With a growing emphasis on communication as a fundamental part of foreign language learning and instruction within the framework of contemporary communicative approaches, willingness to communicate (WTC) has become recognized as one of the key concepts in L2 pedagogy. While the early empirical investigations into WTC primarily considered learner-related factors, such as anxiety, communicative self-confidence, motivation, and perceived language proficiency (MacIntyre et al., 2001), more recent studies expanded the research focus by considering the ecological factors that shape the complex classroom reality. External, context-dependent factors that have been identified as relevant for students’ readiness or reluctance to speak include topic, task type, interlocutor(s), teacher, and classroom atmosphere. (Peng, 2012)

The rationale behind this diary study was to zoom in on the ways the learners’ perceptions of classroom events came together to construct the contextual mosaic of two EFL classroom sessions. Seven undergraduate English majors at a Croatian university kept a diary in which they revealed their observations and interpretations of what was happening in class, their feelings about those observations, and the ways in which those experiences may have contributed to promoting or inhibiting their WTC during the two sessions. While the diaries contained shared factual observations, this exploration focused on the seven co-existing realities based on the diversity of observed details and nuances, and the individual interpretations that motivated the participants’ behaviour.

It is hoped that the insights from this study will contribute to raising awareness of the underlying richness of thoughts and emotions that can co-occur within a single session and shape the elaborate social context of a language classroom.


Keywords: constructing context, willingness to communicate, perceptions.