A comparison of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) between Iranian EFL and EAP learners

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken to investigate whether 1) there is any significant difference between EFL and EAP learners in terms of willingness to communicate, 2) there is any significant difference in WTC of Iranian EFL/EAP learners with 1- Native speakers, 2- Nonnative speakers and 3- In class context, and 3) there is any significant difference between male and female EFL learners in terms of willingness to communicate. To these ends 363 undergraduate students (131 EAP students and 232 EFL students) studying at Bu-Ali Sina University-Hamedan and Azad University of Mashad during the academic year of 2013-2014 participated in this study. Data were collected through a 5 point Likert-scale Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTC-FLS) questionnaire containing 21 statements. The instrument was composed of three subscales measuring, 1- willingness to communicate with native speakers of English (WTC-NS), 2- willingness to communicate with foreigners who are not native speakers of English (WTC-NN), and 3- willingness to communicate in the school context (WTC-SC). Using factor analysis and pilot testing, the questionnaire was found to have an acceptable validity rate. Also, using Chronbach's alpha, the reliability of the questionnaire was estimated to be 0.93. Using SPSS, the results of independent samples t-test indicated that, overall, there was a significant difference between EFL and EAP learners in terms of their willingness to communicate. Furthermore, the results of one-way ANOVA for subscales of WTC-FLS revealed a significant difference in WTC of both EFL and EAP learners with native speakers, nonnative speakers and in class context. That is while EFL learners were more willing to communicate with native speakers of English and less willing to communicate with nonnative speakers of English, EAP learners were found to be more willing to communicate with native speakers of English and less willing to communicate in class context. Finally, no significant difference was found between male and female EFL learners in terms of willingness to communicate. Implications and recommendations for future research are also addressed.

Keywords: willingness to communicate; EFL learners; EAP learners

A comparison of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) between Iranian EFL and EAP learners

1. Introduction

Communication is recognized as central to the development of human relationships (Sallinen-Kuparinen, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1991). As such, McCroskey and Richmond (1987, cited in Mohseni & Niknejad, 2013) argued that being a poor communicator or not willing to communicate with others is one of the dysfunctional behaviors in society. With respect to significant role of communication in L2 learning, Macintyre and Charos (1996, p. 3) state that:

> *"Communication and second language acquisition are closely tied together. On one hand, recent trends toward a conversational approach to second language pedagogy reflect the belief that one must use the language to develop proficiency, that is, one must talk to learn. On the other hand, communication is more than a means of facilitating language learning, it is an important goal in itself".*

In fact the human being, by means of communication with other people, gradually acquires language. In this regard, willingness to communicate (WTC), defined as a stable predisposition toward communication when free to choose to do so (McCroskey & Baer, 1985), is the most basic orientation toward communication.

Willingness to communicate which has been suggested as the final intention to really initiate a communication plays an important role in language learning, and has recently become an important concept across disciplines of second language teaching and learning. The importance of WTC arises from the role of interaction in language development (Molberg, 2010). According to Kang (2005), more interaction causes more language development and learning

Willingness to communicate was first used in first language (L1) communication by McCroskey and Baer (1985). They defined willingness to communicate as the underlying tendency totalkto others which is rooted in a personality variable. Further, they mentioned introversion, self-esteem, communication competence, communication apprehension, and cultural diversity as antecedents of WTC.WTC was then applied to second language (L*2*) communication by MacIntyre and Charos (1996). They widened McCroskey and Baer's (1985) model by adding motivation, personality, and context as predictors of not only WTC but also the frequency of communication. They hypothesized that WTC and integrative motivation would explain the frequency of communication in L*2*.Later, L*2* scholars identified perceived competence, communication anxiety, L2 communicative confidence, and L2 attitude as the key factors influencing L2WTC (Ortega, 2009, cited in Furuta, 2011).

WTC which represents the psychological preparedness to use the second language (MacIntyre, 2007); "is of special importance in revealing learners' communication psychology and promoting communication engagement in class" (Xie, 2011, p. 1). It is often regarded to be the main cause of the frequency of L2 use (Yu, Li, & Gou, 2011).That is, language students who are willing to communicate in the second language actually look for opportunities to communicate. According to MacIntyre and Doucette (2010, p. 1), "being willing to communicate is part of becoming fluent in a second language, which often is the ultimate goal of L2 learners" Therefore, it seems that producing WTC is a crucial component of modern language instruction and the goal of the learning process should be to engender in language students "*the willingness to communicate*" (McIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998).

WTC affects not only speaking mode but also listening, writing, and reading modes (McIntyre et al., 1998). As such, L2 researchers argue that willingness to communicate (WTC) in L2 is one of the best predictors of

success in L2 acquisition. Therefore, L2 learners with high levels of willingness to communicate may have the greater possibility to develop L2 proficiency (Kim, 2004). The willingness to communicate as an important construct in explaining second language (L2) communication, holds a great value in the research of second and foreign language learning and instruction (YU, 2009). It is especially of great interest to communicative language teaching (CLT), which puts an emphasis on learning through communicating (Ellis, 2008, cited in Xie, 2011).

While there is a growing body of research which explores EFL students' WTC in second language, a similar line of research is lacking on EAP learners' WTC. Therefore, the present study intends first to see whether there is any significant difference between EFL and EAP learners in terms of willingness to communicate, second to see whether there is any significant difference in WTC of Iranian EFL/EAP learners with 1-native speakers, 2-nonnative speakers and 3- in class context, and finally, to explore the difference between male and female English learners in willingness to communicate.

2. Review of the related literature

The construct "Willingness to Communicate" was first used by McCroskey and Baer (1985) in relation to communication in the native language. They maintained that even though situational variables might affect one's willingness to communicate, individuals display similar WTC tendencies in various situations. Furthermore, they mentioned introversion, self-esteem, communication competence, communication apprehension and cultural diversity as antecedents that lead to differences in WTC. They found that the degree of WTC, communication apprehension, communication competence, and introversion differed across countries as well as the degree of relations among these variables. Moreover, they suggested that any kind of generalization should be done with reference to culture.

2.1 MacIntyre's (1994) willingness to communicate model

Maclntyre (1994) developed a path model to predict willingness to communicate in the first language. Based on this model, higher levels of willingness to communicate are caused by a combination of greater perceived communicative competence and a relative lack of communication apprehension. Introversion contributes to both communication apprehension and the perception of communicative competence, and self-esteem is in relation to communication apprehension. Finally, drawing upon Burgoon's (1976) findings, this model suggests that societal pressures (in the feelings of alienation and anomie) play a part in generating an unwillingness to communicate. Maclntyre (1994) recommended "exploring the interaction between personality and specific situational characteristics in their influence on willingness to communicate" (p. 140).

2.2 MacIntyre and Charos's (1996) model.

MacIntyre and Charos (1996) applied the more comprehensive version of MacIntyre's (1994) model to research communication in the second language. They widened the structural model by adding motivation, personality, and context as predictors of not only WTC but also the frequency of communication. They hypothesized that WTC and integrative motivation would explain the frequency of communication in L2.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) argue that it is highly unlikely that WTC in L2 is a simple manifestation of WTC in Ll. The differences between L1 and L2 WTC may be due to the uncertainty inherent in L2 use that interacts in a more complex manner with those variables that influence L1 WTC. In addition, L2 use carries a number of intergroup issues, with social and political implications, that are usually irrelevant to L1 use. MacIntyre et al. (1998) developed a comprehensive model of willingness to communicate in L2 and integrated linguistic, communicative and social psychological variables to explain one's WTC in second language. However, they treated WTC in L2 as a situational variable that has both transient and enduring influences. Moreover, they argued that WTC covers not only speaking mode but also listening, writing and reading modes. They use a pyramid figure to illustrate the WTC model, this pyramid model demonstrates a wide variety of factors that

affect the psychological preparedness to speak. We can identify both individual factors (anxiety, motivation, attitudes, interpersonal attraction, etc.) and social contextual factors (ethno linguistic vitality, language contact, etc.) that either enhance or reduce WTC (MacIntyre, 2007).

The pyramid model of WTC- WTC as the psychological preparedness to use the L2 when there is the opportunity requires a focus on the specific moment of decision where an L2 learner chooses to become an L2 speaker (MacIntyre, 2007). Previous research in second language acquisition shows that as motivation increases and language anxiety decreases, performance in the L2 will improve. According to MacIntyre (2007), the decision to speak or not, over time, exerts an impact on the person's success at language learning. Moreover he states that both psychological and sociopolitical processes will be relevant to creating the willingness to communicate. However, by focusing on WTC, McIntyre examines social context as it is interpreted by the individual and as it affects her or his decision making and argues that opportunities for communication refer to specific moments in time when communication might be conducted in a second language (particularly considering moments when an individual has the choice to speak in the L2).   Therefore, willingness to speak in the L2 at such moments conditions the social interactions among persons from differing language groups and in some respects reflects the success of the interlocutors' language learning efforts (MacIntyre, 2007).

As shown in figure 2, MacDonald, Clement, and Macintyre (2003) note that the construct WTC comprises several layers and subsumes a range of linguistic and psychological variables, including linguistic self-confidence (both state and trait); the desire to affiliate with a person; interpersonal motivation; intergroup attitudes, motivation, and climate; parameters of the social situation; communicative competence and experience; and various personality traits.
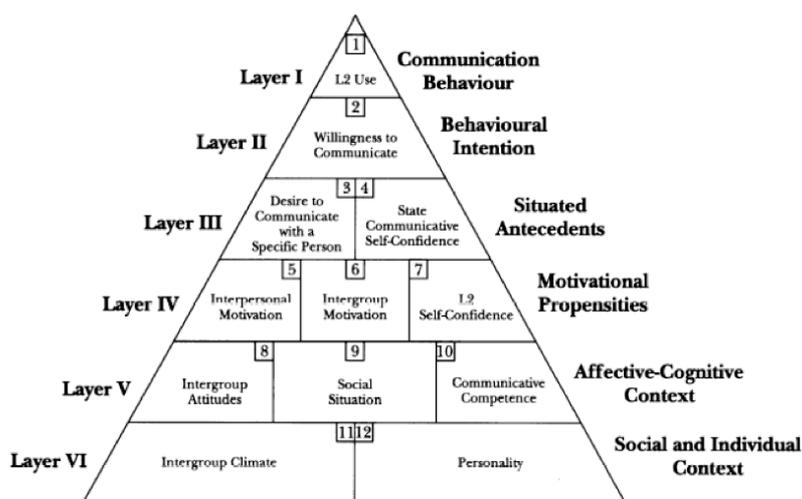

Figure 2. Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC

Source: MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998, p. 547

As presented in Dornyei (2003), WTC is a fairly stable personality trait, developed over the years, but the situation is more complex with regard to L2 use, because here the level of one's L2 proficiency, and particularly that of the individual's L2 communicative competence, is an additional powerful modifying variable. What is important, though, is that WTC and communicative competence are not the same: There are many L2 learners who are very competent L2 speakers, yet tend to avoid L2 communication situations, whereas some other, less proficient learners actively seek opportunities to engage in L2 talk (Dornyei, 2003).

2.3 Willingness to communicate studies within the context of Iran

Many researchers have investigated Iranian EFL learners' **willingness** to communicate in different contexts:

Alemi and Pakzadian (2011) attempted to investigate how much the WTC model (MacIntyre, 1989) was capable of providing explanation for the relationship among social-psychological and communication variables in the EFL context. The participants in this study were 45 Iranian engineering students who took TOEFL and then filled out a WTC questionnaire (MacIntyre, 1998). The findings showed that university students' WTC was to function as a trait and they were low in willingness to communicate both in the classroom and outside because, they didn't need to communicate in English for their basic needs. Also, no relationship was found between any sources of support and any components of orientation. Furthermore, in terms of orientation, the learners showed to be more integratively motivated than instrumentally. Among social support factors, teachers had the main role. Moreover, among all skills, learners were more interested in reading. And the reason they were not willing to communicate inside the classes was that they might be afraid of being evaluated. Based on the results of this study, the researchers suggested that language instructors use more authentic L2 communication and foster more friendly relationship with learners.

In another study, Alemi, Daftarifard, and Pashmforoosh (2011) in an attempt to explore Iranian EFL university students' WTC and its interaction with their language anxiety and language proficiency, showed that Iranian university students' WTC was directly related to their language proficiency. In this study higher proficient learners showed to be less communicative than lower proficient ones outside the classroom indicating the state-like nature of WTC in the present sample. Moreover, no significant interaction between WTC and anxiety was found. The researchers argued that anxiety did not affect the learners' participation in communication (WTC). Finally, it was revealed that anxiety and language proficiency were negatively correlated. That is the association between language learning experience and L2 anxiety was confirmed in the results of this study. Based on the results of the study, linguistic variables seem to be more predictive of Iranian students' WTC, and language instructors should work on their students' English proficiency.

Ghonsooly, Khajavy, and Asadpour (2012) examined willingness to communicate in the second language (L2WTC) construct and its underlying variables among non–English major students in the context of Iran. They used WTC and socioeducational models for examining L2 communication and L2 learning. The results of this study indicated that L2 self-confidence and attitudes toward international community were two predictors of L2WTC in Iranian context. The paths from motivation to L2WTC and openness to experience to L2 self-confidence were not significant and thus were deleted. Their model indicated the potential use of the L2WTC construct for English as a foreign language context.

Barjesteh, Vaseghi, and Neissi (2012) investigated Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of their willingness to initiate communication across four types of context and three types of receiver. Using a questionnaire consisted of 20 situations in which one might choose to communicate or not to communicate, the researchers came to the conclusion that learners were highly willing to communicate in two context-types (Group Discussion, & Meetings) and one receiver-type (Friend). Based on the results obtained from the questioner, EFL learners were not willing to communicate in other situations. The researchers argued that the main reason that majority of Iranians were not willing to communicate in other situation was that they had the experience of communicating in English only in language classrooms in which they could have some group discussion, meetings, and friendly chat. They didn't have an access to a native speaker or possibility to travel to an English speaking country. The researchers concluded that Generally, Iranian EFL learners are willing to initiate communication in situations experienced before (such as group discussion or communicating with their friends). They don't feel confident enough to initiate communication in unfamiliar situations like public speaking. Therefore, context- and receiver-type familiarity is an effective factor for the situation in which a learner initiates communication.

Khazaei, Zadeh, and Ketabi (2012) aimed to investigate the effect of class size on WTC of Iranian EFL students among three different class sizes. The data of this research were collected through observation of three classes in terms of students' turn of talk and talk time. The findings of the study revealed that class size had a substantial effect on the students' willingness to communicate. Students were more willing to communicate in small classes where they had more opportunity to practice oral skills and communicate.

Baghaei (2012) on the relationship between willingness to communicate and success in learning English as a foreign language, showed that two out of the three subscales of WTC (willingness to communicate in the school context and willingness to communicate with native speakers of English) were moderately correlated with success in learning English as foreign language. Riasati (2012) also studied Iranian EFL learners' perception of factors that influence their willingness to speak English in language classrooms. The results of semi-structured interviews revealed that a number factors including task type, topic of discussion, interlocutor, teacher, class atmosphere, personality and self-perceived speaking ability contribute to willingness to speak.

Pourjafarian (2012) examined the relationship patterns between socioeconomic factors, i.e. parental occupations, cultural capital, and willingness to communicate in English in Iranian high school context in Shiraz. Individual semi-structured interviews were used to obtain supportive data. The findings revealed noticeable evidence of the existence of a strong relationship between willingness to communicate in English and socio-economic orientations and language achievement. In addition, Zarrinabadi, (2012) investigated Iranian culture values related to self-perceived communication competence, which is reported to be a strong predictor of willingness to communicate (McCroskey& Richmond, 1990). The Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) (McCroskey, 1995) instrument was used to measure the communication competence self-perceptions of more than 700 Iranian university students regarding various contexts and with various receivers. Results indicated that the participants feel more competent communicating in dyads and group context and with friend and acquaintance receivers, while less competent when talking with strangers or in public.

Tabataba'ian (2012) aimed to investigate the relationships among emotional intelligence (EI), foreign language anxiety, and willingness to communicate (WTC). The results of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between EQ, WTC, and Foreign Language Anxiety (FLCAS).Significant correlation was found between FLCAS and WTC too. Several subscales of EQ were also related to FLCAS and WTC. Further, regression analysis indicated that FLCAS, EQ, and some of its subscales were predictors of WTC. Also, EQ and several of its subscales could predict FLCAS. Mohammadzadeh and Jafarigohar (2012) studied whether there is any possible relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC) and multiple intelligences (MI) among over 500 EFL learners. The researchers also investigated the effect of gender on the relationship between these two constructs. Findings of the study revealed that the MI profile of learners of English had a significant correlation with their willingness to participate in L2 communication and that the link between MI and WTC was affected by gender.

Mahmoodi and Moazam (2013) investigating willingness to communicate and L**2** achievement of Arabic language learners found a significant correlation between WTC and Arabic language achievement. Regarding subscales of WTC, willingness to communicate in the school context was found to have the highest correlation with Arabic language achievement. This is probably because these students were provided with ample opportunities to participate more in classroom activities. And, perhaps they didn't have an access to a native speaker of Arabic out of their classrooms. While there has been much research exploring EFL students' willingness to communicate in the second language, EAP learners' willingness to communicate seems to have been a neglected area in L2 research. Therefore, the present study was mainly designed to explore EAP learners' WTC and compare it with that of EFL learners. The following research questions were thus formulated for the present study:

1. Is there any significant difference between EFL and EAP learners in terms of willingness to communicate?

2. Is there any significant difference in WTC of Iranian EFL/EAP learners with

   A. native speakers,

   B. nonnative speakers, and

C.   in class context?

3.   Is there any significant difference between male and female EFL learners in terms of willingness to communicate?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study were 363 Iranian male and female undergraduate students attending Bu -Ali Sina University of Hamedan and Azad University of Mashad. 232 of the participants were EFL learners, and 131 of the participants were EAP learners. The students were of different academic levels and the age range of the two groups was 19-29.The researcher used cluster random sampling to select the participants. That is the researcher randomly selected intact classrooms and gave the questionnaire to all the students in those classrooms.

3.2 Instruments

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) questionnaire - The Willingness to Communicate in a Foreign Language Scale (WTC-FLS) which was developed and validated by Baghaei (2012) was given to the participants. This scale was used as a direct measure of the respondents' predisposition toward approaching or avoiding the initiation of communication (Appendix A). The scale has 21 items, of which seven items are related to willingness to communicate with native speakers, seven items assess willingness to communicate with nonnative speakers, and seven items are related to willingness to communicate in class context. Participants were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree) how willing they were to communicate.

3.3 Data Collection procedure

The researcher pursued the following procedures:

In this study cluster random sampling was used to select the participants. First of all, the purposes and the importance of the study were clarified to the participants and full descriptive instructions regarding the procedures of administration was provided. Then, the questionnaire was administered to 363 EAP and EFL students at Bu Ali Sina University and Azad University of Mashad. Students were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 to 5 how willing they were to communicate. It took each student 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

3.4 Data Analysis

In this study the following statistical procedures were used:

T-test - For research questions number1 and 3 an independent samples t-test was conducted.

One way ANOVA - For research question number 2, a one way ANOVA was run to investigate whether there is any significant difference in WTC of Iranian EFL/EAP learners with 1- native speakers, 2- nonnative speakers and 3- in class context.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic information of the participants

Table 1 reports participants' demographic information. As Table 1 indicates, 232 EFL learners (63.9 %) and 131 EAP learners (36.06%) participated in this study. Overall, 363 EFL/EAP learners completed the willingness to communicate questionnaire.

Table 1

Demographic information of the participants in the study

EFL learners		EAP learners		Total
Participants	Percentage	Participants	Percentage	363
232	63.9	131	36.06	

4.2 Reliability

Table 2 shows the results of Cronbach's Alpha consistency for the questionnaire. As Table 2 indicates, the *reliability coefficient* **o**f the WTC questionnaire using Chronbach's Alpha consistency was estimated to be 0.95.

Table 2

Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.95	21

4.3 Validity

Table 3 shows the results of factor analysis for the WTC questionnaire. As Table 3 shows, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was greater than .90 and, the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant which indicates that the relationship among variables was strong.

Table 3

KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.93
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2.155E3
	Df	23
	Sig.	.00

4.4 T –test for overall WTC between EAP and EFL participants

The first research question of this study was "is there any significant difference between EAP and EFL learners in terms of their WTC?" Table 4 represents descriptive statistics for EAP and EFL participants.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics for EAP and EFL participants

	N	*Mean*	***SD***	Std. Error Mean
EAP participants' WTC	131	77.61	14.94	1.30
EFL participants' WTC	232	86.56	10.51	.69

Table 5 summarizes the results of independent samples t-test for overall willingness to communicate of EAP and EFL participants. As Table 5 indicates, there is a statistically significant difference between EAP and EFL learners in terms of willingness to communicate.

Table 5

Independent samples t-test for overall willingness to communicate of EAP and EFL participants

	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
Equal variances assumed	14.65	.00	-6.66	361	.00	-8.94	1.34
Equal variances not assumed			-6.06	203.87	.00	-8.94	1.47

4.5 One way ANOVA for EFL participants

The second research question of the study was "is there any significant difference in WTC of Iranian EFL/EAP learners' with 1- native speakers, 2- nonnative speakers and 3- in class context?" The following Tables summarize the results of one way ANOVA. Table 6 provides descriptive statistics for EFL participants.

Table 6

Descriptive statistics for EFL participants

	N	*Mean*	*SD*	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
WTC with Native speakers of English	232	29.21	3.85	.25	28.71	29.70	11	35
WTC with Non Native speakers of English	232	26.84	4.21	.27	26.30	27.39	13	35
In Class context WTC	232	27.18	4.82	.31	26.56	27.81	12	35
Total	696	27.75	4.43	.16	27.42	28.08	11	35

Table 7 represents the results of the Levene's test for the assumption that the variances of the three subscales are not significantly different.

Table 7

Test of homogeneity of variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
5.71	2	693	.00

As shown in Table 7, the Levene's test was significant (sig=.00). Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. As the result had been significant, then we could use an adjusted *F* test. While, Table 8 shows the results of one way ANOVA for EFL participants.

Table 8

One way ANOVA for EFL participants

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	756.47	2	378.23	20.30	.00
Within Groups	12908.02	693	18.62		
Total	13664.50	695			

As is evident from Table 8, The EFL participants' WTC with native speakers, nonnative speakers, and in classroom context are significantly different from each other as the $F(20.30) = .00$, $p < .01$. Table 9 represents the results of robust tests of equality of means.

Table 9

Robust tests of equality of means

		df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	23.11	2	458.32	.00
Brown-Forsythe	20.30	2	669.64	.00

Note. Asymptotically F distributed.

As can be seen in Table 9, the results of the Welch statistics and the Brown-Forsythe statistics show that there is a significant difference in WTC of EFL learners with native speakers, nonnative speakers and in class context (sig=.00). It can be concluded that at least one or two of the subscale means are significantly different from the others (or that at least two of the subscale means are significantly different from each other). However, to determine which WTC subscales are significantly different from each other, a post-hoc test was used. Table 10 reports the results of post-hoc test (Tukey).

Table 10

Post hoc tests for EFL participants

Tukey HSD (I) VAR002	(J) VAR 002	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Native	Nonnative	2.36[*]	.40	.00	1.42	3.30
	Class	2.02[*]	.40	.00	1.08	2.96
non native	Native	-2.36[*]	.40	.00	-3.30	-1.42
	Class	-.34	.40	.67	-1.28	.60
Class	Native	-2.02[*]	.40	.00	-2.96	-1.08
	Nonnative	.34	.40	.67	-.60	1.28

Note. *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 10 indicates that the willingness to communicate with native speakers of English ($M = 29.21$) is significantly different from the willingness to communicate with nonnative speakers of English ($M = 26.84$), with a mean difference of 2.36and a *p* value of .00. Also, the willingness to communicate with native speakers of English ($M = 29.21$) is significantly different from the willingness to communicate in the school context ($M = 27.18$), with a mean difference of 2.02and a *p* value of .00.

4.6 One way ANOVA for EAP participants

The second part of the second research question was "is there any significant difference in WTC of Iranian EAP learners with 1- native speakers, 2- nonnative speakers and 3- in class context". Table 11 represents descriptive statistics for EAP participants.

Table 11

Descriptive statistics for EAP participants

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Min	Max
WTC with native speakers of English	131	25.54	5.38	.47	24.61	26.48	7	35
WTC nonnative speakers of English	131	25.08	5.21	.45	24.18	25.98	7	35
In class context WTC	131	23.48	5.77	.50	22.48	24.	7	35
Total	393	24.70	5.51	.27	24.15	25.25	7	35

Table 12 represents the results of the Levene's test homogeneity of variances.

Table 12

Test of homogeneity of variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.45	2	390	.63

As Table 12 indicates, the Levene's test was not significant (Sig=.63). Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met for EAP learners.

Table 13 represents the results of one way ANOVA for EAP participants.

Table 13

One way ANOVA for EAP participants

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	308.55	2	154.27	5.17	.00
Within Groups	11635.20	390	29.83		
Total	11943.76	392			

As is evident from Table 13, there is a significant difference in WTC of EAP learners with native speakers, nonnative speakers and in class context, $F (5.17) = .00$, $p < .01$. As such, we can conclude that at least one or two of the subscale means are significantly different from the others (or at least two of the subscale means are significantly different from each other). Table 14 represents the results of post-hoc test (Tukey) to determine where exactly the differences lie.

Table 14

Post hoc tests for EAP participants

Tukey HSD (I) VAR002	(J) VAR002	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
native	non native	.46	.67	.76	-1.12	2.05
	Class	2.06[*]	.67	.00	.48	3.65
non native	Native	-.46	.67	.76	-2.05	1.12
	Class	1.60[*]	.67	.04	.01	3.19
class	Native	-2.06[*]	.67	.00	-3.65	-.48
	non native	-1.60[*]	.67	.04	-3.19	-.01

Note. *The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As Table 14 reveals the willingness to communicate with native speakers of English ($M = 25.54$) is not significantly different from the willingness to communicate with nonnative speakers of English ($M = 25.08$), with a mean difference of .46565 and a *p* value of .76. But, the willingness to communicate with native speakers of English ($M = 29.21$) is significantly different from the willingness to communicate in the school context ($M = 23.48$), with a mean difference of 2.06and a *p* value of .00.

4.7 T-test for male and female EFL participants

The last research question of the study was "is there any significant difference between male and female EFL learners in terms of willingness to communicate?" In this regard, Table 15 provides descriptive statistics for male and female EFL learners WTC.

Table 15

Descriptive statistics for WTC of male and female EFL participants

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
WTC of male	27	91.03	10.08	1.94
WTC of female	121	87.04	9.81	.89

Table 16 represents the results of independent samples t-test for willingness to communicate between male and female EFL participants.

Table 16

Independent samples t-test betweenWTC of male and female EFL participants

	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
Equal variances Assumed	.28	.59	1.90	146	.05	3.98	2.09
Equal variances not Assumed			1.86	37.77	.07	3.98	2.13

As Table 16 shows, there was no significant difference between male and female EFL learners regarding WTC (sig=.05).

5. Discussion

In this study, overall, there was a significant difference between EFL and EAP students in terms of willingness to communicate. That is EFL students were more willing to communicate than EAP students.

One probable reason for this finding is that EFL students are provided with ample opportunities to participate in classroom activities. Therefore, seam found to be more willing to communicate than EAP learners. Another possible reason for the current result could be a lack of English proficiency and self-perceived communication competence which is reported to be a strong predictor of willingness to communicate (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990) on the part of EAP students. Hence, previous research have found that undergraduate students' general English proficiency (GEP), in general, is lower than what is required in the EAP courses (Atai & Nazari, 2011). So, it seems that lower English proficiency of EAP learners is the cause of their lower levels of willingness to communicate. In this regard, Hashimoto (2002) argues that perceived competence is the cause of stronger WTC, which leads to more L2 use.

This finding is in line with that of Alemi, Daftarifard, and Pashmforoosh (2011) who found that Iranian university students' WTC is directly related to their language proficiency. Based on the results of the study, the researchers suggested that linguistic variables seem to be stronger predictive of Iranian students' WTC. Similarly, Riasati (2012) investigating Iranian EFL learners' perception of factors that influence their willingness to speak English in language classrooms, found that self-perceived speaking ability among a number of other factors such as task type, topic of discussion, interlocutor, teacher, class atmosphere, and personality contributes to willingness to speak.

According to Dornyei (2003), WTC is a fairly stable personality trait, developed over the years, but the situation is more complex with regard to L2 use, because here the level of one's L2 proficiency, and particularly that of the individual's L2 communicative competence, is an additional powerful modifying variable. Moreover, perhaps because EAP learners did not find themselves competent enough to communicate in English in their

classrooms, they preferred to avoid communication. Moreover, a lack of competence in language seems to be the cause of communication apprehension in these learners that leads them to decide not to engage in communication.

According to Yu, Li and Gou (2011), an individual with less communication apprehension and high level of perceived communication competence has more willingness to communicate. In other words, both increasing perceived competence and lowering anxiety help students foster a willingness to communicate (Maclntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2003).

On the other hand, as the results of the study indicate, significant differences were found between the two groups in terms of the subscales of WTC- FLS in favor of EFL learners. That is EFL learners were also more willing to communicate with native speakers, nonnative speakers, and in class context in contrast to their EAP counterparts. Furthermore, the findings of the study indicate that there was a significant difference in WTC of EFL learners with native speakers, nonnative speakers and in class context. As the findings of the study showed EFL learners were more willing to communicate with native speakers of English and less willing to communicate with nonnative speakers of English. Perhaps EFL learners believe that they can learn more from native speakers of English than from nonnative speakers of English (Baghaei, 2012). So, they may see no point in communicating with nonnative speakers.

According to the findings of this study, EFL learners' willingness to communicate in the school context had the second highest rate of WTC. In this regard, MacIntyre and Doucette (2010) hold that in foreign language contexts, students rarely have opportunity for exposure to the target language outside of their classrooms. In other words, students in L2 classrooms are frequently faced with the opportunity to speak up and outside the classroom opportunities for L2 communication may arise from time to time. Further, Mady and Arnott (2010) indicated that participants' willingness to communicate in the second language maybe influenced by situational factors inherent to the volunteer experience such as access to native speakers of the target language and opportunities for authentic community participation. Thus, it seems justifiable to say that because the participants of the present study might not have had access to native speakers of English out of their classrooms, they have no choice other than practicing English in their own classrooms. In addition, Barjesteh, Vaseghi, and Neissi (2012) argue that Iranian EFL learners are not willing to communicate in unfamiliar situations. They mostly communicate in English only in their language classrooms.

According to the findings of the study, EAP students were found to be more willing to communicate with native speakers of English and less willing to communicate in class context. There might be some reasons why EAP students were less willing to communicate in the class context:

Teaching EAP seems to have no clear guidance from the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (MSRT) (Mazdayasna &Tahririan, 2008; Moslemi, Moinzadeh, & Dabaghi, 2011). As MacIntyre et al. (1998, cited in Kim, 2004) argue, "a proper objective for L2 education is to create WTC.

Several classroom observations conducted by the researcher revealed that GTM method was mostly used by the EAP teachers as they mostly emphasized on translation and reading comprehension. That is, the main objective of English classes at undergraduate level is to help students increase their technical vocabulary, reading, and translation skills. Speaking skill is ignored and there are not good involvement and interaction among students in EAP classes. Furthermore, it was observed that course administrators and departments as well as students did not take EAP classes seriously. Mostly these classes were crowded and held at late times.

Also, it is probable that class size has had a substantial effect on the EAP students' willingness to communicate. According to Khazaei, Zadeh, and Ketabi (2012), Iranian students are more willing to communicate in small classes where they have more opportunity to practice oral skills and communicate. More importantly, EAP courses at Bu Ali Sina University are mostly held by subject-matter teachers who mostly, lack the methodological skills to deal with EAP courses. So, instructors fail to properly engage the EAP students in

classroom activities.

Finally, there was no significant difference between male and female EFL participants in terms of willingness to communicate. In line with this finding, Afghari and Sadeghi (2012) found no significant difference between male and female students in WTC. In the opposition of this finding, Donovan and MacIntyre (2004) found that as males age, they become more willing to communicate. Females, in contrast, become less willing to communicate with age. In general, females were more willing to communicate as compared to males.

6. Conclusion and implications of the study

Since in an EFL context like Iran students mostly learn in the classroom where English teaching and learning mainly occur, EFL teachers and their students need to understand that the best way to enhance WTC is to communicate and interact with one another. Thus, Iranian EFL teachers should devote much effort to encouraging Iranian EFL students to use their L2 in their classrooms and work together to enhance the students' willingness to communicate as a crucial component of modern L2 pedagogy in English.

As previously discussed, overall, EAP students were less willing to communicate and appeared to have low levels of WTC in English compared to EFL students who were highly willing to communicate in second language. Therefore, EAP teachers are advised to improve their communicative language teaching methods and curriculum design to provide language learners with more communication opportunities. They are suggested to encourage their students to use their L2 when the opportunity arises, inside or outside the classroom, to foster their students' willingness to communicate. Furthermore, as EAP students were found to have the least willingness to communicate in class context, the researcher of the study suggests that EAP teachers in Iran make efforts to create a positive classroom atmosphere to help students engage in communication activities and carry out investigations in their own classrooms in order to further their knowledge of the conditions and contexts that will be more likely to motivate students to use target language more actively. Finally, EAP and EFL teachers are recommended to reflect upon their teaching practice and classroom management. This may then lead to changes and improvements in their teaching.

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