

Willingness to Communicate and EFL Speaking Achievement: The Case of Turkish Learners

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the relationship between the speaking component of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and speaking achievement exam scores of Turkish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. Additionally, the factors that influence WTC of students were investigated. To this end, a mixed-methods research design was employed. The quantitative data were gathered from 40 intermediate level students studying at a state university while 18 students representing low, moderate and high level of speaking achievement were chosen and administered an open-ended questionnaire for qualitative data. The results revealed that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between speaking component of WTC scale and speaking achievement scores of the participants. Specifically, those who have high level WTC tend to get higher scores from a speaking achievement exam. The participants also reported some factors influencing WTC and these can be categorized in four themes; teacher, topics, classroom activities and self-confidence.

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate, Speaking Achievement, EFL, Speaking skill

Introduction

The construct of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) has and continues to attract considerable interest in the L2 learning research (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014). WTC appears to be fundamental to productive engagement in spoken communication in English as a Foreign language (EFL) environments (Wood, 2016). WTC can be defined as a state of mind and given a state of self-confidence as a communicator (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). In L2 context, WTC can be best defined as a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2 (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clement, & Noels, 1998).

After being examined in the context of L2 communication and acquisition, WTC was seen as a mixture of internal and external factors, including L2 self-confidence, motivation, opportunity for contact, perception of L2 competence (Clement, Baker, & MacIntyre 2003; MacIntyre &

Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002). Additionally, some studies focused on the relationship between WTC and some specific elements. In the EFL setting of Iran, researchers examined the relationship between WTC and the personality traits of openness to experience and extraversion (Khany, & Nejad, 2017), and the relationship between WTC and learners' pragmatic knowledge (Hosseinpour, & Nevisi, 2017).

Likewise, the relationship between WTC and Arabic students' foreign language achievement was explored by Mahmoodi and Moazam (2014) in Arab setting. All these recent studies show that gaining an insight for WTC enables language teachers to know about its development, the aspects affecting it, and possible ways to help boost it (Zarrinabadi, 2014).

In their influential study, MacIntyre et al. (1998) incorporated personality, communicative competence, social situation, intergroup climate, attitudes and motivation, interpersonal motivation, L2 self-confidence, and desire to communicate. They found out that over 30 variables have possibility of affecting L2 WTC. In that study, L2 WTC is modelled as a pyramid that systematically presents interactions between situational and trait influences (Almurtadha, 2019). In that heuristic model, WTC is proposed to have interaction with cognitive-affective variables and social factors. L2 learners move from the basic influences shown in the bottom of the pyramid (e.g. personality, social situation, L2 self-confidence etc.) to the top layer which shows being able to communicate in the L2.

As Robson (2015) stated, WTC can be categorized as its occurring ways; at the trait, situational, and state levels. At the trait level, the variables are quite constant across unsimilar situations. Variables are changeable at the situational level despite being fixed to the situation. At the state level, WTC is measured at the certain moment it takes place. Empirical studies into L2 WTC have mainly centered on trait-like WTC and situational WTC where L2 WTC is interdependent among individual students' personalities, linguistic abilities, and situational and environmental conditions as well as communication strategies (Chen, 2018).

In addition to the studies carried out outside of EFL classroom, researchers mainly focused on language skills and achievement of L2 learners for in-class WTC. Especially, speaking achievement and oral proficiency has been regarded one of the most remarkable area in terms of WTC research.

WTC and Speaking Achievement in L2

In communicative classrooms, teachers who facilitate communicative language teaching tend to have encouraged students who have high degree of willingness to communicate in the foreign language (Riasati, 2018). In an EFL environments in which learners are not exposed to English outside classroom, language learners cannot find an opportunity to practice L2 except for classroom environment. For this reason, in-class speaking activities are essential to increase learners' WTC and speaking proficiency in L2. Speaking proficiency involves receptive and expressive skills, with the knowledge of oral language including phonology, vocabulary,

morphology, grammar, discourse features, and pragmatic skills (August & Shanahan, 2006). Being aware of these aspects, proficient L2 speakers are called with different terms as fluent, knowledgeable, competent, bilingual, or good (Višnja & Dunja, 2012).

WTC and speaking proficiency in L2 are likely to relate to each other as learners' desire to communicate results in high scores in their speaking proficiency in the previous research studies (Valadi, Rezaee and Baharvand, 2015; Chen, 2018; Cong-Lem, and Thu-Hang, 2018; Riasati, 2018).

In a recent study, Valadi, Rezaee & Baharvand (2015) investigated the relationship between WTC and oral proficiency of language learners in an Iranian context. 70 intermediate language learners participated in their study. The WTC questionnaire was provided to the participants and a standard speaking test was carried out. The results of correlational analyses displayed that there was a strong relationship between WTC of learners and their oral proficiency.

In another study, Cong-Lem & Thu-Hang (2018) examined the interplay among WTC, speaking test anxiety, and speaking proficiency. Participants were 40 tenth-grade students at a high school in the southern part of Vietnam. The research instruments included a speaking-test anxiety and an L2 WTC scale developed by the researchers. The results indicated that WTC was positively associated with the participants' speaking proficiency.

In a similar study, Riasati (2018) carried out a study which tries to find out the extent to which WTC contributes to an improvement in the learners' speaking ability. 156 EFL learners participated in the study. Some questionnaires were used to evaluate WTC and other variables. In addition, participants took an IELTS speaking test to see if their WTC is related to their speaking performance. Findings revealed that learners who were more willing to speak got a higher speaking score.

Another study in that vein aimed to explore the type of learning task to foster WTC. Based on this, Chen (2018) designed a higher-order thinking (HOT) approach to see the relationship between WTC and L2 speaking proficiency. Data were collected through observation from pre-test, post-test, delayed post-test, and stimulated recall interviews with the participation of two freshman EFL classes. Results showed that the HOT approach significantly enhanced participants' WTC and that WTC was positively correlated with L2 speaking ability. It was seen that there was a positive attitude toward the thinking approach in student interviews and a perceived improvement for speaking and WTC in L2.

These studies illuminate the relation between L2 WTC and L2 speaking achievement in that learners who are willing to communicate gain higher speaking score.

Factors Affecting Willingness to Communicate

The variables which constitute WTC are required to be handled thoroughly in foreign language education so as to explain WTC's entangled condition in the process of language learning (Kanat-Mutluoglu, 2016). With this aim, many researchers investigated the essential factors affecting WTC in L2 environment.

In Persian context, WTC studies examined the effects of several key components on WTC including the effect of learner autonomy (Khaki, 2013), emotional intelligence (Ketabdar, Yazdani, & Yarahmadi, 2014), teaching communicative strategies (Mirsane, & Khabiri, 2016), code-switching (Noorbar & Mamaghani, 2016), the simultaneous impact of anxiety, self – confidence, communicative competence, and international posture (Aliakbari, Kamangar, & Khany, 2016), and a person-centred future time perspective intervention (Zarrinabadi, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2017).

Similar studies were seen in Omani and Indonesian contexts. In the setting of Oman, possible effects of communication and affective variables on WTC were searched (Al Amrani, 2019). In EFL setting of Indonesia, considerable effects of perception, motivation and communicative self-confidence on WTC of Indonesian learners were investigated (Fadilah, 2018).

Pawlak, Mystkowska-Wiertelak, and Bielak (2016) summarized the fundamental impacts on changes in WTC levels identified by researchers in a table;

Table 1

Summary of the main influences on changes in WTC levels

Study	Variables affecting WTC levels (often in interaction)
Kang (2005)	“security, excitement, responsibility”
Cao & Philip (2006)	“group size, familiarity with interlocutors, their participation, knowledge of the topic, self-confidence and cultural background”
De Saint Léger & Storch (2009)	“students’ perceptions of their speaking skills, contributions they made to in-class oral activities, attitudes towards these activities”
Cao (2011)	“self-confidence, personality, emotion, perceived opportunity to communicate, topic, task, interlocutor, teacher, group size, linguistic factors”
MacIntyre, Burns & Jessome (2011)	“context”
MacIntyre & Legatto (2011)	“linguistic factors (lexis), context, proficiency”
Cao (2013)	“task, experience, confidence”
Cao (2014)	“individual characteristics, classroom environmental conditions, and linguistic factors”
Peng (2014)	“motivation, learner beliefs, classroom context, aspects of perceived communication confidence, such as topical knowledge, topical familiarity or critical thinking ability”
Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak (2014)	“participation format (monologue vs. dialogue), fatigue”
Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2015)	“presence or absence of teacher, degree of familiarity with interlocutor, having ideas to share”

Some other factors which enhance learners' WTC outside classroom like studying or spending time abroad have been investigated in several EFL contexts. For example, Kang (2014) examined the effects of study-abroad (SA) experiences on EFL learners' WTC. With the participation of 60 Korean university, the results indicated that the EFL learners' WTC was significantly improved as a consequence of SA experience. Similar findings are shared by Leis (2015) who examined the effectiveness of a short study abroad program on WTC. In that regard, 80 Japanese junior high school students answered a pre and post questionnaire after they attended a ten-day study abroad program to Sydney, Australia. The findings showed that there was a salient decrease in the anxiety level of students for English speaking practice.

While factors generally concentrate on student aspect, Chang (2018) asserts that research does not focus on the viewpoints of the ESL university students and their professor in terms of factors affecting WTC. Based on this gap, the researcher investigated the factors that influence the WTC of ESL university students from the point of both the students and their oral communication professor. Chang (2018) found out that the influencing factors for WTC from student perspective were "interest in the topics, conversation partner, vocabulary and pronunciation, English language proficiency, student-professor rapport, and physical and psychological issues." It was revealed that the professor also identified some factors as influencing students' WTC as "cultural background, interest in the activity, attitude toward the nationality of the professor, and fatigue." These studies pinpoint a requirement for determining the factors affecting WTC and improving students' WTC to help them acquire the target language.

Current Turkish Research on Willingness to Communicate

In Turkish EFL context, despite limited number of studies exploring L2 WTC, there have been some attempts to illuminate the learners' desire to speak in educational setting.

In a study, Çetinkaya (2005) investigated whether college students who were learning English in Turkish EFL context were willing to communicate when they were provided an opportunity and whether the WTC model explained the relations among social-psychological, linguistic and communication variables in this context. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis was used to investigate the interrelations among students' willingness to communicate in English, their language learning motivation, communication anxiety, perceived communication competence, attitude toward the international community, and personality. The findings demonstrated that Turkish students were somewhat willing to communicate in English and their WTC in English was directly related to their attitudes towards international community and linguistic self-confidence. The attitude toward international community was correlated with personality. Students' motivation and personality were also indirectly related to their WTC through their linguistic self-confidence.

Şener (2014) displayed the levels of WTC of Turkish ELT department students together with its relationships with their linguistic self-confidence, motivation, attitudes toward international

community, and personality by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Results revealed that there were significant correlations between self-confidence, attitude toward international community, and WTC in English. It was seen that the most significant predictor of learners' WTC was self-confidence. Additionally, students' motivation had a partial impact on their WTC.

In another study, investigating the relationship between the levels of WTC inside the classroom and language learning strategy (LLS) use among Turkish university students, Merç (2014) found out that Turkish EFL learners were willing to communicate in the classroom in a range from half of the time to usually willing. In addition, a significant positive correlation was found between WTC and LLS.

Öz, Demirezen and Pourfeiz (2015) examined EFL learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) in Turkish context. The participants who were enrolled at EFL teacher education program at a Turkish university answered questionnaires on WTC, communication and affective factors. The results showed that 21.6% of the participants had high WTC, 13.4% had high communicative competence and 18.7% had high level of communication apprehension. In addition, the results of SEM demonstrated that communication competence and communication apprehension were the strong predictors of WTC while motivational factors indirectly affected WTC. A strong correlation between integrativeness and the ideal L2 self and attitudes towards learning situation and instrumental orientations was found out. In other words, when learners are more aware of their ideal L2 selves, they will be motivated to communicate more.

Examining WTC through a structural model with the attendance of 251 freshmen students, Asmalı (2016) found out that participants' WTC in English directly affected by their attitude toward international community, their motivation to learn English, and their confidence in English communication. Carrying out a research on the predicting effect of three self-guided motivational units, namely, ideal L2 self, academic self-concept and levels of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) on L2 WTC, Kanat-Mutluoglu (2016) found out that ideal L2 self was the best predictor of L2 WTC. Similarly, Öz and Bursalı (2018) found out parallel results that the relationship between the Ideal L2 Self and L2 WTC was statistically significant. In their study, Hişmanoğlu and Özüdoğru (2017) revealed that major of learners or their experience of communication with English speaking people influenced learners' WTC in English.

As can be inferred from the studies cited in the previous studies, research in Turkish context mainly underlines the concepts of WTC level of L2 learners and its relationship with learner's self-confidence and motivation. Although some recent studies carried out to explore the factors related to the L2 WTC, the reasons why tertiary level Turkish EFL learners show for their willingness or unwillingness while communicating in L2 have not been investigated thoroughly. Thus, there is still a need for conducting studies in Turkish EFL context to shed light on the relation between WTC and speaking achievement, particularly at tertiary level. Additionally, carrying out more research on WTC in terms of speaking proficiency of learners

and their motives to be engaged would provide opportunities for both L2 learners and teachers to enhance the production of target language.

Overall, given the dearth of research on the exploration of WTC regarding speaking achievement in Turkish EFL context, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between the speaking component of WTC inside the classroom and speaking achievement exam scores of Turkish EFL learners?
2. What factors affect L2 WTC of Turkish EFL learners in speaking skill?

Methodology

The current research followed a mixed-method design in which a quantitative research was conducted first, then qualitative data was analysed to explain and clarify the findings in depth, as part of ‘explanatory design’ (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Convenience sampling technique, which requires willing and available participants (Dörnyei, 2007), was used for recruiting the subjects of the study. The quantitative dimension of the study consisted of a correlation analysis while the qualitative dimension included the data obtained from the open – ended questionnaire.

Participants

The participants in the study were Turkish intermediate level EFL learners studying at English Preparatory Program of a state university. There were 40 participants including 21 males and 19 females whose ages are ranged between 18 and 22. In the beginning of the academic year, the institution held a proficiency and a placement exam designed by the testing office of the institution and based on the results of these exams, the students were placed. For this reason, the participant group was homogenous. Intermediate level is categorized in independent user based on CEFR (Common European Framework). CEFR specified that B1 learners

“Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.

Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.

Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes/ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.” (Council of Europe, 2001)

The students have been taking 20 hours of English classes, including 12 hours ‘Main Course’ and 8 hours ‘Reading and Writing’. A separate speaking course does not take place in the

curriculum of the institution; however, instructors were expected to do speaking activities of main course books and reading books in classes.

Setting

The study was carried out at English Preparatory Program of a state university in İstanbul, Turkey. The preparatory program provides one-year English education for students who will study at English departments like Molecular Biology and Genetics and Political Science and Public Administration. In addition to these English obligatory programs, students studying at departments in which Turkish is medium of instruction prefer to study at English preparatory program voluntarily in their first year. The program aims B2 (upper intermediate) exit level based on CEFR. The program offers 22-20 hours in a week according to students' level.

Instruments

In order to find out a relation between the level of WTC inside the classroom and speaking achievement, and the factors affecting WTC, three data collection instruments were used: WTC scale, speaking achievement exam scores, and an open-ended questionnaire.

WTC Scale

In the study, WTC Scale developed by MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod (2001) was used. The scale is originally composed of four sections. In the current study, only one section of the scale entitled “Willingness to Communicate Inside the Classroom” was used. The scale includes 27 items to measure students' willingness to engage in classroom tasks and activities.

The items are categorized in four skills as speaking (8 items), reading (6 items), writing (8 items) and comprehension (5 items) in L2. Students are supposed to demonstrate their willingness to communicate on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=almost never willing, 2=sometimes willing, 3=willing half of the time, 4=usually willing, 5=almost always willing) in each sentence of related sub-skills. The scale was used in the research conducted by Merç (2014) and translated into Turkish in the context of that research. This Turkish version of the scale was used for the current study as well, with slight modifications to clarify the context.

Speaking Achievement Exam Scores

Speaking achievement exam scores were obtained from the institution at which participants were studying. English Preparatory Program of that institution holds periodical midterm exams including written and speaking parts every two months. In speaking part, students have approximately 10 minutes to speak and answer the questions of the interlocutor.

Speaking exam is composed of three parts. In the first part, the teacher asks the student questions about daily life. Then, the teacher asks two different questions to the student about education, technology, health or food. Afterwards, the student picks a topic among several speaking topics asking their opinions. The student prepares for the topic by taking notes in 3 minutes and starts sharing his ideas on the topic. Two teachers assess the student's speaking performance. The Interlocutor teacher gives an overall score over 20 and the Assessor teacher gives his score based on a detailed rubric (Appendix A). The student performance is recorded via audio recorder. If there is a big difference between two teachers' marking (more than 3 points), teachers listen to the record together and decide on the final score of the student. In the present study, midterm 3 (B1 level exam) speaking scores of the students were collected.

Open-ended Questionnaire on Factors Affecting WTC

Open-ended questionnaire (Appendix B) was adapted from the study carried out by Chang (2018). The questionnaire included 6 questions. These questions were asked in participants' native language, so that they could give answers in their mother tongue which help them to feel better while expressing themselves. The aim of the questionnaire was to find out reasons for why students show willingness or unwillingness in communicative engagement in the class.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedure followed the steps below:

- 1) Firstly, the participants, in different three classes, were asked to answer WTC scale during a class hour by their teachers. Participants completed the scale in 15-20 minutes.
- 2) Secondly, speaking achievement exam scores of the participants were obtained from the institution at which students studying after a formal permission.
- 3) After the completion of first two stages, the participants with high score, medium score and low score were randomly chosen as the representatives of each group and the questionnaire was administered to these students. 6 students from each group, 18 in total, were asked to answer the open-ended questionnaire in their regular class hour with the guidance of their teacher.

Data Analysis Procedures

In order to answer the first research question "Is there a correlation between the speaking component of WTC inside the classroom and speaking achievement exam scores of Turkish EFL learners?", the descriptive analysis was conducted and mean scores of WTC inside the classroom scale and speaking achievement scores were calculated. Afterwards, the Product – Moment correlation coefficients were calculated between the speaking component of WTC inside the classroom scale and speaking exam scores.

To answer the second research question “What factors affect L2 WTC of Turkish EFL learners in speaking skill?”, the information gained from qualitative data was analysed using Content Analysis Method (Miles & Hubermann, 1994). Focusing on three categories as strategies to develop EFL learners’ communicative skills, factors affecting WTC in their opinion and their suggestions to have higher WTC presented in the open-ended questionnaire, codes were determined. Similar codes were grouped together for next step to form subcategories. Then, emerging subcategories were written under the title of main categories; strategies to develop their communicative skills, factors affecting WTC in their opinion and their suggestions to have higher WTC. To show evidence from data, some excerpts were presented for main categories.

Results and Discussion

RQ 1: Is there a correlation between the speaking component of WTC inside the classroom and speaking achievement exam scores of Turkish EFL learners?

In order to calculate the correlation, firstly mean scores of the whole scale and the components of the scale were calculated. This analysis aimed to find out the level of WTC inside the classroom of Turkish EFL learners in four language skills. The descriptive analysis of the WTC inside the classroom scale displayed that the overall mean for WTC was 3.34 (3= Willing half of the time, 4= Usually willing). Findings revealed that the participants were placed between half willing and usually willing as the scale illustrates.

Table 2

Mean scores for WTC Inside the Classroom

Components	N	Mean
Reading	40	3,7958
Comprehension	40	3,7500
Speaking	40	3,1781
Writing	40	2,9219
Overall	40	3,3454

1= Almost never willing
2= Sometimes willing
3= Willing half of the time
4= Usually willing
5= Almost always willing

In addition, the mean scores of the four components were calculated to see the level of WTC inside the classroom. It was found out that willingness to read in class (on your own) was the highest component among others (3.79). The second highest component was comprehension

in class (3.75). Speaking in class took the third place among other components (3.17) and writing in class had the lowest mean (2.92).

As displayed in Table 2 above, Turkish EFL learners' WTC level is slightly high above "willing half of the time" in overall mean score and in mean scores of the components, except writing. It is seen that the participants are quite willing to communicate while they do not have overall willingness inside the classroom in terms of speaking skill. It is a striking point that the participants are not much willing for writing skill which has the lowest mean score.

Table 3 below shows the correlation analysis between the speaking component of the WTC inside the classroom scale and participants' speaking achievement exam scores to see whether there is a relationship between them.

Table 3

Correlations among speaking component of WTC and speaking exam scores

		WTC Speaking	Speaking Exam Scores
WTC Speaking Component	Pearson Correlation	1	,329*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,038
	N	40	40
Speaking Exam Scores	Pearson Correlation	,329*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,038	
	N	40	40

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

The findings in Table 3 represent that there is a significant moderate positive correlation between speaking component of WTC scale and speaking achievement of the participants ($r=.329, p<.05$). It indicates that those who has higher level of WTC in speaking component tend to get higher scores from the speaking achievement exam, or vice versa.

These results are in line with the previous research in various contexts (Valadi, Rezaee & Baharvand, 2015; Chen, 2018; Cong-Lem, & Thu-Hang, 2018; Riasati, 2018). The findings also agree with the previous study conducted by Merç (2014) in Turkish EFL context. The researcher found out that first-year Turkish university students who were enrolled at English Language Department were neither unwilling nor high willing to communicate inside the classroom in terms of both overall willingness and willingness in four language skills. In a similar way, Merç (2014) noticed that the students were quite less willing for the productive skills, speaking and writing.

RQ 2: What factors affect L2 WTC of Turkish EFL learners in speaking skill?

To find out factors affecting L2 WTC of Turkish learners, participants' answers were categorized in three main categories; strategies to develop their communicative skills, factors affecting WTC in their opinion and their suggestions to have higher WTC. Sub

categories can be listed as practicing English, watching English movies / TV series and participating speaking activities for the first main category; teacher, topics, classroom activities and self-confidence for the second main category; and speaking, reading and listening for the last main category.

Findings related to developing communicative skills are demonstrated in Table 4 below. It is seen that all groups practice English even if in different contexts and watch English movies and TV series even if with different purposes.

Table 4

Participants' answers based on developing communicative skills

	High	Moderate	Low
Developing communicative skills	➤ Practicing English with family members with foreign friends with tourists with international students via message on their own ➤ Watching English movies/TV series repeating dialogues heard in movies in real life learning patterns ➤ Participating in classroom activities speaking activities in class	➤ Practicing English reading books listening podcast listening songs with lyrics ➤ Watching English movies/TV series with subtitles learning words ➤ Participating speaking activities in class	➤ Practicing English with foreign friends reading books messaging with friends playing games study on internet ➤ Watching English movies/TV series

The analysis showed that students with low speaking scores do not mention about participating speaking activities in class while answering the related question. It can be concluded that low level students do not get involved in-class speaking activities and so they do not consider this strategy as developing their communicative skills. Besides, low level students only mention about watching English movies or TV series, but they do not state any purpose or strategy for it. On the other hand, high level students state they learn patterns while moderate level students express they learn words through English movies.

The excerpts below illustrate how students improve their communicative skills.

- (1). I feel anxious while I am speaking English, so I go to Sultanahmet and **speak English with tourists** there to improve my speaking skill and **control my anxiety**. (Student 19 –Moderate level group)
- (2). I try to understand English words by watching English TV series and movies. (Student 15 – Moderate level group)
- (3). I talk to my **family members in English**. I have **speaking practice with my foreign friends** once a week. I **repeat the dialogues** performed on English TV series in my daily life. (Student 28 – High level group)

The excerpts show that students with higher scores use various strategies and real-life opportunities to enhance their speaking skills in target language including practicing English with family members, foreign friends, tourists and using the phrases in English movies.

Findings related to factors affecting WTC are illustrated in Table 5 below. Based on findings, the participants' answers were categorized in four subcategories; teacher, topics, classroom activities and self-confidence. As it is seen in Table 5, only low and moderate level groups mention self-confidence. It can be concluded that while high level students do not have a problem with their self-confidence, low and moderate level students consider it as an influencing element for their WTC.

It is noteworthy that low level students give more detailed explanation about self – confidence. They expressed some reasons for not being self-confident such as feeling shy, feeling not proficient, being afraid of making mistake and being introvert.

Table 5

Participants' answers for factors affecting WTC

	High	Moderate	Low
Factors affecting WTC in speaking skill	➤ Teacher with fun activities listening to the students motivation knowledge encouragement ➤ Topics enjoyable interesting ➤ Classroom activities group-work pair work teacher-student activities	➤ Teacher good rapport encouragement having fun ➤ Topics enjoyable interesting background information related to their major ➤ Classroom activities friendly atmosphere pair work games ➤ Self-confidence fear of making mistake being introvert	➤ Teacher good rapport encouragement ➤ Topics enjoyable interesting interest-based ➤ Classroom activities motivation in class pair work games ➤ Self-confidence fear of making mistake being introvert feeling shy feeling not proficient

The excerpts below demonstrate these key points affecting students desire to do speaking practice in the class.

(4). Speaking in front of others is the thing makes me unwilling to communicate. I am unwilling because I'm **afraid of making mistake** and I **feel nervous**. (Student 31 – Moderate level group)

(5). The biggest reason is **self-confidence**. For this reason, **it bothers me when the teacher asks me a question** even if I know the answer or the topic. I feel really **nervous** when the question is addressed, and I start **not to participate** to the activities. But I understand them.

If I were a teacher, I would do anything I could to make students engaged. (Student 10 – Low level group)

(6). I feel relaxed while I am talking to my friend next to me and I become eager to speak. (Student 26 – Moderate level group)

The excerpts above indicate that *low level student 10* (5) emphasizes the importance of self-confidence. They know the answers of the questions asked in the class; however, they are not confident enough to share their opinions in L2. Similarly, *moderate level student 31* (4) declares that being afraid of making mistake hinders him speak with others. *Moderate level student 26* (6) confirms the result that moderate and low-level students prefer to talk to their peers in pair-work while practicing speaking in the class. They avoid speaking in L2 while all classmates are listening to them. These findings align with the recent study of Tan, Yough and Wang (2018). The study demonstrated that confidence had the highest weight in determining Chinese undergraduate students' WTC.

Similar to the study of Osterman (2014), the findings demonstrate that the environment play an essential role in why students do not actively engage in English communication in class or with each other. Osterman (2014) found out that some students were less active and participating than they need to be. Therefore, this demotivated mood seemed to affect the classroom atmosphere and decrease the level of WTC. In the current study, the participants share same opinions as stating, "motivation in class" and "friendly atmosphere" as factors affecting their willingness to speak in the class. One of the participants in Osterman's study (2014) mentioned that when the "classroom is quiet," it prevents him from talking. Similar comments are seen in the excerpts presented above.

Another striking subcategory is the 'teacher' factor. High level students consider teacher as a motivator, organizer of fun activities and an authority for delivering knowledge. These factors are lessening through moderate and low-level students. Moderate level students have high WTC when their teachers have good rapport, encourage them and create an enjoyable atmosphere in the class. However, low level students only expect their teachers to have good rapport and to encourage the students.

The findings related to 'teacher' as a factor affecting WTC show similarity with previous studies (Zarrinabadi, 2014; Vongsila & Reinders, 2016; Chang, 2018). Zarrinabadi (2014) explored how teachers can affect learners' tendency to talk in class. The findings showed that teachers' error correction and support exert influence on learners' WTC. In the current study, the participants highlighted teachers' error correction and encouragement as a factor affecting their willingness to speak. It was found out that participants do not have high level of WTC when the teacher corrects their mistakes constantly. They also feel avoidance of making mistakes in front of their classmates, thus they do not prefer teacher's interference.

Table 6

Participants' suggestions for WTC

	High	Moderate	Low
Suggestions for WTC	➤ Speaking learning through mistakes for fun - not feeling anxious ➤ Reading focusing on understanding interesting	➤ Speaking with foreign friends on your own - summer job to speak presentation - not feeling anxious ➤ Reading books	➤ Speaking attending clubs activities - online sources ➤ Reading books ➤ Listening music

Findings related to suggestions for WTC are displayed in Table 6 above. The results yielded that the participants' answers were categorized in three subcategories for WTC suggestions; speaking, reading and listening. Table 6 demonstrates that low level students do not mention the experience of speaking with foreign people or international friends. In terms of speaking practices, they suggest attending a speaking club, activities and using online sources. Real life interaction with native speakers was not found in their suggestions. On the contrary, the moderate level students suggest speaking with foreign friends, working in summer to speak English and making a presentation, which reflect real life experiences.

As Yu (2015) states WTC is dynamic and is jointly established by the interlocutors during communication. Higher level students mentioned factors related to speaking with foreign people to speak English while low level students do not include these factors. As the study of Yu (2015) supports, co-constructed speaking environment formed by the communication participants tend to increase WTC. Low level students' low WTC might stem from not having real-life conversation in this case.

The excerpts below support this finding since some students expect real-life context in the class. *Low level student 37 (7)* and *student 18 (8)* state that boring activities in the class are the reason for their unwillingness to communicate.

- (6). The topics are **boring**. I suggest my teacher to do speaking activities like discussion groups, it would be more fun. (*Student 37 – Low level group*)
- (7). I suggest my teacher **not to follow boring parts of the book**. I want them to ask questions about the things we like, or we wonder. (*Student 18 – Low level group*)

Conclusions and Implications

This study tried to discover the relationship between the speaking component of WTC inside the classroom and speaking achievement exam scores of Turkish EFL learners. The research also aimed to investigate factors that influence students' WTC in target language based on students' views. The results of this study demonstrated that there was a significant moderate positive correlation between speaking component of WTC scale and speaking achievement

exam scores of the participants. In other words, those who have high level WTC in speaking skill tend to get higher scores from a speaking achievement exam.

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis demonstrated that teacher, topic, classroom activity and self-confidence are related factors which influence students' WTC. Students' suggestions for high level WTC consisted of improving speaking, reading and listening skills. Besides, the findings indicated that students with low speaking scores tend to ignore speaking activities. They do not prefer participating in classroom activities and speaking activities in class. Unfortunately, it creates a vicious circle; they may not put in effort, then they become unwilling to communicate and consequently their speaking score might go down. In the end, they might convince themselves that they cannot speak English.

Considering the results of the study, educators should take the factors affecting students' WTC into account. The results of the study hold several implications for EFL curriculum designers and EFL teachers. In the curriculum design, the experts should determine students' needs for speaking skill and prepare the program based on these needs, aims and expected outcomes. Assignments appealing students' interests like watching a movie, listening a song or speaking English with a tourist could foster motivation, autonomy and WTC.

EFL teachers have a major role in enhancing student engagement, so they should offer opportunities to evoke interest and interaction among students to generate WTC and improve their self-confidence. Considering that students feel more relaxed while speaking to their peers, teachers should promote peer-interaction which will lead to pair works and group works. After experiencing collaborative speaking tasks for a while, students could realize that they are able to speak in L2 with everyone in the class and their fear could disappear. Moreover, teachers' encouragement, friendly manner and good rapport in learning environment can result in less anxiety for students.

Some limitations of the current research include limited number of participants ($n=40$), restricted period for speaking achievement results and the specific context of English preparatory program. Further research is required among other EFL contexts to determine if the similar results are revealed. Furthermore, research studies which explore each main factor affecting WTC should be conducted. Addressing specific reasons could bring solutions, so such research findings could provide different perspectives in terms of how to improve WTC.

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Appendix A

Speaking Achievement Exam Rubric

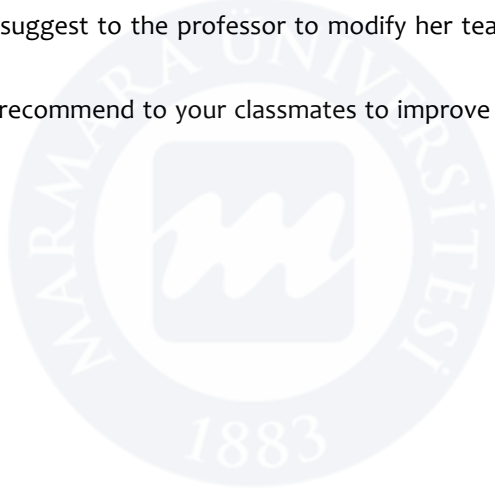
	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation and Fluency		Discourse Management
			Pronunciation	Fluency	
5	- Shows a good degree of control of a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms.	- Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a wide range of familiar topics.	- Is intelligible. - Intonation is appropriate. - Sentence and word stress is accurately placed. - Individual sounds are articulated clearly.	- Produces stretches of language with a fairly even tempo although hesitant as searching for patterns and expressions. - There are very few noticeably long pauses.	- Produces extended stretches of language with very little hesitation. - Contributions are relevant and there is a clear organization of ideas - Uses a range of cohesive devices and discourse markers.
4	Shares the features of both bands 3 and 5				
3	- Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms.	- Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on a range of familiar topics.	- Is intelligible. - Intonation is generally appropriate. - Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed. - Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly.	- Produces stretches of language generally with a fairly even tempo although hesitant as searching for patterns and expressions. - There are quite a few noticeably long pauses.	- Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation. - Contributions are relevant and there is very little repetition. - Uses a range of cohesive devices.
2	Shares the features of both bands 1 and 3				
1	- Shows a good degree of simple grammatical forms.	- Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about everyday situations.	- Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels.	- Produces stretches of language with a broken tempo and very hesitant as searching for patterns and expressions. - There are a lot of noticeably long pauses.	- Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation. - Contributions are mostly relevant, despite some repetition. - Uses basic cohesive devices.
0	Performance below 1				



Appendix B

Open-Ended Questions Related to Willingness to Communicate

1. What do you do to improve your speaking skill?
2. What do you think would make you more likely to speak English in class?
3. What do you think would make you more unlikely to speak English in class?
4. What activity in the course do you remember best? How does this activity help your oral communication in English?
5. What would you suggest to the professor to modify her teaching to motivate you to speak more in class?
6. What would you recommend to your classmates to improve their oral communication skills?



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