

## STUDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC) IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE : A CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

This research primary objective is to identify the factors influencing students' propensity to communicate in English at MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi. The second objective is to determine how willing pupils are to communicate in English at MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi. The qualitative descriptive method was utilised in the study's design. This research was conducted with ninth-grade students from MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi. This research data was collected through interviews, and based on the findings and discussions, a number of factors influenced students' propensity to communicate in English. There are two different categories of factors: internal and external. Regarding internal factors, the students' willingness is affected by their self-willingness. Regarding external factors, the teacher, the classroom environment, and the effect of the topic influence students' resolve. The most influential of these factors are self-will and classroom environment. The majority of students stated that they are eager to use English when communicating. The students' propensity to communicate in English at MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi is divided into two levels, namely high level and medium level, based on the findings of the second research question. Students believe that using English is essential for various purposes. In this study, the researcher suggests that students can increase their willingness to communicate in English.

*Keywords:* English Language, Factors, Students' Willingness

### A. INTRODUCTION

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is a contentious issue among language learning experts. McCroskey and Baer (1985) introduced it in their discussion of L1 communication. WTC was adapted to the L2 situation by MacIntyre and Charos (1996). McCroskey and Richmond (1990) describe WTC as the tendency to start communication when given the chance.

Language learners who are willing to communicate in their second language actively seek opportunities to do so.

According to McCroskey and Richmond (1990), WTC is a personality trait that varies across different communication situations and recipients. Individuals have consistent WTC preferences across communication settings, even circumstances affecting their readiness to communicate. According to the 2013 educational plan, Junior School children should be independent. Although English is taught from kindergarten through higher school, students may choose to speak up or remain silent when given the option to converse in English. Some students struggle with English, while others opt not to, leading to a majority of avoidance of the language. Without teamwork in the language classroom, students cannot improve their oral communication skills. Despite extensive language learning, many students remain shy, afraid, and unwilling to interact in English (Riasati, 2014).

We can gauge students' willingness or unwillingness through their reactions throughout communication. When a student is unwilling to speak, they may be bashful or uncomfortable and may stay quiet. M Pakpahan (2019) The language barrier hindered participants' readiness to communicate in English at school from time to time.

Students were hesitant to use English more often due to grammatical difficulties, vocabulary gaps, and pronunciation issues. The second is shyness or nervousness. They are categorised as psycholinguistic factors. Students were often afraid to talk more frequently in English due to fear of making mistakes. Kids' confidence in responding to us is the key indicator of their willingness to communicate in English.

Hashimoto (2002) found that driven language learners use it more frequently, and willing communicators are more likely to do so. Yashima (2002) suggests that highly motivated students are more likely to persist in their learning, leading to increased competence, confidence, and L2 WTC. Based on Muamaroh & Nanik (2013), students with English

language anxiety scores of 55% or higher and willingness scores of 33% or less are considered unwilling to communicate in English. Students are willing to speak in English if their English language anxiety score is 26% or less, and their willingness to communicate score is 68% or more. To meet the 2013 educational programme requirements, students must use both written and spoken English relating to the real situation.

The present research examined students' propensity to utilise English in class. The researcher observed and interviewed an English teacher and students at MTs 8 Muaro Jambi. They found that while students learn English through writing, they may not use it in their learning interactions. Evaluating students' learning involves both active and passive participation in class.

From pre-research and pre-observation, In summary, the researcher discovered that pupils with good English language communication skills outnumbered those with weaker skills. The preinterview revealed that some students were hesitant to interact in English, while others responded well to the researcher in English. The researcher observed students' interest and gestures throughout the conversation. Learning and communicating in English is crucial for students.

This research aims to identify factors that influence students' willingness to communicate in English. By identifying these factors, teachers can tailor their instruction to increase students' willingness to communicate and improve those with low levels of enthusiasm. The researcher aims to investigate students' willingness to communicate in English at MTs 8 Muaro, Jambi, through observation and interviews, in response to the issues stated above. The researcher will interview third graders using the provided transcript and gather data from the interviews. The purpose is to assess students' willingness to communicate in English and identify variables affecting it, while also watching the classroom.

## **B. METHOD**

Various research methods were utilised to conduct a study. In this investigation, qualitative data was used to analyse the data. According to Gay et al (2012, p. 8), the researcher neither controls nor modifies the context qualitative study. In order to fathom the participants' perspectives, qualitative researchers must conduct time-intensive data collection techniques such as interviews and observations with a large number of individuals. As a result, the number of participants is frequently restricted, and qualitative researchers examine the data inductively by classifying and arranging patterns to produce a descriptive, narrative synthesis. In this study, interviews and observation were used to collect data on both factual information and attitudes. For data collection, the researcher opted for an interview.

When a phenomenon cannot be directly observed, interviews are particularly advantageous. Therefore, they are an excellent means to discover what others believe or feel about a particular issue. In addition, they permit us to communicate with others about past and future events. In qualitative research, interviewing involves much more than the interaction itself. The data collection procedure for this study consisted of two phases.

The first task involves conducting interviews with selected third-grade students. The second stage consisted of the researcher observing students in the classroom during an English language lecture. Interviews followed the same procedures as other forms of research: planning, developing instruments, collecting data, analysing data, and disseminating findings.

## **C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The researcher collected data from all research tools during the research process. The researcher conducted a systematic and accurate data analysis to achieve the research objectives. The data was analysed to determine the research's purpose. In this chapter, the researcher separated the findings into two sections. They are described as follows:

### **1. English-speaking students**

The research found that most students are willing to speak in English, based on classroom observations and interview data. The researcher found that many MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi pupils preferred to communicate in English during English class. The researcher saw students struggling with English language usage and communication. The study found that students in MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi vary in their willingness to converse in English. Some pupils are highly communicative, while others are only minimally comfortable using English in communication.

- **High Level**

Qualifying assignments, interesting themes, and supportive roles were found to positively impact students' WTC. Regarding teacher engagement, Lee (2020) suggests that English teachers should consider all areas that motivate students to engage in communicative activities. Students' WTC was linked to strong self-esteem, confidence, internal motivation, and external incentive in terms of personality. Trait and personality are somewhat linked. This field has been debated by MacIntyre et al. (1998), a pioneer in WTC discourse. Language problems are not the only factors affecting WTC, as psychological aspects such state of mind and personal attributes are likely to become more relevant predictors.

The study found that students' self-confidence boosted their speaking performance, leading to high levels of English WTC in the classroom. Yashima (2002) highlights self-confidence as a key aspect in WTC. A teacher or lecturer must provide engaging English.

- **Medium Level**

All students expressed confidence in using English for communication. Students appeared to fear making mistakes in front of others. Other factors include public disgrace and losing face. The pupils were more comfortable initiating dialogue in English under certain settings.

Spielberger (1983) defines anxiety as a short emotional reaction involving tension, apprehension, and autonomic nervous system activation. Anxiety levels fluctuate and decrease self-confidence, leading to decreased communication (WTC). Various factors can cause anxiety, such as negative prior experiences, intergroup animosity, fear of assimilation, and increased audience size.

## **2. Factors affecting students' English-language communication willingness**

The second portion interviews. The observation procedure was followed by the interview section. The interview segment aims to determine the elements that impact students' willingness to speak in English. The purpose of this interview is to confirm the results of the observation data. The researcher conducted interviews with several third-grade kids. The researcher aims to explore factors influencing their willingness to converse in English. MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi students were interviewed by the researcher. In the interviews, the researcher asked students pertinent questions on the research topic. To address all research questions, the researcher gathered student information. The researcher accomplished data reduction after gathering all student responses. The researcher selected relevant student responses.

- **Self-willing**

The data indicates that most pupils are willing to communicate in English. Students' English communication skills are influenced by various circumstances. The researcher interviewed pupils from MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi. Students from third grade were chosen. The researcher questioned each student in 5 minutes. The researcher recorded the interview method, took notes, and asked questions. An interview was done in a classroom environment.

Most pupils reported being comfortable using English for communication. While they appreciate the importance of English, they may struggle to use it due to fear and shyness. They do not feel concerned about using English, even when corrected by their teacher for

mistakes. To effectively communicate, pupils must be mentally prepared to speak without hesitation, anxiety, or lack of confidence. According to MacIntyre (2007), WTC refers to the psychological ability to engage in conversation using the learned language.

McCroskey and Baer define WTC in Manipuspika (2018: 204) as "a consistent tendency to communicate when free to do so." They emphasise that pupils who are willing to communicate have no hurdles to doing so. Student 5 stated, "I do quite often and want to use English when communicating during English class because I want to train myself and if there is an opportunity to study or go abroad, at least you must be able to speak English language" (interview procedure).

According to Baker and MacIntyre (2000), WTC refers to a student's communication preferences or dislikes. According to Ellis (2004), engaged learners benefit more from their communicative acts. As L2 usage increases (MacIntyre et al., 2001), individuals have more time to practise and expose their L2, leading to increased activeness and independence (S.-J. Kang, 2005). As a result, MacIntyre et al. (2001) and (1998) anticipate increased verbal competency.

- **Topic effect**

When a teacher describes an engaging class topic, some students may not use English to communicate and may continue to behave as usual without showing indicators of increased activity. However, most students reported that the lesson topic strengthened their motivation to use English in communication. Using a topic relevant to students' experience and familiarity improved their WTC. Research indicates that students are more engaged in discussions on familiar, interesting, relevant topics with prior knowledge (Cao, 2011; Cao & Philp, 2006; Pawlak, 2015; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2016; Pawlak et al., 2016; Riasati, 2012; Wolf, 2012).

Kang (2005) suggests that some issues may create a sense of "responsibility" to participate, as they are intrinsically and instrumentally interesting to the individual. According to Cao (2011), sensitive themes should be avoided to prevent students' WTC inhibition. Riasati (2012) suggests that students should have sufficient preparation time before addressing a topic to engage more actively in the activity. In response to the inquiry, students made a similar idea. According to Kang (2005), students' security is influenced by their past understanding of the topic.

However, students are more engaged in topics that relate to their personal experiences and underlying knowledge, and those they view as significant. Essential and sensitive information within their knowledge affects their responsibilities. Teachers should encourage students to express their views, not just the accuracy of their responses, as anxiousness hindered their WTC in English, as shown by data.

- **Teacher**

According to students, a nice and encouraging teacher can significantly impact their motivation to use English in communication, leading to improved English proficiency. Hashimoto (2002) states that motivation is a key factor in students' readiness to speak in English. His research found a strong correlation between motivation and students' WTC. Students who are motivated are more likely to be confident in communicating than those who are not. Teachers could facilitate situational aspects such group-work activities, considering team size, interlocutors, themes, and ethnic backgrounds, to promote WTC among students (Kang, 2005).

EFL teachers should consider motivation when aiming to enhance students' WTC in speaking lessons. In addition to motivation, self-esteem, or self-perception, can impact one's WTC. Research indicates that individuals who place great value on themselves believe they can achieve what others can. This approach may increase confidence, encouraging daring and

dialogue participation. McCroskey and Richmond in Ghanbarpour (2016) suggest that low self-esteem can hinder speaking.

Zade and Hashemi (2014) examined how self-esteem and WTC affect spoken language performance. The study found that combining self-esteem and WTC can help language learners effectively produce spoken language speeches in class. This

This research compares Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Etinkaya (2007) theories that emphasise self-esteem as the primary factor in speaking activities. Research by Zade and Hashemi found that both self-esteem and WTC significantly impact pupils' speaking performance.

Manipuspika (2018) found a significant link between anxiety and WTC in a previous study. This study found that students with high levels of WTC are less likely to speak the language they have learned. Students reported that open-minded, kind, and enthusiastic teachers increased their willingness to speak in English. Previous research (Cao, 2013; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Pawlak, et al., 2016; Peng, 2007; Peng, 2012; Riasati, 2012; Zarrinabadi, 2014) suggests that teachers' immediacy during teaching and learning positively impacts students' WTC through attachment and encouragement.

Students' propensity to speak in English is influenced by the classroom environment, including comfort, supportive facilities, and fun. Robert J. Marzano et al., 2005, p. 15 The classroom setting can either encourage or deter student involvement. To promote a positive classroom climate, emphasise students' reactions and dispel any embarrassment they may feel from being laughed at for their blunders. This finding contradicts Peng's (2012) finding that negative evaluations diminish students' WTC. The average WTC score of the students in teacher A's class was high. This is partly because students have a positive bond with their classmates after knowing them for several weeks. This study confirms Khajavy (2014) and Peng (2007) results that cohesiveness affects students' WTC.

The researcher found that pupils at MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi are inclined to communicate in English, as evidenced by interviews.

The research identified aspects affecting students' English communication, such as self-willingness, class topic, teacher role, and surroundings. The two main variables are self-will and environmental impact. The main factor affecting pupils' English speaking willingness is self-will. While many answered that learning English is essential for global travel, others were willing to interact in English due to their personal interest in the language. Evidence suggests that students with high self-willingness are more likely to converse in English. Conversely, students who were inspired by their learning environment were more excited and willing to speak in English, resulting in higher readiness to do so.

In summary, the research's comprehensive approach, including observation and interviews, provided valuable insights into students' willingness to communicate in the English language at MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi. The observation phase illuminated a diverse range of willingness levels among students, leading to a classification into two distinct categories: those with a high willingness and those with a medium willingness to engage in English communication. Subsequently, the interview findings enriched the analysis by employing a framework of six factors to dissect the dynamics behind students' willingness to communicate in English at the school.

Delving deeper into the interview results, it became evident that a selection of key factors significantly impacted students' readiness to communicate in English. The researcher's exploration unveiled four pivotal factors within the context of MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi: the role of teachers, the influence of the classroom environment, the effect of the chosen topic of communication, and the intrinsic self-willingness of the students themselves. Collectively, these factors intertwined to shape students' attitudes and engagement with the English

language, showcasing the complex interplay between instructional methods, surroundings, content relevance, and personal motivation.

Ultimately, this research's holistic examination of students' willingness to communicate in English language not only contributes to a nuanced understanding of the dynamics within the educational environment at MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi but also underscores the multi-faceted nature of language engagement. The findings serve as a foundation for potential interventions and improvements in pedagogical strategies, classroom setup, topic selection, and fostering students' self-driven enthusiasm for English communication.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The level of students' propensity to communicate in the English language varies, as determined by the results of a study that employed observation to gain a general understanding of the students' dispositions in this regard. At MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi, students' desire to communicate in English is categorised as either high or moderate.

In addition, after determining the outcome of the interview, the researcher analysed the six factors that influenced students' propensity to communicate in English at MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi by utilising the interview result.

The interview and analysis of the students' responses to the interview revealed four factors that influence students' willingness to communicate in English at MTs N 8 Muaro Jambi: teacher factor, classroom environment, topic effect, and self-willingness.

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