

Willingness to Communicate in the Second Language

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【Abstract】 Why are some learners willing to communicate in English, whilst others are reluctant to do so? Willingness to communicate (WTC), which was originally developed to explicate individual differences in the first language (L1) communication, has started to be focused on as an important factor to account for second language (L2) communication. First, this review article overviews how the concept of WTC was developed in L1 communication research. The second purpose is to describe the heuristic model of WTC in L2, which was developed inter-disciplinarily in second language acquisition research, and the third is to review the revised model in the Chinese context. Lastly, some empirical studies of WTC in an L2 context are reviewed. The results of previous studies have indicated that communication apprehension (CA) and self-perceived communication competence (SPCC) are found to be deciding factors to WTC among other variables.

【Keywords】 willingness to communicate (WTC), communication apprehension (CA), self-perceived communication competence (SPCC)

1. Introduction

Many language-teaching professionals agree that motivation is a key part of the process of learning a second or foreign language. However, in a real situation, outside of the classroom in particular, where the language learners are exposed, motivation and proficiency are not necessarily sufficient for them to start communication. They actually have to initiate or participate in communication in their less familiar language. The notion of Willingness to Communicate (WTC), which is the intention to initiate communication, will be useful in investigating why the standard of Japanese communicative competence in English is not perceived to be good enough to survive in the present globalized society.

Among the few researchers who have investigated WTC, Yashima (2002) examined how affective variables such as attitude (international posture), English learning motivation, and English communication confidence, influence WTC in English in the Japanese context. The structural equation model clarifies that attitude influences motivation and WTC; motivation influences proficiency and self-confidence; self-confidence influences WTC. Goodness of Fit Index of the model was 0.97,

which indicates WTC, motivational constructs and proficiency in English are relevant in accounting for communication in English.

The concept of WTC was originally developed in L1 communication by McCroskey and his associates (1987), based on Unwillingness to Communicate (Burgoon, J. K., 1976, cited by MacIntyre et al., 1998). McCroskey, however, applied his earlier framework of Communication Apprehension (CA, hereafter) into the second language context including Japan (McCroskey et al., 1985). McCroskey et al. (1985) investigated levels of CA, which is the main construct of WTC, among Japanese students in speaking Japanese and English. The results showed a high degree of CA in both languages among Japanese college students; in contrast a big discrepancy exists in CA between Spanish and English in research on Puerto Rican students (McCroskey et al., 1985). This study implies the importance of cultural norms.

The proverb says 'Where there is a will, there is a way.' So even the less proficient learners may communicate in English when they are willing to. On the contrary, highly proficient learners may not be willing to communicate since 'where there is not a will, there is not a way'. However, I have witnessed cases where there is both a will and a way (sufficient proficiency), but there

is no communication in English. If the ultimate purpose or goal of learning language is authentic communication between persons of different languages and cultures, as MacIntyre et al.(1998) suggest, what are all the efforts expended in learning English for?

In this literature review, how the concept of WTC was developed in the study of communication in the first language, how it was applied to the second language research, and how it was re-conceptualized in an East Asian context will be examined. In addition, the actual studies on the second language learning in the framework of WTC will be presented. Lastly, the future direction in the WTC study in second language acquisition will be discussed.

II. Willingness to Communicate(WTC)

According to McCroskey(e. g. 1997), WTC refers to the probability of engaging in communication when the opportunity is given. In the first language(L 1), WTC is regarded as the stable predisposition to talk, a personal trait ; in particular, the degree of introversion or extroversion. Whether one decides to communicate is a volitional choice that involves cognition. Cognition about human communication is heavily influenced by the personality of the individual, though many situational variables, such as how the person feels that day, what communication the person has had with others recently, who the other person is, what that person looks like, what might be gained or lost through communicating and other demands on the person's time, can strongly influence communicative behavior. Antecedents of WTC are introversion, self-esteem, communication competence, communication apprehension and cultural diversity(McCroskey & Richmond, 1991).

According to McCroskey(1997), Clevenger and Phillips provided the foundation on which McCroskey has built his conceptualizations of WTC, CA, and Self-perceived Communication Competence(SPCC). Clevenger (1959, cited in McCroskey, 1997) summarized the research on stage fright in public speaking. Phillips (1965, 1968, cited in McCroskey, 1997), moving beyond public speaking, recognized that there are some people who avoid communication because they feel they have more to gain from remaining silent than from speaking, which he calls reticence phenomenon. Phillips(1965 cited in McCroskey, 1997)indicated that anxiety was the

primary cause of the reticence phenomenon ; however, Phillips(1968, cited in McCroskey, 1997)pointed out that the major cause of reticence is the individual's lack of communication skills though anxiety may be present.

Foundations of the WTC Construct

Although the earliest origin of WTC was from Phillips' reticence, McCroskey developed the WTC construct from unwillingness to communicate(Burgoon, 1976, cited in McCroskey, 1997), predispositions toward verbal behavior(Mortensen, Arntson, & Lustig, 1977, cited in McCroskey, 1997), and shyness(McCroskey & Richmond, 1982, cited in McCroskey, 1997)

Unwillingness to communicate

Burgoon(1976, cited by McCroskey, 1997)labeled the construct "unwillingness to communicate", which is the predisposition to avoid oral communication. As an operational definition of the construct, Burgoon developed a self-report measure, which was found to include two factors, 'approach-avoidance' and 'reward'. The approach-avoidance factor was correlated with a measure of communication apprehension, interaction with the reward factor was satisfaction with a group of people. The behavioral measure of communication as validating an unwillingness to communicate predisposition was only correlated with the approach-avoidance factor. Instead of providing a general predisposition of unwillingness to communicate, Burgoon's research only confirmed that people fearful or anxious about communication are likely to engage in less communication than others, according to McCroskey(1997).

Predispositions toward verbal behavior

'Predispositions toward verbal behavior' is the term given by Mortensen et al. (1977, cited in McCroskey, 1997)for the phenomenon of consistency in the amount of communication of individual across communication situation that was evidenced by the data using a self-report scale known as the Predispositions toward Verbal Behavior(PVB)scale. McCroskey(1997)argues that the PVB does not function as a general predisposition of unwillingness to communicate, but provides additional indications that the amount of an individual communication is somewhat regular.

Shyness

Leary(1983, cited in McCroskey, 1997)postulated that *shyness* is a construct named 'social anxiety' that is composed of an internally experienced discomfort and

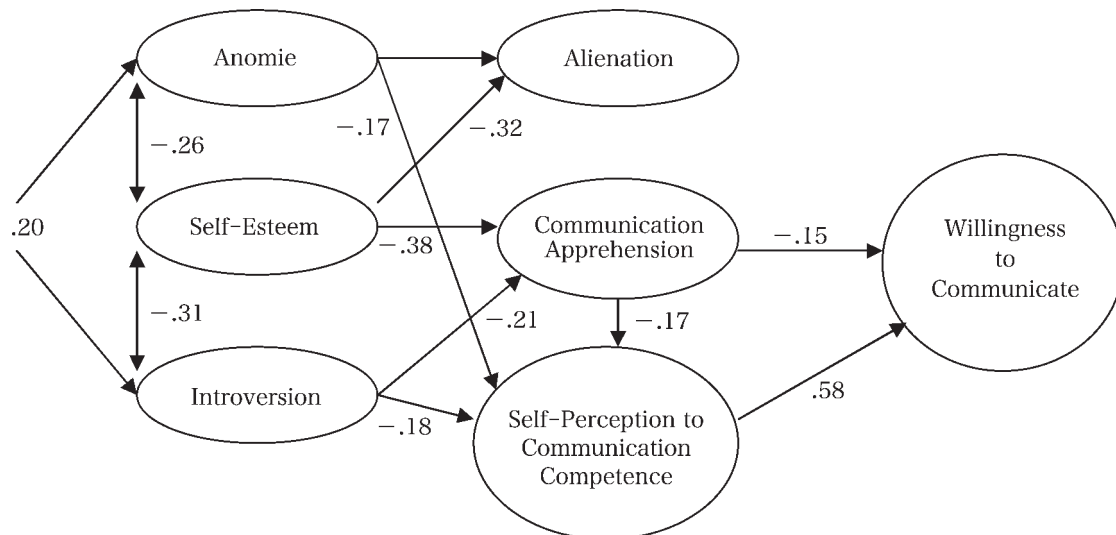


Figure 1 MacIntyre's(1994)causal sequence for predicting WTC using personality-based variables

externally observable behavior. McCroskey and Richmond(1982, cited in McCroskey, 1997), focused on shyness as an externally observable behavior, defining *shyness* as 'the tendency to be timid, reserved, and most specifically, talk less' (p. 460 cited in McCroskey, 1997). The Shyness Scale developed by McCroskey et al. (1981, cited in McCroskey, 1997)called McCroskey Shyness Scale(MSS)can predict an amount of talk and show behavioral tendencies in communication; however it fails to validate the existence of a personality-based predisposition to be unwilling to communicate.

The WTC construct

According to McCroskey and Richmond(1990, cited in McCroskey, 1997), WTC is correlated with introversion, communication apprehension, and self-perceived communication competence and these correlations are found to be present in a variety of cultures. The correlator of WTC with introversion was $-.19$ to $-.43$, with communication apprehension, $-.44$ to $-.52$ and with self-perceived communication competence, $.44$ to $.80$. The two antecedents of WTC scale are communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence.

Communication apprehension (CA)

McCroskey(1997) categorized the original two types of CA's, trait-like CA and situational CA into four types of CA's; (a)trait-like CA, (b)generalized-context CA, (c)person-group CA, and(d)situational CA. However, only two types of CA's were given causes. The etiology of trait-like CA was given two explanations; heredity and environment. Causes of situational CA have two

elements : degree of evaluation and prior history. In terms of the CA effects, CA may have an impact in all three areas of communication learning, these are communication competence, communication skill, and positive communication affect. McCroskey(1997)concluded that High CA is highly associated with ineffective communication.

Self-perceived communication competence (SPCC)

McCroskey(1997)predicted a substantial correlation between self-perception of communication competence and scores on the WTC, and this prediction was confirmed across cultures with positive correlations between self-perceived competence and WTC, ranging from $.44$ in Sweden(McCroskey, Burroughs, Daun, & Richmond, 1990 cited in McCroskey, 1997)to $.80$ in Micronesia(Burroughs & Marie, 1990, cited in McCrosky, 1997).

McCroskey(1997) postulated that WTC, CA and SPCC, which are distinct constructs, are related in predictable ways, adding that WTC is the best predictor of actual communication approach/avoidance behavior, while CA and SPCC may measure the factors that make the major contribution to the prediction of a person's WTC.

MacIntyre(1994)examined how individual difference variables, regarded as determinants of WTC, are inter-related. The personality-based constructs, originally identified by Burgoon(1976, cited in MacIntyre, 1994), i. e., communication apprehension(CA), anomie, alienation, introversion, self-esteem, and perceived communication competence(PCC)were tested using a causal

model (See Figure 1). Results show that WTC was most directly influenced by communication apprehension and perceived communication competence, as McCroskey and associates have suggested (e. g., McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). This means that people are willing to communicate when they are not apprehensive and perceive themselves to be a competent communicator. However, Figure 1 indicates a reduction in CA increases both WTC and PCC but PCC does not reduce CA. In other words, when people are less apprehensive, their perception of communication competence increases and consequently they are more likely to willing to communicate. This causal model also shows that CA and PCC, in turn, were, to some extent, caused by introversion and self-esteem, and anomie. According to Burgoon's work (1976, cited in MacIntyre, 1994), both anomie and alienation directly correlated to WTC but these constructs were not proved to be causal factors to WTC. Furthermore, MacIntyre et al. (1999), examined the hypothesized antecedents such as self-perceived competence and communication apprehension to WTC using a structural equation model with a good fit to the data.

III. WTC in L 2

Some communication experts have applied the WTC research in second or foreign language (L 2) contexts (e. g., McCroskey, Fayer, & Richmond, 1985 ; McCroskey, Gudykunst, & Nishida, 1985) and from cross-cultural perspectives (e. g., Barranclough, Christophel, & McCroskey, 1988 ; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). For instance, McCroskey, Fayer & Richmond (1985) investigated Puerto Rican college students' WTC, with the results indicating that the Puerto Ricans are much less apprehensive about communication in Spanish than are the U. S. students but are much more apprehensive in English. However McCroskey, Gudykunst, & Nishida (1985) found that Japanese students had extremely high CA in communicating in both Japanese and English. The discrepancy in CA between Puerto Ricans and Japanese college students may shed the light on the significance in expanding WTC research into the second language acquisition (SLA) area with cross-cultural consideration. In fact, McCroskey and Richmond (1990) reported some cultural differences in WTC, based on the scores of the instrument developed by McCroskey and Richmond (1987, cited in McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

However, WTC in the second language should be different from in the L 1 among the adult learners in particular. Adult learners of L 2, who are plausibly familiarized with using their L 1, may range from almost no L 2 competence to full L 2 competence, as pointed out in MacIntyre et al. (1998). In the late 1990s, some SLA researchers started to focus on WTC.

MacIntyre and Charos (1996) developed the path model of L 2 WTC, which was modified from MacIntyre (1994). The path model, as shown below, added 'integrativeness', 'attitude', and 'motivation' from Gardner's socio-educational model (See Figure 2). The relationship between affective variables, i. e., attitudes, motivation, perceived competence, and anxiety and their impact on WTC and the actual use measured by the frequency of L 2 communication were investigated. As Figure 2 indicates, significant paths affecting the L 2 communication via WTC were provided from motivation, and perceived communication competence. Both anxiety and integrativeness influence WTC indirectly. Anxiety affects WTC through perceived communication competence and integrativeness affects WTC through motivation. This model was the first model focusing on WTC in L 2.

MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) expanded MacIntyre and Charos' model of L 2 WTC into the heuristic model of L 2 WTC, containing twelve variables in a layered pyramid (See Figure 3). The top four variables are situation-specific and can be treated as a dependent variable gauging WTC as Sick et al. (2000) did. Six variables composing the fourth (motivational propensities) and fifth (affective-cognitive context) layers largely overlap the socio-psychological model developed and modified by Gardner and associates (e. g., Gardner, 1979, 1980, 1985 ; Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972).

The model has basically two structures; one consists of situational factors and the other consists of enduring influences. Situational factors are more immediate in taking an action of communication but situational and may vary in a given context. They are: L 2 use, willingness to communicate, desire to communicate, self-confidence in communicating, and anxiety in communicating. These factors may change in accordance with whom an individual is talking, the topic of the conversation, who is there. Therefore, WTC is measured via these factors. On the other hand, enduring influences include (a) motivational propensities composed of interpersonal

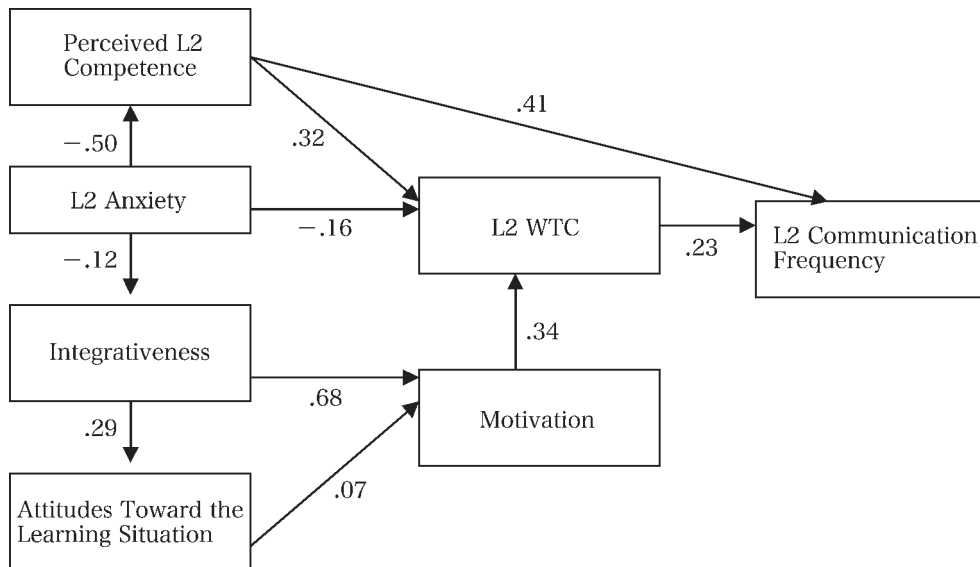


Figure 2 MacIntyre and Charos' (1996) model of L2 Willingness to Communicate

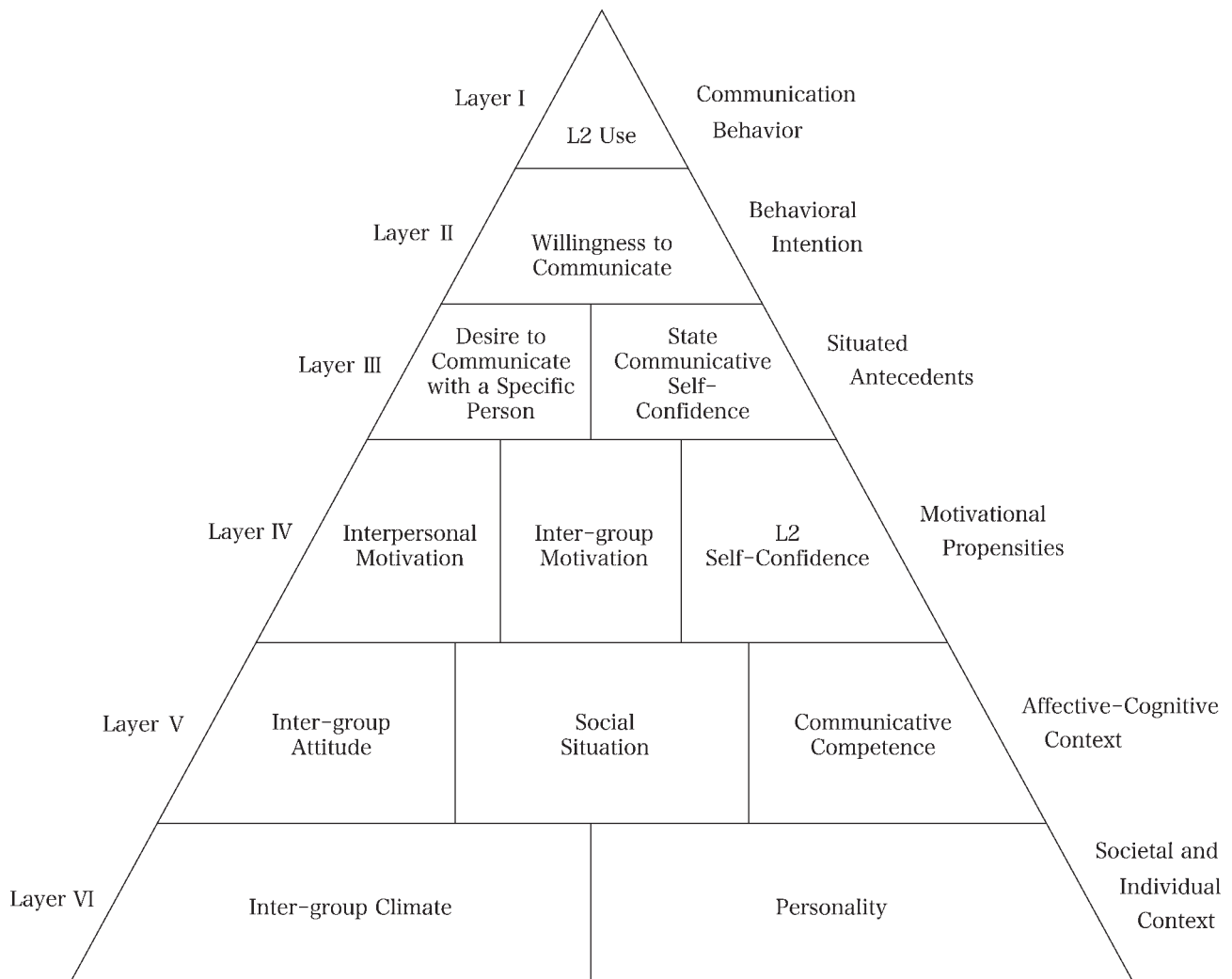


Figure 3 Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC from MacIntyre et al. (1998)

motivation, inter-group motivation, and L 2 self-confidence, (b) affective-cognitive context (which is composed of inter-group attitudes, social situation and communicative competence), and (c) societal and individual context (which is composed of inter-group climate and personality). The details about the MacIntyre et al.'s model (1998) are as follows.

Layer I is communicative behavior, as a result of the complex system of interrelated variables in the lower layers. MacIntyre et al. (1998) propose that the ultimate goal of language learning be to engender the willingness to seek out communication opportunities and WTC itself. WTC in Layer II was defined as the readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons in L 2, including the situational variation, it is different from WTC as the trait-like concept developed by McCroskey et al. (1997). It is also based on the conviction that behavior is strongly predicted by intention or willingness to act. Van de Putte (1991, cited in MacIntyre, 1998) reports a mean correlation of $r = .62$ between intention and behavior. Layer III of situated antecedents of communication consists of (a) the desire to communicate with a specific person and (b) state communication self-confidence. The desire to communicate with a specific person is driven by a combination of inter-individual and inter-group motivations, which involve both affiliation (integrativeness) and control (instrumentality). State communication self-confidence includes (a) state perceived competence and (b) a lack of state anxiety, following the framework offered by Clément (1980) and the results of the path model developed by MacIntyre and Charos (1996). State perceived competence refers to the feeling of the capacity to communicate effectively at a given time; state anxiety refers to the transient feelings of tension and apprehension accompanied by the autonomic nervous system arousal as defined by Spielberger (1983, cited in MacIntyre et al., 1998). Both the desire to interact with a specific person and state self-confidence are regarded as the most immediate determinants of WTC.

The other layers deal with enduring influences or stable individual differences and function as independent variables in analyzing WTC in L 2. Layer IV, termed motivational propensities, consists of (a) interpersonal motivation instigated by either control and affiliation, (b) inter-group motivation derived directly from the group the individuals belong to, and (c) L 2 self-confi-

dence, consisting of the self-evaluation of L 2 skills and language anxiety.

Layer V, termed as the affective and cognitive context, consists of (a) inter-group attitudes, which include integrativeness, fear of assimilation, and motivation to learn the L 2, (b) social situation, and (c) communicative competence.

Integrativeness and fear of assimilation in the category of inter-group attitudes may be opposing forces in the individual depending on the power relations among groups. Five factors that may influence the social situation are the participants, the setting, the purpose, the topic, and the channel of communication. The participants are characterized by age, gender, social class, language proficiency etc.; the settings refers to the location and time where the communication takes place; purpose refers to the goals or intension of communication such as to persuade, to transfer information; the channel of communication involves the medium used for communication such as speaking and writing. Regarding topics, familiarity in the given topic was found to enhance verbal forthcoming, with limited language proficiency overridden (Zuenglar, 1993, cited in MacIntyre et al., 1998). Though McCroskey and associates have used the term 'communication competence', 'communicative competence', coined by Hymes (1972), refers to L 2 proficiency. Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995, cited in MacIntyre, 1998) pointed out five main competencies in communicative competence. The first is linguistic competence; the second is discourse competence; the third is actional competence referring to matching communicative intent with linguistic form; the fourth is sociocultural competence involving knowledge of how to express messages appropriately within a given context; the fifth is strategic competence referring to knowledge of communication strategies by which a speaker may compensate for limited proficiency. The last Layer VI, titled the societal and individual context, involves the interaction of two factors: the society and the individual. The societal context is referred to by intergroup climate, defined with the structural characteristics of the community and the perceptual and affective correlates as used by Gardner and Clément (1990). The individual is referred to by personality. Intergroup context and personality, which may underpin the social distance or harmony between groups, are placed at the bottom of the model as they are thought to

determine the L2 WTC to a lesser degree than other variables.

IV. WTC in L2 in East Asian Contexts

As the heuristic model of MacIntyre et al. indicates, the motivational structure and a given habitus and/or cultural mores must be taken into account in researching on WTC. However, Wen and Clément (2003) argue, that the model is based on research mainly conducted in the western context and proposed some modification of the model according to the Chinese context.

According to Wen and Clément (2003), how to generate students' WTC in order to improve the oral proficiency has been a key issue for English language teaching (ELT) in China, since Chinese students, who are very good at grammar-based written examinations are poor speakers. It is also pointed out that a student-centered communicative approach has been emphasized with the deepening of education reform and the increasing demands for communicative competency, whilst teachers' lectures are believed to be effective for enhancing English proficiency. These societal and cultural features have been observed and shared in Japanese context; therefore it seems relevant to overview the WTC model revised by Wen and Clément (2003) as the exemplar for WTC that may be applied in the Japanese context.

Chinese learners' unwillingness to communicate in public is deeply rooted in two aspects of interpersonal relations: an other-directed self and a submissive way of learning. Out of an other-directed self, face-protected orientation and the insider effect are brought about. Based on Confucianism, the existential reality of self is dialectically related to the family, the community, the nation, and the world (Chai & Chai, 1965, cited in Wen & Clément), from which face-protected orientation may ensue; consequently, the Chinese learners are less likely to be active in communication in L2, being sensitive to the judgment of the public. The insider effect, realized as ingroup-oriented, may generate a certain distance from other members of other groups, which impedes the interaction needed in order to succeed in L2 communication (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000). In terms of submissive ways of learning, passing on knowledge is regarded as a teaching requirement; students may not feel they are learning in a student-centered communicate-

oriented learning (Hu, 2002, cited in Wen & Clément, 2003), which should enhance their WTC in English.

The following figure was proposed by Wen and Clément as their schematic representation of the impact of Chinese cultural values on WTC in L2.

In Wen & Clément's conceptualization, a distinction is made between desire (DC), as a deliberate choice or preference, and willingness (WTC), as a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, based on the belief that the desire does not have to be realized as willingness impeded by traditional social orientation such as face-protected orientation.

At the societal context level, which corresponds to Layer VI in MacIntyre et al's, group cohesiveness and teacher support are posited. In the western culture, group cohesiveness is based on interpersonal attraction among group members, with emotional satisfaction emphasized; on the other hand, in the Chinese setting, it stems from social orientation with the inside relations among ingroup members, engendering a sense of belongingness (Hogg, 1992, cited in Wen & Clément, 2003). Teacher's support, embodied as teacher involvement and immediacy, is regarded as an important factor in this Chinese model.

Personal factors include risk-taking and tolerance of ambiguity, both of which are affectively related and culturally significant in the Chinese context. Risk-taking is defined as 'any consciously, or non-consciously controlled behavior with a perceived uncertainty about its outcome' (Trimpop, 1994; 9, quoted in Wen & Clément, 2003). Because of the cultural tendency to protect face in China, the relationship between desire to communicate and WTC is partially determined by how much the learners will accept the risk of losing face. Though successful language learning necessitates tolerance of ambiguity (Brown, 1987, cited in Wen & Clément, 2003), Chinese students are less tolerant of ambiguity, resulting from their rule-dominated and face-protection orientation.

Motivational orientation has affiliation and task-orientation, while 'affiliation' and 'control' are the components in the original model by MacIntyre et al.'s model, since this model focuses on the classroom settings. Affective perception, which corresponds to the affective and cognitive context in the fifth layer of MacIntyre et al.'s model, is regarded as directly involved in determin-

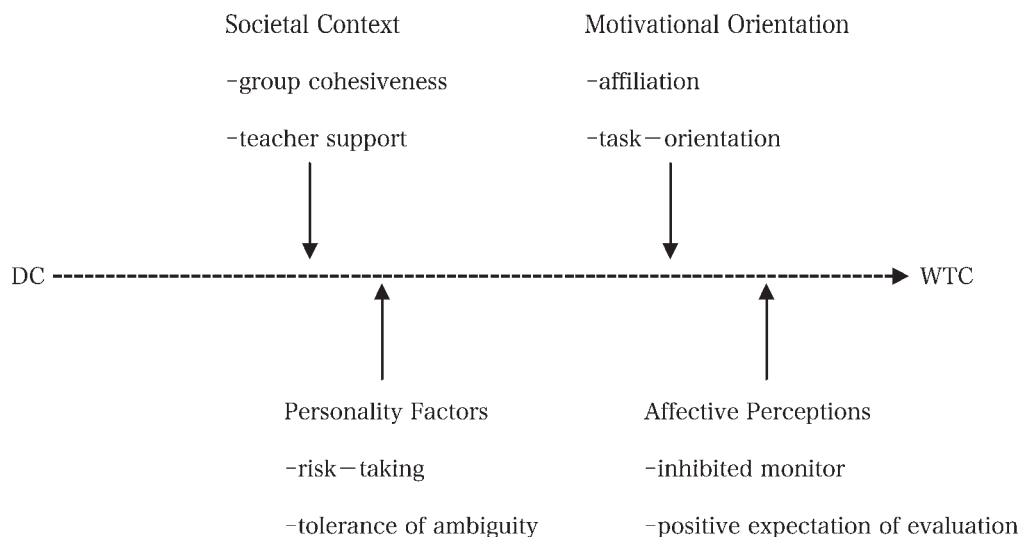


Figure 4 Variables moderating the relation between DC and WTC in the Chinese EFL classroom (Wen & Clément, 2003)

ing WTC, based on the belief that language learners are watchful and defensive in communication in an L2 where much attention is paid to public verdict. Inhibited monitor and an expectation of positive evaluation are designated as the components in this category. An inhibited monitor entails reduced self-consciousness and consequently, reduced anxiety or apprehension. Positive expectations of evaluation would decrease anxiety (Gudykunst, 1993, cited in Wen & Clément, 2003).

In a different format from the MacIntyre et al.'s model, this modified model of WTC within a Chinese cultural context suggests the variables moderate the relation between DC and WTC as shown in Figure 4. As stated earlier, similar features to these factors can be observed in Japanese cultural mores, therefore, this model may well be plausibly tested in the Japanese context, as well as the original model by MacIntyre et al.'s.

V. Empirical Studies on WTC in L2

A great deal of research has been written about second or foreign language learners' motivational structure in the framework or model of Gardner and his associates and the modified or expanded version from Gardner et al. (e.g., Brown et al., 2001, Kimura et al., 2003). Many studies focusing on language learning anxiety in the Asian context are also available (e.g., Spielmann & Randofsky, 2001, Kondo, 2003). However,

research focusing on WTC in the second language has not been conducted yet.

Among the few studies on WTC in an L2, McIntyre et al. (2001) found that social support, particularly from friends, was associated with higher levels of WTC outside the classroom but played less of a role inside the classroom. MacIntyre et al. (2002) investigated second language communication among students in a junior high French immersion program. The effects of variables on WTC was examined with the results indicating both age and sex influence L2 WTC, perceived competence and language anxiety. Yashima (2002), in the only comprehensive research on WTC in L2 in the Japanese context, examined the relationship among the variables that are believed to affect Japanese learners' WTC in English, using the heuristic model by MacIntyre et al. and Gardner's socio-educational model as a basic framework. The results in the structural equation model show that international posture influences motivation; in turn, motivation influences proficiency in English and self-confidence; self-confidence in L2 communication led to WTC in the L2. Besides, a direct path from international posture to WTC in the L2 was significant. Yashima (2004) investigated the effect of home-stay experience on WTC in the L2. Lastly, MacIntyre et al. (2003) examined the effects of prior immersion experience on WTC, using samples of both immersion and non-immersion groups of college students, finding positive relations between immersion experience and WTC

in the L 2.

VI. Concluding Remarks

To investigate the underlying system of WTC in English is the most urgently required research, considering the vast amount of criticism about the inappropriate level of communicative competence of the general Japanese population. It is an ironic situation to recall the fact that The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has emphasized fostering communicative competence in English education (1989, 1999). Yashima (2000, 2002, 2004) has probed the motivational structure in the Japanese English education focusing on WTC; however, Wen's reconceptualized model has not been employed in either study. Based on Yashima's research, more should be done on WTC in English in the Japanese context in order to explore ways to enhance the Japanese WTC in English through increasing the SPCC and decreasing the AC, taking into account cultural behavior as posited by Wen et al. (2003).

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第二言語におけるコミュニケーション意欲

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【要旨】 英語でのコミュニケーションに対して学習者の抵抗感が異なるのは何故だろうか。コミュニケーションへの意欲 (WTC) という概念は、母語でコミュニケーションを図る場合の個人差を分析するものとして生みだされたものであるが、昨今第二言語でのコミュニケーションを分析する場合にも重要な要素であるとして注目を集めるようになってきている。当総説では、まず、WTC の概念がコミュニケーション研究においてどのような経過をへて顕在してきたかを考察する。その上で、WTC が第二言語習得研究において学際的な概念化されたモデルと、更にそのモデルを中国の社会環境を考慮に入れて改変したモデルを解説する。最後に、WTC が実際に第二言語コミュニケーションの学習者の間でどのように重要な要素となっているかを検証した研究を概観する。コミュニケーション懸念 (CA) とコミュニケーションの自己評価 (SPCC) が特に WTC に重要な要因となっていることが検証されている。
