

Introduction



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Since its introduction to the second language (L2) learning and teaching by MacIntyre and Charos (1996), willingness to communicate (WTC) research has become of the highly studied topics within the field of second language acquisition (SLA) and applied linguistics. Many researchers have tried to examine different theoretical and empirical underpinnings of the WTC model by MacIntyre et al. (1998). Scholars tried to examine L2 WTC from different theoretical perspectives and employed different research methodologies to unravel the factors that facilitate or hinder learners' intentions to communicate using L2 (see Zarrinabadi & Tanbakooei, 2016 for a review). There are, however, several important questions about L2 WTC that have remained unanswered. This volume includes a diverse range of novel theoretical and methodological viewpoints applied to the study of WTC in L2. In the rest of this, we briefly describe the studies included in this edited volume.

In Chapter “[Second Language Willingness to Communicate as a Complex Dynamic System](#)”, Nematizadeh and Wood view WTC as a complex dynamic system through examining the definitions of WTC proposed in the literature and conceptualizing the basic properties of complex dynamic systems. Dynamically-informed investigations of WTC are then examined for their methodologies and results, and the properties characterizing complex dynamic systems and WTC are identified and discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future directions in WTC research.

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In Chapter “[Case Studies of Iranian Migrants’ WTC Within an Ecosystems Framework: The Influence of Past and Present Language Learning Experiences](#)”, Denise Cameron reports on a qualitative and longitudinal investigation into the willingness to communicate (WTC) of Iranian migrants in their past Iranian English classrooms, in their present New Zealand pre-university classrooms, and in the community outside. By means of questionnaires, observations, stimulated recall, and multiple interviews with these learners and their classroom teachers, the question is addressed as to whether their past learning experiences affected their present WTC, and which elements of classroom and community context facilitate or inhibit their readiness to speak. In the process of this investigation, the relevance of dynamic systems theory and the usefulness of an ecological framework is explored in order to describe the nature of their WTC, ranging from the micro context of the classroom to the macro context of the wider society of Iran and New Zealand. Factors which affect their past English language learning experiences in Iran were family influence, type of school, and teacher expertise, whereas now in New Zealand their relationships with their classmates, opportunities to speak in and out of class, and the effect of different types of curriculum are revealed.

Gertrud Tarp, in Chapter “[Building Dialogue Between Cultures: Expats’ Way of Coping in A Foreign Country and Their Willingness to Communicate in A Foreign Language](#)”, focuses on student mobility and English as a foreign language and argues that L2 WTC in languages other than English is an understudied issue. This chapter is based upon a study of expatriates’ (expats’) WTC in German as a foreign language in naturalistic settings. This study is an attempt to listen to expatriate voices and to look for trends in how they experience their sojourn abroad, intercultural communication and foreign language learning. The study was carried out in Germany and the following groups were addressed: expatriates working and/or studying in Germany, all members of the network “Expats in Germany”. The methodology applied comprises a quantitative and a qualitative approach. The findings show that using English as a lingua franca influences expatriates’ German language communication. In addition, the expatriate situation in terms of cultural immersion strongly enhances their willingness to communicate in German dependent on expatriate age, education, gender, language skills, occupation and country of origin. The study argues for the importance of paying attention to individual and societal factors in foreign language learning and communication.

Baran-Lucarz, in Chapter “[The Mediating Effect of Culture on the Relationship Between FL Self-Assessment and L2 Willingness to Communicate: The Polish and Italian EFL context](#)”, reports a mixed-method study conducted among Italian and Polish learners of EFL, which aimed to verify the assumption that the strength of relationship between self-assessment of FL skills and L2 WTC is determined by the cultural background of the students. Data gathered with the use of three questionnaires—a FL Self-Assessment Measure, Measure of WTC in the FL Classroom and Measure of WTC outside the FL Classroom show that the Italian participants not only assessed their level of English subskills significantly higher than the Polish students, but also that they were more willing to communicate in both settings. Moreover, the results suggest that the Polish participants were more concerned about

their level of English when speaking in the TL than the Italian learners. While in the case of the Polish respondents, moderate to strong relationships between self-assessment of English skills and WTC both in the classroom and naturalistic setting are reported, in the case of the Italian participants, the correlations are either weak or non-significant. Most of the differences between the paired correlations computed for particular subskills and L2 WTC for the Polish and Italian participants are statistically significant. The differences are further supported by qualitative data.

Negah Allahyar, in Chapter “[What Does Students’ Willingness to Communicate or Reticence Signify to Teachers?](#)”, argues that there is a growing concern about the potential biases in teacher perceptions of WTC and reticent students’ characteristics and abilities. This chapter draws upon the attribution theory to shed light on the way teachers make sense of learners’ WTC and reticence and to explain the causes of WTC and reticence through the lens of teachers. To explore the perceptions of English teachers, six Iranian teachers’ perspectives are examined. The semi-structured interviews are the instruments for data collection over six months. The thematic analysis shows that teacher participants hold a negative view of the reticent students. They attribute reticence to more student internal causes within the student’s control and willingness to communicate to more external, teacher controllable causes. The chapter ends with implications for teacher education in the Iranian as well as similar English language contexts.

In Chapter “[Positive Predictive Value of Extraversion in Diagnosing L2 WTC](#)”, Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel argues that WTC in a foreign/second language (L2 WTC) is now considered an influential variable underlying the second and foreign language learning processes. It is also perceived in terms of a fundamental goal of second language education, because its higher levels of willingness result in a greater desire to practise oral communication, bringing about successful language learning. According to the pyramid model of L2 WTC, it is rooted in personality which produces both distal and enduring influences on a student’s verbal behaviour. It can thus be expected that extraversion, a personality dimension identified with energy and enthusiasm, characterised by sensitivity to reward and sociability, is tightly connected with WTC. Indeed, recent empirical research tends to demonstrate that personality (e.g., extraversion) is directly related to L2 WTC, self-perceived proficiency and language anxiety (immediate antecedents of WTC). However, studies have been undertaken in which no direct effect of personality (extraversion) on L2 WTC can be confirmed. The research carried out for the purpose of this chapter demonstrates a modest predictive value of extraversion for L2 WTC levels, caused by a direct impact of this personality trait on the interpersonal nature of a learner’s readiness to communicate in a foreign language. Its indirect effect, exercised by influencing the immediate WTC antecedents (self-perceived levels of foreign language skills and language anxiety), is also revealed.

In Chapter “[On the Effect of Using A Flipped Classroom Methodology on Iranian EFL Learners’ Willingness to Communicate](#)”, Zarrinabadi, Khodarahmi, and Shahbazi report on a study that investigates the effect of using a flipped classroom strategy for facilitating WTC among Iranian EFL students. Zarrinabadi et al.’s quantitative

and qualitative data analysis show that using a flipped classroom strategy can significantly influence learners' WTC. Flipped classroom influences WTC by motivating learners, making language learning enjoyable, and decreases anxiety. They conclude the chapter with some suggestions for further research.

In Chapter “[Examining the Dynamic Relationships Between Willingness to Communicate, Anxiety and Enjoyment Using the Experience Sampling Method](#)”, Khajavi, MacIntyre, Taherian, and Ross examine the dynamic relationship between WTC, foreign language anxiety, and foreign language enjoyment using experience sampling method. Results of the study show significant amount of variability in all three variables over time, both within weekly sessions and from one week to another. Moreover, moving correlations among the three variables show the correlations between WTC and enjoyment are remarkably consistent, strong, and positive, while moving correlations between WTC and anxiety, and anxiety and enjoyment are inconsistent and majority of them are negative.

In Chapter “[The Opportunity to Communicate: A Social Network Approach to L2 WTC and Classroom-Based Research](#)”, Gallagher and Zarrinabadi introduce a social network approach to the study of L2 WTC. They first describe the key tenets of social network theory. Then they argue that different aspects of the theory can be applied to explain L2 WTC. In so doing, they focus on the notion of opportunity in WTC and try to analyze it from a social network approach. Gallagher and Zarrinabadi finally argue that theoretical integration of a network approach into L2 research would allow researchers to further develop, refine, and re-conceptualize longstanding concepts related to groups, classrooms, social categories, and individual differences.

In Chapter “[Teachers' Immediacy, Self-Disclosure, and Technology Policy as Predictors of Willingness to Communicate: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis](#)”, Amirian, Rezazadeh, and Rahimi-Dashti investigate the structural relations between teacher immediacy, teacher self-disclosure, teacher technology policy, and intermediate EFL students' WTC. The results of structural equation modeling show that teacher immediacy, self-disclosure, and technology policy positively predict students' WTC. The findings highlight that passing on information about yourself in the classroom as a teacher and reducing the distance between the teacher and the students can play an important role in students' WTC in the classroom. In addition, the use of technology in classroom contexts can increase positive attitudes toward learning and eventually develop students' participation and willingness to talk. The authors suggest that future experimental and qualitative studies can determine the ways in which these teacher variables can affect students WTC.

The chapter by Sen and Oz (Chapter “[Vocabulary Size as a Predictor of Willingness to Communicate inside the Classroom](#)”) focuses on the relationship between learners' vocabulary size and willingness to communicate in a second language (L2 WTC) inside the classroom in English as a foreign language (EFL) setting. The study applies a quantitative research paradigm to shed light on the relationship between vocabulary size of the learners and their willingness to communicate inside the classroom. It presents the reviewed literature about vocabulary and vocabulary size with a focus on individual differences along with L2 WTC. Personal, psychological and educational factors influencing WTC and its predictors are touched on to

provide insight into the topic. The method and findings of the study are presented, and the findings demonstrate that vocabulary level of the participants significantly predicted their WTC inside the classroom. The chapter then discusses the findings of the study in the light of previous research. It provides implications for language teachers, pre-service language teachers, curriculum designers and teacher trainers to create awareness on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and willingness to communicate. It also calls for further research for a better understanding of the relationship between learners' vocabulary knowledge and L2 WTC.

In the final chapter, Nourollah Zarrinabadi outlines five ways in which research on L2 WTC can be continued. Zarrinabadi build on recent developments in psychology and SLA to recommend different suggestions for future research.

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