Language Context in the Willingness to Communicate Research Works: A Review

WTC 研究における言語環境 - 総説

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Introduction

In the past three decades, since the concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) was first proposed, research in this area has accumulated to a great extent. Our goal is to produce an overview of the many lines of research related to the WTC. Firstly, we will introduce the reader to the definition of the WTC and its historical development; next, we will make a clear distinction between WTC in the context of second and foreign language learning, and present empirical studies accounting for either context, with special attention to the various Asian, and in particular Japanese studies of the WTC in foreign language; furthermore, we will introduce some studies on WTC in Japanese language. Overall findings will be discussed from the language context point of view. Finally, we will give some directives for further study.

Section 1: Historical view on the WTC model

1.1. Origin

A pioneer in WTC research was McCroskey, who developed this construct from three independent sources - "unwillingness to communicate" used by Burgoon (1976), "predispositions toward verbal behavior" (Mortensen, Arntson, & Lustig, 1977), and "shyness" (McCroskey & Richmond, 1982).

Initial research addressed WTC in the native language, and recognized it as a personality-based, trait-like predisposition (McCroskey, & Baer, 1985; McCroskey, & McCroskey, 1986) that is rather stable across contexts and receivers (McCroskey, & Richmond, 1987, 1990). From this perspective, WTC was considered the tendency of an individual to begin communication when free to do so. (McCroskey, & Richmond, 1987, 1990). Richmond and McCroskey (1989) stressed the importance of WTC for an individual's well being, suggesting that individuals who are communicating more, are generally better evaluated in different contexts (for example school, organization and social), and that having low WTC refers to communicational dysfunction that can diminish one's social and emotional happiness.

McCroskey and Richmond (1990) suggested that WTC originates from two variables - lack of
anxiety and perceived competence. This means that people are willing to communicate when they are not apprehensive and perceive themselves to be a competent communicator. This suggestion, later methodically explained by McCroskey (1997), was first empirically supported by MacIntyre (1994). He developed a path model which postulated that WTC is based on a combination of greater perceived communicative competence and a lower level of communication apprehension (Figure 1). The model also hypothesized that anxiety influences the perception of competence.

![Figure 1: Segment of MacIntyre's (1994) Willingness to Communicate model](image)

With the development of a construct for WTC in the first language (L1), an instrument for its measurement was also developed (McCroskey & Baer, 1985) and validated many times (Chan & McCroskey, 1987; McCroskey, 1992; McCroskey & Richmond, 1985; Zakahi & McCroskey, 1989). The WTC scale has been applied in numerous empirical studies. Some researchers have investigated WTC in the L1 from cross-cultural perspectives (Barraclough, Christophel, & McCroskey, 1988; McCroskey, Burrough, Daun, & Richmond, 1990). For example McCroskey, Fayer, & Richmond (1985) examined Puerto Rican college students' WTC, while McCroskey & Richmond (1990) compared those findings with WTC among Australian, Micronesian, Swedish and USA students. Sallinen-Kuparinen, McCroskey, & Richmond (1991) evaluated Finish students' WTC and compared their results to populations from the previously mentioned studies. Overall results suggested that different countries and cultures significantly differ in communication orientation.

1. 2. Theoretical conceptualization of the WTC in the second language (L2)

The first application of the WTC model to the L2 was by MacIntyre and Charos (1996). They tested a hybrid of Gardner's (1985) socio-educational and MacIntyre's (1994) WTC models to predict the frequency of daily L2 use among Anglophone students learning French. The results confirmed that students with greater motivation for language learning, reported using the language more frequently, and students who were more willing to communicate were more likely to do so. The hypothesized
variables underlying WTC were also tested. Both language anxiety and perceived competence influenced WTC, and the predicted influence of anxiety on perceived communicative competence was also supported. In the model of MacIntyre and Charos (1996), it was also hypothesized that personality characteristics and social context have an indirect effect on L2 communication frequency through attitude, motivation, language anxiety, and perceived competence. These personality traits influenced motivation and WTC which in turn influenced L2 communication frequency. Regarding social context, it was found that having more opportunities for interaction in the L2 affected the frequency of L2 use directly, and indirectly through perceived competence and WTC. These findings support the suggestions by MacIntyre et al. (1998) that context and personality are among the variables influencing the WTC.

When WTC was extended to L2 communication situations, it was proposed that it is not necessary to limit WTC to a trait-like variable, since the use of a L2 introduces the potential for significant situational differences, based on wide variations in competence and inter-group relations (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998). MacIntyre et al. (1998) conceptualized WTC in a L2 in a theoretical model in which social and individual context, affective cognitive context, motivational propensities, situated antecedents, and behavioral intention are interrelated in influencing WTC in L2 and L2 use.

1.3. Pyramid model

MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1998) broadened MacIntyre and Charos’ model of L2 WTC into a complex theoretical model, and illustrated it as a six-layered pyramid (Figure 2). First three layers of the pyramid (communication behavior, behavioral intention and situated antecedents) were comprised of situational factors that are believed to affect prompt L2 communication; these fluctuate in different contexts, for example, in reaction to the subject of conversation and differences between interlocutors.
Layer 1 is communication behavior, and emerges as an outcome of the complex system of interrelated variables in the lower layers. Here, communication has a wide meaning, including for example reading newspapers, speaking up in class, using the L2 at the workplace.

Layer 2 is willingness to communicate, and as MacIntyre et al.'s concept it differs from trait-like WTC offered by McCroskey et al. (1997), because it additionally involves situation-specific factors. Here, WTC is defined as the “readiness to enter discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2”. For the WTC to exist, opportunity to communicate is not required. (MacIntyre et al. 1998). MacIntyre et al. (1998) claimed that the vital purpose of language learning should be to stimulate the willingness to communicate, and that the program which fails to produce WTC in students is a failed program.

Layer 3 includes two immediate antecedents of willingness to communicate: desire to communicate with a specific person and the state of communication self-confidence.

(3) Desire to communicate with a specific person results from a mixture of inter-individual and inter-group motivations, involving motives related to both affiliation (integrativeness) and control (instrumentality). MacIntyre et al. (1998) claimed that affiliation (belonging to a group) may be the most important drive for communicating in an informal situation.

(4) State communication self-confidence includes two factors: state perceived competence and lack of
state anxiety. The foundation of this dichotomy stems from the earlier mentioned work of Clement (1980, 1986), plus the results of the McIntyre and Charos’s path analysis (1996). State perceived competence taps personal impression of self-ability to communicate effectively at a particular time, and increases WTC if person has satisfactory language and knowledge proficiency (MacIntyre, 2003). Anxiety fluctuates in intensity and over time, and decreases WTC (MacIntyre, 2003).

The next three layers represent enduring influences, and work as independent variables in analyzing WTC in L2.

**Layer 4** termed motivational propensities, consists of interpersonal motivation, inter-group motivation and L2 self-confidence.

5) Interpersonal motivation is derived from the playing a social role within a group, and it is initiated by either control or affiliation. The role of control is to limit the cognitive, affective, and behavioral freedom of the communicators. Affiliation is encouraged by attractiveness, physical closeness, similarity, and repeated contact. Motives related to control and affiliation may occur at the same time.

6) Intergroup motivation results from membership of a particular group. As with interpersonal motivation, control and affiliation are the basic components of the intergroup motivation. Here, control refers to contact which results in the maintenance of power established between groups. Affiliation motive occurs when the basis for contact is the desire to establish or maintain rapport with a member of another group.

7) L2 self-confidence is created by two components: self-evaluation of L2 skills and language anxiety. Anxiety and self-evaluation are highly correlated for the L2.

**Layer 5** called affective and cognitive context, consists of inter-group attitudes, social situation, and communicative competence.

8) Intergroup attitudes are influenced by integrativeness, which is related to increased frequency and quality of contact with L2 speakers, fear of assimilation which predicts less contact with the L2 community, and attitudes toward the L2, which determines motivation to learn.

9) Social situation is a complex category that describes a social encounter in a particular setting. Factors that influence situational variation are: participants, setting, purpose, topic, and channel of communication.

10) Communicative competence is the result of five main competences: linguistic competence, discourse competence, actional competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.

The last layer, **Layer 6**, illustrates relations between the society and the individual.

11) Intergroup climate is defined by the structural characteristics of the community, and perceptual
and affective correlates. Structural characteristics of the community are understood through ethnolinguistic vitality and personal communication networks. Languages with high ethnolinguistic vitality will be more important and thus attractive to the speakers, and therefore are used more in daily communication. Personal communication networks may strongly influence the effects of ethnolinguistic vitality.

Perceptual and affective correlates refer to the attitudes and values directed toward the L2 community. Generally, positive attitudes toward an ethnic group lead to positive interactions with that group, while negative attitudes will be associated with less positive interactions with that language group. Attitudes may also be mediated by the extent of contact between members of the two groups.

1. Personality predicts reactions to communication, other people, stress, etc. Individual dispositions will affect whether one reacts positively or negatively to a different ethnic group. Inter-group context and personality, which may reinforce the social distance or closeness between groups, are placed at the bottom of the model as they are thought to determine the L2 WTC to a lesser degree than the other variables.

Various communication experts later successfully applied the WTC heuristic model in the context of second or foreign languages (Burroughs, Marie, & McCroskey, 2003; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre, Clement & Donovan, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). Most of those studies investigated how personality traits (MacIntyre et al. (1999); MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Matsuoka, 2004; 2005), attitudes and motivation (Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2002; Yashima, 2002) affected differences in WTC.

1.4. Some reconceptualizations

Wen and Clement (2003) added a new dimension to the WTC theoretical concept - the role of culture. Wen & Clement (2003) argued that the WTC model is based on research mainly conducted in the Western context and suggested some revision of the model according to the Chinese cultural context. They proposed that Chinese communication behavior is deeply rooted in Confucianism and its aspects of interpersonal relations, such as face protected orientation and other-directed self. Chinese cultural values and submissive way of learning have strong impacts on WTC in a L2, and Wen & Clement (2003) suggested that these must be considered when conducting WTC L2 research among Chinese learners of a L2. Similar features to these factors can be observed in the Japanese cultural background. Therefore, the authors suggested that this model should be tested in a Japanese context too. Although Wen and Clement's involvement of culture provoked great interest, particularly among
Asian researchers, the new model remained theoretical and thus far it is unknown whether it was actually applied empirically.

Another newer reconsideration of the WTC came from Kang (2005). Contrary to previous researchers, who mainly investigated WTC as a trait-like predisposition, (McCroskey, & Baer, 1985; McCroskey, & McCroskey, 1986, Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2001) Kang adopted a qualitative approach to examine how situational L2 WTC could dynamically emerge and fluctuate during a conversation situation. He proposed situational WTC as a multilayered construct that could change moment-to-moment with conversational context, under the mutual effect of the psychological conditions of excitement, responsibility and security. Kang offered a new definition of WTC in a L2: “individual’s volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables.” (Kang, 2005, p. 291).

Section 2: WTC in the foreign language context - Asian perspectives

Language context in WTC studies can be roughly dichotomized as “second language” and “foreign language” contexts. A major difference between the second and foreign language environments is the opportunity for interaction. A second language is learned in a context where it is used as the main tool for daily interaction for the majority of people, and it provides constant stimulation in the target language. In contrast a foreign language is learned in a place where that language is not typically used as a means of daily communication. Foreign language learners are surrounded by their own native language, and they receive stimulation in the target language only within the language classroom (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000, 2003).

WTC was explored in each of these contexts. Firstly, we will present studies conducted in the foreign language environment. A great deal of research on WTC in the foreign language context focus on the English language. In the past few years, research on English WTC has become particularly productive in East Asia.

Kim (2004) applied the MacIntyre et al. (1998) model to the Korean context. Results showed that MacIntyre et al.'s model was reliable in the Korean context, thus, he suggested WTC is more likely to be a trait-like, rather than a situational variable. He also suggested that Korean students' low WTC in English, probably explains why they are not so successful at English learning.

In China, Asker (1998) compared Hong Kong students and students from western countries with regards their WTC, and discovered that their WTC is lower than in their western counterparts. Yu and Lin (2004) revealed that university students from one province in mainland China are more
willing to communicate than those from Hong Kong. Peng (2007) discovered that among Chinese university students, motivation was the strongest predictor of L2 WTC, while attitudes towards the learning situation did not predict L2 WTC.

More recently Japan has become a fruitful ground for WTC research.

The first comprehensive research on WTC in English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Japanese context was conducted by Yashima (2002). She discovered that WTC is directly and indirectly influenced by an attitudinal construct called “international posture”. Later, Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu (2004) investigated the effects of a home-stay experience on WTC in a L2. They revealed that WTC results in more frequent communication in a L2 and that the international posture leads to WTC and communication behavior. International posture was also an important predictor of WTC in EFL in Matsuoka’s (2004, 2005) studies, together with other factors, including motivation, anxiety, perceived competence and personal traits, such as extraversion/introversion.

In the Japanese context, the willingness to communicate concept generated some original practical applications. Gladman & Curl (2005) approached WTC from an intercultural point of view. Based on the series of studies produced by Lin and associates (Lin & Rancer, 2003a, 2003b; Lin, Rancer, & Lim, 2003; Lin, Rancer, & Trimbitas, 2004), they investigated the relationships between ethnocentrism, intercultural communicative apprehension and intercultural willingness to communicate (Kassing, 1997) among expatriates in Japan. Their results supported Lin & Rancer’s (2003) study, in that higher levels of ethnocentrism result in lower levels of WTC. They also discovered that expatriates in Japan in general, have lower ethnocentrism and higher WTC than their American counterparts.

Matsubara (2007) investigated WTC and L2 motivation in relation to classroom group dynamics, and revealed that student-centered approach and intergroup approach tendency had significant influences on WTC in EFL. Freiermuth and Jarrell (2006) discovered that online chatting provided a more comfortable environment compared to face-to-face situation, and improved students’willingness to communicate. Moreover, some authors contributed psychometrically to the measurement of WTC. Weaver (2005) developed a new instrument for measuring WTC in the Japanese EFL classroom, using a Rasch model, while Sick and Nakasaka (2000) and Sick (2001) built a WTC questionnaire to be used as an alternative classroom assessment instead of the current methods used to measure students’communicative competence. Finally, Okayama (2006) put Sick & Nakasaka’s (2000) instrument in practice. However, results did not completely support the assessment application of WTC, and Okayama suggested that more studies are needed before application becomes plausible.

All the studies mentioned here were conducted in the English foreign language (EFL) context. EFL students study English as an obligatory school subject, their only purpose being to pass the
examination. Often it is highly likely that their English teacher is their only access to the authentic language (Farquharson, 2005). There is usually no need for them to use English in daily life. However, with this current era of globalization, and the launch of English as the number one tool for international and intercultural communication, real oral use of English has become a necessity. This explains the great interest of Asian countries in the willingness to communicate concept.

Although the subject of WTC application has been widened, one similarity between all these works, is that they are all concerned with trait-like willingness to communicate. From the trait-like standpoint, L1 and L2 researchers have examined the effect of an individual’s variables on the WTC. Among them, perceived communicative competence and communication anxiety have been found to be consistent predictors of the WTC. All studies mentioned in this section confirmed MacIntyre's (1994) hypothesis that anxiety decreases, while perceived competence increases WTC.

Section 3: WTC in the second language context

As mentioned earlier, the second language (L2) context is one where the target language is normally used for daily communication by the majority of people, and it provides continuous audio and visual stimulation for the learners.

The difference between immersion and non-immersion students is based on the same principle as the difference between foreign and second language students (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000, 2003). Like students in a L2 environment, immersion students, compared to non-immersion students, have more contact with the target language and receive the kind of stimulation necessary to better master communication in the target language. We will classify second language learners based on the social context, and will describe related studies accordingly.

3. 1. Immersion context

MacIntyre's line of research offers three works which stress a positive influence of the immersion program on willingness to communicate.

The first study (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000) examined 71 immersion and 124 non-immersion high school students in Canada. They all spoke English as a L1, and were learning French as a L2 in an English-speaking community in Canada. Immersion students had all their courses taught in French. This study revealed that French immersion students were found to be higher in L2 WTC, lower in language anxiety, higher in L2 perceived competence and higher in frequency of communication in French than their non-immersion counterparts. Moreover, among the immersion students, anxiety was a better predictor of WTC, while among the non-immersion students perceived competence was the main predictor of WTC. Furthermore, the authors discovered that a negative experience in speaking French
provoked anger in either group, but that this actually rendered the students more determined to master French in order to avoid similar negative experiences in the future. Overall findings suggested that the influences of the variables underlying WTC might change overtime as students gain greater experience in the second language.

A second study along these lines (Maclntyre et al., 2002), examined sex and age differences in relation to WTC, and differences in perceived competence, anxiety and motivation among three groups of junior high school students (7th, 8th and 9th grades). There was no significant correlation between anxiety and perceived competence for 7th grade students, but there was a significant negative correlation between these two variables for 8th and 9th grade immersion students. This finding suggested that the relationship between anxiety and perceived competence may develop with experience (Maclntyre, Clement, & Donovan, 2002). L2 WTC, frequency of communication, and perceived competence were significantly higher in grade eight students compared to grade seven students, suggesting gains in these non-linguistic outcomes.

Similar results were obtained by Maclntyre, Baker, Clement and Donovan (2003). They investigated how prior immersion experience affects the relationships between WTC, anxiety, perceived competence and frequency of communication in French L2. 59 university students (27 with, and 39 without immersion experience) participated in this study. Results revealed increased WTC and frequency of communication in French L2 among students with immersion experience.

Altogether, the described studies supported positive outcomes of the immersion programs. They provided consistent evidence that French immersion encourages WTC in L2. Immersion was also associated with greater frequency of L2 use. Generally, results from the immersion program studies suggested that among more experienced (immersion) learners, anxiety is better predictor of L2 WTC, while for less experienced students (non-immersion), perceived competence is a better predictor of L2 WTC (Maclntyre, Clement, & Donovan, 2002). Results also suggest that while language anxiety and perceived competence are associated with L2 WTC, which supports Maclntyre et al.'s (1998) model, the relationship between these variables may differ with experience in L2. This finding suggests that experience is a significant aspect worthy of exploration in future studies (Maclntyre, et al. 2002).

3. 2. Study abroad context

Kang (2005) performed a qualitative study that suggested how situational willingness to communicate (WTC) in a second language can dynamically emerge and vary during a conversation situation. He found that situational WTC in a L2 emerged from the joint effect of three interacting psychological conditions: excitement, responsibility, and security. Each of these variables interacted
with situational variables such as topic, interlocutors, and conversational context. Based on these findings, Kang proposed a multilayered construct of situational WTC and a new definition of WTC in L2, in which WTC is defined as a dynamic situational concept that can change moment-to-moment, rather than a trait-like predisposition.

Another qualitative study on WTC in the target language context (Cao, 2006) investigated the dual characteristics of WTC in a L2: trait-like and situational WTC. This study revealed a gap between trait and state WTC. While trait-like WTC, as measured by a self-report survey, could predict a tendency to communicate, classroom observation of situational WTC, and interviews with individual learners, highlighted actual behavior of students and the influence of contextual factors on the decision to engage in interaction with other students. The following factors were perceived by learners to influence WTC behavior in class: group size, familiarity with interlocutor(s), interlocutor(s)' participation, familiarity with topics under discussion, self-confidence, medium of communication and cultural background.

Compton (2007) qualitatively examined how content and context affects WTC of the international teaching assistants at U.S. university, and their participation in the classroom. Compton used the pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998) to explore the different factors that affect this research context. The study partially supported MacIntyre et al.’ (1998) in their claim that perceived confidence increases WTC in a L2. However, in-depth exploration of the results discovered additional significant variables that were not covered under the pyramid model. Regarding the content, shared topical knowledge, while for context, international posture and cultural factors were identified as important variables influencing the participant's WTC, not included in the MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) concept.

Taken as a whole, results from previously described studies have two common features. First, they approach the WTC concept from a situational point of view. Researchers have investigated how situational variables, such as social contextual variables, can influence WTC. Another similarity between these studies is that they support the pyramid model only partially. In immersion students, the experience factor has been shown to be important, while in qualitative studies on foreign students, other factors, such as emotional (excitement, responsibility, and security) (Kang, 2005), shared topical knowledge, and international posture (Compton, 2007) are important antecedents of the WTC that were not included in heuristic pyramid model. Thus, this review suggests that the MacIntyre et al.’s (1998) heuristic model is not comprehensive enough for L2 learners in the context of target language learning.

Section 4: WTC in Japanese language - new perspectives

The first known research which applies WTC to Japanese as a second language, is that conducted by
Hamawaki (2004). This study investigated how Japanese school teachers estimate the level of WTC in Japanese, among assistant language teachers (ALT), who are mainly native speakers of English. Results revealed that those ALTs who were estimated as more willing to talk in Japanese, were more positively estimated, better welcomed and were more likely to have good relationships at work.

Simic, Tanaka and Yashima (2007) studied the WTC in Japanese among foreign students in Japan. They investigated WTC in English L2 and Japanese L3, and explored how the Japanese context is related to the WTC. The Japanese context was measured through various socio-linguistic variables revealed in the preceding interview survey (Simic, Tanaka, & Hasegawa, 2006), and categorized as importance and cost/benefits of English and Japanese use. These factors were later specified as Usefulness, Foreign language frustration, Attitude/motivation toward Japanese, Global necessity of English, Alienation and Familiar Japanese (Simic & Tanaka, 2008). It was hypothesized that for international students in Japan, English L2 and Japanese L3 will negatively relate to each other. Furthermore, it was assumed that the Japanese context strongly influences WTC in both languages. Results confirmed the hypothesis that a mutual negative relationship exists between WTC in English and WTC in Japanese; students who were more willing to communicate in English tended to be less willing to communicate in Japanese, and vice versa. An analysis of Japanese context-specific variables and WTC discovered significant correlations. However, Japanese context variables turned out to be not antecedents but consequences of the WTC.

These results suggest that WTC can account not only for the frequency of communication but for some other consequences as well. A highly intriguing possibility is that WTC can actually affect the social context, and that by increasing WTC, social context can be modified. This suggestion requires careful re-examination, which is a potential directive for future studies.

**Section 5: Concluding remarks**

The general conclusion that can be drawn from this vast body of research is that willingness to communicate should be measured differently in different language contexts.

In the foreign language context, predominantly English, most of studies approached the WTC as a trait-like variable, stable across context and receivers. Much of the researches discussed here completely support MacIntyre's (1994) proposition with regards the negative influence of anxiety and positive influence of perceived competence on WTC. This means that in the foreign language context MacIntyre's model can explain WTC very well. In this context, real communication in foreign language is rare outside of the language classroom, and students' language behavior is mainly guided by
“international posture” (Yashima, 2002), and seldom by actual experience. For this context, MacIntyre's models (1994, 1998) are sufficient. They explain most of the WTC, and in this case, the models do not require any adjustment.

Conversely, with regards research in L2 context studies, the approach to the WTC is more state-like. The studies described in sections three and four of this review suggested that the WTC variable is more situational than trait-like. The pyramid model (MacIntyre et al, 1998) explained WTC in second language context only partially, with regards the relationships between anxiety, perceived competence and willingness. However, the pyramid model seems to be insufficient to explain all antecedents of the WTC.

Communication in the L2 context is more of a reality, often a necessity, and experience is very important for language behavior. Studies on immersion programs suggest that experience in L2 use can strongly influence relation between anxiety and perceived competence, and as a result, can affect WTC. The other studies mentioned here were more focused on situational and culturological-specific experience. Overall results suggest that WTC is more situational than trait-like, and that it varies across different contexts and receivers, but also with experience. Simic & Tanaka (in press) support this assumption by identifying different factors that explain WTC in English L2, compared to Japanese L3.

All the described studies on WTC in the L2 environment discovered important variables that affect WTC, which are not included in the pyramid model. In immersion program studies (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al. 2002; MacIntyre et al., 2003), experience turned out to affect WTC, while in the study abroad context, different factors, such as emotional (Kang, 2005), shared topical knowledge and cultural factors (Compton, 2007), so as personal usefulness of the language (Simic et al., 2007) revealed close relationships with WTC. Thus, we can conclude that in the target language environment, MacIntyre et al’s (1998) model does not thoroughly explain the nature of WTC.

Directives for future research on WTC should include the following: application of the pyramid model to the L2/L3 in various language environments is needed; More quantitative research is required in situational WTC in second/third language contexts; more attention should be devoted to identifying context-specific variables in different languages and societies which can potentially influence WTC. WTC is originally a linguistic concept. However, we believe that a multidisciplinary approach would be most fruitful for future research. Importantly, WTC research lacks psychological perspective. While antecedents of the WTC are widely studied, there are no empirical studies on the effects of willingness to communicate, other than the frequency of communication. We believe that it would be worth detecting sociological and psychological benefits of increased WTC. Hamawaki (2004)
suggested improved well-being of ALTs with higher WTC in the Japanese language, yet more quantitative psychological research is needed. Furthermore, in the case of foreign students and other emigrants, psychological and socio-cultural adjustment should be investigated in relation to the WTC. Our final suggestion is that the WTC model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) must be context-specifically adjusted in order to be applicable to different cultures and languages.

References:


