

Relationship between Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and Writing Ability among Afghanistan EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

The notion of willingness to communicate (WTC) is a state of readiness to speak freely, without fear at a particular time with a specific person or group of people using a foreign language. Writing ability is, therefore, defined as the ability to initiate and evolve ideas and then use certain revising and editing practices to develop them to maturity in a given context. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Afghanistan EFL learners' WTC and their writing ability. To perform this, 25 male learners who studied in senior English language class were selected to participate in this study. At the beginning of the research, they were asked to complete the Willingness to communicate questionnaire. Having answered the questionnaire, the participants were supposed to write a 200-word essay on a topic to show the learners' writing ability. In the end, in order to explore the relationship between WTC and writing ability of the EFL learners, a descriptive correlational design used to achieve its objectives. The study used a descriptive correlational design to achieve its objectives. The results of the present study indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between the participants' WTC and their writing ability.

Keywords- Willingness to communicate (WTC), Writing Ability, EFL students, intermediate level.

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is considered as one of the most important functions of any language. Besides, to learn and acquire a second/foreign language, the learner must show willingness to communicate (WTC) in that language. Thus, the ability to communicate in a second/foreign language is considered as a significant element for successful learning. In a general sense, the notion of willingness to communicate is a complex concept and is influenced by other notions such as personality types, learning styles, creativity, critical thinking, etc. The notion of willingness to communicate is rooted in the works of Burgoon (1976). According to MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, and Noels (1998), producing willingness to communicate is a significant

element in modern language instruction. Based on the studies of Kang (2005), teachers will have more active learners by making them more willing to communicate. Kang (2005) mentioned that "students with high WTC are more likely to use L2 in authentic communication and function as autonomous learners by making independent efforts to learn language." (p. 234) He also suggested that students with high willingness to communicate will have their learning opportunities and participate in learning activities both inside and particularly outside the classrooms.

Furthermore, writing skill is considered as one of the main components of English language learning which is a difficult, challenging and demanding task for many EFL learners (Khodashenas, Kishani Farahani & Amouzegar, 2013). As put by Ahmed (2013, p. 8),

“learning to write in English as a second language allows learners to put their thoughts on paper, see their ideas in print, and share them with others”. Having these in mind, this study seeks to explore the relationship between willingness to communicate and writing ability among Afghanistan EFL learners.

1.1 Significance of the study

The important aspect of this study is that, as seen in literature review, the volume of works done on WTC is not high. This study bridges the gap by investigating the relationship between WTC and writing ability in the Afghanistan context which is considered as an EFL context. Furthermore, the findings of this study can be used by EFL educational systems to become more familiar with the notion of willingness to communicate. The results can also help EFL learners, teachers and researchers by making them aware of the potentials of improving learners’ WTC level. More particularly, the results of the present study can help EFL teachers, curriculum developers, and syllabus designers to take willingness to communicate more into account in developing a particular syllabus for classrooms.

1.2 Objective of the study

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Afghanistan EFL learners’ WTC and their writing ability.

1.3 Research question

Is there a significant relationship between Afghanistan EFL learners’ WTC and their writing ability?

1.4 Null hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between Afghanistan EFL learners’ WTC and their writing ability.

II. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

2.1 Willingness to communicate (WTC):

According to MacIntyre, et al. (1998), WTC in a second language is “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2” (p. 457).

2.2 Writing Ability:

Various definitions have been proposed for writing ability. However, in this study, writing ability is defined as learners’ performance in researcher-made writing tests.

2.3 Limitations and delimitations

The following limitations can be mentioned for this study:

1. Just 25 students participated in this study.
2. No random sampling was used in this study.

The delimitations of the study were as follows:

No female learner was present in this study. Setting of the study was delimited to an English language class at Faryab university in Maimana city.

2.4 Design

This study used a descriptive correlational design to achieve its objectives.

2.5 Participants

Participants of the study consisted of 25 Afghanistan male EFL learners at the intermediate level whose age was ranged between 22-25. Sampling of this study was convenience sampling because available students were selected as the study participants in the absence of random sampling.

III. INSTRUMENTS

The first instrument was willingness to communicate scale in a foreign language context (WTC) questionnaire, developed by MacIntyre, et al. (2001) and modified by Hamzehnejad and Shariati (2014). The scale comprises of 27 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = almost never willing" to "5 = almost always willing". The items were written in a way that involved students’ willingness to communicate in all four skills. MacIntyre et al. (2001) reported this scale to be a valid and reliable one (alpha levels indicate reliability estimates): speaking (8 items, $\alpha = .81$), comprehension (5 items, $\alpha = .83$), reading (6 items, $\alpha = .83$), and writing (8 items, $\alpha = .88$). The alpha reliability for this instrument in the current study was calculated as .84.

The second instrument was a researcher-made writing test which will be designed based on the topics covered in the textbook used in the language course. In this test, the learners were asked to write a 200-word essay on a topic. This was used to check whether the participants are equivalent in terms of their writing ability at the outset of the study.

The third instrument was a second researcher-made writing test in which the students will be asked to write a 200-word essay on a topic. The aim of this test is to measure the learners’ writing ability.

3.1 Data collection procedures

To collect the data, at first, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. Also, they were told that there is no obligation for participation in the study and their participation is completely voluntary. In addition, they were informed that the data are scored anonymously. The general trend of data collection in this study was that, firstly a researcher-made writing test was taken from the participants to check their homogenization. Three days later, they were asked to fill WTC scale. For this questionnaire, a 20-minute time was given to the participants. Also, to ensure comprehensibility of questionnaires, Dari version of the questionnaire was used. One week later, another researcher-made writing test was taken from the participants.

3.2 Data analysis

To analyze the collected data, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Descriptive

statistics included mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics included Pearson product moment correlation test.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 shows the results of descriptive statistics for the WTC questionnaire.

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics for WTC questionnaire

Factor	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WTC	25	/18	/95	/56	/28

Table 4.2 shows the results of descriptive statistics for the participants' writing ability.

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics for Writing Ability

Factor	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Writing ability	25	4/58	5/29	5/18	/42

Table 4.3 shows the results of Pearson Product Moment correlation test for exploring the relationship between the participants' WTC and their writing ability.

Table 4.3 Pearson product moment correlation between WTC and writing ability

		Writing ability
WTC		
Pearson Correlation		/74*
Sig (2-tailed)		/001

As shown in Table 4.3, there is a positive significant relationship ($r=74$, $p<05$) between the participants' WTC and their writing ability. This correlation is strong. This means that the participants' WTC is positively correlated with their writing ability.

This finding is in line with findings of Razmjoo and Hoomanfar's (2012) study on the relationship between WTC and writing ability. The researchers reported the existence of a significant positive relationship between EFL learners' WTC and writing ability.

Also, this finding is consistent with Wang's (2004) finding according to which WTC and writing ability are significantly positively correlated.

The significant positive strong correlation between Afghanistan EFL learners' WTC and their writing ability can be attributed to the point that writing is a productive skill and reasonably it is correlated with learners' communicative ability and communicative willingness.

V. CONCLUSION

Generally, based on the results of the present research, it seems authentic to claim that willingness to communicate plays a significant role in improving EFL learners' writing ability. This implies that EFL teachers need to explore the potentials of willingness to communicate in their classes by recognizing the factors contributing to and enhancing this important trait. The major goal of this article was to find out the relationship between Afghanistan EFL learners' willingness to communicate and their writing ability. Learners might play a leading role in the process of producing an accurate writing. The result of the present study showed a positive significant relationship between willingness to communicate and writing ability of learners. Therefore, one can conclude that this study subject's WTC level is related to their writing ability.

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