Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in an L2, which is widely believed to facilitate the acquisition of the target language, has recently been extensively investigated (Gallagher & Robins, 2015; MacIntyre, Burns, & Jessome, 2011). Though having attracted much positive attention, few studies have been conducted to explore the effects different levels of WTC have on actual L2 communication in the classroom.

This presentation reports on an attempt to fill this gap by investigating whether the level of WTC positively affects (1) the amount of communication (2) meaningful contribution to the discussion, and (3) willingness to take the leadership roles in interaction.

A group of 28 Japanese university EFL learners participated in the study. Students, first, performed the courtroom drama, then, students in groups of 4 had jury discussions. Students were grouped into high-WTC groups, high/low-WTC groups, and low-WTC groups. Oral performance data were collected during the jury discussions, transcribed verbatim, and coded for analysis. At the same time, the number of words each student produced, and the frequency of turns each student took, were counted.

The results suggested that in high/low WTC groups, high WTC learners produced more L2 communication, made more meaningful contribution to the discussion, and took more leadership roles toward reaching a verdict. However, in high-WTC groups and low-WTC groups, all the members produced similar amount of speech, and equally contributed to the jury discussions toward reaching a verdict. Pedagogical implication of the research findings will be discussed.


Keywords: L2 communication, classroom interaction, willingness to communicate, jury discussion.