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L2 Classroom Willingness to Communicate as a Predictor of Participatory Behavior

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Abstract

In the context of language instruction and learning, willingness to communicate (WTC) is an important factor in learners' language use. It is viewed as a volitional process influenced by individual, social, linguistic, and situationally dependent factors. Foundational research focused on trait and state WTC-influencing factors as separate entities. Current research considers the dynamic relationship that occurs between the two and particularly how it manifests in classroom interaction. This study investigated such differences by examining learners' self-reported WTC as trait-related and observed WTC as state-related. It compared WTC in both a teacher led and a peer led activity. Triangulated data were gathered using questionnaires, video recordings, and stimulated recall interviews. The importance of the study's findings lie in the investigation of how learners' self-perception relates to L2 classroom participation. Results showed that WTC may be boosted based on activity and peer group type, emphasizing the necessity of careful lesson planning by language instructors.

Keywords: *willingness to communicate, peer interaction, participation, individual learner factors*

Background

Current approaches in second language acquisition (SLA) instruction emphasize both the importance of recognizing individual learner factors as having an influence on second language (L2) learning and the ability to promote L2 learning by using certain instructional task types. One affective learner factor to be considered is willingness to communicate (WTC). Originally conceptualized in L2 learning by McCroskey and Baer (1985), WTC was considered a trait-specific quality evident in one's personality such as being introverted or extroverted. Subsequent research showed WTC to be a situational-specific quality that may change based on external elements such as classroom environment and relationship to peers, or internal conditions such as self-perception in the target language.

Subsequent and current research has shown that other factors may influence WTC at a given time. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) and MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod (2001) found that confidence in the language and social support may factor into a learner's WTC apart from it being a trait-like personality feature. Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) likewise found that strong in-

terpersonal relationships with other learners may contribute to higher state WTC. Motivation has also been found to influence WTC (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, 2002). While researchers have investigated the extent to which proficiency places a role in learner WTC, Yashima (2009) discovered that having a higher proficiency in the L2 did not necessarily increase a learner's WTC. MacIntyre (2007) stated in later research that WTC should be viewed as an act of volition which can be fluid and change based on any given number of factors at any given time. Cao (2009) further supported the idea of WTC as situational rather than trait-specific, finding that learners' individual identities and classroom environment impact WTC. Studies by Peng and Woodrow (2010) and Alemi et al. (2013) contributed to the understanding of WTC as having a variable nature by presenting many factors at play including environmental conditions and level of interaction with native speakers in target language (TL).

This research aligns with the notion that learner WTC may correlate to L2 learning. SLA research for the past several decades has suggested that learners better acquire an L2 by participating in communicative tasks as in communicative language teaching (CLT) (Nunan, 1989) that require learners to negotiate meaning (Long, 1996) and produce speech in a meaningful context as in the output hypothesis (Swain, 1985). This poses several questions. First, if a learner has low WTC and is therefore reluctant to speak, will less learning take place? Next, is there a difference in a learner's WTC in a speech activity in front of peers, interacting with the teacher, versus interacting amongst peers but not in front of the rest of the class as an audience? Finally, can one say that there is a correlation between a learner's trait and state WTC in relation to different types of activities, or is state WTC completely dependent on the factors of that particular situation and thus fluid and not able to be related back to trait WTC? The present study seeks to find if different activity types can boost learner WTC, as evidenced through increased participation, thus allowing learners more time engaging with and speaking in the L2.

Literature Review

Origins of Willingness to Communicate as a Trait or State Based Feature

The concept of WTC began as an assessment of unwillingness to communicate in the first language (L1) by Burgoon (1976). The study sought to relate unwillingness to communicate to anomia, alienation, introversion, self-esteem and communication apprehension (Burgoon, 1976) as a trait-like disposition in L1 communication. The researcher believed that a person's communicative tendencies and apprehension in verbal communication could be predicted based on trait characteristics.

McCroskey and Baer (1985) later hypothesized that unwillingness to communicate in the L1 could be viewed as beneficial as a measure of WTC in the L2. They argued that WTC could be viewed as a trait-like personality construct, such as introversion and extroversion in which a person has predispositions to verbalize and initiate speech or not (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). With this idea in mind, McCroskey and Baer (1985) created the WTC Scale which placed items into four communication contexts: public speaking, talking in meetings, talking in small groups, and talking in dyads, with three types of receivers: strangers, acquaintances, and friends. The questionnaire is comprised of 20 questions which ask participants to rate their level

of WTC from a scale of 0%-100% for each question. McCroskey (1992) showed the questionnaire to be both reliable and valid in predicting a person's WTC, and it has since been used in other studies as a predictor of WTC (see Alemi *et al.*, 2013; Baker & MacIntyre, 2002; Cao & Philip, 2006; MacIntyre *et al.*).

MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) considered the WTC construct not only as trait-specific but rather conceptualized it as a fluid quality that could vary due to state quality; that is, they explained that WTC could be affected both by situational and affective factors. They even stated that boosting WTC should be the primary goal of language instruction because if an instructor had the ability to increase a learner's desire to communicate in the L2, then learners would communicate more, thus enriching their L2 learning experience and acquisition. MacIntyre et al. (1998) described WTC as influenced by many factors including communication behavior, intention of speech, situated antecedents, the affective-cognitive context, and the social and individual context, some of which could be manipulated by the instructor. However, Ellis (2012) pointed out that there is no existing evidence that clearly provides a link between a learner's WTC and improved learning (p. 324). However, research does show that individual learner differences play a role in L2 learning in general (Ellis, 2012), which suggests that WTC as such a factor can affect learning in some way.

Current Investigations on Trait versus State WTC

To date, a growing body of research addresses WTC within the L2 classroom as either a personality-based factor or a situational-based factor. Less research exists that examines state WTC and how it manifests in different types of instructional activities. Two studies investigating WTC in classroom contexts and in direct relation to activity type exist which are pertinent to this study. Dörnyei and Korsmos (2000) investigated the individual and social variables that contributed to L2 English learners' oral performance in a Hungarian school, with WTC being one of the variables analyzed. They found that students' WTC was influenced by their attitudes to instructional tasks. Believing that WTC has a relationship to learner motivation and task interest, Dörnyei (2005) later urged that researchers explore how different types of tasks may engage learners, perhaps increasing their WTC and prompting them to try out different speech strategies (Dörnyei, 2005).

Next, Cao and Philp (2006) conducted a study of non-native English speakers in a New Zealand school to find if there was any relation between self-report WTC ("trait WTC") and behavioral WTC ("state WTC") in different classroom contexts: whole class, group, and dyadic. Their findings showed that there was not a clear correlation between the learners' self-reports and their participatory behavior of WTC, finding much variation amongst learners and across the three types of contexts. Cao and Philp (2006) did, however, find a greater correlation between trait and state WTC in pair and group work than with whole-class activities. Cao (2009) continued to investigate activity type as it related to WTC as her dissertation study.

This study builds on the investigation of Cao and Philp (2006) in that it compares activity type as influencing state WTC. Their study examined perceived (trait) and actual (state) WTC in students in an English language learner (ELL) university course in New Zealand. It is important to note that, since English is the primary

language spoken in New Zealand, the motivation to learn the L2 may have been different for learners in Cao and Philp's (2006) study than for those in the present study who are learning an L2 (Spanish) as native speakers of the primary language in their country of origin (English in the United States).

Research Questions

Given the need for such a study and with the prior information in mind, the following research questions were proposed:

1. Does learners' WTC self-report (trait) correspond to their participatory behavior in class?
2. Does learners' WTC behavior (state) differ in the two observed contexts (teacher-led/student-led activities)?
3. What are the learners' perceptions of the factors contributing to their WTC in the contexts?

Methods

Participants

Participants in the study included 48 adult learners ages 18-29 in two classes of beginner level second-semester Spanish at a large, urban university in the US Northeast. Of the 48 learners, 30 were female and 18 were male. Each class was comprised of 24 learners. Thirty-five of the 48 students, over two-thirds of the sample, reported some prior experience with learning Spanish at the elementary, middle school, or high school level. The other 13 students had no prior experience with Spanish but had taken other languages in high school: French, Italian, and Latin. All students in the class had previously taken beginner level first-semester Spanish, except for one student who had tested out of it and was placed in a second-semester class. Questionnaire results showed that no students had been exposed to Spanish at home, though two students had Spanish-speaking grandparents with whom they spoke English. Of the 48 students, five listed other languages as their native language: Farsi (2), Vietnamese, Krio, Mandarin. Finally, both courses followed the same curriculum and lesson and were taught by the same instructor on the same day. The two recorded activities were similar to ones the learners had completed in previous classes in first- and second-year Spanish, so they were not new activities where comprehension of task would be an impediment to completing the activity.

Procedures and Data Collection

The following design materials were used for the purpose of the study. The WTC questionnaire (Appendix A) developed by McCroskey and Baer (1985) was used as the main instrument. Comprised of 20 questions, learners were directed to respond to each question writing a percentage of 0%-100% as to how likely they would be to communicate in the situations (0% = never and 100%= always). Examples include 'Talk with a large meeting of friends' and 'Talk with a stranger while standing in line' (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). Eight of the questions are included as filler questions to throw off questionnaire-takers. The other 12 questions were ana-

lyzed according to the directions of the questionnaire. The learners were unaware that any of the questions were fillers, and they also did not know how the questions would be analyzed. Though the questionnaire scoring allows for sub-scores to be calculated for the four context-types (group discussion, meetings, interpersonal, public speaking) and three receiver-types (stranger, acquaintance, friend), only the total WTC score was calculated to obtain a general score for each learner. After the learner WTC levels were calculated on the 0%-100% scale, each learner was identified as either high overall WTC >82, medium overall WTC <82 and >52, or low overall WTC <52. 'Overall' in this case means one global score comprised of both context-type sub scores and receiver-type sub scores. In Cao and Philp's (2006) similar study, the reliability of the scale using Cronbach's alpha was .917 (Cao & Philp, 2006).

One week after the questionnaire was administered, both classes of learners were recorded using two video recorders per classroom. Two activities were recorded per class: a teacher-led discussion and a learner-led discussion. The lesson topic was opinions and preferences regarding food and food practices. The first was a whole-class, teacher-led question and answer activity with questions displayed on a PowerPoint projection of ten separate questions in which students were asked to raise their hands if they were willing to be called on to answer the question. Sample questions include '*¿Tomas mucha agua todos los días?*' (Do you drink a lot of water every day?) and '*¿Comes chocolate cuando estás deprimido/a?*' (Do you eat chocolate when you are depressed?). Because the questions elicited yes/no responses initially, students were instructed to also ask a follow-up open-ended question such as '¿Por qué comes chocolate cuando estás deprimido/a?' (Why do you eat chocolate when you are depressed?) or '¿Qué más haces cuando estás deprimido/a para sentir mejor?' (What else do you do to feel better when you are depressed?).

The next activity, video recorded immediately after the first activity, was a whole-class, peer-led 10-question signature activity taken from the Interactive Resource Kit for the classroom text, *Tu mundo: español sin fronteras* (Andrade, Egasse, Muñoz, & Cabrera Puche, 2013), in which students were asked to circulate the room and ask/answer the questions of their peers, signing one another's papers once the information had been exchanged. Sample questions include '*¿Te gusta el bistec bien asado?*' (Do you like steak well done?) and *¿Sabes preparar un postre especial?*' (Do you know how to prepare a special dessert?). Students were again instructed to ask a follow-up open-ended question to their peers.

Lastly, 12 stimulated recall interviews (Appendix B) took place within one week after the class activity recordings. Interview questions asked learners to describe how prepared and motivated they felt to raise their hands in each activity, how they felt during the activities and if they preferred one over the other, and a conversation about what they felt motivated them to speak and learn Spanish. Four students of each WTC level (high, medium, low) were interviewed based on availability.

All 48 participants who agreed to the survey were administered the demographic information sheet and WTC questionnaire on the same day. On a different class meeting day, a week after the questionnaire was administered, the two instructional activities in each class were recorded. Forty participants were present on the

day of recording. Twelve learners were selected for stimulated recall interviews lasting approximately 20 minutes in duration. Participants were selected on a volunteer basis so that the researcher had two participants per class from each WTC-level: two students of low WTC according to the questionnaire, two of medium WTC, and 2 of high WTC from each class. Four interviews were conducted per WTC level equaling 12 total interviews. In the meeting, each student was shown parts of the video to remember how he or she participated in class and asked the questions in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Each learner was identified as either high overall WTC >82, medium overall WTC <82 and >52, or low overall WTC <52 based on their responses to McCroskey and Baer's (1985) WTC scale. Next, the researcher watched the videos and tallied each time learners raised their hand for the ten questions in the teacher-led activity, which indicated that participants were willing to be called on to answer the question in front of the class. For the peer-led activity, the researcher collected the ten-question signature activity and tallied the number of signatures, which indicated that the learners had completed that question-and-answer number with a peer. The researcher then watched the video recordings to observe students' interactions with one another and listened for follow-up questions posed during dyad interactions. Since each activity was comprised of ten questions, students' participation was measured as a 100-scale percentage based on how many times they raised a hand and how many signatures they obtained, because both indicated that WTC and/or actual verbal communication had taken place. For example, if a student raised his hand for five of the ten teacher-led questions, he was given a percentage of 50% WTC for the whole-class, teacher-led activity. If a student had eight of the ten lines signed on the signature page, she was given a percentage of 80% WTC for the peer-led activity.

Lastly, the stimulated recall interviews were analyzed by the researcher to provide insight into the students' responses and how they correlated with the students' trait-WTC as presented on the questionnaire and state WTC as observed in the two activities. Learners who took part in the stimulated recall interviews were closely observed to provide a qualitative look at their specific WTC tendencies. Use of movement in the classroom was observed; for example, how frequently the particular learner walked up to a peer versus having a peer walk up to him, or how much the learner circulated the room versus staying in one place.

Findings

All 48 learner responses to McCroskey and Baer's (1985) WTC questionnaire were calculated to identify each learner within the appropriate WTC range between 0-100 with >82 High Overall WTC, <82 and >52 Medium Overall WTC, and <52 Low Overall WTC. Figure 1 shows the WTC score of each learner. The mean WTC of all 48 learners was 68.64% so that, of the 48 learners, the average fell within the medium overall WTC range but was 1.64% closer to the high range than the low range. The range was 72.92 with the lowest reported level of trait WTC at 25% and the highest at 97.92%.

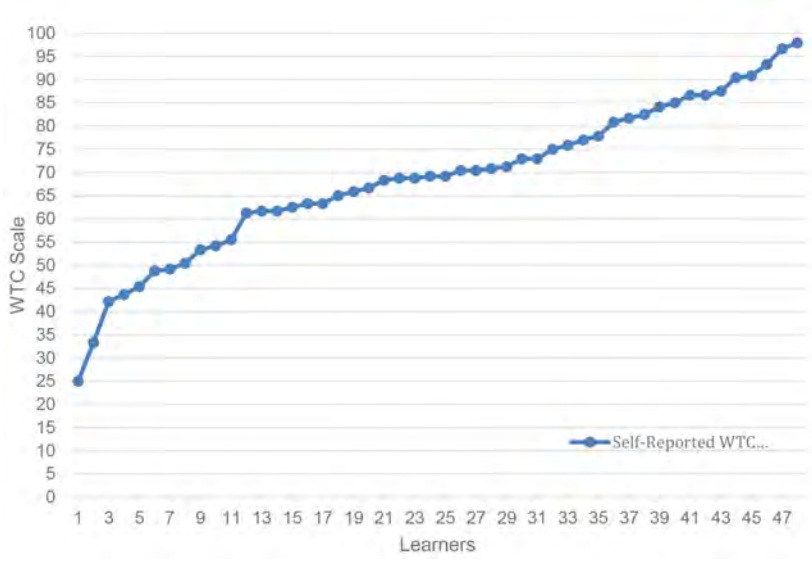

Figure 1. *Learner self-reported WTC on McCroskey's (1992) questionnaire*

Figure 2 shows the results of the tabulation of countable hand-raises in the teacher-led activity and peer signatures in the peer-led activity. When comparing the teacher-led activity and the peer-led activity, every learner had higher participation in the peer-led activity than the teacher-led activity. The two learners who had 100% participation in the teacher-led activity also had 100% participation in the peer-led activity. Nine of the learners raised their hands 0% of the time for the teacher-led activity, while every learner participated 40% or more in the peer-led activity.

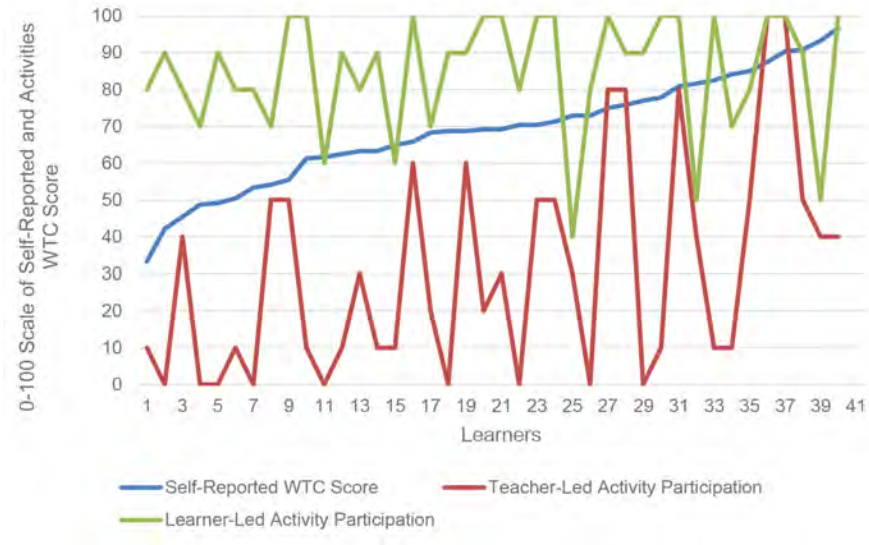

Figure 2. *Learner self-reported WTC compared to peer and teacher led activity participation*

Figure 3 shows the results of only the participants of the stimulated recall interviews. The same findings are evident in that all instances of learner-led participation are higher than teacher-led participation, except for one interviewed participant of high WTC who participated 100% of the time for both activities.

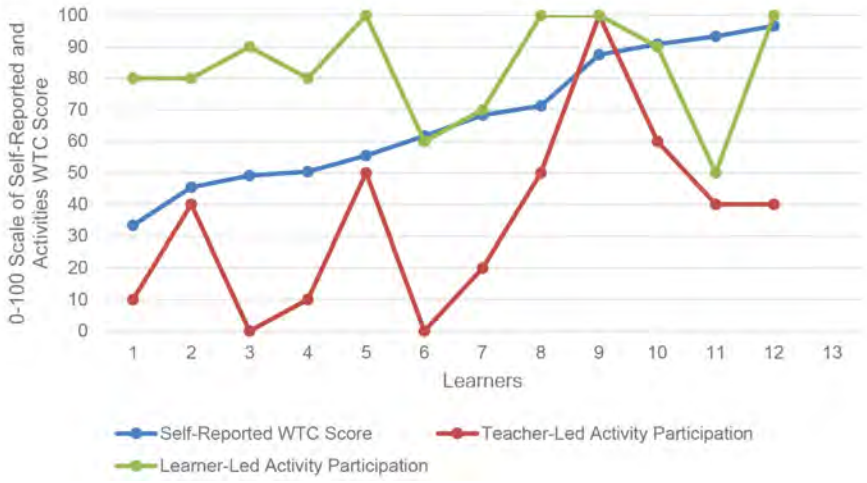

Figure 3. *Stimulated recall learners self-reported WTC compared with observed participation in teacher led and peer led activities*

A regression analysis (Table 1) was run to find the r-square value and correlation between all learners reported WTC and observed WTC in both the learner- and teacher-led activities. R^2 = .209063391 suggests a closer relationship between learner trait-state WTC in the teacher-led activity. R^2 = .005786628 suggests no correlation between the trait-state WTC in the peer-led activity. This finding is expected when one accounts for the social setting of teacher-led instruction. The learners' WTC trait tendencies were more apparent in high-stakes participation where they were expected to perform in front of peers. While an extroverted learner may not experience nervousness by raising her hand in front of the class or by making errors, a timid learner may experience increased anxiety at the thought of speaking in front of others and thus lower WTC. Conversely, the results suggest that a learner-led activity generally carries less pressure and room for embarrassment. Therefore, state WTC appears not to be predicted by trait WTC in peer-led or lower-pressure activities. This finding is beneficial for instructors as they remember that whole-class instruction allows all students to hear error-correction and see proper modeling; however, it may not be an ideal setting for all types of learners to actively participate and have the opportunity to speak.

Table 1

Regression statistics of teacher and peer led activities compared with expected participatory behavior based on self-reported WTC questionnaire

Activity Type	Regression Statistics	
Teacher Led	R Square	0.209063391
Peer Led	R Square	0.005786628

The qualitative element of the data was obtained from stimulated recall interviews. The interviews were conducted with four students of low WTC, four students of medium WTC, and four students of high WTC as reported on the questionnaire. When asked how prepared learners felt to raise their hands in the first activity (teacher-led), all four of the low trait WTC learners expressed that they comprehended the questions but felt more comfortable thinking of the answers in their heads to check their accuracy. All four participants mentioned that they liked having time to write down their answers as well as having the questions written down on a piece of paper in the learner-led activity because it gave them time to think of the question and their answers. When asked about which activity they preferred, three of the four students chose the learner-led activity. One learner stated:

> *I prefer the talking just to the classmates ones better just because it's one on one and I'd rather do that and towards that one I feel more comfortable because I have the paper in front of me and it's easier for me to figure out when I'm just like sitting there looking at the paper and when it's at the board in like a couple seconds like it makes me a little bit more nervous I guess, but not to the point where I'm like, 'Oh God this is awful'.*

The low trait WTC learner who expressed preference for the teacher-led activity said "I like getting up and talking to people" but that "I do like listening to [the instructor] speak more because it helps me learn."

Of the learners who were medium-trait WTC, three of the four students in that group also cited the learner-led activity as preferable over the teacher-led activity while the fourth learner said he liked them both equally. Reasons included "I felt more comfortable," "you just like, talk to people," "I'm probably less scared because it's just like one-on-one, and they probably say things wrong too," "I feel comfortable and I definitely enjoy the like, more interactive things better because like, it's more fun to be in a class where you know more people so the Spanish classes are always closer because we're always interacting, so I'd say the interacting activities more than raising your hand."

In the high trait WTC group, all four learners expressed feelings of responsibility or the need to offer shared turn-taking amongst their peers to answer questions in class in the teacher-led activities that the low and medium trait WTC learners did not. For example:

> *Motivated it was just whenever, sometimes even when I don't want to answer questions and I just see that no one else is answering questions, like no one else is raising their hand I just raise my hand just because like participation like you should participate.*

The other high trait WTC learners commented "I don't want to be the only person who is giving answers all the time because I want to give people chances to answer so, I was willing definitely, to answer all of them" and "I was prepared and had an answer for all of them basically. I just don't like answering all of them and like, not letting other people have a chance" and "Normally it's like, I'll answer questions, like, I'll let other people do it but if there's like a gap or if it's quiet I'll answer it or if I feel like I have a really good answer." It is important to mention that learner 11 on Figure 3, who was rated a 93.3% on the questionnaire, had 40% hand raises and 50%

signatures for the two recorded activities. The learner was normally a high participator but was sick the day of recording and had very little voice. She stated during the interview that she likes to speak and participate in all activity types.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

Returning to the research questions, does learners' WTC self-report (trait) correspond to their participatory behavior in class?, and does learners' WTC behavior (state) differ in the two observed contexts (teacher-led/student-led activities)?, the findings suggest that trait WTC does trend toward a correlate to state WTC, and that all learners' state WTC resulted higher in the peer-based activity. Research question three, what are the learners' perceptions of the factors contributing to their WTC in the contexts?, showed a variety of factors such as preference for having written questions in one's hand, fear of incorrect responses, and responsibility. One can also draw similarities in perceptions of each group of low, medium and high WTC learners.

Based on the questionnaire results and countable data from the teacher-led and learner-led activities, one conclusion that can be drawn is that all learners, regardless of self-reported WTC on the questionnaire had higher learner-led activity participation than teacher-led activity participation. It does not appear that one could draw the conclusion that having a higher trait WTC means a learner will automatically have a higher overall WTC in all state, observed types of activities. The highest cases of teacher-led activity participation, though, do occur with the learners with medium-high to high self-reported WTC. This means there is no self-reported low WTC learner with a higher participation rate than that of a self-reported medium-high or higher self-reported learner.

With regard to the interviews, the discovery that all learners had a higher tendency to participate in the learner-led activity than the teacher-led activity is not surprising. Similarly, the majority of interviewed participants stated the learner-led one as their preference for activity type. These results confirm the belief that learners feel more comfortable in a low-stakes, peer-to-peer interaction versus in front of an entire group of peers. The relationship is observable between the questionnaire WTC and observed participatory behavior in both activity types, though variance does exist. With regard to personality tendencies, none of the high or medium-high trait WTC learners mentioned nervousness or unsureness in answering in the teacher-led activity, while several of the low and medium-low trait WTC learners mentioned their need to feel comfortable or completely certain of their answers before responding or even willing to raise their hands in the teacher-led activity. Also, of the low WTC interviewed learners, all commented on their feelings as either "nervous" or "not sure." Several cited their feelings as having an impact on their participatory behavior. One learner stated:

> *If I was like, 100%, that I knew exactly what I was saying then I would raise my hand but if there was like doubts then I didn't – like if I would get it right or not – I guess cause I don't want to like stutter and look for Spanish words on the spot because then I get nervous and then like I can't think of any words, so, I think yeah.*

Finally, to return to the research questions, it appears that some learners' WTC self-reports (trait) do correspond to their participatory behavior in class, and that general tendencies were expressed from the lower trait WTC learners in the teacher-led activity, such as feelings of unsureness and the need for reassurance, as well as preferring the learner-led activity over the teacher-led. The higher trait WTC learners in the interviews did not express concern over volunteering during the teacher-led activity; however, these students preferred the learner-led activity over the teacher-led one. Four of the 12 participants did express that they appreciated the teacher-led activity because they received correction, which they could not guarantee from peers. This finding suggests that the students, regardless of trait WTC, desire feedback to know if they are accurate or not, but not all learners (and none of the lower trait WTC learners) wanted correction in front of their peers. In regard to the learners' perceptions of factors contributing to their WTC during the different activities, feelings of nervousness impact students' participatory behavior. However, based on the interview discussions and WTC survey results, this factor did not stem from a personality trait so much as not wanting to say something incorrectly in front of the class, be it an entire class of peers, the instructor, or both, and wanting to be sure of their answers. That is, none of the interviewed learners self-identified as shy or nervous people, but they felt unsure and did not want to sound wrong in front of the entire group and instructor. This would confirm why these students felt more comfortable and less risk when speaking in peer activities with smaller groups of speakers and the instructor only present when checking in with their group.

Lastly, the interviewed learners expressed more comfort, feelings of interaction, and camaraderie in the peer-based activity, which could impact their willingness to speak. The fact that the students had to complete the activity; that is, they had to have signatures, which required speaking, meant that the students had to speak in order to complete the activity, whereas not all of the students felt obligated to raise their hands in the teacher-led activity.

Theoretical and Pedagogical Contribution

In comparing the findings in the two instructional activities to see if there was more participation in one activity or in the other, there was more participation from all students in the peer-based versus teacher-led activity regardless of their level of WTC on the questionnaire. While this suggests that, as the interviewed learners stated, there is a greater level of comfort and less concern for errors with peers, it does not necessarily mean that the peer-based activity is more beneficial to learning if students are not or do not feel they are receiving adequate feedback. However, the data show that all students were speaking more in the peer-based activity, which means all students were given an opportunity to negotiate meaning (to the extent to which the question/answer activity allowed) and practice multiple times rather than answering one question, which could be beneficial. Ellis (2012) explained:

> speaking in an L2 may well assist in learning, but so may listening. We have seen plenty of evidence […] to suggest that greater participation does not necessarily translate into more learning and that input-based instruction can be as effective as production-based approaches. Perhaps what is crucial for learning inside the classroom is not so much willingness to communicate as willingness to listen closely. (p. 324)

All of the low WTC interviewed students expressed that they were listening to, and understood, the teacher-led questions, and that they answered in their head or on paper and checked their peer's answer with theirs. This corresponds to Ellis's idea that listening can be just as useful to learning as speaking. Perhaps this depends on the student's individual learner factors. It certainly shows that many approaches such as task-based language teaching and collaborative based learning promote learner speech to aid in learning, students express that they feel confident and that they comprehend the material while listening and that speaking only makes them feel more nervous. From a pedagogical standpoint, this could mean that when instructors feel that a student who does not want to speak in class is doing so because she is not paying attention or does not understand, the student might actually be learning in the way that feels more beneficial as a (perhaps lower WTC) individual, through listening and checking comprehension. In this case, it is important that instructors have multiple means of assessment including writing, reading, and auditory comprehension tasks, and that they consider students' personalities when assessing oral participation. For example, instructors should be less concerned if lower WTC students do not volunteer in whole class activities but check in with these students when working in small group and pair activities to encourage speech in the "safer" small group contexts. It is also helpful to include questions on a beginning of the semester student survey about their tendencies in class about learning styles and if students feel comfortable participating or not.

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation to this study was the short time duration and quantity of data collection. However, more studies comparing trait and state WTC directly related to quantity of peer interaction are needed so that instructors can better serve a variety of learner types, and this study sought to engage instructors in thinking of their students' willingness to take part in class activities. Furthermore, this study sought to serve as a starting point for research into how different activity types may promote or hinder trait-based WTC tendencies, though it only utilized one peer-led and one teacher-led activity. Future investigations that examine different student groupings and activity types could be beneficial.

Conclusion

This investigation sought to explore the relationship that exists between a learner's trait WTC as being highly, moderately, or not willing to communicate in the TL with the quantity of output produced in two different activity types in a university-level second-semester Spanish class. It showed a relationship between a certain WTC trait level and participatory behavior in one activity or the other, teacher-led or learner-led, and that the 48 learners had higher participation in the learner-led activity regardless of their trait WTC. This finding suggests that, overall, learners feel more comfortable engaging with their peers rather than in front of peers with the teacher, and that learners speak when they feel that it is something they 'have to do' to complete the task; if there is an option to raise one's hand or not, a learner may not, regardless of trait WTC.

The study did show that higher trait WTC learners tended to feel a sense of responsibility and desire to participate in an activity in front of the whole class and were not affected by feelings of nervousness or the fear of saying something incorrectly in front of peers. However, lower trait WTC learners did express apprehension about speaking in front of the whole class and saying something incorrectly. The lower trait WTC learners, though, also voiced that it was helpful to have something written down in front of them to feel comfortable and confident in their speech as a guide, and that they were always listening and comprehending what was taking place in both activities. Therefore, this study does not show that proficiency or comprehension were factors in learner WTC, but it suggests that handouts can act as a form of support for communication that lower proficiency students might need.

This research offers insight into what promotes or restrains students from speaking in the L2 in the classroom in relation to their level of WTC and what types of activities may be beneficial dependent on their level. Additionally, it adds to existing WTC research on L2 speakers in their native language environment, differing from existing studies of non-native speakers in the L2 native environment who showed no difference in perceived/actual WTC but expressed high anxiety in communicating and necessity in learning the language. With regard to prior WTC investigations mentioned in this study, several of the investigations looked at learner WTC while living in the country of the TL and thus the learners had high motivation to learn the language. When participants were asked what motivates them to speak and learn Spanish, all learners told a personal anecdote or belief as to why Spanish was important to them: some had Spanish-speaking relatives, others had Spanish-speaking co-workers or friends, and many expressed that it is very important in the workforce and in the country for them to know Spanish as well as they can. All students placed value on the TL in some way which could positively influence their own willingness to speak in the language or desire to learn it. It is evident that while not all students were highly *willing* to communicate, all expressed that they comprehended the material, were engaged, and had some reason motivating them to learn the language.

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Appendix A

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale (McCroskey & Baer, 1985)

Directions: Below are 20 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Presume you have completely free choice. Indicate the percentage of times you would choose to communicate in each type of situation. Indicate in the space at the left of the item what percent of the time you would choose to communicate. (0 = Never to 100 = Always)

_____1. Talk with a service station attendant.

_____2. Talk with a physician.

_____3. Present a talk to a group of strangers.

_____4. Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.

_____5. Talk with a salesperson in a store.

_____6. Talk in a large meeting of friends.

_____7. Talk with a police officer.

_____8. Talk in a small group of strangers.

_____9. Talk with a friend while standing in line.

_____10. Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.

_____11. Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.

_____12. Talk with a stranger while standing in line.

_____13. Talk with a secretary.

_____14. Present a talk to a group of friends.

_____15. Talk in a small group of acquaintances.

_____16. Talk with a garbage collector.

_____17. Talk in a large meeting of strangers.

_____18. Talk with a spouse (or girl/boyfriend).

_____19. Talk in a small group of friends.

_____20. Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

Appendix B

Stimulated Recall Interview Questions

1. How prepared did you feel to raise your hand in the first activity? How motivated? Please explain.
2. How prepared did you feel to initiate speech in the second activity? How motivated? Please explain.
3. Generally, what do you feel motivates you to speak in Spanish?
4. Describe what you were feeling during both activities. Did you prefer one over the other? Please explain.