EFL Learners' Language Aptitude, Foreign Language Anxiety, and Willingness to Communicate

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Abstract
This study was an attempt to investigate the relationship among EFL learners' language aptitude, anxiety, and willingness to communicate (WTC). Accordingly, two questionnaires and a battery were used: Language Aptitude Battery for Iranian Learners (LABI), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and WTC Scale. A total of 164 undergraduate students majoring in English literature and English translation of Islamic Azad University Central Tehran took part in this study, among whom 119 (52 males and 67 females) whose age ranged from 19 to 35 years responded to the three instruments completely and were thus considered as the actual participants. The researchers carried out a series of both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses and the results supported the notion that learners' anxiety was negatively correlated with their WTC while learners' language aptitude was positively correlated with their WTC. Hence, the major implication of this study is that by helping learners reduce their anxiety and enhance their aptitude, they can increase their WTC.

Keywords: Language aptitude, anxiety, willingness to communicate

Introduction

Learning a second language may be viewed as a complex process which is under the effect of not just linguistic factors but also certain other nonlinguistic elements including cognitive, metacognitive, and affective ones. Among affective factors that influence learners' performance in L2 learning, a significant trait is indeed anxiety (Horwitz, 2010).

Many different attempts have been made at defining anxiety as a psychological construct. For instance, a pioneer definition was formulated by Hilgard, Atkinson, and Atkinson (1971, as cited in Hashemi, 2011, p. 1812):"a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object".Adopting a perhaps psycho-neurological approach, Horwitz (2001) defines anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with the arousal of the automatic nervous system" (p.113) while Pekrun (1992, as cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, 2008, p. 28) looks into the construct as a "Sociobiologic phenomenon experienced as a foreboding dread or threat resulting from the individual's appraisal of a situation and of their capacity to deal with it".

The ELT literature is replete with studies which show that anxiety has a debilitative effect on L2 learners' performance (e.g., Atef-Vahid & Fard-Kashani, 2011; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Marashi & Assgar, 2019; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Shao, Yu, & Ji, 2013). Interestingly, there are some scholars who believe that anxiety may have a facilitative effect (e.g., Brown, 2007; Zhang &Zhong, 2012).

According to a number of researchers, anxiety is considered as a fundamental factor in WTC specifically in EFL contexts (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003). The notion of WTC began perhaps in the 1970s from the observation of an unwillingness to communicate which is represented as "a chronic tendency to avoid and/or devalue oral communication" (Burgoon, 1976, p. 60). Later on, the term*unwillingness*was changed into *willingness* to promote a positive sense (McCroskey &Richmond, 1987).

WTC has been defined as "an underlying continuum representing the predisposition toward or away from communicating, given the choice" (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2001, p. 538) or as "the intention to initiate communication, given a choice" (Brown, 2007, p. 157). This concept is considered as one of the key components of second language acquisition in modern language literature (Kang, 2005) and the primary and final goal of L2 pedagogy (MacIntyre et al.).

Alongside anxiety and WTC, another factor highly at work in L2 learning is the learner's aptitude (Dörnyei, 2005; Ellis, 2004; Kormos & Safar, 2008; Robinson, 2005; Skehan, 2002). Language learning aptitude refers to how well compared to others, one can acquire a second language in a specific amount of time and under specific circumstances (Carroll& Sapon, 2002).

Language learning aptitude has also been defined as "the strength individual learners have – relative to their population – in the cognitive abilities information processing draws on during L2 learning and performance in various context and at different stages" (Robinson, 2005, p. 46) while Ellis (2005) considers it as one of the predictors of language learning.

There is of course a very rich literature on anxiety, WTC, and aptitude. To begin with, MacIntyre (1994), Baker and MacIntyre (2000), and MacIntyre et al. (2001) demonstrated that both communicative competence and communication anxiety are indeed two significant WTC predictors. Another predictor in foreign language learning is aptitude (Dörnyei, 2005) which Robinson (2002) has proven leads to academic success. In another study, Kumar (2016) revealed the negative relation between aptitude and anxiety.

Quite a sizeable number of studies have been conducted on these constructs in Iran too. For instance, Azmand (2014) concluded that WTC and L2 motivation are significantly correlated while Zarinabadi and Abdi (2011) found language orientation to be more correlated with WTC outside than inside the classroom. Also, Marashi and Dakhili (2105) demonstrated that among the eight categorizations of multiple intelligences, linguistically intelligent learners' anxiety and self-efficacy were negatively correlated.

Rastegar and Karami (2015) found that there is negative relationship between anxiety and WTC while Mahmoodzadeh (2013) concluded that mixed-gender classrooms may provoke anxiety in Iran's teaching context. Nahavandi and Mukundan (2013) demonstrated that students experienced anxiety "in all four scales (communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and fear of English classes) on the higher side of range and communication anxiety was found to be the predominant anxiety component" (p. 131).

Furthermore, Abolfazli Khonbi and Sadeghi (2015) noted a significant role for aptitude in language learning strategy use and Attarzadeh and Farahani (2014) found no considerable effect of aptitude on task complexity, whereas Mohammadi Dorabad (2013) found no interaction between aptitude and feedback in target language accuracy.

Having done a relatively thorough review of literature on anxiety, aptitude, and WTC, the researchers felt that there existed a gap in the literature regarding the interaction of these three constructs. While the relationship between WTC and anxiety and also WTC and aptitude is reasonably established (as demonstrated by the studies cited above), there is perhaps no empirical evidence on the comparison of anxiety and aptitude as predictors of WTC. Accordingly, the

purpose of this study was to explore into the relationship among EFL learners' language aptitude, WTC, and anxiety. To this end, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between EFL learners' language aptitude and willingness to communicate.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between EFL learners' anxiety and willingness to communicate.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference between EFL learners' language aptitude and anxiety in predicting their willingness to communicate.

Review of Literature

Anxiety

Psychologists categorize anxiety into three different groups: "trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 252). According to Zheng (2008), these three categories can laythegroundsfora continuum from stability to transience. In other words, "trait anxiety, which is related to a generally stable tendency to be nervous in a wide range of situations, forms one end, and a moment-to-moment experience of transient emotional state forms the other" (Zheng, p. 2). Accordingly, situational anxiety can be defined as the possibility of becoming nervous and agitated in the specific situation which falls in between the continuum (MacIntyre, 1998).

When it comes to language as a situation-specific anxiety, Brown (2007) describes this as, "a feeling of worry experienced in relation to a foreign language, either trait or state in nature" (p. 384). Language anxiety has great impact not only on language learning but also on language performance (Liu & Jackson, 2008). This affective state appears in second language learning and causes problems for L2 learners asthereisthepossibility of interference with L2 acquisition, retention, and production (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

Anxiety has been shown to be related to learners' different characteristics such as gender, age, grade and social circumstances. For instance, Piechurska-Kuciel (2008) claims that students with a high level of anxiety are "mostly female, very expressive, and declaring significant vulnerability to negative emotion" (p. 228). In terms of age, Dewaele (2002) found that mature learners are less flexible than younger learners in following up the foreign language rules and as a result, mature learners experience higher anxiety in learning the foreign languages.

Furthermore, Liu (2006) found that lower grade learners have more foreign language anxiety than higher-grade groups. In general, other social circumstances such as supportive conversational partners may help learners to extricate themselves of foreign language anxiety (Dewaele, Petrides, &Furnham, 2008).

Willingness to Communicate

There are different factors that have been considered as significant elements in WTC. For example, studies conducted in the Western hemisphere demonstrate that females have more tendency to establish communication than males and as a result, they have a higher WTC (Peng, 2007). Another factor is age: WTC varies in different ages (MacIntyre et al., 2001). Furthermore, Cao (2009) asserts that, "Topic, interlocutor, teacher, opportunity for talking and self-competence were factors that affect L2 WTC" (p. 207).

MacIntyre (1994) proposed that communication apprehension and perceived competence could be sources of WTC. Motivation, personality, and context are considered as important predictors of WTC (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Motivation predicts the frequency of communication and the personality traits related to WTC and motivation influence language

communication directly through attitudes, perceived competence and language anxiety and context (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996).

WTC depends on the learners' situation and the person that learners are supposed to speak to/with and the communicative self-confidence of learners plays an important role (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Wen and Clément (2003) believe that WTC is rooted in learners' cultural perceptions.

Kang (2005) maintains that beside all the mentioned factors which influence WTC, psychological and contextual attributes have a significant role in students' willingness to establish communication. She further presents a new definition for WTC taking the above two features into consideration: "Willingness to communicate is an individual's volitional inclination toward actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, conversational context, among other potential situational variables"(p. 291).

Aptitude

Language aptitude research has undergone changes of conceptualization over the last 20 years in that "Scholars have started to explore ways of linking language aptitude to a number of important issues in SLA research" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 43). In contrast to the traditional perception of language aptitude that it is "an innate, relatively fixed talent to acquire and process language structure" (Bylund, Abrahamsson, & Hytenstam, 2010, p. 447) and remains relatively fixed after puberty (Erlam, 2005), the present view shows that language aptitude is not fixed from birth such that awareness from experience and training influences it (Robinson, 2002). More support is provided by Larsen-Freeman (2001) who regards this aptitude as "a dynamic and multiple sets of malleable abilities that interact with other internal learner attributes and attitudes"(p. 234).

Gass and Selinker (2008) emphasize the multi-segment nature of language learning aptitude by clarifying it as "a learner's ability to learn another language [made up of] numerous component, such as verbal aptitude [which] seem reasonable predictors of second language learning success" (p. 417).Furthermore, aptitude covers different parts of language such as: phonological, coding/decoding (Dörnyei, 2005). The structure of aptitude seems that "nobody would question that the innate ability to learn another language, as a child or as an adult, varies significantly from individual to individual" (Dörnyei, p. 33). Some researchers believe that the construct of aptitude is flexible but there is no practical proof for it (Kormos &Csizér, 2008; Sparks, Fluharty, Ganschow, & Little, 1996).

Some researchers such as Sparks (2009) propose that there is relationship between L1 proficiency in childhood and their later L2 aptitude proficiency. To this end, Schmidt (2001) considers the important role of *noticing* which entails awareness as part of language learning. This awareness, he notes, is correlated with language learning aptitude.

Method

Participants

A total of 164 undergraduate students majoring in English literature and English translation of Islamic Azad University Central Tehran took part in this study, among whom 120(52 males and 67 females) whose age ranged from 19 to 35 years responded to the three instruments completely and were thus considered as the actual participants.One of the 120 was an outlier (discussed in the results section) and was thus removed leaving 119 participants. The researchers did not have control over the educational background and proficiency level of the participants. The proportion of male and female students in the classes was not equal as the

number of female students majoring in English is always exponentially larger than that of males in Iran. The participants' participation in the study was completely voluntary.

Instruments

Language Aptitude Battery for Iranian Students (LABI)

In order to measure the participants' foreign language aptitude in this study, LABI (the first standardized language aptitude battery for Iranian students) which was developed and validated by Sabouri (1999) was utilized. The aptitude test contains four parts: proficiency test, associated pairs, socio-linguistic sensitivity, and Farsi vocabulary equivalents.

Part 1 or the proficiency test is a standard placement test of English as a foreign language consisting of four subtests. Part A contains three passages of reading comprehension with eight multiple-choice comprehension questions. Part B consists of five multiple-choice questions measuring the participants' familiarity with English sounds, mainly English vowels. Part C comprises 14 items aiming at measuring the English syntactic knowledge of the participants. In part D, there are seven vocabulary questions in multiple-choice format. The whole test takes 30 minutes to administer.

In Part 2 which is called associated pairs, the students were given 12 pairs of written Urdu-Farsi words and asked to memorize them in one minute. They were given the list of the 12 Urdu words and had another one minute to write down their Farsi equivalents. This part was designed to measure rote-learning ability for foreign language materials.

For Part 3 or socio-linguistic sensitivity, the students were exposed to 10 situations. They were expected to identify the appropriate form to match each given situation within five minutes.

In Part 4called Farsi vocabulary equivalents, the students were given 13 Farsi words with four choices out of which they had to identify the closest to the meaning of the words. The allocated time for this part is five minutes.Based on the scoring of the LABI which includes 69 questions (a maximum score of 69),those receiving 23 and lower were classified as the low aptitude group while those who scored 46 and higher as the high aptitude group (LABI appears in the Appendix).

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

In order to measure the participants' foreign language anxiety, the FLCAS which was developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope(1986) was utilized. This questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part was intended to collect the personal information of the participants such as name, gender, age, academic major, and ethnicity. The second part consists of 33 five-point likert scale items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with values 1-5 assigned to them, respectively. The scores range from 33-165; the higher the score, the more anxiety the students have. Scores lower than 76 show low anxiety while between 77-119 moderate anxiety and more than 119, a high level of anxiety.

The scale has demonstrated internal reliability, achieving an alpha coefficient of 0.93 with all items producing significant corrected item-total scale correlation. Test-retest reliability yielded an r =0.83 (Horwitz et al., 1986). The needed time for answering this questionnaire was 15 minutes.

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale

In order to measure the participants' level of WTC in this study, the McCroskey (1992) scale was utilized. This questionnaire consists of 20 items assessing the students' willingness to engage in communication tasks. In this questionnaire, situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not were available. The respondents could assign the range of scores from

zero (meaning NEVER) to 100 (meaning ALWAYS). According to McCroskey, the face validity of the instrument was strong and the results of extensive research indicated the predictive validity of the instrument. Alpha reliability estimates for this instrument ranged from 0.85 to well above 0.90. Those receiving more than 82 were considered as individuals with high WTC and those who received less than 52 were considered as low WTC individuals.

Procedure

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following procedure was conducted: First, the researchers requested a number of university instructors to give them one session of their classes. Next, the students in each class were asked to take part in the study only if they were willing to and were requested to complete the questionnaires accurately. Subsequently, the participants were provided with a brief explanation on the purpose of study and the instructions for each step. The participants were further assured about the confidentiality of their answers.

The abovementioned procedure took about three minutes. Then the researchers explained that they were going to distribute the first of the three questionnaires and that no question would be responded to by the researchers while they were filling the questionnaires. Moreover, they were told to write their email addresses on the cover page, in case they were interested to be informed about their scores later.

Once the time was up, the first questionnaire was collected and the second was distributed which in turn was collected when the time was up and finally the third questionnaire was distributed. The LABI, the WTC scale, and the FLCAS were distributed among 146 students; out of the above total, 120 students had filled out all three instruments. The order of the administration of the questionnaires was varied in the following six possible ways to eliminate the probable impact of a fixed order and pattern of administration on the participants' manner of responding:

1.FLCAS, WTC, LABI
2.FLCAS, LABI, WTC
3.WTC, FLCAS, LABI
4.WTC, LABI, FLCAS
5.LABI, FLCAS, WTC
6.LABI, WTC, FLCAS

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Language Aptitude Battery for Iranian Students

The descriptive statistics of administeringLABI appears in Table 1: the mean and the standard deviation of the scores stood at 36.67 and 8.63, respectively. Furthermore, the scores represented normalcy with the skewness ratio falling within the acceptable range of ±1.96 (0.183 / 0.221 = 0.83). also, the reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.89 using Cronbach Alpha.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics of the participants' scores on the LABI*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
LABI	120	18	64	36.67	8.632	.183	.221
Valid (listwise)	120						

For easier reference, the above scores are represented in Figure1. As is evident from the histogram, one of the participants (number 74 scoring 64) was an outlier and was thus removed from the final analysis.

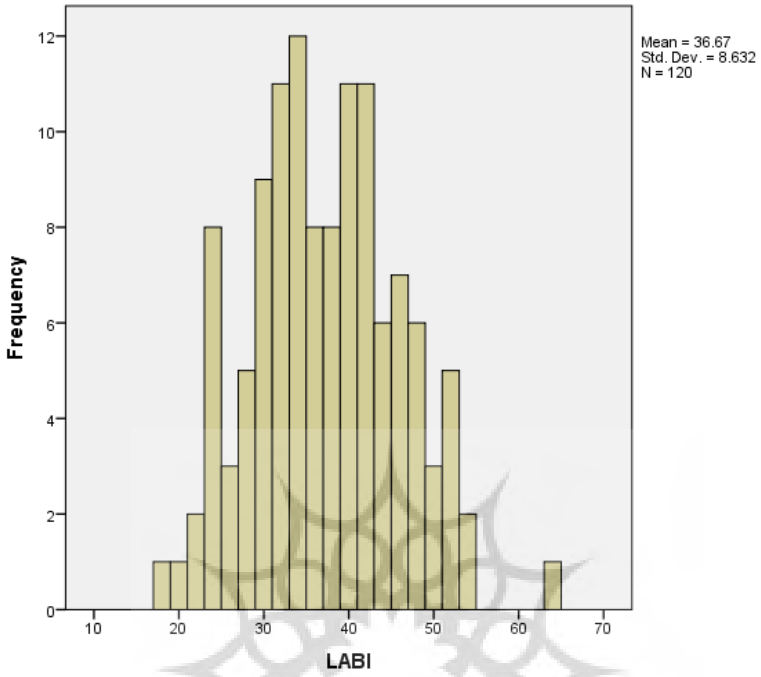

Figure 1. *Histogram of the participants' scores on the LABI*

Willingness to Communicate Scale

Next, the 120 participants took the WTC with the scores appearing below in Table 2.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics of the participants' scores on the WTC*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
WTC	120	15.25	100.00	54.755	18.756	.218	.221
Valid (listwise)	120						

As is seen in the table, the mean and the standard deviation of the scores stood at 54.75 and 18.76, respectively. Furthermore, the scores represented normalcy with the skewness ratio falling within the acceptable range of ±1.96 (0.218 / 0.221 = 0.98). The reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.91 using Cronbach Alpha.For easier reference, the above scores are represented in Figure 2.

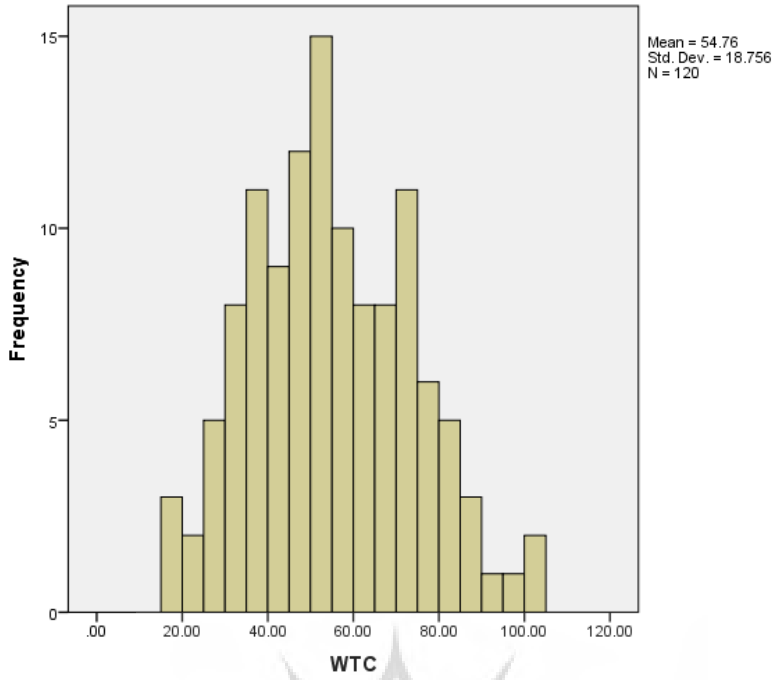

Figure 2. *Histogram of the participants' scores on the WTC*

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

The third instrument used in this study was the FLCAS. Table 3 displays the mean and the standard deviation of the scores:87.86 and 17.98, respectively. Furthermore, the scores represented normalcy with the skewness ratio falling within the acceptable range of ±1.96 (0.079 / 0.221 = 0.357). The reliability of the scores in this administration was 0.92 using Cronbach Alpha.

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics of the participants' scores on the FLCAS*

	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error
FLCAS	120	43	133	87.86	17.980	.079	.221
Valid (listwise)	120						

Figure 3 shows the mean scores achieved by the 120participants on the FLCAS.

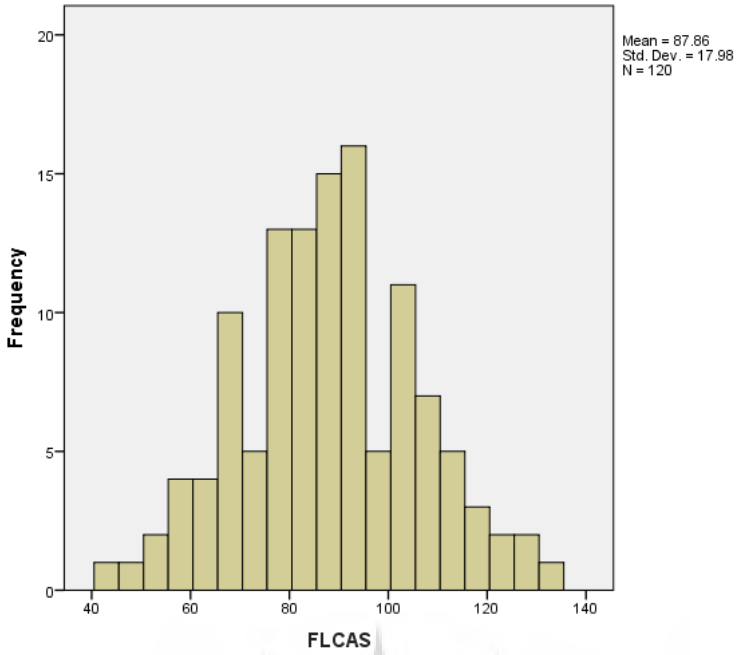

Figure 3. *Histogram of the participants' scores on the FLCAS*

Testing the Hypotheses

First Null Hypothesis

To test the first null hypothesis of the study, i.e. whether *there was any significant relationship between EFL learners' language aptitude and their willingness to communicate*, the Pearson correlation test was run.Prior to this of course, the assumptions for running this parametric test had to be checked, i.e. linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity of the two distributions of scores.To inspect the first parameter (linearity), the researchers used a scatterplot of the two variables of the study (Figure 4).

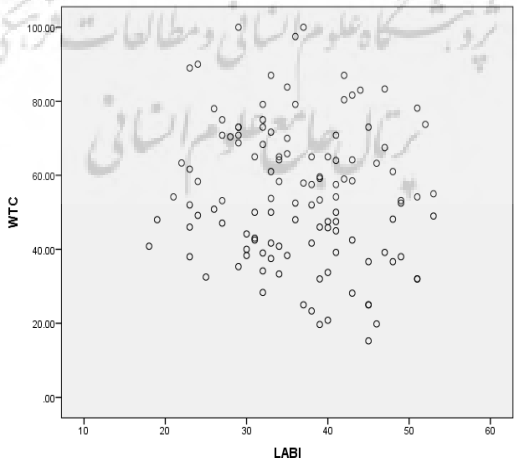

Figure 4. *Scatterplot of the participants' scores on the LABI and the WTC*

As shown in this scatterplot, there was no kind of nonlinear relationship between the scores on the two batteries. Hence, the relationship between the two variables was not assumed

non-linear and the assumption was thus not violated.As for the second parameter – normality of the distributions – going back to Tables 1 and 2, the skewness ratios of both distributions fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96; hence, the distributions were normal.

The remaining assumption which had to be checked was homoscedasticity, that is, the assumption that the variability in the participants' scores for the LABIshould be similar at all values of the scores on the WTC; to this end, the researchers examined the residuals plot (Figure 5).

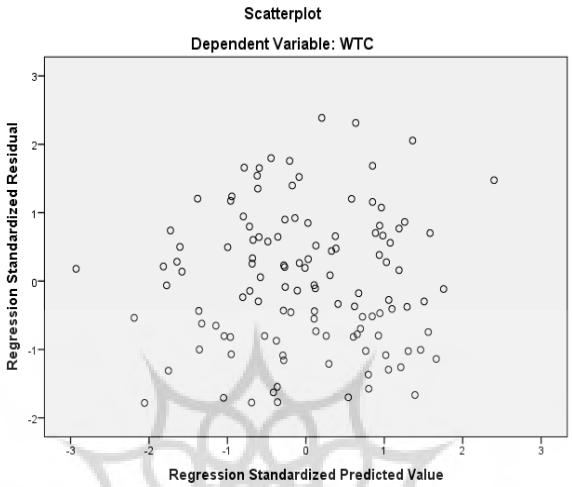

Figure 5. *Plot of studentized residuals for the participants' WTC*

As demonstrated in Figure 5, the cloud of data scattered shows evenness at both ends and thus the variance is homogeneous and the principle of homoscedasticty is met (Pallant, 2007). With the three assumptions of correlation having been met, the researchers could run the correlation to test the first hypothesis of the study (Table 4).

Table 4. *Correlation of the participants' scores on the LABI and WTC*

		LABI	WTC
LABI	Correlation	1	.485**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	119	119
WTC	Correlation	.485**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	119	119

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As demonstrated by Table 4 above, the correlation came out to be significant at the 0.01 level ($r = 0.485$, $p = 0.001 < 0.05$). Furthermore, R^2 (or common variance) which is the effect size for correlation came out to be 0.233. This is a moderate effect size (Larson-Hall, 2010). As a result, the researchers were able to reject the first null hypothesis. In other words, *there is a significant relationship between EFL learners' language aptitude and willingness to communicate*.

Second Null Hypothesis

To test the second null hypothesis, i.e. whether *there was any significant relationship between EFL learners' anxiety and willingness to communicate*, the Pearson correlation test was run. Again, however, the prerequisites had to be checked. To inspect linearity, the researchers used a scatterplot of the two variables of the study (Figure 6). As shown in this scatterplot, there was no kind of nonlinear relationship between the scores on the two batteries. Hence, the relationship between the two variables was not assumed non-linear.

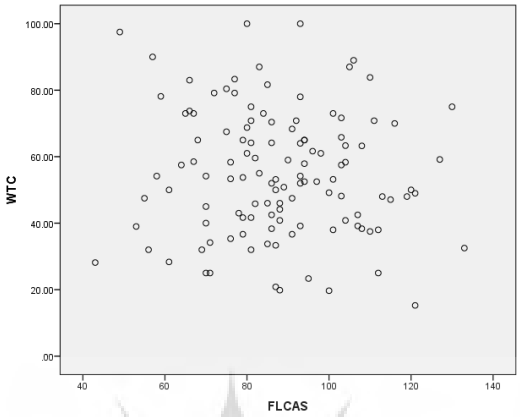

Figure 6. *Scatterplot of the participants' scores on the FLCASand the WTC*

As for the second parameter – normality of the distributions – going back to Tables 2 and 3, the skewness ratios of both distributions fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96; hence, the distributions were normal. Regarding the last parameter, i.e. homoscedasticity, the researchers had already examined the residuals plot (Figure 5).

Table 5. *Correlation of the participants' scores on the FLCAS and WTC*

		FLCAS	WTC
FLCAS	Correlation	1	-.565**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	119	119
WTC	Correlation	-.565**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	119	119

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As demonstrated by Table 5 above, the correlation came out to be significant at the 0.01 level ($r = -0.565$, $p = 0.0001 < 0.05$). also, R^2 came out to be 0.319 which again is a moderate effect size (Larson-Hall, 2010). As a result, the researcherswere able to reject the second null hypothesis too. In other words, *there is a significantly negative relationship between EFL learners' anxiety and willingness to communicate*.

Third Null Hypothesis

As the previous null hypotheses were rejected, i.e. a significant correlation existed among the three constructs, running a multiple correlation was justified. The assumptions of normality of distribution and homoscedasticitywere already established; hence, to test the null hypothesis, the information in Table 6 below is used. The multiple R in the population equals 0.187 which means

that indeed there was no significant difference in the predictability of EFL learners' willingness to communicate by their aptitude and anxiety; in other words, aptitude and anxiety did not function with significant difference when it comes to predicting WTC; thus, the third and last null hypothesis raised in this study was not rejected.

Table 6. *ANOVA*[b]

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1180.474	2	590.237	1.703	.187[b]
Residual	40205.582	116	346.600		
Total	41386.056	118			

a. Predictor variables: (Constant), LABI & FLCAS
b. Predictedvariable: WTC

One last check was to see whether there were any unusual cases in the score distribution or not and whether they had any undue influence over the results. For this, the case wise diagnostics had to be checked. The result was that no cases had a standardized residual value outside ±3.00.

Discussion

The finding of this study revealed a significantly negative correlation between EFL learners' anxiety and their WTC which indicate that the higher anxiety that learners experience during class causes the decreasing of their willingness to communicate.The findings of the present study are in the line with those found in previous studies (Horwitz et al.,1986; Liu & Jackson, 2008; MacIntyre, 2007; Marzban &Firoozjahantigh, 2017; Rastegar & Karami, 2015) which concluded that learners with higher language learning anxiety tended to be more apprehensive about L2 communication.

Rastegar and Karami (2015) also found a significantly negative correlation between learners' foreign language anxiety and WTC. Moreover, the finding of this study is congruent with that of Atef Vahid and Fard Kashani (2011) which indicates that a high level of anxiety prevents learners from participating in the class,especially during oral activities. In addition, Aghajani and Amanzadeh (2017) found that learners with high levels of anxiety have poorer communication performance and therefore receive lower test scores.

The results of Liu and Jackson's (2008) research indicate that learners' unwillingness to communicate and their anxiety were significantly correlated with their self-rated foreign language proficiency. Nishitani and Matsuda (2011) found that anxious learners who experience anxiety during language learning tend to feel anxious when producing or using foreign languages.

The result of Philip's (1992) study revealed a relationship between language anxiety and oral performance and, as a result, language anxiety can have an effect on learners' WTC and their oral performance. Park and Lee (1995) reported that "the higher anxious the students were about speaking English as a foreign language, the lower scores they gained on their oral performance"(p. 197). Furthermore, Aida (1994) showed that language anxiety was negatively correlated with the students' performance of foreign language. Elkhafaifi (2005) too concluded that the low performance of learners is a consequentiality of anxiety.

In contrast to other researchers and their findings, Kim (2004) showed that students' WTC was directly related to their confidence in foreign language communication not

anxiety.Furthermore, Hashemi and Abbasi (2013) demonstrated that the foreign language anxiety experienced by EFL learners differed in relation to language skills.

Another finding of this study reveals the correlation between EFL learners' language aptitude and their WTC. Lightbown and Spada (2006) argue that high aptitude learners learn with greater ease and speed and – as a result – they are more willing to participate in class activities, especially oral activities.

Contrary to the result of this study, Harly and Hart (1997) claim that among students enrolled in an immersion program in their first grade, aptitude is not considered as a significant predictor of language proficiency and it does not have direct effect on learners' WTC. On the other hand, Dörnyei (2005) claims that language learning aptitude affects WTC.

Based on the results of other studies and the scores of the learners on the LABI, it may well be justified that learners who have high learning aptitude have more confidence to participate in class activities and high language learning aptitude encourages them to communicate in a foreign language.

Conclusion

This study may have pedagogical implications for EFL teachers, syllabus designers, and EFL learners.As there is a significantly negative relationship between EFL learners' anxiety and their WTC, the teacher has a crucial role in the reduction of students' anxiety level. Horwitz (2001) claimed that classroom atmosphere, teachers support, task orientation, and importance of instructions are significant factors that influence students' anxiety level.

Moreover, there is a significant relationship between EFL learners' language aptitude and their WTC; again, teachers play an important role in promoting WTC in the class. To promote students' WTC in the class, teachers could choose to focus on promoting self-regulated learning as "self-regulation is a self-initiated capability that relies less on teachers and more on students' motivational beliefs" (Zimmerman, 2004, p. 162).

Syllabus designers could offer a specific curriculum that can cater to learners who experience speaking anxiety in order to improve their WTC. This can be done by offering additional courses separated from the mainstream program to suit their needs. The course could pay attention to the relevance of communication and speaking skills as they require for their foreign language development.

Learners themselves may have control over their anxiety which leads to language learning and WTC. In the light of WTC, learners cope with the anxiety and mistakes. Step by step, they overcome their anxiety and become more proficient which leads to their WTC. By understanding the causes and sources of foreign language anxiety and relationship to language achievement, learners could employ these factors to decrease their anxiety.

The following two recommendations for future research are based upon the results of this study. First, replicating this research with different samples including other age groups or from various backgrounds may yield different results.Secondly, another construct such as self-confidence may be examined alongside WTC and aptitude.

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Appendix: Language Aptitude Battery for Iranian Students (LABI)

Part 1: PLACEMENT TEST

Direction for answering questions 1-8. Read each passage carefully and select the correct answer between a, b, c, or d.

It was a fine morning. The sun was bright, the sky was blue and I was extremely happy because I was a university student at last. My brother and sister were still at school; so I was important. After 8 month of being university student, I am not happy anymore. University student‘s life is so difficult. I should get up early morning every day. I should study all the day but my work never finishes. I rarely see my friends and I cannot go out with them. I have got the time or the money. My father thinks I am already successful because I am a medical student. I only think of summer holiday which is so close.

1.She rarely sees her friends because----------

a.They are busy

b.They go to school

c.She is a medical student
d.She does not have enough time
2.The writer is ---------
a.Glad to be a medical student
b.Not happy with college life
c.Often visiting friends
d.Not very busy now
3.The writer is happy about one thing; ----------
a.She does not have to go to university anymore
b.She is going to see her friends
c.The holidays are coming
d.The university is closed

Eskimo dogs are very useful animals in the Arctic Regions. They are strong and they can withstand the extremely cold weather of the Arctic. These beautiful animals are used by many Eskimo families for pulling sleds and hunting. Because of their great strength and endurance, they can pull heavy loads for many miles without tiring. The sleds that they pull are made of wood and bone fastened together with rawhide. The Eskimo dogs are particularly useful in hunting seals. They help the Eskimo hunters to find the seals by locating air holes in the ice through which the seals breathe. Eskimo do most of their hunting on the ice, but sometimes they hunt from boat.

4.Where there are air holes, there most probably are ----------
a.Eskimos
b.Hunters
c.Seals
d.Dogs

5.Seals are hunted when they come up ----------
a.To get air
b.For hunting
c.To get warm
d.For food

A dictionary is a reference book that you will find useful all your life. You must learn how to use a dictionary properly. A dictionary gives the meanings of words and shows how they are used. The words in a dictionary are printed in alphabetical order. In most dictionaries, the words are printed in two columns on each page. At the top of each column, one word is printed in bold type. The illustration bellows shows the top and bottom of the page 104 of a dictionary.

HUMAN **104**	**HYPNOTIZE**
Human adj. belonging to mankind. N. human a man, woman, or child. Adv. Humanly in a human way------	**Hurry** v.1. To move fast. 2. To urge others to move fast. As the captain hurried his men along (hurrying, hurried). n.hurry haste.
Hurdle n. 1. A fence of laths or twigs. 2. A movable fence for jumping over	**Hypnotize** v. for a hypnotist to send someone in to a trance in which he obeys

	suggestions put to him.adj.hypnotic.n.hypnotism.

The boldly printed words show you whether or not the word that you are looking for is printed on that page. For example, if the words at the tops of the columns were

BEWARE BLANKET

Then bicycle would appear on that page because BI comes between BE and BL in the alphabetical order.

6.According to the passage you will find a dictionary useful----------.

a.At home
b.At college
c.All the time
d.At the time of study

7.Which group of words could you find on page 104 in the passage?

a.Hurry, hypocrite, hysteria
b.Hush, hydrate, hyperbole
c.Huge, hurried, hyperactive
d.Hurried, hustle, hysterectomy

8.If the guide words on a page are "spring" and "spud", which of the following words could be found on the page?

a.Square
b.Sprint
c.Sprig
d.Spur

Direction for answering question 9-13. Select the correct item a, b, c, or d. which vowel sound is different from that of the numbered word and mark your answer sheet.

9.Hit	a. fit	b. pit	c. miss	d. neat
10.Bus	a. fun	b. sun	c. one	d. tune
11.Kite	a. fine	b. pick	c. dine	d. fight
12.Cube	a. tube	b. huge	c. mule	d. luck
13.Pond	a. so	b. drop	c. rock	d. got

Direction for answering questions 14-27. Select the correct item a, b, c, or d – which completes the sentence most appropriately and mark your answer sheet.

14.A: when is he going to start work?
B: ----------

a.Morning
b.Yesterday
c.Tomorrow
d.On weekends

15.Mr. Brown let his secretary ---------- home early today.

a.Went
b.Goes

c.Go
d.To go
16.I will go if you ----------.
a.Went
b.Go
c.Will go
d.Would go
17.She kept on ---------- even after the bell rang.
a.Teach
b.Taught
c.Teaching
d.To teach
18.She cannot help ---------- when she sees a mous.
a.Scream
b.Screams
c.To scream
d.Screaming
19.Mary went to the store ---------- buy a raincoat.
a.To
b.For
c.Because
d.Till
20.John was very ---------- when he heard the news.
a.Excites
b.Excited
c.Exciting
d.Excitedly
21.They went finishing ---------- the bad weather.
a.Even though
b.In spite of
c.although
d.Because
22.It would be nice if you ---------- come to the meeting.
a.Could have
b.Could
c.Will
d.Can
23.He tried to look happy ---------- he was not.
a.Although
b.Because
c.Unless
d.If
24.It was ---------- nice day that we could not stay home.
a.So
b.Too
c.Very
d.Such a

25.Tell her the truth, --------- she likes to hear it.
a.Whether or not
b.In spite of
c.Although
d.Unless
26.The teacher had the students ---------- her with the work.
a.To help
b.Helping
c.Help
d.Helped
27.George is used to ----------.
a.Working
b.Worked
c.Works
d.Work
Select the correct item which completes the sentence most meaning fully.
28.When they took the fish out of water, it was still ----------.
a.Jumping
b.floating
c.Splashing
d.Swimming
29.We saw a very ---------- sheep in the zoo. It had five legs.
a.Usual
b.Famous
c.Strange
d.Big
30.Plants --------- water from the ground.
a.Soak
b.Drink
c.Suck up
d.Turn up
31.They are building a new ---------- on the river.
a.Road
b.Dam
c.Bank
d.Stream
32.I like ---------- potatoes with my dinner.
a.Baked
b.Burned
c.Crushed
d.Threshed
33.We saw several beautiful ------ in the river.
a.Roosters
b.Whales
c.Ducks
d.Flies
34.Most ---------- are very small.

a.Insects
b.Snakes
c.Animals
d.Creatures

Part 2: Associated- pairs

در زیر ۱۲ کلمه از یک زبان خارجی را با معادل فارسی هر یک مشاهده می کنید. سعی کنید هر کلمه ومعادل ان را به خاطر بسپارید.

۱ . انکچشم	ه
۲ . ادای‌سد	دلتنگی
۳. بندقو	تفنگ
٤. باسورھ	اعتماد
٥. پته	برگ
٦. پس‌ایِ	تشنگی
۷. تھکاخسد	ن‌تگی
۸. چھسد	ت‌قف
۹. سماج	اجتماع
۱۰. سف	چوکر
۱۱. سورج	افتاب
۱۲. کھیل	بازی

Part 3: Socio- linguistic

در این بخش با دقت هر یک از ۱۰ وضعیتی را که در ذیل تشریح شده است. بهترین گزینه را انتخاب کرده و علامت بزنید.

در هنگام معرفی به بانویی کهنسال چه می گویید.

الف. خوشبختم
ب. حالت خوبه
ج. از ملاقات شما خوشوقتلا
د. من حسن ی‌احی هستم

در رستوران سفارش غذا می دهید:

الف. گارسون چلوک باد لطفا
ب. لطفا یک کوبیده بدون گوجه
ج. من زرشک پلو نمی خورم
د. ممکن است برای اینجانب یک بشقاب جوجه بیاورید.

به ەنگام ترک میهمانی خانم میزبان خداحافظی می کند شما چه می گویید؟

الف. خدانگهدار شبتان بخیر
ب. از لطف شما ممنونم به امید دیدار
ج. خ‌لی خوش گذش‌ت
د. بعدا شما را می بینم

همکارتان وضع معده لش بهم ریخته و نمی داند چه کند چه می گویید؟

الف. برو دکتر
ب. چرا دکتر نمی ری؟
ج. ایا در معده درد هم داری؟
د. تو حتما باید به پزشک متخ صص مراجعه کنی!

در کنار خیابان منتظر تاکسی هستید. با نزدیک شدن تاکسی چه میگویید؟

الف. مستقیم
ب. میخوره؟
ج. مرا به دانشگاه ببر
د. مسیرتان کجاست؟

دوستتان اتومبیلد خریده که معایه فنی ندارد چه می گویید؟
الف. برو کارت معاینه فنی بگیر
ب. بـ ـهتر است ـهرچه زودتر برگ معاینه تهیه کنی
ج. اگر با پلیس برخرد کنی جریمت می کنه
د. باید این اتومبیل را ارزان می خری‌دی چرا خریدی؟
رادیویی که دیروز خریدید کار نمی کند انرا به فروشگاه برگردانده و به فروشنده می گوی‌ید:
الف. لطفا عوضش کنید
ب. اقا یک راد یوی سالم بدهید
ج. ببخشید رادیو ویی که دیروز خریدم کار نمی کند
د. این رادیو خراب است خواهش می کنم دیگر انرا نمی خواهم
در منزل دوستی هستید می خواهید تلفن بزنید چه می گوی‌ید؟
الف. ایا شما تلفن دارید؟
ب. با اجازه می خواهم به منزل تلفن بزنم
ج. ایا امکانپذیر ا ست از تلفن منزل شما استفاده کنم
د. ببخش ید تلفن شمارا می خواستم که یک تلفن بزنم
قهوه تان روی فرش ریخته به میزبان چه می گوی‌ید؟
الف. اه خیلی بد شد
ب. متاسفم فنجان قهوه را شکستم
ج. واقعا متاسفم اجازه بدید خودم فرش را پاک کنم
د. ممکن است یک دستمال بدهید تا فرش را تمیز کنم
می خواهید دربارکن نوشابه بخرید لما اسمش رو فراموش کردید:
الف. ببخشید اسم وسیله رو فراموش کردم
ب. در نوشابه را با چی باز می کنن؟
ج.وسیله ای که در نوشابه را باز می کند چه نام زارد؟
د. ببخشید وسیله ای می خواستم که درب نو شابه را باز کند.

Part 4: vocabulary

گزینه هم معنی کلمات داده شده را انتخاب کنید.
ثاقب:
الف. ستاره
ب. سنگین
ج. درخشان
د. سوراخ
بادافراه:
الف. باشکوه
ب. نوعی بیماری
ج. مجازات
د. پای افراز
طالح:
الف. ازمند
ب. نیکوکار
ج. بدکار
د. خوشخو
ضحاک:
الف. بسیار خندان
ب. بسیار عصبانی
ج. بیرحم

د. فربه
ابرام:
الف. برادران
ب. نیکو
ج. پافشاری
د. سرشت
چاروا:
الف. حیوان بارکش
ب. غله
ج. اصطبل
د. نوعی اش
رازی:
الف. گوینده راز
ب. سرنگهدار
ج. اهل ری
د. اهل
راقم:
الف. نویسنده
ب. حسابدار
ج. خفته
د.تحصیلدار
طرایف:
الف. طرف ها
ب. سخنان نغز
ج. شرکا
د. زشت گویی
چلیپا:
الف. خاج
ب. هزارپا
ج. دیوانه
د. دل
دهش:
الف. ترس
ب. کرم
ج. بزرگ
د.ترسان
فاجر:
الف. ارزان
ب.صبح زود
ج. اندوه کار
د. گناهکار
ماستبا:
الف. ماستبند
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ج. اش ماست
د.نان و ماست