

VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HANOI
UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

NGUYỄN HÀ SÂM

**LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR
WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN
ENGLISH IN DIFFERENT INTERACTIONAL
CONTEXTS INSIDE THE CLASSROOM AT
ILA: A CASE STUDY**

*SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (TEFL)*

Hanoi, May 2011

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SUPERVISOR: Ms. TRẦN THỊ HIẾU THỦY, M.A

Hanoi, May 2011



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ABSTRACT

The fact that young learners at intermediate level at senior class at ILA, are not always active in learning has urged the need to investigate their willingness to participate in English inside the classroom. Looking at the matter from the students' perspective, this paper seeks to detect their levels of willingness to communicate and find out the factors that influence the levels.

By adopting methods of classroom observation, participant interviews and questionnaire, consistency between learners' self-report WTC and their actual WTC behavior in the English classroom was examined. While trait-like WTC, as measured by a self-report survey, could predict a tendency to communicate, classroom observation of situational WTC and interviews with individual learners revealed actual behavior and the influence of contextual factors on the decision to engage in interaction with fellow students. A number of factors were perceived by learners to influence WTC behavior in class: self-confidence, background knowledge, group size, teacher support, format and content of the task given, familiarity with interlocutor, and interlocutor participation.

The researcher, then, basing on these findings and data collected from interviews with two experienced teachers of English, makes some recommendations with the hope of drawing the attention of the teachers to the issue and the solution. Although still having some certain limitations, the

researcher believes that this paper is of certain value to teachers, educators, and other researchers as well.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CLT: Communicative language teaching
- EFL: English as a foreign language
- ILA: International Language Academy
- L2: Target language - English
- WTC: Willingness to communicate

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the problem and the rationale for the study

Modern language teaching and learning has put great emphasis on the significance of cultivating communicative competence in second and foreign language learners (Canale & Swain, 1980). With the introduction of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, classroom organization has been “increasingly characterized by authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks” (Brown, 2001, p. 42). The traditional teacher lecture mode is now complemented by increased teacher-student and student-student interactions. Therefore, learners’ willingness “to talk in order to learn” (Skehan, 1989, p. 48) is crucial to their language acquisition. Based on research of interaction-driven second and foreign language development, many researchers promote the benefits of learning through engagement in meaningful communication with others inside the classroom. Given the potential benefits of participating in communicative interaction, some researchers argued that a fundamental goal of second language education should be the creation of *willingness to communicate (WTC)* in the language learning process; that is, to encourage learners to be willing to seek

out communication opportunities and to use the language for authentic communication. They also suggested that higher WTC among learners translates into increased opportunity for practice of both target and authentic target language (MacIntyre et al., 2001). This has implications for English language acquisition in countries like Vietnam.

In Vietnam the ability to communicate effectively in English is thought to be of great importance, particularly in larger cities like Hanoi. This is chiefly because the country is undergoing a rapid integration into the international community. As a result of this integration there has been an explosive growth in the demand for English language skills. In the hundreds of language centers established across the country in recent decades, an overwhelming majority of learners study English (Ministry of Education and Training, 1993; Nguyen Ngoc Quang, 1993, as cited in Do, 2006). However, there are problems associated with this sudden expansion that pose a potential impediment to language acquisition success. Until the present, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) has been the greatest factor influencing how Vietnamese learners developed English language skills. For many years the focus of English language teaching in Vietnam has been on teaching grammar, with communicative skills suffering and being neglected as a result. Even though the main purpose of learning English in Vietnam is defined by Ministry of Education and Training (2006) as a communicative one, it is not unusual to find learners who are reluctant and sometimes unable to use the English target language taught to communicate in the EFL classroom.

As for the researcher, she has been working for nearly one year as a teaching assistant for ILA, a foreign owned education and training company

which offers a broad range of English courses to children, teenagers and adults. From observations, the researcher realized that learners were not always willing to communicate in English (especially orally) inside the classroom, despite having the chance to work with native English speakers who use CLT in order to improve learners' communicative competence.

Because of the previously mentioned circumstances and issues, the researcher has chosen "*Learners' perceptions of their willingness to communicate in English in different interactional contexts inside the classroom at ILA: A case study*" as the topic of her graduation paper.

1.2. Aims and objectives of the study

Firstly, this study was conducted in order to observe students' behaviors and willingness when communicating in three different interactional contexts in the classroom. These three contexts include whole class interaction, small group interaction and dyadic interaction. The second objective of the study was to investigate learners' own perceptions of factors contributing to their willingness to communicate in classroom. Finally, the researcher hoped to find out the strategies that some teachers at ILA use to promote their students' willingness to communicate, in order to make recommendations to other teachers of English in general. In brief, the research aimed to seek answers for the following questions:

1. What are learners' perceptions of their willingness to communicate in English? Does learners' willingness to communicate behaviors in class differ in three classroom contexts: whole class, group and dyadic interaction?

2. What are learners' perceptions of the most important factors contributing to their willingness to communicate in the three classroom contexts?

3. From teachers' perspectives, what recommendations can be made for teachers of English to enhance learners' willingness to communicate in English classes?

1.3. Significance of the study

It is expected that the findings of this paper will answer the three research questions and assist participants by raising their awareness of motivations and willingness to communicate in English classes. Moreover, the research will also provide recommendations to enhance the WTC of learners, and be a source of reference for EFL teachers and learners in general. Lastly, this paper might serve to provide readers with some general understanding about willingness to communicate and its importance in foreign language acquisition, which may be helpful for those interested in or conducting further research in this area.

1.4. Scope of the study

Earlier studies have treated the WTC construct by referring to production modes of written and spoken communication, as well as comprehension of both spoken and written language inside and outside the classroom. However, due to the smaller scale of a graduation paper, this study's focus was placed solely on spoken communication in English among learners at an intermediate level inside classroom.

1.5. Organization

The paper comprises of five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction - provides an introduction to the issue and an overview of the paper including the reasons for conducting the study as well as the research questions that need to be dealt with, the scope of the study and the significance of the study to English language teaching and learning once it is completed.

Chapter 2 – Literature review – presents the background of the study, including definitions of key terms, the theoretical background and discussions of related studies.

Chapter 3 – Methodology – describes the setting of the research, the research design, participants, instruments of the study, and the procedure employed to carry out the research.

Chapter 4 – Data analysis and discussion – presents, analyzes and discusses the findings that the researchers extrapolated from the data collected and more importantly, highlights the connections between these findings and other related studies in the available literature.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion – summarizes the main findings discussed in the paper and provides recommendations to solve the identified problems. Also outlines the limitations of the research, and makes some suggestions for further studies. This chapter is followed by the Reference and Appendices.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of key terms

2.1.1. Willingness

Online Webster's Dictionary defines “willingness” as “the freedom from reluctance, or the readiness of the mind to do or forbear.”

2.1.2. Willingness to communicate

Willingness to communicate (WTC – McCroskey & Baer, 1985, McCroskey, 1992) can be defined as the probability of an individual choosing to initiate communication and more specifically to talk, when free to do so (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996).

Roach (1999) noted that “*willingness to communicate is the one, overwhelming communication personality construct which permeates every facet of an individual’s life and contributes significantly to the social, educational, and organizational achievements of the individual*”

McCroskey and Richmond (1990) maintained that people demonstrate consistency in their level of WTC across situations; therefore it should be defined as a personality trait. This trait is influenced by the stability in an

individual's cognitive processes when confronted with the choice to engage in communication or not (MacIntyre & Clement, 1996). It has been suggested that willingness to communicate functions as a personality trait, showing stable individual differences over time and across varied situations (MacIntyre, 1994).

However, the aim of this paper is to investigate the level of willingness to communicate of learners in different classroom contexts. Therefore, the researcher decided to adopt the definition of MacIntyre and Charos (1996) as it describes the activeness of a person when having a chance to involve in interactions.

2.1.3. Willingness to communicate in foreign language acquisition

In foreign language acquisition, willingness to communicate (WTC) refers to the idea that language learners who are *willing to communicate* in the target language actually look for chances to communicate. Furthermore, these learners actually do communicate in the target language. Therefore, “*the ultimate goal of the learning process should be to engender in language students*” the *willingness to communicate* (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998, p. 545).

2.2. An overview of willingness to communicate

2.2.1. Role of willingness to communicate in foreign language acquisition

MacIntyre (1994) pointed out that willingness to communicate has been proposed as an important variable underlying the interpersonal

communication process. If the person has the willingness to communicate, he will in most cases initiate the actual behavior of communication. Therefore the willingness to communicate can result in the use of the target language by the foreign language learners. This enables learners to improve their learning and realize the goal of foreign language acquisition.

MacIntyre (2003) also claimed that WTC can be conceptualized as a goal of foreign language instruction, a variable that facilitates language learning itself, and an internal psychological event with socially meaningful consequences. This outlines more important roles of willingness to communicate in foreign language acquisition.

In addition, Schmidt's study (as cited in Song, 2008) stated that:

“The greater degree of willingness to communicate creates more opportunities to interact in English. Learners will therefore have more opportunity to practice their speaking skills, which in turn will enhance their oral fluency. Practice helps improve speaking rate, thus increasing learner confidence to engage in further interaction. The more opportunity for meaningful practice, the more opportunity learners have to transfer important language rules into their conversations”

In short, it can be said that when students are more engaged in communication in language classes they are more likely to improve their speaking fluency and speaking speed which will result in greater self-confidence in communicating in the target language. In other words, WTC helps put theory into practice and ultimately boosts students' language acquisition.

2.2.2. Evolution of the willingness to communicate model

McCroskey is a pioneer of WTC research who developed this construct from three independent sources – “unwillingness to communicate”

used by Burgoon (1976, as cited in Matsuoka & Evans, 2005), “predispositions toward verbal behavior” (Mortensen, Arntson, & Lustig, 1977, as cited in Matsuoka & Evans, 2005), and “shyness” (McCroskey & Richmond, 1982, as cited in Matsuoka & Evans, 2005). Initial research addressed WTC in the native language, and recognized it as a personality-based, trait-like predisposition (McCroskey, & Baer, 1985; McCroskey, 1986, as cited in Cao, Y. & Philp, J. (2006)) that is rather stable across contexts and receivers (McCroskey, & Richmond, 1990).

McCroskey and Richmond (1990) suggested that WTC originates from two variables: lack of anxiety and perceived competence. This means that people are willing to communicate when they are not apprehensive and perceive themselves to be competent communicators. This suggestion, later methodically explained by McCroskey (1997, as cited in Matsuoka & Evans, 2005), was first empirically supported by MacIntyre (1994). He developed a path model which postulated that WTC is based on a combination of greater perceived communicative competence and a lower level of communication apprehension. The model also hypothesized that anxiety influences the perception of competence:

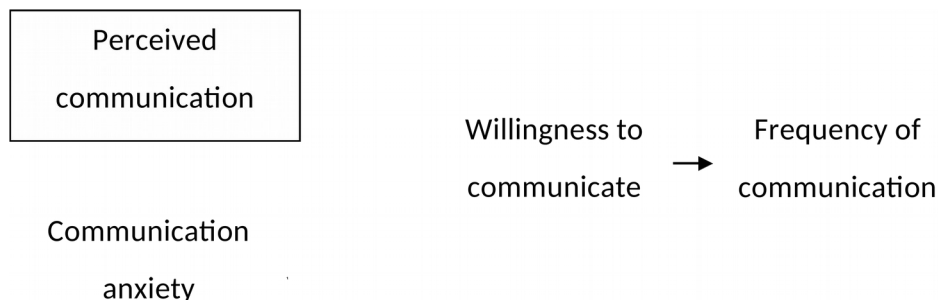


Figure 1: Segment of MacIntyre's (1994) willingness to communicate model

This was later developed by MacIntyre (1994) into the WTC's model as follows:

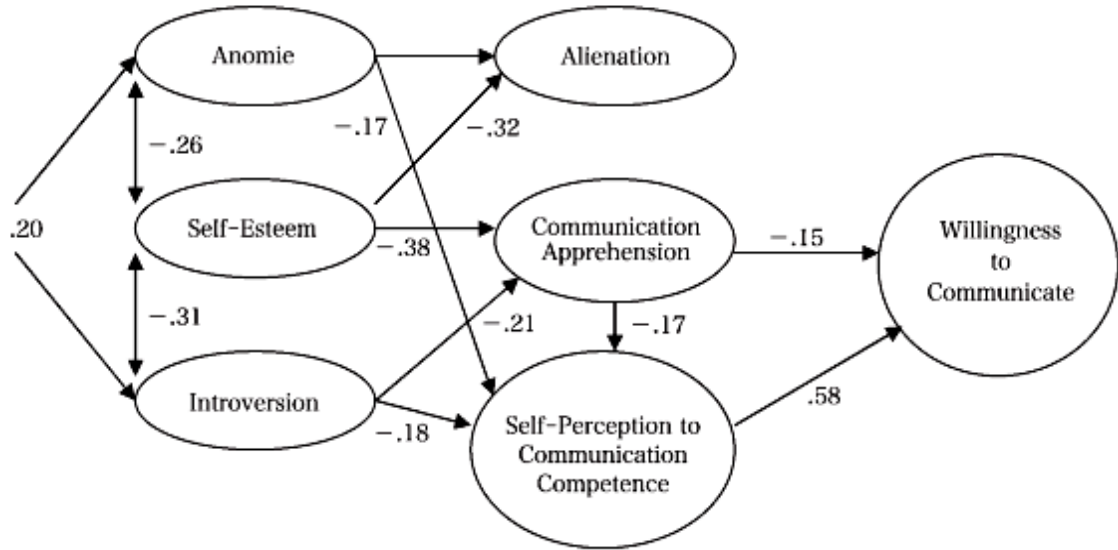


Figure 2: MacIntyre's (1994) casual sequence for predicting WTC using personality-based variables

Then, the first model focusing on L2 WTC was developed by MacIntyre and his associates in 1996:

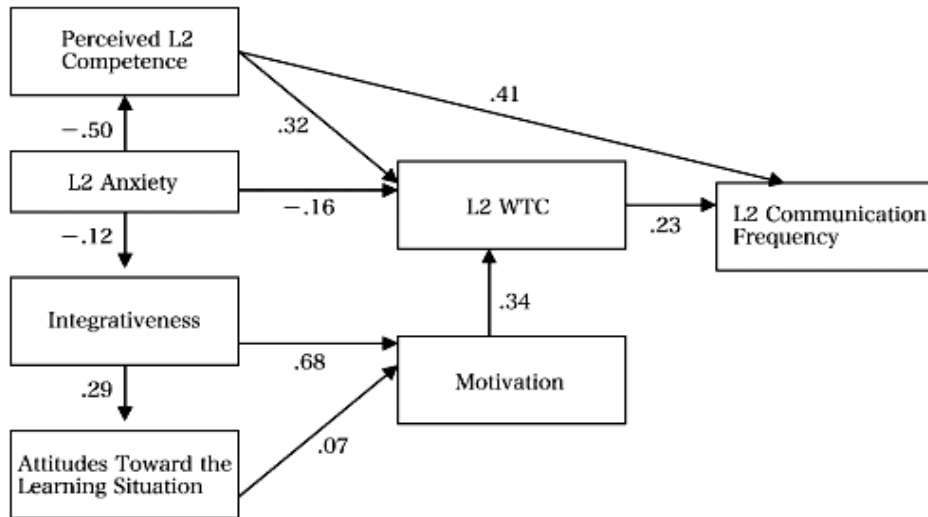


Figure 3: MacIntyre and Charos' (1996) model of L2 Willingness to communicate

This model also illustrates MacIntyre's opinion that WTC is the combination of greater perceived communication competence and lower anxiety in communication. Perceived competence reflects learners' perceptions of their own ability to communicate successfully at a particular time. It can be understood in the sense that WTC may be increased if a particular person has adequate language and knowledge proficiency. Concerning anxiety, it varies over time and according to the context.

After that, MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1998) broadened Macintyre and Charos' model of L2 WTC into a complex theoretical model, and illustrated it as a six layered pyramid.

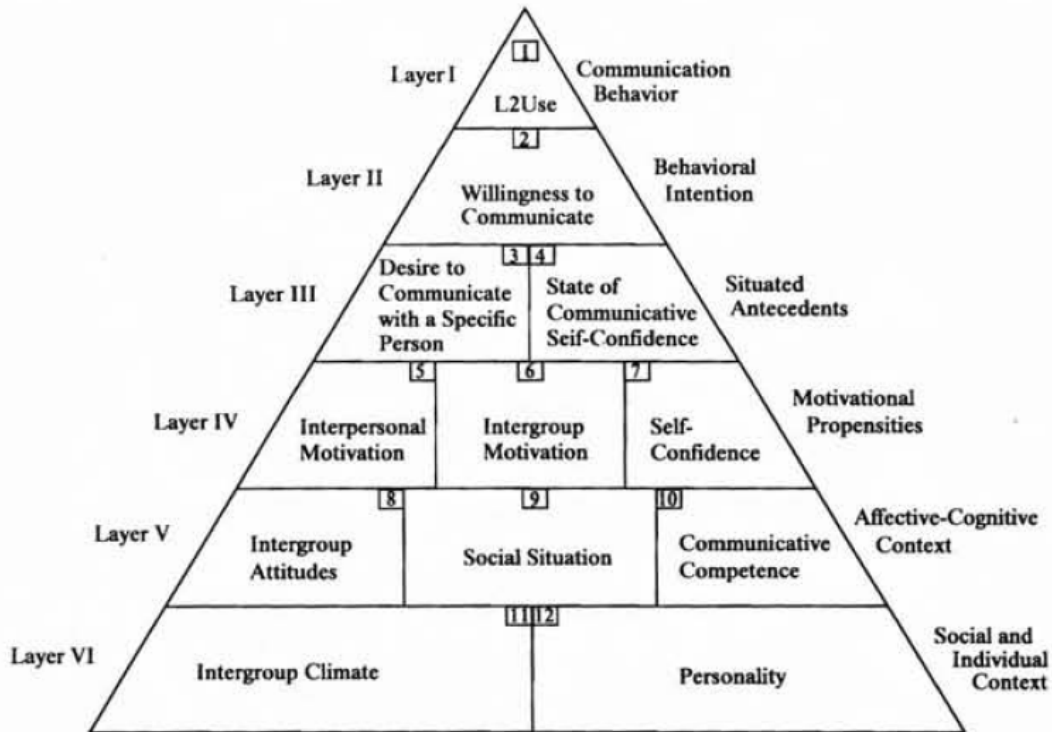


Figure 4: Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC from MacIntyre et al. (1998)

Layer 1 is communication behaviors and it is an outcome of the complex system of interrelated variables in the lower layers. Communication here refers to a wide range of communication contexts

Layer 2 is willingness to communicate, and it involves situation-specific factors. As it is explained above, WTC is the key factor that decides the engagement of learners in communication

Layer 3 includes two immediate antecedents of willingness to communicate: *desire to communicate with a specific person (3)* and *the state of communicative self-confidence (4)*. State communicative self-confidence includes two factors: state perceived competence and lack of state anxiety.

State self-confidence here differs from trait self-confidence in the way that it is a momentary self-confidence. This is similar to the model by MacIntyre above.

The next three layers show the influences, and serve as independent variables in analyzing WTC in L2.

Layer 4 is motivational propensities, which is composed of interpersonal motivation, inter-group motivation and L2 self-confidence.

Interpersonal motivation (5) motivation refers to the relationship of one person with the society they are living in. It can be initiated by control or affiliation. Affiliation can be related to the power relationships, for instance, if one person has strong group solidarity, their participation will be influenced by how they think they are fitted into the class. Control is more concerned with the teacher and his or her teaching style. She/he will create the opportunities for students to actively participate in communication

Intergroup motivation (6) motivation results from membership of a particular group. It also includes two factors: control and affiliation, but control here helps maintain the inter-influence among groups, and affiliation refers to the desire to keep contacts with other groups

L2 self-confidence (7) includes two elements: self-evaluation of L2 skills and language anxiety

Layer 5 is named as affective and cognitive context, which is created by three components: ***inter-group attitudes, social situation, and communicative competence.***

Intergroup attitudes (8) are influenced by integrativeness, which is related to increased frequency and quality of contact with L2 speakers, fear of assimilation which predicts less contact with the L2 community, and attitudes toward the L2, which determines motivation to learn.

Social situation (9) is a complex category that describes a social encounter in a particular setting. Factors that influence situational variation are: participants, setting, purpose, topic, and channel of communication.

Communicative (10) competence is the result of five main competences: linguistic competence, discourse competence, actional competence, socio-cultural competence, and strategic competence.

Layer 6 is the social and individual context. This includes two factors that are considered to affect WTC at the least extent.

Inter group climate (11) is defined by the structural characteristics of the community, and perceptual and affective correlates. Perceptual and affective correlates refer to the attitudes and values towards the L2 community. It can be understood in the sense that if one student has positive attitudes towards a particular group, he or she will be more likely to have contact with the person from that group.

Personality (12) will decide the way how a person reacts to communication.

MacIntyre et al.'s model is considered a general base for a vast number of studies on WTC. However, it can be noticed that this model is much suitable for Western context rather than Asian one. To amend MacIntyre et al.'s model, Wen & Clément (2003) conducted a research

named “*A Chinese conceptualization of willingness to communicate in ESL*”. Through the research, they revealed that cultural values were “the dominant force shaping the individual’s perception and way of learning” in countries like China with orientation of rule-domination and face-protection as; hence contributing to influence on WTC in L2.

2.3. Related study

2.3.1. Study abroad context

Compton (2007) qualitatively examined how content and context affects the WTC of the international teaching assistants at U.S. universities, and their participation in the classroom. Compton used the pyramid model (Macintyre et al., 1998) to explore the different factors that affected this research context. The study partially supported Macintyre et al.’ (1998) in their claim that perceived confidence increases WTC in a L2. However, in-depth exploration of the results found additional significant variables that were not covered under the pyramid model. Also, shared topical knowledge, international posture and cultural factors were identified as important content variables influencing the participant's WTC that were not included in the Macintyre et al.’s (1998) concept.

In a study of L2 learners’ own perceptions of factors contributing to WTC, House (2004) suggests other factors which may affect WTC in different contexts. In this study, six learners were asked to report their experiences over a five-week period, and how perceptions of these experiences influenced their WTC inside an ESL (English as a second language) classroom. He reported that learners only felt able to actually

engage in communication when an opportunity arose which they perceived as suitable for communication. Factors such as perceived politeness, the role of physical locality, the presence of the opposite sex, mood and the topic under discussion, were also found to be minor influences affecting WTC.

2.3.2. WTC in the foreign language context - Asian perspectives

Language context in WTC studies can be roughly dichotomized as “second language” and “foreign language” contexts. A major difference between the second and foreign language environments is the opportunity for interaction. A second language is learned in a context where it is used as the main tool for daily interaction for the majority of people, and it provides constant stimulation in the target language. In contrast a foreign language is learned in a place where that language is not typically used as a means of daily communication. Foreign language learners are surrounded by their own native language, and they receive stimulation in the target language only within the language classroom (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000, 2003). A great deal of research on WTC in the foreign language context focused on the English language. In the past few years, research on English WTC has become particularly productive in East Asia.

Kim (2004) applied the MacIntyre et al.’ (1998) model to the Korean context. Results showed that MacIntyre et al.’s model was reliable in the Korean context, thus, he suggested WTC is more likely to be a trait-like, rather than a situational variable. He also suggested that Korean students' low WTC in English probably explains why they are not so successful in English learning.

Kang's (2005) study adopted a qualitative approach in order to examine how situational L2 WTC could dynamically emerge and fluctuate during a conversation situation between NNS (Non-native speaking) learners and NS (Native speaking) tutors. Based on a longitudinal study of four male Korean learners studying in an American university, Kang proposed situational WTC as a multilayered construct that could change moment-to-moment in the conversational context, under the joint effect of the psychological conditions of excitement, responsibility and security. In this study, L2 WTC was described as a dynamic situational concept rather than a trait-like predisposition.

In China, Asker (1998) compared the WTC of Hong Kong students with students from western countries and discovered that the WTC is lower in the former than in their western counterparts. Yu and Lin (2004, as cited in Simic, M. & Tanaka, T., 2008) revealed that university students from one province in mainland China were more willing to communicate than those from Hong Kong. Peng (2007, as cited in Simic, M. & Tanaka, T., 2008) discovered that among Chinese university students, motivation was the strongest predictor of L2 WTC, while attitudes towards the learning situation did not predict L2 WTC.

More recently Japan has become a fruitful ground for WTC research. The first comprehensive research study on WTC in English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Japanese context was conducted by Yashima (2002). She discovered that WTC is directly and indirectly influenced by an attitude related construct called "international posture". Later, Yashima et al. (2004) investigated the effects of a home-stay experience on WTC in a L2. They revealed that WTC results in more frequent communication in a L2 and that

the international posture leads to WTC and other communication behaviors. International posture was also an important predictor of WTC in EFL in Matsuoka and Evans' (2005) study, together with other factors, including motivation, anxiety, perceived competence and personal traits, such as extroversion / introversion.

Although the subject of WTC application has been widened, one similarity between all these works is that they are all concerned with trait-like willingness to communicate. From the trait-like standpoint, L1 and L2 researchers have examined the effect of an individual's variables on the WTC. Among them, perceived communicative competence and communication anxiety have been found to be consistent predictors of the WTC. All studies mentioned in this section confirmed Macintyre's (1994) hypothesis that anxiety decreases, while perceived competence increases WTC.

Taken as a whole, results from the previously described studies have two common features. First, they approach the WTC concept from a situational point of view. Researchers have investigated how situational variables, such as social contextual variables, can influence WTC. Secondly, these studies support the pyramid model, but only partially.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

3.1. Setting of the study

The study was conducted at ILA, Hanoi. At present ILA has more than 700 students aged from 4 to 18. Each student has to undergo placement testing prior to course commencement and is placed in an appropriate course for his/her age and English language ability.

At ILA, teachers are qualified and experienced native English-speaking teaching professionals and adopt communicative approach in their teaching. This means that classes are interactive and students are encouraged to express themselves with confidence and develop their listening, speaking and pronunciation skills. During class time students are engaged in a wide range of role-plays, discussions, mingling activities, brainstorming sessions, group work/pair work, multi-media based exercises, team orientated activities and individual presentations.

English for young learner programs at ILA are divided into five sub groups: Jumpstart for children from 4 to 6 years old, Juniors for children from 6 to 11 years old, Seniors for children and teenagers from 11 to 15 years of age and Elite for teenagers from 15 to 18 years of age. In this study, the researcher focused on an intermediate Senior class in which there are 18 students aged from 11 to 16.

3.2. Research design

To address the three questions raised in the introduction, the study was carried out with a descriptive case study approach. The researcher adopted this approach for a number of reasons.

To begin with, this approach is relevant to the descriptive and exploratory nature of the study to “*offer descriptions, interpretations and clarifications of naturalistic social contexts*” (Burns, 1999, p. 22).

Secondly, the case study design claims to offer “*a richness and depth of information*” (Hancock, 1998, as cited in House, 2004), provides “*the collection of very intensive data*” (Burns, 2000 as cited in Le, 2009, p. 29)

and “*detailed descriptions of specific learners*” (Mackey & Gass, 2000 as cited in Le, 2009, p. 29). As a result, the researcher believed that to conduct a research study concerning students’ willingness to communicate in English classroom it was advisable to do perceptive research containing descriptive and detailed data rather than a study that was wide and superficial. In the present study, the researcher decided to investigate more than one case. As a result, it will be easier for the researcher to compare and contrast students’ willingness to communicate in English classroom in a logical way. Therefore, the data investigated in the research may be more concise and persuasive and more accurately reflect different perspectives of various students from the same levels of English proficiency.

Moreover, adopting the case study approach also gave the researcher opportunities to understand the research context and to “*describe the studied phenomenon from the perspective of the insiders.*” (Le, 2009, p. 30). That means that the participants are involved directly and they themselves deal with the problems. In this study, the data was collected from five participants who took part in the English course with a communicative teaching and learning approach, which provides learners with many chances to communicate in English.

The research was conducted with the consciousness that a case study involving just a few participants could not secure external validity for the research. However, the purpose of the research was not to achieve a large spread of data related to the topic but to have a deeper look at the issue, in order to provide a good base for further studies.

In general, research in the form of a case study was considered to be the most appropriate approach for the present study. It was believed that the study could contribute somehow for further investigation of learners' willingness to communicate in English inside classrooms.

3.3. Selection of subjects

3.3.1. Learners

As the present study was conducted following a qualitative case approach, the researcher made use of purposive sampling, in which *“a case is selected because it serves the real purpose and objectives of the researcher of discovering, gaining insight and understanding into a particular chosen phenomenon”* (Burns, 2000 as cited in Le, 2009, p. 31).

The five learners were chosen based on the following criteria: To begin with, all the five learners were directly involved in an intermediate course of the Seniors program at ILA. They all studied in the same class together. The researcher believed that taking a sample of students taught by the same teacher employing the same teaching methods would reduce complexity, time consumption and confusion. Secondly, the five learners were purposively chosen basing on their speaking scores in the mid-course test (i.e. 5 learners with 5 different levels of scores from the lowest (17) to the highest (28)) so that the researcher could investigate diverse backgrounds and behaviors. This criterion, called *“maximum variation cases”* by Flyvbjerg (2006), was set for the purpose of getting information about *“various cases in the language context”* (Le, 2009, p. 31). Thirdly,

under the voluntary agreement, students were selected so that the researcher could ensure their commitment to getting involved in the study.

Detailed information about each learner is summarized in the table below:

	Gender	Age	Time studying English	Speaking scores
Learner 1	Male	12	6 years	28/30
Learner 2	Male	13	7 years	21/30
Learner 3	Female	16	9 years	17/30
Learner 4	Female	13	5 years	24/30
Learner 5	Female	15	9 years	19/30

Table 1: Participants' information

The researcher was conscious that it could be impractical and unachievable to select more than five learners. With a huge amount of data and a limited scope of the study (class observations and intensive interviews), the researcher would find it hard to manage and analyze data. Moreover, due to its own features of qualitative research, it was more practical to investigate only a limited number of participants. In general, the researcher believed that sufficient valid data could be collected through the proposed sample of participants and research instruments.

3.3.2. Teachers

Native English teachers were deliberately chosen for the interview session. Two teachers were invited to share their opinion and experience on

the investigated issue. They have both achieved recognized qualification in teaching English and particularly in teaching young learners after having been trained for both CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) and CELTYL (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Young Learners) over three to six months. Notably, both of them have obtained intensive background knowledge from valuable experiences in teaching English to young learners in other countries before coming to Vietnam, which is the reason they are well qualified for the study and familiar with the targeted students enlisted in this study. Additionally, teachers at ILA are in direct and frequent contact with learners; therefore, they are at least well-aware of students' needs, their strengths and weaknesses, and more importantly, how to motivate them to learn and acquire English.

3.4. Data collection instruments

With the aim of addressing the research questions, the data collecting instruments for this study are WTC questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations.

3.4.1. WTC questionnaire

The researcher adopted this questionnaire from the study “*Interactional context and willingness to communicate: A comparison of behavior in whole class, group and dyadic interaction*” (Cao, Y. & Philp, J., 2006). Trait WTC was measured through the use of a 25 item questionnaire (see Appendix A) widely used in previous research (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990 and Hashimoto, 2002), and previously demonstrated to have high reliability (Asker, 1998), and strong content and construct validity

(McCroskey, 1992). Participants indicated how willing they would be to communicate on a percentage scale (0–100%) in different communication situations. Since the instrument was generic and not specifically designed for an instructional setting, it was modified for use in English classroom by the addition of five items adapted from WTC behavioral intentions listed in the classroom observation scheme, including “*volunteer an answer when the teacher asks a question in class*”, “*ask a question in class*”, “*present your own opinions in class*”, “*participate in group discussion in class*” and “*help others answer a question*”. Data collected from WTC questionnaire was used as learners’ WTC profiles which were then compared with learners’ actual WTC behaviors in different classroom contexts.

3.4.2. Classroom observations

Since the research relates to a practical issue, classroom observation is regarded as an effective tool to verify the results obtained through questionnaires and interviews. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) claimed that “*observational data are attractive as they afford the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from ‘live’ situations*”. With the use of “*over time and repeated observation, the researcher can gain a deeper and more multilayered understanding of the participants and their content*” (Mackey and Gass, 2005).

In this study, state-level WTC was measured by observation of classroom behaviors, using a classroom observation scheme consisting of 15 categories (see Appendix B). These categories (for example, “volunteer an answer”, “give an answer to the teacher’s question”, “ask the teacher a question”, “try out a difficult form in the target language”) were based on

previous descriptions of instructed learners with high WTC and/or high motivation including: a desire to “take moderate but intelligent risks, such as guessing word meanings based on background knowledge and speaking up despite the possibility of making occasional mistakes” (Oxford, 1997, as cited in Cao, Y. & Philp, J., 2006); hand-raising to volunteer an answer (MacIntyre et al., 1998); trying out a difficult sentence in class or making requests without concern for grammatical mistakes (Ely, 1986, as cited in Cao, Y. & Philp, J., 2006); co-operation with the teacher, e.g. by responding to or asking questions in class (Wajnryb, 1992, as cited in Cao, Y. & Philp, J., 2006). These categories were further refined following piloting in the classroom. Further modifications were then made to the whole class observation scheme specific to pair/group interaction; that is, by distinguishing between interaction with and without the teacher’s presence during the pair/group.

3.4.3. Interviews with learners

Learners’ perceptions of the factors contributing to their WTC behavior in class were elicited through structured interviews comprising of two sections (see Appendix C). The first section consisted of questions relating to antecedents of WTC such as motivation, level of anxiety and perceived competence. The second section employed stimulated recall (Mackey & Gass, 2005) designed to elicit introspective comments from participants as they recalled their performances in pair or group work in the last lessons. The questions in this section were associated with participants’ feelings about their task performance in particular groups or pairs. Because of time constraints, stimulated recall occurred two weeks after the task performance, rather than shortly after the original interaction, as is optimal

(Mackey & Gass, 2005). It was recognized that the timing of the interviews posed some threat to the reliability of the stimulated-recall part of the interview, and every effort was made to encourage accurate recall, for example by providing information concerning the conditions under which the tasks were performed prior to each interview.

3.4.4. Interview with teachers

Besides WTC questionnaire and learner interviews, the researcher used interviews from teachers of English as a data collection instrument for obtaining further information on the issues of the study. These interviews were conducted in order to get information about strategies teachers use to enhance learners' willingness to communicate inside English classroom. Then, the researcher made use of this data to make recommendations to other teachers and learners.

3.5. Procedures of data collection

The data collection procedure consists of two main stages:

Stage 1:

In this stage, the researcher prepared the WTC questionnaire, the interview schedule and the observation checklist. To make sure that the questions were comprehensible and the answers could be easily analyzed, these questionnaire and interview schedules were revised, and then modified before they were administered to the participants.

Stage 2:

This stage occurred over a period of three weeks, and consisted of (a) a WTC questionnaire, administered on Day 1 of the study; (b) four classroom observations, carried out twice-weekly in two hourly sessions; (c) a 15–20 minute- interview with each learner after each lesson, and (d) a 15-20 minute interview with each teacher in week three.

While interviewing learners and teachers, the researcher tried best to take notes and tape-record the content, with the interviewees’ permission. During the interview, five learners were encouraged to speak English. However, if they found it difficult to express themselves in English, it was also possible for them to use Vietnamese, so that the information collected could be more detailed and exact. The researcher also tried to be flexible in asking supplementary questions to obtain a deeper level of information.

During the observation, the researcher performed two main tasks including observing and completing the checklists. It is also noted that the researcher, being long familiar with the teacher and learners of that class, did not intervene or disrupt the continuity or flow of the lesson. Therefore, the quality of the result gained from observations can be guaranteed. This stage is presented in Table 2.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Week 1	Week 1–2	Week 3
(a) Self-report questionnaires	(b) Classroom observation (4×2 h/four weeks)	(c) Interviews with five learners (15-20 minute each)
		(d) Interviews with two

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Week 1	Week 1–2	Week 3
		teachers (15 min each)

Table 2: Three step in stage 2 of data collection

3.6. Procedure of data analysis

WTC profiles were based on the self-report (questionnaire) data and the classroom observations over two weeks. Each learner’s self-report WTC frequency was calculated and averaged as a percentage.

The score for WTC is calculated as follows:

To compute the total WTC score, the researcher added the scores for items (3), (4), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (13), (14), (15), (17), (18), (19), (21), (23), (24) and (25), then divided by 18.

To measure the WTC score in dyadic interaction, the researcher added the scores for items (4), (8), and (11), then divided by 3.

To calculate the WTC score in group discussion, the researcher added the scores for items (18), (19) and (24), then divided by 3.

To compute the WTC score in whole class interaction, the researcher added the scores for items (6), (9), (15), and (23), then divided by 4

After the scores for WTC in the self-report questionnaire were calculated, the researcher used the norms for WTC scores to evaluate the learners’ levels of WTC. Those norms are:

Total WTC >82 High Overall WTC, <52 Low Overall WTC

Dyadic conversations >94 High WTC, <64 Low WTC

Group discussion >89 High WTC, <57 Low WTC

Whole class interaction >78 High WTC, <33 Low WTC

For purposes of comparison between the three classroom contexts, descriptions of WTC behavior for each individual was added with scores from self-report questionnaires and data from class observation.

Data from interviews were also synthesized and analyzed based on the content analysis method. Interviews were transcribed, analyzed and integrated into the presentation of WTC questionnaire results so that readers can have a better understanding of the situations.

CHAPTER 4: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. English learning background

Though the researcher did not intend to cover this aspect, it is worthwhile investigating how this variable affects the participants' awareness and willingness to communicate inside the English classroom. All of the participants are at intermediate level and perceived themselves as such. However, Learner 1, 2 and 4 have been learning at ILA continuously for three to five courses and so they are quite familiar with communicative teaching and learning approaches. In contrast, Learners 3 and 5 are attending their first course at ILA; and the communicative approach, to some extent, is new to them. Moreover, Learners 3 and 5 also perceived themselves as

having poor speaking skills, even though they have a very good command of grammar and writing skills.

It is also noticeable that all the participants are well aware of the importance of English and motivated to learn English. All five learners are motivated in working for good academic results at school, getting good jobs and studying abroad in the future. However, in spite of these motivations, not all of the learners are willing to communicate in English inside the classroom.

4.1. 2. Research question 1:

The first research question addressed learners' perceptions of their willingness to communicate in English measured by self-report WTC questionnaires and potential differences in learners' WTC behaviors during whole class, pair and group work. The scores in self-report WTC of five learners are presented in the chart below:

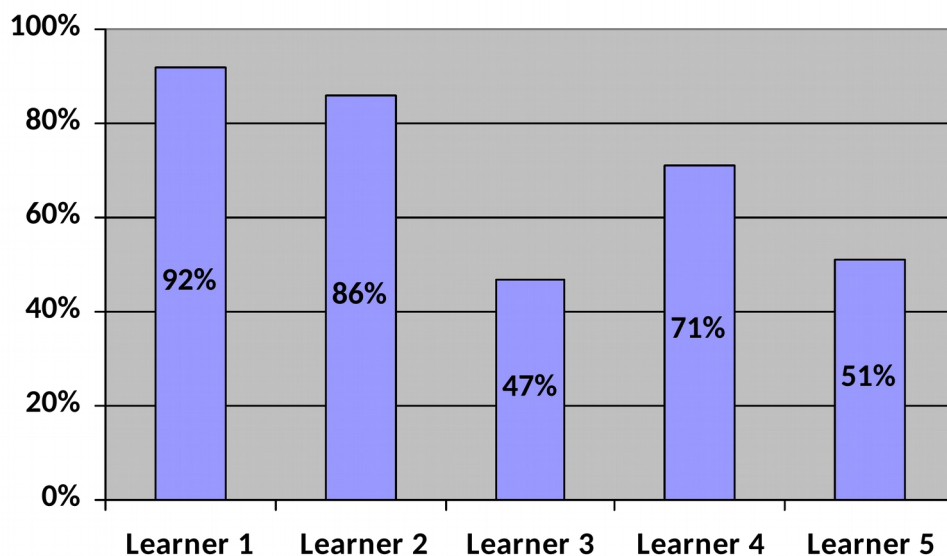


Figure 5: Learners' total scores in self-report WTC

More detailed descriptions of each learner's score in WTC questionnaire and his/her actual behaviors in different classroom contexts including whole class, small group and dyadic situations will be discussed as follows.

4.1.2.1. Case 1: Learner 1

Learner 1 scored highest in self-report of WTC (92%) and he was also highly willing to communicate in pair, group and whole class work as well. From his self-report of WTC, his readiness to engage in oral communication in three classroom contexts is as follows:

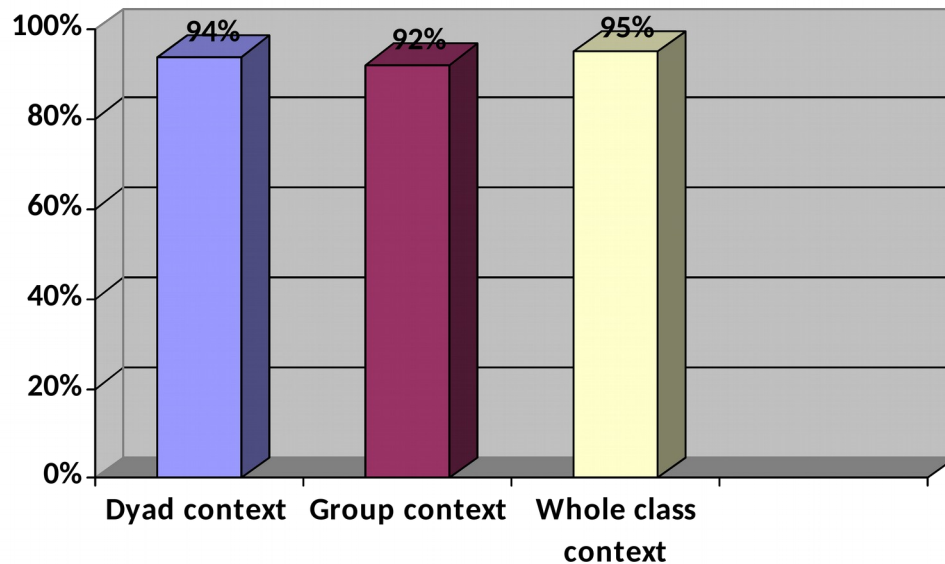


Figure 6: Learner 1's scores in three different classroom contexts in self-report WTC

As can be seen in the chart, Learner 1 received high marks in self-report WTC in dyad, group and whole class situations with 94%, 92% and

95% respectively. From classroom observation, it was apparent that Learner 1 was an active and enthusiastic learner willing to take part in interactions in all three classroom contexts: pair, group and whole class situations. The researcher noticed that Learner 1 displayed high involvement in teacher-fronted and whole class contexts. For instance, he volunteered answers in class by speaking out the answers immediately after the teacher asked questions. He was also confident in talking with the teacher to ask the meanings of new words and clarification of teachers' explanations. As observed, he did not hesitate to try out a new form of grammar or a new word; for example, he made a sentence using the word "glitter" after its meaning was explained by the teacher. In pair work and group work, it was noted that he was always the person to initiate the conversation and volunteer to present the ideas of his group in front of the class.

Further, Learner 1 tried to use English outside of the context of the target language and set activities by classroom phrases such, "*Excuse me*", "*How can I say....*", "*What does....mean in English/ Vietnamese*", "*Sorry/ Thanks*". However, when the teacher was absent he did not use English all the time, similarly to his group and other class members who all tended to use a greater amount of Vietnamese when not being supervised by the teacher.

Learner 1's background shows that he initially had a good command of spoken English (evident from his mid-course speaking score of 28/30). He has furthered this by equipping himself with a good range of vocabulary and structures to have daily-life conversations. Secondly, he has been attending English courses at ILA for nearly four years, so he has had chances to practice English with native English teachers and other learners. As a

result he has built up his confidence in speaking English more so than others who have not had these opportunities.

4.1.2.2. Case 2: Learner 2

Learner 2's willingness to communicate in self-report (86%) was not as high as Learner 1's. However, he is still categorized as learner with high WTC. The chart below indicates his WTC in different classroom contexts as perceived by him in the self-report questionnaire.

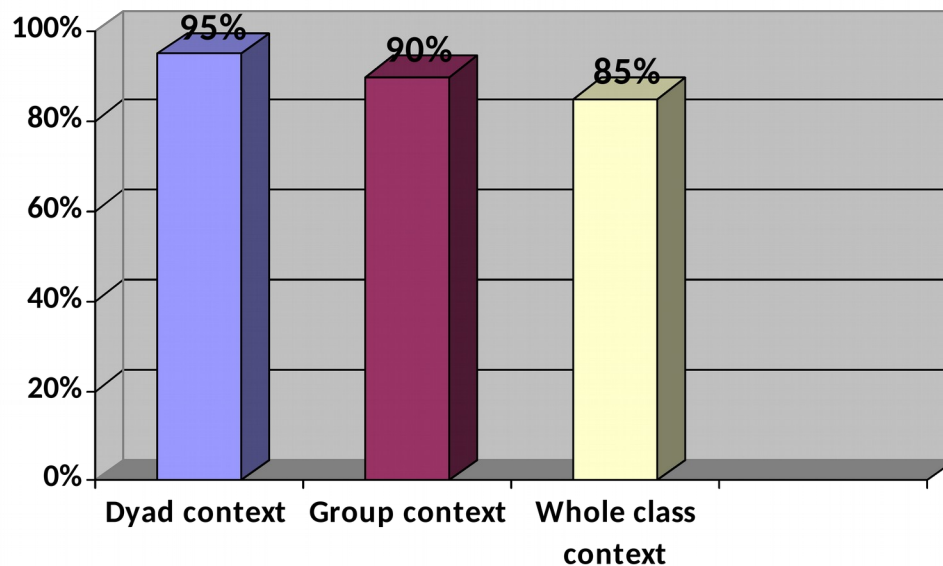


Figure 7: Learner 2's scores in three different classroom contexts in self-report WTC

Learner's 2 high scores in the self-report WTC showed that he was also highly engaged in all of the interactions inside the English classroom. From observations, the researcher noticed that Learner 2 volunteered to answer a lot of questions raised by teacher, approximately thirteen times in one lesson alone. In addition, he tried to engage in interactions with the

teacher throughout the lessons by continually asking the meanings of new words and for teacher support in discussions. In dyadic and group contexts he also participated enthusiastically and supported his partner and group members actively. However, unlike Learner 1, it is observed that he rarely tried out a new form in the target language in terms of lexis or grammar. He took notes on all of the new words he came across in the lessons and then translated them into Vietnamese, but he did not try to put those words into different contexts.

The interview with Learner 2 revealed that he was an extroverted and talkative person. It was also evident that he was highly motivated in this English course as he enjoyed learning with his classmates and teacher as well as admiring the learning and teaching style at ILA. As a result, he tried to take part in classroom interactions as much as possible.

4.1.2.3. Case 3: Learner 3

Among the five learners, Learner 3 got the lowest mark in self-report WTC (47%). She had average willingness to communicate in pair work (67%), but low WTC in group and whole class situations (53% and 30% respectively). Her WTC in three different classroom contexts was shown in the chart below:

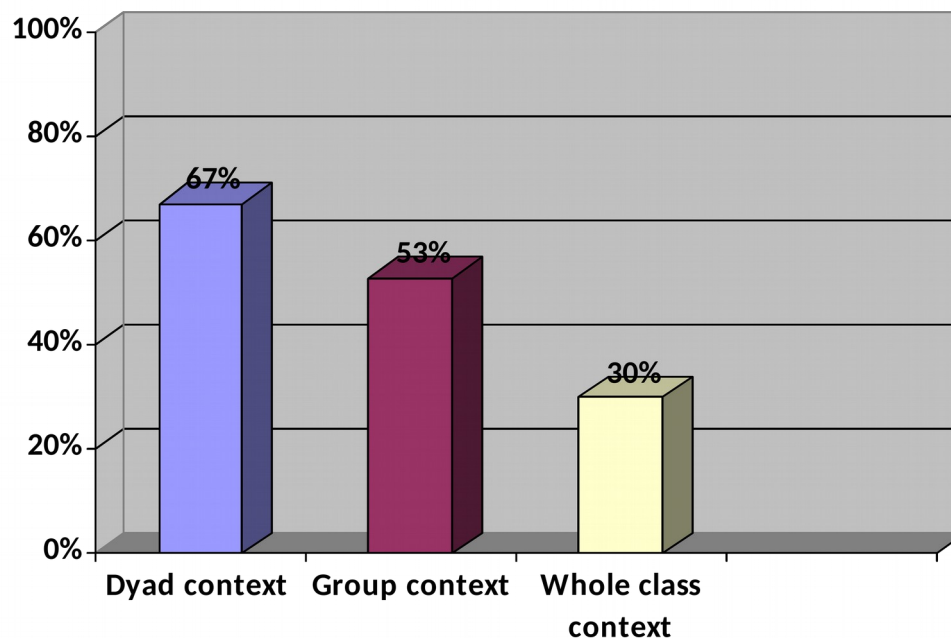


Figure 8: Learner 3's scores in three different classroom contexts in self-report WTC

Classroom observations showed that Learner 3 only participated in discussions when working in pairs. In group and whole class situations she hesitated to join in. Although she contributed to group work, it was not to the standard that the teacher and other group members expected from her. She was never the first to raise her opinion in group discussions and neither supported nor opposed her peers' ideas. Generally she was quite passive in class. She was afraid of presenting her ideas in front of the whole class and even when the teacher asked her a question and provided her with supportive information for the answer, she was still hesitant to speak.

In the interview with the researcher later, Learner 3 claimed that she was a shy and introverted person. Moreover, she stated that she was not

familiar with communicative teaching and learning approaches, so she is still nervous about speaking in class. Therefore, although she is very good in written English, her speaking skill is not thought to be of intermediate level.

4.1.2.4. Case 4: Learner 4:

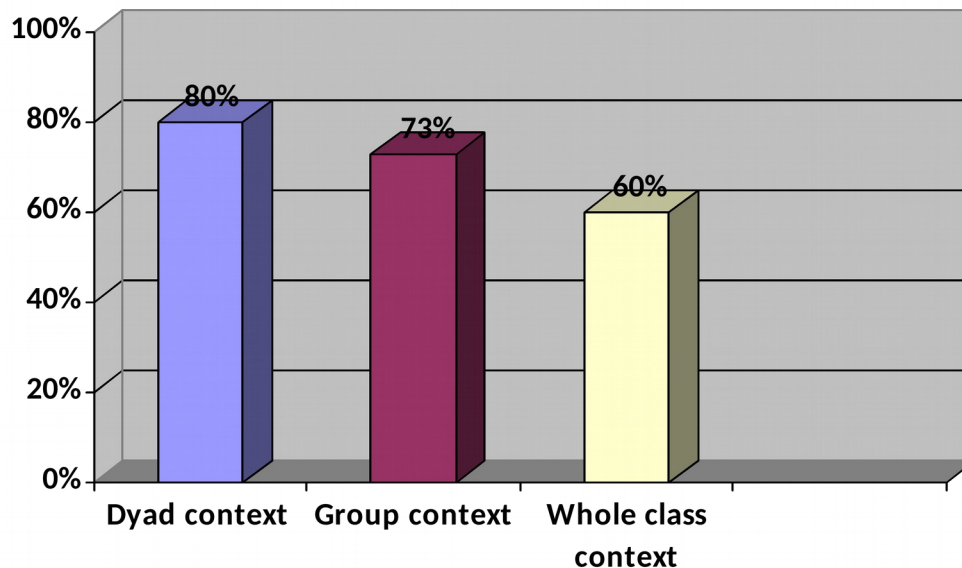


Figure 9: Learner 4's scores in three different classroom contexts in self-report WTC

Learner 4 had an overall average score in the self-report WTC questionnaire (71%), and also received an average WTC score in all three of the classroom contexts. From observations it is evident that Learner 4 was generally willing to join discussions at any time they occurred. She also tried to raise questions to other classmates and the teacher in class. When asked about her willingness to communicate in group discussion in the interview,

she admitted that she was always eager to share her opinions with her peers in class. However, she did not always speak in English. In each lesson it was seen that while she was still continuing to communicate with her peers to complete the in-class tasks the teacher assigned, nearly one third of the communications were in Vietnamese. This is partly because she to some extent felt she was not as good as other learners in the class and afraid of being laughed at when making mistakes.

Among three classroom contexts, she felt the most comfortable when working in pairs (80%). This is understandable as dyadic discussions gave her more chances to participate than group and whole class discussions.

4.1.2.5. Case 5: Learner 5

Learner 5's readiness to engage in interaction inside the classroom is demonstrated in the chart below.

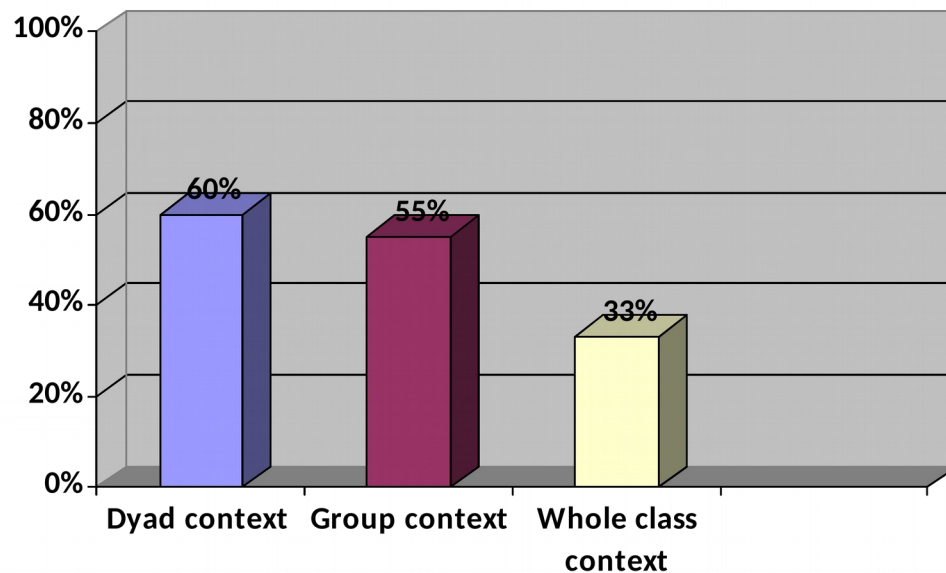


Figure 10: Learner 5's scores in three different classroom contexts in self-report WTC

As can be seen in the chart, Learner 5's willingness to communicate in English over the three classroom contexts was low, especially in whole class situations (33%). Like Learner 3, Learner 5 did not participate much in class, especially in whole class situations. From classroom observations the researcher noticed that Learner 5 was not ready to engage in interaction with either fellow learners or the teacher and she rarely volunteered answers in class or participated enthusiastically in pair and group discussions. She always waited to be asked by the teacher rather than volunteering an answer and she never presented an idea in discussions or asked for explanations and clarification from the teacher and classmates. Generally speaking, she is regarded as an inactive and idle learner in class.

These behaviors could stem from her level of motivation to learn English. She wants to improve her English only to improve and assist her academic studies at high school. In her high school English program, emphasis is placed solely on having a good command of grammar, reading and writing.

4.1.2.6. Summary of findings for research question 1

In the first place, from classroom observations, the researcher can see that level of willingness to communicate in English in three classroom contexts: dyad, group and whole-class situations of each learner associated with their evaluation on their own self-report WTC. In other word, there is a match between self-report of WTC and learners' actual classroom behaviors in all cases. This finding disagreed with other researches of Baker MacIntyre, (2000), Kang (2005) and Cao, Y. and Philp, J. (2006) which

revealed a mismatch between WTC reported by learners in the self-report questionnaires and learners' actual behaviors inside English classroom.

Secondly, data collected from the self-report questionnaire and class observation indicated that level of WTC in whole class situations were substantially lower than those of WTC pair and WTC group work. Understandably, the comparatively larger size of a whole class gave less opportunity for each individual to communicate than would occur within a dyad or a smaller group. Even so, comparison of individual participation in each context reveals differing participation patterns. Learners 3 and 5 scored lowest on the self report of WTC with 47% and 51% respectively. Learners 1 and 2 scored highest in the self-report of WTC (92% and 86% respectively) and were high in WTC in all whole class, group work and pair work contexts. Learner 1 in particular displayed extremely high involvement in whole-class activities, yet in contrast to this, his participation in pair and group work was lower. The four other learners participated considerably less in the whole-class context than in the dyad and group contexts.

4.1.3. Research question 2:

The second research question addressed learners' perceptions of those factors which most contributed to their WTC behavior in class. Based on interview data from five learners, the four factors most commonly perceived by learners to impact their WTC behaviors were self-confidence, background knowledge, group size, and teacher support. Table 3 below presents all of the factors and the number of participants who noted each factor in the interview.

Factors affecting WTC	N/5
Self-confidence	5
Background knowledge	5
Group size	4
Teacher support	3
Format and content of the task given	2
Familiarity with interlocutor	1
Interlocutor's participation	1

Table 3: Factors affecting WTC as perceived by learners

Self-confidence was perceived to be a major factor contributing to WTC by all five learners, particularly in the whole-class situation. Learners 2, 3 and 5 stated that they felt comfortable when working in pairs and groups of three to five people, however, speaking in front of the whole class made them nervous. The participation of these learners in whole-class interactions was comparatively low, corresponding with their reported low self-confidence. In contrast, Learners 1 and 4, whose whole-class participation

accounted for nearly one third of the participation of the entire class, reported generally being confident about speaking in class.

In addition to self-confidence, background knowledge was also considered to highly affect WTC inside classroom by all of the learners. According to Learner 2, knowledge plays an important part in communication. He said that if he had enough knowledge about the issues discussed he would be more active as a communicator. A similar belief was held by Learners 3, 4 and 5. Learner 4 even stated, *“In my opinion, my willingness to communicate depends on the topics; if I know much about that topic I will actively participate but if I know little about that I will possibly stay silent.”* This belief was illustrated in the situation in which her group discussed traveling topics. She had had a chance to travel to a number of places across Vietnam and some countries abroad; thus she initiated the first idea that was immediately approved of by all other members. All the learners affirmed that the knowledge should come from reading books, newspapers, the Internet, and from real life experiences. In addition, they emphasized the need for vocabulary and expression. They said one of the reasons that they were not confident talking in English was that they could not choose the right words or the appropriate expressions. This, to some extent, contributed to the reluctance to discuss topics in English with other students in pairs, in groups and in whole-class situations.

Another factor reported to be one of the determinants of learners' WTC inside classroom was group size. Four of the learners admitted that a small number of interlocutors in a communication context was preferable, with the ideal number suggested being three or four. Learner 1 commented: *“Group, three or four is good for me ... some people talking, some people*

listen, we can help each other. With three or four people in a group, we can contribute more ideas. I do not really like working in pairs because there are only two people, it is kind of boring to me. I also do not want to work with more than five people as there are too many ideas, which can lead to a fight”

The influence of teacher’s support on learners’ WTC was also noted by three Learners 2, 4 and 5. According to Learner 5, she was supported by the teacher only in vocabulary, mostly when she asked for help, but not in ideas, expressions and background knowledge. Therefore, she found it difficult to participate in pair and group discussions. However, unlike Learner 5, Learners 2 and 4 always appreciated the support of teacher as well as only needing the teacher’s help in terms of vocabulary and expressions. Yet, they all agreed that the teacher should take responsibility for ensuring that every group member used English in discussions, as participants seemed to switch to their mother tongue quite frequently. Overall they were well aware of the influence of teacher’s support on their willingness to discuss in English with their peers.

Other factors included the format and content of the task given, familiarity with the interlocutor and interlocutor participation. Among the five learners, only Learners 2 and 3 emphasized the importance of topics and activity formats to their active participation. According to them, an activity which could involve as many students as possible was more interesting and motivating. They both mentioned the activity called “improvisation” in which they had to make up a conversation on the spot. They described the class atmosphere at those times as chaotic, but they felt happy with that and dynamically took part in the activity, speaking English.

Interlocutor's participation was perceived as another factor contributing to WTC, as Learner 5 reported. She showed dissatisfaction with the contributions from her group. She commented: *"This group work is not very good. We didn't speak a lot, and also that was not a good conversation. Everybody should say one point. But no one wanted to say anything, just sat and looked at each other. That the reason why I did not participate much"*.

Familiarity with the interlocutor(s) was noted by Learner 3 as affecting WTC. She expressed a reluctance to communicate in all of the class contexts because she considered her classmates as acquaintances, rather than people she felt comfortable with. However, she appeared to be much more willing to communicate in a pair with Learner 4 as she considered Learner 4 as her friend.

4.2. Discussion

One focus of the study was concerned with the actual WTC behaviors of participants across interactional contexts. It is likely that the researcher finding a trend for weak correlation between group work and pair work is related to the number of participants. As Wen and Clement (2003) claim, class size appears to be *"part of the contextual factors embedded in group cohesiveness"* (p. 27). The whole class context, with a larger group of learners, lacks the sense of cohesiveness that would presumably lend support to learners by making them feel secure enough to speak. Additionally, in the classroom context, a sense of responsibility to communicate (Kang, 2005) is reduced.

The second focus concerned learners' perceptions of factors contributing to their WTC in class. Self-confidence, background knowledge, group size and teacher support were most commonly identified as factors contributing to or reducing WTC. Self-confidence has been identified in previous studies as a combination of perceived competence and a lack of anxiety (for example, Baker and MacIntyre, 2003, MacIntyre et al., 2002 and MacIntyre et al., 2003). A majority of the learners in this study attributed their comparatively low participation in the whole class to a lack of self-confidence. This supports findings by Liu and Littlewood (1997) and Tsui (1996), that a lack of confidence in spoken English could result in reticence in class. Conversely, the two most active participants in the whole-class situation also reported being self-confident in that context. Dörnyei and Kormos (2000) report that linguistic self-confidence exerted a considerably stronger impact among task-motivated learners, therefore future research might investigate the interactions between task, motivation and self-confidence.

Another factor identified as affecting learners' WTC behavior in each of the classroom contexts was background knowledge. MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 554) claimed that content knowledge will result in a boost in one's linguistic self-confidence, while lack of knowledge about a topic may inhibit communication. Kang (2005, p. 283) reported that learners tended to feel insecure about conversing on a topic about which they had little background knowledge.

Fewer rather than larger numbers of interlocutors were preferred by the learners, supporting McCroskey and Richmond's (1990) claim that the larger the number of interlocutors, the less willing the individual is to

communicate. Also consistent with their study was learners' reporting of greater WTC in groups among friends than with unfamiliar classmates; this suggests that the more distant the relationship of the individual to the receiver(s), the less willing the individual is to communicate.

The results from this study also correspond with Baker et al.'s model (2003) in terms of the importance of the teacher's influence on learners' eagerness to communicate in English with their peers. The study of these cases discovered that input and corrective feedback provided by the teacher fostered the participant's confidence and eagerness to speak English. The above-mentioned input, according to the participant, consists of topic-based background knowledge, topic-based vocabulary and expressions.

4.3. Pedagogical implications

An implication of these findings is the potential of the interactional context to encourage or discourage willingness to communicate among learners. The results of the study demonstrated that learners behaved differently according to the contexts: some were more willing to communicate in teacher-fronted or whole class activities; others preferred small groups or pair work. This clearly supports the practice of including different interactional contexts, particularly small group and dyadic interaction in addition to whole class interaction.

As mentioned previously, one of the most significant findings of the research is the participants' need for both language and knowledge input. Although the research only studied five cases, the researcher assumes that this need would also be evident in many other cases. Therefore, it is

recommended that a variety of activities should be carried out in order to provide students with more chances to absorb background knowledge and relevant language knowledge. Teachers can provide students with reading materials for the next week's topic so that students can read and prepare themselves at home before going to class, or teachers can ask students to read about that topic at home before going to class and to share their findings with their classmates. In this way students have a chance to improve their background knowledge of the topics and are more likely to participate actively in the discussion. It would also be a good idea for teachers to provide students with a list of structures and vocabulary that are relevant to the topic for that week as well as explaining carefully these structures or vocabulary to them before students come to the group discussion.

There is a further implication relevant to the teacher, acting as a facilitator and a guide for the class. The researcher would like to put emphasis on the importance of teacher-student interactions in class, or to be more specific, the teacher's influence over group discussions and their motivation of the students. Firstly, in order to avoid that students switching to Vietnamese in pair and group discussions because it is easier, teachers should monitor the class well while they are taking place. As a class at ILA consists of at most 18 students it is certainly not too hard for teachers to monitor the whole class. Secondly, teachers are advised to provide students with timely positive feedback so that students get timely encouragement to be more confident and willing to communicate. Thirdly, it is advisable for the teachers to get closer to and have a better understanding of students' personalities and their needs by sharing life or study experiences with

students and asking them to share their opinions and vice versa. This may help to decrease anxiety in class and therefore enhance students' willingness to speak in English. Also, from their knowledge of their students, teachers can make any necessary changes to teaching methods or instructions to assist students in being more active in group discussions.

4.4. Recommended strategies for teachers to promote learners' willingness to communicate in English inside classroom

In order to make this study more valuable, the researcher also interviewed two experienced English teachers at ILA to glean some recommendations on strategies for enhancing students' willingness to communicate in class. Such strategies that other teachers of English can find useful and applicable are as follows:

Discussion Questions: Before class, the teacher should ask students to prepare a question about the readings or other material in the course and write it out on an index card. Questions should encourage critical thinking and deep reading; avoid yes/no varieties. During class, teacher compiles the index cards and gives one to each student; then pairs students and asks one person to start by being the interviewer. The interviewer asks a question and takes notes on the answers given by the other student. Then they switch roles and repeat the process. Any questions that could not be answered are reported to the larger class and students are asked to write for 1-2 minutes on the answers to the tough questions.

Alternatively, teacher can compile the index cards and pull two or three at the beginning of class. Then teacher calls on students randomly to answer

the questions on the card. If they don't know the answer, teacher should ask them to facilitate a short discussion with the class to get the answer. This activity encourages quiet students to be more active, provides thinking time to all students, and allows all students to be involved.

Chatty warmer: The teacher gets students working in pairs or threes to plan a lunch box. Students should decide on the main food, drink, snack and sweet item, and include something healthy. If teacher gets all the students engaged in a chatty, personalized activity during the first five minutes, it breaks the ice and establishes in their minds that you are the teacher who wants them to talk. The teacher also should remember to keep class feedback to a minimum after such an activity otherwise the pace might drop.

Circling Up: Teacher needs to arrange desks or groups of desks into a circle for discussion. If there are multiple topics to be discussed, teacher should arrange desks into groups and the topic (or students) can rotate through the groups. With this activity, face to face interaction among students is encouraged, so they talk to each other, not to the teacher.

Think-Pair-Share: Before beginning a class discussion, the teacher asks students to consider a prompt. Then, the teacher should have students discuss their responses with a partner before asking the pairs to report back to the larger class. This allows all students to actively consider the topic; takes pressure off of quiet students by not asking them to respond to the larger group.

Lenses: Teacher assigns students "lenses" through which they must interpret course material. Lenses are usually broadly interpretive perspectives that

structure the student's attention and cause salient information to come to the foreground. A reading could be seen, for example, through an environmental lens or a political lens. A presentation in criminal justice, engineering design, or textile marketing could be seen through the lens of gender or age. Follow-up can compare interpretations either in informal writing, online, or during an in-class discussion. This activity encourages multiple perspectives from students and provides them with chances to share and express their own opinions in class.

Warm Calling: Teacher provides either the full class or a subset of students warning about a question that the teacher will ask them to answer. Then, the teacher lets students have time to think through a response while other discussion occurs. With this kind of activity, students are provided with thinking time and students' anxiety of being called on is reduced.

Provided Questions: The teacher provides a list of possible discussion questions to students before the class and encourages students to read the questions and be prepared to discuss them in class. This activity is useful in that it provides thinking time, allows deeper discussion as well as provides a focused direction for discussion and taps into different learning styles.

Pluses and Minuses: During a discussion, the teacher encourages students to provide feedback to each other. For example, after a student provides a possible solution to a problem, the teacher may ask the class for one positive and one negative aspect of that suggestion. This encourages even quiet students to respond in a less threatening situation.

Thinking about topics and format of the task: Discussion topics can be anything from current events to favorite foods. Teacher should choose topics which they are confident their students will find interesting. However, the teacher should also bear in mind that directing a discussion about unfamiliar or difficult topics will not only give oral communication practice, but will also help students to learn more about other aspects of life and enhance their vocabulary as well as background knowledge.

With regard to the format of the discussion, there are a variety of different types of discussions that occur naturally and which the teacher can recreate in the classroom. These include discussions where the participants have to:

- ***Make decisions*** (e.g. decide who to invite to a party and where to seat them)
- ***Give and / or share their opinions on a given topic*** (e.g. discussing beliefs about the effectiveness of capital punishment)
- ***Create something*** (e.g. plan and make a poster as a medium for feedback on a language course)
- ***Solve a problem*** (e.g. discussing the situations behind a series of logic problems)

Depending on the topics discussed and students' preferences, the teacher can choose the appropriate format of the task, so that students feel interested and willing to participate. One thing that should be considered is that the teacher should vary group sizes to make students familiar with working with different numbers of partners. It can also be useful to mix classes of students

so they have practice doing discussions with people they don't already know.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary of findings

The study was conducted with the central aim of examining the learners' perceptions of their willingness to communicate in English in three different classroom contexts including dyadic, small group and whole class interaction as well as investigating the factors contributing to their WTC from learners' perspectives. To serve fulfill these aims three research tools were used, including a WTC questionnaire, classroom observations and structured interviews.

Overall, this study has had relatively in-depth look at five individuals. After collecting and analyzing data, the researcher has drawn some significant findings. Though these findings are just conclusions from five particular cases, the researcher thought that the cases were relatively typical and assumed that there would be many similar cases. Therefore, she believes that her findings are of fairly high reliability.

Firstly, the findings indicated that the level of the WTC in English perceived by learners in the self-report questionnaire correlated to their actual behavior inside classroom. In other words, WTC as measured by self-report is predictive of actual classroom behavior. However, learners' WTC

changes in the classroom across interactional contexts, in which the levels of the WTC in whole class situations were lower than those of WTC in pairs and group work.

Secondly, learners in this study primarily attributed different WTC behavior to: self-confidence in communicative ability, group size, background knowledge, teacher support, format and content of the task given, familiarity with interlocutor and interlocutor participation. No single factor was perceived as responsible for WTC behavior in class, so teachers need to be mindful of the interactions between different factors when planning learning activities, rather than focusing on one at the expense of others.

5.2. Limitations of the study

Admittedly, although the researcher has devoted herself to conducting this study in a professional manner, it is unavoidable that she encountered some difficulties in the process of implementation, which resulted in the research having the following limitations.

An obvious limitation of the study is the limited sample size; the data represented is from a sample of just five learners, which is not enough for generalizations. However, as stated before, the aim of the study was to gain a select, in- depth view of the issue and not to generalize any problems. Therefore, it is believed that detailed and sufficient data in the research could provide reasonable and concrete information for further research.

In addition, due to time constraints, it was impossible for the researcher to investigate the learners' WTC in written communication inside

English classroom. This might require other studies which explore the other kind of communication in ELF class.

In conclusion, the research inevitably has some limitations; therefore, it is advisable to take these issues into consideration and make necessary changes should further studies be conducted on the same topic.

5.3. Suggestions for further studies

This research can act as a survey of how students are willing to communicate in English in class; the researcher hopes that similar research will be carried out on a larger scale so that we can see a broader view of the situation. Since the researcher had a short period of time to do the study, she could only look at several cases in-depth, because she knew that studying a large population without in-depth analysis would not be useful. The researcher believes that if this research can be done over a longer period of time and on a larger scale it will help teachers to understand what their students really feel and need and adjust their teaching accordingly.

This study points to the usefulness of employing a combination of self-report, observation and reflective interviews in identifying WTC within a specific context. It is apparent from the triangulation of this data that further research on situational WTC, particularly the antecedents of WTC, is important in finding its implications for pedagogy, for further understanding the WTC construct and for exploring the relationship between WTC and language learning.

Methodologically, this study employed a generic questionnaire relating to WTC in an instructional context. Further research should focus on

the development of a separate L2 WTC classroom instrument and innovative WTC survey covering different speaking and writing situations specific to an EFL (English as a foreign language) classroom setting.

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APPENDIX A - WTC SELF-REPORT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:.....

Email address:.....

WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Nguyen Ha Sam, from class 07.1.E15, Faculty of English Language Teaching Education, ULIS, VNUH. I am conducting my graduation paper on the topic:

“Learners’ perceptions of their willingness to communicate in English in different interactional contexts in classroom at ILA: A case study”

I would like you to help me by completing this survey questionnaire. This is not a test so there is **no “right” or “wrong” answers**. All the information that you give in this survey only serves for the purpose of carrying out this paper and will be kept secret. I ask for your personal information just because I would contact you later to conduct an interview. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation.

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation!

DIRECTIONS: Below are 25 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate in English. Presume that you have

completely free choice. Please indicate the percentage of time you would choose to communicate in each type of situation. Indicate in the space at the left what percent of time you would choose to communicate. 0% = never, 100% = always.

No.	Situations	Level of WTC
1	Talk with an acquaintance in an elevator.	
2	Talk with a stranger on the bus.	
3	Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of strangers.	
4	Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.	
5	Talk with a salesperson in a store.	
6	Volunteer an answer when the teacher asks a question in class.	
7	Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of friends.	
8	Talk to your teacher after class.	
9	Ask a question in class.	
10	Talk in a small group (about five people) of strangers.	
11	Talk with a friend while standing in line.	
12	Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.	
13	Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of acquaintances.	

14	Talk with a stranger while standing in line.	
15	Present your own opinions in class.	
16	Talk with a shop clerk.	
17	Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of friends.	
18	Talk in a small group (about five people) of acquaintances.	
19	Participate in group discussion in class.	
20	Talk with a garbage collector.	
21	Talk in a large meeting (about 10 people) of strangers.	
22	Talk with a librarian.	
23	Help others answer a question.	
24	Talk in a small group (about five people) of friends.	
25	Speak in public to a group (about 30 people) of acquaintances.	

APPENDIX B – CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEME

Date:.....

Time:.....

Class observed:.....

	Learner 1	Learner 2	Learner 3	Learner 4	Learner 5
In the presence of teacher					
1. Volunteer an answer (including raising a hand)					
2. Give an answer to the teacher’s question					

a. Provide information-general solicit					
b. Learner-responding.					
c. Non-public response.					
3. Ask the teacher a question.					
4. Ask for instructions/clarification when confusing about a task you must complete when you or not understanding the teacher's questions					
5. Help others answer a question in English in class					
6. Guess the meaning of an unknown word.					
7. Try out a difficult form in the target language (lexical/morphosyntactic)					
8. Present own opinions in class.					
9. Participate in pair work					

10. Participate in group work					
Additional categories for pair and group work in the absence of the teacher					
1. Guess the meaning of an unknown word.					
2. Ask group member/partner a question.					
3. Give an answer to the question.					
4. Try out a difficult form in the target language (lexical/grammatical/syntactical).					
5. Present own opinions in pair/group.					

APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW QUESTION FOR LEARNERS

Part I: general questions

1. How important is it for you to learn English?
2. How motivated were you during this language course?
3. How much did you like learning together with your classmates in this course?
4. How good are you at learning English?
5. What do you think your English level is like? What about your speaking skill in particular?

6. How competent do you think you were to communicate in English during this course?
7. How would you describe your personality (quiet or talkative, relaxed or tense)?
8. Did you feel very sure and relaxed in this class?
9. Did you feel confident when you were speaking English in class?
10. Did it embarrass you to volunteer answers in class?
11. Did you feel that the other students speak English better than you did?
12. Were you afraid that other students would laugh at you when you were speaking English?
13. Did you get nervous when your English teacher asked you a question?
14. Were you afraid that your English teacher was ready to correct every mistake you made?
15. In what situation did you feel most comfortable (most willing) to communicate: in pairs, in small groups, with the teacher in a whole class? Why?

Part II: stimulated recall questions

16. Did you like this task? Why? Why not?
17. How useful for your learning do you think this task was? Why? Why not?

18. Did you think you did this task well? Why? Why not?

19. Did you enjoy doing this task? Why? Why not?

Were you the first person to give your ideas in pair/group discussion?
Why/ Why not?

20. Did you feel happy to work in this group/pair? What did you feel happy/not happy with?

21. Were you interested in the topic teacher gave to your pair/group?

Do you know much about that topic? Do you find your knowledge about the topic help you a lot in pair/group discussion?

22. How many people were there in your group? Did you prefer working with more or less people? Why?

Do you often talk to those people? Are they friendly to you? In pair/group discussion, did they let you speak up?

Did your partner/group members support your ideas?

How did you feel when they support/did not support your ideas?

Did you feel comfortable when working in that pair/group? Why? How did it affect your participation in pair/group discussion?

23. After group discussion, did you volunteer to represent your group to present your group's ideas in class?

24. When you have pair/group discussion, did your teacher support you? If yes, how?

Did you find teacher's support helpful? Why?

25. Comparing the tasks you did, which task did you prefer? Why? Which group did you prefer? Why?

APPENDIX D - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. How long have you been teaching English?
2. How do you assign tasks for students (individual work, pair work, and group work)?
3. What kinds of activities attract students the most and make them communicate in English the most?
4. Do you often swap student's partner and group members?
5. Do you often give students unfamiliar topics for discussions? Why/Why not?

6. Do you often support your students in pair/group discussion? How do you support them?

7. Do you have any strategies to help your students to be more confident in communicating in English?