THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Researchers have extensively studied learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) over the last three decades, as students who study language are more likely to communicate with one another in a setting where foreign or second-language teaching as well as learning takes place. McCroskey and Richmond (1987) introduced the concept of WTC in L1 by defining it as a personality trait that is consistent across situations. However, given the wide range of linguistic competencies possessed by L2 speakers, ranging from absolute beginners to fluent bilinguals, it is likely that L2 WTC is significantly more complex variable than L1 WTC, owing to the breadth of communication opportunities and competencies possessed by communicators. Researchers have examined both stability and fluctuation in constructing the conceptualization of L2 WTC. Hence, the purpose of this article is to conduct a systemic review of the literature regarding both trait-like and dynamic nature as well as situational antecedents that may contribute to variation in WTC.

Keywords: Dynamic willingness to communicate, first language, second language, situational willingness to communicate, trait willingness to communicate, and willingness to communicate.

INTRODUCTION

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is a concept that refers to an individual's proclivity to initiate communication with others (McCroskey, 1997, p. 77) and is arguably one of the most critical concepts in the context of foreign or L2 language learning. Specifically, people exhibit predictable behavioural patterns in response to the amount of communication they receive; thus, their willingness to speak is situationally determined (Borgetta & Bales, 1953; Chapelle & Arensberg, 1940; McCroskey, 1997). Individual differences (IDs) variable called WTC is indicated by their proclivity for communication (McCroskey, 1992; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1990, 1991). The fundamental conceptualization of WTC indicated the presence of a trait or stable characteristic in the literature on communication. McCroskey et al. (1985, 1990, 1991) proposed a WTC construct that resembled traits derived from the L1. Similarly, this construct can be observed in Burgoon (1976)'s research on unwillingness to communicate (UWTC), McCroskey and Richmond

(1982)'s research on shyness, and Mortensen, Arnston, and Lustig's research on predisposition to verbal behaviour (PoVB) (1977). According to McCroskey and Richmond (1987), WTC is a construct that reflects an individual's intention to initiate communication when given the choice based on previous research. Additionally, in the context of L1, WTC is referred to as a personality trait that remains consistent across situations and individuals. Numerous studies examined various variables associated with L1 WTC, including cultural (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990), verbal aggression (Teven, Richmond, McCroskey & McCroskey, 2010), introversion (MacIntyre, 1994; McCroskey, 1997), anomie and alienation (MacIntyre, 1994), shyness (Teven et al., 2010), and communication apprehension (MacIntyre, 1994; McCroskey (Barraclough, Christophel & McCroskey, 1988; MacIntyre, 1994; McCroskey, Buroughs, Duan & Richmond, 1990; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990;

Sallinen-Kuparinen, McCroskey & Richmond, 1991).

WTC also encompassed both state and trait proclivities, as conceptualized and theorized in the L2 context by MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, and Noels (1998). The trait-like dimension of the L2 WTC was examined with respect to motivation (Cetinkaya, 2005; Cha & Kim, 2013; Knell & Chi, 2012; Hasmoto, 2002; Peng & Woodrow, 2010), anxiety (Cetinkaya, 2005; Hashimoto, 2002; Kim, 2004; Knell & Chi, 2012; MacIntyre et al., 2002), self-confidence (Hishimoto, 2002; Yashima (Kim 2004; MacIntyre et al., 1999; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2000; Sparks & Ganschow, 2001; Yu, 2008). In contrast, the state or situational perspective of L2 WTC was examined as a contextual and individual factor, which included linguistic factors (Cao, 2011; Khajavy, Ghonsooly, Fatemi, & Choi, 2016), tasks assigned (Cao, 2011), topics (Cao, 2011; Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005), and interlocutors (Cao, 2011; Cao & Philp, 2006; de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; Syed, Kuzborska & Tarnopolsky, 2019). Thus, the current definition of the WTC was denoted as a dynamic construct that fluctuated over time. The following sections detail WTC's past and current research, as well as its methodological approaches and future directions.

1. The past of WTC

It was first discovered that WTC conceptualised a trait-like or stable IDs variable in L1 communicative contexts (Burgoon, 1976). Burgoon (1976) established UWTC as a stable variable on the basis of the premise that some people communicate more frequently than others. Subsequently, a scale was proposed for measuring UWTC that included items on avoidance, distrust, and anxiety. The items include; "talking to other people is just a waste of time," "I don't think my friends are honest in their communication with me," or "I feel nervous when I have to speak with others." structure was not well defined via factor analysis (Burgoon, 1976; McCroskey & Baer, 1985), it was not widely used. Eventually, the construct was renamed WTC in the L1 context (McCroskey and Baer 1985), and a scale for measuring the WTC was developed (Backer & MacIntyre, 2003; Bamfield 2014; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2003; MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Mahdi, 2010;

Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, McCroskey and Baer argued, based on their research, that Burgoon's (1976) scale was associated with the concept of communication apprehension, resulting in the formation of a WTC that was analysed from a different perspective. This novel WTC scale examined twelve everyday life situations that included three types of receivers: strangers, friends, and acquaintances, as well as four types of groups: public speaking, large meetings, small groups, and dyads. Additionally, the scale included eight fillers, such as "talk to a secretary," that ranged from 0% to 100% in terms of informants' willingness to speak. Additionally, responses were quantified using the probability format scale and were consistent with the WTC's conceptual definition, which included a scale with acceptable psychometric properties (McCroskey & Baer, 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1990, 1991). However, the WTC L1 scale measures only the trait-like or stable concept (McCroskey and Baer, 1985; McCroskey and Richmond, 1982, 1990; McCroskey, 1992). (Weaver, 2005; MacIntyre, 2020). Thus, numerous studies have cast doubt on the questionnaire's practicality in the Asian English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) context (Syed, 2016); thus, Cao and Philp (2006) suggested that additional research was necessary before implementing an L2 WTC questionnaire in the classroom.

2.1 The conceptualisation of WTC in L2 as a situational construct

L2 comprehension required the individual to draw on a variety of experiences, making it a critically complex situation (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). MacIntyre et al. (1998), argued that it was highly improbable that WTC L2 was a direct manifestation of WTC L1, and thus conceptualised WTC L2 accordingly. Besides that, the research explained that the difference between L1 and L2 WTC could be due to the inherent uncertainty of L2, which conflated with the variable in a more composite manner, affecting L1 WTC. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), L2 WTC refers to the "willingness to engage in discourse with a specific individual at a particular time" (p. 547). Figure 1 depicts a heuristic pyramid model for L2 WTC, in which WTC was observed as a situational and trait-like variable.
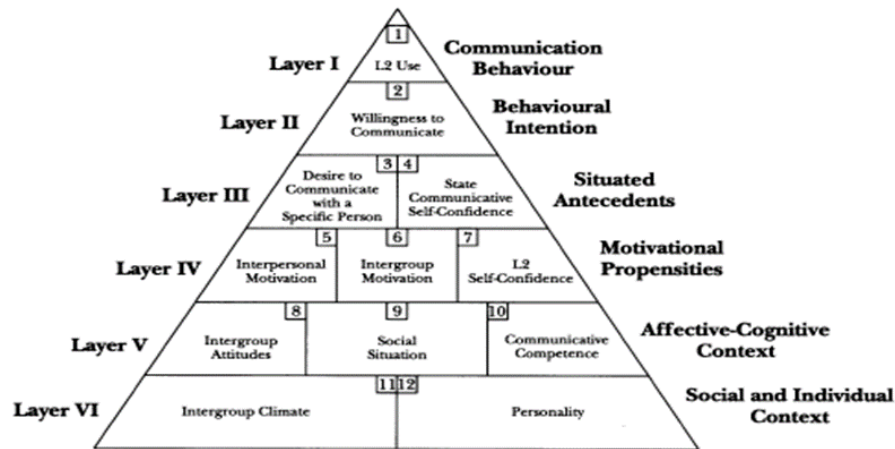
Figure 1: The heuristic model of WTC in L2 (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

The model comprises both enduring and situational variables that indirectly or directly affect an individual's L2 WTC. The variables are as follows:

1. Communication behaviour: L2 use.
2. Behavioural intention: WTC.
3. Situated antecedents: State communicative self-confidence and desire to communicate with a specific person.
4. Motivational propensities: L2 self-confidence, intergroup motivation, and interpersonal motivation.
5. Affective-cognitive context: Communicative competence, social situation, and intergroup attitudes.
6. Social and individual context: Personality and intergroup climate.

This multi-layered pyramid model is one of the most comprehensive and widely used theoretical frameworks, containing twelve multiple variables that examined the distal and proximal influences on the WTC. Additionally, this model combined a variety of communicative, psychological, and linguistic variables and was developed in response to L2's observation that some individuals speak more frequently than others (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The model's sixth layer included personality and intergroup climate, which were viewed as long-term and stable variables that changed gradually (MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre, 2007, 2020). Besides that, the pyramid model depicted a specific moment of communication with a specific person, and concurrently, a behavioural intention emerged from the interaction of numerous types of influences. However, because the L2 WTC model was developed using research conducted in the L1

context rather than the L2 context (Wen & Clément, 2003), the following detailed description of these enduring and situational variables is provided.2.2.

2.2 Enduring and stable variables
2.2.1 Societal and individual context
Layer VI of the pyramid model depicts two fundamental characteristics, namely personality and intergroup climate. Intergroup refers specifically to an individual's perceptions of the target language community, the speaker's attributed value, and their desire to reduce the social distance between the L2 and L1 communities. Meanwhile, it is suggested that personality has an indirect effect on WTC through affective variables such as confidence, motivation, and attitude (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

2.2.2 Affective and cognitive context
Three variables, namely communicative competence, intergroup attitude, and social situation, are distinct from specific communication situations. Additionally, intergroup attitudes reflect a desire to communicate with the target language community, as well as a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction felt by L2's linguistic learners. Meanwhile, the social situation is composed of variables such as communication channels, subject, purpose, setting, participants, and the proficiency level of the interlocutor. The WTC of an individual can be influenced by their proficiency level, also referred to as communicative competence. Additionally, communicative competence and the personality of the interlocutor can influence an individual's L2 self-confidence, which is largely determined by their level of apprehension and proficiency (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Thus, by exerting an effect on the factors

in the model's upper layers, the variables displayed in Layer V can indirectly influence L2 WTC leaners.

2.3 Motivational propensities

Layer IV of the model includes three enduring variables: interpersonal motivation, L2 self-confidence, and intergroup motivation. These variables describe motivational tendencies that are considered to be stable individual variables. Additionally, this layer addresses the critical stage for L2 learners, which is associated with the critical roles of particular class members and the class context. Furthermore, interpersonal and intergroup motivation are associated with Layer III's desire to communicate with specific individuals.

Intergroup and interpersonal motivations are classified as cognitive and affective contexts, which contribute to an individual's confidence (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Moreover, intergroup motivation is linked to an individual's specific affiliation, whereas interpersonal motivation refers to an individual's social roles within that group (MacIntyre, 2007). The way an individual communicates with another person is determined by two primary concepts, namely control and affiliation, both of which are related to attitudes and the relationship between individuals and other people.

2.4 Situation-specific variables

2.4.1 Situated antecedents of communication

Layer III of the model depicts the situated antecedents of communication, which include two variables that have an effect on the WTC. The desire to communicate with a particular individual indicates that "affiliation may be the primary motivation in informal situations with an attractive, L2 speaking interlocutor" (MacIntyre et al., 1998: 549). Meanwhile, state communicative self-confidence is defined as the present-moment feelings of confidence in a specific environment. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), state communicative self-confidence is distinct from trait-like self-confidence, and a momentary sense of confidence as a result of a person's feelings may influence the L2's effective communication with a specific person at a specific time.

The absence of anxiety and perceived competence contribute to the individual's L2 self-confidence (Clément 1980, 1986). More precisely, perceived competence is defined as the capacity to communicate effectively at a given time (MacIntyre et al., 1998). This state, however, is more likely when a learner is in an environment where the L2 speaker is confident..

2.5 Behavioural intention

The immediate variable that influences L2 communication's learning process in WTC is displayed in Layer II. MacIntyre et al. (1998), described WTC as the readiness to penetrate the discourse using L2 at a particular time with a specific person or persons. For instance, students in a classroom can display WTC by simply raising their hands, even though it is a non-verbal action.

2.6 Communicative behaviour

L2 is a concept found in Layer 1 beneath communicative behaviour, which primarily promotes WTC among its learners. According to MacIntyre et al., 1998, the primary goal of language learning is authentic L2 use. The authors defined communicative behaviour as the use of L2 in a variety of situations, such as watching a movie, reading a novel, or speaking during a class activity. Additionally, the authors asserted that programmes failed due to students' unwillingness to use the language (p. 547). The model was found to have both practical and theoretical implications, as it assigned a set of variables to encompass a more holistic view of L2 communication and learning (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Besides that, the same author regarded WTC as the final stage of preparing an L2 learner for communication because the concept implied the learner's potential use of the target language for communicative purposes when the opportunity presented itself.

Previous research revealed that L2 WTC initially used trait-like WTC, which made significant progress based on the literature on L1 WTC. For instance, in Canadian L2 settings, students preferred to speak in L2 as compared to traditional French language (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan, 2002). Similarly, in Japanese settings, Japanese students that communicated with the Americans benefited from their trip after returning home (Yashima et al., 2004). Furthermore, it was found that students with enhanced WTC were associated with similar friends with WTC (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Conrod, 2001). Hence, social conditions that provided the opportunity communicate resulted in increased WTC (Clément, Baker & MacIntyre, 2003). WTC predicted the initiation of communication in both L2 and L1, which was also associated with other factors like personality. However, insufficient studies on L2 WTC inside the classroom exists; thus, quantitative methods were predominantly used.

The L2 WTC is conceptualised by researchers as a situational variable, which periodically in a given context via qualitative methods, such as journal writing, videotape conversations, diaries writing, observations, and stimulated recall interviews (Cao & Philp, 2006; Cao, 2009; Kang, 2005). For instance, in a Korean setting, Kang (2005) examined the situational WTC through stimulated recalls and videotaped conversations and found that L2 WTC fluctuated according to the security, excitement, and responsibility, which were in different situations, such as, interlocutor, topic, and conversational conditions. The same author established L2 WTC as an individual's voluntary inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation. This situation varied according to the interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables (p. 291). Furthermore, Cao and Philp (2006) categorised L2 WTC in three groups, namely group work, pair work, and whole-class interactions. In a longitudinal study, it was found that students in small groups were anxious in class interactions at the beginning of the semester due to an inadequate vocabulary and language fluency (de Saint Léger and Storch 2009). Meanwhile, they were confident at the end of the semester, which revealed an improved lexical weakness and language fluency. In another study, the environmental situations were examined, such as teacher, group size, task type, interlocutor, and topic concerning individual factors, which included emotions, perceived opportunity to communicate, self-confidence, and personality (Cao 2011).

2. The present

Recently, studies indicated that the WTC is a dynamic variable that fluctuates on a periodic basis, an idea sparked by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron's (2008) complex dynamic theory (CDST). MacIntyre (2020) stated that when the WTC was conceptualised using the 1998 pyramid model, the CDST framework did not exist within the concept of the WTC's operation. Furthermore, if CDST concepts were used to conceptualise and describe the WTC pyramid model, a clearer picture of the meta-theoretical implications might have been possible (p. 116). Thus, due to the dynamic nature of the WTC, the pyramid model was abandoned, and researchers began to focus more on the dynamic nature of the WTC beginning in 2010. (MacIntyre, Burns, & Jessome, 2011; Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak,

2014; Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2018; Syed et al., 2019). Besides that, a qualitative study was conducted on French immersion students using an essay writing technique, in which participants were asked to write the most and least L2 WTC situations, and the results revealed significant similarities in the subjects' WTC situations (MacIntyre et al., 2011).

In another study, an idiodynamic method was developed to explore fluctuations of the speaker's affective states (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). The study used video recordings as data in the communicative activities, and WTC was rated via computer. Leaners reported their interest in the type of task that influenced the fluctuations of the learners' WTC vis-a-vis task duration. The participants provided their WTC fluctuations during the tasks, which found periodic fluctuations in the respondents' WTC during different tasks (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2014). Hence, students' WTC fluctuations were explored over one semester, and the data were collected through interviews, in-class WTC survey, lesson plans, and self-reported WTC grids (Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2018). It was reported that there was an array of group-related and personal factors, which possessed the capability of shaping in-class communicative behaviour. Furthermore, WTC was investigated by applying CDST on a timescale in three different situations, namely between classes, over time, and during conversations (Syed et al., 2019). The data were collected via class observations, biographic questions, stimulated recall, and diaries, which revealed that L2 WTC's fluctuations were influenced by perceived opportunity, topic, and interlocutors. However, research on the dynamic nature was still in its infancy; hence, a qualitative method was necessary to explore the fluctuations in WTC vis-a-vis quantitative method (Macintyre 2020).

3. Methodological approaches in WTC

The main methodological approaches to analyse WTC were quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Initially, studies applied quantitative method using questionnaires as data collection tools to investigate WTC with other variables (Clément et al., 2003; Ghonsooly, Khajavy & Asapour, 2012; MacIntyre & Blackie, 2012; MacIntyre et al., 2001; MacIntyre et al., 2002, MacIntyre et al., 2003; MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Peng, 2007; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002;). The quantitative data collection method, such as questionnaires,

displayed the trait-like perspective of WTC, which examined its association with other personality-based variables. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach was the second most used method to explore WTC. However, the trait-like view excluded and decontextualised the impact of communication context, participants, and time (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The qualitative method was more favourable to elicit in-depth information of a phenomenon, explore the individual views, reveal idiosyncratic features, and elaborate on the dynamic system (Dörnyei, 2007; Kang, 2005; Zarrinabadi, Ketabi & Abdi, 2014). Additionally, qualitative methods analyse the individual's propensity to contextualise and investigate on the proximal and distal influences of WTC (Zarrinabadi & Tanbakooei, 2016). Different qualitative tools were used to explore the potential influencing variables of an individual's WTC, such as observations, focused essay, diary, stimulated recall interviews, semi-structured interview, and videos (Cao, 2009, 2011, 2014; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Peng, 2012; Syed & Kuzburska, 2019).

The third method orientation was to merge both qualitative and quantitative (mixed methods) to explore WTC. The usage of methods utilised the strengths of both paradigms to avoid the method's limitations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In this study, interview and observations contributed to the qualitative part, whereas, the quantitative part comprised mainly questionnaires. Hence, researchers applied the mixed-method design to qualitatively and quantitatively investigate WTC (Ali, 2017; Backer & MacIntyre, 2000; Cao & Philp, 2006; de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011).

4. The Future of WTC

WTC has evolved over the last three decades from trait and situational WTC to dynamic WTC. Notably, WTC places a premium on oral communication (speaking), despite the fact that research has largely ignored the other three skills of speaking, writing, and listening. Future researchers should therefore concentrate on the dynamic nature of the three abilities and their variations across situations and contexts. Moreover, a comprehensive scale is required to assess WTC in a variety of classroom situations, including small group, individual, pair, and entire class interactions during various activities (role-playing, presentations, and discussions) that can be conducted with students of the same or opposite gender, task preparation, and seating arrangements in class (front, middle, and back of the class). Besides that, the pyramid model was unable to capture the information contained in per-second fluctuations in the WTC rating. On the other hand, modern dual processing theory enables greater elaboration of the factors underlying WTC by connecting dynamic and trait conceptualizations (Frankish, 2010).

The dual processing theory's core tenet asserts that humans are capable of developing two distinct system types in order to maintain conversation within their environment (Frankish, 2010). Moreover, Kahneman (2011) proposed two distinct processing systems for interpreting people's data, namely system one and system two, in order to avoid extraneous connotations. According to the same author, system one is an emotional, rapid, and prone to error intuitive system based on experiential thinking that enables quick judgement, whereas system two is more effortful, logical, slower, and deliberative. Due to the effortless nature of the process, it was discovered that people use system one in their daily life conversations, primarily in rapid communications. However, if the individual requires greater caution and logic in their thinking, system two has an effect on decision making and information processing.

Given that language learning occurs as a result of social interaction, it is necessary to investigate the sociocultural perspective of WTC (Lantolf, 2000, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). Modern methods of language teaching and learning for the acquisition of L2 have revealed that language learning is a sociocultural phenomenon (Chang, 2018; Lantolf & Thorne, 2015; Syed, 2016; Pathan et al., 2018). Furthermore, Vygotskyian's social-cultural theory (SCT) demonstrates the learners' active participation in the language learning process with teachers, peers, and the environment (Lantolf, 2004; Lantolf & Thorne, 2015). Similarly, mediation, zone of proximal development (ZPD), and internalisation originated from the same theory (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2015; Pathan et al., 2018). More precisely, mediation refers to the tools that a learner uses to solve problems, such as logic, language, and categorization (Lantolf, 2007), whereas ZPD is the gap between the learner's actual and potential understanding (Lantolf & Thorne, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, internalisation is critical for higher cognitive functions (Kozulin, 1990, p. 116).

The WTC could be viewed through a mediational lens of social interaction. On the other hand, ZPD evaluates a learner's ability to perform both with and without the assistance of a teacher or friend, whereas internalisation evaluates a learner's WTC on social and psychological levels.

In the modern era, social media is regarded as the primary source of intra and inter-cultural communication; thus, WTC must be examined in conjunction with computer-mediated communication (CMC). Future research may incorporate various aspects of social networks on WTC while utilising various social media networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter. Furthermore, future research should investigate WTC's sociolinguistic perspective on learners' language use outside of the classroom in various domains of their daily lives. This idea can be realised by applying Fishman's (1965) theory of language use domains, which primarily include family, workplace, neighbourhood, friends, education, religion, transaction, mass media, and social media (Fishman, 1965, 1972; Grosjean, 2010, 2016; Leo & Abdullah, 2013; Widad, 2017). Another critical aspect overlooked by previous studies is teachers' perspectives on students' WTC from a sociocultural and dynamic perspective in various classroom situations. As a result, future researchers should investigate teachers' perspectives within the context of language pedagogy (Wen & Clément, 2010; Zarrinabadi et al., 2014). In conclusion, more research is needed to promote authentic communication and language learning among learners from various linguistic backgrounds.

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