

Exploring the Relationship Between Motivation And Willingness to Communicate in English among Pakistani Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

Motivational orientations and willingness to communicate (WTC) are often considered closely connected. However, previous studies indicate that learners' motivation to study a second language (L2) does not always correspond with their actual willingness to speak the language. Consequently, earlier research has reported varying results when examining the relationship between motivation and WTC. The present study explored the willingness to communicate in English among English as a Second Language (ESL) students in relation to both integrative and instrumental motivational orientations. A total of 450 undergraduate students from different institutions in the Sindh region participated in the study. Using a cluster sampling method, data were collected through questionnaires that measured students' willingness to communicate in English within classroom settings as well as their motivation to learn the language. The findings revealed that students demonstrated a high level of willingness to communicate during activities such as group work, interactions with the same gender, classroom tasks that involved preparation time, and situations where they were seated at the front of the classroom. In contrast, their willingness to communicate was only moderate in situations involving interaction with the opposite gender, when seated in the middle or back of the classroom, and when speaking in front of the entire class. Moreover, the results showed that the participants possessed strong levels of both integrative and instrumental motivation. However, instrumental motivation was found to be stronger than integrative motivation. The analysis also indicated a significant relationship between students' willingness to communicate in English and both types of motivational orientations. Based on these findings, the study proposed several pedagogical recommendations for educators, curriculum developers, and other stakeholders involved in ESL education.

Keywords: Willingness to communicate, Integrative motivation, Instrumental motivation, English as a second language.

1. Introduction

Research on communication in foreign and second languages (L2) suggests that language ability alone does not always determine whether learners actively participate in communication. Some learners who possess strong linguistic competence may remain silent, whereas others with relatively limited proficiency may engage in frequent communication (Baghaei, Dourakhshan, & Salavati, 2012). In other words, a high level of

communicative competence does not necessarily guarantee active participation in second language interactions. Even highly motivated learners may hesitate to speak due to various psychological barriers. According to Dörnyei (2005, p. 207), individuals sometimes avoid participating in L2 communication even when they possess sufficient communicative competence. Communication plays a crucial role in the process of second language acquisition. Regardless of the different reasons for learning a language—such as employment opportunities, cultural integration, travel, or social interaction—the primary purpose of learning a second language is to enable individuals to communicate effectively (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Previous research has also highlighted the importance of individual differences (IDs) in second language learning (Andreou, Andreou, & Vlachos, 2005, 2006; Andreou & Galantomos, 2009; Andreou, Vlachos, & Andreou, 2006; Dörnyei, 2005). Individual differences refer to the personal characteristics that distinguish one learner from another. According to Andreou et al. (2006), these differences significantly influence the ways in which individuals learn and achieve success in language acquisition. Among the many variables examined in L2 research, willingness to communicate (WTC) and motivation are considered particularly important. The concept of willingness to communicate was initially developed to explain individuals' tendency to initiate communication in their first language (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). Later, this concept was extended to second language contexts to examine learners' readiness to communicate using the target language (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Over the past three decades, most studies on WTC have been conducted in Western settings, especially in North America (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2003). Subsequently, research on WTC expanded to non-native English-speaking contexts such as Iran (Baghaei et al., 2012; Ghonsooly, Khajavy, & Asadpour, 2012; Riasati & Rahimi, 2018), Turkey (Cetinkaya, 2009; Asmali, 2016), China (Peng, 2007; Xie, 2011), Japan (Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004), and Pakistan (Ali, 2017; Kalyar et al., 2019).

Researchers have emphasized that participation in conversation is essential for meaningful second language communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Mackey, 1999). Clément et al. (2003) describe willingness to communicate as “the most immediate determinant of L2 use” (p. 191). Similarly, MacIntyre et al. (1998) argue that the ultimate objective of second language learning should be to develop learners who are willing and ready to communicate in the target language. Several factors have been examined in relation to WTC, including language anxiety, perceived communicative competence, and motivation. Numerous studies have explored the relationship between WTC and anxiety (e.g., Hashimoto; Kim; Knell & Chi), as well as other individual differences such as those discussed by Onwuegbuzie et al., Sparks and Ganschow, and Yu. However, limited research has examined the relationship between WTC and L2 motivation within the Pakistani ESL context (Ubaid et al., 2024).

Pakistan consists of several provinces, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Punjab. Each province has its own regional language and a variety of local dialects. Due to the country's colonial history, English holds the status of an official language, while Urdu serves as the national language (Kalyar et al., 2019). In many regions, English functions as the primary language used in government, business, and administrative institutions. Additionally, numerous well-known educational institutions use English as the main medium of instruction. Since independence, English has continued to play a significant role in Pakistani society, and it is widely valued by students, parents, and policymakers (Kalyar et al., 2019). Proficiency in English is also essential for success in competitive examinations and academic advancement. The language is taught as a compulsory subject from early schooling through higher education in both public and private institutions (Khan, Zahid, & Akhtar, 2017; Shamim, 2011). Furthermore, English is associated with media, authority, prestige, education, and the corporate sector in Pakistan (Pathan, Shahriar, & Ali, 2010; Shamim, 2008; Shamim, 2011). As a result, competence in English is considered a crucial skill for students. Despite studying English for many years, however, many Pakistani undergraduates still experience difficulty and discomfort when speaking the language. Research indicates that Pakistani students often demonstrate

hesitation and shyness while communicating in English (Ali et al., 2020). Similarly, Asif et al. (2018) reported that many students lack confidence when using English in spoken communication.

Given this situation, the present study focuses on examining the motivation of Pakistani undergraduate students to learn English and exploring how this motivation relates to their willingness to communicate in English.

Research Questions

1. How does undergraduates' willingness to communicate in English vary across different classroom situations?
2. What levels of integrative and instrumental motivation do undergraduates demonstrate in learning English?
3. What is the relationship between integrative and instrumental motivation and undergraduates' willingness to communicate in English?

2. Literature Review

Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

The concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) was initially introduced by McCroskey and Richmond in 1987 in the context of first language (L1) communication. In L1 settings, WTC was viewed as a relatively stable personality trait that remains consistent across different communication situations. However, when the concept was applied to second language (L2) learning, researchers recognized that it functions differently because learners possess varying levels of linguistic proficiency and encounter diverse communication opportunities. As a result, WTC in L2 contexts may fluctuate depending on communicative competence and situational factors.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) conceptualized L2 WTC as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with specific individuals using an L2” (p. 547). This definition highlights the situational and contextual nature of the construct. The authors further emphasized that both contextual conditions and momentary factors significantly influence learners' readiness to communicate in a second language. Numerous empirical studies conducted in different contexts have examined the communicative, contextual, and linguistic variables associated with WTC, demonstrating that these elements contribute to variations in learners' communication behavior (Joe et al., 2017; Khajavy et al., 2016; Oz et al., 2015; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002). According to the WTC model, language learners must not only develop linguistic and communicative competence but also cultivate psychological readiness to engage in communication when opportunities arise. Various factors have been identified as influencing WTC, including language proficiency, communicative competence, anxiety, attitudes, motivation, personality traits, and intergroup relations. In addition, elements such as self-confidence and the willingness to interact with specific interlocutors in particular contexts are considered immediate influences on communication behavior. MacIntyre et al. (1998) therefore regard WTC as a central objective of language education, as it reflects the readiness of learners to actively use the target language.

Recent research has further explored the factors that influence students' participation in second language classrooms (Riasati & Rahimi, 2018; Pawlak, Mystkowska-Wiertelak, & Bielak, 2016; Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2014). Increasing attention has been given to the classroom environment as a key context for understanding WTC. For instance, Peng and Woodrow (2010) proposed a model of WTC within Chinese L2 classrooms, finding that learners' attitudes, classroom atmosphere, motivation, and self-confidence significantly affected their willingness to communicate. Their study also highlighted the important role of classroom conditions and learners' L2 self-confidence in shaping communication behavior.

Similarly, Khajavy et al. (2016) reported that both classroom climate and learners' self-confidence directly influence L2 WTC. Lee and Hsieh (2019) found that familiarity with interlocutors and learners' confidence

in using the second language were among the most significant factors affecting WTC. De Saint Leger and Storch (2009) also demonstrated that the nature of speaking activities influences learners' readiness to communicate. In another study, Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pawlak (2014) identified several classroom-related variables affecting WTC, including the type of task, group arrangement, discussion topic, learners' proficiency levels, interlocutor characteristics, and the degree of learner engagement.

Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2019) investigated changes in Chinese learners' WTC over the course of a semester. Their findings indicated that learning environment factors such as task interest, perceived task value, and peer support contributed to variations in students' willingness to communicate. Building on these findings, the present study aims to address gaps in existing research by examining undergraduates' WTC quantitatively across multiple classroom contexts. These contexts include individual, pair, small-group, and whole-class interactions; different types of classroom activities such as discussions, role-plays, and presentations; interactions with both same-gender and opposite-gender peers; physical seating arrangements within the classroom (front, middle, and back); and students' level of preparedness.

Motivation in Relation to WTC

Motivation is widely recognized as one of the most influential individual difference variables in second language acquisition and has therefore received considerable attention in language learning research (Shirvan et al., 2019). Motivation plays a crucial role in shaping learners' capacity to acquire a second language, influencing both the pace and the quality of learning (Dörnyei, 1998). According to Gardner (1985), motivation in language learning involves learners' attitudes toward the language, their goals for learning it, and the effort they are willing to invest in the learning process.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) proposed two primary types of motivation in second language learning: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to a learner's desire to connect with and become part of the target language community, while instrumental motivation is associated with practical objectives such as academic success, employment opportunities, or career advancement (Chalak & Kassaian, 2010). Learners who are integratively motivated tend to develop positive attitudes toward the target language community and display greater openness toward the language learning process (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). In contrast, instrumentally motivated learners focus primarily on the utilitarian benefits of learning the language (Gardner, 2010).

Wang (2008) suggested that learners who possess strong intrinsic motivation and clear learning objectives are more likely to invest significant effort in acquiring a second language. Dörnyei (2001) also argued that integrative and instrumental motivations should be viewed as complementary dimensions of a broader motivational framework. According to Wan-Er (2008), combining both types of motivation can produce more effective and meaningful learning outcomes.

Several empirical studies have explored the relationship between motivation and willingness to communicate in a second language. Research by Baker and MacIntyre (2000), Hashimoto (2002), Yashima (2002), Peng and Woodrow (2010), and Ma, Wannaruk, and Lei (2019) has demonstrated that learners who are highly motivated are generally more willing to communicate in the target language. Hashimoto (2002) found that learners' motivation significantly increased their willingness to communicate in a second language. Similarly, Cetinkaya (2005), Knell and Chi (2012), and Peng and Woodrow (2010) reported that higher levels of motivation tend to enhance learners' readiness to participate in communication. Peng (2012) also established a strong link between L2 motivation and students' willingness to communicate in the target language.

MacIntyre and Charos (1996) identified motivation as a key predictor of WTC. In addition, Hashimoto (2002) found a significant positive relationship between learners' motivation and their willingness to communicate in an L2. Baker and MacIntyre (2000) also reported that both immersion and non-immersion students exhibited a positive relationship between motivation and WTC, indicating that motivated learners are more inclined to participate in second language communication.

Sociocultural Theory and Mediation

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT) views language learning not merely as an individual cognitive activity but as a socially and culturally mediated process. According to this perspective, higher-order mental functions develop through participation in socially organized and culturally shaped activities. A central concept in SCT is mediation, which refers to the use of cultural tools—such as language, symbols, and artifacts—to support cognitive development and learning (Presseisen & Kozulin, 2020; Vygotsky, 1978).

Mediation initially occurs on the interpsychological level, where learners collaborate with more knowledgeable individuals such as teachers or peers to accomplish tasks. Through processes such as scaffolding and guided participation, these shared interactions gradually become internalized, enabling learners to perform tasks independently over time (Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Presseisen & Kozulin, 2020). In second language learning, mediation can take both material forms—such as textbooks and digital technologies—and symbolic forms, including peer collaboration and teacher feedback. These mediational processes contribute to the development of learners' metacognitive awareness, communicative competence, and motivation (Li & Chen, 2021). Closely related to mediation is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which represents the range of tasks that learners can accomplish with guidance but cannot yet perform independently (Chaiklin, 2003). Contemporary research has increasingly emphasized the role of learner agency and emotional engagement within sociocultural learning environments. Studies suggest that collaborative and culturally meaningful learning experiences can enhance both learners' motivation and their willingness to communicate (Truong, 2024; Li & Chen, 2021; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014).

In this regard, Sociocultural Theory provides a valuable theoretical framework for examining English language learning among Pakistani university students, particularly in understanding how social interaction, mediation, and collaborative learning environments influence learners' motivation and their willingness to communicate in English.

3. Methodology

The present study aimed to investigate undergraduate students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English in relation to their integrative and instrumental motivational orientations. To achieve this objective, a quantitative research design was employed. This approach enabled the researcher to measure students' motivation as well as their readiness to communicate in the target language through structured survey instruments. Quantitative methods are widely recognized as effective for collecting and analyzing measurable data, allowing researchers to obtain detailed and reliable insights into the phenomenon being studied (Kalsoom et al., 2020).

Participants

The participants of this study were undergraduate students enrolled in several public universities located in the Sindh province of Pakistan. A cluster sampling technique was used to select the sample. Out of the 31 public universities in the province, eight institutions were randomly chosen for participation in the study: Sindh University, Mehran University, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Government College University Hyderabad, Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU) Khairpur, Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology (QUEST) Nawabshah, Karachi University, and Dawood University.

From each university, 55 undergraduate students were selected, resulting in a total sample size of 440 participants. Among them, 144 participants (32.7%) were female, while 296 participants (67.3%) were male.

Instruments

Two questionnaires were used as the primary instruments for data collection. The first instrument was an 80-item scale designed to measure students' willingness to communicate in English ($\alpha = 0.97$). The items were adapted and refined from earlier studies conducted by Ali (2017), de Saint Léger and Storch (2009), Menzel

and Carrell (1999), Pattapong (2010), Peng and Woodrow (2010), Riasati and Rahimi (2018), and Yashima et al. (2018). The questionnaire assessed students' readiness to communicate in English across nine different classroom contexts. Each item was carefully developed to reflect authentic classroom situations experienced by ESL learners.

The second instrument measured students' motivational orientations toward learning English. This scale consisted of 31 items rated on a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" ($\alpha = 0.92$). The items were adapted from established studies, including those by Chalak and Kassaian (2010), Clement and Kruidenier (1983), Clement and Dörnyei (1990), Gardner (1985), Islam et al. (2013), Muftah and Rafik-Galea (2013), Vaezi (2008), Yaqoob (2014), and Yashima (2002).

The motivation questionnaire was divided into two categories to assess both integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation was measured through 15 items ($\alpha = 0.85$), while instrumental motivation was measured through another 15 items ($\alpha = 0.91$). These items were designed to identify the underlying factors that motivate learners to study English, whether for social and cultural integration or for practical and career-related purposes.

4. Data Collection

To collect the data, formal permission was first obtained from the department heads of the participating universities through a written consent form. After granting permission, the authorities were asked to confirm their agreement by signing a document ensuring that the study would be conducted ethically and without any conflicts of interest. The participants were clearly informed that their involvement in the study was voluntary. They were also assured that their participation would not influence their academic results in English courses and that there were no right or wrong answers to the questionnaire items.

The questionnaires were administered in the presence of the researcher and the participants' English instructor to ensure clarity and proper guidance during the process. Students were asked to complete the questionnaires individually, and the entire process required approximately two to five minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using statistical methods. The analysis was based on two primary instruments: the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English scale and the Motivation for Learning English scale. Descriptive statistical techniques, including mean scores and standard deviations, were used to determine the overall levels of students' willingness to communicate and their motivation to learn English.

To examine the relationship between WTC and motivational orientations, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted. This analysis helped determine the strength and direction of the relationship between WTC and both integrative and instrumental motivation.

Additionally, the study followed previously established criteria for interpreting levels of WTC and motivation used in earlier research. For WTC, mean scores ranging from 3.68 to 5.00 indicated a high level, scores between 2.34 and 3.67 represented a moderate level, and scores between 1.00 and 2.33 indicated a low level of willingness to communicate (Başöz & Erten, 2018; Kalra, 2017; Lian & Budin, 2014).

Similarly, for motivation, a mean score between 3.50 and 5.00 represented a high level of motivation, scores between 2.50 and 3.49 indicated a moderate level, and scores between 1.00 and 2.49 reflected a low level of motivation (Abu-Snoubar, 2017; Al-Khasawneh & Al-Omari, 2015; Ma, Wannaruk, & Lei, 2019). These classifications helped in interpreting the participants' motivational orientations and their willingness to communicate in English.

5. Results

Table 1. The undergraduates' L2 WTC in different classroom situations

The table shows that the WTC in English inside the classroom by the undergraduates was rated higher

than (3.68) in the majority of the situations, such as when the respondents work in groups, when they stay with the same gender, when they are in a particular task, when the learners receive time to prepare, and when they sit in the front of the class. However, the participants were also moderately willing to communicate in English with members of the opposite sex, in front of the class as a whole, and while sitting in the middle as well as in the back of the classroom.

	Classroom situations	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	WTC during grouping mode	4.05	.44	High
2	WTC during activities.	4.01	.40	High
3	WTC with the same gender.	4.02	.39	High
4	WTC with the opposite gender.	2.82	.69	Moderate
5	WTC when given preparation time	4.06	.33	High
6	WTC while seated in front of the class	3.87	.34	High
7	WTC while seated in the Middle of the class	3.53	.49	Moderate
8	WTC while seated at the back of the class	3.39	.47	Moderate
9	WTC in front of the whole class	3.52	.40	Moderate
10	Overall	3.7675	.29882	High WTC

Table 2. The undergraduates' integrative motivational orientation

Results indicate that learners' integrative motivation was higher than ($M = 3.5$) in most of the situations. On the other hand, the participants' integrative motivation was moderate in some situations. Their motivation was highest when communicating with English people ($M=4.04$) and lowest while listening to English songs. Overall, the informants' integrative motivation was high.

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	I learn English.... understand English culture.	3.41	1.20	Moderate
2	understand English art and literature.	3.77	1.15	High
3	Communicate with English-speaking people.	4.04	1.03	High
4	I like English food (e.g., fish and chips, roast beef, roast lamb, etc.).	3.33	1.35	Moderate
5	I like English songs.	3.24	1.24	Moderate
6	I like English movies.	3.48	1.30	Moderate
7	I like English TV programs.	3.34	1.29	Moderate
8	I like English artists (e.g., actors, musicians).	3.36	1.18	Moderate
9	I like to read magazines in English.	3.90	.99	High
10	I like to read newspapers in English.	3.90	1.02	High
11	I like to read books in English.	3.70	1.23	High
12	I like to read stories in English.	4.02	1.08	High
13	I enjoy learning it.	3.89	1.19	High
14	It is my favourite subject.	3.75	1.12	High
15	It is easy.	3.56	1.24	High
	Overall	3.6500	.57413	

Table 3: The undergraduates' instrumental motivational orientation

Results demonstrate that the undergraduates' instrumental motivation was higher than 3.5 in all situations. However, their motivation was highest for searching information on the internet, getting better better-paying job, and a future career, while their motivation was lowest for living in a foreign country, traveling as a tourist, and studying abroad, respectively. The respondents' overall instrumental motivation was high.

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1	I learn English.... for my future career.	4.13	.98	High
2	Get a better-paying job in the future.	4.11	1.74	High
3	it will help me to get a promotion in my job in the future.	3.67	1.11	High
4	work in a foreign country in the future.	3.78	1.08	High
5	Travel abroad as a tourist in the future.	3.63	1.06	High
6	live in a foreign country in the future.	3.55	1.14	High
7	Study abroad in the future.	3.63	1.12	High
8	Get a scholarship in the future	3.75	.97	High
9	compulsory subject in my BS program.	4.07	.99	High
10	My assignments require English proficiency.	3.74	1.17	High
11	Without passing it I cannot get my degree.	3.94	1.09	High
12	medium of instruction in my university.	3.84	1.08	High
13	An influential person in my society.	3.79	1.13	High
14	it keeps me up to date about the current issues.	3.92	.94	High
15	it enables me to use modern technology.	4.08	1.0	High
16	because it enables me to search for information on the internet.	4.30	.79	High
	Overall	3.8756	.60389	

Table 4. The Relationship between undergraduates' L2 WTC and motivational Orientations The results demonstrate a connection between motivational orientations and WTC in English. The link between WTC and integrative motivation is small but statistically significant ($r=.113$, $P<0.05$). However, when looking at instrumental motivation and WTC, there is a moderate but significant positive association ($r=.613$, $P<0.05$).

		WTC in English	Integrative Motivation	Instrumental Motivation
WTC in English	Pearson Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Integrative Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.113**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003		
Instrumental Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.146**	.613**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	

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

5. Discussion

The findings revealed that participants demonstrated a higher level of willingness to communicate (WTC) when they were engaged in group-based activities. During the classification of classroom contexts, learning situations included individual work, pair work, and small group interaction. The results indicated that students were more willing to communicate when working collaboratively rather than individually. These findings are consistent with previous studies which reported that learners' WTC tends to increase in group settings (Bernales, 2014; Cao, 2009; Kang, 2005; Cao & Philp, 2006; de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; Riasati & Rahimi, 2018). Similarly, Riasati and Rahimi (2018) found that Iranian EFL learners were more willing to communicate in pairs and small groups. Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2016) also observed that participants preferred working in pairs or small groups, although they sometimes reported reduced personal comfort in such settings. Cetinkaya (2005) and Riasati (2012) further noted that learners demonstrated greater willingness to communicate in pair and small-group contexts compared to individual tasks. Iranian EFL learners, for example, felt more comfortable using the target language when interacting with peers in small groups rather than when working alone. These findings collectively suggest that collaborative activities can significantly enhance learners' willingness to communicate, as group interaction encourages the exchange of ideas and facilitates knowledge sharing (Riasati, 2012).

The participants also showed strong cooperation while completing various classroom tasks. These activities included lectures, collaborative group work, and simulated communication tasks. Previous studies indicate that instructional activities such as debates and role-playing can significantly increase students' readiness to communicate in English (Cao, 2013; Eddy-U, 2015; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Riasati & Rahimi, 2018). Karnchanachari (2019) similarly found that Thai learners demonstrated greater willingness to communicate when participating in role-play activities. Likewise, Syed (2016) reported that role-playing activities were particularly effective in improving students' communication willingness and speaking ability in classroom settings.

Another factor examined in this study was the influence of gender interaction on WTC. The findings showed that students were more willing to communicate with peers of the same gender than with those of the opposite gender. Pakistani students generally appeared more comfortable interacting with same-gender classmates. Several sociocultural factors may explain this pattern. For instance, many schools in Pakistan maintain separate institutions for boys and girls at the primary and secondary levels (Ali, 2017). When students later enter universities where co-education is practiced, they may feel less comfortable interacting with the opposite gender. In addition, co-education is often discouraged in certain rural areas, and in some tribal regions where conservative religious beliefs prevail, mixed-gender interaction may be viewed as culturally inappropriate. Similar findings were reported by Riasati and Rahimi (2018), who observed that Iranian EFL learners were more willing to communicate with interlocutors of the same gender. Nadafian and Mehrdad (2015) also reported comparable results, suggesting that Iranian students showed greater willingness to communicate with same-sex peers. These similarities may reflect shared cultural and religious norms between Iranian and Pakistani societies.

Students' preparedness was another important factor influencing WTC. The results indicated that learners were more willing to communicate after they had been given time to prepare for classroom tasks. These findings align with those of Riasati and Rahimi (2018), who reported that students felt more comfortable participating in communication when they had sufficient preparation time. Riasati (2012) similarly found that learners' willingness to communicate increased when they were allowed time to organize their thoughts before speaking. Preparation time also reduced students' anxiety, increased their confidence, and improved their understanding of the topic being discussed.

The physical seating arrangement within the classroom also appeared to influence learners' willingness to communicate. The findings revealed that students seated near the front of the classroom displayed higher levels of WTC compared to those seated in the middle or back rows. These results are consistent with Syed

(2016), who reported that students positioned at the front of the classroom were more willing to participate because they felt more actively involved in the lesson. Riasati and Rahimi (2018) also found that students sitting in front seats were more inclined to communicate than those seated at the back of the classroom. According to their study, several factors contributed to this tendency: students sitting in the front felt more visible to others, received greater attention from the teacher, and had more opportunities to participate in classroom interaction. As a result, their willingness to communicate was higher when they occupied front-row seats.

In contrast, students demonstrated only moderate levels of willingness to communicate when addressing the entire class. De Saint Léger and Storch (2009) found that speaking in front of the whole class was perceived as one of the most challenging tasks by language learners. Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2016) also observed that many learners felt uncomfortable speaking before the entire class. This situation can increase students' anxiety due to factors such as peer evaluation and perceived pressure from both classmates and teachers (Cao, 2009). The findings of the present study similarly suggest that many students are reluctant to speak publicly in front of a large audience. Although moderate levels of anxiety may sometimes encourage students to speak, excessive anxiety often reduces their confidence and willingness to participate in communication.

The study also examined learners' motivational orientations toward learning English. The results showed that students possessed strong levels of both instrumental and integrative motivation. However, instrumental motivation was found to be stronger than integrative motivation. These findings are consistent with those of Kitjaroonchai and Kitjaroonchai (2012), who reported that Thai ESL learners were primarily motivated by practical considerations rather than by integrative goals. Similarly, Liu (2007) found that Chinese learners exhibited stronger instrumental motivation than integrative motivation. Kyriacou and Zhu (2008), in their study of students in Shanghai, reported that most participants were motivated to learn English in order to achieve academic and professional success, reflecting strong instrumental motivation.

Research conducted by Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) on Yemeni learners also indicated that instrumental motivation was more prominent than integrative motivation. However, Degang (2010) found slightly stronger integrative motivation among Thai students. The difference in findings may be attributed to the academic context of the participants in that study, who were specializing in Business English. Their professional ambitions and interest in engaging with the global business community may have strengthened their integrative orientation toward English-speaking societies. More broadly, many Asian learners tend to learn English for practical reasons, such as passing examinations, securing well-paid employment, and advancing their careers.

Finally, the results revealed a significant relationship between willingness to communicate and both types of motivational orientation. Instrumental and integrative motivations were both positively correlated with WTC, although instrumental motivation demonstrated a stronger relationship. These findings align with Peng's (2007) research on Chinese learners, which showed that both integrative and instrumental motivation were significantly related to WTC, with instrumental motivation displaying a stronger correlation. Liu and Hsu (2008) also reported a significant positive relationship between L2 motivation and willingness to communicate. Hashimoto (2002) similarly found that higher levels of motivation positively influenced learners' readiness to speak in a second language. MacIntyre et al. (2003) further demonstrated that students in immersion learning environments showed a positive relationship between motivation and WTC.

Additional evidence supporting this relationship was provided by Peng (2012), who found a strong connection between learners' motivation to study English as a foreign language and their willingness to communicate. Ma et al. (2019) also reported a significant correlation between WTC and both integrative and instrumental motivation, although instrumental motivation again demonstrated a stronger association. Overall, these findings suggest that motivation plays a crucial role in shaping learners' willingness to communicate in a second language. Students who possess stronger motivation—particularly instrumental motivation—are more likely to actively participate in communication using the target language.

5. Implications

The findings of the present study indicate that willingness to communicate (WTC) in a second language within the classroom is influenced by a combination of linguistic, contextual, psychological, and physical factors rather than by a single variable. This suggests that WTC should be viewed as a complex individual difference that varies depending on situational conditions. Based on these results, several important implications can be drawn for ESL teachers, curriculum designers, and educational stakeholders.

The results revealed that students demonstrated higher levels of WTC when participating in group-based activities and interactive tasks such as role-plays, presentations, and discussions. These findings suggest that collaborative learning environments encourage learners to share ideas, interact with peers, and become more confident in using English. Therefore, teachers should emphasize group work and activity-based learning strategies in their classrooms, as these approaches can strengthen students' motivation to speak in English. Additionally, teachers can create a supportive and relaxed classroom environment by incorporating communicative activities that help reduce anxiety and build learners' confidence in using the target language. From a curriculum development perspective, designers of English language programs—particularly in the Pakistani ESL context—should integrate collaborative and cooperative learning strategies into course structures. Such approaches can foster meaningful interaction among students and provide more opportunities for communicative language practice.

Another important finding of the study relates to the influence of gender on WTC. The results showed that learners were more willing to communicate with peers of the same gender than with those of the opposite gender. This indicates that gender dynamics can either facilitate or restrict students' willingness to participate in communication. To address this issue, educators and stakeholders should organize extracurricular activities that encourage interaction between male and female students. Activities such as academic debates, group discussions, and educational trips can help students become more comfortable interacting with peers of the opposite gender. Over time, such experiences may reduce apprehension and increase students' willingness to communicate across genders.

The study also demonstrated that learners were more willing to communicate when they were given sufficient preparation time before speaking tasks. Allowing students time to organize their ideas can reduce anxiety and increase their confidence during communication activities. Therefore, teachers should incorporate preparation time into classroom activities, enabling students to plan their responses and engage more effectively in second language communication (Cao, 2009; Kang, 2005).

In addition, the physical classroom environment was found to play a significant role in shaping students' willingness to communicate. Students reported higher levels of WTC when seated near the front of the classroom, whereas those seated in the middle or back rows showed lower levels of participation. To address this imbalance, teachers should periodically rotate seating arrangements so that all students have the opportunity to sit in front-row positions. Students seated at the front often feel more visible to the teacher and their peers, which can encourage greater participation in classroom activities (Riasati & Rahimi, 2018).

Finally, the study found that students demonstrated only moderate levels of willingness to communicate when speaking in front of the entire class. To improve this aspect, teachers should gradually encourage students to participate in whole-class activities such as presentations, role-plays, and class discussions. Providing regular opportunities for public speaking within a supportive classroom environment can help learners build confidence and increase their willingness to communicate before the entire class.

6. Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the in-class L2 WTC by focusing on integrative and instrumental motivation. Students' level of WTC was high in general, medium in the specific classroom contexts, when talking to the opposite sex, when sitting in the center or back of the class, and when talking to the whole class. The students demonstrated high motivation towards acquiring English fluency. The instrument-oriented motivation was

over their relationship-oriented motivation. Besides, there was a high relationship between L2 WTC and L2 motivation. This research, like others, limited and recommendations. This study is focused on undergraduates. Next, future studies should repeat a similar design at college and high school levels. The current study focus was on verbal communication. In the future, research should be directed towards the development of other communication skills (listening, writing, and reading). The data was collected using a cluster sampling method. Other methods of data collection could be used by future scientists. The current study demonstrated the relationship between WTC and both instrumental and integrative motivations. In subsequent studies, other motivational orientations such as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation should be included. The current study focused on undergraduates' WTC. Consideration might also be given in future research to teachers' ascriptions of WTC to students.

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