



# Investigating willingness to communicate in English within the Turkish EFL classroom context

Cennet Yıldız<sup>a \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Uşak University, School of Foreign Languages, 64200, Uşak, Turkey*

## Abstract

The communicative component of language learning has gained importance in line with the needs of the 21st century. So, different factors which influence the communicative ability of language learners has caught the attention of the researchers. Willingness to communicate (WTC) is one of these individual variables which affects the communicative ability of learners and various aspects of this construct are widely investigated in different language learning contexts. However, the number of studies in Turkish English as a foreign language (EFL) context is limited. Thus, the primary goal of the study was to investigate L2 WTC in Turkey. 711 preparatory school students at a state university completed measures of WTC, communication confidence, motivation, ideal L2 self, learner beliefs, classroom environment, and a vocabulary test. According to the results of the structural model, the relationships of classroom environment with both WTC in English and communication confidence were fully mediated by motivation to learn English, ideal L2 self, and learner beliefs. Moreover, the relationships of learner beliefs and ideal self with WTC in English were fully mediated by communication confidence. Motivation to learn English directly influenced WTC. Lastly, vocabulary size indirectly influenced WTC through communication confidence.

**Keywords:** Willingness to communicate; classroom context; learner beliefs; communication confidence; motivation; ideal L2 Self; Structural Equation Model (SEM)

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Introduce the problem

Acquisition of a language primarily depends on to what extent necessary conditions are provided to learners. Krashen (1982) claims that speaking emerges on its own based on the competence acquired through comprehensible input. Thus, he claims that L2 learners should be provided with  $i+1$  input which is a little more advanced level than the current state of the learner's interlanguage.

\* Corresponding author name. Cennet Yıldız ORCID ID.: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8930-4913>  
E-mail address: [cennet.altiner@usak.edu.tr](mailto:cennet.altiner@usak.edu.tr)

On the other hand, Swain (1985) states that learners cannot acquire a language without producing comprehensible output. She suggests that output gives learners the opportunity to notice gaps in their interlanguages and test hypotheses. Other researchers also supported Swain's Output Hypothesis. It was indicated that it is impossible for learners to develop their oral skills if their language classrooms do not provide learners with opportunities for interaction (Lightbown et al., 1999; Long, 1985).

From the perspective of L2 acquisition theories, learners should use the target language to learn it. However, not all of the learners have the same level of willingness to communicate which could prevent successful L2 acquisition. So, it is necessary to investigate different factors which may affect learners' willingness to communicate. For this purpose, a heuristic model of willingness to communicate was introduced by MacIntyre et al. (1998) in second language learning area based on the idea that WTC should be conceived as a situational variable instead of a trait-like variable. A pyramid figure which has twelve constructs was developed to illustrate the probable determinants of willingness to communicate in L2. This figure is based on the fact that one's decision to communicate in L2 is affected by both situational influences and enduring elements (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Since the proposal of this model, many researchers have conducted several studies to test the validity of willingness to communicate in different learning contexts all around the world. In many of these studies, it was found that learners' perceived communication competence and communication anxiety are the main variables which affect L2 WTC (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 2001; MacIntyre et al., 2003; Yashima, 2002). Based on these findings, the construct of linguistic self-confidence was introduced by researchers (Clement et al., 2003; Yashima, 2002) to describe the connection between perceived communication skill and communication anxiety.

Motivation was also found as a significant individual variable which directly or indirectly influences learners' willingness to communicate (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 2001; Yashima, 2002). In order to evaluate learners' motivation, many of these studies adopted Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model. Integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and motivation were defined as the main components of this model. Most of the L2 WTC studies found important relationships among L2 WTC, attitudes and motivation (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2001).

The majority of the research were carried out in Canada, where French is taught as a second language, despite the fact that many of them supported the validity of the WTC model created by MacIntyre et al. (1998) in terms of describing learners' L2WTC and its relationship with other variables (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Baker & MacIntyre, 2000;

MacIntyre et al., 2001). Only a limited number of studies were carried out in English as a second language (ESL) learning context (Clement et al., 2003; Hashimoto, 2002), or English as a foreign language (EFL) learning environments (Kim, 2004; Bektaş, 2005; Yashima, 2002). The context of English as a foreign language (EFL) differs from the context of English as a second language (ESL) with regard to finding a chance to use L2 in a real conversation during daily life (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). While language learners can find a chance to practice their speaking abilities in ESL contexts, this situation is almost impossible for learners who learn a language in EFL contexts. Due to this reason, the language classroom is the most appropriate setting for assessing speaking abilities in EFL contexts. Despite this, very few studies have looked into the impact of the language classroom context on L2WTC. (Cao, 2011; Khajavy et al., 2014; Peng, 2012; Peng & Woodrow, 2010) and most of them were conducted in the Chinese EFL context. Turkey is also an EFL context, but the L2WTC in the Turkish language classrooms was not investigated by any of the researchers.

In order to investigate the relationship between motivation and L2WTC, most previous WTC studies used Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002). However, some of the researchers questioned the validity of integrative motivation considering that the role of integrative motivation has lost its importance in an EFL context (Chen et al., 2005; Warden & Lin, 2000). Thus, in this study, recently developed motivational systems such as Dörnyei's (2005) motivational self-system and Noels et al.'s (Noels et al. 2000; Noels, 2001) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation within a EFL classroom context are adopted as opposed to the early studies which were conducted in EFL settings (Bektaş, 2005; Kim, 2004; Yashima et al., 2004). For the first time in a Turkish context, the relationship between recent motivation systems and WTC, as well as the interaction of them with the classroom environment, was investigated. Hence, through this study, it was planned to examine the interactions of social-psychological, communication, and linguistic variables of L2 willingness to communicate with contextual variables in the Turkish EFL context in light of the WTC frameworks proposed in the literature (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Peng & Woodrow, 2010).

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Willingness to Communicate*

The phrase "Willingness to Communicate" (WTC) was first used in relation to speaking in one's native tongue (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). In the 1990s, WTC research in L1 received the attention of the researchers in the second language research area. Some studies adopted Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model to investigate L2WTC model in

the Canadian contexts (MacIntyre et al., 1998) and also in the Asian foreign language context (Kim, 2004; Yashima, 2002). In the Turkish context, some researchers also tested different WTC models to explain the relations among different variables in this EFL context (Bektaş, 2005; Oz et al., 2015). Bektaş (2005) found that students' attitudes toward the international community, as well as their perceived linguistic self-confidence, have a direct impact on their willingness to communicate. The main predictors of learners' willingness to communicate, according to Oz et al. (2015), were the communication competence and communication anxiety, with other factors having a secondary impact.

As shown above, some studies were conducted in the Turkish EFL context to determine different factors affecting L2 WTC. L2 WTC and its interaction with different variables such as personality, attitudes, motivation and linguistic self-confidence were investigated by some researchers by means of different statistical techniques. Despite the fact that language classrooms are the best settings for practicing speaking skills in EFL contexts (Cao, 2011; Peng & Woodrow, 2010), the L2 WTC in the language classroom setting was not investigated by any of the researchers in Turkey. For this purpose, this study aims to fill in this gap by investigating L2 WTC in the Turkish EFL classroom context through the relations among psychological, contextual, and linguistic variables of L2 WTC.

## *2.2. Motivation*

The original impetus in L2 motivation research results from Gardner's work in this area (Gardner, 1985). According to Gardner's (1985) socioeducational model, the primary aspects of motivation for L2 learners are their desire to learn the L2, the intensity of their motivation, and their attitudes toward L2 learning. At the beginning of 1990s, the validity of socio-educational model was questioned by some researchers and self-determination theory started to gain importance during this time (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self-determination theory suggests that human beings basically need autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Thus, to what extent these needs are satisfied causes various types of motivation. Also, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are distinguished in the self-determination theory. Intrinsic motivation means performing an action for its own sake to feel the joy of doing it while extrinsic motivation is defined as performing an action to receive some rewards or avoid punishment (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Various regulations are presented on a scale ranging from self-determination (intrinsic) to controlled (extrinsic) motivation. Considering L2 learning always involves both external and internal reasons, Noels et al. (Noels et al., 2000; Noels, 2001) studied self-determination theory in second language learning and applied the intrinsic/extrinsic continuum to language learning. Ryan's (1995) discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic

motivation considers these constructs as orientations. Intrinsic orientations are directly related to one's inherent interest in the activity and the activity is performed to feel satisfied with it. Three different types of intrinsic orientations have been defined (Vallerand et al., 1992, 1993; Vallerand, 1997). *Intrinsic-Knowledge* involves the feelings of pleasure that is obtained from developing knowledge about a specific area. *Intrinsic-Accomplishment* is identified as the sense of enjoyment which is related with surpassing oneself and completing a difficult activity. The process of achievement is more important than the end result. *Intrinsic-Stimulation* is defined as the enjoyment of the aesthetics of the experience (Noels et al., 2000).

According to Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, Noels et al. (2000) also classify three categories of extrinsic motivation. *External Regulation* is defined as the performance of an activity controlled by external forces. *Introjected Regulation*, which is more internalized, refers to reasons related with carrying out an activity because of the pressure that learners put on themselves, so that they force themselves to conduct that activity. *Identified Regulation*, the most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation, is related with performing an activity due to its importance for attaining a valued goal or personally related reasons. Noels (2001) argues that learners are not motivated by one goal but several reasons may serve as important impetus for language learning, although the significance of them changes for each learner.

This study investigated the interaction of motivation and WTC within the framework of Noels et al.'s (Noels et al., 2000; Noels, 2001) intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which is based on Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (SDT) (1985) because some of the researchers questioned the validity of integrative motivation considering that the role of integrative motivation has lost its importance in an EFL context (Chen et al., 2005; Warden & Lin, 2000).

### 2.3. Linguistic Self-Confidence

It was proposed that self-confidence is related to self-perceived communication competence and a lack of anxiety (Clement, 1980, 1986). Researchers claim that learners' readiness to speak increases when they feel more confident in their communication skills and experience less communication fear (Cao, 2009; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al. 1998). Linguistic self-confidence was especially emphasized in MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) WTC model. Two components of L2 self-confidence are listed by MacIntyre (1998). The first component is about the self-evaluation of the L2 learner with regard to proficiency in the second language. The second component concerns with language anxiety which implies the uneasiness experienced while using an L2. According to MacIntyre (1998), there is a strong association between language anxiety and self-evaluation in the field of L2 study

(Clement et al., 1980; MacIntyre et al., 1998). On the basis of the results of his study, which show a high association between linguistic anxiety and self-evaluation, Clement et al. (1994) emphasize the significance of merging these two variables into a single, self-confidence construct. Noels et al. (1996) define self-confidence as "self-perceptions of communicative competence and concomitant low levels of anxiety in using the second language" (p. 248).

In the light of these findings, many studies investigated the importance of "self-confidence" construct and its relation to WTC in their studies. According to Yu's (2009) study in the Chinese context, communication apprehension and self-perceived communication ability have a direct correlation with WTC in English. In a Japanese setting, Yashima et al. (2004) investigated the determinants of WTC in a second language and it was found that self-confidence in L2 directly affects WTC in L2. Additionally, Ghonsooly et al. (2012) looked at the causes of a person's WTC in a second language in the context of Iranian education. Regarding the factors that influence WTC, it was discovered that L2 attitudes toward the international community and self-confidence had a direct relationship with WTC. On the other hand, the most important antecedent of WTC was L2 self-confidence in the Iranian EFL context. Bektaş (2005) and Şener (2014) also looked at WTC in the Turkish context and discovered that linguistic self-confidence was the most important factor influencing students' WTC, supporting earlier research done in other EFL contexts.

#### *2.4. Learner Beliefs*

Learner beliefs have been holding the attention of L2 researchers since their introduction into L2 literature by Horwitz in 1980s. As a concept, many researchers found it difficult to define (Barcelos, 2003; Dörnyei, 2005). Generally, learner beliefs are classified under two headings: cognitive beliefs and sociocultural beliefs. The nature of language and language learning are important topics for cognitive dimension of learner beliefs. With regard to sociocultural dimension, it is claimed that beliefs cannot be defined only within a cognitive dimension, it is necessary to take into consideration social dimension as well, because our interactions with others and with our environment have a great effect on them.

Recently, the relationship between learner beliefs and L2 WTC has been catching the attention of L2 researchers. Fushino (2010) proposed a WTC model which consisted of beliefs about group work, communication confidence, and willingness to communicate (WTC) based on the models of Yashima (2002) and MacIntyre et al. (1998). The study found that communicative confidence in L2 group work, which is a result of views about L2 group work, indirectly influences WTC in L2 group work. Peng (2014) discovered that learner beliefs have a direct impact on motivation and linguistic self-confidence in the Chinese setting.

The variable of learner beliefs was examined in this study from both a cognitive (how English should be taught and learned) and a sociocultural (how it should be taught) perspective (what learning and communication behavior is acceptable in the classroom). Considering that one of the main goals of this study is to investigate WTC in the classroom context, learning more about the learner beliefs is necessary because learner beliefs are considered to affect the behaviors of learners in the classroom (Benson & Lor, 1999; Mantle-Bromley, 1995).

### *2.5. Ideal L2 Self*

Although the idea of "self" is one of the most frequently discussed concepts in psychology, not many researchers in the area of second language education are interested in this construct. Dörnyei (2005, 2009) applied self theories to second language acquisition through L2 motivational self system, which comprises of the ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience.

Many studies investigated the relationship between L2 Motivational Self System and L2WTC in various L2 contexts. In the Japanese context, Munezane (2015) investigated the relationship between L2WTC and the ideal L2 self and found that there was a significant path from the ideal L2 self to L2WTC. It was also found that there was a direct link between motivation and ideal L2 self which implies that higher motivation helps learners to have better imagination about the future in which they start their professional career with high English skills. In China, Peng's (2015) study indicated direct paths from learning experience, ought-to L2 self, and international posture to ideal L2 self. Results also revealed that ideal L2 self positively influenced L2 anxiety, whereas ought-to L2 self negatively affected L2 anxiety.

Turkish SLA researchers have not adequately addressed the role of the L2 motivational self-system in language learning. Oz et al. (2015) were the first to look into the relationship between the ideal L2 self and other affective variables in a Turkish setting. There was no significant direct path from integrativeness and the ideal L2 self to motivation and WTC, despite the fact that they had a direct influence on self-perceived communication competence and communication anxiety. Hence, Oz et al. (2015) proposed improving learners' self-perceived communication skills by assisting them in developing more favorable impressions of their ideal L2 selves in order to encourage learners' motivation to speak.

Given the importance of the ideal L2 self construct in influencing language learners' communication preferences and the scarcity of literature on it in a Turkish context, the relationship between the ideal L2 self, willingness to communicate, and contextual factors was investigated in this study.

## 2.6. Classroom Environment

A language classroom is defined as a social environment where learners and teacher negotiate as social members. Dörnyei (1994) suggests that classroom dynamics are closely related to the teacher, learners, and tasks which are the main components of a language classroom. In most educational settings, Fraser's (2002) *What Is Happening In This Class* (WIHIC) questionnaire which was validated across cultures is employed to assess seven aspects of the classroom environment which are student cohesiveness, teacher support, involvement, investigation, task orientation, cooperation, and equity. Three aspects of this scale related to classroom WTC were investigated for this study: teacher support, student cohesiveness, and task orientation. As proposed by Clement et al. (1994) and Williams and Burden (1997), these aspects refer to three underlying concepts of the language classroom environment (teacher, learner, and tasks).

Teacher support is the assistance, trust, and attention displayed to students by the teacher (Dorman, 2003). Wen and Clement (2003) suggest that teacher support, particularly teacher immediacy, is a strong element which directly affects learners' WTC. Yu (2009) investigated the L2 communication behaviors of Chinese EFL learners and discovered a direct link between teacher immediacy and communication apprehension and competence. Results implied that teacher immediacy could indirectly affect L2WTC through these two constructs.

Student cohesiveness refers to the collaboration and support among students (Dorman, 2003). Clement et al. (1994) point out that interaction and learning in the classroom is greatly affected by student cohesiveness. Dörnyei (2007) also indicates that the elements which shape the atmosphere of a language classroom such as support for each other or competitiveness are the main antecedents of the quality of teaching and learning. Barker et al. (1991) conceptualize group cohesiveness on a continuum which ranges from low to high. Shaw's theory, on the other hand, implies that high group cohesiveness produces engagement and reduces anxiety in a classroom setting, which supports willingness to communicate if the group members are satisfied with task orientation (Shaw, 1981).

Task orientation denotes the importance of finishing tasks and the value of the tasks (Dorman, 2003). A task's perceived usefulness determines whether it places more focus on meaning or form. While form-focused activities try to teach language structure, meaning-focused tasks are primarily concerned with communicating in a genuine setting. For the objective of natural language acquisition, meaning-focused activities were promoted; however, some scholars contend that form-focused activities should also be incorporated into meaning-focused sessions (Ellis, 2002; Long, 1998). Numerous studies have discovered an advantageous connection between task orientation and student engagement. Kubanyiova (2006) found that meaningful, personally related and



moderately difficult activities would increase the quality of performance. Wu (2003) also suggested that moderately difficult tasks are effective in supporting perceived competence and increasing motivation.

### *2.7. Vocabulary Size*

Vocabulary knowledge has an important place in foreign language learning (Nation, 1990; Schmitt et al., 2001). The relation between vocabulary knowledge and communicative language ability has important implications for L2 students, foreign language teachers and educational systems. Thus, many studies have been conducted to investigate this relation. Ediger's (2002) study pointed out that a person who has rich vocabulary will communicate more accurately. So, wide vocabulary gives learners an opportunity to express themselves. In the Iran context, Khodadady (2010) also found out that students' willingness to communicate was positively associated with their vocabulary knowledge. Cao (2011) pointed out that a lack of lexical resources would impact learners' willingness to communicate to great extent. Learners in this study indicated that they would not communicate with others well enough if their vocabulary is not sufficient enough. MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) also concluded that searching memory for vocabulary was identified as a key process affecting WTC, though there were many other factors that affect WTC.

Peng (2012) further claimed that linguistic constraints on WTC include difficulty with comprehension and a dearth of vocabulary. Participants in her study reported having varying degrees of difficulty remembering appropriate English terms. As a result, this circumstance either decreased their WTC or forced them to use their native tongue. Additionally, Hilton (2008) asserted a connection between spoken fluency and vocabulary size. He investigated the fluency findings from a corpus of oral productions in three different L2s and found out that 'lexical competence' had a fundamental role in spoken fluency. Based on this finding, Hilton (2008) argued that the concept of "lexical competence" should be given more emphasis in language-teaching programmes.

According to these studies, language knowledge and communication competence are directly related to one another. The majority of research also highlighted the role of a person's vocabulary size as a linguistic variable in determining their readiness to communicate (Cao, 2011; Khodadady, 2010; Peng, 2012). However, these studies are qualitatively conducted and to the best of researcher's knowledge, none of the studies in the literature investigated the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and L2 WTC through a strong quantitative model, which could give us a clearer understanding about the influence of vocabulary knowledge on learners' WTC and also its interaction with other antecedents of L2WTC such as psychological variables (motivation, learner beliefs) and affective variables (communication confidence). For this purpose, this study's primary objective is to close this gap by using a SEM model to look at how social-

psychological, communicational, and linguistic L2WTC variables interact with contextual factors in the Turkish EFL environment.

## 2.8. Research Questions

The study's primary research question is: 1- What are the relations among Turkish EFL students' WTC in English, their motivation, ideal L2 self, communication confidence, learner beliefs, classroom environment and their vocabulary levels?

Based on the current L2WTC literature, the following hypothesis were proposed:

1. Students' vocabulary size, communication confidence in English, and classroom environment will directly affect their willingness to communicate.
2. Ideal L2 self, learner beliefs, and motivation will directly affect linguistic self-confidence and they will have indirect effects on willingness to communicate through linguistic self-confidence.
3. Classroom environment will directly affect learner beliefs, motivation, ideal L2 self, communication confidence and willingness to communicate in English.
4. Ideal L2 self will have a direct effect on both motivation and learner beliefs.

## 3. Method

The primary goal of the study is to investigate the relationship between several variables and the willingness to communicate of EFL students in Turkey. Quantitative data collection and analysis were done for this reason.

### 3.1. Research design

Taylor and Trumbull (2005) indicate that quantitative methods are objective and reliable. Quantitative research is used to define a certain phenomenon and show how it can be controlled using various treatments.

In quantitative research, the researcher maintains objectivity, and measurements are used to gather data. According to the information provided above, numerical data was gathered using questionnaires that have undergone testing to ensure its validity. In order to collect quantitative data, questionnaires were utilized. For the accuracy of instruments, translation and back-translation methods were adopted. The original musical compositions were initially translated into Turkish before being translated back into English. A pilot study was conducted to evaluate the instruments' reliability. For the selection of participants, cluster random sampling was utilized. In cluster random sampling, researcher selects groups (clusters) that occur naturally in the population rather than a single unit (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). As a result,

the intact classes in this study were chosen at random, and the materials were distributed to all students in these classes.

### *3.2. Participants*

The study's data were gathered from 711 preparatory school students at a Turkish state university. Most of these students were recent graduates of high schools and they started university based on their exam scores they acquired from nationwide university selection and placement test (YGS). In fourth grade, these students began taking English classes in elementary school.

The majority of the 711 survey participants (99%) were Turkish citizens, with only four having other nationalities. The age of 614 participants ranged from 17 to 19, while 83 of them were between ages 20-22 which indicates a young group of learners. The majority of participants (60%) were female, while males made up less than half of the total (39%). English proficiency levels of the participants varied from elementary (ELE) to advanced (ADV). Slightly more than half of the students (56%) were at pre-intermediate and elementary levels, while 43% of the students were at advanced and intermediate levels.

### *3.3. Data Collection Tools*

In the study, quantitative data were collected by means of a questionnaire, a scale with seven sections and a vocabulary test. A questionnaire with 14 items was used in the study to better understand the students' backgrounds. It consists of questions about students' backgrounds, such as age, gender, class, nationality, and length of time studying English. The scale is divided into seven sections that assess students' willingness to communicate, motivation, linguistic self-confidence, classroom environment, ideal L2 self, and beliefs.

To assess the construct "linguistic self-confidence," which consists of communication anxiety and perceived communication competence, two scales were developed. The scales and the number of items for each scale were chosen based on the literature and the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

To avoid semantic loss during scale translation, both translation and back translation methods were used (Brislin, 1980). As a first step, the original scales were translated into Turkish by three different English majors to be able to choose the most natural translation among them. Secondly, a back-translation was conducted from Turkish into English by three different English majors without any reference to the original English versions (Geisinger, 1994). Five multilingual raters with at least a Master's degree in English initially scored the English original and Turkish translation's similarity on a scale of 10 for each. The main goal of this step was to reduce the risk of item translation difference (Şireci & Berberoğlu, 2000). Second, using a scale of 1 to 10, a different group

of five raters with the same credentials compared the synonymy between the original English text and the back-translated English text.

A pilot study was conducted at the end of the spring semester of the academic year 2015/2016 to test the reliability of the scales. The reliability values for each factor were found to be acceptable in this pilot study. Also, the cronbach alpha of the whole scale was .80 which means that it was highly reliable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). After ensuring the reliability of the scales, they were utilized in the main study.

Data for the main study was collected in December, 2016 at the end of the Fall semester of Academic Year 2016/2017. The reliability analysis of the WTC, self-perceived communicative competence, anxiety, motivation, ideal L2 self and classroom environment categories were carried out and it was found that the reliability coefficients of each scale were higher than .80, which were highly reliable. On the other hand, the reliability coefficient of learner beliefs scale was higher than .70, which was reliable.

Table 1. Reliability of the Instruments (Number of valid cases= 711)

Scales	Cronbach's alpha	Number of Items
WTC	.87	10
Communication Competence	.88	6
Communication Anxiety	.95	18
Motivation	.91	21
Ideal L2 Self	.93	10
Learner Beliefs	.73	9
Classroom Environment	.85	13

1. Willingness to Communicate: Ten items (Cronbach's alpha= .94) adapted from Peng and Woodrow (2010) served to assess Turkish preparatory students' willingness to communicate in English. The students chose their ratings on a 6-point scale from 1 (definitely not willing) to 6 (definitely willing).

2. Perceived Communication Competence: Six items (Cronbach's alpha= .93) used by Peng and Woodrow (2010) were utilized to assess to what extent students feel confident communicating in English. Students showed their level of communication competence on a 11-point can-do scale ranging from 0% to 100%.

3. Communication Anxiety: 18 items from from 33 items of FLCAS developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) which were directly related to foreign language speaking anxiety were selected. The internal consistency of foreign language speaking anxiety questionnaire (FLSAQ) was found as .91, which shows that it is highly reliable. The students were asked to respond on a 6-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

4. Motivation: 21 items (Cronbach's alpha= .91) adapted from Language Learning Orientation Scale, which was originally developed by Noels et. al. (2000) and later expanded and adapted by McIntosh and Noels (2004), were used to measure students' motivation in two subcomponents of LLOS scale which are intrinsic motivation (knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation) and extrinsic motivation (external, introjected, and identified regulation) on a 6-point Likert scale.
5. Learner Beliefs: Nine items (Cronbach's alpha= .80) used by Peng and Woodrow (2010) were used to investigate learner beliefs about classroom behaviors. The students were asked to respond on a 6-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).
6. Classroom Environment: Thirteen items (Cronbach's alpha= .88) used by Peng and Woodrow (2010) were utilized to assess classroom environment. Students evaluated their classroom environment on a 6-point scale from 1 (never) to 6 (always).
7. Ideal L2 Self: Ten item ideal L2 self scale adopted from Dörnyei & Taguchi (2010) was used to evaluate students' desired L2 self. The internal consistency of the scale is .90, which is highly reliable. Ratings were recorded on a 6-point scale.
8. Vocabulary Levels Tests: To be able to assess the vocabulary knowledge of students in this study, Schmitt, Schmitt, and Clapham's (2001) the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) was utilized. In this study, only 3000, 5000 and academic vocabulary levels were utilized. In terms of the reliability of the Vocabulary Levels Test, they calculated the reliability indices (Cronbach's alpha= .92) for each section of the test and found that they were all high.

#### *3.4. Data Analysis*

As a first step in data analysis, descriptive analysis of the questionnaire was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and student vocabulary scores were calculated. The Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) statistical program was then used to perform Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis. Essentially, SEM allows one to specify, estimate, and evaluate models of variable relationships (Hair et al., 1998).

## **4. Findings**

The proposed model of the present study was tested after confirmatory factor analyses were done for each measure used in the definition of the constructs. Test of the structural model was accomplished using a two-step approach, according to which a measurement model was tested before testing the structural model.

#### *4.1. Test of the Measurement Model:*

The measurement model depicts the relationships between the observed variables and their underlying latent constructs, which were allowed to freely intercorrelate. Correlations between the observed variables were calculated prior to model testing. Table 2 shows that the correlations between the observed variables used in this study ranged from .01 to .88.

A test of the measurement model defined by these observed variables resulted in a good fit to the data as indicated by the following goodness of fit statistics:  $\chi^2(84, N = 711) = 428.86, p < .01$ ; Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) = 0.93, Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.95, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.96, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.076 (.90 confidence interval for RMSEA = 0.069-0.083).

Table 2. Intercorrelations of Observed Variables Used in the Measurement and Structural Models

	<i>Wtc-M</i>	<i>Wtc-F</i>	<i>Anx</i>	<i>Comp</i>	<i>LB1</i>	<i>LB2</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Student</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>IS1</i>	<i>IS2</i>	<i>Int</i>	<i>Ext</i>	<i>W3000</i>	<i>W5000</i>
WTC-M	-														
WTC-F	.45**	-													
ANX	-.38**	-.03	-												
COMP	.54**	.21**	-.58**	-											
LB1	-.13**	-.08*	.16**	-.05	-										
LB2	-.21**	-.12**	.33**	-.33**	.34**	-									
TASK	.29**	.27**	.09*	.22**	-.22**	-.16**	-								
STUDENT	.35**	.25**	-.18**	.29**	-.21**	-.16**	.41**	-							
TEACHER	.16**	.22**	-.06	.21**	-.15**	-.16**	.58**	.38**	-						
IS1	.37**	.25**	-.30**	.45**	-.03	-.28**	.23**	.25**	.24**	-					
IS2	.37**	.28**	-.26**	.42**	-.02	.26**	.23**	.29**	.27**	.88**	-				
INT	.40**	.42**	-.12**	.31*	-.03	.14**	.29**	.29**	.29**	.45**	.45**	-			
EXT	.30**	.27**	-.04	.22**	.01	-.10**	.25**	.27**	.29**	.43**	.50**	.65**	-		
W3000	.20**	.21**	-.24**	.39**	.06	-.32**	.14**	.10**	.20**	.36**	.35**	.29**	.11**	-	
W5000	.20**	.19**	-.23**	.37**	-.05	-.30**	.14**	.06	.19**	.31**	.29**	.26**	.09*	.83**	-
WAcad	.18**	.18**	-.21**	.35**	-.05	-.29**	.11**	.06	.17**	.29**	.29**	.25**	.09*	.79**	.85**

Note: N = 771, WTC-M = Willingness to communicate in meaning, WTC-F = Willingness to communicate in form, ANX = Speaking anxiety, COMP = Communication competence, LB1 = learner beliefs about English learning, LB2 = learner beliefs about classroom communication behaviors, TASK = Task orientation, STUDENT = Student cohesiveness, TEACHER = Teacher support, IS1-2 = Parcels for ideal self, EXT = Extrinsic motivation, INT = Intrinsic motivation, V3000 = 3000 vocabulary level, V5000 = 5000 vocabulary level, ACVOC = Academic vocabulary. \*p<.05; \*\* p<.01.

As can be seen from Table 3, all of the loadings of the indicators on the latent variables were relatively large and statistically significant. It is clear from the standardized factor loadings, except for the learner beliefs parcels, most of the indicators factor loadings were higher than .70. Therefore, all of the latent variables appear to have been adequately operationalized by their respective indicators.

Table 3. Factor Loadings, Standard Errors, and T-values for the Measurement Model

<i>Latent and Observed variable</i>	<i>Unstandardized factor loading</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Standardized factor loading</i>
Willingness to Communicate				
WTC-M	5.71	.28	20.05**	.85
WTC-F	2.92	.21	13.80**	.55
Communication Confidence				
ANX	13.26	.77	17.25**	.65
COMP	10.52	.39	24.01	.91
Learner Beliefs				
LB1	1.84	.18	10.39**	.47
LB2	3.11	.20	15.94**	.67
Classroom Environment				
TASK	3.63	.18	20.27**	.77
STUDENT	2.42	.16	15.36**	.60
TEACHER	2.84	.16	19.16**	.73
Ideal Self				
IS1	4.83	.16	30.72**	.93
IS2	4.59	.15	31.20**	.94
Motivation				
EXT	6.93	.34	20.11**	.74
INT	8.93	.38	23.49**	.86
Vocabulary Size				
V3000	7.03	.27	25.99**	.82



V5000	7.93	.25	31.53**	.93
ACVOC	8.68	.31	28.11**	.87

Note. N = 711. WTC-M = Willingness to communicate in meaning, WTC-F = Willingness to communicate in form, ANX = Speaking anxiety, COMP = Communication competence, LB1-2 = Parcels for learner beliefs, TASK = Task orientation, STUDENT = Student cohesiveness, TEACHER = Teacher support, IS1-2 = Parcels for ideal self, EXT = Extrinsic motivation, INT = Intrinsic motivation, V3000 = 3000 vocabulary level, V5000 = 5000 vocabulary level, ACVOC = Academic vocabulary

\*\*p<.01

4.2. Test of the Structural Model:

Test of the structural model was accomplished using Maximum Likelihood estimation method and resulted in an acceptable goodness of fit statistics:  $\chi^2(84, N = 711) = 529.68, p < .01$ ; Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) = 0.91, Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.90, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.91, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.083 (.90 confidence interval for RMSEA = 0.076-0.090).

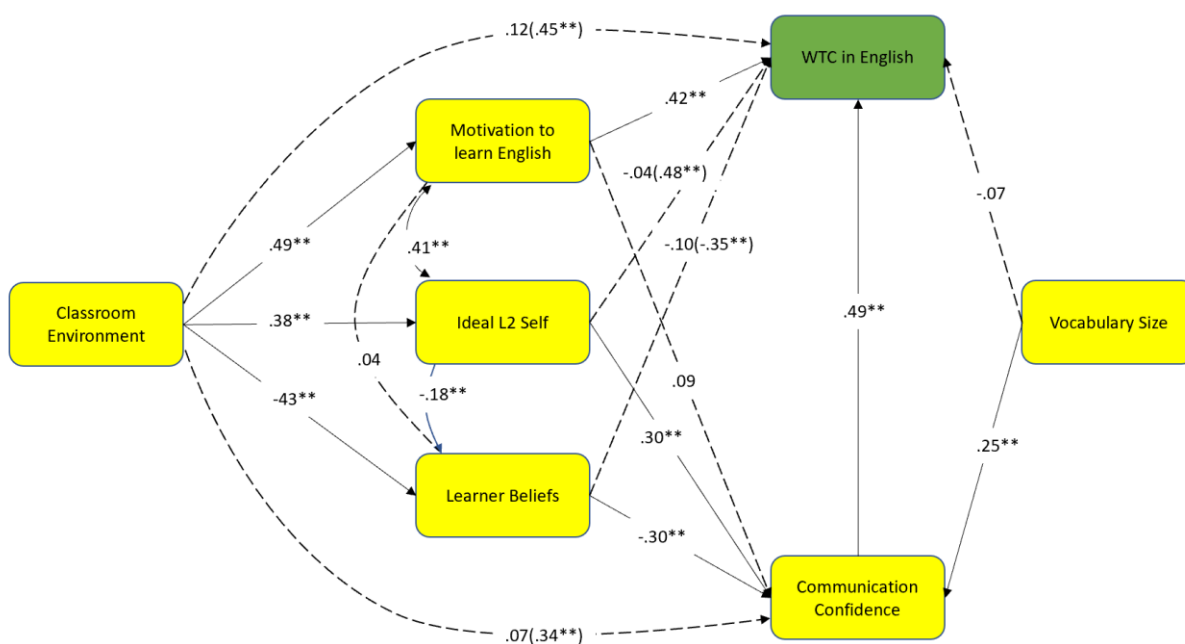


Figure 1 Standardized values of the structural model

Notes: N=711, Observed variables are not shown for the ease of presentation; dashed lines refers to insignificant paths. \*\*p<.01

According to the results of the structural model, the relationships of classroom environment with both WTC in English and Communication Confidence were fully mediated by the three variables in the model, namely motivation to learn English, Ideal self, and learner beliefs.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the relationship between classroom environment and WTC in English ( $\beta = .45$ ,  $p < .01$ ) turned out to be insignificant ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p > .01$ ) when the mediators were added into the equation. Similarly, the relationship between classroom environment and communication confidence ( $\beta = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ) became insignificant ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ ) when the mediator variables were added to the structural model.

Moreover, the relationships of learner beliefs and ideal self with WTC in English were fully mediated by communication confidence. The relationship of learner beliefs ( $\beta = -.35$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and ideal self ( $\beta = .48$ ,  $p < .01$ ) turned out to be insignificant ( $\beta s = -.10$ ,  $-.04$ ,  $p < .01$ , respectively) when the mediators were added to the structural equation. On the other hand, ideal L2 self had a statistically significant relationship with both motivation ( $\beta = .41$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and learner beliefs ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, there was not a significant relationship between motivation and learner beliefs ( $\beta = .04$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

When it comes to the relationship between motivation to learn English and WTC in English, communication confidence did not operate as a mediator given that the relationship between motivation to learn and WTC had a strong and statistically significant relationship even when the communication confidence was defined as a mediator. The insignificant path from motivation to learn to communication confidence also indicated that communication confidence could not be a mediator between the constructs. With regard to the relationship between willingness to communicate and vocabulary size, communication confidence served as a mediator between these two variables.

Finally, it was shown that the model accounted for %55 of the variance in willingness to communicate, %35 of the variance in communication confidence, %18 of the variance in learner beliefs, %15 of the variance in ideal self, and %24 of the variance in motivation to learn English.

## 5. Discussion

The SEM results revealed that communication confidence was the most significant predictor of willingness to communicate, meaning that Turkish EFL students become more willing to talk in their classrooms if they believe they are competent enough to communicate and have less anxiety. This finding was found to be in parallel with both L2WTC theory (MacIntyre et al., 1998) and the findings of previous studies in different countries such as Japan (Yashima 2002), Canada (Clement et al., 2003), South Korea (Kim, 2004), China (Peng & Woodrow, 2010), Iran (Khajavy et al., 2016), and Turkey (Bektaş, 2005; Şener, 2014).

Besides, it was found that students' motivation, which was measured within the framework of extrinsic/intrinsic motivation, directly and significantly influenced willingness to communicate, which supports the findings of MacIntyre et al. (1996) and Hashimoto (2002). This finding implied that the more motivated students become, the more willing they become to communicate in English. On the other hand, the insignificant path from motivation to learn to communication confidence also indicated that communication confidence could not be a mediator between the constructs. However, this result contradicted with some previous studies which found that motivation was directly related to communication confidence and indirectly related to willingness to communicate through communication confidence (Ghonsooly et al., 2012; Kim, 2004; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002). Contrary to these WTC studies which adopted Gardner's Socio-Educational Model, motivation was investigated as extrinsic orientations and intrinsic orientations in this study according to intrinsic/extrinsic continuum suggested by Noels et al. (2000) based on self-determination theory. Three different types of intrinsic orientations (*Knowledge, Accomplishment, Stimulation*) and extrinsic orientations (*External Regulation, Introjected Regulation, Identified Regulation*) have been evaluated. It was found that students mostly give importance to the pragmatic use of English (extrinsic motives) rather than intrinsic motives. Learners' emphasis on the pragmatic use of English could be the main reason for the direct influence of motivation on WTC.

With regard to the role of classroom environment, the findings revealed that the relationships of classroom environment with both WTC in English and communication confidence were fully mediated by the three individual variables, namely motivation to learn English, ideal self, and learner beliefs. The insignificant direct paths from classroom environment to WTC and communication confidence showed that classroom environment indirectly affects learners' WTC through motivation, while it indirectly affects communication confidence through learner beliefs and ideal L2 self.

Although no direct path was found from classroom environment to WTC and communication confidence, it was found that classroom environment directly and significantly affected individual variables; motivation, ideal L2 self and learner beliefs. The most strong correlation was found between the classroom environment and motivation, which supports the findings of many studies showing the immediate effect of classroom environment on learners' motivation in SLA research (Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Zhang & Oetzel, 2006).

The interaction between classroom environment and ideal L2 self was for the first time investigated in a L2 WTC model and it was found that classroom environment is positively and significantly related to ideal L2 self, which imply that classroom environment has an important role in helping students to form positive ideal L2 self images.

A significant path from classroom environment to learner beliefs was also found in the study which implies that classroom environment' role in shaping learner beliefs about English learning and appropriate classroom behaviors is significant (Hu, 2003; Oz, 2007; Peng, 2012). Moreover, the relationships of learner beliefs and ideal self with WTC in English were fully mediated by communication confidence in the study as it was expected based on the previous studies (Fushino, 2008, 2010; Oz et al., 2016; Papi, 2010; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Peng, 2012; Peng, 2015; Ueki & Takeuchi, 2012).

The path from learner beliefs to ideal L2 self was found to be significant as it was expected (Ushioda, 2001). On the other hand, a strong interaction was found between motivation which was evaluated within the framework of motivation construct suggested by Noels et al. (2000) and ideal L2 self, which was proposed by Dörnyei (2005) as a component of L2 motivational self system. This finding was found to be in line with the previous studies (Al-Shehri, 2009; Dörnyei, 2009; Munezane, 2010; Shahbaz & Liu, 2012; Ueki & Takeuchi, 2012).

With respect to the relationship between vocabulary size, communication confidence and willingness to communicate, a significant path from vocabulary size to communication confidence was found as expected, whereas the path from vocabulary size to willingness to communicate was not found to be significant as opposed to what was expected. The findings revealed that the relationship of vocabulary size and WTC in English were fully mediated by communication confidence. A significant path from vocabulary size to communication confidence conformed to other findings in the literature (Hilton, 2008; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). On the other hand, the insignificant path from vocabulary size to WTC in English did not support the view in the literature which indicates that a lack of lexical resources would significantly impact learners' willingness to communicate. Considering that communication confidence is a combination of a low level of anxiety and a high level of communicative competence, a direct interaction of vocabulary size with both communication anxiety and communicative spoken fluency in the previous studies supported the significant path from vocabulary size to communication confidence in this study.

## **6. Conclusions**

The findings of the study revealed that as one of the two significant indicators of willingness to communicate, communication confidence proved to be the universal predictor of willingness to communicate (Bektaş, 2005; Clement et al., 2003; Khajavy, 2016; Kim, 2004; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Şener, 2014; Yashima, 2002). The second strong predictor was motivation which directly influenced willingness to communicate (Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Clement, 1996). Especially, extrinsic orientations would encourage them to become more willing to communicate in English. Classroom environment is an important contributor to learners' willingness to communicate through

its direct effect on learners' motivation, ideal L2 self, beliefs and indirect effect on communication confidence. On the other hand, ideal L2 self and learner beliefs were found to indirectly influence learners' willingness to communicate through the mediating role of communication confidence. Lastly, vocabulary knowledge is an important linguistic factor which influences learners' willingness to communicate through communication confidence.

Based on the investigation of the relationships between learners' WTC, individual and contextual variables, the findings of this study are significant in terms of providing some pedagogical implications for L2 learning and teaching. First of all, the primary concern of language educators should be to help their learners to build and increase their communication confidence by reducing their speaking anxiety. So, it can be suggested that as a first step, teachers should provide their learners with a relaxed language environment in which they could test their communication competences without any hesitation.

Second, motivation was found to be another significant indicator of learners' WTC in English, but Turkish EFL learners were generally found to be extrinsically motivated, which revealed a moderate level of self-determination. Thus, L2 educators would help learners to acquire a sense of accomplishment, knowledge and stimulation which are all components of intrinsic motivation by means of successful learning experience because a higher level of self-determination means a higher level of WTC.

Besides, the pleasant classroom environment has an important role in increasing learners' motivation, which, in turn, increases their WTC in English. Considering that a classroom is a small community where learners continuously interact with each other, establishing a friendly atmosphere in a language class, where learners are friendly to each other, helpful to other class member and tolerant of mistakes, would definitely make learners feel more relaxed and express themselves easily in their classrooms.

Considering the direct path from classroom environment to ideal L2 self and learner beliefs in the study, it is concluded that a carefully structured classroom environment has a great role in shaping learners' beliefs about English learning and appropriate classroom behaviors and also encouraging learners' positive perceptions about their ideal L2 selves. So, different pedagogies of communicative language teaching should be integrated into learners' English classes with meaningful tasks and activities, which will foster learners' beliefs in the same direction and help them to imagine themselves as adults who can speak English in every area of their future lives. Also, it is suggested that language teachers could help their learners to have positive beliefs about English learning by means of different methods such as portfolios. Learners can be given a chance to reflect on their beliefs through these portfolios which include their writings or journal entries recording their beliefs.

Lastly, it seems that although learners are aware that their vocabulary is not sufficient and it needs to be improved, they do not know how to do it. So, teachers should guide their learners in this way by organizing different activities which directly aim at developing learners' vocabulary knowledge.

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