

An Investigation into Non-English Majored Students' Willingness to Communicate in English

Tham Van Nguyen^{1*}, Truc Thi Nguyen², Tran Huynh Nguyen³, Khoa Trong Tran⁴, Quan Minh Trinh⁵

¹ English Department, FPT University

^{2, 3, 4, 5} FPT University

*thamnv4@fe.edu.vn

ABSTRACT

Willingness to communicate (WTC) has recently been considered an important part of the foreign language learning process and communication plays an important role in developing EFL learners' communicative competence. In many parts of the world, people as well as university students can use English for most of their daily communication. Recent times have seen a shift in empirical investigations of language learners' communicative readiness whilst research related to WTC has been conducted in a variety of contexts and populations. Although WTC is not a new term, it is worth researching new aspects of this field in which this study is an attempt to explore non-English majored students' WTC and its influential factors. Following a mixed research method, the current study gained the quantitative data through questionnaires administered to 300 non-English majored students at FPT University while its qualitative data were achieved from semi-structured interviews with 30 randomly-chosen participants completing the questionnaires. The results indicate that the non-English majored students' WTC is shown at different extents. Students are only willing to communicate at a basic level and with familiar topics. Interestingly, despite studying in a fully English environment, students' self-confidence and motivation are still the two most influential factors to their WTC. In addition, the findings also reveal that other surveyed factors have a direct influence on the students' WTC. From the findings, suggestions and pedagogical implications were made for students, teachers and universities to help them have better insights into students' WTC.

Keywords

Willingness to communicate (WTC), EFL Learners, Motivation, Self-confidence, Personality traits, Language anxiety, Attitude

Introduction

Currently, English is the most popular language in the world. In Vietnam, students have been exposed to English since elementary school. Still, not all students are willing to communicate in English in situations that frequently occur inside and outside the classroom. Students get exposed to English as a foreign language with different attitudes and motivations, so the extent of students' willingness to communicate is also different.

In FPT university, English is considered a compulsory subject and the language of instruction. As students of other schools, many students tend to be the ones who speak less in English classes and become passive during the speaking lessons. Therefore, being ready to communicate in English is a substantial concern for foreign language education. At FPT

University, students will be sorted into certain levels based on the placement test results. That is the difference between the English program of FPT University and that of other universities in the region.

Willingness to communicate in English is considered an important part of education as well as a personality trait that has a significant influence on human communication behavior, McCroskey (1990). There are many benefits when students are willing to communicate in English and become more active, open-minded, and friendly in their communication. However, having some communication-related issues, some of them are still unwilling to communicate in English even though they have adequate knowledge of grammar and lexical sources. This obstacle can cause apprehension about students' ability to communicate and affect their personal development in the process of authentic English

learning. Several attempts have been made to investigate what factors influence a student's WTC. Besides, several studies have been done to examine introversion, self-esteem, communicative competence, communication apprehension, and cultural diversity. These predisposing factors are considered to govern the communicator's cognitive decision-making.

WTC has been increasingly a term of interest to many researchers in recent years. Many researchers have focused on studying the factors affecting WTC. The results of previous research have shown that various factors influence a student's WTC. However, each of the researchers has also conducted their study on some certain aspects of learners' WTC with various participant populations in different contexts. In the context of English learning and teaching in universities in Can Tho city, this research aimed to find out the extent of WTC of non-English majored students. It was also conducted to determine the factors affecting the willingness to communicate in English among non-English majored students.

Literature Review

Willingness to communicate

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is important in explaining first and second language communication. Furthermore, McCroskey's (1990) research confirms that WTC is a personality-based predisposition that significantly influences human communication behavior. In MacIntyre (1998), WTC is defined as the learner's willingness to participate in discussions at a particular time with a specific person or L2 user. This study contributes to understanding the concept that willingness to communicate is described as an essential communication tendency and a speaker's level of WTC that can vary depending on the speaker, the topic, and the context of the conversation.

In L2 context, MacIntyre (1998) depicts WTC as a "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2", influenced by personality. This demonstrates that a learner's WTC in L2 communication is

correlated with his or her personality. Similarly, Atay and Kurt (2009) combined qualitative and quantitative research to study the factors affecting the speaking motivation of Turkish EFL learners. They discovered a high positive association between perceived competence and WTC, similar to prior studies. The study's qualitative findings proved that WTC in such a context is affected by situational factors. Meanwhile, in order to gain better insights into WTC, Matsuoka (2006) investigated the applicability of modified models in the context of Japanese EFL. The researcher examined how personality traits like integration, communication apprehension, perceived competence, introversion, motivation, attitudes, and other-directedness are linked to learners' foreign language willingness and English proficiency. It is apparent from the results that these five independent variables contribute a great deal to the prediction of students' WTC.

Factors affecting non-English majored students' willingness to communicate

Motivation

From the epistemological point of view, motivation is the degree to which a person strives to achieve a particular goal (Keller, 1983) whilst Jung's study (2011) shows that motivation is considered a variable that directly affects WTC. In the same vein, the research results of Gardner (1985) indicate that integration and instrumentation are two types of motivation. In this research, integrative motivation refers to learners' desire to integrate into the communication process. Meanwhile, the second type of motivation is instrumental motivation, which refers to educational and life interests. Previous studies provide evidence that motivation is a factor that directly affects students's WTC in different English learning and teaching contexts. However, it is argued that motivation is varied among a variety of English learners and even in the same group. More importantly, learners' motivation is formed and developed differently as they are exposed to English learning contexts that are changeable. In the context of our study, although students have quite similar English learning characteristics, styles and general English

programs, their motivation towards English learning and willingness to communicate in the target language manifests its difference. Therefore, to perceive whether or not this tendency occurs in our context, we examined how non-English majored students' motivation correlates with their learning process and willingness to communicate in English.

Self-confidence

In 2004, Yashima published a paper in which the researcher described self-confidence as one of the common factors affecting students' willingness to communicate in English. Self-confidence is a combination of perceived communication ability and a lower level of anxiety, which is crucial for a person to speak. Similarly, Jung (2011) found out another variable that directly influences WTC in English: English communication confidence. As a result, communication, confidence, and motivation directly impacted WTC. Additionally, Pyun, Kim, Cho, and Lee (2014) discovered that students' L2 self-confidence was substantially connected with their L2 oral communicative proficiency. It is more likely that self-confidence greatly affect students' WTC in L2 context that as students are highly self-confident in their English, they are more willing to use it to communicate with others. It is; however, tougher for EFL students to be ready for their communication as their self-confidence is not as high as their peers'. In spite of ample evidence from former studies on the relationship between self-confidence and WTC in certain contexts, literature and related studies on the effect of self-confidence on non-English majored students' WTC has been scarcely done in EFL context in the Mekong Delta, especially in FPT University. We aimed to explore this factor in our current study to fulfill this gap.

Personality traits

From previous studies, personality traits are regarded as other vital attributes to the concept of WTC. According to Rieko Matsuoka, David Richard Evans (2005), students' WTC was also profoundly affected by personality traits. Once communicating with others, students' personality

will determine their willingness to communicate through certain aspects including how they feel on that day, what they share about, the people they will communicate with, how they think about themselves and how much time they have. In others, McCroskey & Richmond (1990) studied the link between personality and WTC asserted that introverted learners are introspective, less outgoing, and feel that they have no need to communicate with others. In contrast, extroverted individuals are people-oriented and value communication. It is clear that learners' being either introverted or extroverted somewhat affects their way of communication and their willingness to use the target language to exchange information with other people.

Differently, the result of the study conducted by MacIntyre (1994) aimed to investigate how students' WTC correlates with their communication in general. Their communication anxiety in particular, interestingly shows that introversion influences WTC by communication anxiety and perceived ability, resulting in students' unwillingness to communicate. Moreover, MacIntyre, Babin & Clement (1999) examined the relation between WTC and personality traits, and the result showed that personality traits influence WTC. (cited in Ahmed, 2014). Associated with students' language learning, their communication is greatly affected by their personality traits. L2 learning and communication are affected by personality traits. Research in 1996 by McIntyre & Charos showed that language students with a higher level of open-mindedness might perceive themselves as more fluent L2 learners, perceived communicative competence, and more proficient in L2 communication, which is confirmed in the study of Oz (2014). It can be concluded that students' personality traits affect their willingness to communicate. Those who have extroverted personalities are more willing to communicate than introverted ones. In the current study, non-English majored students' personality is examined to prove that whether or not it is a factor affecting their WTC in the EFL context.

Language anxiety

Numerous researchers have provided insights into how language anxiety and WTC are correlated regarding the factors affecting students' WTC. Language anxiety can be described as fear and the feeling of worry related to second or foreign language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991b, cited by MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C., 1994).

In the same way, Horwitz et al. (1986) showed that one of the most common feelings of English learners, including non-English-majored students, is language anxiety. This is a feeling of nervousness, pressure, and hesitation when using English. This feeling makes students not confident about doing it, even making them make some mistakes in grammar, spelling, and pronunciation of some English words, which renders them unwilling to communicate (Yana Shanti Manipuspika, 2018).

Fear or apprehension that arises when a student is expected to perform in a second or foreign language is referred to as language anxiety (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Meanwhile, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of unfavorable evaluation were the three subscales of anxiety about speaking a foreign language (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). From such findings, it can be seen that students' willingness to use English to speak with others depends on how they fear different things such as taking a test or being assessed by others. In other words, language anxiety is believed to be a result of various sources of fear and has negatively impacted language learning and performance might become a permanent response if an individual frequently identifies these sensations with language tasks, according to Oxford's study (1999). However, Oxford (1999) did not specify how long it would take for a fixed response. While previous studies indicated that language anxiety is a factor affecting students' WTC, the current study also aimed to figure out whether or not it greatly influences students' WTC in the investigated context.

Attitude

While other researchers studied confidence and motivation as the factors related to WTC, Kim (2004) conducted a study on one more WTC-related factor, which is depicted as attitude. Consequently, it is indicated that students' attitudes directly influence their WTC through confidence in English communication.

Another study investigating the WTC done by Mr. Do'nyei in 1990. This study focuses on students who cannot interact with native English speakers daily. Learners can hardly feel the reactions or attitudes of native speakers, so students' attitudes towards Americans and other cultures using English affect students' WTC.

According to MacIntyre (1998) and his partner about the notion of WTC in L2, the intergroup attitude was among the factors that affect WTC in L2. Second language orientations of the types described by Clement, Do'nyei, Noels (1994), and Clement & Kruidenier (1983) are mentioned as examples of intergroup motivation. In contrast, integration and afraid of assimilation appear as intergroup attitudes. Furthermore, Gudykunst (1991) introduced several concepts to assess the communication approach of different groups of people. The most striking result of this study was the avoidance of communication. It is indicated that when learners meet foreigners, their communication is negatively influenced, making them avoid taking the chance to communicate with the foreigners.

In 2002, a Japanese researcher named Yashima was researching WTC. English learners are often divided into two types. The first type is learners who are only interested in immediate goals such as tests, grades, and academic achievement. The second type refers to those who are interested in whether they can communicate. Therefore, students will have different learning attitudes depending on various learning purposes. It has been proven to affect students' WTC in English.

In 1985, Gardner conducted a study aiming to provide further understanding of the

relationship between learners' attitudes and their WTC. Consequently, two fundamental attitudes, namely integrative and attitude towards learning circumstances, influence learners' learning motivation in L2. Some studies that support Gardner's research also suggest that English learners' attitudes are divided into these two basic categories (Gardner, 1980, 1985, 1988; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

Methodology

Research questions

(1) To what extent are non-English-majored students willing to communicate in English?

(2) What factors may affect non-English-majored students' willingness to communicate in English?

Participants

There are 300 K16 students of FPT Can Tho University, who are non-English majored students participating in this research by completing the questionnaires and there are 30 out of 300 participating in the interviews.

The researchers employed two instruments to gain data for the current study, including questionnaire and semi-structured interview.

The items in Part I were adapted from the research questionnaires by McCroskey (1985) and Xie (2011) to be suitable for the context of the current study.

This part followed a 5 Likert scale design labeled as 1- Almost never willing; 2 - Sometimes willing; 3 - Willing half of the time; 4 - Often willing; 5 - Almost always willing. The questionnaire will consist of five extents and participants will choose one of them.

The other parts of the questionnaire on factors affecting students' willingness to communicate are designed on a 5-Likert scale labeled as 1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree and 5 - Strongly agree. The items in part II, which is about motivation, were adapted from Hernandez (2006), Gerdner and Lambert (1959), whose concept of motivation is used in this study. Part III asked participants to answer 7 items

As can be seen from the mentioned former studies concerning attitudes and WTC, attitude is found out to be the factor affecting students' WTC. Attitudes when learning English, communicating in English and attitudes towards English language users are crucial aspects of WTC which are also explored in the current study.

concerning self-confidence. Items for the self-confidence scale were adopted from Pyun et al. (2014) and used to determine the level of confidence participants have in their ability to understand and communicate in English with others. Part IV refers to a 9-item personality traits scale adapted from Huseyin Oz (2014) to suit our research. Part V aimed to examine language anxiety adapted from Liu (2008), which considers the general tendency of the students' language anxiety. Part VI, including 10 items for attitude, was adapted from Tomoko Yashima (2002). Attitude includes the desire to learn English, intergroup approach-avoidance tendency and interest in international vocation or activities.

Data Analysis

The researchers used semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data. This research used a semi-structured type of interview because it helps the researchers receive answers about non-English majored students' WTC and the factors affecting it. In addition, the researchers also gained experiences and insights from the respondents (Richards, 2003, p. 64). Thanks to the flexibility of the semi-structured interview, the researchers can ask additional questions based on the previously asked questions.

Results

Non-English majored students' willingness to communicate in English

Quantitative analysis

The quantitative data gained from the questionnaire administered to 300 non-English majored students were statistically processed to

report the results of this study and frequency tests were run to evaluate the extent of the students' WTC. The statistics in Table 4.1 are organized in descending order according to the percentage of participants who reported they are "willing to communicate" (i.e., often willing or almost always willing) in each situation. Meanwhile, "Sometimes willing" or "Almost never willing" were grouped into "Unwilling to communicate" regarding the degree of the students' agreement. Table 2 shows the WTC extent of non-English-major students in the surveyed communication situations.

The most striking observation from the data comparison was the WTC of participants who talked to a group of strangers or talked to a stranger while standing in line. In this situation, the participants were hardly willing to communicate, accounting for 55% of the total number of participants choosing this extent. Besides, presenting a talk to a group of strangers or talk with a stranger while standing in line, present your own opinions in English in class and talk to your teacher in English before or after class are the situations with the lowest extent of WTC. Most of the participants were not willing to communicate in these situations.

What's interesting about this data is that participants were most likely to be communicative when talking to acquaintances while in line, about 68.4% of the total respondents who chose this extent. Talking in a small group of friends, reading out the conversations in English from the textbook and talking with an acquaintance while standing in line are the situations with the highest extent of WTC. Interestingly, there were also differences in the ratios in willingness to communicate when participants read out the conversations in English from the textbook. Most of the participants chose to be willing to communicate in this situation. Only 11.7% of the total participants were unwilling to communicate in English.

Overall, there was a similarity in the WTC levels of the participants in the two situations where the respondents answered in English when they were asked questions in class and expressed their opinions in English in class. The percentages

of the degrees laid out are roughly the same and range from 30% to 40%.

Qualitative analysis

To gain insights into the WTC extent of non-English-major students, data from semi-structured interviews regarding their WTC extent were also analysed to check the reliability of the data achieved from the questionnaire. First, with the situation where the students are willing to communicate in English, about 60% of the total number of students interviewed answered that they are entirely ready to communicate in English in all cases. Besides, most students will be prepared to communicate in English in daily life and the classroom. Talking about this situation, an interviewee emphasized that, "If there is a foreigner who asks me for an address, I will be willing to help them." As one interviewee expressed his idea that, "I am completely available to communicate in English when someone needs my help or needs me to communicate in English with them."

Analysis of student information from interviews also contributes to manifesting their WTC level and their WTC factors. More specifically, many students said they are entirely willing to communicate in English when asked by the teacher. One participant replied that "When people ask me in English, I am willing to communicate in English." One interviewee said, "If a teacher or friends asked me in English, I would enthusiastically answer them in English." Moreover, of the 32 participants who responded to this question, only four respondents answered that they are unwilling to communicate in English. Talking about this situation, an interviewee said:

"I'm unwilling to communicate in English. If there are any exceptions, I think it is when I take an examination, see a foreigner needing help, or when I have something to do and need to communicate in English."

Factors affecting non-English majored students' willingness to communicate in English

Quantitative analysis

Motivation

This section deals with the impact of motivation on WTC of non-English majored students studying in universities. Table 3 shows the results of this surveyed factor.

It is apparent from this table that the highest mean of motivation (M) is 4.41, and the highest standard deviation (SD) is 1.197. On the other hand, the lowest mean and lowest SD for motivation are 3.46 and 0.881. The range of mean 3.46–4.41 shows positive responses of participants for all the items of motivation

Table 3: *Measurement of central tendencies of motivation on WTC of non-English majored students*

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)
-----------	-------	------	-------------------------

Motivation (M)	M1	4.41	0.922
----------------	----	------	-------

	M2	4.11	1.003
--	----	------	-------

M3	4.13	1.023
----	------	-------

M4	4.11	0.928
----	------	-------

M5	3.81	0.978
----	------	-------

M6	4.38	0.901
----	------	-------

M7	3.46	1.197
----	------	-------

M8	4.27	0.887
----	------	-------

M9	4.16	0.890
----	------	-------

M10	4.33	0.881
-----	------	-------

Self-confidence

It can be seen from the data in table 3 that the highest mean for self-confidence (SC) is 3.74. Meanwhile, the lowest mean for SC is 3.05. The range of mean 3.05-3.74 shows the participants

have a good response for the items of SC. In addition, the highest standard deviation (SD) for SC is 1.019 and the lowest SD for SC is 0.917.

Table 4: *Measurement of central tendencies of self-confidence on WTC of non-English majored students*

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)
Self-confidence (SC)	SC1	3.17	0.952
	SC2	3.07	0.965
	SC3	3.35	0.982
	SC4	3.24	0.917
	SC5	3.37	0.943
	SC6	3.74	0.925

SC7 3.05 1.019

Personality traits

This section of the research describes the mean and standard deviation of the personality traits on the WTC of non-English majored students at the FPT University. The results are shown in Table 5.

The results of Table 5 indicate that 300 participants of this research showed their responses to the personality traits on their WTC from “disagree” to “agree” for the items surveyed. The results show the highest mean and highest standard deviation for personality traits are 3.84 and 1.314, respectively. Meanwhile, the lowest mean and standard deviation in a total of personality traits is 3.01 and 0.981 indicating that the figures tend to increase unevenly between questions in the questionnaire on the issues related to personality traits but the standard deviation was the highest of all, at 1.314.

Table 5: *Measurement of central tendencies of personality traits on WTC of non-English majored students*

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)
Personality traits (PT)	PT1	3.32	1.308

PT2 3.07 1.314 lowest values of standard deviation being 1.005 and 1.024, respectively. Comparing the two results shows that the mean from 2.68 to 2.89 was the weaknesses in language anxiety items.

PT3 3.84 0.981 Table 6: *Measurement of central tendencies of language anxiety on WTC of non-English majored students*

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)
PT4 3.01 1.311			
PT5 3.55 0.940	Language anxiety (LA)	LA1 3.44	1.024
PT6 3.51 0.997		LA2 3.10	1.199
PT7 3.39 0.991		LA3 2.98	1.005
PT8 3.14 1.112		LA4 2.68	1.173
PT9 3.06 1.082		LA5 2.89	1.117
		LA6 3.43	1.176

Language anxiety

It is shown that the mean range from 2.68 to 3.60, a positive response was found for all the items of language anxiety. On the other hand, it is statistically clear that the study resulted in the

LA7	3.35	1.160	A2	3.94	0.938
LA8	3.25	1.256	A3	3.54	1.016
LA9	3.60	1.176	A4	4.36	0.920
LA10	3.49	1.214	A5	2.92	1.164

A6 4.11 0.943

Attitude

The highest mean of attitude (A) is 4.36 and the highest standard deviation (SD) is 1.213. On the other hand, the lowest mean and lowest SD for attitude are 2.60 and 0.920. The range of mean is 2.60–4.36. As shown in Table 6, the results indicate positive responses of participants for all the items of attitude.

Table 7: Measurement of central tendencies of attitude on WTC of non-English majored students

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)		
				A7	2.54 1.211
				A8	3.44 1.076
				A9	3.50 1.135
				A10	2.60 1.213
Attitude (A)	A1	3.96	0.982		

The correlation between the dependent and independent variables and the correlation between the independent variables are also shown in this study. To assess such relationships, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed. The mean and standard deviation for each variable were calculated and the correlation matrix is illustrated in Table 8.

As can be seen from table 8, all factors are strongly correlated for WTC. The Pearson correlation values of the factors compared with WTC are all greater than 0.4. This shows that between WTC and factors, there is a close correlation with each other. In addition, these values between factors are also larger than 0.4, which shows us that there is also a strong correlation between factors. The reliability of these correlations is 99% because the sig value of the correlations between WTC with factors and factors together is less than 0.01.

More specifically, the correlation matrix shows that self-confidence most strongly relates to L2 WTC ($r = .577$, $p < .01$). With regard to personality traits, the WTC of non-majored students' is affected to a larger extent by personality traits ($r = .513$, $p < .01$) than by motivation and attitudes towards language learning ($r = .438$, $p < .01$) and ($r = .451$, $p < .01$), which are shown as the most important factors. In addition, it can be seen that language anxiety proficiency also correlates with students' WTC ($r = .423$, $p < .01$).

Table 8: Correlation matrix (observed variables)

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6

1. Willingness to communicate	3.31	.70	1.0					
2. Motivation	4.11	.67	.438**	1.0				
3. Self-confidence	3.28	.78	.577**	.454**	1.0			
4. Personality traits	3.32	.62	.513**	.464**	.632**	1.0		
5. Language	3.22	.69	.423**	.461**	.443**	.540**	1.0	

anxiety								
6.	3.4	.	.45	.56	.46	.58	.69	1
Attitud	9	5	1**	9**	7**	2**	4**	.
e		9						0

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Qualitative analysis

Analysing students' information from interviews also contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing students' WTC. Furthermore, many students gave their own opinions about the factors affecting their WTC. In response to the questions "What is your motivation to learn English? Do you think motivation is a factor affecting students' willingness to communicate?", about 80% of the total interviewees indicated that motivation directly affects WTC.

C claimed that:

" My motivation to learn English is to communicate in English in my job as well as daily life. I think it has a big effect on the way I communicate with others"

F also shared:

"My motivation for learning English is to be able to read more books, especially FPT's books that have a lot of useful things. I think this also affects my willingness to communicate, because if I am motivated, I will want to communicate and be more interested in English".

Besides, as being asked about whether they are confident about in-class presentations, nearly 53% of the total number of respondents reported that if you give them time to prepare, they will confidently present in front of the class.

H said that:

" If it's an unexpected situation but give me time to prepare to do well, I'm still confident. I think confidence is one of the important factors for communication, any language is the same".

On the other hand, 7 out of 30 participants said that they were not confident enough to present in front of the class.

V indicated that:

"I'm not confident enough. I need more preparation because I'm shy and lack confidence".

However, a small number of those interviewed suggested that attitude also affects WTC, G said that:

"In my opinion, being ready to communicate in English can only depend on me adjusting my attitude and improving my English level."

About personality traits, similar to the study of MacIntyre, Babin & Clement in 1999, which showed that personality traits influence WTC. There were about 63% of participants said that personality traits affect their willingness to communicate in English. G shared that:

"I think everyone's personality will affect their willingness to communicate not only in English but also in their mother tongue. If you're a timid person, you might not be able to communicate confidently".

Besides, language anxiety also is a factor affects students' WTC, language anxiety makes students not confident in grammar, spelling, and pronunciation of some English words. There were 53% of participants reported that they usually worry about their language, a participant once stated:

"Because my vocabulary is still not rich, I am afraid to communicate and fear causing misunderstandings for others. I will be available to communicate in English when the person needs my help."

However, another participant J gives their opinion that:

"I think it doesn't matter. For example, it is very stressful in an English learning environment, but it is not stressful in daily communication."

Discussions

This research aims to find out the extent of non-English majored students' willingness to communicate in English and the factors that may affect it. This study is based on the theory of McCroskey which confirms in research in 1990 that WTC is a personality-based predisposition that has a significant influence on human communication behavior and of Xie in 201, reporting that communicative readiness is defined as a basic communication tendency. In the current study, the findings of the survey of 300 non-English majored students as the participants reveals both similar and different aspects of students' WTC in comparison with those of the mentioned authors. The result showed that the case where students are always most willing to communicate in English, namely talking in a group of friends with 81% students willing. With regard to the situations where students are unwilling to communicate, it is reported that students are unwilling to talk to teacher in English before or after class with only 22.7% students willing. However, even though studying in an environment entirely in English, students still have different levels of willingness to

communicate, which is consistent with the previous study by MacIntyre (1998). According to MacIntyre, WTC is a communicative trend among learners and they are willing to participate in one discussion at a time with the same person. The speaker's level of WTC may vary depending on the speaker, the subject and the communication context.

When asked about which factors affecting their willingness to communicate, most students answered that confidence is an essential factor affecting their willingness to communicate in English. Based on Pyun et al.'s study in 2014, the result showed that the majority of students lack of self-confidence in English communication with a coefficient of 0.577, consistent with the previous study by Pyun, Kim, Cho, and Lee (2014). A great number of students are still aware that confidence plays a big part in their readiness to communicate in English. This lack of confidence results from an insufficiency of vocabulary, leading to confusion in communication and the unwillingness to communicate. Another reason for students' unwillingness to communicate is not being prepared for their speaking in advance; therefore, some students feel nervous and lack self-confidence when speaking unexpected English. Others responded that they still confidently communicate in any situation if they had time to think and prepare for their ideas.

On the other hand, unlike a previous study on language anxiety by Horwitz et al. (1986) [P8], language anxiety is one of the most common feelings of English learners, including English-majored students. This factor has the most negligible influence on the willingness to communicate with FPT non-English majored students, with a coefficient of .423. Among the studied factors, including motivation, self-confidence, personal traits, language anxiety and attitude, the language anxiety of FPT students may not be profound because FPT is an international environment where English is taught in a significant number of subjects, so the students' anxiety in English communication in this context tends to be negligible. Meanwhile, it is discussed from the results that students are only

worried about their grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation errors when speaking. In terms of interlocutors, they often avoid communicating with foreigners for fear of being misunderstood or afraid that foreigners will not understand precisely what they are saying, which may prevent the students from using the target language.

The results of this study are consistent with the results of previous studies exploring how motivation affects students' WTC. Like other studies, the present study shows that the WTC of non-English majored students is mostly influenced by two types of motivation. Motivation to learn English helps students have more determination when communicating in English. According to student feedback in the current study, students become more willing to communicate and study well to fulfill their goals, such as traveling abroad, working in famous foreign companies, or simply watching movies or other entertainments in English, which is consistent with the previous study by Gardner (1985). In Gardner's research, it is figured out that integrative motivation refers to learners' desire to integrate into the communication process. It is also indicated that integrative motivation is the students' desire to communicate in English with foreign teachers. In contrast, the second type of motivation is regarded as instrumental motivation, which refers to educational and life interests. As with Gardner's findings, from the majority of participants' responses in the current study, most students said they had both types of motivation. For integration motivation, it is the motivation such as wanting to communicate with foreigners or foreign teachers so that students have the opportunity to communicate in English. As for instrumentation motivation, it's as simple as they want to get high scores or good academic performance in order to improve their English. Similarly, a study conducted by Chang (2002) shows that integrated and instrumental dynamics are factors affecting WTC. According to Chang's research, both types of motivation can significantly contribute to students' enthusiasm for learning a foreign language. Chang's research results are completely consistent with the findings of the current studies. In conclusion, the present study has similar results

to previous studies on student communication motivation.

Additionally, from the interviews, personality traits were also mentioned as a factor affecting a majority of respondents' willingness to communicate. Most of them argued that personality traits significantly influence their WTC. Some information from the interviewees shows that when a particular student is an extrovert, communicating with them is very easy and almost as if they want to look for someone to talk to in any language, which contributes to making their communication become much easier. On the other hand, it is reported that as students are introverts, they avoid socializing with others. Since they may be very good at English but afraid to communicate, this greatly affected their WTC. In particular, the findings are similar to those of the study of MacIntyre et al., (1980) that personality traits significantly influence students' readiness to communicate in the target language and their personality causes students' WTC that extraverted students involve in class communication more than introverted ones.

In other ways, attitudes towards English-speaking cultures or people of different complexions and different language use also greatly influence the WTC. When a student's attitude is friendly or wants to help foreigners, they find it easy to start their communication more comfortably and confidently. Still, when the student's attitude is avoidant, students tend to avoid speaking to them even if foreigners come. The current study's findings are in line with those of the previous research by Mr. Do'nyei in 1990. The author's research focuses on students who cannot daily interact with native English speakers. It is more likely that students can hardly feel the reactions or attitudes of native speakers, so students often have a mindset to avoid communicating with native speakers, and this affects the students' WTC. In addition, many students also believe that motivation affects students' attitudes in WTC. This is completely consistent with Yashima (2002) study, who pointed out that depending on different learning goals, students have different learning attitudes.

Those attitudes have more or less influenced the WTC.

Additionally, from the interviews, personality traits were also mentioned as a factor affecting a majority of respondents' willingness to communicate. Most of them argued that personality traits significantly influence their WTC. Some information from the interviewees shows that when a particular student is an extrovert, communicating with them is very easy and almost as if they want to look for someone to talk to in any language, which contributes to making their communication become much easier. On the other hand, it is reported that as students are introverts, they avoid socializing with others. Since they may be very good at English but afraid to communicate, this greatly affected their WTC. In particular, the findings are similar to those of the study of MacIntyre et al., (1980) that personality traits significantly influence students' readiness to communicate in the target language and their personality causes students' WTC that extraverted students involve in class communication more than introverted ones.

Last not but least, the most striking findings is self-confidence which is the most influential factor for the WTC of non-English majors at FPT University. The present study results are not too different from previous studies on WTC. But it is interesting that in this study, we do not think that language anxiety strongly influences students' WTC as previous studies have confirmed in the context of FPT University. In some special results, there are students who think that motivation is the most influential factor on WTC and attitude is the least influential factor. This is the result that was found during the interview process and many students have the same opinion.

Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the level of WTC of students and the factors affecting the

Limitations and Future Studies

level of WTC of students at FPT University. There are two research questions surveyed in the study, in which the subjects of this study are 300 students of FPT University who are non-English majored ones. The results gained from quantitative data show that students are more willing to communicate when talking to acquaintances while in line than in other investigated situations. Besides, talking in a small group of friends and reading English dialogues in textbooks are situations where most students are willing to communicate in English. Furthermore, the qualitative data findings also indicate that most students are willing to communicate in any case. Meanwhile, some other students only feel willing to communicate when there are adequate preparations in advance and only use English in daily life and in-the-classroom conversations. More specifically, a significant number of students reported that they are entirely ready to respond in English when asked by the teacher.

In terms of the factors affecting students' WTC, the quantitative results depict that all factors examined in the study strongly correlate with students' WTC. The factor that a majority of students considered to be the most influential was self-confidence. As a person has self-confidence, they will be able to communicate in a better way. In addition, the factor considered by FPT University students to have the least significant influence on WTC was language anxiety since respondents shared that students at FPT University who are taught subjects in English may significantly reduce their language anxiety. On the other hand, from the qualitative findings, it is shown that many students at FPT university believe that all the five surveyed factors influence their WTC to a certain extent, but motivation is the most influential. Besides, attitude is the factor that students think has the least noticeable influence on their WTC. Therefore, this is the most significant difference between the quantitative and qualitative findings of the current study.

Future research can be done by collecting more personal opinions to analyse whether

shyness affects the WTC of students at FPT Can Tho University. In addition, future studies can also be carried out on either English majored or non-English majored students at other FPT University campuses or other universities in the region to have better insights into students' WTC.

Acknowledgement

I, as the Corresponding Author, declare and undertake that in the study titled as "An Investigation into Non-English Majored Students' Willingness to Communicate in English", scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; Psychology and Education Journal Editorial Board has no responsibility for all ethical violations to be encountered, that all responsibility belongs to the author/s and that this study has not been sent to any other academic publication platform for evaluation.

References

- Ahmed, M. D. (2014). Willingness to communicate in English: A case study of EFL students at King Khalid University. *English Language Teaching*, 7(7), 17-25. [Doi:10.5539/elt.v7n7p17](https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n7p17)
- Atay, D., & Kurt, G. (2009). Turkish EFL learners' willingness to communicate in English. Paper presented at The First International Congress of Educational Research: Trends and issues of educational research. *Çanakkale: Educational Research Association, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Ministry of National Education*.
- Bland, J. M., & Altman, D. G. (1997). Statistics notes: Cronbach's alpha. *British Medical Journal*, 314(7080), 572-572. [Doi:10.1136/bmj.314.7080.572](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.314.7080.572)
- CHANG, S. F. (2002). Conceptualizing Taiwanese college students' English learning motivation. *Research Report For The National Science Council*.
- Clément, R., & Kruidenier, B. G. (1985). Aptitude, attitude, and motivation in second language proficiency: A test of Clément's model. *Journal Of Language And Social Psychology*, 4(1), 21-37. [Doi:10.1177/0261927X8500400102](https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X8500400102)
- Clément, R., & Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1994). Motivation, self-confidence, and group cohesion in the foreign language classroom. *Language Learning*, 44(3), 417-448. [Doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1994.tb01113.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1994.tb01113.x)
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1959). Motivational variables in second language acquisition. *Canadian Journal Of Psychology/Revue Canadienne de Psychologie*, 13(4), 266-272. [Doi:10.1037/h0083787](https://doi.org/10.1037/h0083787)
- Gardner, R. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (1993). On the measurement of affective variables in second language learning. *Language Learning*, 43(2), 157-194. [Doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1992.tb00714.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1992.tb00714.x)
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). Social psychology and second language learning: The roles of attitudes and motivation. *London, England: Edward Arnold*. 10(3).
- Gardner, R. C. (2006). The socio-educational model of second language acquisition: A research paradigm. *Eurosla Yearbook*, 6, 237-260. [Doi:10.1075/eurosla.6.14gar](https://doi.org/10.1075/eurosla.6.14gar)
- Graham, S., & Weiner, B. (2011). Motivation: Past, present, future. In K. Harris, S. Graham, & T. Urdan (Eds.), *APA Educational Psychology Handbook*, 1, 367-397.
- Hernandez, T. (2006). Integrative motivation as a predictor of success in the intermediate foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(4), 605-617. [Doi:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2006.tb02279.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2006.tb02279.x)
- HORWITZ, E. K., & HORWITZ, M. B., & COPE, J. (1986). Foreign language

- classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.
[Doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x)
- Jung, M. A. (2011). Korean EFL university students' willingness to communicate in English. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Indiana University.
- Kang, S. -J. (2005). Dynamic emergence of situational willingness to communicate in a second language. *System*, 33(2), 277-292.
[Doi:10.1016/j.system.2004.10.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2004.10.004)
- Keller, J. M. (1983). Motivational design of instruction. *Instructional Design Theories And Models: An Overview Of Their Current Status*. 1, 383-434.
- Khajavy, G. H., & Ghonsooly, B., & Hosseini, F. A., & Choi, C. W. (2014). Willingness to communicate in English: A microsystem model in the Iranian EFL classroom context. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(1), 154-180.
[Doi:10.1002/tesq.204](https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.204)
- Kim, S. J. (2004). Exploring willingness to communicate (WTC) in English among Korean EFL students in Korea: WTC as a predictor of success in second language acquisition. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Ohio State University
- LIU, M., & JACKSON, J. (2008). An exploration of Chinese EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(1), 71-86. [Doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00687.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00687.x)
- MACINTYRE, P. D., & CLÉMENT, R., & DÖRNYEI, Z., & NOELS, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(4), 545-562.
[Doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x)
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the Second Language. *Language Learning*, 44(2), 283-305.
[Doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1994.tb01103.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1994.tb01103.x)
- Matsuoka, R., & Evans, D. R. (2005). Willingness to communicate in a second language. *Journal Of Nursing Studies*, 4, 3-12.
- Matsuoka, R. (2006). Japanese college students' willingness to communicate in English. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Temple University
- McCroskey, J. C., & Baer, J. E. (1985). Willingness to communicate: The construct and its measurement.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1990). Willingness to communicate: Differing cultural perspectives. *Southern Communication Journal*, 56(1), 72-77.
[Doi:10.1080/10417949009372817](https://doi.org/10.1080/10417949009372817)
- OXFORD, R. L. (1999). Anxiety and the language learner: New insight. In J. Arnold (Ed.). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 58 - 67.
- Oz, H. (2014). Big five personality traits and willingness to communicate among foreign language learners in Turkey. *Social Behavior And Personality: An International Journal*, 42(9), 1473-1482.
[Doi:10.2224/sbp.2014.42.9.1473](https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2014.42.9.1473)
- Pyun, D. O., & Kim, J. S., & Cho, H. Y., & Lee, J. H. (2014). Impact of affective variables on Korean as a foreign language learners' oral achievement. *System*, 47, 53-63.
[Doi:10.1016/j.system.2014.09.017](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2014.09.017)
- Xie, Q. M. (2011). Willingness to communicate in English among secondary school students in the rural Chinese English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). AUT University. Auckland.
- Yana, S. M. (2018). Correlation between anxiety and willingness to communicate in the Indonesian EFL context. *Arab World English Journal*, 9(2), 200-217.
[Doi:10.24093/awej/vol9no2.14](https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no2.14)
- Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL

context. *The Modern Language Journal*,
86(1), 54-66. [Doi:10.1111/1540-4781.00136](https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00136)

Yousef, R., & Jamil, H., & Razak, N. (2013).
Willingness to communicate in English: A
study of Malaysian pre-service English
teachers. *English Language Teaching*, 6(9),
205-216. [Doi:10.5539/elt.v6n9p205](https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n9p205)