FLUCTUATIONS IN LEARNERS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE DURING COMMUNICATIVE TASK PERFORMANCE: CONDITIONS AND TENDENCIES

ANNA MYSTKOWSKA-WIERTELAK
Adam Mickiewicz University, Kalisz
mystkows@amu.edu.pl

MIROSŁAW PAWLAK
Adam Mickiewicz University, Kalisz
pawlakmi@amu.edu.pl

Abstract

A person's willingness to communicate (WTC), believed to stem from a combination of proximal and distal variables comprising psychological, linguistic, educational and communicative dimensions of language, appears to be a significant predictor of success in language learning. The ability to communicate is both a means and end of language education, since, on the one hand, being able to express the intended meanings in the target language is generally perceived as the main purpose of any language course and, on the other, linguistic development proceeds in the course of language use. However, MacIntyre (2007, p. 564) observes that some learners, despite extensive study, may never become successful L2 speakers. The inability or unwillingness to sustain contacts with more competent language users may influence the way learners are evaluated in various social contexts. Establishing social networks as a result of frequent communication with target language users is believed to foster linguistic development. WTC, initially considered a stable personality trait and then a result of context-dependent influences, has recently been viewed as a dynamic phenomenon changing its intensity within one communicative event (MacIntyre and Legatto, 2011; MacIntyre et al., 2011). The study whose results are reported here attempts to tap into factors that shape one's willingness to speak during a communicative task. The measures employed to collect the data – self-ratings and surveys – allow looking at the issue from a number of perspectives.

Keywords: L2 willingness to communicate, classroom interaction, communicative tasks

1. Introduction

The ability to communicate in the target language, which each language learner hopes to achieve, appears to be an indication of the effectiveness of the techniques and methods of instruction applied as well as the expression of the learner's predispositions, diligence or dedication. However, it turns out that the processes leading up to the decision to initiate or contribute to the ongoing interaction involve numerous psychological, linguistic, educational and communicative factors whose interplay is not easy to grasp. It

appears that, as communicative ability is not only the end but also the means of foreign language learning, importance needs to be attached to fostering conditions that promote and develop willingness to communicate (WTC) among students. In fact, not infrequent are cases when otherwise talkative students remain silent during communicative activities, or when students whose extensive knowledge of the target language subsystems is manifested by test results refrain from contributing to classroom discussions (Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2013). The importance of communication and interaction as a means of fostering language acquisition is advocated by a number of theoretical positions, such as the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1985, 1996), the output hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 1998) or the sociocultural framework (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2006). All of these positions propose a link between the decision to engage in interaction and the rate of second language acquisition (SLA). Frequency of communication, in turn, depends on the learner's WTC, as confirmed by Clement et al. (2003), MacIntyre and Charos (1996), or Yashima et al. (2004), among others. Given the importance of interaction, there is a major problem that L2 learners need to face: they have to accept the challenge of having to communicate in the language they have not gained full control of, which might lead to losing face and damaging their self-esteem (MacIntyre and Legatto, 2011).

The learner's decision to speak, apart from his or her perceived competence, depends on moment-by-moment management of an array of mutually related variables, including various issues related to culture, personality, motivation, instructional context, etc. Thus, the dynamic character of WTC cannot be denied despite the fact that the construct was initially perceived as a stable characteristic of an individual (cf. McCroskey and Richmond, 1987). The present paper is an attempt to investigate WTC as a constantly evolving feature undergoing the influences of situational variables in the course of a communicative activity performed by learners of English as a foreign language. The understanding of WTC has evolved over the years from its original interpretation as a stable personality trait, through an interplay of context-dependent influences, to a dynamic phenomenon changing its intensity within one communicative event (MacIntyre and Legatto, 2011; MacIntyre et al., 2011). The study whose results are reported below represents an attempt to explore factors underlying one's willingness to speak reported by the participants in the course of performing two types of communicative tasks: a dialogue and a monologue. The data gathered by means of self-ratings employed to collect information on fluctuations of the participants' WTC were supplemented with information provided by a survey tapping into more general dispositions and tendencies. The results, which are admittedly somewhat fragmentary, allow formulating tentative conclusions as well as recommendations for changes of the classroom climate so that it can become more conducive to interaction, and, consequently, second language development.

2. Literature Review

Initially, empirical investigations into WTC involved the use of the mother tongue and rested on Burgoon's (1976) conceptualization of unwillingness to communicate as a stable characteristic. WTC was originally perceived as a predisposition to initiate or

avoid communication with others when given a choice (McCroskey, 1992, p. 17). It was understood as an individual feature which remained relatively stable in different contexts. Although at the very outset the studies conducted concerned speakers' L1, attention was soon shifted to the exploration of second language learners' WTC. Data collection tools, quantitative in nature, which were employed to explore the concept, initially rested on the assumptions offered by personality psychology, influential at that time, and attempted to tap into factors responsible for the decision to speak or withhold communication. Thus, McCroskey and Richmond (1991) offered evidence that a person's WTC is related to their self-esteem, introversion, communication apprehension and perceived communication competence. WTC scales that were then developed recognized the impact of situational variables and hence such contexts as pairs, small groups, meetings and public occasions, with three different types of interlocutors/audiences, namely friends, acquaintances and strangers, being taken into account (e.g., Chan and McCroskey, 1987; McCroskey, 1992; McCroskey and Richmond, 1991). The data accrued in the course of these studies indicated that when speaking a foreign language, despite changing conditions, individuals display similar tendencies with respect to WTC as in their L1. Early studies of L2 WTC involved performing statistical analyses of the cause-and-effect relationship between a language learner's WTC and individual variables believed to underlie the process of language learning (e.g. MacIntyre and Charos, 1996; MacIntyre and Clement, 1996). In 1998, MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1998) suggested that L2 WTC is a complex phenomenon that cannot be explained as "a simple manifestation of WTC in the L1" (p. 546). They defined it as the "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific, person or persons, using a L2" (1998, p. 547).

Using path analysis, MacIntyre (1994) established that WTC is caused by a combination of communication apprehension and perceived competence. The combination of MacIntyre's (1994) model with Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model of language learning allowed the formulation of a hybrid model of L2 WTC (cf. MacIntyre and Charos, 1996), in which statistically significant paths from perceived competence, anxiety, and opportunity for contact with target language speakers to L2 WTC were identified. Moreover, a statistically significant relationship, leading from L2 WTC, perceived L2 communication competence and language learning motivation to the frequency of communication, was found.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) conceptualised L2 WTC as the outcome of an interplay of diverse factors, such as social and individual context, affective and cognitive context, motivational propensities, situated antecedents, and behavioural intentions. The famous pyramid model presents WTC antecedents as bricks arranged in layers from intergroup climate and personality at the bottom (layer 6), through the affective and cognitive context that comprises intergroup attitudes, social situation and communicative competence (layer 5), motivational propensities with L2 self-confidence, and interpersonal and intergroup motivation (layer 4), followed by situated antecedents: state communicative self-confidence and the desire to communicate with a specific person (layer 3), to the layer immediately preceding language use, the layer of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 550-551).

The findings of numerous studies have suggested that anxiety and self-perceived communicative competence largely impinge on L2 WTC. When conceptualized

separately (Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre and Charos, 1996) or as one construct (Clement, Baker and MacIntyre, 2003; Yashima, 2002), these variables have been found to be the immediate antecedents of L2 WTC. Using the path model, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) established that perceived competence and lack of anxiety were equally effective in predicting L2 WTC. In the study by Clément and Kruidenier (1985), L2 perceived communicative competence and lack of L2 communication anxiety were conceived of as one factor. Much in the same vein, Yashima (2002) employed the concept of self-perceived communication confidence which she defined as a combination of L2 perceived communicative competence and lack of L2 communication anxiety. The results implied that self-perceived communication confidence turned out to be the strongest predictor of L2 WTC in the sample consisting of Japanese learners. Similar results were observed in the study carried out in the same context by Yashima et al. (2004), and the study by Peng and Woodrow (2010) conducted among Chinese university students.

The impact of context has also been evidenced by the data collected in the studies by Baker and MacIntyre (2000), and MacIntyre et al. (2002), where antecedents of WTC among immersion and non-immersion students were taken into account. It turned out that immersion students' WTC depends on their L2 confidence that is directly linked to anxiety, whereas non-immersion students' WTC is built upon their perceived L2 competence. Immersion students will engage in communication if their anxiety levels are low; non-immersion students need to value their L2 competence to initiate communicate. According to Yashima (2012, p. 124), immersion contexts resemble the characteristics of L1 situations in which anxiety is "the single best predictor of WTC."

Investigations of language learners' WTC have understandably involved the issue of motivation. Although motivation seems more directly linked to achievement in language learning, its role in facilitating communication cannot be denied (Clement and Gardner, 2001). The conceptualizations of motivation which have been taken into account have included Gardner's (1985) integrative and instrumental dichotomy (e.g. MacIntyre et al., 1998), Noels' (Noels, 2001; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand, 2000) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (e.g. Hashimoto, 2002; Peng, 2014), and Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) Ideal L2 Self (e.g. Ryan, 2009; Yashima, 2009). MacIntyre et al. (1998) pointed out that, although motivation undeniably plays a role in creating conditions for L2 communication, its impact may depend on anxiety and perceived competence, more immediate antecedents of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 2002). Baker and MacIntyre (2000) as well as MacIntyre et al. (2002) have provided evidence for positive correlations between motivation and L2 WTC; however, as reported by Yashima (2002), Yashima et al.(2004), and Peng and Woodrow (2010), anxiety can counterbalance the impact of motivation.

Concerns over the applicability of Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model to foreign language contexts, where language learners have little contact with target language speakers and where the need to aspire to the target language community may not prevail, have led Yashima (2002) to propose a new concept of international posture (IP) that could account for L2 learners' need for increased contacts with foreigners, thus boosting their WTC. The construct, defined as "openness and favourable disposition towards other languages and cultures, interest in foreign affairs and non-ethnocentric outlook on life" (Yashima, 2002, p. 57), comprises, among other things, interest in

foreign international affairs, willingness to work or study abroad, and a readiness to interact with people from other countries. The results of Yashima's (2002) study indicate that international posture predicted L2 WTC and L2 motivation, which, in turn, predicted L2 proficiency. Structural equation modelling applied by Yashima et al. (2004) provided a basis for the claim that IP directly affects motivation, L2 WTC, and frequency of communication. Yashima (2009) has also shown that high levels of IP lead to increased WTC. More recently, in the study conducted by Munezane (2013) in the Japanese context a path from IP to motivation was found, much in line with the results obtained by Yashima (2002) and Yashima et al. (2004), showing that learners with interest in international affairs, work, travel and people from other countries are more motivated to study English. In the same study, Munezane established that Ideal L2 Self was the second most significant predictor of overall L2 WTC with linguistic self-confidence being the first. Not only the Ideal L2 Self paradigm has been applied to account for learners' willingness to take part in conversations, but also Julius Kuhl's (1994a, 1994b) theory of action control, as is evident in an attempt by MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) who used this framework to explore L2 WTC. They hypothesized that the basic concepts underlying action control, that is preoccupation, volatility, and hesitation, should be incorporated into the array of factors from which WTC originates. The researchers claim that unwillingness to communicate both in the classroom and outside is related to a disruption in action control.

Questionnaire-based studies investigating relationships between numerous factors enhancing or hindering communication have been supplemented with qualitative research where such data collection tools as observations, immediate report, interviews or self-ratings were used to tap into the relationship between L2 WTC and a number of contextual factors, such as topic, interlocutors, group size, and cultural background, as well as classroom contexts. Kang (2005), for example, having investigated the emergence and fluctuations of L2 WTC in a conversation, reported that momentary changes in WTC may be brought about by feelings of excitement, responsibility and security. Kang posits that L2 WTC is "an individual's volitional inclination towards 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" (2005, p. 291). Peng (2007), in turn, investigated the interaction of individual, classroom and cultural factors fostering or hampering L2 WTC among Chinese EFL students. He identified themes related to the learner, including communicative competence, language anxiety, risk-taking, and learners' beliefs, as well as those concerning the social context, that is classroom climate, group cohesiveness, teacher support, and classroom organization. In a more recent publication, Peng (2014) attempted to reconcile the quantitative and qualitative traditions, and chose the ecological perspective to explore classroom WTC. The dynamic character of the WTC of Chinese learners' of English was evident in its fluctuations among the participants of this longitudinal multiple-case study. The fluctuations resulted from the impact of a number of factors that were assumed to be part of three contexts: the distal individual context (i.e. learner beliefs and motivation), the proximal individual context (i.e. cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors), and the situational social context (i.e. classroom environment). According to Peng (2014), the qualitative findings indicate that while belief systems and motivational thinking may shape learners' learning and

communication behaviour, in the language classroom, learners' momentary cognitive, linguistic and affective conditions embedded in such an environment exert a direct influence on situational WTC. Variations of these individual and environmental contingencies lead to the ups and downs of students' WTC in class.

Cao and Philip (2006) investigated the levels of learners' WTC in three classroom organizational modes: pair work, group work and whole class. They failed to establish correlations between trait WTC and situational WTC; what they did establish, though, was that changes in WTC levels could be attributed to the size of the group, the level of self-confidence, the degree of familiarity with other participants in interaction, and the extent of the interlocutors' participation. Also Peng and Woodrow (2010) attempted to explore the role that classroom environmental factors play in L2 WTC. Their study concerned relationships among WTC, communication confidence, motivation, learner beliefs and the classroom setting. The analysis of the collected data led Peng and Woodrow to state that communication confidence was the most significant predictor of WTC, "primary and universal precursor to L2 WTC regardless regional diversity" (p. 855).

More recently MacIntyre, Burns and Jessome (2011) investigated the fluctuations of individuals' WTC from high willingness to unwillingness to communicate. The researchers observed that a learner can be both willing and unwilling to communicate under certain circumstances and these are often similar even to the extent of being identical. Apparently, a small alteration affecting one of the components involved in a communicative event may result in a turnover of the decision to speak. A novel approach to ways of investigating L2 WTC has been put forward by MacIntyre and Legatto (2011), who developed the *idiodynamic* method and applied it to explore fluctuations in the speaker's affective state. The participants, while watching the video recordings of the communicative activities they took part in, rated their WTC using a computer mouse. Additional data were derived by means of a review and discussion of the changes reported by the learners. The researchers were interested in the influence of task type on learners' WTC, changes of WTC in the course of task duration as well as explanations the participants provided for fluctuations of their WTC. Characteristic tendencies for individual students were identified in the study along with the link between perceived competence and task demands.

The aim of the study undertaken by the present authors was to delve into antecedents of WTC in the Polish educational context. Being the participants' regular teachers of English and teacher educators, the researchers attempted to identify factors and conditions leading to WTC growth, thus contributing to the learners' linguistic development, and gain insight into ways of fostering WTC, which could be instrumental in training prospective teachers to create WTC-rich classrooms. The Polish context, bearing obvious resemblance to the Japanese or Chinese contexts, not least because English is taught and learnt here as a foreign rather than second language, naturally also involves an interplay of tendencies and features of unique character. These have been of main interest to the researchers who also looked for the relationship between trait-like characteristics and learners' fluctuating WTC in the course of two communicative tasks.

3. The Study

The main focus of the study was recording fluctuations that the participants' WTC underwent during the performance of a communicative task. Two types of tasks requiring the production of output were chosen with a view to observing characteristic patterns or tendencies as well as identifying which of the tasks generates more willingness to participate. More specifically, the learners were required to perform a monologue and a dialogue. This particular choice was prompted by the fact that these two types of tasks are most frequently employed by teachers at this type of university course. Moreover, these are the tasks that students are most likely to be confronted with during their oral exams. The other aim of the study was establishing those predictors of WTC that would correlate with the students' WTC while performing particular tasks. Naturally, the existence of correlations between factors leading to WTC was also anticipated and an attempt was made to look into the relationship between task WTC and a number of trait characteristics believed to underlie L2 WTC. In particular, the study set out to investigate the following research questions:
1. Are there any typical patterns in fluctuations of interlocutors' WTC?
2. Are there any differences between the participants' task WTC as reported in the course of a dialogue and a monologue?
3. How is the reported task WTC related to reported frequency of L2 use in the classroom, perceived competence, communication anxiety, WTC in English, classroom WTC and classroom anxiety?

3.1 Participants

The sample consisted of 44 second- and third-year students majoring in English, 33 females and 11 males who had volunteered to take part in the study. On average, they were 22 years of age, and their experience in learning English extended over the period of 12.07 years. They came from two institutions of higher education, 24 from a university and 20 from a higher vocational school, both of which offered exactly the same training for those who intended to become teachers of English. The participants from both locations had also been following the same course of studies, which, apart from extensive instruction in English as a foreign language, included classes in history, literature, linguistics and teaching methodology, all of which were conducted in the target language. The proficiency level represented by the students could be described as ranging from B2 to C1, as specified in the levels laid out in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. According to the grading systems applied in the institutions the students attended, their average result for the end-of-the year examination in English amounted to 3.17 (on the scale from 2, or *fail*, to 5, or *very good*). The self-evaluation score was slightly higher and amounted to 3.68.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The study involved the application of two data collection procedures. In the first one, the students were requested to self-rate their WTC as they were engaged in the performance of communicative tasks. This happened during an especially arranged session which was not part of the students' regular program. The other procedure consisted in filling in a questionnaire intended to gather information on various individual propensities, which was accomplished following the completion of the communication-based tasks. For the purpose of the study, the respondents were randomly divided into pairs, with each pair sitting at a distance so as not to disturb the others. The first phase of the experiment involved performing a monologue which required the participants to describe and discuss a picture showing people at a restaurant or at a business meeting. While one of the students was talking about the assigned topic, the other was instructed to control the time. The students took turns in completing the task and their speeches were not recorded. The second task entailed discussing in pairs the choice of items to be contained in the time capsule and also in this case no audio-recording took place. Each time the participants were informed that the production phase should not exceed 5 minutes. The choice of themes for the monologue and dialogue, which might be deemed too easy for this group of learners, was dictated by the need to avoid topics that would overwhelm the participants or be overly challenging so as not to discourage them from speaking from the very outset. It seemed advisable that the researchers should not listen to the students' presentations and conversations so as not to affect the atmosphere; however, they remained in the room throughout the experiment. Unfortunately, the order in which the two tasks were performed was not counter-balanced and the whole sample first produced their monologues and then took part in dialogues, which may be perceived as a weakness inherent in the design of the study, and, it needs to be admitted, might have had a bearing on the learners' WTC. During both tasks the respondents rated their WTC on a special grid on hearing a beep every 30 seconds, a time span which was chosen arbitrarily as likely to provide sufficient data in the course of a task as well as reflective of the amount of time most exchanges or presentations typically took in the students' regular English classes. This undoubtedly somewhat unnatural scheme was chosen in order to make sure that the participants reported their WTC in real time, thereby avoiding the limitations inherent in post-task reflection, such as interpretation of specific behaviors once the task has been completed rather than indications of changes on a minute-by-minute basis. The scale allowed the students to indicate the level of WTC at 30 sec intervals from -10, indicating extreme unwillingness to communicate, to +10, standing for extreme willingness to communicate, with the zero point meaning indifference. The self-ratings were analyzed quantitatively and a paired samples *t*-test was computed to compare the results for the two tasks.

In the second phase of the study, the participants were asked to fill in a battery of questionnaires, which included items related to the following issues: *WTC in English*, *Perceived Competence in English*, *Frequency of Communication in English*, based on the survey applied by MacIntyre and Charos (1996), *Classroom WTC*, which was adapted from MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, and Conrod (2001), *Communication Anxiety in English* in the form presented by Yashima (2002), and, finally, a widely used tool, the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope

(1986). The choice of WTC antecedents was dictated by the fact that the above-mentioned constructs as well as the data collection tools, specifically designed and believed to measure them, have been applied in numerous studies investigating this concept (cf. Cao and Philip, 2006; Hashimoto, 2002; McCroskey and Richmond,1991; Peng, 2012). All of these instruments have been shown to demonstrate high reliability (Asker, 1998), as well as to manifest strong content and construct validity (McCroskey, 1992). It was also decided that, apart from communication anxiety, the students' classroom anxiety needs to be inspected as the main focus of the present study was on the participants' behavior in an instructional context. Much in the same vein, the authors were interested both in the general and classroom WTC of the students with a view to investigating the relationship between these two attributes and the willingness to speak as manifested in task performance. A short description of the instruments follows:

1. *Willingness to Communicate in English* ($\alpha = .97$ in MacIntyre and Charos, 1996). The questionnaire consists of twenty items checking the percentage of time participants would choose to communicate in different situations. A probability estimate scale between 0% and 100% is used here.

2. *Perceived Competence in English* ($\alpha = .98$ in Macintyre and Charos, 1996). This survey includes twelve items tapping into the average percentage of time from 0% to 100% that participants feel competent in speaking English in 12 situations.

3. *Frequency of Communication in English* ($\alpha = .97$ in Macintyre and Charos, 1996) The scale uses the same items as those included in the perceived competence survey but it is altered to refer to the frequency of communication in English for each of the 12 situations.

4. *Classroom WTC*. The scale, adapted from MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, and Conrod (2001) ($\alpha = .92$), refers to various situations that are likely to take place in the classroom; respondents indicate, using a 5-point Likert scale, the frequency with which they choose to communicate in them.

5. *Communication Anxiety in English* ($\alpha = .92$ in Yashima, 2002). The questionnaire consists of 12 items which measure the average percentage of nervousness from 0% to 100%, experienced by respondents while communicating in English in 12 situations.

6. *FLCAS* ($\alpha = .93$ in Horwitz et al., 1986) is a 33-item individual self-report Likert scale that reflects communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. A 5-point scale corresponds to psychophysiological symptoms, negative expectations concerning performance, comparison to others, and avoiding language-related behavior.

Once the data collected by means of these instruments were analyzed, Pearson product-moment correlations were computed between the self-ratings for the monologue and the dialogue, and the constructs measured in the ways that were described above.

3.3 Findings and Discussion

As illustrated in Table 1, which presents minute-by-minute fluctuations of the respondents' WTC, the self-ratings provided by the students indicated that the more preferred type of task, or a task during which their willingness to speak proved to be

higher was, a monologue. The mean value on the 20 (from -10 to +10) point scale was 4.0977 (SD = 2.11129) for the monologue and 3.6182 (SD = 2.99195) for the dialogue. A t-test which was performed on the data revealed that the difference was statistically significant, with the p value standing at .046 (t = -2.058). Cohen's d reached the level of 0.31, which testifies to moderate effect size. The higher level of the participants' willingness to speak in this case might have resulted from the fact that while performing the task on their own, they were not dependent on another person's decisions and choices and they could plan their contribution as they saw fit. Moreover, they avoided embarrassing situations, surprising questions or instances when somebody else presents arguments or opinions they would have liked to bring up before they had a chance to do it. In a word, exercising a greater control over the task undeniably lowered anxiety and led to a higher level of WTC (cf. Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak, in press). Another tendency that could be detected was that initially high WTC in monologue tasks tended to decrease in the course of task performance, which can perhaps be attributed to running out of arguments or ideas or tiredness and weariness which could have set in during the 5 min time span. In the case of a dialogue, a reverse trend was visible, since the initial unwillingness to talk tended to fade away as the students became more engaged in the task, perhaps in response to the points raised by the other participants. It should also be noted that when grids of the students working in individual pairs were compared, it turned out that at the very start usually one person's WTC was much higher than the other's and it might be assumed that it was this person that most likely started the conversation.

Minute/Task	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5
Dialogue	2.67	3.36	3.36	3.82	3.44	3.84	4.04	4.20	3.91	3.96
Monologue	4.36	4.91	5.22	5.09	4.87	4.69	4.69	4.51	4.27	3.84

Table 1: Fluctuations of learners' WTC during a dialogue and a monologue

As regards the relationships between the willingness to communicate reported in the course of task performance (see Table 2) and the constructs investigated in the study (see section 3.2.), it was revealed that the correlations were low on the whole. Nevertheless, statistically significant correlations (at the .01 level) were observed between WTC in English and Perceived Competence (r = .607), and between Classroom WTC and Frequency of Communication (r = .401), with the variables accounting for about 36% and 16% of the variance in each other, respectively. Somewhat predictably then, it turned out that a positive picture that learners hold with respect to their competence translated into their eagerness to speak. Equally unsurprisingly, the students whose classroom WTC was high enjoyed making a contribution to classroom discourse. Since correlations indicate only the relationship between variables without determining causality, it can only be hypothesized that students who actively participate in classroom activities increase their classroom WTC, with the caveat that this relationship could in fact be reciprocal. Correlations significant at the .05 level were detected between Classroom WTC and Perceived Competence (r = .344), between WTC in English and Frequency of Communication (r = .325), and between Perceived Competence and

Frequency of Communication ($r = .362$), with the constructs accounting for about 10% of the variance in each case.

	Monologue	WTC in E	C WTC	P Compet	FREQ	C ANXIETY	FLCAS	Dialogue
Monologue	1	.062	-.049	-.026	-.269	.023	-.102	.157
WTC in E	.062	1	-.049	.607[**]	.325[*]	-.025	-.084	.259
C WTC	-.049	-.049	1	.344[*]	.401[**]	.016	-.049	.125
PCompet	-.026	.607[**]	.344[*]	1	.362[*]	-.123	-.026	.210
FREQ	-.269	.325[*]	.401[**]	.362[*]	1	-.163	-.165	.013
C ANXIETY	.023	-.025	.016	-.123	-.163	1	.252	-.086
FLCAS	-.102	-.084	-.049	-.026	-.165	.252	1	-.175
Dialogue	.157	.259	.125	.210	.013	-.086	-.175	1

Table 2: Pearson correlations for the self-ratings and the remaining factors**: WTC in E = willingness to communicate in English; C WTC = classroom WTC; P Compet = perceived competence; FREQ = frequency of communication; C ANXIETY = classroom anxiety; FLCAS = foreign language classroom anxiety scale.**
* Correlation is significant at the .05 level.
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

The relationships among the constructs measured by means of the questionnaires were expected as they remain in line with previously reported empirical investigations of L2 WTC (e.g. Macintyre and Charos, 1996; MacIntyre and Legatto, 2011; MacIntyre et al., 2001; Munezane, 2013; Yashima, 2002). It came as a surprise, however, that no statistically significant correlations were established between any of the constructs and the respondents' WTC during the tasks they participated in. This may cast doubt either on the procedure adopted for tapping the moment-by-moment fluctuations in the levels of WTC during task performance or the adequacy of the instruments employed to measure the constructs under study, as the tools used apparently proved unable to detect a relationship between the students' self-ratings in the monologue and dialogue, and factors leading to communication. A discussion of limitations of data collection procedures as well as tentative conclusions on the issue will be offered in the section to follow. What is also interesting is the low correlation between the participants' self-rated WTC in the two tasks, which may indicate that speaking on one's own and interacting with others may place quite different demands on learners, a point that is surely in need of further empirical investigation.

4. Conclusions, Implications and Directions for Future Research

The foregoing discussion clearly shows that the models of WTC that the present-day empirical investigations have been based on may still be inadequate in some respects and may require further development and fine-tuning. The results of the present study, far from being conclusive, show clearly that determining and analyzing conditions and factors capable of shaping WTC in the target language pose a considerable challenge and deserve attention and careful examination. Still, some pedagogical implications can be offered in view of the fact that more WTC can be generated by tasks that allow students to decide on the choice of linguistic means as well as the content of their output. The statistically significant difference between the participants' WTC in the course of performing monologues and dialogues clearly indicates which classroom procedures might help quiet students to gain more confidence and practice before embarking on more demanding tasks. The results also indicate that even the most captivating communicative activities in the classroom should not last for too long since, with the passage of time, boredom and weariness may decrease the level of WTC.

What appears disconcerting is the fact that neither Classroom WTC nor WTC in English, as measured by the relevant questionnaires, correlated with WTC, as self-reported by the participants in the course of task performance. Actually, none of the constructs taken into account in the present study proved to correlate with the students' WTC self-ratings. What is more, the relationships among these constructs themselves turned out to be weak and only in a few cases was statistical significance reached. This, as indicated in the section above, might have its roots either in the limitations of the WTC self-rating procedure or the inadequacy of the surveys applied following the literature on the subject. Thus a possibility cannot be ruled out that the data collection tools employed in the present study failed to some extent to tap into the underlying qualities of the learners or the situational variables in the context under investigation. One reason for this could be that, as indicated by some of the participants, certain situation types described in the questionnaires may not occur in this specific educational context, which might have distorted the outcomes to some extent. The procedure for tapping WTC during task performance chosen by the authors is also not without its limitations. A situation in which the participants are disturbed every 30 sec. with a beep and required to indicate the level of willingness to participate in a task is undoubtedly unnatural and might be disconcerting, which in turn might be reflected in the ratings. Nevertheless, it was assumed that measuring fluctuations in learners' WTC performed after the task would not have provided a sufficient reflection of on-line changes. All the same, the interpretation of the self-ratings would have been far more insightful if the procedure had included some kind of introspection (e.g. a stimulated recall). This would have enabled the students to comment on the ebbs and flows of their WTC, thus allowing a more in-depth analysis of the data. Finally, it should also be noted that students majoring in English constitute a very unique set, not necessarily sharing the characteristics of typical language learners. Most of them will join the teaching profession and that is why their standards and expectations as well as knowledge about the learning process may be higher, which will undoubtedly shape their responses and behavior. For this reason, engaging other age groups, educational levels and study programs would have offered a much broader picture of the issue. To conclude, it

appears warranted to say on the basis of the findings that the interplay of numerous trait-like features and situation-bound influences evade questionnaire-based studies and thus a more focused person-in-context perspective (Ushioda, 2009) should also be included, as has been attempted in the present study.

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