTC were examined by McCroskey and Richmond (1987) and referred as the "antecedents" of L1 WTC. These variables were anomie and alienation, introversion, cultural divergence, self-esteem, communication apprehension, and communication skill level. They found that communication apprehension (CA) is the strongest antecedent of WTC. However, communication apprehension measures are not presumed to be direct measures of global predisposition to approach or avoid

communication. Fear or anxiety may be a precursor to willingness to communicate, but does not encompass all of the underlying concepts for why an individual will or will not communicate. They suggested that WTC deserves to receive a high degree of attention from scholars concerned with individual differences in communication.

In order to explore L2 WTC extensively by a variety of cognitive, affective, and situational variables, a heuristic model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) to depict the conceptualization of WTC in L2. As mentioned before, the initial conceptualization of WTC in L1 (McCroskey & Baer, 1985) considered it as a personality-based predisposition, but in this model, WTC is treated with more situational variables. This model has both enduring and transitional influences on L2 WTC. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), enduring influences characterised as long-term and stable properties of a person or environment that could be utilised in any situation. Conversely, transitional influences considered as dependent on a specific setting where an individual communicates at a certain time. As presented in Figure 1, the heuristic model shows the range of possible influences on L2 WTC. In this model, six categories mentioned as “layers.” The first three proximal layers that are Communication Behaviour, Behavioural Intention, and Situated Antecedents referred to as situational factors influencing L2 communication within a specific time. The first layer at the peak of the model is regarded as the *communication behaviour* which is interpreted as L2 use and it is considered as the primary and final goal of L2 learning.

Layer III is composed of two immediate determinants of willingness to communicate— *desire to interact with a specific person* and *state self-confidence*. It is believed that the *desire to interact with a specific person* originated from a combination of *control motives* and *affiliation* which respectfully stand for impact over other interlocutors or the operation of power and the desire to establish a relationship with communicators.

Several researchers found that L2 WTC is a factor that influences the development of L2 oral communication (Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2010; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima, 2002). A higher level of L2 WTC among learners provides more opportunities for meaningful L2 use and

facilitating L2 communication skills (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2010). A number of variables have been distinguished which could directly or indirectly influence WTC, including perceived communicative competence (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000a), communication anxiety (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000a; Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003), motivation (MacIntyre, 2002), learning context and social support (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000a) international posture (Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004) as well as gender and age (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002). However, the majority of these studies on WTC are quantitative in nature and applied Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to analyse the possible correlations of WTC with other variables (e.g., Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Wen & Clément, 2003; Yashima, 2002).

In recent studies conducted in Iran in line with the effect of L2 communicative self-confidence on L2 WTC, Fallah (2014) study on EFL Iranians revealed that L2 self-confidence has strong influence on L2 WTC. Cameron (2015) qualitative study concluded that SPCC was one of the important factors influencing L2 WTC learners’ L2 both in Iran and their current learning experience in New Zealand. In another qualitative study by Alishah (2016), EFL Iranians’ previous L2 WTC in Iran and their current L2 WTC in Turkey were compared and found that L2 SPCC was one of the essential variable contributing to Iranians’ L2 WTC in both countries. In addition, Ghonsooly et al. (2012) study in Iran revealed that L2 self-confidence is a major antecedent of L2 WTC. Besides, in a study that examined L2 WTC on English-major students in Iran by Khajavy, Ghonsooly, Hosseini Fatemi and Choi (2016), the results showed that L2 confidence impacts directly on L2 WTC and indirectly on English language proficiency influenced L2 WTC via mediation of communication confidence.

On the other hand, the very recent study of Aliakbari, Kamangar and Khany (2016) found that the most powerful predictor of L2 WTC is communicative competence which is not in line with the above-mentioned Iranian recent studies as well as the other previous EFL/ESL important studies, (such as Yashima, 2002; Clément et al., 2003). Aliakbari and Mohsennejad (2014) explained that the rationale behind the odd finding of the study could pertain to the nature of the participants as teenagers possessing a false self-confidence. Therefore, it is worthwhile to consider the age of participants in researches on variables contributing to L2 WTC. So, in most of Iranian studies which were conducted qualitatively, it has been discovered that self-confidence works as the most powerful predictor of L2 WTC.

To summarize, certain factors influencing positively or negatively on L2 WTC in recent studies among EFL Iranian learners have been scrutinized. Among various factors, L2 anxiety, L2 motivation, L2 self-confidence, attitude, situational as well as contextual variables have been emphasized. However, more research on L2 WTC and its influential factors, particularly on situational variables, different learning contexts are required to be conducted to provide a broader perspective on their effects on L2 WTC among Iranian EFL learners.

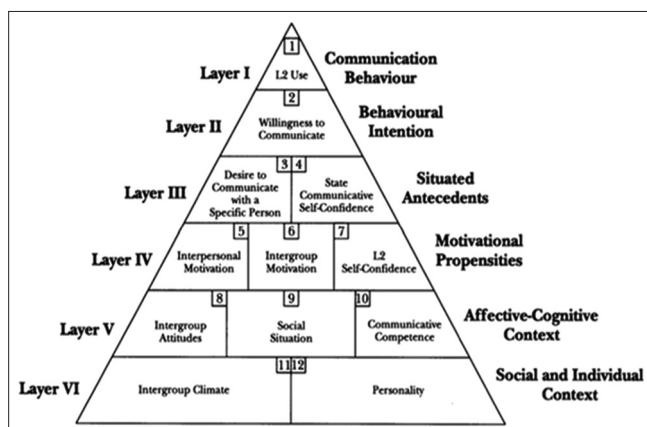


Figure 1. Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998)

## METHOD

### Design

The qualitative research methodology, case study approach was selected since this study was concerned with a group of EFL Iranian PhD students in a public university in Malaysia who had gone through experiencing their L2 oral communication in a new foreign context, which was Malaysia. Based on the objective of this study which is exploratory in nature, a qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate approach since it permitted the participants to openly elaborate their related experiences and perceptions which helped the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of their experiences (Creswell & Poth 2017). 8 EFL Iranian PhD students were selected through purposive snowball sampling from a public university in Malaysia.

### Participants and Setting

The participants of the present study were 8 PhD Iranian students studying in different faculties of the public university in Malaysia. In order to find the most appropriate participants, initially the researcher establishes the criteria that direct the case selection, and choose a case which meets those criteria. Gender is an important criterion which has been mentioned in Literature that male and female level of communication in L2 is not quite similar, so that the researcher tried to employ the number of males and females equally from different disciplines. Secondly, participants from certain different disciplines (Engineering, Social Science, and Science,) were selected since postgraduates from these disciplines could have different perceptions, thoughts, and behaviours regarding English language willingness to communication. Another criterion was that all participants had to live in Malaysia at least for one year, and finally the participants must first have learnt English in Iran as an EFL context in which they had less exposure to English language and their only English communication experiences were in the English classroom.

After establishing these criteria, the researcher utilised snowball sampling to recruit participants holding certain characteristics which are essential in a study. The primary criterion in choosing the number of sample size was the saturation or redundancy of information obtained from the sample. Therefore, the number of the participants saturated in this study was 8 individuals when no new information emerged from the data collection.

### Instruments

In current study, different sources of information were used for answering the research questions. The main source of data collection was a semi-structured interview. Focus group discussion and solicited diary of participants were the other sources of data for this study. The reason for applying number of data sources was to triangulate the findings for obtaining a better perspective regarding the L2 WTC among EFL Iranian PhD students. Triangulation has an essential role in qualitative research methodology as it has the potential to

enhance the validity and reliability of the results (Silverman, 2000).

In this study, the primary method in collecting data was individual interviewing, in particular, semi-structured interview guides. The concrete format of the interview guide of this study has three sections, demographic, background questions, accompanied by open-ended questions. The open-ended questions which are designed based on research questions and the respondents' perceptions, experiences and evaluation regarding English oral communication before in Iran. Moreover, the questions were reviewed by three experts later to give stronger validity to the questions before conducting the actual interview. The interview lasted for one hour for each participants and it was conducted in English.

The secondary method in collecting data was the focus group interview. Focus group refers to an interview on a topic with a group of participants who have the knowledge of that topic (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). In the current study, according to the maximum variation sampling, students who were PhD students divided into two focus groups in order to meet the homogeneity of the participants. In these focus group events, overall, 13 individuals with quite similar criteria were included and participants were free to talk with other group members. Since participants were actively encouraged to not only express their own opinions, but also responded to other members and questions posed by the moderator, focus groups offered a nuance and variety to the discussion that would not be available through individual interviews and solicited journal diaries. In contrast, individual interviews and solicited journal diaries produced more in-depth data than focus groups, and offered more insight into a respondent's personal perceptions, feelings, and experiences.

Participants' diaries or keeping journals by the participants of the study is another supplementary method for gathering data from the participants to triangulate from the main data of the interview. Solicited diaries have a different focus from that of unsolicited, personal diaries. They are written with the researcher in mind (Elliott, 1997). In this case, the writer completes the diary reflecting on issues that are of interest to the researcher and with the knowledge that the diary will be read and interpreted by another person (Jacelon & Imperio, 2005).

The researcher gave notebooks and journal guidelines to the participants after all interviews and the focus group discussions were finished. She collected the notebooks from the participants after 2 weeks. The average length of handwritten dairies was 18 pages. After going through the diaries, the researcher set a follow up session with each participants to clarify whether the information provided by them was accurate and based on their opinions to avoid any misunderstandings.

### Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher wrote memos at different times throughout the research process. Writing memos were a way to express her thoughts and feelings in the process of conducting the study and helped her to be aware of the emerging themes. She also wrote down her interpretations, questions

that came up in her mind and directions for further data collection.

The data of this study was analysed through manual analysis of qualitative data. After reading several times and becoming familiar with the data, the researcher started the coding process.

After finalizing the coding process for the initial transcript, the researcher built up themes through grouping of the produced codes which seem to match with each other. The researcher gave credit to the words that different participants often applied equally to mention the same insights. These same repeating insights or ideas turned into themes.

In this study, certain theme labels were derived from the own words of the respondents and some others were derived from relevant theories according to the researcher’s interpretation which later was verified by supervisory committee as well as the panel of examiners. The production of categories is increasingly inductive in nature at the beginning of Constant Comparative Method. While the researcher moves through the analysis of data, she was more potent to “check out” these tentative themes with the following data sets. As the researcher reaches to the saturation point, she was possibly pondering in a more deductive way rather than inductive (Merriam, 2009). In the theoretical triangulation, the researcher has been referred to different models and theories for justifying the data such as heuristic model of L2 WTC by (MacIntyre et al., 1998) and theory of L2 motivational self-system by (Dörnyei, 2005). Therefore, triangulation is applied through this research in order to provide diverse sources of information to converge the interpretation of data.

In the current study, the trustworthiness of this study was ensured through triangulation, member check, peer examination, researcher’s position or reflexivity, and the documentation of audit trail. In this study, the researcher applied multiple methods for data collection, including individual interview, focus group discussion and solicited journal diaries; therefore, the collected data was crosschecked and compared from diverse angles.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

RQ1: What were the EFL Iranian PhD students’ perceptions about the factors influencing their trait-like L2 WTC orally after they moved to Malaysia?

The first research question of this study revealed the experiences of English oral communication and its learning among EFL Iranian PhD students when they had lived in Iran, based on their perceptions. These findings demonstrate the factors influencing on their trait-like L2 WTC. Some of these features were supporting and some others inhibiting trait-like L2 WTC among the EFL Iranian PhD students before coming to Malaysia. Examination of the data to identify the reasons influencing L2 WTC emerged five themes.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is a complex concept usually seen as both an individual difference variable which affects SLA and a goal of second language teaching and learning (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Different psychological, educational, linguistic and communicative approaches have tried to explain why some language users, regardless

Themes outlined for factors influencing Iranian students’ WTC in English when they were living in Iran

Theme	Sub-theme
Lack of exposure to L2 communication	Lack of exposure to L2 communication in public Lack of exposure to L2 oral communication at school Lack of exposure to L2 oral communication at home
Low l2 self-confidence	Low self-perceived communicative competence High L2 anxiety
Cultural values on l2 oral communication	Using L2 as a contradiction with social norms Gaining symbolic cultural capital
L2 motivation on improving l2 oral communication	L2 ought-to-self study abroad Lack of exposure to L2 oral communication Cultural values on L2 oral communication use Low L2 self-confidence L2 extrinsic motivation
Enabling behavior	Attending private language centers Extra-supporting activities

of their language proficiency, are more willing to communicate in the second language than the others (Clément et al., 2003). Still, the most prominent theory on WTC in the second language is the heuristic model of L2 WTC designed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) as describes the factors influencing L2 WTC. The study also confirms that the EFL Iranian PhD students were influenced by particular social, cultural, individual, psychological, and educational factors when they were in Iran which consequently had impact on their L2 WTC.

The findings of the first research question shows that one of the prominent issues that the respondents had in Iran which discouraged their L2 WTC was the lack of exposure to L2 oral communication in Iranian context. This finding is concurrent with what (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000b) and Clément et al. (2003) revealed that the relation between L2 WTC and its influential factors depends on the learning context. In other words, the degree of the L2 use is likely to have a considerable impact not only on L2 learning and development, but on L2 WTC (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000b; MacIntyre et al., 2003; Yashima et al., 2004). Therefore, in contexts which English oral communication has no use, the EFL learners’ L2 WTC cannot be improved. In this study, it has been found that EFL Iranian PhD students had the lack of exposure to English language 1) in public; 2) at school; and 3) at home which where three important settings for their L2 WTC improvement; consequently, their L2 WTC was not enough.

Lack of exposure to English oral communication at school in Iran has been scrutinized by several researchers and was found that the English was taught at school and universities in Iran only focuses on grammar and translation of texts into Persian language and oral communication in English never

been used in this setting (Khajavy et al., 2016; Noora, 2008; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012). Incompetency of teachers to teach and use L2 oral communication in the classes have also been found in other Iranian studies like Sadeghi and Richards (2015). They mentioned in their study that classes are typically conducted in the students' L1 and teachers have limited English spoken proficiency. Therefore, lack of exposure to L2 at school as an important learning setting was a significant reason which EFL Iranian PhD students had low L2 WTC when they were in Iran.

Lack of exposure to L2 oral communication in public has been found as one of the important settings that the respondents of this study had no opportunity to use or practice oral communication in English when they were in public in Iran because respondents believed that Iranians were reluctant to use L2 oral communication in public as it seems unnatural to use English when they know their own language better. Besides, most of them had no knowledge and skills of using English, therefore L2 oral communication does not exist outside the English classroom in public setting, so that their L2 WTC was not high enough. The same results have been found in other EFL contexts in studies like (Léger & Storch, 2009; Macdonald, Clément, & MacIntyre, 2003). Regarding the lack of exposure to L2 in public, Léger and Storch (2009) found that when asked why EFL students avoided opportunities to use English in public, they mentioned that practicing English with L1 speakers was viewed as unnatural, awkward or embarrassing.

Apart from the public and school settings, home was another important setting where respondents reported on their lack of exposure to English oral communication. Home setting has been neglected in literature as a factor influencing L2 WTC of the EFL learners. Most of the studies explored the influence of L2 exposure in the classroom on students' L2 WTC. To the knowledge of the researcher, no study has investigated the role of home setting on the L2 WTC among the Iranian EFL learners inside Iran. However, the current study found that home was an important setting influencing L2 WTC of the EFL Iranian PhD students before they pursued their studies in Malaysia. Lack of English linguistic knowledge among the parents, growing up with the habit of communicating in L1, reluctance to communicate in L2, and lack of accessing to the facilities for improving their L2 during their childhood and adolescence like the internet and English language TV channels were among the reasons that the respondents reported low exposure to L2 in their home resulting in their low L2 WTC.

### **Cultural Values on L2 Oral Communication Use**

Cultural value was another important new finding of the study indicating its impact on L2 WTC of the EFL Iranian PhD students when they were in Iran. Cultural values which have not been scrutinized adequately in L2 WTC literature among Iranian context, demonstrated as having both inhibiting and improving effects on the L2 WTC among the respondents of the study. As an inhibiting factor, using English oral communication against social norms in public was a finding which was reported by all the respondents that they were

not able to use L2 in public to enhance their L2 WTC due to linguistic homogeneous context of Iran, and also negative view of Iranians toward using English in public as a conceited westernized behaviour, and as a tool to extinct Persian language.

The fear of negative judgments of people and losing face in public were the reason for EFL Iranian PhD students' lack of willingness to communicate in English in public when they were in Iran. Similar to this finding, in the Chinese EFL context, Wen and Clément (2003) suggested a modified model of WTC in a Chinese cultural context. They pointed out that Chinese learners' unwillingness to communicate in public might be deeply rooted in being sensitive to judgment by other.

On the other hand, cultural values can operate as a factor improving L2 WTC of EFL learners through gaining symbolic cultural capital in their society. When EFL Iranian PhD students were in Iran, symbolic cultural capital supported them to improve their L2 WTC. Gaining symbolic cultural capital through learning English provided them higher social standing comparing to other peers in the society. The participants of the study tried to attain this social position primarily through their family encouragement and peer pressure. Besides symbolic cultural capital could provide more job opportunities for them even if they were not required to use it at work. Similar findings have been found by Sadeghi and Richards (2015) that English in public in Iran carries an additional symbolic meaning conveying attributes of prestige and status. It can serve to signal prestige, status, and membership of a higher socio-economic class.

### **Low L2 Self-confidence**

Low L2 self-confidence of EFL Iranian PhD students before moving to Malaysia was another finding emerged from the first research question. They had high L2 anxiety and low self-perceived communicative competence. Several studies (e.g., Barraclough, Christophel, & McCroskey, 1988; Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2005; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Weaver, 2010; Yu, 2009) have demonstrated a relationship between, one's self-perceived communication competence and communication apprehension as the strongest variables predict L2 WTC. Besides, Peng and Woodrow (2010) found that the combination of L2 anxiety and L2 perceived communication competence as communication confidence was the strongest predictor of second language willingness to communicate among EFL Chinese university students.

Low SPCC among EFL Iranian PhD students originated from their thoughts/believes about their possible failure if they had engaged in L2 oral communication, having perfectionist inclination toward using error-free English which came from their teachers' extra error-feedback and expectations, as well as comparing themselves with native speakers in English movies which led them to find themselves too weak comparing to native speakers. Moreover, when respondents were in Iran, they never were in touch with other non-native speakers, so their only criteria for spoken English production were their English teachers and English movies,

therefore, they had this belief that they had to use L2 oral communication without any mistakes and this was beyond their abilities and led them to have less self-perceived communicative competence. Same finding has been found in a study by Safaei, Moghmizade and Shariati (2014) in which they found that low SPCC among Iranian EFL students in Iran is a factor influence on their L2 self-confidence, and consequently on their L2 WTC.

L2 anxiety has been found as high among the learners and they emphasized that engaging/establishing L2 oral communication inside and especially outside the classroom was very stressful for them. They related their high anxiety due to low self-perceived communicative competence, having no/few experience of using L2, fear of judgment of people and losing face in front of them due to using L2 oral communication in public which was an unnatural behaviour; and/or fear of making mistakes in articulating wrong English structures during their speaking. This finding is similar to the notion of Confucian culture in Chinese culture, which is characterized by acceptance of the views and opinions of others, fear of losing face (dignity, prestige, and self-respect) among peers (de Guzman, Albela, Nieto, Ferrer, & Santos, 2006; Kim, 2007; Martinsons & Brivins Martinsons, 1996).

### L2 Extrinsic Motivation

L2 extrinsic motivation was an important finding of the study indicating its essential role for the EFL Iranian PhD students when they were in Iran to improve their L2 WTC before moving to Malaysia. Their initial L2 extrinsic motivation mostly came from their family expectation and peer pressure as a L2 ought-to self to fulfil the requirement of attending the private English class. Later, their L2 motivation enhanced through gaining symbolic cultural capital and deciding to study abroad. Thus, their L2 motivation was mostly extrinsic rather than to be intrinsic.

Early research on L2 WTC utilized the socio-educational framework by applying motivation and integrativeness as two important variables in MacIntyre et al. (1998) pyramid model. This extrinsic motivation has been found in similar studies in other EFL contexts like Korea (Jung, 2011). According to Jung (2011), EFL learners with a real desire to learn spoken English are learners who may hope to work abroad or to live in an English-speaking country as well, those who have a strong personal interest in speaking English.

### Enabling Behaviour

Enabling behaviour was another important result of the study from the EFL Iranian PhD students before they move to Malaysia to continue their studies in postgraduate programs. Enabling behaviours which were the actions that the participants took to improve their L2 WTC when they were in Iran in which the L2 oral communication was completely absent outside the English class. The Enabling behaviours found in the participants of the study before moving to Malaysia as attending private English classes and extra-supporting activities outside the English classrooms which supported in increasing

their L2 WTC. Baghaei and Dourakhshan (2012) also found that the only opportunity for foreign language learners to use their ability to communicate is in the classroom. Therefore, it seems reasonable that their readiness to use those opportunities has been arisen in the English classroom.

Moreover, it was found that although students were attending English classes as an enabling behaviour in enhancing their L2 WTC; however, they were not quite satisfied with their results. This finding is concurrent with MacIntyre et al. (1998) argument that it is not enough for students to become communicatively competent in the classroom, for this is no guarantee that learners will actually use the language. As a result, they suggest that a fundamental goal of second language instruction should be to produce students who are willing to use the language for authentic communication.

Extra-supporting activities was another finding from the enabling behaviour theme in this study which demonstrates that EFL Iranian postgraduate students were utilized activities extra than the classroom for improving their L2 WTC. Their extra-supporting was mostly confined to watching English movies and films. Most of the respondents increased their activities as their extrinsic motivation for studying overseas improved. This finding has been found in a study by Jung (2011) that EFL learners seek to utilise extra-supporting activities in order to improve their L2 WTC as they believed that the classroom is not enough for their improvement, besides they did not have positive attitude toward private English classes and they preferred to have outside activities to improve.

RQ 2. What were the EFL Iranian PhD students' perceptions about the factors influencing their trait-like L2 WTC orally after they moved to Malaysia?

Findings of the second research question show that EFL Iranian PhD students have met changes in their stable L2 WTC since they moved to Malaysia. Changes in L2 WTC have happened due to the particular factors in their contexts. The emergent themes and sub-themes are tabulated in Table 2. Findings of the second research question regarding

**Table 2.** Students' perceptions about the factors influencing their trait-like L2 WTC orally after they moved to Malaysia

Theme	Sub-themes
Raised awareness	Raised awareness on lack of L2 oral communication skill Raised awareness of the importance of L2 oral communication
Cultural background	Face-protected orientation In-group consistency
Personality	Low tolerance of ambiguity
Exposure to the L2 oral communication	Enforced exposure to L2 oral communication Voluntary exposure to L2 oral communication
Extrinsic L2 motivation	L2 ought self International posture
Increased l2 self-confidence	Increased self-perceived communicative competence Decreased L2 anxiety

factors influencing trait-like L2 WTC are, (1) raised awareness; (2) exposure to L2 oral communication; (3) personality; (4) cultural background; (5) extrinsic L2 motivation; and (6) increased L2 self-confidence. The emerged themes of the second research question have been compared, elaborated, and discussed with the previous studies in the following section.

### Raised Awareness

The EFL Iranian PhD students as the participants of this study reported that by moving to Malaysia, they obtained new insights that changed their orientations, thoughts and behaviour toward English oral communication and made them become more aware of their deficiencies and also understanding the importance of L2 oral communication in their life compared to the time they lived in Iran. This increased awareness had advantageous for them and let them change their attitudes and behaviour towards L2 oral communication learning which they could not obtain if they had stayed in their own EFL context. At the beginning of arriving to a new authentic context (Malaysia), EFL Iranian PhD students raised their awareness about their deficiencies in L2 communicative competency due to their self-evaluation and others' evaluation in the new society.

Raising awareness on their lack of communicative competency initially caused them to decrease their self-perceived communicative competence and increased their L2 anxiety which were the two important inhibiting factors for their L2 self-confidence. Therefore, when their L2-self-confidence lowered at initial period of arriving to Malaysia, their willingness to communicate in English decreased as well.

Regarding the respondents' self-evaluation and other's evaluation, a study by Markus and Kitayama (1991) confirms that the independent selves view the self as a distinct entity and seek to "discover and express [their] unique attributes" Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 226). These findings of the study are in consistent with other studies in this field (e.g., Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2005; Cao, 2011; Hashimoto, 2002; Matsuoka, 2005; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002). In these studies, it has also found that EFL/ESL learners who perceived themselves as not competent in communicating, have high anxiety in communicating in L2 and, consequently they are less willing to initiate communication.

Although the respondents' self-perceived communicative competence lowered and their L2 anxiety increased at the beginning of arriving to Malaysia, on the other hand, they understood about the vital and essential role of L2 oral communication in their life through experiencing the real and authentic use of it in the new context of Malaysia. This awareness compensated for their lowering of their L2 WTC and made them increase their L2 ought-to self-motivation for managing their deficiencies. This finding is consistent with what Alishah (2016) has found among the group of Iranian students who moved to Turkey for improving their Turkish language. Alishah's study confirms that the respondents possessed a more instrumental need for learning Turkish language in Turkey – for work and for study, and also integrative – to settle in this country.

### Exposure to L2 Oral Communication

Exposure to L2 oral communication in Malaysian context helped the respondents to experience and practice L2 oral communication in authentic settings, and provided them with a new understanding. Consistent with the finding of this study, Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) study also highlighted the impact of different learning contexts on L2 WTC. They compared 165 study-abroad and study-at-home groups with considerably different exposure to an L2. The results from their data showed that the study-abroad groups had a clear advantage in L2 WTC over the study-at-home groups.

In this study, exposure to L2 oral communication in Malaysian context as a new, foreign context has been found as enforced and voluntarily exposures since both have different features. Enforced exposure related to the communication in English which was not by the respondents' desire, on the other hand the voluntarily exposure is by the desire of the respondents. Enforced exposure to L2 oral communication has been found mostly in academic activities when EFL Iranian PhD students in Malaysia had to communicate in English, such as attending in the classes for their related field of study, presenting in meetings, seminars etc. In those settings, most of the respondents encountered with lots of anxiety and low level of readiness at the early time of arriving in Malaysia which most of them preferred to stay silent or communicate in L1, but they had no choice. This obligatory exposure to English; however, supported them a lot to manage their shortcomings and try to lessen their anxiety and increase their L2 WTC.

Most of the studies emphasized on the exposure to L2 WTC in a new foreign context only, and they had not viewed it by the learners' enthusiasm to see how different their feature would be and which could have more impact on L2 WTC of the learners. In this study, it has been found that without enforced exposure, EFL Iranian PhD student in Malaysia could not increase their readiness to communicate in English in different settings and interlocutors, like bigger group size, formal setting and/or more knowledgeable interlocutors.

Not only enforced exposure supported the learners, but also their voluntarily exposure was important in increasing their L2 WTC and practice of L2 oral communication in which they had less anxiety. In voluntary exposure which has been found mostly in informal setting among the EFL Iranian PhD students in Malaysia such as friend and classmate's gatherings or outside the university exposure. Some of the EFL Iranian PhD students claimed that the feeling of having companions in a foreign country empowers the WTC and affects the readiness to start to speak positively. This is relevant with what Alishah (2016) has been found about the Iranian students who study Turkish as a second language in Turkey. Horwitz (2016) also found the relevant notion on the informal context that the informal settings may provide a persistent environment in which ESL learners can practice their English without fear of negative evaluation.

### Personality

Personality as another finding of the second research had influence on the L2 WTC of the participants in Malaysian



context. According to MacIntyre and Charos (1996) and MacIntyre et al. (1998) which made the basic theory for WTC, personality can either facilitate or inhibit language learning in general and learner's WTC in particular. However, in this study most of the respondents declared on two particular personalities that they had which inhibited them to improve their L2 WTC. These personalities are cautious and defensive of their position and low tolerance of ambiguity.

Being cautious and defensive is a trait which has emerged from the respondents obtained data stating that the most of respondents did not easily get into communication with interlocutors unless it was under particular circumstances. Most of the respondents required a sense of security to communicate in L2 for protecting their faces since they were worried to lose their faces if they could not successfully communicate in L2 in front of the interlocutors.

This personality is concurrent with the notion of Trimpop (1994, p. 9), referred as "risk-taking". It is generally defined as 'any consciously or non-consciously controlled behaviour with a perceived uncertainty about its outcome'. It also involves the willingness to risk social embarrassment or smirks in front of one's peers (Beebe, 1983; Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993).

Students' embarrassment or apprehension when they made mistakes in English may result from Iranian culture of other-directedness. This notion has also found as a predictor of students' L2 willingness to communicate in other cultures like China (Wen & Clément, 2003), in Korea (Jung, 2011) and in Japan (Berque, 1992; Kuwayama, 1992). For instance, Wen and Clément (2003) mentioned that because of the cultural tendency to protect face in China, willingness to communicate is partially determined by how much the learners will accept the risk of losing face. This study highlights on the cautious and defensive personality of EFL Iranians, since this notion has not been explored in literature regarding L2 WTC among Iranians.

Low Tolerance of ambiguity is another personality factor found in the study refers to the respondents' impatience behaviour or thoughts that let them not involve in ambiguous oral communications in English which was not clear for them. Low tolerance of ambiguity causes them to have lower L2 WTC. This is concurrent with Stanley Budner (1962) concept that in the presence of such ambiguous learning situations, learners' attitudes differ and their behaviours vary. Some perceive them as desirable.

This finding is relevant with what Wen and Clément (2003) mentions about the Chinese EFL learners' personality. Considering the characteristics of ambiguous situations, it is not surprising to find that Chinese students are, in general, less tolerant of ambiguity. This tendency results from their rule-dominated and face-protection orientation which is similar to the tendency of EFL Iranian PhD students in this study about ambiguous L2 situation.

### Cultural Background

WTC is not a simple display of linguistic competence or communicative competence; however, it is an interplay of communicative, linguistic, and socio-psychological factors.

The findings of the second research question also indicate that the cultural factors have influence on the L2 WTC of the respondents although they had lived in Malaysian context more than a year. The cultural factors emerged from the most of EFL Iranian PhD students in Malaysia were (1) face-protected Orientation; and (2) in-group consistency.

Respondents were afraid of (potential) failure in conversation. For learners, failure in conversation seems to be equal to losing face, resulting in losing confidence in conversation. In this sense, learners' ability to keep a conversation going was a very valuable skill, in that by maintaining conversations, they could benefit from receiving additional input and develop their ability to use the target language. Wen and Clément (2003) also mentioned that Chinese students' unwillingness to communicate in public is deeply rooted in other-directedness, from which face-protected orientation may ensue. Similarly, Korean students showed strong other-directedness in a sense that they are sensitive to the judgment of the public (Jung, 2011).

Therefore, the group of EFL Iranian PhD students in Malaysia like other Asian EFL learners have a face-protected orientation stemming from their cultural background that inhibits them to facilitate their L2 oral willingness to communicate even though they had lived in another country over one year. However, the respondents stated that their anxiety to have failure in conversation which came from their face-protected orientation became less than before because in some situations, they had to be prepared and show themselves confident enough. Besides, having more experience of communicating orally in L2 led them to decrease the sense of protection over their mistakes over a long period of living in Malaysia.

Another cultural themes emerged from the data is in-group cohesiveness. In-group cohesiveness motivated EFL Iranian PhD students in Malaysia to stay together and caused most of them to spend their time together within Iranian communities and group friends in Malaysia. This action influenced on their amount of exposure to English oral communication to the large extent and consequently inhibited the improvement of their L2 WTC.

This sub-theme is concurrent with the definition brought by Shaw (1981, p. 197) in social psychology, referring to the degree to which the group coheres or "hangs together". According to the intergroup model (Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1977), strong in-group identification may prevent learners from actively interacting with the out group culture and practising the out group language, thus impeding the acquisition of communicative proficiency in the L2. Therefore, for EFL Iranian PhD students who had great in-group consistency in Malaysia led them to have low willingness to communicate in English.

### Motivation

L2 motivation or the motivation for improving English language oral communication was one of the important themes emerged from the findings of the study. Without L2 motivation, EFL Iranian PhD students in Malaysia were not able to improve their L2 WTC through the course of living in

Malaysia. This L2 motivation was originated from the raised awareness on their lack of communicative competence and the importance of English language at the beginning of arriving to Malaysia. Two sub-themes appeared from L2 motivation which are ought self and international posture.

All the respondents asserted that they “persuade” themselves to get better in oral communication day by day, even some of them mentioned that it was against their desire, but they had no choice, but to improve. For this purpose, they took some actions on their behaviour to compensate the deficiency in their oral communication such as trying to increase their exposure to L2 oral communication in different settings or watching English movies.

This is concurrent with Dörnyei’s (2005) L2 Motivational Self System the “ought self” which is introduced to have relationship with the duties and obligations individuals perceive they have towards others. This finding is concurrent with the result of the study conducted by Munezane (2014) to examine the structural relationships among variables that affect Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and frequency of communication in the L2 in Japanese university EFL learners.

Another sub-theme was international posture was highlighted as a motivating factor for making the EFL Iranian PhD students in Malaysia improve their L2 oral communication. They remarked that they would like to improve their L2 WTC because they wanted to find international friends, improve their international affairs like working or living in international countries and they had not intended to return to their countries and other reasons. All these purposes which are under the term “international posture” work as a motivation in making students to improve their L2 WTC.

This finding is originated from the Yashima’s definition of international posture. Supporting to this finding, Munezane, (2014) study demonstrated a path from international posture to motivation, supporting the results of the previous studies as well (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004) suggesting that learners with higher interest in international affairs, vocation and people from abroad are more motivated to study English. Motivation directly predicts linguistic self-confidence supporting the previous studies (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004) which indicated that higher motivation leads to higher self-confidence, which in turn predicts WTC. It implies that if a learner is highly motivated to learn, motivation overcomes anxiety and confidence tends to dominate the emotional space.

### Increased Self-confidence

One of the theme which shows improvement in EFL Iranian PhD students studying in Malaysia from their exposure to a new, foreign context was their ultimately increase in L2 self-confidence. Although they faced with low self-confidence at the early periods of their arrival to Malaysia due to raised awareness on their lack of oral communicative competence in L2, however, after exposing to the new context and have various experiences with the L2 oral communication as well as increase in their L2 motivation to practice and seek for improvement, their L2 self-confidence increased. It was found that the self-confidence was the interplay of L2 anxiety and

self-perceived communicative competence. These two factors emerged as the subthemes in forming L2 self-confidence major theme from the findings of the second research question. Self-confidence in respondents worked as an improving factor for increasing their willingness to communicate in L2.

Concurrent to this finding, MacIntyre et al. (1998) stated that one of the most important factors involved in L2 WTC is L2 self-confidence, and this refers to the “overall belief in being able to communicate in the L2 in an adaptive and efficient manner” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 551)

### CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to understand the process of L2 WTC changes among EFL Iranian PhD students in a public university in Malaysia. The interviews were analysed and triangulated by solicited diaries and focus group discussion of participants and then the themes and sub-themes were developed.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is a complex concept usually seen as both individual differences which affects SLA and a goal of second language teaching and learning (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Still, the most prominent theory on WTC in the second language is the heuristic model of L2 WTC designed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) as describes the factors influencing L2 WTC. The study also confirms that the EFL Iranian PhD students were influenced by particular social, cultural, individual, psychological, and educational factors when they were in Iran which consequently had impact on their L2 WTC.

The findings of the first research question of the study presents that willingness to communicate orally in English in Iran is substantially influenced by primarily, lack of exposure to English language in different authentic settings, as well as EFL learners’ L2 self-confidence, L2 motivation and cultural values. Besides, findings suggested that most respondents attended private English classrooms when they were in Iran as an enabling behaviour to improve their English language. Therefore, it can be understood that private English classrooms play important role in Iran and it must provide efficient teaching methods for improving L2 oral communication skills for students since it has been regarded as the only place that EFL learners in Iran can practice their L2 oral communication.

Therefore, teachers in Iran or other EFL context need to provide many opportunities for students in the class to practice oral communication. They try to conduct more student-centred classes and assign the class syllabus in a way that all students could have equal and ample time to be able to communicate orally in classes. Teachers can assign oral communication homework for students in order to make them practice English outside the class as well.

Apart from teaching, EFL Iranian PhD students were influenced by affective factors of high anxiety, low self-perceived communicative competence, and fear of judgment in the society, therefore, English classroom must be a hub for students to become aware of their influential psychological factors and be able to overcome the negative ones and enhance the positive ones. Students should become conscious

that if they want to improve their L2 self-confidence which has direct influence on their L2 WTC, they must increase their belief about their communicative competence and reduce their anxiety. Students must become aware that if they want to communicate in English, it does not require becoming flawless like native speakers. Teachers should move from paying attention to the surface structures of language like accent, pronunciation, and grammar to the deep structure. In other words, teachers should pay more attention to teach students how to transfer meaning to students in an efficient way rather than some grammatical or pronunciation mistakes or even their accents. In this vein, teachers need to give less error feedback to students and ask the students to deliver their messages orally in English using different ways until it will be understood by the audiences. These practices and recommendation by teachers could encourage students to feel less anxious in making mistakes. The important thing is to send their message to the audiences properly and according to their intention. When students feel less anxious and more confident, their L2 willingness to communicate can be increased.

These practices made students feel more confident in their communicative competence and reduce anxiety that lead them to have higher L2 self-confidence. Higher L2 self-confidence is a great predictor of higher L2 WTC in students which ultimately facilitate their L2 oral communication. Besides, L2 anxiety of the students regarding their face-protection can be reduced if the teacher asks them to record their voice or video in public places like park, restaurant and etc. or suggesting them to practice L2 with their classmates in public places.

Another implication of this study is for English teachers/learners, L2 practitioners and educators, but also for international EFL students studying overseas, English language agents in targeted countries, and universities that intend to attract more international students from different countries, especially from EFL countries where English is not used outside the classrooms. The findings of this study revealed that one of the major problem that international EFL students from Iran has is their inability to communicate orally in English across academic settings at early periods of moving to Malaysia. Their IELTS or TOFEL scores were not a guarantee that they were able to communicate effectively in authentic setting of universities with their lecturers, supervisors, classmates or even to have efficient presentation in classes, seminars or conferences.

Therefore, it would be worthwhile to provide particular workshops and/or English classes for international students in order to teach them how to maximize their willingness to communicate in English across different authentic settings and receivers in order to facilitate their L2 oral communication which is an important asset in their academic success.

## REFERENCES

- Aliakbari, M., Kamangar, M., & Khany, R. (2016). Willingness to Communicate in English among Iranian EFL Students. *English Language Teaching*, 9(5), 33. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n5p33>
- Aliakbari, M., & Mohsennejad, F. (2014). Advances in English Language and the Effect of Story Retelling Opinion Gap Task on. *Advances In English Language And Literature (AELL)*, 1(2), 1–8. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohammad\\_Aliakbari/publication/264546731\\_The\\_Effect\\_of\\_Story\\_Retelling\\_Opinion\\_Gap\\_Task\\_on\\_Iranian\\_EFL\\_Students'\\_Speaking\\_Skill\\_Advances\\_in\\_English\\_language\\_and\\_literature/links/53e47eaa0cf21cc29fc8fbb1.pdf%0Ahttp://ww](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohammad_Aliakbari/publication/264546731_The_Effect_of_Story_Retelling_Opinion_Gap_Task_on_Iranian_EFL_Students'_Speaking_Skill_Advances_in_English_language_and_literature/links/53e47eaa0cf21cc29fc8fbb1.pdf%0Ahttp://ww)
- Alishah, A. R. (2016). To Culture or not to Culture, that is the Question! *ELT Research Journal*, 5(3), 218-233–233.
- Baghaei, P., & Dourakhshan, A. (2012). The relationship between willingness to communicate and success in learning English as a foreign language. *Elixir Psychology*, 53, 12160–12164.
- Baker, S. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2000a). The role of gender and immersion in communication and second language orientations. *Language Learning*, 50(2), 311–341. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00119>
- Baker, S. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2000b). The Role of Gender and Immersion in Communication and Second Language Orientations. *Language Learning*, 50(2), 311–341. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00119>
- Barjesteh, H., Vaseghi, R., & Neissi, S. (2012). Iranian EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate Across Different Context- and Receiver-types. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98(1), 932–939. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.502>
- Barracough, R. A., Christophel, D. M., & McCroskey, J. C. (1988). Willingness to communicate: A cross-cultural investigation. *Communication Research Reports*, 5(2), 187–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824098809359822>
- Beebe, L. M. (1983). Risk-taking and the language learner. *Classroom Oriented Research in Second Language Acquisition*, 39–66.
- Bektas-Cetinkaya, Y. (2009). College students' willingness to communicate in English: Turkish context. In *VDM Publishing*. VDM Publishing.
- Bektas Cetinkaya, Y. (2005). *Turkish college students' willingness to communicate in English as a foreign language* (The Ohio State University). Retrieved from [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg\\_10?0:NO:10:P10\\_ACCESSION\\_NUM:osu1133287531](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg_10?0:NO:10:P10_ACCESSION_NUM:osu1133287531)
- Berque, A. (1992). *Identification of the self in relation to the environment*.
- Cameron, D. (2015). 'In New Zealand I feel more confidence': The role of context in the willingness to communicate (WTC) of migrant Iranian English language learners.' *International Journal of English Studies*, 15(2), 61. <https://doi.org/10.6018/ijes/2015/2/202981>
- Cao, Y. (2011). Investigating situational willingness to communicate within second language classrooms from an ecological perspective. *System*, 39(4), 468–479. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.10.016>

- Clément, R., Baker, S. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2003). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Effects of Context, Norms, and Vitality. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 22*(2), 190–209. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X03022002003>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Retrieved from [https://books.google.com.my/books?hl=en&lr=&id=DLbBDQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Creswell,+J.+W.+\(2013\).+Qualitative+inquiry+and+research+design:+Choosing+among+five+approaches&ots=-gt837ENQA&sig=ED41r1l1DDh1JuqBGXsQiqiG0Eo&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Creswell%2C](https://books.google.com.my/books?hl=en&lr=&id=DLbBDQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Creswell,+J.+W.+(2013).+Qualitative+inquiry+and+research+design:+Choosing+among+five+approaches&ots=-gt837ENQA&sig=ED41r1l1DDh1JuqBGXsQiqiG0Eo&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Creswell%2C)
- de Guzman, A. B., Albela, E. J. A., Nieto, D. R. D., Ferrer, J. B. F., & Santos, R. N. (2006). English language learning difficulty of Korean students in a Philippine Multidisciplinary University. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 7*(2), 152–161. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03031539>
- Dornyei, Z. (2005). TESL-EJ 10.1 -- The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition. Retrieved September 8, 2019, from TESL-EJ website: <http://www.cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp/information/tesl-ej/ej37/r7.html>
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies. *Oxford University Press, 95–123*.
- Elliott, H. (1997). The Use of Diaries in Sociological Research on Health Experience. *Sociological Research Online, 2*(2), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.38>
- Fallah, N. (2014). Willingness to communicate in English, communication self-confidence, motivation, shyness and teacher immediacy among Iranian English-major undergraduates: A structural equation modeling approach. *Learning and Individual Differences, 30*, 140–147. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2013.12.006>
- Ghonsooly, B., Khajavy, G. H., & Asadpour, S. F. (2012). Willingness to Communicate in English Among Iranian Non-English Major University Students. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 31*(2), 197–211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X12438538>
- Giles, H., Taylor, D. M., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1977). Dimensions of Welsh identity. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 7*(2), 165–174. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420070205>
- Hashimoto, Y. (2002). MOTIVATION AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AS PREDICTORS OF REPORTED L2 USE: THE JAPANESE ESL CONTEXT. In *Second Language Studies* (Vol. 20).
- Hodis, G. M. (2009). A longitudinal latent growth modeling perspective on communication apprehension, self-perceived communication competence, and willingness to communicate. Southern Illinois. In *University at Carbondale*.
- Horwitz, E. K. (2016). Reflections on Horwitz (1986), “Preliminary Evidence for the Validity and Reliability of a Foreign Language Anxiety Scale.” *TESOL Quarterly, 50*(4), 932–935. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.295>
- Jacelon, C. S., & Imperio, K. (2005). Participant diaries as a source of data in research with older adults. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*(7), 991–997. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305278603>
- Jonassen, D. H., & Grabowski, B. (1993). *Individual differences and instruction*.
- Jung, M. (2011). *Korean EFL university students' willingness to communicate in English*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/openview/6bec18eb9dfafd4d0a8ae0faa678262f/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&dis-s=y>
- Kang, S. J. (2005). Dynamic emergence of situational willingness to communicate in a second language. *System, 33*(2), 277–292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2004.10.004>
- Khajavy, G. H., Ghonsooly, B., Hosseini Fatemi, A., & Choi, C. W. (2016). Willingness to Communicate in English: A Microsystem Model in the Iranian EFL Classroom Context. *TESOL Quarterly, 50*(1), 154–180. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.204>
- Kim, Y. Y. (2007). Ideology, identity, and intercultural communication: An analysis of differing academic conceptions of cultural identity. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 36*(3), 237–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475750701737181>
- Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in language acquisition and use*. Retrieved from <http://www.academia.edu/download/32202497/chapter2.pdf>
- Kuwayama, T. (1992). *The reference other orientation in Japanese sense of Self ed Rosenberg, Nancy R*.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2007). Reflecting on the cognitive - Social debate in second language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal, 91*(SUPPL. 1), 773–787. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00668.x>
- Léger, D. de Saint, & Storch, N. (2009). Learners' perceptions and attitudes: Implications for willingness to communicate in an L2 classroom. *System, 37*(2), 269–285. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.01.001>
- Macdonald, J. R., Clément, R., & Macintyre, P. D. (2003). Willingness to Communicate in a L2 in a Bilingual Context: A Qualitative Investigation of Anglophone and Francophone Students. *Unpublished Manuscript, Cape Breton University, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada, 1–29*.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Legatto, J. J. (2010). (2010). A dynamic system approach to willingness to communicate: Developing an idiodynamic method to capture rapidly changing affect. *Applied Linguistics, 32*(2), 149–171. Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/applij/article-abstract/32/2/149/166152>
- MacIntyre, P., Clément, R., MacIntyre, P. D., Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Donovan, L. A. (2003). Talking in order to learn: Willingness to communicate and intensive language programs. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 59*(4), 589–608. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/216308609>
- MacIntyre, P. D. (2002). *Individual differences and instructed language learning* (Vol. 2). Retrieved from <https://books.google.com.my/books?hl=en&l->

- r=&id=ItE8uyRIgvEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA45&dq=MacIntyre,+P.+D.+(2002).+Motivation,+anxiety+and+emotion+in+second+language+acquisition.+Individual+differences+and+instructed+language+learning,+2,+45-68.&ots=SD3Fco\_XBe&sig=V4
- MacIntyre, Peter D. (1994). Variables Underlying Willingness to Communicate: A Causal Analysis. *Communication Research Reports*, 11(2), 135–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824099409359951>
- MacIntyre, Peter D. (2007). Willingness to communicate in the second language: Understanding the decision to speak as a volitional process. *Modern Language Journal*, 91(4), 564–576. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00623.x>
- MacIntyre, Peter D, Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Donovan, L. A. (2002). Sex and age effects on willingness to communicate, anxiety, perceived competence, and L2 motivation among junior high school French immersion students. *Language Learning*, 52(3), 537–564. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9922.00194>
- MacIntyre, Peter D, Burns, C., & Jessome, A. (2011). Ambivalence About Communicating in a Second Language: A Qualitative Study of French Immersion Students' Willingness to Communicate. *Modern Language Journal*, 95(1), 81–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01141.x>
- MacIntyre, Peter D, & Charos, C. (1996). Personality, attitudes, and affect as predictors of second language communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 15(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X960151001>
- MacIntyre, Peter D, Dornyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *Modern Language Journal*, 82(4), 545–562. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x>
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224–253. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224>
- Martinsons, M. G., & Brivins Martinsons, A. (1996). Conquering cultural constraints to cultivate Chinese management creativity and innovation. *Journal of Management Development*, 15(9), 18–35. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621719610146239>
- Matsuoka, R. (2005). *Willingness to Communication among Japanese college students*. Retrieved from <http://www.paaljapan.org/resources/proceedings/PAAL10/pdfs/matsuoka.pdf>
- McCroskey, J. C., & Baer, J. E. (1985). *Willingness to communicate: The construct and its measurement*.
- McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (1988). Correlates of willingness to communicate. *Western Speech Communication Association Convention*.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1987). Willingness to communicate. *Personality and Interpersonal Communication*, 6, 129–156.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1987). Willingness to communicate. In *Personality and interpersonal communication* (Daly JA, pp. 129–156). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X03252758>
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). A guide to design and implementation: Qualitative research science and education. *New York: Jossey-Bass*.
- Munezane, Y. (2014). A structural equation model and intervention study of individual differences, willingness to communicate, and L2 use in an EFL classroom. *Doctoral Dissertation, Temple University Libraries*. <https://doi.org/3637461>
- Nagy, W. (2007). Metalinguistic awareness and the vocabulary-comprehension connection. *Vocabulary Acquisition: Implications for Reading Comprehension*, 52–77.
- Noora, A. (2008). Iranian Undergraduates Non-English Majors' Language Learning Preferences. *GEMA Online®-Journal of Language Studies*, 8(2).
- Papi, M., & Abdollahzadeh, E. (2012). Teacher Motivational Practice, Student Motivation, and Possible L2 Selves: An Examination in the Iranian EFL Context. *Language Learning*, 62(2), 571–594. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00632.x>
- Peng, J. E., & Woodrow, L. (2010). Willingness to communicate in English: A model in the Chinese EFL classroom context. *Language Learning*, 60(4), 834–876. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2010.00576.x>
- Sadeghi, K., & Richards, J. C. (2015). Teaching spoken English in Iran's private language schools: issues and options. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 14(2), 210–234. <https://doi.org/10.1108/etpc-03-2015-0019>
- Safaei, B., Moghmizade, R. P., & Shariati, M. (2014). Exploring the Relationship between Willingness to Communicate, Self. *The Iranian EFL Journal*, 8(198). Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318339626>
- Shahban, E. (2010). Communication strategies in social interaction between Arab and Iranian postgraduate students. *Doctoral Dissertation, University of Malaya*.
- Shaw, M. E. (1981). *Group dynamics: The psychology of small group behavior*. (3).
- Silverman, D. (2000). Analyzing talk and text. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2(0), 821–834.
- Stanley Budner, N. Y. (1962). Intolerance of ambiguity as a personality variable. *Journal of Personality*, 30(1), 29–50. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1962.tb02303.x>
- Stewart, D. W., Shamdasani, P. N., & Rook, D. W. (2007). Focus groups: theory and practice. *Kern County Network for Children*, 13.
- Trimpop, R. M. (1994). *The psychology of risk taking behavior* (107<sup>th</sup> ed.). Retrieved from [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=rI4c24VTriEC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Trimpop,+R.+M.+\(1994\)](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=rI4c24VTriEC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Trimpop,+R.+M.+(1994))
- Weaver, C. T. (2010). *Japanese university students' willingness to use English with different interlocutors*.
- Wen, W. P., & Clément, R. (2003). A Chinese conceptualisation of willingness to communicate in ESL. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 16(1), 18–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310308666654>

- Xie, Q. M. (2011). Willingness to communicate in English among secondary school students in the rural Chinese English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. *Auckland University of Technology*.
- Yashima, T., & Zenuk-Nishide, L. (2008). The impact of learning contexts on proficiency, attitudes, and L2 communication: Creating an imagined international community. *Elsevier*, 36(4), 566--585. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0346251X0800064X>
- Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language: The Japanese EFL Context. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(1), 54–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00136>
- Yashima, T., Zenuk-Nishide, L., & Shimizu, K. (2004). The Influence of Attitudes and Affect on Willingness to Communicate and Second Language Communication. *Language Learning*, 54(1), 119–152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2004.00250.x>
- Yu, M. (2009). Willingness to Communicate of Foreign Language Learners in a Chinese Setting. *The Florida State University*. Retrieved from <https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu%3A169064>
- Zarrinabadi, N., & Abdi, R. (2011). Willingness to Communicate and Language Learning Orientations in Iranian EFL Context. *International Education Studies*, 4(4), 206. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v4n4p206>