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Willingness to Communicate in English: Its Influence on Oral Proficiency Levels in ESL Learners

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Abstract: *This study investigates the impact of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) on oral proficiency in English language learning, particularly focusing on its influence as an individual difference in second language (L2) acquisition. The research primarily aims to explore the correlation between WTC and oral language competency in L2 learners and examines how variations in WTC among learners with different levels of competency relate to other key factors such as self-confidence, the desire to communicate, and anxiety. Additionally, it assesses potential gender-based differences in WTC and oral proficiency. The participant group comprised 175 undergraduate students, including 88 males and 87 females. Data collection involved a comprehensive survey, and the analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. The findings revealed significant correlations between the studied variables, although T-test analyses indicated no significant gender-based differences in WTC and oral proficiency. This research contributes to a better understanding of how self-confidence, a strong desire to communicate, and a stress-free learning environment are crucial for successful language learning, thereby informing language education practices and policies.*

Key Words: Willingness to Communicate, Oral Proficiency, English Language Learning

Introduction

This research investigates the impact of willingness to communicate (WTC) on learners' oral proficiency in English, particularly in the context of second language (L2) acquisition. Originally conceptualized by McCroskey and his colleagues, WTC is understood as an individual's propensity to initiate conversation, influenced by various factors like self-confidence, anxiety, and gender differences. This study focuses on the Pakistani educational context, where English, as a widely used medium of instruction, plays a crucial role in academic and career success. Utilizing the WTC scale developed by MacIntyre, Baker, et al., the research explores how WTC correlates with oral language proficiency, considering individual and situational variables. It particularly examines the relationship between learners' WTC in English and their oral proficiency, alongside factors such as self-confidence, desire to communicate, and environmental aspects like classroom dynamics. The study aims to enhance understanding of how these factors interplay to affect second language learning, acknowledging that WTC is a dynamic trait varying across different situations and influenced by both personal and contextual factors.

Significance of the Study

The primary objective of this quantitative study is to scrutinize the influence of willingness to communicate (WTC) on the oral proficiency of learners in English, especially within the context of second language (L2) acquisition. This research is particularly pertinent in the diverse educational landscape of

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Pakistan, exemplified by undergraduates at Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology (KFUEIT), who bring varied backgrounds and differential exposure to the English language. Such diversity inevitably leads to a range of levels of self-confidence, desire to communicate, and anxiety related to L2 usage among students. A critical issue that emerges from this heterogeneity is the varying degrees of WTC, which potentially impedes the development of oral proficiency and, more broadly, the efficacy of L2 learning. This study posits that a reluctance to engage in communicative activities in English may signal a shortfall in the L2 program, affecting both the learners' perspectives on their language challenges and their motivation to overcome these obstacles. This research, therefore, seeks to understand the extent to which KFUEIT students are disposed to communicate in English, aiming to discern the implications of WTC on their oral proficiency.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the potential correlation between willingness to communicate (WTC) and proficiency in oral language.
2. To examine the impact of self-confidence and anxiety on both WTC and oral language proficiency.
3. To discern any disparities in WTC and oral language proficiency based on gender.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant correlation between willingness to communicate (WTC) and oral language proficiency among learners?
2. How do self-confidence and anxiety influence both willingness to communicate (WTC) and oral language proficiency in learners?
3. Are there notable gender differences in willingness to communicate (WTC) and oral language proficiency?

Delimitation of the Study

The heuristic model posits that willingness to communicate (WTC) is a multifaceted construct subject to influences from diverse factors encompassing linguistic, cultural, situational, and psychological dimensions. While the scope of research in this area is broad and capable of encompassing an extensive range of these variables, the present study intentionally narrows its focus. Specifically, this research examines the relationship between WTC and oral language proficiency. In addition, it aims to analyze the impact of two critical affective factors, self-confidence and anxiety, on WTC and oral language proficiency. By focusing on just these few aspects, the study aims to give a more focused and in-depth picture of how these specific factors interact and affect WTC and language proficiency instead of looking at a wider range of possible factors that could affect these things. This concentration allows for a more detailed exploration within the specified parameters, contributing targeted insights into the complex dynamics at play in the realm of second language acquisition.

Literature Review

This section covers the scientific debate on willingness to communicate (WTC) in second language (L2) acquisition, especially its relationship to spoken language competency. It begins with English's historical and global backdrop, then discusses its history and status as a worldwide language. Next, the conversation turns to the importance of English in Pakistani professional and educational fields.

A comprehensive study of WTC was created for first language acquisition and then adapted to L2 learning. WTC has psychological, social, and linguistic dimensions. We examine the concept's origins, growth, and influences, such as self-confidence, anxiety, and personality qualities. This study analyzes how these factors affect learners' L2 communicative preparedness and oral language ability.

The literature review discusses WTC's heuristic model, which incorporates several aspects. This paradigm helps explain WTC in L2 learning. This chapter examines the theoretical and empirical dimensions of WTC to understand the many factors that affect language learners' willingness to communicate in English, particularly in Pakistan, and how this willingness correlates with their language proficiency.

The evaluation also stresses the importance of English as a worldwide language for communication and academic and professional achievement. It discusses the difficulties of learning English in Pakistan, where it is not the native language yet is important in many fields. The review finds that WTC is important in L2 learning, particularly in Pakistani education, and may improve learners' communicative competence and language proficiency.

Burgoon's (1976) notion of "unwillingness to communicate." inspired WTC. (McCroskey & Baer, 1985) introduced WTC in L1. Communication skills, apprehension, self-esteem, and cultural diversity are WTC precursors. They also advocated cultural generalization. Later, (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996)used the WTC model in a second language and found that personality and social situation impacted WTC.

WTC initially described people's tendency to communicate in their first language (L1). It was considered consistent in several cases (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). However, linguistic, social, and psychological factors may not directly impact second language (L2) communication willingness to communicate (WTC) (MacIntyre et al., 1998). MacIntyre and his team (Emery et al., 1998) suggested a heuristic pyramid model to understand second language willingness to communicate (L2 WTC)'s long-term and temporary factors. The paradigm states that the World Trade Center (WTC) directly impacts second language (L2) communication. According to(MacIntyre et al., 1998), other factors affect pyramid levels. This paradigm has greatly influenced World Trade Center research. Several studies have shown how complicated WTC is and how numerous things impact it. Ability to communicate effectively, fear or anxiety about communication, the relationship between self-confidence and proficiency in a second language, motivation to learn the language, the concept of an ideal self in the second language, an international mindset, and attitudes toward the international community are all factors that contribute to language learning. This helps explain WTC and its dynamics in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). According to (MacIntyre et al., 1998), trait-based WTC may make people more likely to communicate in favorable settings, but communication relies on context. Those with more WTC tend to communicate. However, social context determines communication. Including individual predispositions and environmental factors is important while examining WTC in communication studies.

Research Design

The research is quantitative. A five-Likert scale-based questionnaire was used to gather numerical data for quantitative research. The goal of the quantitative research design was to ascertain the proportion of people who hold a specific belief, behavior, or emotion regarding language use. Appropriate sample sizes were used in quantitative projects, which prioritized the number of responses collected from a population as the study was purely quantitative. The quantitative approach is used to analyze data. The quantitative approach enabled researchers to examine a significant sample, which allows it to offer factual, trustworthy outcome data that is typically generalizable to a larger population.(Aquino & Thau, 2009) . Because quantitative data was submitted to a variety of statistical methods, the results were usually thorough, parsimonious, and generalizable.

Participants

The population of this study was undergraduate ESL learners at the university level. The participants were 300 Pakistani students enrolled in BS English programs at the Khawja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahimyar Khan. Participants were students of BS English, 5th (61+72), 4th semester (38) and 3rd semesters (66+64). At the time of data collection, they were enrolled in the Fall semester of 2022. All participants belonged to diverse backgrounds and had different levels of English proficiency. A detail of the population is given in the table.

Table 1

Strength of participants of the study

Semester	Section	Male	Female	No. of Students
BS-ENGL-3	A	32	34	66
BS-ENGL-3	B	30	34	64
BS-ENGL-5	A	30	31	61

Semester	Section	Male	Female	No. of Students
BS-ENGL-5	B	40	35	72
BS-ENGL-4	NIL	20	18	38

Data Collection Tool and Procedure

This study used an adapted questionnaire to examine how willingness to communicate (WTC) affects spoken English competence. WTC's immediate antecedents were self-confidence, gender disparities, and communication. The study used (MacIntyre et al., 2001).WTC scale and extensively analyzed and interpreted the data using SPSS. An online poll used a five-point Likert scale (Appendix A). Participants received an invitation link to do the survey.

About 300 Pakistani bachelor's and ESL students at KFUEIT in autumn 2022 participated in the study. The questionnaire began with demographic questions on participants' names, genders, and education. A series of questions assessed the study's core variables: L2 self-confidence, willingness to communicate, and second language fear. These elements are crucial to L2 WTC and English oral proficiency assessment.

This research used a correlational design rather than an experimental strategy to collect demographic data and responses for correlational analysis and gender-based discrepancies. The poll has 25 questions: 6 on self-confidence, seven on communication, and 11 on anxiety. I used SPSS 26.0 for statistical analysis. (Bukhari et al., 2015) advises using Pearson correlation analysis to assess the independent variable's correlations with other variables. We examined the relationship between speaking success and WTC using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. An independent sample t-test examined gender differences in self-confidence, communication, and anxiety.

Pilot Study

Conducting a pilot study is a crucial step in research methodology, as it assists in identifying and rectifying potential ambiguities and phrasing issues and assessing the overall feasibility of the questionnaire or oral exam (Chappell & Williams, 2002). In this research, a pilot study was carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of the questionnaire designed to measure willingness to communicate and oral proficiency in English.

A sample of thirty university students, representing one-tenth of the original target population size (300), was randomly selected from various departments. They were invited to participate in the survey, which was conducted online after ensuring adequate internet availability. Based on the feedback received, several modifications were made to the questionnaire. Firstly, the language of the questionnaire was simplified by replacing complex words with more accessible synonyms, such as substituting 'interlocutors' and 'dialogist' with 'speaker' and 'comrade' with 'friend.' Secondly, an overlooked item (Question No. 9: "I feel anxious when I have to speak without preparation in English class") was identified and subsequently included in the revised questionnaire.

Additionally, a subset of five students was randomly chosen to participate in a trial run of the oral test. Originally allotted five minutes per response, the pilot study revealed that this duration could induce anxiety among participants, adversely affecting their performance. Therefore, based on observations and student feedback, the response time was adjusted to 2.5 minutes. Furthermore, it was suggested that recording students' responses without prior notification could yield more natural and less anxious performances.

The pilot study proved instrumental in fine-tuning the research instruments, ensuring the clarity of questionnaire items, and enhancing the practicality of the oral test. It provided valuable insights, enabling the researcher to make informed adjustments to the study's methodology, thereby increasing the likelihood of obtaining reliable and valid data in the subsequent main research phase.

Oral Proficiency Test: Participants and procedure

This study chose 50 top and bottom 25 questionnaire respondents from 300 students to take the oral proficiency exam. A mobile device recorded each participant's 2.5-minute speech on 'Myself' to measure oral proficiency. These recordings assessed fluency, sentence structure, clarity of concepts, pronunciation,

vocabulary, and non-verbal communication skills, including body language and eye contact. The LMS schedules determined the students' availability for the three-day tests. To maintain transparency, participants were told that their comments were being recorded. This method encouraged spontaneous conversation and reduced recording nervousness. The self-designed evaluations featured a semi-structured guide for conversation and observation of the topic, and the transcriptions were examined to determine oral ability.

Delimitation of the Study

The heuristic model states that WTC is multidimensional and impacted by language, culture, situation, psychology, and other variables. There can be studies on all these characteristics, the Cronbach alpha for the WTC and oral language skills and how self-confidence and anxiety affect both.

We assessed reliability by measuring internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α). Surveys with a reliability value of 0.8 are generally valid (McEvoy et al., 2014). The WTC questionnaire has an excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) of 0.78.

The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the anxiety scale with 11 items was 87, the want to communicate scale with seven items was 87, and the self-confidence scale with six items was 61 in this study. There was concept consistency in all constructions except self-confidence (.61), which is acceptable.

Table 2

Constructs	No. of items	Alpha (α)
Anxiety	11	.87
Desire to communicate	7	.87
Self-confidence	6	.61

Data Analysis

Result of the Self Confidence Scale

In this study, Self-confidence was used as the first variable. The items used to assess the self-confidence of the learners' are six in number. Frequency, percentage, and mean score obtained for each questionnaire item are mentioned. Most of the statements in the survey got average scores. Here, some statements with the lowest scores are discussed. Keeping in mind the background of the participants, the researcher also tried to find out the reason behind the specific feedback. The statements on which participants strongly disagreed got the lowest mean score.

For Example,

'When I will Speak English, my Friends will Laugh at me (Item 10)

The statement mean score is 2.35. The study participants strongly disagreed. Out of 175 individuals, 60 strongly disagreed, and 53 disagreed. As said, participants are graduate students from different semesters and backgrounds. Their linguistic skills vary. Linguistic acquisition is easier without linguistic anxiety. Mature participants realize that L2 language apprehensions fade with effort and patience. Thus, they rarely feel this anxiety. Student English is not their first language. Language learners must establish their own environment.

I can Easily Remember and Sing the Lyrics of English Songs (item 16)

The 113 pupils disagreed. The student mean score for this Statement is 2.35. Out of 175 participants, 53 strongly disagreed, and 60 disagreed, scoring high. This suggests that pupils struggle with this second-language learning strategy. Singing improves verbal and nonverbal communication. It boosts confidence. Listening, comprehending, remembering, and singing English lyrics is difficult for some, but it helps develop oral skills. Native song composers use colloquialisms, current English idioms, and slang in their songs. Since English is not the participants' first language, Pakistan seldom uses this strategy. Initially, participants at institutions, especially public schools, struggle to recall and perform English songs owing to insufficient exposure to native English. The complete result of self -the confidence scale is given in the table.

Table 3
Statistics for self-confidence

Q. No	Element	Level of Disagreement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Level of Agreement	Mean
21	F	33	49	41	31	21	2.762
	%	18.9	28	23.4	17.7	12	
25	F	35	37	36	33	34	2.965
	%	20	21.1	20.6	18.9	19.4	
10	F	60	53	25	14	23	2.354
	%	34.3	30.3	14.3	8	13.1	
23	F	53	60	25	15	22	2.354
	%	30.3	34.3	14.3	8.1	13	
17	F	32	31	50	46	16	2.902
	%	18.3	17.7	28.6	26.3	9.1	
23	F	34	48	41	30	22	2.713
	%	18.10	28.2	23.4	17.4	12	

The Result of the Desire to Communicate Scale

There are seven items from the questionnaire designed to measure the desire to communicate with the participants of the study. These are the statements on which the majority of the students agreed and got marks above average. The examples of such statements are discussed in the following section.

The Job I Imagine having in the Future Requires that I Speak English Well. (item 18)

The result of this statement was 3.302, an overall positive result. Out of 175 participants, 49 strongly agreed and 45 agreed. Participants doing their BS in English are aware of the importance of developing speaking skills and want to get it improved. They themselves consider it their essential need. Moreover, the majority of their instructors keep highlighting the importance of different fields of life. Learners know that effective communication is a basic life skill. In third-world countries, especially in Pakistan, English as an official language is used as a medium of instruction in institutions. So, learners' communication in the English language, to a great extent, measures the level of success. Participants are aware of the fact that the foundation of job type, promotion, and professional reputation in the future greatly depends on their ability to communicate verbally and in writing about career objectives. The high mean score of the following statements also shows the same thinking. Similarly, item No. 13 has 3.017. Out of 175, 39 strongly agreed, and 38 participants agreed).

I want to speak because my teacher wants me to speak English (item 13)
I like to think of myself as someone who will be able to speak English item 2)

In descriptive statistics of the participants' desire to communicate, this statement(item 2) shows a positive result of 3.011. It reflects the optimistic approach of the participants. They are aware that good workplace communication promotes a positive work environment and ensures that individuals are aware of how to utilize language to convey information effectively. While maintaining or improving interpersonal connections, information should be accurately presented in successful communication.

No matter what stage of language learning the participant is at, he sees himself as communicationally competent. In the words of Buddha, what you think you create, what you feel you attract, and what you imagine you become.

Learners' positive attitude towards learning a different language is important. While learning a foreign language, linguistic and cultural differences are numerous. To successfully overcome all such restrictions, the learners need to develop a positive mindset. Language learning is a complex cognitive task. With persistence, however, this language skill can be developed. It's a great approach to learning a second language.

Table 4

Statistics for desire to communicate

Q. No	Element	level of Disagreement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Level of Agreement	Mean
2	F	36	34	33	36	36	3.011
	%	2.6	19.4	18.9	20.6	20.6	
12	F	28	39	45	35	28	2.977
	%	16	22.3	25.7	20	16	
13	F	44	24	30	39	38	3.017
	%	25.1	13.7	17.1	22.3	21.7	
15	F	25	48	44	37	21	2.891
	%	14.3	27.4	25.1	21.1	12	
18	F	33	20	28	49	45	3.302
	%	18.9	11.4	16	28	25	
19	F	35	36	42	33	29	2.914
	%	20	20.6	24	18.9	16.6	
22	F	37	30	29	43	36	3.062
	%	21.1	17.1	16.6	24.6	20.6	

Result of the Anxiety scale

Eleven items of the questionnaire are designed to measure anxiety using L2. The statements with exceptional results are discussed below. Some of the least agreed statements from the table are:

I feel anxious when a teacher asks me questions in English (item 1)

I feel anxious when someone starts a conversation in English on the phone (item 20)

The mean score of the item 1 is 2.468. Out of 175 participants, 62 strongly disagreed and 46 disagreed. Similarly, item 20 got a 2.48 score. Out of 175 participants, 47 strongly disagreed and 54 disagreed. Both least agreed statements show that most of the participants of the study are less concerned about grammatical mistakes and capable of coping with a situation in which they have to use a second language either with a teacher in the classroom or on the telephone with some stranger. The score on the following statements justifies this.

'I fear others take note of my pronunciation mistakes' (item 11)

The mean score of the statement is 2.600. Out of 175 participants, 43 participants strongly disagreed and 44 disagreed. Participants know that a habit of correcting themselves will aid in memorizing the correct tenses, pronouns, etc., but extra focus on grammar rules does not help develop the flow of communication. So it will affect their fluency. Language learners need to use L2 immediately as words come to their mind without having to remember grammatical rules. However, speaking rapidly is not the objective. The objective is to make good-sounding speech (natural). Therefore, it is preferable to proceed more slowly and repair errors as they are made. It's better to use language even with mistakes than not using it at all. The results of the statements show the participants' right attitude towards grammar and its rules. Complete statistics are displayed in the form of a table.

Table 5

Statistics for anxiety

Q. No	Element	level of Disagreement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Level of Agreement	Mean
1	F	52	46	36	25	16	2.468
	%	29.7	26.3	20.6	14.5	9.1	
3	F	55	44	29	23	24	2.525
	%	31.4	25.1	16.6	13.1	13.4	
4	F	36	47	37	34	21	2.754
	%	20.6	26.9	21.1	19.4	12	

Q. No	Element	level of Disagreement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Level of Agreement	Mean
8	F	37	45	43	30	20	2.720
	%	21.1	25.7	24.6	17.1	11.4	
9	F	36	42	46	29	22	2.765
	%	20.6	24	26.3	16.6	12.6	
11	F	43	44	45	26	17	2.600
	%	24.6	25.1	25.1	14.9	9.7	
14	F	35	45	46	29	20	2.737
	%	20	25.7	26.3	16.6	11.4	
20	F	47	54	35	21	18	2.48
	%	26.9	30.9	20	12	10.3	
6	F	50	32	44	30	19	2.609
	%	28.6	18.3	25.1	17.1	10.9	
5	F	42	52	28	27	26	2.651
	%	24	29.7	16	15.4	14.9	
24	F	41	50	34	36	14	2.758
	%	23.4	28.5	19.4	20.6	8.0	

WTC and Oral Language Proficiency

What is the relationship between WTC and oral language proficiency?

The primary goal of this study was to thoroughly examine the connection between Oral language proficiency and WTC. To answer this question, the data were analyzed using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. The outcome or result of this analysis is shown in the table.

Table 6

Pearson product-moment correlation for the measurement of the WTC variable and oral test score

	Self-confidence	DTC	Anxiety	Test Score
Self-confidence	1			
Desire to communicate	.626**	1		
Anxiety	.529**	.459**	1	
test score	.505**	.411**	-.622**	1

***. Correlation at the 0.01 level is significant (2-tailed).*

A Positive Correlation between Self-confidence and Oral Proficiency

Speaking is the only one of the four basic language skills—speaking, listening, writing, and reading—that is essential for daily living and communication (Shin et al., 2016). Many psychological, physiological, systematic, and attitude-related impediments hinder practical speaking. Psychological and attitudinal barriers like lack of self-confidence make it hard for second-language learners to speak their home language. Self-confidence affects a learner's readiness to speak a foreign language. Speaking requires self-confidence, which is being confident and neither hesitant nor combative in social circumstances. As said, self-confidence requires accepting one's talents, appreciating oneself, and being aware of one's sentiments. Confidence can be internal or external. Inner confidence comes from self-love, self-knowledge, defined goals, and a positive mindset. "Inner confidence" is a person's ideas and feelings of self-satisfaction. Outward confidence requires communication and emotional control. Self-confidence

inspires pride. Self-confidence makes verbal communication simpler. Previous research has shown that self-confidence affects speaking skills (Gurler, 2015). This study likewise found a favorable link between both factors. The association between self-confidence and oral proficiency supports earlier studies.L2 self-confidence is based on two essential elements: a lack of fear and a self-perceived level of proficiency in L2 skills. People who experience low levels of anxiety have little trouble starting a conversation. These individuals believe themselves to be skilled communicators and encounter fewer obstacles due to their high level of communication motivation. Unlike Cle'ment's model, which focuses on how perceived competence and anxiety affect WTC jointly rather than independently, on the other hand, a second approach proposed by MacIntyre focuses on how perceived competence and anxiety affect WTC separately (Clément & Kruidenier, 1985). Using these hypotheses, L2 self-confidence may cause L2 WTC. Self-confidence comes from perceived communication abilities and a lower fear level, which makes someone inclined to talk. People engaged in global concerns and eager to pursue international occupations or hobbies seem to speak English more often. Globally focused people are more motivated to learn L2. Motivation increases with self-confidence, and WTC in the L2 follows. People who can picture using English are more inclined to start talking and learning.

Many UK research studies found that instructors' lack of opportunity for youngsters to talk at length and role-play impeded oral language development. The researcher observed that the speaking and listening frameworks were poorly organized (Gurler et al., 2015). Additionally, a lot of studies link success to self-confidence. In one interview, a research participant said that poor self-confidence leads to unpleasant sentiments, which are bad for performance. Research also shows how poor self-confidence affects performance. Another study's excerpt shows how beneficial self-confidence is: High self-confidence helps you manage overwhelming thoughts and feelings if you know you can control them. Thus, confident persons do better in oral communication (Mellalieu et al., 2004).

The result from the correlation analysis shows a positive correlation between test scores and self-confidence. The association between the variables, i.e., self-confidence (as measured by the self-confidence scale) and test score, was examined using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (as measured by the speaking test scale). The preliminary study supported the conclusion that the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were not violated. A high level of self-confidence was linked to a lower level of anxiety [r =0.505, N=50, p=.300], and the two variables exhibited a significant correlation with one another.

Negative Correlation between Anxiety and Oral Proficiency

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the variables, i.e., anxiety (as measured by the anxiety scale) and test score (as measured by the speaking test scale). The two variables had a significant correlation with one another [r =-0.622, N=50, p<.580]. A high level of self-confidence was associated with a lower level of anxiety.

Anxiety has a close relation with oral communication, but both are negatively correlated with each other. Confidence has a positive correlation with oral proficiency, and anxiety has a negative relationship with it. The result of the study shows a negative but strong correlation of -.622. Insights from the first language (LI) communication field were first noticed in the second language (L2) field in the early 1990s. Shyness is an innate trait that decreases a person's willingness to speak in a variety of situations. This is the point that unequivocally establishes that WTC is an individual, stable trait. WTC was broadly defined as the probability of initiating communication when the opportunity presents itself. They discovered that in addition to the learners' perception of their communicative competence, non-linguistic outcomes such as motivation and anxiety appear to be involved in WTC (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). WTC is not just anxiety regarding communication but rather a synthesis of many factors that constitute a person's overall orientation toward speaking. Anxiety is the subjective experience of tension, fear, nervousness, and worry linked with an activation of the autonomic nervous system. Three aspects of language anxiety have been recognized in the context of learning a foreign or second language (Cheng et al., 1999). The first is related to the circumstance in which a person feels uneasy and stressed out while conversing with others or in front of others. He stresses that communication anxiety may be brought on by a sort of mismatch between students' mature thoughts and readiness to participate in a conversation, as well as a lack of linguistic

competence that would make them unable to express their thoughts appropriately. Students who are terrified of being negatively judged by others worry that they will seem bad, be seen as incompetent, or even illiterate. This sentiment could be made worse by students' tendency to see their mistakes with extreme criticality (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). The inability to separate oneself from one's own mistakes and the pursuit of perfection can increase anxiety and, in some situations, result in skipping courses and using avoidance techniques (Takahashi & Takahashi, 2015).

So, anxiety is a great hindrance in the process of language learning. Language anxiety, which affects the decision to communicate or not in various contexts, is another important predictor of L2 WTC levels. The study also confirmed that a nervous student skips language lessons to retreat from speaking activities, avoid speaking altogether, or, if forced to talk, speak slowly and incoherently. A student who is more inclined to converse in a different tongue, on the other hand, surely feels safe and is willing to take chances when starting a conversation, even if they may not know the language very well. The worst impacts of language anxiety typically involve the impairment of language processing, which results in actions that jeopardize effective in-class communication. Because of this, the need to communicate in a second language within a native cultural setting causes worry, which in turn lowers WTC levels, which is not good for language learners.

Moderate Correlation between a Desire to Communicate and Oral Proficiency

The desire to initiate communication deals with a person's desire to speak with a particular interlocutor. It results from a combination of communication control and familiarity in one-to-one or group conversations. Although WTC has been referred to as a personal disposition, it can only be improved and grown by social engagement. Collaboration may lead to high WTC, but an individual's level of desire to initiate discussion has a significant impact on the task's outcome, especially on communication. According to studies, students prefer speaking with friends to strangers or acquaintances, and they value speaking with people who are cooperative and actively participate in conversations. (Cao, 2014) Through the study, the researcher was able to confirm that students reported stronger WTC with friends than with new peers. This means that a person will be less ready to communicate with those whom they are away from their intended audience. Studies show that students value interacting with people who are cooperative, actively participate in oral dialogues, and prefer conversing with friends over strangers or acquaintances. Students reported stronger WTC with friends than with new peers (Cao, 2013).

This implies that the farther one gets from their intended audience, the less prepared one will be to communicate. In the present student, the association between the variables, i.e., desire to communicate (as measured by the desire to communicate scale) and test score, was examined using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (as measured by the speaking test scale). The preliminary study supported the conclusion that the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were not violated. Desire to communicate and oral proficiency, the two variables' substantial connection is moderately significant [r =-0.411, N=50, p.419]. The negative sign shows the negative direction of the correlation.

Interlocutors who are well-known and helpful lessen learners' speaking anxiety. By making other students feel as though their contributions are essential to maintaining communication. Participatory interlocutors improve the quality of the conversations by making others feel accountable for conveying information. The highest WTC levels were reached if both group members were equally engaged and motivated to accomplish a job. All of the participants working in a specific organizational mode seemed to benefit from the interlocutor's involvement and overall good attitude. The results of the study show that learners' WTC is influenced by the interlocutor's communication style and relationship with the students, as well as by how the students themselves view the interlocutor's cooperation and participation (Pawlak et al., 2016).

Self-confidence, Anxiety and Desire to Communicate

How do self-confidence, anxiety and desire to communicate correlate with each other?

To find the strength and direction of the correlation among the variables, the Pearson correlation was used to carry out this correlational investigation. The findings of the investigation are discussed below.

Table 7

Pearson Product Moment Correlation between WTC's Variables

	Self-confidence	Desire to communicate	Anxiety
Self confidence	1		
Desire to communicate	.628**	1	
Anxiety	-.525**	.459**	1

***. At the 0.01 level, the correlation is significant (2-tailed).*

Relationship between Self- confidence and Desire to Communicate

To investigate the correlation between the variables indicating self-confidence (as measured by the self-confidence scale) and desire to communicate (as measured by the desire to communicate scale), the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used. The preliminary analysis supported the absence of any violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. High levels of self-confidence are linked to high levels of desire to communicate, as evidenced by a significant correlation between the two variables [r =0.628, N=174, p=.000].

The measured coefficient between the measures of self-confidence and desire to communicate was 0.628, which shows a strong correlation. It refers to the idea that an increase in the desire to communicate will lead to more confidence to use a second language. Self-confidence is the result of both perceived L2 communication competence and a lack of language learning apprehension or usage anxiety. Self-assurance can motivate and improve one's desire to communicate and ability to accomplish goals through communication. It has been discovered that perceptions of self-confidence influence the acquisition of second languages (Clément et al., 2003). In contrast to self-concept, which is one's idea of oneself, self-esteem is essentially self-confidence. Fear, worry, trepidation, or uneasiness about a situation are all examples of anxiety. On these three variables, however, academic success, especially second language learning, has a significant bearing. The main goal of this study was to look into how adolescents' language learning and their sense of self-worth, self-concept, and anxiety are related. The findings of the correlation also confirmed a significant relationship. A common quality of successful language learners is that they have more desire to communicate and are effective communicators.

Relationship between Self- confidence and Anxiety

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the variables, i.e., self-confidence (as measured by the self-confidence scale) and anxiety (as measured by the anxiety scale). The results of the preliminary analysis supported the conclusion that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The two variables had a significant correlation with one another [r =-0.525, N=174, p<.000]. A high level of self-confidence is associated with a lower level of anxiety.

Anxiety has a significant negative correlation with self-confidence. The result of the study shows a negative but strong correlation of -.525. Insights from the first language (LI) communication field were first noticed in the second language (L2) field in the early 1990s. Shyness is an innate trait that decreases a person's willingness to speak in a variety of situations. This is the point that unequivocally establishes that WTC is an individual, stable trait. WTC was broadly defined by McCroskey and Baer (1985) as the probability of initiating communication when the opportunity presents itself. They discovered that in addition to the leamers' perception of their communicative competence, non-linguistic outcomes such as motivation and anxiety appear to be involved in WTC. WTC is not just anxiety regarding communication but rather a synthesis of many factors that constitute a person's overall orientation toward speaking. Anxiety is the subjective experience of tension, fear, nervousness, and worry linked with an activation of the autonomic nervous system. Three aspects of language anxiety have been recognized in the context of learning a foreign or second language.

Relationship between the Desire to Communicate and Anxiety

The relationship between the variables representing the desire to communicate (as measured by the desire to communicate scale) and anxiety (as measured by the anxiety scale) was examined using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The preliminary analysis supported the conclusion that the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were not violated. The level of desire to communicate is typically correlated with the level of anxiety [r =.459, N=174, p.000], and the two variables had a high medium correlation with one another.

Academic achievement is significantly influenced by self-concept, self-esteem, and anxiety; however, as self-concept and self-esteem rise, so does academic achievement, while a decline in anxiety also correlates with higher language success. According to research, Anxiety and self-concept have an inverted relationship, with high anxiety being related to low self-concept and high self-concept being related to a positive attitude toward learning and getting diverse life experiences The findings of the previous study showed that self-concept and self-esteem play a significant role in mental health; as a result, a decline in these factors will likely be accompanied by symptoms and characteristics of anxiety, depression, loneliness, shyness that greatly hinder the process of language learning.

Lastly, the T-test was used for the third time to compare anxiety scores for both genders. The anxiety scores for men and women were compared using an independent sample t-test. The scores for males (M=18.261, SD=6.0009) and for females (M=18.839, SD=7.034; t(173) =.560, p=.560) do not differ significantly. The magnitude of the mean difference variations was non-significant (eta squared =.999). Different studies looked at age and gender differences in WTC, and the results showed that females were more communicative than males, but no significant differences in WTC between males and females were found in the high school or university groups. There were no appreciable gender differences in communication apprehension or self-perceived competence among junior high and high school students. It's quite natural to feel anxious when learners are asked to perform a certain task in L2 using their knowledge of English. There is no gender differentiation as per the result findings.

Gender Difference

Are there any gender-based differences in WTC and learners' oral proficiency in English?

An independent sample T-test was used to statistically find the answer to this question of whether males or females differ significantly in terms of the variables of interest, i.e., self-confidence, anxiety, and desire to communicate. Results obtained from the independent T-test are given below. In terms of gender, there was no statistically significant difference among all participants at the level of ($p < .05$). In the first step, self-confidence scores for males and females were compared using an independent sample t-test. There was no statistical difference between the scores for males (M=14.9540, SD=4.5441) and females (M=15.6667, SD=4.43209; t(172) =-1.047, p=0.296). The difference in the mean was very slight (eta squared = 0.006) in magnitude. Therefore, gender can be seen to account for only 6% of the variance. Table 4. 6 presents the statistical results related to the analysis of self-confidence of students with their gender. The findings of the study reveal that both genders demonstrated a high level of confidence. In addition to this, there is not a statistically significant difference between genders in terms of their self-confidence. Secondly, an independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the desire to communicate scores for males and females. There was no significant difference in the score for males (M=21.181, SD= 7.525) and females [M=21.1724, SD=7.233; t(173) =.008, p=0.993]. The magnitude of the differences in the mean was extremely small (eta squared=.0000003). These findings confirmed that there is no statistically significant difference between the genders of students' levels of desire to communicate.

The desire to communicate using L2 was higher in both male and female students. Students today are highly motivated to have a more qualified status in society and the workplace, and speaking a foreign language is recognized as an appreciated outstanding product knowledge for this status. Both male and female students may become more motivated to learn English, which is why the desire to initiate communication in L2 is equally found both in males and females.

Table 8

Independent sample T-test scores

	Gender	N	M	SD	df	T	Effect size
Self-confidence	Male	87	14.954	4.544	172	-1.047	.006
	Female	87	15.666	4.432			
Desire to Communicate	Male	88	21.181	7.525	173	.008	.0000003
	Female	87	21.172	7.233			
Anxiety	Male	88	18.261	6.0009	173	-585	.999
	Female	87	18.839	7.0345			

The difference is significant at a .05 level.

Table 6 demonstrates that there is no meaningful gender difference in the WTC factors. The outcome indicates that the difference is noteworthy at the level of $p < .05$.

Conclusion

This research delves into the impact of willingness to communicate (WTC) on learners' proficiency in spoken English, particularly focusing on the correlation between WTC and oral language competency in the context of second language (L2) learning. The study posits that a heightened degree of WTC is instrumental in enhancing oral language proficiency. Employing a quantitative approach, the research scrutinizes variations in WTC levels among L2 learners with differing competencies, exploring the interplay between WTC and factors such as self-confidence, the desire to communicate, anxiety, and gender differences. Moreover, it examines how these variables collectively influence language proficiency and WTC. WTC emerges as a pivotal individual difference that significantly contributes to the success of second language learning. The findings underscore key determinants of learners' inclination towards using an L2, highlighting self-confidence, the desire to communicate, and anxiety in L2 usage as influential factors. Drawing on perspective, the study suggests that teachers need to be cognizant of the intricate internal and social interpersonal dynamics inherent in language learning. Understanding these facets can offer deeper insights into the complexities of the language learning process and aid in developing more effective instructional strategies.

Findings

The study utilized three different scales to measure self-confidence, desire to communicate, and anxiety in L2 among the participants. The self-confidence scale comprised six items, with results showing above-average scores. For instance, the statement 'When I speak English, my friends will laugh at me' had a mean score of 2.35, indicating significant disagreement among participants. Similarly, the statement about remembering and singing English song lyrics scored similarly, reflecting difficulties in using this technique for L2 learning.

Seven items in the questionnaire assessed the desire to communicate. Notable findings included positive responses to statements about the necessity of English proficiency for future jobs and the participants' identification with English speaking ability. The study also noted a significant positive outlook among participants regarding their communicative abilities in the workplace.

Anxiety in using L2 was measured through eleven items. Statements like feeling anxious when asked questions in English or starting conversations in English on the phone showed lower agreement, suggesting participants' relative ease with grammatical mistakes and communicating in L2 in various scenarios.

A significant correlation was found between WTC and oral test scores. The study revealed a positive relationship between self-confidence and oral proficiency and a negative correlation between anxiety and oral proficiency, indicating that higher self-confidence is associated with lower anxiety and better oral performance. The correlation analysis also showed a moderate significance between the desire to communicate and oral test scores.

Regarding self-confidence, anxiety, and the desire to communicate, the study found a positive correlation between self-confidence and the desire to communicate and a strong negative correlation between anxiety and self-confidence. These findings align with previous research indicating that self-concept and self-esteem are closely linked to anxiety, depression, and language learning hindrances.

The study also explored gender differences in WTC and oral proficiency in English. An independent sample T-test showed no statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of self-confidence, anxiety, and willingness to communicate. This finding aligns with other studies showing minimal gender differences in communication apprehension or self-perceived competence.

The study highlights the complex interplay of self-confidence, anxiety, and desire to communicate in influencing WTC and oral proficiency in English. These findings suggest potential avenues for experimental studies to enhance speaking ability, desire to initiate communication and self-confidence. Future studies could consider specific classroom activities or tasks to foster a fair level of WTC, informed by the insights gleaned from this research.

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