Mediation and EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate: A Micro Sociocultural Study

Behrouz Jamalvandi [1], Manoochehr Jafarigohar [2*], Alireza Jalilifar [3], Hassan Soleimani [4]

[1] *Ph.D. Candidate, Department of TEFL and English Literature, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran*
[2] *Associate Professor, Department of TEFL and English Literature, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran*
[3] *Professor, Department of TEFL and English Literature, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Iran*
[4] *Associate Professor, Department of TEFL and English Literature, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran*

Abstract: Exploring various dimensions associated with classroom Willingness to Communicate (WTC) appears to have become a focal issue among researchers. Despite previous studies on WTC, there still exists the paucity of research reflecting actual learners' WTC behavior via the lens of the Sociocultural Theory (SCT). The present study, therefore, delved into the role task-mediation and teacher scaffolding might play in EFL learners' WTC, juxtaposing STC, and task-based instruction. Through a multiple case study approach, six types of tasks were applied with 11 Iranian EFL learners over 9 weeks. Relying on triangulation, the authors of the present study collected the data using observation, stimulated recall interviews, and learners' reflective journals. To treat the data, the qualitative method of analysis was utilized. The results showed that the learners behaved variably in their WTC with respect to the tasks. Furthermore, teacher scaffolding was found to contribute to the learners' WTC. Mediation via task and teacher scaffolding carry implications for English teachers, which have been discussed at the end of this article.

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate; Sociocultural Theory; Task-Based Instruction; Scaffolding; Mediation.

Introduction

The construct of WTC was first proposed by McCroskey and Baer (1985) with reference to first language (L1) communication. Later, the concept found its way into a second language (L2) research. WTC by definition is "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément & Noels, 1998, p.547). As a concept closely related to L2 communication, WTC has given rise to a plethora of research across the world. The importance of research on WTC, as Kang (2005) noted, lies in the role it plays in language development, which is depicted from an array of standpoints including sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978), linguistic (Long, 1985; Swain, 1985), and other related areas. Researchers have addressed WTC from an array of aspects: personality traits (MacIntyre, Burns & Jessome, 2011; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide & Shimizu, 2004), learners' participation (Bernales, 2016), effect of the teacher (Zarrinabadi, 2014), WTC among non-English students (Ghonsooly, Khajavy & Asadpour, 2012), learner agency (Mercer, 2011), the role of context (Cameron, 2015), sociocognitive perspective (Cao, 2014), and dynamism (Cao, 2013).

Despite extensive investigations conducted on L2 WTC, it appears that reflecting on what is actually going on in the classroom context is under-researched. In Yashima's (2012) words, pedagogically more research is required to disclose how to help learners enhance their WTC. This change is obviously, to a great extent, under the influence of social contexts. In fact, research on WTC as a constantly changing characteristic is in its infancy and hence more research seems essential to unwrap how teachers and different techniques affect classroom WTC (Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015). This gap is also noted by Cao (2013), asserting that although attempts have been made to explore the impact of time and context on L2 WTC, there exists a gap to reveal a systematic change in situational L2 WTC in the classroom. To fill this gap, and looking at WTC from the SCT perspective, this study investigated L2 WTC in the context of the classroom. The importance of this study lies in the fact that enhanced WTC and successful language learning are closely interrelated.

The association of SCT with WTC could lie in the role SCT plays in providing opportunities for learners to use an L2. Given that SCT highlights the consolidation of social, cultural, and biological factors, some researchers believe it caters for the prime need to explore social and cognitive aspects of EFL/ESL (Block, 2003; Frawley & Lantolf, 1985). SCT pays special attention to interaction, negotiation, and collaboration. At the heart of this perspective lies participation in social interactions and culturally organized activities that play influential roles in

psychological development (Scot & Palincsar, 2013). SCT reasons that our mental functioning is basically a mediated process, organized by means of activities, cultural artifacts, and concepts (Ratner, 2002). According to VanPatten and Williams (2015) "developmental processes take place through participation in cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings such as family life, peer group interaction, and institutional contexts like schooling, organized social activities, and workplaces" (p. 207). Therefore, one way to mediate WTC as a psychological construct is using tasks, which has been addressed by the present research. To account for using tasks and its connection with SCT, we can make a reference to Lantolf (2000b), maintaining that mediation in L2 learning situations can appear in three types: a) mediation by others in social activities; b) mediation by self via private speech; and c) mediation by artifacts. This study drew on the third type of mediation by applying tasks as a category included in artifacts. The mediation by the teacher shaped another aspect addressed by the present inquiry. Previous research in the field indicates that teachers and their communication behavior in the classroom exert an impact on learners' WTC. Zarrinabadi (2014), for example, reported that the teacher's extended wait time and support could significantly improve learners' WTC. Also, Cao and Philp (2006) and Peng (2014) reported that teachers' communicative behavior and feedback on students' performance influenced the effectiveness of pedagogical tasks. As such, in this study, teacher mediation was included to see if the presence or absence of teacher mediation affected the effectiveness of tasks.

Literature Review

Trait-like versus Situational WTC

The construct of WTC was initially conceptualized as a stable characteristic or a trait-like aspect. The trait-like notion stems from the studies by McCroskey and Baer (1985), McCroskey and Richmond (1990, 1991). They focused on L1 WTC and introduced WTC as the intention to embark on communication when free to do so. Accordingly, WTC was believed to be invariant across situations with various receivers. However, criticizing the trait-like view of WTC, scholars have claimed that there exist situational factors affecting one's WTC. As pioneers in applying WTC in L2, MacIntyre et al. (1998) devised a heuristic model to demonstrate various linguistic, communicative, and social variables playing a role in L2 WTC. Unlike L1 WTC considered as an invariant trait across different contexts and receivers (McCroskey & Baer, 1985), MacIntyre et al. (1998) redefined it as a situational/state variable, undertaking fluctuations under various circumstances and in specific contexts.

In tandem with the situation-specific treatment of WTC, Kang (2005) provided a definition of WTC as "an individual's volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation" (p. 291). According to this definition, WTC can vary with reference to the interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, along with other situational variables. Having adopted the dynamism of WTC, more researchers reflected this standpoint in a number of inquiries (Cao, 2013; Cao & Philp, 2006; Jamalifar & Salehi, 2017; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2010; Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015).

Empirical Research on L2 WTC

Extensive research conducted on L2 WTC has aimed at augmenting our understanding of this construct. Kang (2005) sheds light on the dynamic emergence of WTC and its fluctuation in the course of a conversation situation. He illustrated that L2 WTC emerged as a combination of three interacting psychological conditions, including excitement, responsibility, and security. The study led to a new conceptualization of WTC, defined "as a dynamic situational concept that can change moment-to-moment, rather than a trait-like predisposition" (p. 1). Weaver (2007) delved into WTC as a mediating factor between learners and tasks. Different tasks were found to produce great variations in the students' WTC, suggesting tasks as a source of variation in WTC. Further, the study highlighted the advantageous role of access to notes in enhancing the learners' WTC while performing the tasks.

There is evidence supporting the dynamism of WTC as the result of common influences of contextual, personal/individual, and linguistic factors in the classroom context (Cao, 2013). According to Cao (2013), WTC is situational, fluctuating, and dynamically changing over time. L2 WTC is prone to fluctuate in the short run as well as in the long run and such fluctuation might occur from one lesson to another (Cao, 2006), from one task to another or as a change in learners' experience and confidence toward betterment (Baker & MacIntyre, 2003). Additionally, research has shown that learning tasks, as an environmental factor, could provoke high WTC whenever they demand meaningful interactions (Peng, 2012). MacIntyre and Legatto (2010) energized our understanding of the dynamic nature of WTC by devising an idiodynamic method. They probed into the impact of task type, WTC variation while doing the task, and the subjects' accounts for their WTC fluctuations. The findings contributed to WTC literature by offering evidence for the vital role of word search and anxiety to justify the fluctuations in the learners' WTC.

Kurniawan, Fadilah, and Triastutie (2018) detected WTC in task-based instruction,

focusing on fluctuation in a dynamic system. They postulated that cultural, psychological, linguistic, socio-cognitive, and situational variables trigger learners' launching to communicate. More importantly, their study highlighted the interconnection of the aforementioned variables causing fluctuation on the basis of time during which the tasks were put into practice. The source of fluctuations was found in situational contexts of the classroom, including interest in and familiarity with the topic, interlocutors, feedback provision, and group discussion. Like previous research, the study endorsed the significant role of situational classroom context in creating fluctuations in learners' WTC. Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2015) call for a wider array of variables to be taken when we deal with L2 WTC; variables like instructional contexts, i.e. different types of tasks to be performed and individuals of dissimilar age and proficiency which include both those of particular context and learners, the teacher, relationship between them, or classroom interaction.

This study, as mentioned earlier, also focused on teacher mediation and learners' L2 WTC. What follows is a review of research on the teacher's role in WTC.

The Role of Teachers in Learners' WTC

Along with different variables affecting WTC, the role of the teacher has also been attested to be a significant factor in relation to individuals' WTC (Cao, 2011; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre et al., 2011; Wen & Clement, 2003; Zarrinabadi, 2014). MacIntyre et al. (2011) maintained that the teacher is potentially able to raise or lower students' WTC at any moment. Kang (2005) showed that social support by a tutor can enhance learners' WTC by lowering anxiety. MacIntyre et al. (2011) considered a pivotal role for the teacher and pointed to the students' overall tendency to talk with their teachers. Wen and Clement (2003) referred to teacher involvement and immediacy as influential in learners' engagement and WTC. According to Cao (2011), when students like their teacher, they show more tendency to come up with questions and take part in class activities more actively. Zarrinabadi (2014) enumerated four factors in association with the teacher that could apply impact on learners' WTC, including teachers' wait time, error correction, the decision on the topic, and support.

Notwithstanding, no research attempt has directly dwelled on the impact of mediation, both the teacher and task mediation, on learners' L2 WTC in the classroom context, although looking at WTC from an ecological perspective (Peng, 2012) and dynamism of WTC (Cao, 2013; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2010) accompanied by the emphasis on the social

aspect of WTC (Cao, 2014; Yashima, 2012) are quite pertinent to SCT.

Bridging SCT and TBLT

Recent research and pedagogy have highly concentrated on developing psychological processes via task-based language learning and teaching and communicative language teaching (Long, 2016). Concurrently, SCT has received increasing attention and considerable reflection in the literature. With reference to SCT, the tasks practiced in a classroom are anticipated to engender higher mental processes comprising problem-solving, logical speech, planning, and evaluation (Vygotsky, 1978). In the same vein, as Wells (2007) noted, learners arriving at a higher cognitive process are likely to require dissimilar degrees and forms of mediation when asked to accomplish a task. Accordingly, research into mediations for learners in relation to any particular task will cater for how learners come up with making meaning via language and other tools (Suksawas, 2011).

To make a marriage between SCT and TBLT, Nunn (2001) rested on three major points: "an attempt to re-contextualize the classroom, the focus of activity or tasks as a place for studying and developing language and a focus on meaning" (p. 4). Concerning the first line of commonality between SCT and TBLT, as Nunn (2001) explicated, tasks are applied to re-contextualize the classroom for the sake of making more meaning the same way it appears in the real world and what SCT does is to contextualize the analysis. Further, shifting focus to process instead of product approach as adopted by TBLT in the world of language teaching is in harmony with Vygotskian tradition. In sum, SCT and TBLT underpinnings are reciprocally valuable in doing research in SLA. As far as the social, dynamic, and cognitive aspects of WTC are concerned, such characteristics are also jointly included in SCT. This association has recently opened a new avenue of research on WTC. As cited earlier, mediation is a pivotal concept in SCT.

Framed in SCT, this study exploited the key term of mediation (Lantolf, 2000a; Vygotsky, 1978) to treat learners' WTC in the classroom context. There exist both external and internal mediation (Ellis, 2003). On the relationship between these two categories, Ellis (2003) contended, "the essence of SCT of mind is that external mediation serves as a means by which internal mediation is achieved" (p. 176). Therefore, development occurs as individuals embark on the appropriation of mediational means that is provided by others in the environment to enhance control over their mental activity (Lantolf, 2000b, as cited in Ellis, 2003). In the same vein, Kang (2005) believed that generating WTC is feasible via

manipulating situational variables. One way, according to her, is the modification by the pedagogical intervention. To do so, a variety of tasks can fuel classroom activities. By SCT-oriented tasks, as utilized in this study, we meant providing the circumstance of implementing the tasks on the basis of basic themes and concepts in SCT including co-constructed knowledge, social interactions, collaboration, active participation, raising motivation, and regulation (Bates, 2019; Vygotsky, 1986). Accordingly, taking into account the findings on WTC from the SCT standpoint, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. Does the application of SCT-oriented tasks leave any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' WTC?
2. Does learners' WTC vary across the types of tasks?
3. Does teacher mediation during task implementation make any significant difference in learners' WTC level?

Methodology

Research Method

The evidence of SCT in this study rested on conducting observable goal-directed activities and tasks that could be commensurate with activities in the real world or those commonly utilized in the classroom contexts (Lantolf & Thorn, 2007). To reflect upon the learners' L2 WTC in detail, the researchers applied a multiple case study approach (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2014) as a type of qualitative research and relied on purposive sampling (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Cao (2014), there exists the jeopardy of "oversimplification of the complexity in the case study" (p.797), which could engender interpretations and claims not supported adequately based on a single method of data collection. To alleviate this pitfall, and through triangulation (Mackey & Gass, 2012), L2 WTC was examined through observation, reflective journals, and stimulated recall interviews. In line with research from the SCT perspective, this study adopted a microgenetic approach (Cross, 2010; Otha, 2000) to probe into the role of mediation through tasks in EFL learners' WTC. Through this approach, we studied the "…development of mediation over a relatively short span of time" (Lantolf, 2000a, p. 3), in the specific context of EFL classrooms in Iran.

Participants

The participants included 11 high school students who attended an obligatory English course once a week as part of their school schedule in Ilam, Iran in 2018. The participants were

selected from among an initial pool of 70 students who took the Oxford Placement Test. The final sample was categorized as intermediate learners although their proficiency ranged within this general category of proficiency. The 11 participants were also interviewed to further confirm their proficiency homogeneity. Furthermore, the participants shared almost the same educational and socioeconomic background and were of the same gender, and belonged to the same age range. Students had a diverse experience of learning English in conversation courses in private language institutes, ranging from no experience to 5 years. The students were all Kurdish/Persian native speakers. They were all males, aged between 16 and 17 years ($M = 16.5$, $SD = 0.7$). For the sake of anonymity, pseudo names are employed in this report.

Instruments

This inquiry utilized triangulation to gather the required data, using the following instruments:

1. Non-participant classroom observation through video-recordings, where the researcher does not normally participate or is minimally engaged in class activities (Dörnyei, 2007);

2. A modified version of the stimulated recall interview by Cao and Philp (2006), which required learners to recall their thoughts about the time they were performing the task; and,

3. Reflective journals (Mackey & Gass, 2012), which aimed at having the participants document their activities while the researcher is not observing the process. Based on an unstructured framework, the participants provided feedback on different tasks they had experienced. They were expected to reveal how they felt in relation to every single task, which tasks encouraged them to talk and why, and other related information. This process recurred at the end of every session.

Procedure

Prior to the study, we assured debriefing the head of the school and the teacher along with receiving the participants' consent to participate in the investigation. At the outset, the participants were administered a biodata questionnaire. As elaborated earlier, the mediation in this inquiry was realized via implementing tasks in a classroom context. Table 1 depicts the phases of the study.

Table 1. *The Phases of Conducting the Research*

Stage 1 (2nd week)	Stage 2 (3rd week)	Stage 3 (4th week)	Stage 4 (5th week)
Participants' completing biodata questionnaire	a. Role-play b. Observation c. SRI[1] d. RJ[2]	a. Storytelling b. Observation c. SRI d. RJ	a. Picture description b. Observation c. SRI d. RJ
Stage 5 (6th week)	**Stage 6 (7th week)**	**Stage 7 (8th week)**	
a. Discussion b. Observation c. SRI d. RJ	a. Film reproduction b. Observation c. SRI d. RJ	a. Problem-solving b. Observation c. SRI d. RJ	

Note. 1. SRI denotes stimulated recall interview; 2. RJ denotes reflective journal.

The participants were accordingly required to carry out certain tasks in the class. The tasks included role-play, discussion, reproducing a film, problem-solving, storytelling, and picture description. The choice of the tasks was based on consulting the experts in the field. Depending on the nature of the task, the time allocated to complete each task varied between 8 to 10 minutes for the preparation phase and giving preliminary guidelines and 20 to 30 minutes for having the students carry out the task. In the role-play task, the students were given some cards containing situations in which they were expected to play a role. The cards were prepared by the first researcher in advance. Before conducting the roles, the students were guided by the teacher and received tips. As for the discussion task, a topic was raised by the teacher and the students contributed to the task. They could get help from more knowledgeable classmates as well as the teacher when necessary. Working on reproducing a film, the students were asked to reconstruct a film they had seen. Storytelling was meant to elicit a story from the students' minds, and picture description was assigned to make the students talk based on the pictures given. Throughout the process, students were not stopped when they made a mistake as long as it was not very serious. Also, the students talked in English although they were allowed to use their mother tongue whenever they ran into a problem or question. As far as applying classroom tasks is concerned, what distinguishes this study from the previous studies is identifying the learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD) and accordingly designing mediational interventions to trigger likely improvement in the participants' WTC. The whole activities of the class were videotaped for more careful and detailed analysis and description (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). The teacher was accustomed to being video-recorded. Owing to the fact that the researchers' presence in the

classroom as an observer could affect the natural process of data collection, non-participant observation was embraced in this investigation. As specified previously, we deployed the observation protocol by Cao and Philp (2006) to treat the recorded data.

To treat stimulated recall interviews, the first researcher held interview sessions with the participants so as to scrutinize how they were feeling the moment they were carrying out a task, what the reason would be for their verbal and non-verbal reactions while engaged in doing the task, and what they were thinking about in the course of the time they were involved in class activities. To capture real and accurate recall, the researchers made an attempt to maintain a short time interval between classroom tasks and the recall (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). Further, we had every student compose journals on the effect of tasks on their level of WTC. To facilitate the students' expressing their comments freely, they were allowed to use Persian. The process of data collection lasted for 8 weeks.

Teacher Intervention

Teacher mediation was realized via scaffolding, a concept tightly associated with ZPD. To trace the instances of how the teacher provided scaffolding throughout different tasks, we mainly followed the categories known as means by Van de Pol, Volman, and Beishuizen (2010). These means include *feedback, hints, instructing, explaining, modeling, and questioning*. In addition, we applied L1 as another scaffolding means based on Guerrero and Villamil (2000), adopting L1 contingently as a facilitative tool and a scaffolding mechanism in the interaction.

Data Analysis

The data from stimulated recall interviews were first transcribed verbatim and the data coming from the participants' journals were rewritten on spreadsheets for coding by the researchers a week after the termination of the data collection process. The data in this stage were originally in Persian and were translated into English by one of the researchers. This stage was followed by assigning codes to both the interviews and reflective journals. The process of coding commenced by pre-coding including underlining, highlighting, circling, coloring or bolding any significant idea uttered by the participants (Saldana, 2009). The data were then coded and recoded to arrive at themes and categories by the researchers. To code the qualitative data, content analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) was applied. Before embarking

on coding the data, the researchers made sure they had gained sufficient knowledge regarding how to approach this operation. Regarding participants' reflective journals, the same procedure for coding stimulated recall interviews was applied.

To analyze the data from classroom observation, we followed Cao (2014) and Cao and Philp (2006) (Appendix A). The video recordings were checked and rechecked to identify the instances and categories of WTC behavior displayed by EFL learners. Based on the scheme (Cao & Philp, 2006), such behaviors could entail volunteering an answer, asking the teacher a question, guessing the meaning of a new word, etc. More specifically, the frequency of WTC instances for each observed session was calculated and represented graphically. The tokens of WTC behavior were computed as a ratio of time for every participant while doing the tasks. The codes attached the patterns, incidents, or instances of WTC. As for the level of learners, the complexity of language was not meant, rather, the behavior displaying a category of WTC was taken into consideration. The process of coding and rating the data was repeated by inviting two experts to review approximately 40 percent of the data. They held the degree of Ph.D. in applied linguistics and had experience in dealing with qualitative data analysis. The invited experts checked the video recordings and applied the classroom observation checklist (Cao & Philp, 2006) to identify WTC instances. Afterward, interrater reliability was estimated (α=88.7) through the simple percent agreement (Mackey & Gass, 2016).

It is worth stating that although the tokens of WTC behavior were computed as a ratio of time for every participant while doing the tasks, more and less proficient participants' WTC behavior was accounted for on the basis of their reflections in their journals and interviews. The researchers tried to examine the role of proficiency differences by examining the participants' journals and narratives. Any possible effects of proficiency on WTC behavior were reflected while writing the report.

Results

The first question dealt with whether applying SCT-oriented tasks would leave any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' WTC. The qualitative analysis of the stimulated recall interviews and the participants' reflective journals revealed that for the most part, the application of the tasks could foster the participants' WTC. As instances, participant #7 said, *"I found story telling task really interesting"* or participant #8 stated that *"the task [role-play] was encouraging ... it pushed me to talk"*. The stimulating role of the tasks in connection with WTC was mentioned by a majority of the learners. Based on the data, not

only did the tasks increase motivation in individual participants, they also paved the way for transferring this motivation from one learner to another. In other words, while one student was taking, this talk motivated the others to embark on communication (#6). Further, active participation of the learners in the most of the tasks was clearly observable in the comments and responses provided during the interviews as well as in the journals (#1, #2, #8, #10, #11). Some of the students asserted that implementing the SCT-oriented tasks strengthened working in pairs and groups and this made the activity interesting, fun, and encouraging, resulting in their more inclination to talk. Emotionally speaking, another fecund aspect of introducing tasks to the classroom, according to the participants, was in association with close relationships, cooperation, and dynamism shaped among the learners as the result of carrying out the task (#5, #9).

Drawing on SCT that underscores knowledge and learning as a matter of participating in social activities, we observed that class participation and the desire to join the others created a challenge for the participants to think of new words, more advanced structures and, whenever needed, seeking help from the peers and the teacher (#6, #7, #9, #11). This point was marked particularly in relation to the discussion, role-play, storytelling, and reproducing a favorite movie. Additionally, the tasks were found to be attractive and WTC-invoking since they catered for simulations of real encounters out in the world. In their comments, the participants wrote, *"…the tasks were reflecting real life experiences and situations, so we hope we always have such tasks in our English classes…"* (#2, #8, #10).

The second question was whether learners' WTC would vary across the task types. As specified earlier, the tasks applied in the current inquiry comprised role-play, discussion, reproducing a film, problem-solving, storytelling, and picture description. Analyzing the participants' WTC was done based on the data from the observations made during the time the learners were carrying out different tasks. The instances of L2 WTC were identified and represented as frequency. The result revealed that as far as different tasks were concerned, the students behaved differently in their WTC. Recall from Figure 1, the tasks applied in the classroom setting made the learners generate the highest rate of WTC in association with role-play, storytelling, discussion, and reproducing a film they had watched before, whereas the least amount of WTC was observed in doing the tasks of picture description and problem-solving. Therefore, except for S4 and S8, the rest exhibited the lowest level of WTC while involved in carrying out the picture description task and as for problem-solving, except for S5 and S8, the other students came up with a lower ratio of WTC when compared with other

tasks. However, this pattern is variant with respect to some of the participants. As an instance, S7 represented a low level of WTC in role-play task (16 tokens), comparing with his higher level of WTC in other tasks of discussion, reproducing a film, and storytelling (27, 26, and 25 instances, respectively). In some cases, just opposite the general finding, they displayed a high rate of WTC in picture description by 22 and 20 instances (S8 and S4, respectively). The same finding holds true about some participants who showed a high level of WTC while engaged in the task of problem-solving, as one of the two least WTC-provoking tasks among all tasks (#5, #8). Further, by comparison, S8 was the only student who preserved a high level of WTC in all tasks, irrespective of task type.

The data from the stimulated recall interviews and the participants' reflective journals provided reasons for the flux in the WTC the students displayed over the various tasks; why they were more inclined to participate in some certain tasks and why they were less eager to communicate when some other tasks were introduced to the English class.
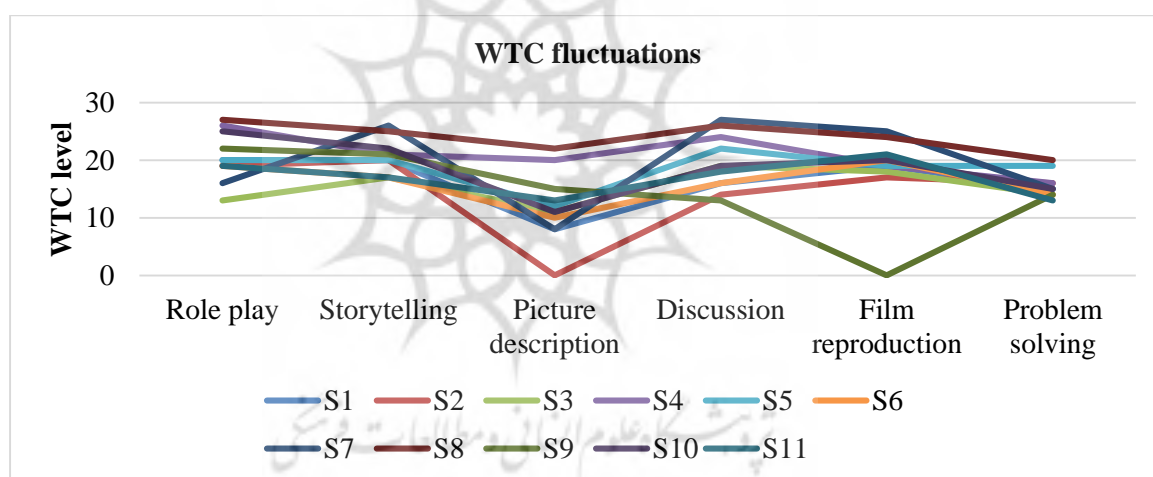

Figure 1. *WTC variations across six different tasks. S2 and S9 were absent in picture description and film reproduction sessions.*

To account for Their low level of WTC in relation to picture description and problem-solving, they made comments like: "I really didn't like the task,… it never helped me to talk to my friends..", "It couldn't improve my vocabulary and grammar …. not an interesting activity", "…it was better to know about the topics before and practice before coming to class…". The tasks were believed to be unable to encourage students to participate actively in the activity. In justification for the low level of WTC in picture description task, some pointed to the fact that "it is not appropriate for students of low proficiency". Albeit high

WTC scale of the majority of the participants in the tasks of role play, storytelling, film reproduction, and discussion, some kept more reticent than communicative during their presence in such tasks. They resorted to such reasons as "I liked role play but I found it difficult …..it was hard for me". Interestingly, in some cases the reason why the students had not been willing to talk in the role-play task lied in the fact that they found the task too simple and situations were viewed as somewhat unusual.

In addition to linguistic aspects of the tasks in raising participants' tendency to join the class activities, the social and affective dimensions of the tasks were mentioned as their intriguing characteristics. In evaluating the role play, they came up with different comments, "it helps us to overcome shyness and fear in real situations", "it makes friendship closer and motivates group work", "This task puts us in different social roles and tasks and situation" or commenting on discussing task, they stated that they liked group work and pair work as well as working with their friends. Creating a warm and dynamic atmosphere along with enhancing a sense of cooperation among the participants was another point they remarked on the task.

The third question by the present investigation revolved around whether teacher mediation during task implementation makes a significant difference in the learners' WTC level. As cited earlier, teacher mediation here was carried out via scaffolding. The overall perception and evaluation of the students supported the facilitative and positive role of teacher mediation via scaffolding during the time they were engaged in trying the tasks. They endorsed such a teacher's role by expressing, "motivating", "facilitative", "source of warmth", "counselor", etc. Additionally, as Renshaw (2013) recommends, scaffolding was investigated here from emotional, social, and cultural perspectives.

To trace the instances of scaffolding in the observations made through the video recordings of each session, we drew upon the taxonomies by Van de Pol et al. (2010), Guerrero and Villamil (2000), and Lidz (1991), using L1 plus emotional scaffolding (Fig. 2). It was found that emotional scaffolding and modeling accounted respectively for the highest and the lowest scaffolding means (45, 19) the teacher employed to encourage the students to take part in the tasks given. Other means including feedback, questioning, using L1, explaining, instructing, and hints were reported to range from almost high to average down to rather low (40, 36, 33, 30, 29, 25, respectively).

Drawing on the data from stimulated recall interviews and reflective journals, the students commented on the scaffolding deployed by the teacher. During the session of

students' reproduction of a favorite movie they had seen, some of them (#8, #2) did not know how to initiate though they had previously seen many movies. The teacher helped them start it, coming up with "when I was a college student, I saw a movie about a man who had a surgery …" (modeling, the teacher's demonstrating a sample of what the students were supposed to practice). In accordance with explaining, in all tasks, the teacher explained structures, grammatical points, or vocabulary needed by the students. Once while involved in the picture description task, Student 11 asked, "Is it ok to say I have seen it this morning?" This led the teacher to explain the structure of the present perfect and that of past tense. Further, the use of hints could be observed in situations where the teacher gave clues or suggestions so the students could arrive at their answers, or he provided them with a little more information. As one example, in reproducing a film task, the teacher gave a hint on using present perfect by making a reference to since and for as two indicators of this tense. The application of defining, synonyms and opposites, appositives, and examples are among the ways the teacher relied on to cater for clues. As an instance, in answering a student's question saying, "what does undesirable mean?" (Role-play), the teacher used synonyms and opposites as one way to provide students with clues. Further, the instantiation of relying on L1 as a scaffolding mechanism was observable in cases where the students asked the English the equivalent of the words they wanted to use in Persian, "how to say قاچاقچی /ghachaghchi/ (smuggler) in English?".

Emotionally speaking, analyzing the data from the stimulated recall interviews and the reflective journals revealed that the participants held positive evaluation towards the role of support supplied by the teacher, meaning the students' WTC enhanced by the teachers' scaffolding. Lidz (1991, as cited in Guerrero & Villamil, 2000) presented an inventory of behaviors of mediation by adults. Some components of this representation were directly related to emotional scaffolding encompassed: a) praise/encouragement (verbally or non-verbally); b) psychological differentiation (avoiding competitiveness with the child); and c) affective involvement (giving warmth and caring to the child) (Lidz, 1991, p. 53).

In their comments, the students wrote, "the teacher always had a smile when he answered our questions", "he was patient enough while answering any question we posed", "he really fostered our motivation", "the teacher kept a close distance to our desks to help us". In his reflective journal, Student 11 wrote, "in the storytelling task, I was demotivated to participate in the task because of my poor performance in the previous test, but I could find myself interested after my teacher talked to me and I could forget about it". These comments

can go in line with the items of praise/encouragement and affective involvement stated above. The atmosphere of the classroom was preserved cooperative rather than competitive by the teacher throughout the sessions. Student 6 pointed to this aspect of emotional scaffolding by uttering, "I was free and comfortable when I saw the teacher never underestimate my performance and never concentrate on some ready students. He respected all of us and our abilities." (Picture description task). The quotation can be the realization of Psychological Differentiation in Lidz' (1991) tokens.
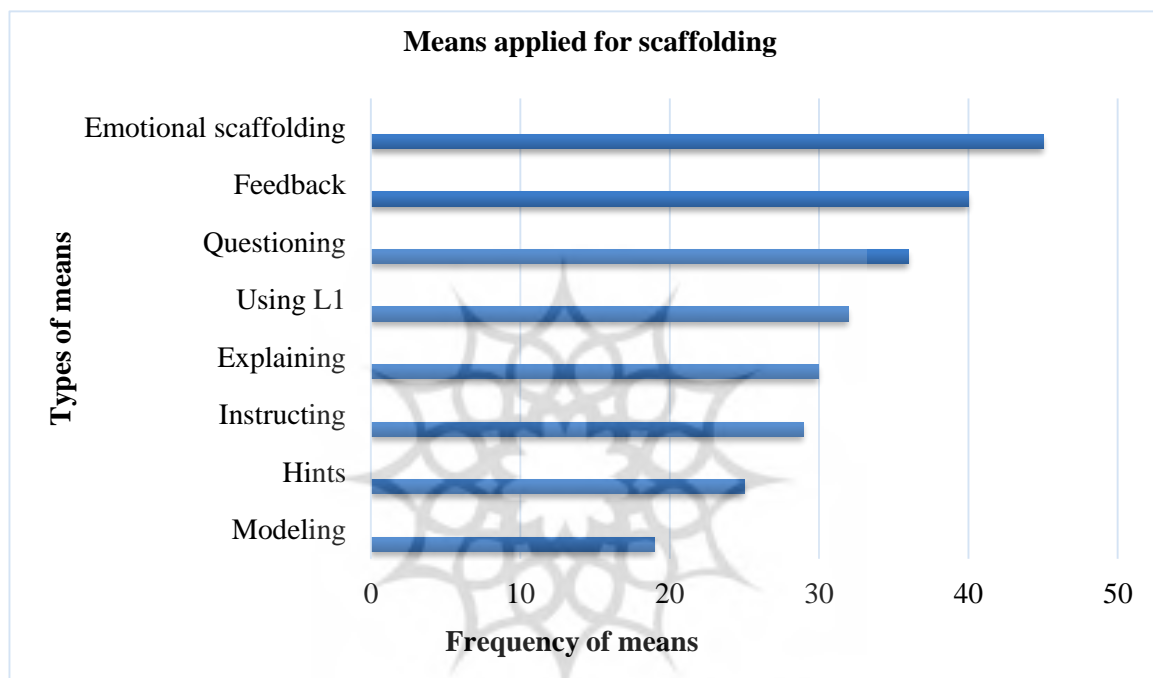

Figure 2. *Representation of frequency of scaffolding means/tools.*

Discussion

The major goal behind this study was to unravel how mediation through tasks would affect EFL students' WTC. It also targeted at exploring the role teacher scaffolding would play in affecting students' WTC. The results are discussed below.

First, we found that SCT-oriented tasks enhanced the students' WTC. Previous research indicates that applying tasks could bolster learners' tendency to communicate in English. (Cao, 2013; Cao & Philp, 2006; Eddy-U, 2015; MacIntyre, & Legatto, 2010). The circumstance under which the tasks were implemented was based on the concepts enclosed by SCT including interaction, cooperation, collaboration, active participation, raising motivation, social-based activities, and so on (Bates, 2019; Vygotsky, 1986). Creating a

connection between social motivators and one's motivation to talk, Ushioda (2003) considers motivation as a socially mediated process, a view that can be framed in the concept of ZPD in SCT. Supporting this viewpoint, the tasks implemented in the current study mostly could raise motivation in the participants to approach communicative activities, more particularly leading them to show higher WTC, albeit the participants' WTC fluctuations from tasks to tasks, which will be discussed subsequently. Further, an aspect highlighted by SCT aims at drawing students to take part in communicative activities (Lantolf, 2000a). The mediation of tasks fueled into the classroom setting in this study was found to evoke the students' participation in the tasks to be practiced throughout the project.

Another major finding of this study was the fluctuation in the students' WTC across different tasks, lending support to previous research (Cao, 2013, 2014; Kurniawan et al., 2018; Peng, 2014; Pawlak, & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015; Weaver, 2007). Past research reported L2 WTC to be fluctuating from lesson to lesson and from one task to another as well as L2 WTC flux with reference to the time factor, both short-time and long-time fluctuation. According to Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2015), WTC does not merely hinge on the tasks being implemented, rather the interface of time and context at every single moment plays a significant role in this regard. Generally, the tasks of role-playing, storytelling, discussion, reproducing one's favorite movie, picture description, and problem-solving, respectively, drove the students to come up with the highest to the lowest levels of WTC. While the tasks were reported to be facilitative in generating L2 WTC among the learners, there existed noticeable fluctuations. Socioculturally speaking, a possible justification for such a state of flux in their WTC could hinge on learners' agency where "learners bring to interactions, their own personal theories, replete with values, assumptions, beliefs, rights, duties, obligations" (Lantolf, 2000a, p. 46) as well as their motivations, goal setting, and desire that can play active roles in the realization of a task in the classroom setting (Coughlin & Duff, 1994).

In accordance with such justifications, throughout this investigation, the place of interest in encouraging the students either to raise or lower their WTC was reported. As for S7, the reason why he showed a poor tendency to communicate while being involved in the role-play task was his lack of interest, while the rest displayed higher levels of WTC the time they were engaged in this task. Interest along with other situational factors affecting learners' WTC has been represented in the WTC literature (Cao & Philp, 2006). Another source of the decline in some students' WTC rate was in association with their low proficiency (See,

MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima, 2002). Yashima (2002) found that language proficiency coupled with attitudes toward learning English, and the international community is significantly related to WTC in English among Japanese students. Notably, S3 and S6 left commented on this aspect in their reflective journals, ascribing their weak participation to their being inadequately proficient. To account for another source of variation in the students' WTC, as attested in research on WTC (Cao, 2013; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2010), students' low WTC in the tasks of picture description and problem-solving is likely to lie in the fact that they were not familiar enough with such tasks. Student 1, Student 10, and Student 11 implied this very point stating that it took time for students to figure out how to approach the tasks.

Importantly, considering the role of different variables effective in increasing or decreasing learners' L2 WTC under the influence of SCT and TBLT, this study has attempted to reason that although the mediation through the task can, in essence, be fecund in reinforcing learners' L2 WTC, the complexity and interface of an array of factors including classroom setting, learner characteristics, linguistic and social elements can make the process unpredictable. Drawing on Cao (2014), Baker and MacIntyre (2000), and Kang (2005), this unpredictability of WTC comes as a result of its being a dynamic situational variable. The emergent and unpredictable behaviors stand as one of the tenets of SCT. Further, the learners' varied participation in the tasks suggests that the role of factors comprising learners' control of task (Weaver, 2007), the variation of tasks (Ellis, 2003), and task specifications (Ellis, 2003) need to be taken into account to account for such a variation. As one more seemingly cogent point, from a socio-cultural viewpoint, as far as the task is considered, it is important to differentiate the task from activity (Ellis, 2003; Lantolf, 2000a). While the task is what we expect learners to display, activity is what learners actually do, varies from individual to individual, and is out of the full control of the teacher.

Mediation by the teacher applying scaffolding tools shaped another focus of this study. Relying on the triangulated data, the authors of the present study explored the role of teacher mediation through scaffolding ameliorated EFL learners' L2 WTC. This finding is generally in resonance with studies conducted on the effectiveness of scaffolding (Cole, 2006; Shavelson & Towne, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2002) under certain conditions and focusing on particular aspects, although the context in which this research has been carried out was different. However, of the scaffolding tools identified here, emotional scaffolding accounted for the highest representation in comparison to the other tools (Figure 2). This finding could

signify the improvement in students' WTC mainly as a corollary of providing learners with adequate emotional scaffolding by the teacher in the course of doing classroom tasks. This statement does not nevertheless underestimate the role of other scaffolding tools in provoking students' WTC. Based on interviews and journal data, the teacher was found to be a source of motivation, facilitate the process of approaching a task, and create a warm and dynamic atmosphere by encouraging the students in any possible way. Student 8 commented on his teacher support as follows: *"First, I didn't like the task, but my teacher talked to me and told me it would be enjoyable and fun if I join the class. My teacher was warm and helpful..."* (#8).

Moreover, given that effective support comes as a consequence of "being contingent or adaptive to students' understanding" (Van de Pol, Volman, Elbers, & Beishuizen, 2012, p.152), it might be inferred from the students' notes that in some cases the teacher's scaffolding might not have been contingently tailored to students' present situation. Included among these comments were: *"what my teacher was explaining was boring to me ... I didn't expect primary things. I couldn't tell my teacher to stop it because I felt shy to do it. The situations were simple"* (#5, role-play task), or *"I got more confused when I didn't know how to use passive sentences and the teacher tried to explain it because it was a little difficult for to me to understand"* (#1, picture description). In resonance with past research (Van de Pol, Volman, Elbers, & Beishuizen, 2012), this finding suggests that teacher scaffolding ought to be dealt with by conforming it to the learners' readiness and current status of understanding and learning.

Additionally, with respect to the controversial issue on the application of L1 in EFL classrooms, in contrary to the belief held by certain scholars that using L1 should be refrained as far as possible (Bouangeune, 2009; Macdonald, 1993; Seligson, 1997), this study showed that using L1 can be beneficial in helping learners to handle their questions and displaying a propensity to communicate. In their journals, some students left notes on the advantage of using L1 in English classroom by referring to this tool as *"facilitative", "a shortcut", "quick to understand", "feeling closer to my teacher", and "getting a clearer picture of subject".*

Conclusion

In conclusion, building upon the findings of the present study, it seems plausible to assert that mediation via the task in an EFL classroom setting can amplify learners' WTC. This

enhancement, however, varies with reference to task specifications, time, and student's unique and complex characteristics, that is, their agency (See, Cao, 2013; Lantolf, 2000a). Also, as highlighted by this study, although teacher scaffolding can socio-culturally and emotionally push students to display higher WTC while attending a classroom task, such scaffolding needs to be tailored to the learner's current needs, level, and the situation in order that it would guarantee its effectiveness and efficiency. The teacher should hence endeavor to identify what is easy and what stands as challenging so he could better apply his support. In a similar vein, van Lier (1996) maintained that scaffolding needs to be strategic, incessant, and following "….a moment-to-moment interactional decision-making" (p. 199). The emergent, unpredictable, and moment-by-moment change perspective held by SCT adds support to the dynamism of WTC, having been attested in previous research on WTC (Cao, 2013; Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2010; Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015).

Probing into WTC changes under different situations can present pedagogically important implications (Peng, Zhang & Chen, 2017). A primary implication of SCT lies in the fact that it caters for a psycholinguistic agenda for TBLT. The two basic components of SCT exploited by the study, including mediation and ZPD, are in coincidence with TBLT (Nunn, 2001). Such ingredients are meant to study both teacher and learner behavior under tasks in the realm of classroom research. Importantly, as Reeve (1996) held, teachers exert a substantial sociocultural influence on learner engagement. Drawing on this inquiry, English teachers are required to take into account that although learners behave differently with respect to their WTC under different social contexts, applying tasks based on the learner's interest, proficiency, familiarity with the task, task type, and emotional inclination could push up their WTC and hence their interaction. Needless to say, cognitive development relies on social interaction. Thus, selecting tasks and tailoring them to students' current competence and readiness are of great importance.

With respect to teacher education, the findings of the current study might create a change in EFL teachers' epistemological perspective, more particularly Iranian EFL teachers, toward embracing SCT and its productive role in fostering learners' communication competence through fueling appropriate tasks into the class syllabus. In addition, as far as teacher scaffolding is considered, teachers are recommended to enhance their scaffolding skills (Van de Pol et al., 2010) as effective teacher scaffolding requires cognizance of scaffolding tools and skills. This awareness and its practice are most likely to cause a task to

be manageable (Wood & Wood, 1996).

Taking into account future research, this study can create opportunities for any research study approaching the same area. Considering task mediation, this study focused only on six types of tasks. More tasks of various types could be utilized by future research to present a far more comprehensive picture of the part mediation plays in learners' WTC behavior in the classroom setting. While the present study delved only into teacher scaffolding in relation to students' WTC, there is an opportunity for future researchers to juxtapose both the teacher and peer scaffolding for the sake of disclosing more aspects of scaffolding and WTC. Further, the participants in this study were only males, so the replication of the same inquiry with females or a co-educated class is another possibility for further research.

Finally, as a limitation of this study, since the Iranian educational system does not allow co-educated classes, it was impossible for this study to examine WTC from the SCT perspective in association with females. Additionally, as held true about any case study (Mackey &Gass, 2016), another limitation of the investigation lies in the fact that generalizations based on this study should be made with extreme caution.

References

Baker, S. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2003). The Role of Gender and Immersion in Communication and Second Language Orientations. *Language Learning, 50*(2), 311–341. doi:10.1111/0023-8333.00224

Bates, B. (2019). *Learning theories simplified*. London: SAGE.

Bernales, C. (2016). Towards a Comprehensive Concept of Willingness to Communicate: Learners' Predicted and Self-Reported Participation In The Foreign Language Classroom. *System, 56*, 1-12. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.11.002

Block, D. (2003). *The Social Turn in Second Language Acquisition*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Bouangeune, S. (2009). Using L1 in Teaching Vocabulary to Low English Proficiency Level Students: A Case Study at the University of Laos. *English Language Teaching Journal, 2* (3), 186-193.

Cameron, D. (2015). In New Zealand I Feel More Confidence: The Role of Context in the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) of Migrant Iranian English Language Learners. *International Journal of English Studies, 15*(2), 61-80.

Cao, Y. (2006). Temporal Fluctuations in Situational Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language Classroom. *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics*, *12*(2), 1-16.

Cao, Y. (2011). Investigating Situational Willingness to Communicate within Second Language Classrooms from an Ecological Perspective. *System, 39*(4), 468-479.

Cao, Y. (2013). Exploring Dynamism in Willingness to Communicate: A Longitudinal Case Study. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, 36*(2), 160 - 176.

Cao, Y. (2014). A Socio-cognitive Perspective on Second Language Classroom Willingness to Communicate. *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(4), 789-814.

Cao, Y., & Philp, J. (2006). Interactional Context and Willingness to Communicate: A Comparison of Behavior in Whole Class, Group and Dyadic Interaction. *System, 34*, 480-93.

Cole, A. D. (2006). Scaffolding Beginning Readers: Micro and Macro Cues Teachers Use during Student Oral Reading. *The Reading Teacher, 59*(5), 450–459.

Coughlin, P., & Duff, P. (1994). Same Task, Different Activities: Analysis of SLA Task from an Activity Theory Perspective. In P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian Approaches to Second Language Research* (pp.173-191). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cross, R. (2010). Language Teaching as Sociocultural Activity: Rethinking Language Teacher Practice. *The Modern Language Journal, 94*(3), 432-452. doi/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01058

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eddy-U, M. (2015). Motivation for Participation or Non-Participation in Group Tasks: A Dynamic Systems Model of Task-situated Willingness to Communicate. *System*, *50*, 43-55. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.03.005

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frawley, W., & Lantolf, J. (1985). Second Language Discourse: A Vygotskian Perspective. In G. Poupore, (2016), Measuring Group Work Dynamics and its Relation with L2 Learners' Task Motivation and Language Production. *Language Teaching Research, 20*(6), 719-740. doi: 10.1177/1362168815606162

Ghonsooly, B., Khajavy, G. H., & Asadpour, A. F. (2012). Willingness to Communicate in English among Iranian Non–English Major University Students. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 31*(2), 197-211. doi: 10.1177/0261927X12438538

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117). London: Sage.

Guerrero, M. C. M., & Villamil, O. S. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual Scaffolding in L2 Peer Revision. *The Modern Language Journal, 84*(1), 51-68.

Jamalifar, G., & Salehi, H. (2017). The Effects of Rehearsal and Strategic Task Planning On L2 Willingness to Communicate. *The Language Learning Journal*, 48(*1)*, 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2017.1370605

Kang, S. J. (2005). Dynamic emergence of situational willingness to communicate in a second language. *System, 33*(2), 277-292.

Kurniawan, Y., Fadilah, E., & Triastutie, N. (2018). Willingness to Communicate in Task-based Instruction: Analysis of Fluctuation in Dynamic System. *Universitas Islam Darul 'Ulum Lamongan, 3*(1), 43-55. http://e-jurnal.unisda.ac.id

Lantolf, J. (Ed.). (2000a). *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J. (2000b). Second Language Learning as a Mediated Process. *Language Teaching, 33*(2), 79-96.

Lantolf, J., & Thorne, S. L. (2007). Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning. In. B. van Patten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 201-224). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lidz, C. S. (1991). *Practitioner's Guide to Dynamic Assessment*. New York: Guilford Press.

Long, M. H. (1985). Input and Second Language Acquisition Theory. In S. M. Gass & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 377–393). Newbury House, Rowley, MA.

Long, M. (2016). In Defense of Tasks and TBLT: Nonissues and Real Issues. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 36*, 5–33.

Macdonald, C. (1993). *Using the Target Language*. Cheltenham, England: Mary Glasgow.

MacIntyre, P. D., Burns, D. C., & Jessome, A. (2011). Ambivalence about Communicating in a Language: A Qualitative Study of French Immersion Students' Willingness to Communicate. *The Modern Language Journal, 95*(1), 81-96.

MacIntyre, P. D., Dörnyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation. *Modern Language Journal, 82*(4), 545-62.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Legatto, J. (2010). A Dynamic System Approach to Willingness to Communicate: Developing an Idiodynamic Method to Capture Rapidly Changing Effect. *Applied Linguistics, 32*(2), 149-171.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2012) (Eds*.). Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition: A Practical Guide*. Malden, M.A.: Wiley-Blackwell.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2016). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. New York: Routledge.

McCroskey, J. C., & Baer, E. J. (1985). *Willingness to Communicate: The Construct and its Measurement*. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Denver, CO.

McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1990). Willingness to Communicate: A Cognitive View. *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality, 5*(2), 19–37.

Mercer, S. (2011). Understanding Learner Agency as a Complex Dynamic System. *System, 39*(4), 427-436.

Nunn, B. (2001). Task-based Methodology and Sociocultural Theory. *Language Teacher Kyoto Jalt*, *25*(8), 12-20.

Ohta, A. S. (2000). Rethinking Interaction in SLA: Developmentally Appropriate Assistance in the Zone of Proximal Development and the Acquisition of L2 Grammar. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning* (pp.51-78). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pawlak, M., & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, A. (2015). Investigating the Dynamic Nature of L2 Willingness to Communicate. *System, 50*, 1-9.

Peng, J-E. (2012). Towards an Ecological Understanding of Willingness to Communicate in EFL Classrooms in China. *System, 40* (2), 203-213.

Peng, J-E (2014). *Willingness to Communicate in the Chinese EFL University Classroom: An Ecological Perspective.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Peng, J-E, Zhang, L., & Chen, Y (2017). The Mediation of Multimodal Affordances on Willingness to Communicate in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, *51*(2), 1-30.

Ratner, C. (2002). *Cultural Psychology: Theory and Methods*. New York: Kluwer/Plenum.

Reeve, J. (1996). *Motivating Others: Nurturing Inner Motivational Resources*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Renshaw, P. D. (2013). The Social Cultural and Emotional Dimensions of Scaffolding. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, 2*(1), 56–60.

Saldana, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. California: Sage Publications.

Scot, S., & Palincsar, A. (2013). *Sociocultural Theory*. Annemarie Palincsar. Retrieved from: http://www.education.com/reference/article/sociocultural-theory

Seligson, P. (1997). *Helping Students to Speak*. Spain: Richmond Publishing.

Shavelson, R. J., & Towne, L. (2002). *Scientific Research in Education*. Washington DC: National Academy Press.

Suksawas, W. (2011). *A Sociocultural Study of EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate*. Retrieved from http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4429andcontext=theses [Google Scholar]

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative Competence: Some Roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in its Development. In S. M. Gass & C.G. Madden (Eds*.), Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2002). Talking it Through: Two French Immersion Learners' Response to Reformulation. *International Journal of Educational Research,* 37, 285-304.

Ushioda, E. (2003). Motivation as a Socially Mediated Process. In D. Little, J. Ridely, & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Learner Autonomy in the Foreign Language Classroom: Learner, Teacher, Curriculum, and Assessment* (pp. 90–102). Dublin: Authentik Press.

Van de Pol, J., Volman, M., & Beishuizen, J. (2010). Scaffolding in Teacher–student Interaction: A Decade of Research. *Educational Psychology Review,* 22(3), 271-296.

Van de Pol, J., Volman, M., Elbers, E., & Beishuizen, J. (2012). Measuring Scaffolding in Teacher—small Group Interactions. In R. M. Gillies (Ed.), *Pedagogy: New*

Developments in the Learning Sciences (pp. 151–188). Hauppage: Nova Science Publishers.

Van Lier, L. (1996*). Interaction in the Language Curriculum: Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity*. New York: Longman.

VanPatten, B., & Williams, J. (2015) (Eds.). *Theories in Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society*: *the Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and Language* (A. Kozulin, trans.). Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Weaver, C. (2007). Willingness to Communicate: A Mediating Factor in the Interaction between Learners and Tasks. In K. Vanden den Branden, K. Van Gorp, K. & M. Verhelst (Eds.), *Tasks in Action: Task-Based Language Education from a Classroom-based Perspective* (pp.159-193). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Wells, G. (2007). Semiotic Mediation, Dialogue and the Construction of Knowledge. *Human Development, 50*, 244-274.

Wen, W. P., & Clément, R. (2003). A Chinese Conceptualization of Willingness to Communicate in ESL. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 16*(1), 18–38.

Wood, D., & Wood, H. (1996). Commentary: Contingency in Tutoring and Learning. *Learning and Instruction, 6*(4), 391–397.

Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to Communicate in a Language: The Japanese EFL Context. *Modern Language Journal ,86*(1), 54-66.

Yashima, T. (2012). Willingness to Communicate: Momentary Volition that Results in L2 Behavior. In S. Mercer, S. Ryan, & M. Williams (Eds), *Psychology for Language Learning: Insights from Theory, Research and Practice* (pp. 119-135). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Yashima, T., Zenuk-Nishide, L., & Shimizu, K. (2004). The Influence of Attitudes and Affect on Willingness to Communicate and Second Language Communication. *Language Learning, 54*(1), 119-52.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5the ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Zarrinabadi, N. (2014). Communicating in a Second Language: Investigating the Effect of Teacher on Learners' Willingness to Communicate. *System, 42*, 288-295.

Appendix A. **Classroom Observation Scheme (Cao &Philp, 2006)**

WTC behavior categories (basis of tally chart for observation of individual students)

In the presence of the teacher	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11
1. Volunteer an answer (a comment).											
2. Give an answer to (group, individual, teacher - private response).											
3. Ask the teacher (a question, for clarification).											
4. Guess the meaning of an unknown word.											
5. Try out a difficult (lexical, morphological, syntactic) form.											
6. Present own opinions in class.											
7. Respond to an opinion.											
8. Volunteer to participate in class activities.											
Student to student OR student to class (part of a lesson or informal socializing)											
1. Talk to neighbor/group member/a student from another group (explain something, ask a question, or initiate a conversation).											
2. Guess the meaning of an unknown word.											
3. Ask group member/partner a question.											
4. Give an answer to (group, individual, the teacher).											
5. Talk to the neighbor/ group member/a student from another group.											
6. Try out a difficult (lexical, morphological, syntactic) form.											
7. Present/respond to an opinion in pair/ group.											

Appendix B. A Modified Version of the Stimulated Recall Interview by Cao and Philp (2006):

1. Did you like this task? Why? Why not?

2. How useful did you find the task to improve your WTC?

3. Did you think you did this task well? Why? Why not?

4. Did you enjoy doing this task? Why? Why not?

5. Did you feel happy to work with your friends? What did you feel happy/not happy with?

6. Did your teacher help you do the task better? If yes, why and how? Why not?