



The Relationship Between Iranian EFL Learners' International Posture and Willingness to Communicate Across High Versus Low English Proficiency Levels

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Abstract

The study attempted to investigate the relationship between male Iranian EFL learners' international posture (IP) and willingness to communicate (WTC) across two proficiency levels. The study was carried out with 106 participants from selected universities in Tabriz and Sarab, Northwest Iran, who were divided into two groups of high and low proficiency based on a Preliminary English Test (PET). The data were collected by the administration of WTC Scale (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990) and IP questionnaire (Yashima, 2000). The collected data were analyzed through Pearson correlation and independent samples t-test. The results showed that there was positive correlation between WTC and IP in the high-proficiency group while the correlation in the low proficiency-group was not statistically significant. It was also found that high proficiency learners had higher levels of both IP and WTC compared to their lower level counterparts. The findings of the study offer pedagogical implications for EFL learners, teachers, and syllabus designers.

Keywords: international posture, Iranian EFL learners' proficiency level, willingness to communicate

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Friday, March 5, 2021

Accepted: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

Published: Monday, November, 15, 2021

Available Online: Saturday, October, 23, 2021

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22049/jalda.2021.27167.1278>

Online ISSN: 2383-2460; Print ISSN: 2383-591x



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Introduction

Research on second language (L2) acquisition supports that interaction in the target language and production of linguistic output lead to language development (Ellis, 2008; Swain, 2000, 2005). L2 researchers seem to agree that language students who are more active in language use have a greater potential to develop communicative competence by having more opportunities to interact with others (Ellis, 2008). MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Conrod (2001) argue that willingness to communicate (WTC) facilitates the language learning process, a view based on their findings that higher-level WTC among students translates into more opportunity for practice in an L2 and authentic L2 use. Most of the researchers agree that WTC has a multidimensional nature and is a complicated term which can be affected by a wide range of cognitive, instructional, situational, cultural, and affective factors (Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2015).

Several other studies have also been done to investigate the variables that may predict WTC. According to Chu (2008), shyness and anxiety influenced WTC negatively. Oz, Demirezen, and Pourfeiz (2015) reported self-perceived communicative competence as the best predictor of WTC, while Yashima (2000) indicated “L2 communication confidence and international posture” (p. 63) as the variables directly affecting it. In addition to these studies, Cetinkaya (2005), in his research with Turkish college students, concluded that WTC was directly associated with the learners' attitudes towards the international community and perceptions of linguistic self-confidence.

Yashima (2000) used the concept of “international posture” (IP) in investigating the goals and attitudes of Japanese EFL students who showed that they had dual goals for learning English. Some participants were mainly concerned with their educational and academic goals, such as test scores and classroom achievement, and some others had the goal of communication with people who used English as a foreign language. The concept of IP had elements such as interest in foreign or international affairs, desire to travel abroad to stay or to work, and readiness to communicate with people from English speaking countries.

Another variable that seems to play a determining role in the learners' WTC is their language proficiency level. Previous research has shown positive interrelationship between EFL learners' language proficiency level (e.g., Biria & Jouybari, 2016; Rostami, Kashanian, & Golami, 2016). However, considering the results obtained from the previous research it becomes evident that there is still a gap in the literature regarding the factors that may be related to the learners' WTC. Thus, in order to shed light on the nature of the concept of WTC in relation to other variables, the present study attempted to investigate the relationship between male Iranian EFL learners' WTC and their international posture (IP) across high versus low English proficiency levels.

Literature Review

The idea of willingness to communicate (WTC) was primarily used by the researchers (e. g., McCroskey & Baer, 1985) in the first language (L1) research as adopted from an earlier concept “unwillingness to communicate” used by Burgoon (1976). WTC has been defined as a lasting desire to communicate when a person likes to do so. According to Xie (2011), WTC in L1 is a personality-related trait which is almost fixed in different communication settings and with different types of interlocutors. In other words, while other factors such as context may affect a person’s inclination to speak, individuals show rather fixed WTC in various situations. McCroskey and Richmond (1990) who worked on WTC with the native language speakers of various languages in different countries such as Micronesia, Sweden, and Australia found that several variables come to influence WTC in L1 acquisition including communication competence, self-efficacy, introversion, communication anxiety, and cultural diversities.

MacIntyre (1994) suggested a model for WTC in L1 acquisition in which the learners’ perceived communication ability and speaking anxiety have direct influence on their WTC. It was suggested that a combination of high language proficiency level and also a relative shortage of speaking anxiety lead to a high level of WTC. Another influencing variable in his model was the personality trait known as introversion and also communication apprehension. Other researchers who have also investigated the influence of individual’s variables on WTC have found that perceived communicative competence and communication apprehension are the best predictors of WTC (e. g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2001).

Two years later, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) carried out a research with 92 English speaking learners in a French immersion setting in Canada in order to operationalize MacIntyre’s (1994) model to interactions in the second or foreign language (L2). Based on the data gathered with questionnaires, they explored a relationship among different affective factors, like attitude, anxiety, and perceived competence, as well as the effect of these factors on the frequency of interactions in the L2.

Some years later, MacIntyre and his colleagues (MacIntyre et al., 1998) claimed that in L2 situation, the context is more complicated because language proficiency level is an additional variable. Therefore, they came to the conclusion that WTC in the L2 is not a simple manifestation of WTC in the L1. Thus, they defined the term as a person’s readiness to enter into communication at a particular time with people by using the foreign language and they also offered a model of WTC in the L2 in order to explain the interrelation between attitude and WTC with the claim that “authentic communication in the L2 can be seen as the result of complex system of interrelated variables” (p. 547). They used this model to explain the different levels of WTC in English language students.

In the evaluation of MacIntyre et al.’s (1998) model in the Chinese EFL context, Wen and Clément (2003) argued that the factors identified in the western model may not explain Chinese EFL learners’ WTC which is a far more complicated notion in the Chinese context under the influence of Confucianism. In

the view of Wen and Clément (2003), under the influence of Confucianism in China, cultural values make up the dominant force shaping an individual's perceptions and ways of learning, which may also manifest themselves in L2 communication. They suggest that Chinese students' lack of WTC in public is not just a language phenomenon, but deeply rooted in their other-directed self and submissive way of learning. In Chinese philosophy and culture, the other-directed self includes a face-protected orientation and the insider effect. According to Confucius, the self does not exist as a single entity; its existential reality is dialectically related to the family, the community, the nation, and the world (Chai & Chai, 1965; as cited in Wen & Clément, 2003).

The concept of international posture (IP) has been introduced by Yashima (2000) who operationally defined IP based on his preliminary studies with Japanese EFL learners who studied at the university level. The results of his research showed that the concept of IP was related to other variables including motivation, language proficiency, self-confidence and WTC. Yashima (2000) designed a foreign language communication model in which IP was significantly related to motivation which, in turn, was significantly related to the participants' level of English language proficiency. Motivation could also affect the learners' self-confidence in the L2 communication, which led to their WTC. Moreover, there was found a positive correlation between IP and L2 WTC because learners with higher scores on IP were more interested in intercultural contact, which often required the use of foreign language (Yashima, 2000).

Gender was also revealed as a substantial individual factor influencing learners' level of WTC. MacIntyre, et al. (2002) found that female learners appeared to outperform their male peers in terms of WTC levels. However, the study conducted by Jamaledin (2015) challenged their findings and showed that male learners had much higher WTC in L2 compared to female learners. Some other studies have found no significant difference between male and female learners' WTC. A study of 140 intermediate level EFL students in Iran found no significant difference in WTC between male and female participants (Valadi et al., 2015). Another study of 55 English department university students in Iran revealed no significant difference between female and male participants in communication apprehension, perceived competence, and WTC (Afghari & Sadeghi, 2012).

Regarding the role of other variables in predicting Iranian EFL learners' WTC, some studies have recently been done in the Iranian EFL context. For example, Karimi and Abbaszadeh (2017) examined the potential relationships among learners' WTC in English, their perceptions of autonomy-supportive teaching, their motivation and English-speaking self-efficacy. Regarding the role of teachers in promoting students' WTC, Zarei, Saeidi, and Ahangari (2019) examined the effect of teachers' socio-affective and pedagogic strategies on learners' WTC. Zakian (2019) found significant positive correlation between WTC and the learners' level of intelligence.

Research has also been done to examine the relationship between EFL learners' English language proficiency level and their WTC. Tan and Phairot (2018)

conducted a study with Thai EFL students who had different English proficiency levels. They found that language proficiency was a significant predictor of WTC because there were significant differences among low, moderate, and high proficient students in terms of their WTC both inside and outside classroom contexts. Another study in Iranian EFL context by Rostami, et al. (2016) showed a significant positive correlation between Iranian EFL learners' general English proficiency levels and their WTC. In their study, learners at the advanced level of English proficiency had higher WTC scores than those at the intermediate level. However, their research showed that the relationship between learners' age and WTC was not statistically significant. Biria and Jouybari (2016) also found that there was a statistically significant relationship among Iranian EFL learners' WTC, language proficiency, and oral proficiency meaning that those who had higher WTC could express themselves more fluently.

In Turkish EFL context, Altuner (2018) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between learners' level of WTC and two other variables of learners' gender and English language proficiency. The study which was done with 711 student participants at a state university in Turkey indicated that the learners had higher WTC in controlled situations (like classroom) compared to more meaning-focused situations. Regarding the learners' gender, the study showed that female participants were more willing to communicate in English in the classroom compared to their male classmates. Lastly, learners who had higher language proficiency levels were found to have higher WTC level compared to learners who had lower language proficiency levels.

However, other research studies have not all reached the same conclusion. For example, in a study, at Iranian context, Alemi, Daftarifard, and Pashmforoosh (2011) attempted to examine the Iranian EFL university students' WTC and its interaction with their language anxiety and language proficiency. The results revealed that the students' WTC was directly related to their language proficiency but surprisingly higher proficient learners showed to be less communicative than lower proficient ones outside the classroom. Moreover, the interaction between WTC and anxiety did not turn out to be significant in their study.

Since the findings of the previous research are far from conclusive, there is still need for further research in the field. Accordingly, the current study aimed at investigating the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' WTC and IP across two levels of English proficiency. The study attempted to find answers for the following four research questions.

- 1) Is there any relationship between Iranian high proficiency male EFL learners' WTC and their IP?
- 2) Is there any relationship between Iranian low proficient male EFL learners' WTC and their IP?
- 3) Is there any significant difference between high and low proficiency male EFL learners' WTC?
- 4) Is there any significant difference between high and low proficiency male EFL learners' IP?

Method

Participants and Sampling

Purposeful and convenience sampling was used to select the participants. In purposeful sampling, the researcher purposefully selects participants and in convenience sampling, the researcher selects participants who are willing to and available to participate in the study (Creswell, 2011). The participants in the study were 106 university students studying English Language Teaching (TEFL) and English Translation at the Islamic Azad University and Payameh-noor University in Sarab and Tabriz. In order to control the gender variable, the study focused only on male participants. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 29 and they came from East Azarbayjan. Based on the results of an English proficiency test, the participants were divided into two groups of high proficient (63) and low proficient (43) learners.

Instruments

Three instruments were used for data collection in the study. Preliminary English test (PET) was used to examine the participants' level of English proficiency. The test had four sections in accordance with four language skills; however, only the written sections were used because of practicality considerations. The total score of the written section including reading and writing subsections was 50 and the middle score of 25 was considered as the cut off score to divide the participants into high (above 25) and low (below 25) proficiency groups.

The instrument used for collecting data regarding the participants' WTC was a scaled questionnaire published by McCroskey (1992) with 20 items, of which 12 were related to four communication contexts (public speaking, talking in meetings, talking in small groups, and talking in dyads) and three types of receivers (strangers, acquaintances, and friends) and 8 items were filler (dummy) items. The participants were required to answer each item by using a number between 0 and 100 showing the percentage of their agreement with the situation in the item. The average of percentage scores for the items was calculated as each individual's score in the WTC Scale. Thus, the scores were in interval scale. (See Appendix A)

To measure the participants' IP, the researcher used a questionnaire designed by Yashima (2000) including 31 items and based on research with Japanese EFL learners. Each item had a 7-point scale that the participants selected with regard to their agreement or disagreement. The scale had subdivisions as follows. Items 1 to 4 (*Intercultural Friendship Orientation*) were related to intercultural friendship and asked the participants' reasons for taking English courses. Items 5 to 10 (*Motivational Intensity*) rated the degree to which each statement matched their state of mind. Items 11 to 16 asked the learners' *desire to learn English*. Items 17 to 23 asked the participants' tendency to approach or avoid foreigners in the local community. Items 24 to 29 examined how much an individual was interested in foreign affairs and living abroad. Items 30 and 31 asked the students' interest in international issues for example reading or watching news about

events in foreign countries. Thus, the range of the scores in the interval scale was between 7 and 217. (See Appendix B)

The reliability of the questionnaires was examined through their pilot administration to a group of 25 students from the same population. Cronbach α was found to be .89 and .91 for the WTC and IP questionnaires, respectively. For validity considerations, expert opinion and back-translation techniques were conducted. The original English versions were translated to Farsi and then back-translated into English. Two experienced EFL teachers were consulted for the final modified versions.

Design

The design of the study was quantitative and descriptive. The correlational design was used to investigate the relationship between the research variables, and between groups design was employed to compare the mean scores of WTC and IP between high and low proficiency groups. The variables were the male Iranian EFL learners' WTC, IP, and English proficiency level (high vs. low). The gender variable was controlled in the study.

Procedure

The study began with the researcher's inviting the students who studied TEFL and English Translation in Tabriz and Sarab Islamic Azad and Payameh-noor Universities. From among the students who were informed and invited, 106 students finally accepted to participate in the study. The participants took PET as a standard English proficiency test, and, based on their test scores, they were divided into two groups of high proficient and low proficient learners.

Before the administration of the questionnaires, their reliability and validity were checked and confirmed through a pilot administration with 25 candidates from the same population. The participants were then given the questionnaires and guided and informed as to how to respond and fill out the answer sheets. They were also ensured that their names and identities would be kept confidential. In all data collection sessions, the researcher was present to explain the goal of the study and help the participants to fully understand the content of the items in the questionnaires. In some cases, the researcher had to translate some items into Farsi in order to ensure their comprehensibility. The answer sheets were then collected and scored by the researcher and the results were statistically analyzed to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis and Results

Four sets of scores were obtained through the questionnaires; scores for WTC and international posture (IP) in high and low proficiency groups. The normality of the scores' distribution was checked by Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test of normality. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the scores obtained and the results of the KS test.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and KS Test Results for WTC and IP Scores in High and Low Groups

		HIP	HWTC	LIP	LWTC
N		63	63	43	43
Normal Parameters ^{a, b}	Mean	126.17	86.08	102.14	67.74
	Std. Deviation	16.380	6.414	10.618	8.197
	Absolute	.163	.184	.156	.097
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.061	.083	.156	.097
	Negative	-.163	-.184	-.096	-.097
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.297	1.457	1.026	.636
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.069	.088	.244	.813

As is seen in Table 1, High proficiency group with 63 participants had the mean score of 126.17 in IP and 86.08 in WTC. Low proficient group with 43 participants had the mean score of 102.14 in IP and 67.74 in WTC. P-values observed for One-sample KS test, for all sets of scores were above the alpha level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) confirming the normality of the distributions. Thus, it was legitimate to use parametric tests of inferential statistics to investigate the research questions.

Based on the first research question which asked if there was any significant correlation between the participants' WTC and IP in high proficiency group, a null hypothesis was developed and tested by running Pearson correlation. Table 2 shows the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 2

Correlation Between WTC and IP in High Proficient Group

		HIP	HWTC
MHIP	Pearson Correlation	1	.261
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.033
	N	63	63
MHWTC	Pearson Correlation	.261	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
	N	63	63

The correlation data in Table 2 shows that a positive coefficient of 0.261 was found between the high proficient learners' level of WTC and their IP. As the p-value observed (.033) was below the α level of significance ($p < .05$), the null hypothesis of no significant correlation between the two variables was rejected and the answer to the first research question was affirmative.

The second research question asked if there was any significant correlation between low proficient participants' WTC and IP. The results of Pearson correlation are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation Between WTC and IP in Low Proficient Group

		LIP	LWTC
LIP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.157
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.316
	N	43	43
LWTC	Pearson Correlation	-.157	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.316	
	N	43	43

As is seen in Table 3, Pearson coefficient of correlation between WTC and IP in low proficiency group was -.157 and the p-value observed was .316 and above the level of significance selected for the study ($p > .05$). So, the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant correlation between the two variables could not be rejected and the answer to the second research question was negative. It means that there was not a significant correlation between WTC and IP in participants with low English proficiency.

The third research question asked if there was any significant difference between high and low proficient learners' WTC. The Independent samples t-test was run to compare the two means of WTC scores in high and low proficient groups. Table 4 shows the results of the t-test.

Table 4
Independent Samples T-Test Comparing High and Low Proficient Groups' WTC Mean Scores

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
High- Low WTC	3.62	.060	12.86	104	.000	18.335	1.421
Equal variances assumed							
Low WTC			12.38	75.50	.000	18.335	1.488
Equal variances not assumed							

The results in Table 4 show that the p-value observed for the comparison between two groups was below α level of significance ($p < .05$) indicating that the null hypothesis of no difference between two means could be rejected. There was a statistically significant difference between the two means, and the high proficiency group mean (86.08) was significantly higher than that in low proficiency group (67.74). So, the answer to the third research question was affirmative

The last research question addressed the difference between high proficient and low proficient learners' IP. The independent samples t-test was run to examine the significance of the difference between the two mean scores. Table 5 shows the results of the t-test.

Table 5
Independent Samples T-Test Comparing High and Low Proficiency Groups' IP Mean Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
High-IP	Equal variances assumed	9.77	.002	8.47	104	.000	24.035	2.835
	Not equal variances assumed			9.16	103.7	.000	24.035	2.623

As is seen in Table 5, Leven's test returns the p-value (.002) below the α level of significance ($p < .05$) showing that the null hypothesis of no difference (equality) between two variances was rejected, and accordingly, the second row of t-test table shows the p-value observed for the t-value of 9.16 was under the α level of significance ($p < .05$), so the null hypothesis of no difference between the two means was rejected showing that the difference was statistically significant. The answer to the fourth research question was affirmative and the high proficient learners had significantly higher scores in IP than low proficient ones.

Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' WTC and IP while taking the learners' proficiency level into account. Significant moderate positive correlation (.261) was found between the high-proficient learners' WTC and IP. This finding was supportive of Yashima's (2000) model which suggested that there were relations among learners' IP and other learner variables such as learning motivation, language proficiency, and WTC.

The finding also supported Macintyre et al.'s (1998) heuristic model of WTC in L2 that explains the interrelation between attitude and WTC. Regarding the relation between participants' English proficiency level and their WTC level, the

study supported Rostami et al.'s (2016) research that showed a significant correlation between Iranian EFL learners' proficiency levels and their WTC. Also, the present study confirmed Cetinkaya's (2005) conclusion in his research with Turkish college students that WTC was directly associated with the learners' attitudes towards the international community.

The results concerning the correlation between WTC and IP of low-proficient learners indicated insignificant weak negative correlation (-.157). This finding is again in support of Yashima's (2000) model suggesting that learners' proficiency level is a determining factor in learners' attitudes to foreign language speakers and culture and their desire to participate in the communicative events.

The next purpose of the study was to compare the level of WTC and IP between high-proficiency and low-proficiency groups. High proficient learners turned out to be significantly more willing to communicate in EFL context. This finding can be justified regarding the dialectical relation between being able and being willing to successfully communicate and use the L2. However, the findings of the previous research have been far from conclusive. Alemi et al. (2011) found that Iranian university students' WTC was negatively related to their language proficiency. On the contrary, Rostami et al. (2016) who made observation to see how willing their research participants were to communicate in real classroom context found that there was a significant relationship between learners' proficiency levels and their WTC. In other words, advanced level learners were more willing to communicate than intermediate level learners. The study by Altiner (2018), in Turkish EFL context, also showed that learners who had higher language proficiency levels had higher WTC levels compared to learners who had lower language proficiency levels in the classroom context. Therefore, in addition to language proficiency, other situational factors come to play an intervening role in the complex array of relationships.

The effect of general L2 proficiency level on the learners' WTC and other communication related variables can be justified on the ground that communication and ability to participate in oral classroom activities require that learners have sufficient proficiency to feel confidence to take such high risks. Chang (2018) also found in his research with classroom EFL learners that English proficiency influenced the WTC of university students. Student participants revealed that they were always ready to participate in class. However, their basic English proficiency kept them from expressing their ideas, since they did not know how to initiate or finish conversation, as well as key words and phrases they could use to present their ideas. Student participants in Chang's (2018) study put forward the claim that their limited vocabulary knowledge left them at a literal loss for words. This had already been emphasized by (de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009, as cited in Chang, 2018) that limited vocabulary was one of the obstacles demotivating the WTC of ESL university students. The findings of the present study were also in line with those of Biria and Jouybari (2016) who had shown that there was a statistically significant relationship among WTC, language proficiency, and oral proficiency of the Iranian EFL learners.

Regarding the role of L2 proficiency level in L2 learners' international attitude, the present study reached similar results that high proficient learners enjoyed a higher level of International Posture compared to their Lower-level counterparts. This finding was consistent with the previous research that has found relationship between language proficiency and affective variables in general and learners' attitudes in particular. For example, Zeinivand, Azizifar, and Gowhari (2015) already found a strong positive correlation between Iranian EFL learners' attitudes and their EFL speaking proficiency. Miller (2017) also found positive relationship between language proficiency and learners' attitudes among young Spanish-English learners.

Contrary to the results of our study, the results of a study by Jahin and Idrees (2012) showed no significant correlation between EFL major students' attitudes towards English language learning and their overall English language proficiency. In Iran, Dehbozorgi (2012) investigated the effects of attitude towards language learning on EFL college students majoring in English translation. The results showed that the relationship between language proficiency level and attitude towards language learning was not significant.

All in all, the findings of this study offered more insights towards the current literature about Iranian EFL learners' WTC in a learning setting and its interaction with some variables such as language proficiency level and learners' attitudes toward international community. In relation to the sociocultural theory of learning on which the present study was grounded, it can be said that there exists a cyclical interrelationship between learners' opportunities for communication and interaction on one hand and their language proficiency that may lead to more WTC and more positive attitudes to the learning situations. Although the present study does not claim causality among WTC and any other variables investigated, some predictions can be made. For instance, high levels of English proficiency can be a good predictor of both WTC and IP. Besides, positive attitudes and high degrees of integrative motivation as compiled in the concept of IP in this study lead to higher participation on the part of language learners, and consequently, lead to higher WTC.

Conclusion

The results of the present study indicated the existence of relationship between L2 learners' language ability and their attitudes towards the language and language learning on one hand and their overall willingness to participate in communicative events in the L2. The relationship was positive among the learners who had almost high proficiency level while among the learners who had relatively lower proficiency level such relation did not significantly exist. Furthermore, the amount of both WTC and IP was higher among the learners with relatively higher L2 proficiency level.

The findings of this research can raise some crucial implications for designing teaching materials. Material designers should focus on developing contexts to increase students' WTC and help them develop positive attitudes

towards English speaking community. The attention should also be given to activities that come to increase the learners' general English proficiency since it turned out to be a predictor of the other two variables. An important message that this finding brings to the area of EFL learning and teaching is that the L2 instruction must incorporate activities to enhance learners' general English proficiency, on one hand, and to create a positive attitude to the international community and L2 speakers, on the other.

Interpretations of the results of this study may lead to several recommendations for future research studies. It is suggested that this study be replicated with a larger number of participants across different language proficiency levels, from intermediate to advanced levels. Other psychological variables such as language learning motivation and language learning anxiety can be incorporated in future studies.

The present study suffered from some limitations through employing a quantitative correlational design and controlling for the gender variable by selecting only male participants. Further studies, with more participants and mixed method designs are needed before coming to more valid conclusions. Considering this specific group of learners and learning context in the current study, any generalization from this study to other learning contexts should be drawn with caution. Since there are quite a large number of variables that come to affect the learners' overall communicative behavior and their L2 achievement, more qualitative research through open-ended questionnaires, free response interviews and close observations must be done in the future in order to explore the array of factors that may play a role in L2 learners' success and achievement.

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Appendix A

Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTC)

Directions: Below are 20 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Presume you have completely free choice. Indicate the percentage of times you would choose to communicate in each type of situation. Indicate in the space at the left of the item what percent of the time you would choose to communicate. (0 = Never to 100 = Always)

- _____ 1. Talk with a service station attendant.
- _____ 2. Talk with a physician.
- _____ 3. Present a talk to a group of strangers.
- _____ 4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.
- _____ 5. Talk with a salesperson in a store.
- _____ 6. Talk in a large meeting of friends.
- _____ 7. Talk with a police officer.
- _____ 8. Talk in a small group of strangers.
- _____ 9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.
- _____ 10. Talk with a waiter / waitress in a restaurant.
- _____ 11. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.
- _____ 12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.
- _____ 13. Talk with a secretary.
- _____ 14. Present a talk to a group of friends.
- _____ 15. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.
- _____ 16. Talk with a garbage collector.
- _____ 17. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.
- _____ 18. Talk with a spouse (or girl / boyfriend).
- _____ 19. Talk in a small group of friends.
- _____ 20. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

Appendix B

Questionnaire for International Posture (Adopted from Yashima, 2000)

Intercultural Friendship Orientation in English Learning

As a reason to study English:

1. It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people.
2. It will allow me to get to know various cultures and peoples.
3. I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.
4. I'd like to make friends with foreigners.

Motivational Intensity

5. Compared to my classmates, I think I study English relatively hard.
6. I often think about the words and ideas which I learn about in my English classes.
7. If English were not taught at school, I would study on my own.

8. I think I spend fairly long hours studying English.
9. I really try to learn English.
10. After I graduate from college, I will continue to study English and try to improve.

Desire to Learn English

11. When I have assignments to do in English, I try to do them immediately.
12. I would read English newspapers or magazines outside my English course work.
13. During English classes I'm absorbed in what is taught and concentrate on my studies.
14. I would like the number of English classes at school increased.
15. I absolutely believe English should be taught at school.
16. I find studying English more interesting than other subjects.

Intergroup Approach-Avoidance Tendency

17. I want to make friends with international students studying in Iran.
18. I try to avoid talking with foreigners if I can.
19. I would talk to an international student if there is one at school.
20. I wouldn't mind sharing an apartment or room with an international student.
21. I want to participate in a volunteer activity to help foreigners living in the neighboring community.
22. I would feel somewhat uncomfortable if a foreigner moved in next door.
23. I would help a foreigner who is in trouble communicating in a restaurant or at a station.

Interest in International Vocation or Activities

24. I would rather stay in my hometown.
25. I want to live in a foreign country.
26. I want to work in an international organization such as the United Nations.
27. I'm interested in volunteer activities in developing countries such as participating in Youth International Development Assistance.
28. I don't think what's happening overseas has much to do with my daily life.
29. I'd rather avoid the kind of work that sends me overseas frequently.

Interest in Foreign Affairs

30. I often read and watch news about foreign countries.
31. I often talk about situations and events in foreign countries with my family and / or friends.

Authors' Biographies



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