

Exploring Students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Indonesian EFL Classroom

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Abstract

When the goal of English language teaching is categorized as for communication purposes, then it is essential to investigate students' willingness to communicate (WTC). This research aimed to find out the students' WTC in the EFL classroom. The researchers conducted descriptive research to compile the findings. The subjects were sixth-semester English Education students at Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. Purposive sampling was applied to gather data from a sample of 25 students. A questionnaire was used as a research instrument, which consisted of 27 question items, all related to the student's willingness to participate in communication inside the classroom. This research found that the students' WTC were classified into four categories: (1) definitely not willing, (2) probably not willing, (3) probably willing, and (4) definitely willing. Those scales operationalized WTC in four basic skill areas: speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. It is found that most of the students were in the category of "probably willing" to "definitely willing" to show their WTC in the EFL classroom, which means that they mostly have positive communication behaviors and meet language learning targets. In addition, by measuring and promoting the WTC model in the EFL context, it is possible to better understand how students communicate and learn the language in real-world settings, predict what they will do when they communicate, and enhance how students use language in an EFL context.

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate (WTC), EFL Classroom

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, mostly the goal of teaching language especially in English language teaching (ELT) has changed from the knowledge of grammar to using of language for communication. It becomes important that students are highly likely to have English skills to communicate with each other when it comes to the application of English in some contexts (Yesin Bektas Cetinkaya, 2005). Due to the condition, most researchers especially in Indonesia have conducted research on English

skills, elements, achievement, etc. for example (Baharuddin et al., 2022; Ratika et al., 2021) to improve students' ability to communicate. However, the researchers have not found any research relating and focusing on how great the students are in using their skills and knowledge to participate for communication purposes.

When the goal of the learning process is categorized as communication purposes, then the problem arises is whether the students are going to communicate or not and it is essential to investigate what affects the students' willingness to

communicate in ELT Classroom. In this case, Macintyre et al. (1998) proposed and developed "Willingness to Communicate" (WTC) model to explain the second/foreign language in communication.

McCroskey's research on native language communication in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, where the interpersonal connection is highly prized, led to the conception of WTC. Although those who communicate effectively are rated favorably, some individuals talk infrequently. The differences in communication practices were conceptualized as recurring across settings, because of personality characteristics. This concept was referred to as "willingness to communicate, which is defined as a stable propensity toward communication when free to do so" (P. D. MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; McCroskey & Baer, 1985; Pattapong, 2010, p. 11).

WTC was developed to reflect a common tendency of interpersonal communication in each native language (L1) (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). The ability to speak was described as a cognitive process impacted by one's personality, involving the conscious decision to do so. Both Communication Apprehension and Self-Perceived Communication Skills are key antecedents, according to him, when it comes to WTC in L1. People who have high CA levels tend to be less communicative. Also, studies discovered that WTC has a stronger relationship with Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) than it is with real competence. SPCC is a term used to describe how an individual views his or her own communication abilities.

A study of WTC in L1 by MacIntyre et al. (1999) confirmed that state and trait factors have complementary effects on WTC. Subjects' willingness to participate in a laboratory setting and their proclivity to take part in a mentally taxing communication task were used to examine traits and state WTC factors in this study. State WTC, they said, determined whether communication occurred in each situation, whereas trait WTC allegedly spurred voluntary participation in a laboratory. This study shows that state and trait factors have a synergistic effect on WTC. The L2 WTC, which is considered more complicated than

WTC on L1, was based on the findings of the L1 WTC investigation (Macintyre et al., 1998).

The L2 WTC grew out of communication research from L1 WTC. The L1 WTC's original concept should have been examined since it can enhance comprehension of the conceptualization of L2 WTC. Key features of the origins of the WTC concept and the evolution of WTC views leading to the most recent consensus are examined. This section focuses on MacIntyre et al. (1998)'s understanding of WTC in L2 in relation to the challenges of WTC in L1, followed by the important research about this study. Based on an examination of the preceding work, probable variables leading to WTC among EFL students. From the L2 WTC model, it leads some researchers to investigate WTC in EFL context.

Several research on WTC in the EFL context have been reported. First, Altiner (2018) explored EFL learners' WTC in the Turkish EFL environment, as well as its interaction with various variables such as gender and competence levels. The findings of this study showed that the students' WTC in English was moderate. It was discovered that students were more likely to communicate in managed scenarios than in meaning-focused ones. Regarding the gender effects on WTC of Turkish EFL learners, it was revealed that female EFL students are more likely to communicate inside the classroom than male EFL students. Lastly, learners with higher degrees of language competence were known to have a greater WTC level than learners with lower levels of language competency.

Second, Öz & Bursalı (2018) investigated the association between the L2 motivational self-system as well as the WTC in EFL learners. Such participants had high L2 MSS scores in 32.4 percent of the cases, whereas 40 percent had moderate scores, and 27.6 percent had poor scores. Furthermore, the results showed that the Ideal L2 Self and L2 WTC were statistically linked, but the Ought-to L2 Self and L2 WTC were not statistically linked. A partial correlation was conducted to better understand the connection between the Ideal L2 Self and the L2 WTC, and the findings showed that, despite its lessened magnitude, the association remained significant.

Third, Mohammadi et al. (2019) studied flipped classroom's effect on students' English language competence and WTC of Iranian eleventh-grade EFL students. On the posttest as well as the WTC questionnaire, the students inside the flipped classes outperformed those in the control group, according to the research findings. The results found that flipped approach can be an effective strategy for teaching EFL to high school students. As part of the study, students in the experimental group learned a brand-new approach for teaching grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension in Iranian secondary schools.

Next, Ma et al. (2019) examined the association between students' WTC and learning motivation in English (L2 WTC) within EFL classrooms in Thailand's urban environment. Following is a summary of the findings. First, university students, whether male or female, are highly motivated to study English, especially in terms of instrumental motivation. In addition, the willingness of university students to converse in English within EFL classrooms is intermediate overall, with no notable gender differences. More than fifty percent of students seem to be more inclined to converse in English with their peers than with their teachers, as they perceive their peers to be simpler to comprehend. Thirdly, the English learning motivation of university students shows a substantial positive link with their L2 WTC.

Then, Dastgoshadeh & Javanmardi (2021) studied the correlation between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and the students' WTC. Students' EI and WTC were shown to be correlated in a significant manner. "Utilization of Emotions in Problem Solving (UEPS) and Emotional Regulation of Others (ERO)" were the most accurate predictors of WTC among the six EI components. As it is feasible to encourage and heighten emotional features related to the social interactional elements in classrooms, and as EI greatly aids communication, it is extremely useful to give EI specific priority and importance in EFL courses.

Furthermore, Barin & Eyerci (2021) explored the relation between learner autonomy (LA) and WTC within EFL university settings in

Turkey. The results demonstrated a moderate but substantial correlation between learners' LA and WTC. The autonomy degrees of EFL students predicted L2 WTC performance. Students with a lower degree of autonomy had a larger discrepancy between their self-reported L2 WTC and their behavioral L2 WTC.

Also, Alqurashi & Althubaiti (2021) evaluated the relationship between language proficiency and classroom communication willingness among Saudi EFL students. According to the findings of this study, students are afraid to speak in EFL contexts because of their perceived language deficiencies, a restricted lexicon, and anxieties of making mistakes that would lead to more misunderstandings.

In addition, Matuzas (2022) examined the influence factors of students' WTC in elementary school EFL classrooms in Korea. Students' WTC was shown to be influenced by a variety of factors, including familiar in speaking activities, classroom location, and treatment suited to the individual needs of each student. He recommends that EFL teachers who want to increase student participation get familiar with their students' qualifications, classroom social interactions, as well as the assessment and placement of learners.

However, only a few studies have explored students' WTC in an Indonesian context. In this case, this research was intended to show students' WTC in an Indonesian EFL classroom. The study's findings were expected to have a direct impact on EFL instruction in Indonesian higher education institutions. It is also possible to better understand how students communicate and learn the language in real-world settings, predict what they will do when they communicate and enhance how students use language in the EFL context.

METHODS

This research applied a descriptive research design. The researchers employed this method to collect and analyze data that is suitable for the research to find out and show the students' WTC. To provide the reader with comprehensive information, the research results were described in a descriptive form.

This research was conducted at Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM). The participants in this study were English Department sixth-semester undergraduate students. Purposive sampling was used by the researchers to identify the target population. The researchers wanted to know more about the willingness of sixth-semester students to communicate in the classroom since they had more university teaching and learning experience. Because of this, the researchers decided to focus on one of the three classes. It was class A. According to the lecturers, students in this class were deemed to have greater English language abilities than those in other classes.

The questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was addressed to 25 selected students. The questionnaire was used to show students' willingness to communicate. It consisted of 27 questions, all of which related to the students' WTC. Students were required to grade their willingness to communicate in scale 1 to 4. The employed scale varied (1=definitely not willing, 2=probably not willing, 3=probably willing, 4=definitely willing). A modified questionnaire from MacIntyre, et al. (2001) was used to test students' WTC in classroom interaction by operationalizing WTC within four skills (speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension). Descriptive statistics were used to examine the questionnaire. The Findings were presented in the tables and charts. Finally, the mean score was categorized based on the following table:

Table 1. The Category of Students' Responses

| Category | Interval Scores |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Definitely willing | 82 – 100 |
| Probably willing | 63 – 81 |
| Probably not willing | 44 – 62 |
| Definitely not willing | 25 – 43 |

The table above was using the specified rating scale as the determining factor. The scales were categorized into four different groups, with 100 being the highest possible score and 25 representing the lowest possible score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the results of a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data that were collected in response to the purpose of this study are presented.

Students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in Indonesian EFL Classroom

The questionnaire is used to find the data on how willing the students are to communicate or show the students' level of their WTC in the EFL classroom. Further, the questionnaire findings are presented according to fundamental skills namely speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. The frequency and the percentage of the students' responses for each item of the questionnaire are shown in the table below:

Table 2. Speaking Frequency and Percentage

| Items | Situations | RATING SCALE | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|--------------|-----|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----|
| | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) |
| 1 | Speaking in a group about your vacation | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 48 | 11 | 44 |
| 2 | Speaking to your teacher about your homework assignment. | 3 | 12 | 5 | 20 | 10 | 40 | 7 | 28 |
| 3 | A stranger enters the room you are in, how willing would you be to have a conversation if he talked to you first? | 1 | 4 | 3 | 12 | 12 | 48 | 9 | 36 |
| 4 | You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions/ clarification? | 1 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 40 | 12 | 48 |
| 5 | Talking to a friend while waiting in line | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 14 | 56 | 9 | 36 |
| 6 | How willing would you be to be an actor in a play? | 0 | 0 | 5 | 20 | 13 | 52 | 7 | 28 |
| 7 | Describe the rules of your favorite game | 1 | 4 | 5 | 20 | 13 | 52 | 6 | 24 |
| 8 | Participate in a debate | 2 | 8 | 9 | 36 | 10 | 40 | 4 | 16 |

This table presents the frequency and the percentage of students' WTC in the speaking area, which consists of 8 question items or situations. The illustration of those responses based on the speaking area can be described in the following diagram:

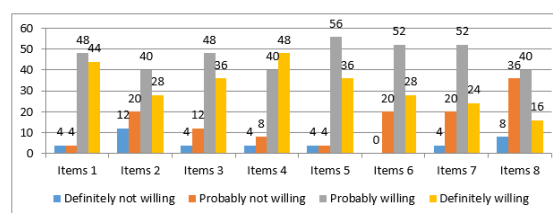


Figure 1. The Percentage of Speaking

This shows that all items in speaking were responded to based on the rating scale provided 1 (definitely not willing) to 2 (probably not willing) to 3 (probably willing) to 4 (definitely willing). For instance, it shows that 1 (4%) student gave definitely not willing and probably not willing, 12

(48%) students gave probably willing, and 11 (44%) students gave definitely willing responses for item 1. The highest number of responses was item 5 responded by 14 (56%) students who were categorized as probably willing, while the lowest number of responses was item 6 responded by no student who was categorized as definitely not willing.

Table 3. Reading Frequency and Percentage

| Items | Situations | RATING SCALE | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|--------------|-----|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----|
| | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) |
| 1 | Read a novel. | 3 | 12 | 4 | 16 | 9 | 36 | 9 | 36 |
| 2 | Read an article in a paper | 2 | 8 | 6 | 24 | 12 | 48 | 5 | 20 |
| 3 | Read letters from a pen pal written in native English | 4 | 16 | 1 | 4 | 13 | 52 | 7 | 28 |
| 4 | Read personal letters or notes written to you in which the writer has deliberately used simple words and constructions | 1 | 4 | 5 | 20 | 9 | 36 | 10 | 40 |
| 5 | Read an advertisement in the paper to find a good thing you can buy | 2 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 32 | 13 | 52 |
| 6 | Read reviews for popular movies | 1 | 4 | 8 | 32 | 7 | 28 | 9 | 36 |

This table presents the frequency and the percentage of students' WTC in the reading area, which consists of 6 question items or situations. The illustration of those responses based on the reading area can be described in the following diagram:

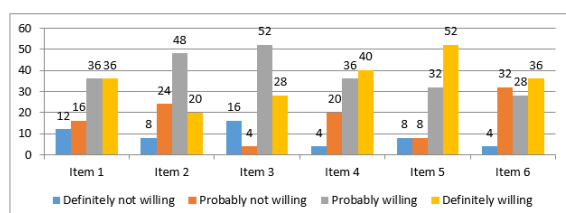


Figure 2. The Percentage of Reading

This shows that the highest numbers of responses in reading were the items 3 and 5 responded by 13 (52%) students as probably willing and definitely willing, while the lowest numbers of responses were the items 4 and 6 responded by 1 (4%) student as definitely not willing and the item 3 responded by 1 (4%) student as probably not willing.

Table 4. Writing Frequency and Percentage

| Items | Situations | RATING SCALE | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|--------------|-----|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----|
| | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) |
| 1 | Write an invitation to invite your schoolmates to a weekend party | 5 | 20 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 40 | 7 | 28 |
| 2 | Write down the instructions for your favorite hobby | 2 | 8 | 5 | 20 | 10 | 40 | 8 | 32 |
| 3 | Write a report on your favorite animal and its habits | 4 | 16 | 6 | 24 | 6 | 24 | 9 | 36 |
| 4 | Write a story | 1 | 4 | 3 | 12 | 11 | 44 | 10 | 40 |
| 5 | Write a letter to a friend | 3 | 12 | 3 | 12 | 11 | 44 | 8 | 32 |
| 6 | Write a newspaper article | 3 | 12 | 9 | 36 | 10 | 40 | 3 | 12 |
| 7 | Write the answers to a "fun" quiz from a magazine | 2 | 8 | 4 | 16 | 9 | 36 | 10 | 40 |
| 8 | Write down a list of things you must do tomorrow | 0 | 0 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 40 | 12 | 48 |

This table presents the frequency and the percentage of students' WTC in the writing area, which consists of 8 question items or situations. The illustration of those responses based on writing area can be described in the following diagram:

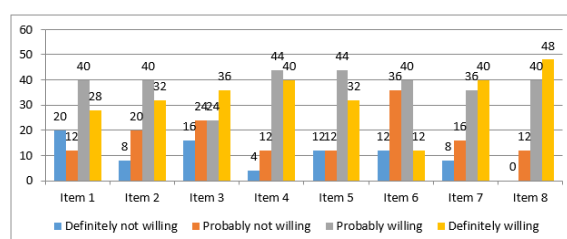


Figure 3. The Percentage of Writing

This shows that the highest number of responses in writing was item 8 responded by 12 (48%) students as definitely willing, while the lowest number of responses was item 8 responded by no student as definitely not willing.

Table 5. Comprehension Frequency and Percentage

| Items | Situations | RATING SCALE | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|--------------|-----|---|-----|----|-----|----|-----|
| | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) | F | (%) |
| 1 | Listen to instructions and complete a task | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 32 | 16 | 64 |
| 2 | Follow the role if instructions were in English | 1 | 4 | 5 | 20 | 9 | 36 | 10 | 40 |
| 3 | Fill out an application form in English | 1 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 13 | 52 | 9 | 36 |
| 4 | Take direction from an English speaker | 1 | 4 | 3 | 12 | 11 | 44 | 10 | 40 |
| 5 | Understand an English movie | 2 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 48 | 10 | 40 |

This table presents the frequency and the percentage of students' WTC in the comprehension area, which consists of 5 question items or situations. The illustration of those responses based on comprehension area can be described as follows:

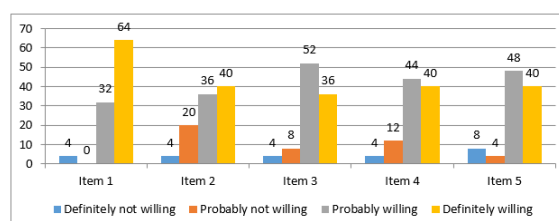


Figure 4. The Percentage of Comprehension

This shows that the highest number of responses in comprehension was item 1 responded by 16 (64%) students as definitely willing, while the lowest number of responses was also item 1 responded by no student as probably not willing.

The questionnaire consisted of 27 items which were administered to 25 students. Among those items, there were the lowest and the highest score of items. The items with the lowest score are items 8 and 20. The score of item 8 was 66 in which 4 students were “definitely willing”, 10 students were “probably willing”, 9 students were “probably not willing” and 2 students were “definitely not willing” with the statement whether the students are interested to participate in debate. The score of item 20 was 63 in which 3 students were “definitely willing”, 10 students were “probably willing”, 9 students were “probably not willing” and 3 students were “definitely not willing” with the statement whether the students are willing to write a newspaper article.

The items with the highest score are items 22 and 23. The score of item 22 was 84 in which 12 students were “definitely willing”, 10 students were “probably willing”, 3 students were “probably not willing” and none students were “definitely not willing” with the statement whether the students are willing to make a list for tasks you must complete tomorrow. The score of item 23 was 89 in which 16 students were “definitely willing”, 8 students “probably willing”, none students “probably not willing” and 1 student “definitely not willing” with the statement whether the students are willing to listen to instructions and complete a task.

These results indicated that this research measured and promoted the WTC model inside the EFL setting, enabling to acquire a more in-depth comprehension of learning the language in a setting in which English wasn't the means of communication within learners' day-to-day lives. As a result, it gave us the green light to predict the learners' communicative behavior and encourage the use of language in the context of EFL.

Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Questionnaire

Based on the descriptive statistics results of the students' questionnaire responses, the mean and standard deviation of the students' willingness to communicate in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension are shown in the table below:

Table 6. The calculation of mean score and standard deviation

| | | Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|----------------|---------|------------------------|---------|---------|---------------|
| N | | SPEAKING | READING | WRITING | COMPREHENSION |
| | Valid | 8 | 6 | 8 | 5 |
| | Missing | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Mean | | 76.7500 | 75.1667 | 73.8750 | 81.4000 |
| Std. Deviation | | 6.06512 | 4.21505 | 6.62112 | 4.33590 |
| Variance | | 36.786 | 17.767 | 43.839 | 18.800 |
| Range | | 17.00 | 12.00 | 21.00 | 11.00 |
| Minimum | | 66.00 | 70.00 | 63.00 | 78.00 |
| Maximum | | 83.00 | 82.00 | 84.00 | 89.00 |
| Sum | | 614.00 | 451.00 | 591.00 | 407.00 |

According to the data presented in the table above, the mean score for speaking is 76.75 whereas the standard deviation seems to be 6.06512. For reading, the mean score is 75.1667, while the standard deviation is 4.21505. The mean score for the writing is 73.8750, while the standard deviation equals 6.62112. Last, the mean score for comprehension is 81.40, and the standard deviation for this category is 4.33590. Based on the table of category and interval score (table 1), these indicated all participants or students were categorized into “probably willing” to “definitely willing” to show their willingness to communicate in EFL Classroom. It can be concluded that students have positive responses to their WTC.

MacIntyre (1994) mentioned that WTC has been considered an essential variable that lies behind the process of interpersonal communication. It is commonly believed that if a person possesses the WTC, they will, in most cases, start engaging in actual behaviors associated with the communication. Because of this, the WTC has the potential to influence the target language that students of second and foreign languages accomplish. So, the students can improve their language skills and bring the aim of language acquisition one step closer to reality. WTC may also be viewed as an aim of language teaching, a factor that facilitates the process of learning the language, as well as an inner psychological event that has socially significant consequences.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Following an analysis of the questionnaire, the researchers found that most of the students selected "probably willing" or "definitely willing" as their response to the questionnaire items. It showed that the students were at a "willing" level when expressing their WTC in the EFL classroom, which means that they mostly have positive communication behaviors and meet language learning targets. This research would serve as a reference for teachers of foreign languages, teacher trainers, and those who create instructional materials. The findings of the study provide information to teachers of foreign languages regarding the linguistics needs of their students, in addition to the affective as well as communicative needs of those students. The findings can be utilized by teacher trainers to design more efficient teacher education programs, and material developers can find the results to be an informative resource in relation to the learners' communicative needs inside the EFL setting.

The scope of this study was restricted to determining whether students were willing to communicate in EFL classroom settings in the situations of speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. Because of this constraint, more study needs to be done in the future to investigate the variables affecting students' WTC in the classroom context as well as in other situations. To investigate an individual's willingness to communicate with others, a qualitative research study is also required. Future researchers could use a variety of data collection techniques, such as observing and interviewing students in English classrooms, conducting in-depth interviews, and analyzing the textbooks and other materials that students use. During the observations, one might also investigate the actual language used by the students, as well as the connection between real language use and an individual's willingness to communicate. In addition, there is the possibility of researching not only the students but also the English teachers' willingness to communicate. Research along these lines could also be carried out with students whose fields of study are not related to English language teaching.

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