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**The Impact of the Willingness to Communicate  
on EFL Learners' Speaking Performance inside  
the Classroom:  
The Case of Third Year LMD Students of English  
at Guelma University.**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Anglophonic Languages Literatures  
and Civilizations.

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## *Dedications*

*To the soul of my parents,*

*To my lovely sisters Sarah and Dounia,*

*To the one I love and I will love forever.*

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## **Abstract**

The main goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to use this language appropriately in real situations. In an EFL context, learners are highly motivated to study English to become fluent speakers for many reasons, mainly studying abroad, increasing job opportunities, and travelling. However, in the classroom there is a prevailing phenomenon of the silent majority versus the speaking minority. Thus, this study is intended to investigate the extent to which EFL learners' speaking ability is affected by their willingness to communicate (WTC) inside the classroom. Moreover, it seeks to identify and analyze the internal and external factors behind the students' reticence to speak in a real classroom context. For that, a case study was conducted with a sample of 70 third year LMD students, and oral expression teachers at the English department of English Language and Letters in Guelma University. The students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview are the main data collection tools used to serve the present work. The analysis of the findings revealed the significant relationship between the students' willingness to communicate and their speaking performance. Finally, the study is concluded by suggesting some pedagogical recommendations for EFL learners and teachers to raise awareness about the concept of willingness to communicate, and show them its significant role in developing the speaking skill.

## **List of Abbreviations**

CA: Communication apprehension

ELT: English Language Teaching

FL: Foreign language

L1: First language

L2: Second language

LMD: License Master Doctorate

Q: Question

SLA: Second language acquisition

SPCC: Self-perceived communication competence

WTC: Willingness to communicate

%: Percentage

## List of Tables

<b>Table 01:</b> Students' Age .....	44
<b>Table 02:</b> Students' Gender .....	45
<b>Table 03:</b> Students' Years of studying English .....	45
<b>Table 04:</b> Students' Choices in Studying English .....	46
<b>Table 05:</b> Students' Level in EFL .....	46
<b>Table 06:</b> Teacher and Students' Amount of Interaction in the Classroom .....	47
<b>Table 07:</b> Students' Classification of the Four Skills .....	48
<b>Table 08:</b> Students' Difficulties When Speaking inside the Classroom .....	48
<b>Table 09:</b> Students' justification of the difficulties they face when speaking in the classroom .....	49
<b>Table 10:</b> Students' Preferable Learning Situation .....	49
<b>Table 11:</b> Students' Opinions about Classroom Oral Presentation .....	50
<b>Table 12:</b> Students' Opinions about Classroom Oral Participation .....	50
<b>Table 13:</b> Students' justification of their opinions concerning the classroom oral participation .....	51
<b>Table 14:</b> Teacher' Impact on the Students' WTC in the Classroom.....	52
<b>Table 15:</b> Students' Avoidance of the Classroom Participation Because of the Module.....	53
<b>Table 16:</b> Classmates Influence on Each Other's WTC.....	53

**Table 17:** Students' Justification of How their Classmates Affect their WTC .....54

## List of Figures

<b>Figure01:</b> Types of Speaking .....	8
<b>Figure02:</b> Components of Communicative Competence .....	16
<b>Figure 03:</b> MacIntyre's (1994) Causal Modal for Predicting WTC by Using Personality-Based Variables .....	30
<b>Figure 04 :</b> MacIntyre et al's (1998) Heuristic WTC Modal .....	32



## Table of Contents

<b>General Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Statement of the Problem .....	1
2. Aims of the Study.....	2
3. The Research Questions .....	3
4. Hypotheses .....	3
5. Significance of the Study .....	3
6. The Research Methodology .....	3
7. Structure of the Dissertation.....	3

### **Chapter One: An Overview of the Speaking Skill**

Introduction .....	5
1.1. Overview of speaking.....	5
1.2. Definition of speaking .....	6
1.3. Component of speaking.....	6
1.3.1. Comprehension.....	7
1.3.2. Grammar.....	7
1.3.3. Vocabulary .....	7
1.3.4. Pronunciation .....	7
1.3.5. Fluency .....	8

1.4. Types of classroom speaking performance .....	8
1.4.1. Imitative .....	9
1.4.2. Intensive .....	9
1.4.3. Responsive .....	9
1.4.4. Interactive.....	9
1.5. Speaking in FL classrooms .....	10
1.6. Teaching Speaking Skill.....	10
1.7. Characteristics of successful Teaching Speaking.....	11
1.7.1. Learners Talk a Lot .....	12
1.7.2. Participation is Even.....	12
1.7.3. Motivation is High .....	12
1.7.4. Language is of an Acceptable Level .....	12
1.8. Methods of teaching speaking for EFL learners .....	12
1.8.1. The Grammar Translation Method.....	13
1.8.2. The Direct Method .....	13
1.8.3. The Audio-Lingual Method .....	14
1.8.4. The Total Physical Response .....	14
1.8.5. The Silent Way.....	15
1.8.6. The Natural Approach.....	15

1.9. Communicative Competence .....	15
1.9.1. Grammatical Competence .....	16
1.9.2. Discourse competence.....	17
1.9.3. Sociolinguistic competence.....	17
1.9.4. Strategic Competence.....	17
1.10. The different roles of the teacher in communicative approach .....	18
1.11. Factors affecting the speaking ability inside the classroom.....	20
1.11.1. Performance Conditions .....	20
1.11.2. Affective Factors .....	20
1.11.3. Listening Skill .....	20
1.11.4. Feedback during Speaking Activities.....	20
1.11.5. Students' Speaking Problems .....	21
1.12. The importance of speaking skill .....	22
Conclusion.....	23

## **Chapter Two: The Willingness to Communicate**

Introduction .....	24
2.1. Overview of the WTC .....	24
2.2. WTC in the Native Language Communication.....	26
2.3. Factors Influencing WTC in L1 Contexts .....	27

2.3.1 Communication Apprehension.....	27
2.3.2 Self-Perceived Communication Competence.....	29
2.4. WTC in the Second Language Communication.....	31
2.5. WTC in EFL Classroom.....	34
2.6. Factors Affecting EFL Student’s WTC.....	36
2.6.1 .Individual Factors.....	36
2.6.2. Social Contextual Factors.....	38
2.7. Speaking and the WTC .....	39
Conclusion.....	40

**Chapter Three: Description and Analysis of the Students’ Questionnaire and the Teachers’ Interview**

Introduction .....	41
3.1 Means of Data Collection.....	41
3.2. The population.....	42
3.2.1.The students.....	42
3.2.2. The teachers.....	42
3.3. Description of the students’ questionnaire .....	43
3.3.1. Section One: Background Information (Q1-Q5) .....	43
3.3.2. Section Two: Students’ Attitude toward Speaking in the Classroom (Q6-Q13).....	44

43.3.3. Section Three: Factors Influencing Students' Willingness to Communicate inside the Classroom (Q14-Q18 .....	44
3.4. The Analysis of the Results.....	44
3.4.1. Section One: Background Information .....	44
3.4.2. Section Two: Students' Attitude toward Classroom Oral Participation .....	47
3.4.2. Section Three: Factors Influencing Students' WTC inside the Classroom.....	51
3.5. Summary of the Results .....	54
3.6. Description of the Teachers' Interview .....	55
3.7. Analysis Teachers' Interview.....	57
3.8. Summary of the Results .....	60
Conclusion.....	60
General Conclusion .....	61
Reference List .....	64
Appendices.....	

## General Introduction

### 1. Statement of the Problem

Effective EFL teaching and learning is becoming increasingly an important task to do because of the global spread of this language. Speaking is the skill that deserves more attention among the other skills for EFL learners. However, many English teachers may experience the same situation in which students are unwilling to speak and interact appropriately in the classroom, due to many internal and external factors that hinder students from speaking. As a result, MacIntyre, Clément, Dornyei and Noels (1987) have introduced a recent notion called: language learners' willingness to communicate. The concept of willingness to communicate originated in the area of native/first language communication. However, recent studies on willingness to communicate have shifted the research interest from first language to second or foreign language communication domains.

The primary goal of teaching and learning a foreign language is to make learners able to communicate fluently and accurately. In EFL classrooms, when the teacher encounters the students with many opportunities to practice and use the target language, some of them speak up and express themselves freely, while the others prefer to keep silent even when they possess high linguistic competencies. Thus, students' unwillingness to communicate inside the classroom can be an essential factor that affects their speaking skill.

The willingness to communicate is a recent notion that emerged after the endeavors of Burgoon (1976) on the concept of the "Unwillingness to communicate" and the study of Mortensen, Arnston and Lusting (1977) on predisposition toward verbal behavior, and the one of McCroskey and Richmond (1982) on shyness. It was further found by MacIntyre, Bahin, and Clément (1999) the willingness to communicate in L1 communication captures both the personality and the situation, that may totally differ from person to person, and situation to situation. The studies conducted by Yashima et al.(2004), McCroskey (1997), and Wen and

Clément (2003) have investigated the relationship that exists between the learners' willingness to communicate and many affective variables such as; motivation, attitude, language anxiety, gender...etc. According to Alemi et al. (2001) those learners who are generally able to communicate and get high degrees in the proficiency tests, are more willing to initiate communication than the others who are unwilling to speak up and achieve high scores. In an EFL Iranian context, Pashmforoosh (2001) attempted to explore the relationship between the students' willingness to communicate, the language anxiety, and the language proficiency. That later found that there exists a relationship between all of them.

Considering the above mentioned conducted studies in this area, it seems that no clear study has pointed out the direct relationship between the learners' willingness to communicate and their speaking performance inside the classroom.

## **2. Aims of the Study**

The students' reluctance to engage in the classroom oral participation is a very common problem faced by many language teachers, so, through the present study at the English department of Guelma University, we aim at investigating the impact of the willingness to communicate on EFL learners' speaking performance inside the classroom. Moreover, to shed the light on the affective factors behind students' hindrance from speaking in the classes, and then to suggest some pedagogical recommendations that may help in increasing the students' willingness to communicate and develop their speaking skill.

## **3. The Research Questions**

The main questions explored in the study are:

1. How can the learners' speaking ability be influenced by their willingness to communicate?
2. How can teachers increase or decrease the learners' willingness to communicate?

#### **4. Hypotheses**

Based on the above questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

1. There may be an impact of the willingness to communicate on EFL learners' speaking ability inside the classroom.
2. There may be internal and external factors that influence EFL learners' willingness to communicate inside the classroom.

#### **5. Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study lies in the contribution to a better understanding of the nature and role of WTC in the development of speaking skill, and it provides EFL teachers and learners with useful recommendations that may help in increasing students' willingness to communicate and then improve the speaking performance inside the classroom.

#### **6. The Research Methodology**

The study will be conducted at the English department of Guelma University, in which a sample will be taken randomly from Third-year LMD students and teachers of Oral Expression of the same level. A questionnaire for the students and an interview for the teachers are going to be the main data collection tools used in the present study.

#### **7. Structure of the Dissertation**

In order to accomplish the objectives of the dissertation, this study will be arranged into three main chapters, in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. The first chapter introduced by a general overview about the speaking skill: definition, types, importance, some methods of teaching the speaking, the difficulties that EFL students experience when speaking in the classroom, and the role of the teacher to overcome these difficulties. The second chapter: deals with the foundation of the willingness to communicate construct, the willingness to communicate in L1 and L2 communications, it also seeks to present the different factors influencing EFL learners' willingness to communicate, then the



relationship between the speaking skill and the willingness to communicate. Finally, chapter three will be concerned with the description of the sample population, the research methods used in the present study, and the analysis of the obtained results. Moreover, it will provide some solutions for EFL learners and teachers in order to develop the students' speaking skill through raising their willingness to communicate inside the classroom.

## **Chapter One**

### **An Overview of the Speaking Skill**

#### **Introduction**

The speaking skill plays an important role in the area of teaching and learning a foreign language among listening, reading and writing skills. Through speaking, one can express his own feelings, thoughts and ideas and communicate properly with others, but teachers of EFL can agree on that there are some students who have the willingness to communicate, while others are unwilling to speak the target language.

This chapter is concerned with the speaking process, it deeply describe and focuses on the concepts of speaking and its components, the types of classroom speaking performance, and teaching the speaking skill, in addition to, the different language teaching methods which was set to help EFL learners to communicate properly among them; communicative competence and its components. Then it tackles the factors that affect the speaking skill inside the classroom.

#### **1.1. Overview of Speaking**

Having a good idea seems interesting, but having the ability to properly transfer this idea is much more important. Speaking is a crucial process in communication, it helps in thinking, shaping, and organizing words and thoughts in our minds by which we interact to each other.

Inside the classroom, speaking is considered as the main tool through which teachers and learners express themselves, exchange ideas and opinions, asking about unclear points to achieve certain goals. As a matter of fact the speaking skill, besides reading, writing, and listening skills seems intuitively as the most important and the frequently used language skill. As Rivers (1981) states, speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing in our communication.

## **1.2. Definition of Speaking**

“Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts”. (Chaney,1998, p.13). Speaking is a crucial skill in communication; it has a lot to do with constructing and transferring meaning whether by using verbal (words) and non-verbal symbols (gestures) in different contexts, to convey the intended idea.

Speaking is defined as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information, its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, the participants and the purposes of speaking (Burns & Joyce 1997). For learners, in order to properly communicate in the FL, they have to master well the speaking skill. Accordingly, speaking ability is one’s ability to express, interact, and appropriately communicate in any given situation, through the use of different aspects of language as such; grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation guided by the correct rules of spoken language. Furthermore, speaking is one of the central elements of the interaction process by which an individual alternately takes the roles of a speaker and a listener to communicate information, ideas, thoughts, express their feelings and emotions to each others through the use of oral language (Sister, 2004, p.7). So, in order to be a good communicator, the speaker in his turn has to firstly construct a clear meaning that will be delivered to help the others easily grasp what have said to them.

## **1.3. Component of Speaking**

Speaking is a productive skill that requires the mastery of its components, in order to be a good communicator. For that Syakur (2007,p.4) states, comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency are the basic components of the speaking skill.

### **1.3.1. Comprehension**

Comprehension is one's ability to understand and process the various stretches of discourse, in order to deliver meaningful messages that can be clearly understood by the receiver, and to avoid misunderstanding. In the same vein, (Cohen, 2005, p.51) states, comprehension refers to the fact that participants fully understand the nature of the research project, even when procedures are complicated and entail risks.

### **1.3.2. Grammar**

Grammar refers to the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units, (Greenbaum & Nelson, 2002, p.1) . Moreover, Harmer (2001,p.12) states, the grammar of a language is the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language .Grammar then is the basis which the students need to construct and form a meaningful structure of spoken and written utterances and sentences.

### **1.3.3. Vocabulary**

One cannot communicate effectively or express their ideas both in oral or written form if they do not have sufficient vocabulary, without grammar very little can be conveyed (Willid in Moras, 2007, p.5). Vocabulary can be defined as knowing the meaning of words that we are communicating with, between each other. Hence, it is considered as the core of an effective communication.

### **1.3.4. Pronunciation**

In an oral production, the term pronunciation refers to the way in which the speaker pronounces the words (Harmer, 2009). For Louma (2003), pronunciation is the sound of speech that “can refer to many features of the speech stream such as; individual's sound, pitch, volume, speed, pausing, stress and intonation”. (p.11). Pronunciation refers to the way

in which utterances are produced, it may include different aspects as such; pitch of voice, rhythm, and intonation.

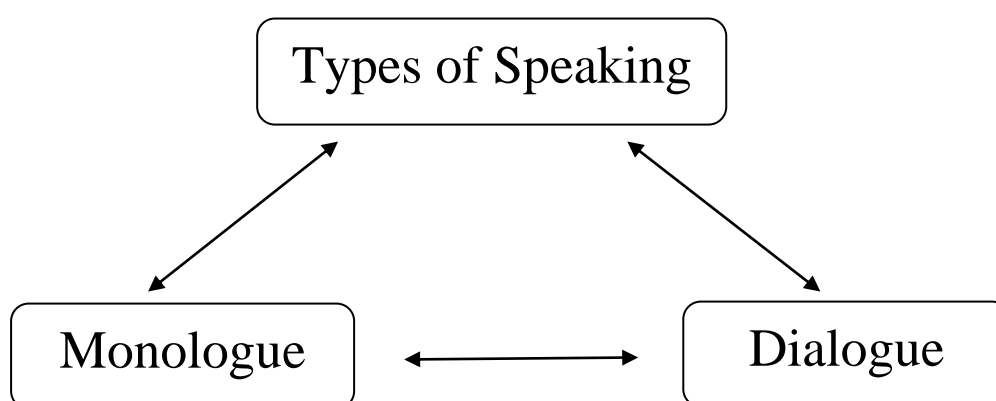
### 1.3.5. Fluency

Richards (2006) defines fluency as the natural language use, which despite limitations in the communicative competence, the speaker engages in an interaction that maintains an understandable and current communication. In the same context, CEFRL (2001) defines as the ability to articulate, and keep communication going. Hence, fluency can be defined as looking as natural as possible when using a language.

One cannot say that speaking is only an oral production of the language, but it is the production of meaningful sentences (comprehension); knowing the right meaning of the words (vocabulary); arranging those words in the correct structure (grammar); sounding as a native speaker (pronunciation); and interacting naturally as much as possible (fluency).

### 1.4. Types of Classroom Speaking Performance

Speaking is a process by which individuals use in order to achieve a particular goal, however, the goal of speaking depends mainly on the type of speaking. Brown (2001:251) classifies the types into two basic categories as the figure bellow:



**Figure01: Types of Speaking**

In dialogue, when there is an interaction between two or more persons, it can be divided into social interaction (interpersonal), or for the purpose of transfer the truth and facts

(transactional). While in monologue, the speaker interacts with people in long speech without any interruption from them such as; reading, lecturer, news broadcast ...etc.

In the classroom context, Brown also provides us with types of classroom speaking performance, they are:

#### **1.4.1. Imitative**

A simple type of speaking in which the student is exposed to a piece of discourse, and then he tries to imitate what he have heard, it is not considered as a meaningful interaction but it just focuses on a specific element of language .

#### **1.4.2 Intensive**

It is a type of speaking performance in which the student produces short stretches of language, in order to demonstrate competence in some aspects of language (intonation, stress, rhythm...) there is a slight difference between this type and the imitative one.

#### **1.4.3. Responsive**

It as a kind of short interaction between the teacher and the students, they interact collaboratively, ask about unclear points, clarify confusion and ambiguity, respond to each other at a limited level of very short conversations.

#### **1.4.4. Interactive**

As its name shows, it is an interaction between the speaker and the listener, it may include multiple exchanges and multiple participants. Interaction can take the form of a transaction which has the purpose of exchanging factual information, or an interactional exchange for the purpose of maintaining social relationships.

#### **1.4.5. Extensive**

Extensive speaking is considered as the most advanced type of oral production, during which the opportunity is given more to the speaker to talk for a long period of time, while the

opportunity for the listener to interact is highly limited. Also the language here should be more formal than the other types of speaking.

### **1.5. Speaking in FL Classrooms**

Learning a foreign language requires the mastery of the four skills, but unlike the listening, reading, and writing, speaking is considered as a big challenge and a measure for learners to handle an interaction. Louma (2004) states that "...the ability to speak in a foreign language is at the very heart of what it means to be able to use a foreign language". (p.5). This implies that using the speaking skill while learning a foreign language is considered as an advanced level for the learners.

In an EFL classroom, the majority of learners measure their proficiency in the foreign language in their ability to properly speak this language, according to (Ur, 1984): "Many if not most foreign language learners are interested in learning to speak" (p.120) that is why to expect a high oral achievement from the learners, the focus should be more on enhancing the speaking skill, and much more attention should be given to the learners who are anxious when speaking a foreign language, unlike their desire to listen, read and write this language. In addition, the light must be shed on the methods of teaching and the psychological factors that may have a negative impact on the EFL learners' speaking performance inside the classroom.

### **1.6. Teaching Speaking Skill**

Teaching speaking implies teaching the students how to express themselves, communicate their needs, interact with each other in different situations and influence the others. For that, it is necessary for the teacher to have full understanding of what he is about to transmit to the students. According to Hornby (1995:37) teaching means giving instruction, knowledge and skill to a person, while speaking means to make use of words in an ordinary speech. So teaching speaking is to give the learners the appropriate instructions in order to speak and communicate effectively.

The primary goal of teaching speaking is to make the learners able to speak the target language, they should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They must try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary and to observe the social and cultural rules that are applied in each communication situation (Bunkart,1998:2). Then in teaching speaking, there are some principles that the teacher should be aware of, according to Nunan (2003:54-56) they are:  
To be aware of the difference between the second language and the foreign language in the learning context.

To give students chances for practice to reach both fluency and accuracy.

To provide opportunity for students to talk by using group work or pair work.

To plan speaking tasks that involve negotiation of meaning.

To design classroom activities that involve guidance and practice in both transactional and interactional speaking.

So, based on the explanation above, it can be inferred that being aware of the principles of teaching speaking and relating them to the teaching materials inside the classroom, would mainly make students connect them with their speaking ability and become good communicators.

### **1.7. Characteristics of a Successful Teaching of Speaking**

Teaching is not an easy task to do; especially teaching speaking can be much more difficult. It can be evaluated through the degree to which learners are fluent enough in speaking the target language or not. Brown (2001:270) says, spoken language is easy to perform, but in some cases it is difficult, in order that students can carry out the successful speaking, they must have some characteristics of successful speaking activities inside the classroom such as:



### **1.7.1. Learners Talk a Lot**

Activities given to students inside the classroom are basically related to how much they speak, this is an obvious mark to the advanced level of the speaking skill.

### **1.7.2. Participation is Even**

Classroom interaction should not be dominated by just few talkative active students, all the students have to get the opportunity to speak and make their own contributions to the topics.

### **1.7.3. Motivation is High**

Students should not speak inside the classroom only because they are obliged, or to avoid harsh comments and judgment, but they have to be intrinsically interested in the topics to achieve the tasks' objectives.

### **1.7.4. Language is of an Acceptable Level**

It is necessary for the students to make their own contributions that are relevant to the topics, and of an acceptable level of language accuracy. Those are the characteristics of successful speaking which can be a parameter for the teacher to teach speaking.

## **1.8. Methods of Teaching Speaking for EFL Learners**

The main reason of learning English language is to be able to communicate in real life situations, due to the rapid technological development, English language is considered now as an international language and the main tool people from all over the world can use to communicate with each other. It can also help in finding a job, improving education through studying abroad and in traveling opportunities. J. Baker and H. Westrup (2003, p.5) state that "a student who can speak English well may have greater chance for further education, of finding employment and gaining promotion". That is, the primary goal of teaching speaking in an EFL context is to improve the learners 'communicative skills. For that many scholars have suggested methods to support teaching speaking for EFL learners are; the Grammar

Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, the Total Physical Response, the Silent Way and the Natural Approach.

### **1.8.1. The Grammar Translation Method**

A traditional method of foreign language teaching dating back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's, it emerged to oppose the classical method of Latin and Greek (Brown,2008:18). The basis of this method is on the grammatical rules as a main focus for translating from the second language to the native language. According to (Prator and Celce Murcia, 1979 cited in Brown, 2000:3) the main principles of this method are:

1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language.
2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words.
3. Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
4. Elaborate explanation of grammar are always provided.
5. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

### **1.8.2. The Direct Method**

This method came to oppose the Grammar Translation Method in the twentieth century. (Harmer, 2001:21). The main focus of this method is that the second language should be taught and learnt in the same way as the first language. It is based on the use of interaction and communication between students and the neglect of translation between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> language (Ibid: 21). According to Richard and Roger (1989: 9 -10) the main principles of the direct method are summarized as follows:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully traded progression, organized around question and answer exchanges between teachers and students in small intensive classes.

4. Grammar was taught inductively.
5. New teaching points were taught modeling and practice.
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration objects and pictures, abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
7. Both speaking and listening comprehension were taught.
8. Concrete pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.

### **1.8.3. The Audio-Lingual Method**

This method took its main concern from the behaviorist view; it focuses on the habit formation in learning a second language (Harmer, 2001: 79). Learners could be trained through a system of reinforcement. The correct response would be praised (reward), while the incorrect response would be punished. Moreover the main focus of this method is on using drills to form habits (Ibid: 79). The main characteristics of this method are:

1. Dependence on mimicry and memorization of set of phrases.
2. Teaching structural patterns by means of repetitive drills.
3. No grammatical explanation.
4. The use of various types and visual aids.
5. Immediate reinforcements of correct responses (Richard and Rodgers, 2001: 156,157).

### **1.8.4. The Total Physical Response**

The Total Physical Response emerged in 1977 by the scholar James Asher, this method of language teaching focuses on the physical actions in teaching the foreign language. According to Brown (2000:30) the main characteristics of this method are:

1. Focus on the listening skill more than speaking skill.
2. Utilize the imperative mood such as; open the window, close the door.
3. Focus on the meaning more than the form.
4. Reduce learning stress.

### **1.8.5. The Silent Way**

It was founded by Caled Gattegno in 1963, it emphasizes on the cognitive aspect then the affective one.(Brown, 2000: 28). Richards and Rogers (1986:99) summarized the theory of learning behind the silent way as follows:

1. Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learnt.
2. Learning is facilitated by accompanying/ mediating physical objects.
3. Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned.

### **1.8.6. The Natural Approach**

The Natural Approach was proposed by Krashan and Terrell in 1983, it focuses on the comprehensible input provided by the teacher to facilitate the acquisition of the second language. In the Natural Approach students should follow the three main stages:

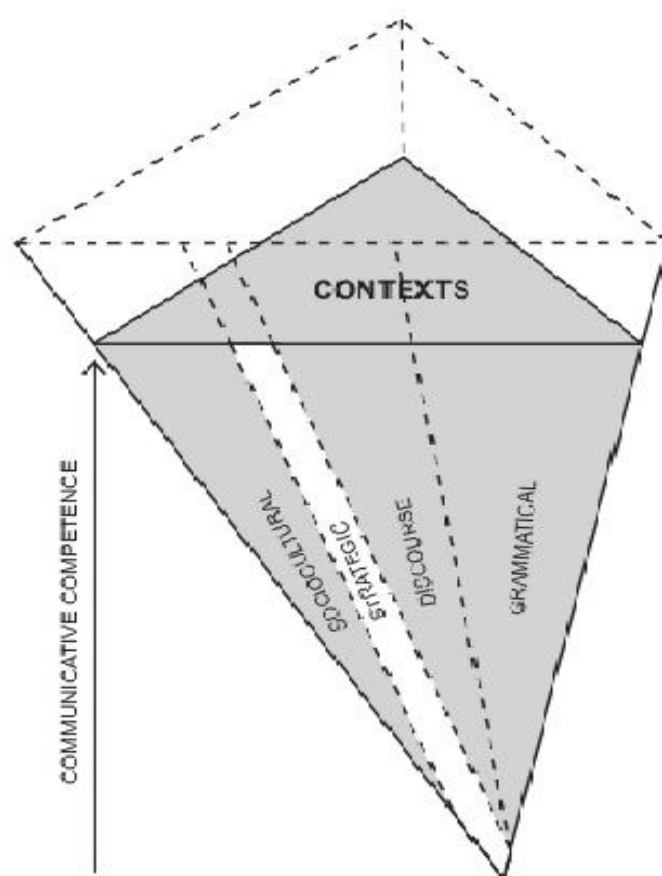
1. The preproduction stage: in this stage foreign students develop their speaking skill.
2. Early production stage: in this stage the students straggle with language and teachers should focus on the meaning not the form; the teacher should not correct errors in this stage.
3. The speech emergent stage: in this stage students develop their speaking skill and their speech by involving them in role plays, dialogues...(Brown, 2000:31)

All the above methods were established as a support to help the EFL learners to communicate effectively by using the target language, but most of them seem failed to achieve the primary goal. So a new approach stands to be a different one in the field of ELT to develop learners' communicative competence.

## **1.9. Communicative Competence**

The term “communicative competence” was first coined by the sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1966) describing the art of communicating. According to Brown (1994, p.227) communicative competence is “the aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and

interpret messages and negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts”. (Cited in B.L Teaver & J.E Willis, 2004, p.5). In other words, learners have to fully understand the sociolinguistics and conversational rules of language. The main concern of the communicative competence is that learning a language successfully involves communication rather than just memorizing a series of rules. Hymes states that the speaker needs to communicate the language and to be able to use it according to the sociocultural environment, imply that the speaker of the FL has to use the target language in a specific context. Canale and Swain (1980) and Savignon conceived communicative competence in terms of four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.



**Figure02: Components of Communicative Competence**

### 1.9.1. Grammatical Competence

Brown states that the grammatical competence “encompasses knowledge of

lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics and phonology (Brown, 2007; in Canale and Swain, 1980: 29). In other words, the knowledge of grammar rules, lexis, syntax, phonetics and vocabulary of the target language and the ability to use them.

### **1.9.2. Discourse competence**

According to Brown (2007:220) discourse competence “the ability to connect sentences ... and to form meaningful whole out of a series utterances” In other words; the ability to understand the context and to know how to link utterances of language to make coherent whole and meaningful texts.

### **1.9.3. Sociolinguistic competence**

It helps the speakers to be “contextually appropriate” (Hedge, 2000:50).

This means the knowledge of how to express messages in accordance with the relationship between the speaker, the listener, the topic, and the setting.

### **1.9.4. Strategic Competence**

According to Brown (2007:220) discourse competence “the ability to connect sentences ... and to form meaningful whole out of a series utterances” In other words; the ability to understand the context and to know how to link utterances of language to make coherent whole and meaningful texts.

The speaking skill in particular is of paramount importance among the other skill, it can be affected by everything in the classroom. The different teaching methods stated above, can be effectively adopted and applied by the teacher while teaching students the speaking skill, in order to help the EFL to raise their desire and willingness to communicate, that mainly leads to their development in the speaking skill.

### **1.10. The Different Roles of the Teacher in the Communicative Approach**

The roles of the teacher are fundamental during the teaching process, the effectiveness of a teacher can be seen in the enhancement of his learners' level, which mainly depends on his behavior inside the classroom (role) according to the various types of activities (nature of activity). In the traditional classrooms, the teacher only explains the content and transmits the knowledge to the students, communicatively speaking, the teacher should play different roles while managing his class in order to achieve high goals. He has to interact with the students, giving them feedback and comments, provide for them the opportunity to speak collaboratively. Hedge Tricia (2000: 26) identifies the important roles the teachers can play:

As controller in eliciting nationality words; as assessor of accuracy as students try to pronounce the words; as corrector of pronunciation; as organizer in giving instructions of the pair work, initiating it, monitoring it, and organizing feedback ; as promoter while students are working together and as resource if students need help with words and structures during the pair work.

#### **1. Controller**

During the classroom interaction, the teacher is the responsible for transmitting the knowledge to his learners, as well as controls the interaction between him/her and the students. He provide the students with the needed instruction and activities, while they have just to listen and follow him. With this the teacher is taking the role of the controller of the whole class.

#### **2. Assessor**

The assessment of the student's competence is one of the most important tasks facing the teacher. Mapstone states "Good teachers know how they must assess their student's learning" (1996). The learning process cannot be enhanced, without providing learners with feedbacks,

corrections and praising in order to let the students be aware about their strengths and weaknesses.

### **3. Corrector**

The teacher as a corrector must consider the appropriate time to interfere and correct his learners' errors and mistakes.

### **4. Organizer**

The teacher should organize his/her classroom interaction, pair and group works, and to provide the students with the right instruction at the right time, s/he also must organize the students turn to talk.

### **5. Prompter**

Due to the lack of vocabulary, learners sometimes get confused and blocked while speaking, here the teacher has to motivate his/her learners to develop their thinking , so that they become independent from him/her.

### **6. Resource**

The teacher should provide his/her learners with all the needed information, answer on all their questions to avoid ambiguity and unclear points.

Although the teacher is the provider of knowledge and the manager of his/her classroom, but the focus should be placed on the students' behaviors and achievements and providing them with many opportunities to practice the target language. In the classroom, the teacher can assume different roles to teach what s/he wants, since s/he is considered as a modal to the students inside. His/her enthusiasm must be transferred to the students as well as his/her roles should be played the right way in front of them to create a good environment, because this will certainly reflect on his/her students' willingness to communicate in, which also affect their speaking performance inside the classroom.



## **1.11. Factors Affecting the Speaking Skill inside the Classroom**

In EFL classrooms, students' speaking performance may be affected by many external and internal factors, so it is necessary to figure out what are these factors and how do they affect, in order to help the learners to overcome the problem and to improve their speaking performance inside the classroom. Tuan and Mai (2015) have conducted a study dealing with the factors that affect the learners' speaking performance.

### **1.11.1. Performance Conditions**

Students perform a speaking activity inside the classroom under many conditions, in which they can be abided by the time pressure, planning, and the quality of performance as (Nation & Newton, 2009) assumed.

### **1.11.2. Affective Factors**

The students' affective side is considered as the guideline for success or failure for learners while learning a foreign language, according to Krashen (1982) the factors related to success in second language acquisition can be categorized between; motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence.

### **1.11.3. Listening Skill**

Speaking and listening are two closing related language skills, the speaker should deliver a meaningful speech to allow the listener to clearly understand what is uttered to him, and effectively interact with each other. (Doff, 1998) states that the speaking skill cannot be developed unless one develop the listening skill.

### **1.11.4. Feedback during Speaking Activities**

Giving feedback on learners' performance while they still speak, can certainly block the flow of the conversation, then demotivate and make them afraid to speak. So, teachers should positively affect their learners' speaking performance as Baker and Westrup (2003) clarify that the learners' speaking performance is mainly related to the instructors' support.

### **1.11.5. Students' Speaking Problems**

While speaking in the classroom many students cannot speak easily, they may face many difficulties caused by internal and external factors can make them unable to speak, or block at a certain stage. For Ur (2000), four main problems can be faced by students in speaking activities, which are; inhibition, nothing to say, low uneven participation, and mother tongue use.

#### **1. Inhibition**

Speaking confidently in front of the audience can be stopped at any stage of the dialogue, because of the fear of making mistakes and errors, the harsh criticism, shyness, stress and anxiety. Littlewood (1993:93) argues that: "it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety). Implies that inhibition is mostly expected in foreign language classrooms because of the anxiety related with the use of the foreign language.

#### **2. Nothing to Say**

"I have nothing to say", "I do not know anything about" are very common arguments most of the students use to defend their unwillingness to participate in a particular topic, the student feels demotivated to express himself/herself, since s/he strongly believes that he would add nothing to the topic, he knows nothing about the relevant topic, or the topic did not suit him at all. As it was supported by Rivers (1968): "the teacher may have chosen a topic which is uncongenial to him [the learner] or about which he knows very little, and as a result he has nothing to express, whether in native language or the foreign language" (p.192).

#### **3. Low Uneven Participation**

In each classroom, there is always a dominant student who frequently participates and takes almost the whole students' turn to talk. That is what makes some of the other learners unwilling to express themselves freely, they prefer to remain silent, in the same context, Harmer (2001) suggests to integrate all the students of the different levels together and to

allow them to work in groups. Moreover, the teacher should play a major role in increasing the students' participation, otherwise even the active ones will not be interested anymore.

#### **4. Mother-Tongue Use**

The use of the mother language in a foreign language classroom is a common problem for the majority of the learners, especially at first year classes, because they may worry about making mistakes in the foreign language, and feel at ease when expressing themselves in their mother language. According to Baker and Westrup (2003) "barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language" (p.12). Therefore, in order to correctly master a foreign language, students should not keep borrowing words from their mother language. Identifying and analyzing the factors mentioned above may have an important role in revealing their unwillingness to communicate and their enhancing EFL learners' speaking ability.

#### **1.12. The Importance of the Speaking Skill**

According to Bygate (1987) "speaking is a skill which deserves attention as much as the literary skills in both native and foreign language". The common belief among EFL learners, that is the primary goal behind learning a foreign language is to be a good communicator in real situations, in order to achieve their goal they should frequently practice the target language either in classrooms, or even in daily life conversation furthermore, EFL learners must believe that the more they practice speaking, the better they become. As it was supported by Robert Frost "I am a writer of books in retrospect, I talk in order to understand, I teach in order to learn". So improving your speaking will not only make you a fluent speaker, but also you will be proficient in using the target language, express ourselves, fulfill our needs and develop a clear thinking.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude this chapter, we have tried to provide an overview about the speaking process in EFL classes, which is the measure for both teachers and learners success in the foreign language, also we have tackled the process of teaching the speaking skill and the characteristics of successful teaching speaking, we have also shed the lights on the different roles that the teacher may play inside the classroom such as; a guide, an organizer, a planner, an assessor that can help in achieving high goals.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Willingness to Communicate**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a deep understanding of the foundation of the willingness to communicate construct, WTC related to both the native language communication and the second language communication. It also presents a clear description of the pyramid model that represents the different factors influencing the L2 WTC, and WTC in an EFL context. It presents the different factors influencing EFL student's WTC, then the chapter ends up with the relationship between the speaking skill and the WTC.

#### **2.1. Overview of the Willingness to Communicate**

An important issue well worth considering that precedes the process of speaking and its importance in the area of EFL teaching and learning, which is the willingness to communicate. When EFL students have the opportunity to use the English language some of them speak up, while others choose to remain silent even when they are able to interact and communicate effectively i.e. not all of the EFL learners seek for opportunities to use the target language in a meaningful context. For that, modern linguists have attached a great importance to the various psychological, social, linguistic, and situational factors that affect the student's reluctance to speak in EFL classes.

The concept of the WTC was first set by McCroskey and Richmond to refer to first language communicators, i.e. those who are willing to engage in communication, then it expanded and became mainly related with the use of L2 communicators, i.e. those students who avoid initiating communication using their English. According to McCroskey and Richmond (1987) WTC is considered as the measure of speaker's desire to participate or avoid communication. The different factors related to second language acquisition such as; fear, anxiety, shyness... are also considered as the main elements in communication in this

language. (McCroskey et al., 1985). Willingness to communicate is “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using a L2” (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément and Noels, 1998, p. 547).

Learning a second or a foreign language aims basically at communicating in that language. That is why many linguists like; McCroskey, Richmond, MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément and Noels, have focused on the communicative goal in the language teaching and learning field. A recently developed instrument known as willingness to communicate emerged as a concept for individual’s L1 and L2 communication, it includes psychological, linguistic and communicative variables to predict communication (Alemi et al., 2011). It has emerged from the endeavors of Burgoon (1976) on the concept of “unwillingness to communicate” and the study of Mortensen, Arnston and Lusting (1977) on predisposition toward verbal behavior, and the one of McCroskey and Richmond (1982) on shyness.

Willingness to communicate was first conceptualized as the desire to initiate communication when you have the opportunity to do so (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). It is of utmost importance in revealing students’ willingness to engage in communication in the classroom. In the same context, Kang (2005) states that “willingness to communicate is an individual’s volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context among other potential situational variables” (p.291). This implies that WTC is the optional tendency inside the individuals to participate in communication in various contexts, depending on the person you are interacting with, the discussed topic, the situation..., and many other affective variables.

MacIntyre, Clément, Dorney and Noels (1998) have suggested that the main goal of L2 education is to create WTC in the language learning process, for the purpose of raising students who are willing to look for communicative opportunities and effectively to use them.

Kang (2005) argued that we can increase L2 learners 'willingness to communicate by creating opportunities, that might make an environment in which learners feel supported and comfortable to initiate communication, because learners with high willingness to communicate are more likely to use their L2 in authentic communication, which can contribute to their successes in second language acquisition.

Based on the statements above, the ultimate goal of learning a second or foreign language is communication. In the same vein, the use of the target language in different contexts plays an important role in achieving communicative purposes. So the willingness to communicate arises as the most basic orientation toward communication, it measures a person's willingness to participate in interaction, and represents the psychological preparedness to use the L2 when the opportunity is given.

## **2.2. WTC in the Native Language Communication**

McCroskey and Richmond (1987) stated that the willingness to communicate is an individual's general personality orientation towards communicating, they pointed out that people differ in the degree of communication, with whom they interact and under which circumstances they do communicate. This means that the contextual variables affect individual's willingness to communicate in their L1. For instance, a person's mood in a given day, the relationship between people who are communicating, what has been said before in the conversation, whether the topic is of interest or not ..., all these variables could affect communication willingness. Hence, to some extent the WTC in L1 can be viewed as a situation dependent.

However, although McCroskey and Richmon (1987) have introduced the WTC as a situation feature, they claimed that WTC was substantially a personality orientation, a concept which has a lot to do with the personality traits.

For that McCroskey (1997) restated and defined that “the willingness to communicate trait is an individual’s predisposition to initiate communication with others” (p.77).

To confirm whether WTC in L1 communication is a personality trait-like or a situational trait-like (the reason behind why people vary in their WTC), McCroskey and Richmond have set a series of variables that might contribute to individual differences in the willingness to communicate, they referred to these variables as the “Antecedents” of the willingness to communicate, which are six variables; introversion, anomie and alienation, self-esteem, cultural divergence, communication skill level, and communication apprehension. However, all these antecedents were believed to have a possible contribution in the willingness to communicate, the ambiguity in these antecedents have led to series of subsequent studies that examine each of these variables among them \_ Communication Apprehension (CA), and Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) \_ these two factors have received substantial attention from many researchers.

### **2.3. Factors Influencing WTC in L1 Contexts**

#### **2.3.1 Communication Apprehension**

Based on the research of Clevenger (1959) on stage fright and Philips (1965) on reticence, McCroskey (1997) defined the communicative apprehension as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p.192). This implies that CA is the measure factor and the predictor of the individual’s willingness to communicate, four types of CA were introduced by McCroskey (1997) ; trait-like CA, generalized-context CA, person-group CA, and situational CA

##### **a/ Trait-like CA**

Is viewed by McCroskey (1997) as a relatively stable readiness toward facing fear, shyness, or anxiety in different communicative situations. While an individuals’ level of trait-like CA is presumed to be the adjustable subject over time in the personality of the individual.



This means that some people feel uncomfortable when they deliver speeches in a class. for example, those learners who are naturally shy and avoid public speaking.

#### **b/ Generalized-Context CA**

McCroskey (1997) defined it as a context anxiety that triggers CA, it is related mainly to a single type of context, for instance the fear from public speaking commonly known as “speech fright” or “stage fright”. Generalized-context CA is supposed to be stable because it becomes a habit over extended periods of time, such as; being anxious while speaking in front of class, small group discussions, or meetings.

#### **c/ Person-Group CA**

McCroskey (1997) states that person-group CA is mainly related to the relationship between the speaker and the receiver (strangers, acquaintance, and friendship), that the degree of the acquaintance may strongly affect the level of CA here. When a specific individual or group of people create a problem of communication. for example, when the students interact with each other they feel relaxed, while the interaction with the teacher makes them feel upset.

#### **d/ Situational CA**

McCroskey (1997) claimed that this type of communication is assumed to be fluctuate since it is affected by the environment in which the communication takes place i.e. the context and the behavior of people who are communicating. It is a kind of anxiety triggered by a specific combination of the audience and the situation that involves different dimensions. As an example, when the students experience new faces on a new environment in the first day of school, this may increase the level of the stress and create communication apprehension. McCroskey (1997) argued that trait-like CA, generalized-context CA and person-group CA were all seen as the stable tendency toward communication, that mainly depend on the type of context and the person or group of people. While situational CA is considered as the

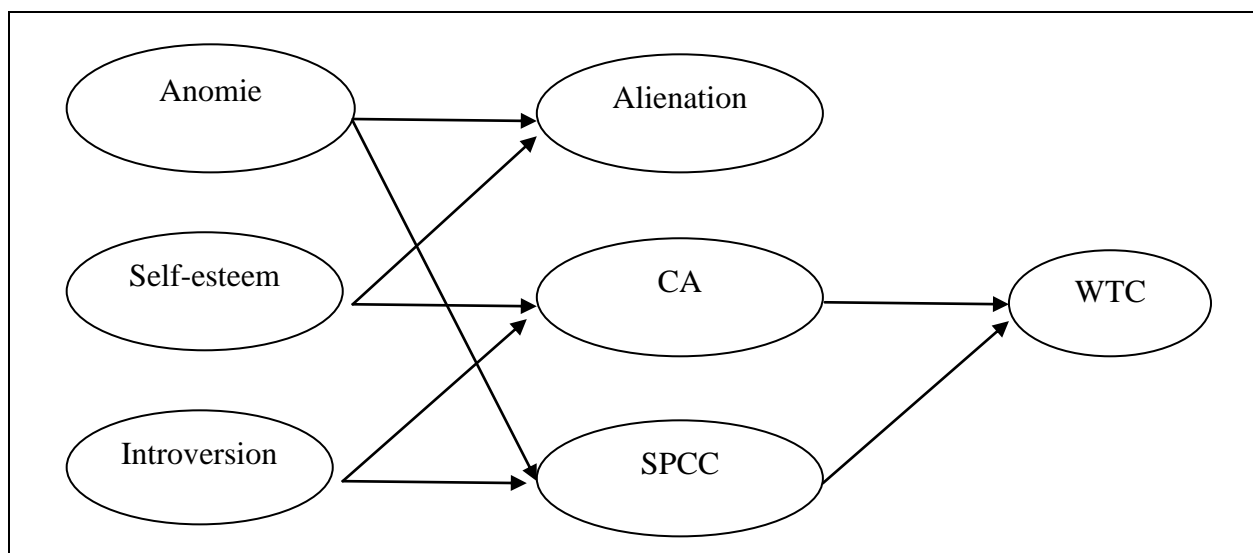
temporary tendency toward communication. Thus, he claimed that there was no fixed trait or state CA, but a continuation “ranging from the extreme trait pole to the extreme state pole, although neither the pure trait nor the pure state probably exists as a meaningful consideration” (McCroskey, 1997,p.84).

### **2.3.2 Self-Perceived Communication Competence**

Based on the early research of Philips on reticence (1965) in which anxiety and lack of communication skills were considered as the two major reasons behind avoiding communication. McCroskey and Richmond (1987) proposed CA and communication skills as the main affective factors in one’s WTC, they noticed that people’s WTC is positively correlated with their training in the communication skills i.e. whenever their communication skills are developed, their WTC arises. Kelly (1982) found that the communication skills of the reticent speaker are almost the same as the communication skills of the non-reticent speaker. Therefore, the self-perception of the communicative skills level is more significant than the actual observed skill level of the person. In the same context, communication competence was defined by McCroskey (1984) as “adequate ability to pass along or give information; the ability to make known by talking or writing” (p.109). As a result, McCroskey and Richmond (1997) claimed that self-perceived communication competence might have a direct correlation with one’s WTC, because “The choice of whether to communicate is cognitive one, it is likely to be more influenced by one’s perception of competence (of which one usually is aware) than one’s actual competence (of which one may be totally unaware)” (p.27)

McCroskey (1997) did not focus on the person’s actual communication skills which affect one’s WTC, but rather the individual’s self-perceived communication competence. Therefore, people who believe themselves as a competent communicator are more willing to participate in communication.

Many studies and researches have been conducted by scholars to investigate and demonstrate that these variables are significantly correlated to be influential on one's WTC. MacIntyre (1994) suggested a causal modal to test the six antecedents identified as the main factors that contribute in the willingness to communicate construct; anomie, alienation, self-esteem, introversion, communication apprehension, and self-perceived communication competence. He started his modal by the general personality dispositions ( i.e. anomie, self-esteem, and introversion) and then followed up the tracks with the more specific predispositions ( communication apprehension, and self-perceived communication competence ) then the modal ends up with the willingness to communicate (WTC) considering that as the last step before starting communication behavior.



**Figure 03: MacIntyre's (1994) Causal Modal for Predicting WTC by Using Personality-Based Variables.**

According to the causal model, only the last two variables \_ communication apprehension, and self-perceived communication competence\_ that are considered as the determinants of the differences among individual's WTC. Hence, people who show less or no anxiety while communicating are believed to be more willing to participate in a conversation. Anomie and

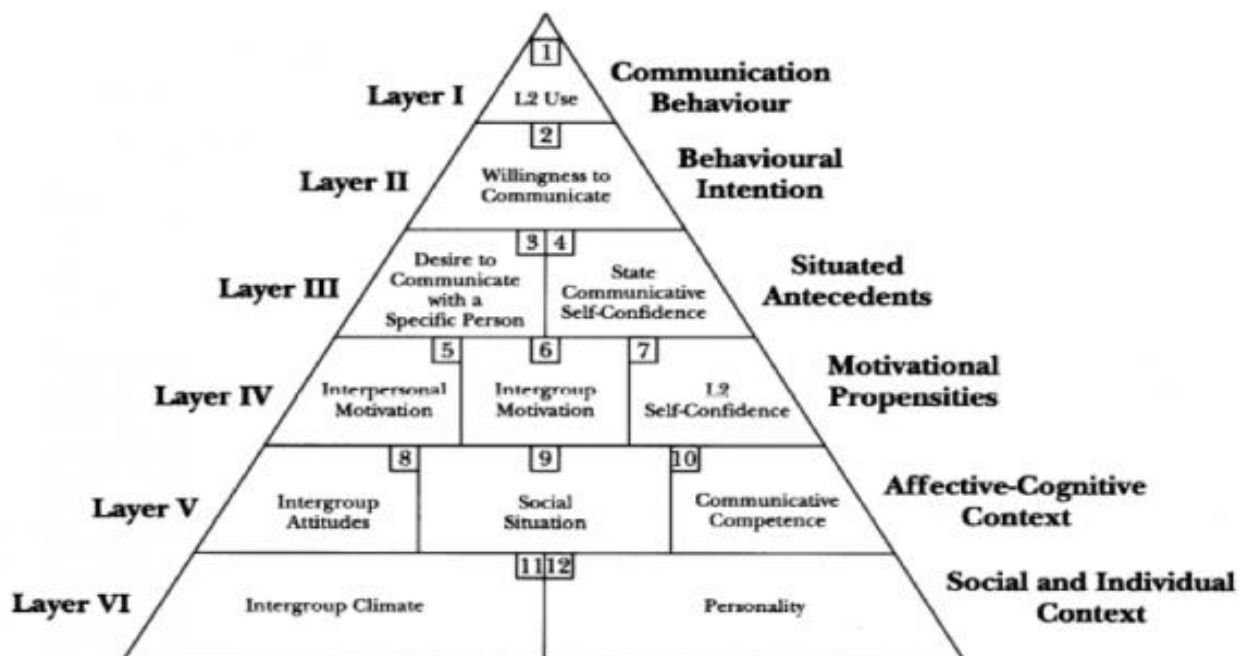
alienation were not considered as causal factors of WTC. Moreover, MacIntyre (1994) pointed out that the modal should not be limited by the use of these personality-based variables, but also it should be extended to include even the examination of the situational factors, as it was suggested by MacIntyre (1994) “the interaction between general personality variables and specific situational characteristics also would provide a potential avenue for the future research” (p.140). Thus, for the development of the willingness to communicate (WTC) Both of the personality-based variables, and the situational factors should be taken into consideration for the future investigations.

#### **2.4. WTC in the Second Language Context**

During the 1900s, the conducted researches on the willingness to communicate in L1 started to develop and extend to shed the light on the willingness to communicate in the second language acquisition, under the area of the individual differences in acquiring the second language. MacIntyre (1998:547) defined L2 WTC as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2”. Accordingly, the situation in L2 WTC differs from that of L1. It seems more complex because of the level of one’s communicative skills in L2 is not the same as one’s communicative skills in the native language. In the vein, MacIntyre, Dornyei, Clément, and Noels (1998) claimed that “it is highly unlikely that WTC in the second language (L2) is a simple manifestation of WTC in L1” (p.546). The limited researches contributing to the comparison of WTC between L1 and L2 have revealed that although students’ communication apprehension in L1 and L2 are almost the same, but their L1 WTC was higher than their L2 WTC.

MacIntyre et al., (1998) stated that “a more complex manner with those variables that influence L1 WTC in L2 use” (p.546). Considering that the second language acquisition is usually related most to adults, their communication competence in L2 could be high a certain level of their L1 communication competence. In addition, the difference between L1 and L2

WTC may also lead to a range of affective variables namely linguistic, social, communicative and psychological factors . Accordingly, MacIntyre et al., (1998) proposed a heuristic model to present the conceptualization of WTC in an L2 communication setting:



**Figure 04: MacIntyre et al's (1998) Heuristic WTC Modal**

The heuristic modal represents the different factors that affect the L2 WTC. The shape of pyramid stands for the more general to the more specific influencing factors in L2 WTC. As the figure 4 represents there are six layers of the modal, the first three layers (communication behavior, behavioral intention, and situated antecedents) represent the impact of the situation on one's WTC at a given period of time. The other three layers (motivational propensities, affective-cognitive context, and social and individual context) indicate the impact of the fixed factors on the L2 WTC. Therefore, from the top to the bottom, the modal moves from the changeable (i.e. situation-based contexts) to the stable affective factors in L2 communication context.

The first layer of communication behavior which is described in a broad sense of L2 use MacIntyre et al., (1998) stated that "the ultimate goal of the learning process should be to engender in language students the willingness to seek out communication opportunities and

the willingness actually to communicate in them” (p.547). That is to say that, L2 use is placed at the climax of the model as the primary goal of second language learning. In layer 2, the willingness to communicate (WTC) is set to imply a behavioral intention, the intention which is the main reason over person’s actions in a communication setting.

The desire to interact with a specific person and state communication self-confidence are embodied under the third layer of situated antecedents, which are considered as the most immediate factors of WTC. The desire to interact with a specific person is affected by the elements of affiliation and control motives; affiliation refers to the nature of the relationship between the interlocutors. For example, people with a close relationship, their desire to interact with each others is high. While control motives can stand for the push over initiating communication. The state communicative self-confidence is suggested by Clément (1980) as a transient feeling in which the communicator feels at ease to participate in communication using L2 at a particular situation.

The motivational propensities in the fourth layer contain three elements; interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, and L2 self-confidence. As it was mentioned before in the third layer, affiliation and control motives are the main determinants over maintaining communication between a person or group of persons (i.e. interpersonal motivation, and intergroup motivation). However, unlike the state communication self-confidence, L2 self-confidence is viewed as the “overall belief in being able to communicate in the L2 in an adaptive and efficient manner” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p.551).

The fifth layer deals with another individual-based influential factor, the affective-cognitive context involves; intergroup attitudes, social situation, and communicative competence. Intergroup attitudes entailed by the factors of integrativeness, a fear of assimilation, and motivation to learn the L2. Integrativeness is the likely force that pushes individuals to learn a second language and the desire to integrate with the second language

identity (Gardner, 1985). Whereas, a fear of assimilation implies the fear of losing one's own self-identity while learning the L2, hence showing less interest with the L2 community. Motivation to learn the L2 refers to the positive or negative attitude from the individuals towards the L2 itself. Another affective variable in this layer is the social situation, it describes the social environment where the communication setting takes place, that involve the interlocutors, the place, the topic, the purpose, and the channel of communication that affect individual's WTC in L2 in a broad sense. The last variable in this layer is the communicative competence which includes the linguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence that vary from one person to another and affect his WTC in L2.

The last layer of the model is the societal and individual contexts, which is concerned with the interaction between society and the individual. Mainly the intergroup climate implies the societal context in which values, attitudes of the society members help and provide opportunities to learn and use the second language. On the other hand, personality has an indirect effect on one's WTC. Therefore, intergroup climate and personality were placed at the bottom of the model to refer to their less direct influence on a person's L2 WTC.

MacIntyre et al., (1998) model is considered as the first attempt to explain and predict the influential variables on the WTC in L2, in which he extended the affective variables in L1 that have been mentioned before by McCroskey and Richmond (1984). In addition to the major role that the context plays in communication as a contextual variable, which drives the individuals to participate in communication.

## **2.5. WTC in EFL Classrooms**

In an EFL context, the student's willingness to communicate can be affected by unidentifiable variables, because it is hard to know why some students seek while others evade foreign language (FL) communication. McCroskey and Richmond (1991) pointed out that the personality-based variables are the main reason why certain students hold a

conversation in certain times, while others remain reticent in similar situations. Many EFL teachers have found that some students with high linguistic competence do not have the desire to use the target language for communication in the classroom, whereas the other students with only limited linguistic knowledge have greater tendency to communicate in every opportunity they have. Therefore, the intention or desire to communicate which is the willingness to communicate (WTC) is considered as an important factor that must be present among EFL students to achieve high goals in that language.

Among the findings of the variables contributing to and reducing student's WTC in the context of EFL classroom are the teacher's role. Kang (2005), MacIntyre et al., (2011) claimed that a significant impact on students' WTC is made by the teacher's methods of teaching, attitude and involvement inside the classroom. In the same context, Wen and Clément (2003:28) indicated that at least in a Chinese EFL classroom students' tendency and desire to initiate communication are influenced by teacher involvement and immediacy. It has also been found that students' background knowledge about the topic, task types, familiarity of classmates affect students' WTC in the context of EFL classrooms (Cao and Philip 2006, Kang 2005, MacIntyre et al., 2011).

As teachers are the ones responsible on how to carry out and manage the classrooms, they should seek to create an appropriate atmosphere for students so that they raise their WTC in the FL and minimize the fear of making mistakes, by providing students with more opportunities to communicate with each others. For instance, negotiating topics, adapting successful teaching methods, focusing on the positive feedback..., MacIntyre et al. (1998:548) emphasize that WTC alone cannot produce behavior, but there must also be an opportunity to communicate. Therefore, without opportunities for communication, students cannot do so, even if they are willing to communicate. In this way, the teacher has to



positively affect his students' WTC by creating the needed opportunities where the students feel supported to develop their speaking performance using the FL inside the classroom.

## **2.6. Factor Affecting EFL Students' WTC**

In EFL classrooms, when given an opportunity to speak, some students are willing to speak up and express themselves, whereas others choose to remain silent, according to the WTC model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998) there are different factors influencing directly or indirectly the EFL student's WTC. There are the individual factors including language anxiety, motivation, shyness, self-confidence, attitudes, the fear of correctness of speech, and the students-perceived linguistic and communication competence. And the social contextual variables such as the effect teacher's role and teaching methods, the effect of the topic, task type, and the classroom atmosphere.

### **2.6.1. Individual Factors**

#### **a/ Language Anxiety**

One influential variable that EFL students may experience when the communication is actually taking place, or is about to occur inside the classroom is the anxiety. According to Baker and MacIntyre (2003) language anxiety has been negatively correlated with learning a foreign or second language, and with the willingness to communicate in using that language. So, when the opportunity is given to use the English language, anxious students avoid to use it and their WTC may decrease over time.

#### **b/ Lack of Motivation**

Motivation is the positive desire and force that drive students to speak in the classroom. According to Gardner (1985) motivation refers to student's desires, attitudes, and efforts that make students willing to use the target language. According to Wen and Clément (2003) less motivated students or those who lack motivation at all are unwilling to participate in communication inside the classroom, thus they fail to meet language learning objective.

**c/ Shyness and Self-Confidence**

Another two major factors concerned with personality are shyness and self-confidence . Liu (2005) claimed that personality is an important factor in making students willing to speak in English classes. Shyness is a factor that is mentioned by MacIntyre (2003) as an enduring factor having an impact on one's willingness to communicate, that there is a positive correlation between shyness and foreign language classroom anxiety which leads to less degree of WTC. Self-confidence is identified by MacIntyre as a combination of perceived communication competence and lack of anxiety, and a determining factor in students' willingness to speak.

**d/ Students' Negative Attitude**

Attitudes refer to the positive or negative feelings students have towards learning the English language. Students' negative attitude is a detrimental factor that is overlooked by many teachers, it is a kind of negative feelings that may be caused by different factors, Kang (2005) states that students' negative attitude has been formed or injured in students mind due to a negative stimulus, and it affects directly students' WTC in using the English language.

**e/ The Fear of Correctness of Speech**

Many students speak and participate in the classroom only if they are absolutely sure there speech is correct, they believe that accuracy is important while speaking, they pay more attention to the grammaticality of their sentences before producing them. Lisa (2006) suggests that students who focus more on their sentences structure are more willing to speak and use the target language. However, when they are not sure of that they fear making mistakes and then avoid speaking at all. So, being highly conscious about accuracy before producing a speech may cause a lack of WTC.

### **f/ Student's perceived linguistic and communicative competence**

Another important factor affecting students' WTC in the classroom is their perception toward the linguistic and communicative competence, some of them believe that their abilities are poor and they possess no competences, especially when it comes to comparison with classmates. Nagy and Nikolov (2007) assume that students who are not satisfied with their abilities and who think that the other classmates possess more capacities than them, they tend to avoid communication and keep silent in the classroom.

### **2.6.2. Social Contextual Factors**

#### **a/ The Effect of the Teacher's Role and Teaching Methods**

One key factor that contributes directly in raising and decreasing students' WTC inside the classroom is the teacher. Wen and Clement's (2003:28) supposition that teacher involvement and immediacy can increase learners' WTC. As well as the methods adapted in teaching can affect his students' willingness to participate in the classroom. Zarrinabadi (2014) claimed that the teacher should pay great attention to the roles s/he plays in the classroom because this mainly reflects on the students' success or failure in the target language.

#### **b/ The Effect of the Topic**

In an EFL classroom, the topic has a great influence on the student's degree of willingness to speak, the familiarity with the topic, topic interest, and the topic preparation affect their willingness to communicate. Students prefer to discuss topics of their interests, in which they have background knowledge. Cao and Philip (2006:488) that the familiarity with the topic has a strong connection with increasing or decreasing students' WTC.

#### **c/ The Classroom Atmosphere**

The classroom atmosphere contributes to a major extent in making the students willing or unwilling to speak, providing them with an appropriate environment, when they feel at ease, relaxed, and supported by their teacher, such an atmosphere facilitate their participation.

Thus, they tend to speak more. Kang (2005) argues that it is possible to develop WTC in the L2 through the creation of environments in which learners feel at ease and engage in real communication. Students with a high WTC are more likely to use the L2 in real situations, which contributes to the successful acquisition of the target language.

## **2.7. The Speaking Skill and the Willingness to Communicate**

Speaking is at heart of learning a foreign language. Bygate (1987) assumes that speaking is the production process of our knowledge about the language. However, one's knowledge about a language is not enough to produce a meaningful speech and to communicate effectively. Most importantly, the speaking skill needs the practice. Yashima et al., (2004) claimed that "to improve communication skills one need to use language" (p.122).

It is evident that communicative opportunities promote individuals' involvement in conversational interactions. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) have suggested that a proper objective for L2 education is to create WTC in the language learning process, in order to produce students who are willing to seek out communication opportunities and actually to communicate in them. Kang (2005) has argued that we can increase L2 learners' WTC by creating opportunities that might create an environment in which learners feel comfortable to initiate communication because learners with a higher WTC are more likely to use L2 in authentic communication, which can contribute to their successful SLA.

It is not uncommon to find people who tend to avoid entering L2 communication situations even if they possess a high level of communicative competence. This implies that there is a further layer of mediating factors between the competence to communicate and putting this competence into practice. WTC is the internal desire that all the students should possess inside the classroom to develop their speaking performance, but it is not the speaking itself.

Therefore, willingness to communicate is a major prerequisite for students to develop their speaking skills. According to Dörnyei (2005) "WTC draws together a host of learner variables

that have been well established an influences on second language acquisition and use” (p.210) and leads him to conclude that WTC shapes the students’ speaking skills in EFL classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter focused on describing the nature and the role of the willingness to communicate in L1 and L2 learning. It also deals with the major factors affecting the students’ WTC (individual-based factors, and the social contextual factors). Finally, it refers to the existing relationship between the speaking skill and WTC.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Description and Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire and the Teachers' Interview**

#### **Introduction**

The present study is conducted to find out the impact of the internal and external factors on the students' willingness to communicate, which shapes their speaking skill inside the classroom. This chapter is devoted to introduce the sample of the study, describe the design of the students' questionnaire and teachers' interviews at the English department of Guelma University, then analyze and interpret the findings to provide some pedagogical recommendations for both the students and teachers.

#### **3.1. Means of Data Collection**

Various methods of data collection were set by social scientists in conducting a research study. In the present work, the researcher opted for both the qualitative and the quantitative data collection tools to strengthen the credibility of the research. As Mackey and Gass (2005) maintain "the use of multiple research techniques and multiple data sources contributes to the credibility of the investigation" (p.164). A quantitative research data gathering tool is the questionnaire for the students, which was used for the purpose of gathering results that are easy to interpret, compare and generalize from the research participant to almost a larger population. Two types of questions were used; factual questions to know more about the sample population such as Q1, Q2 and Q5. In addition to that, the attitudinal questions to figure out the learners' perception about their willingness to communicate in English as EFL learners (Q6-Q12), and the influencing factors contributing in this element (Q13-Q18). The other data collection tool used in this study is the teachers' interviews, it was used as the qualitative aspect to expand and clarify the quantitative results.

## **3.2. Population of the Field Study**

### **3.2.1 The Students**

The sample under investigation was composed of 70 third year students of English at the University of Guelma selected randomly out of the entire population, which comprises of 220 students. There were 60 (86%) female participants, while male participants male were 10 (14%). The sample was selected on the basis that third year LMD students are aware about their progress in their speaking skill, since they have already got the opportunity to speak in oral expression sessions in the previous years. So, obviously they know what motivates them to participate, and what makes them willing or unwilling to communicate in the classroom. Also, these students are about to graduate this year, therefore they are going to be teachers and know the value of the students' willingness to speak in developing their speaking ability.

### **3.2.2 The Teachers**

Four teachers were asked to conduct the interview. They are oral expression teachers of third year students. Their experience in teaching English language ranged from 3 to 20 years, they were selected randomly to conduct a semi structured interview. The reason for selecting oral expression teachers is that, they can provide the research with a deep understanding about the students' difficulties in the speaking performance, what makes the students motivated and willing to participate, and which kind of activities enhances their speaking skill inside the classroom.

## **3.3. Description of the Students' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was used as the main tool to gather data from the students to accomplish the research. It was divided into three sections each of which consists of multiple choices, in which the participants have to tick the right box(s) that corresponds with the appropriate answer(s) for each of them, in addition to open-ended question to express themselves freely. This questionnaire is divided into three sections containing 18 questions. The first section

deals with the background information of the students. The second part is devoted to the students' attitude towards speaking inside the classroom. Finally, the third section is about the factors influencing students' willingness to communicate inside the classroom.

### **3.3.1. Section One: Background Information (Q1-Q5)**

This section is devoted to know more about the sample Participants age, gender (Q1, Q2), as a kind of a warm up to get the students involved in the questionnaire. The three remaining questions were designed to check the students' attitude toward the English language as EFL learners; Q3 asks them how long they have been studying English. In Q4, they were asked if they are studying English by their own choices, yes. Or No? The reason behind such question is to know whether the participants are intrinsically motivated to learn English or not. The last question in this part is about the students' level in English whether it is good? average? or not satisfied?

### **3.3.2. Section Two: Students' Attitude toward Speaking in the Classroom (Q6-Q13)**

Section two is composed of multiple choice questions, classifications and open-ended questions for the students' justifications. The first question in this part Q6 is about the teachers and students' amount of interaction in the classroom, the aim of this question is to know whether classroom interaction is teacher or students- centered. Q7 asks the students to classify the four skills according to their importance, to figure out the value of the speaking skill in particular among the other skills. The following questions, Q8 and Q9 were designed to reveal the students' difficulties that hinder them from willing to speak in the classroom. In Q10, the participants were asked in which situation they do prefer to present whether individually? in pairs? or group work? The aim of this question is to know in which situation students are more willing to present. The other remaining questions, Q11, Q12 are about the students' perception of the classroom oral presentation, and classroom oral participation if



they are Important? Optional? Or Unnecessary? Q13 is a space given to the students to justify their answers.

### **3.3.3. Section Three: Factors Influencing Students' Willingness to Communicate inside the Classroom (Q14-Q18)**

Section three seeks to identify the factors influencing the students' willingness to speak inside the classroom. It starts by asking the participants about the teacher's affect over their willingness to communicate, is that due to: The time he gives to them to talk in the classroom? the teacher' encouragement to them to participate? or teacher feedback after speaking? (Q14). In Q15, they were asked about their avoidance to classroom participation because of the subject matter is: difficult? new? or not of their interest? The aim here is to know to what extent the subject matter affects the students' willingness to participate. The next question is about whether classmates influence each other's willingness to communicate positively? or negatively? if they do, how? (Q17). The final open-ended question (Q18) is a blank space for any further comments or suggestions by the students.

## **3.4. The Analysis of the Results**

### **3.4.1. Section One: Background Information**

**Q1-** Age: .....years.

**Table 1: Students 'Age**

<b>Year</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the table above we notice the diversity in the students age ranged from 20 to 26 years old. We have 19 students who are 20 years old representing 27% of our sample, which implies that they started early their primary education. Besides, the majority of the participants who represent 29% of the whole sample who are 21 years old, which is the

average age of third year LMD students. 26% represents 18 students who are 22 years old. There are also 10 participants represent 14% who are 23 years old, just one student represents 1% of the sample, and 2 students are 26 years old represent 3% they are considered the older participants of the sample, who are believed to have repeated at least two years in their education, or studied another branch before studying English.

## Q2- Gender

Male

Female

**Table 2: Students' Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results from the table above show that female participants are numerous in comparison to males. 60 students in this study are females representing 86% of the whole sample. Whereas, 10 males making up 14%, we can say that girls tend to study foreign languages more than males do.

## Q3- 3- How long have you been studying English?

.....years

**Table 3: Students' Years of Studying English**

<b>Years</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

A look at table 3, shows that the majority of the participants (55) making up 79% were studying English for 10 years, those are the normal years to reach their academic level. While,

13 students representing 18% have been studying English for 11 years, and 2 students making up 3% studied English for 12 years.

**Q4-** Is it your own choice to study English?

- a- Yes
- b- No

**Table 4: Students' Choices in Studying English**

Options	Yes	No	Total
Number	61	9	70
%	87%	13%	100%

The obtained results from table 4 reveal that 61 students go for “Yes” which represents 87% of the whole sample. While 9 participants have answered by “No” making up 13%. The majority of the students are studying English by their own choice, unlike the minority of them (13%) maybe it was a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> choice.

**Q5-** How could you describe your level in English?

- a- Good
- b- Average
- c- Not satisfied

**Table 5: Students' Level in EFL?**

Options	Good	Average	Not Satisfied	Total
Number	35	33	2	70
%	50%	47%	3%	100

The results of the table above imply that the majority of the participants (35) making up 50% out of the sample evaluated their English level as good. While 33 students representing

47% of the participants state that their level is average, and just 2 students making up 3% from the whole sample were not satisfied with their level in English.

### 3.4.2. Section Two: Students' Attitude toward Classroom Oral Participation

**Q6-** Who does generally interact more in the classroom?

- a- Teacher
- b- Students

**Table 6: Teacher and Students' Amount of Interaction in the Classroom**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The obtained results of table 6 show that the majority of the informants 52 representing 74% of the sample claim that the teacher interacts more than the students inside the classroom, which means that they believe in that their classroom in a teacher-centered. While 18 participants making up 26% state that the students interact more than the teacher does, maybe due to the classroom presentations they consider that the classroom is a learner-centered.

**Q7-** As an EFL learner, order the following skills according to their importance:

- a- Listening
- b- Speaking
- c- Writing
- d- Reading

**Table 7: Students Classification of the Four Skills**

Skills	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Reading	Total
<b>Classification</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the classification above in table7, about half the sample consider the speaking skill as the most important ability to master. 20 students making up 29% of the participants, think that the writing skill should be first in terms of importance. 9 students representing 13% of the questioned sample are more interested about the listening skill. Reading is classified the fourth in terms of importance, because only 5 participants (7%) chose it. So, the results show that: students believe that the productive skills are more important than the receptive ones.

**Q8-** Do you face difficulties when speaking inside the classroom?

a- Yes

b- No

**Table 8: Students' Difficulties when Speaking inside the classroom?**

Options	Yes	No	Total
<b>Number</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the results in table 8, we notice that the majority of the students (59%) have difficulties when they participate in the classroom. While 29 participants representing 41% of the sample claimed that they do not face difficulties with speaking. This maybe justifies the phenomenon of the silent majority versus the speaking minority in EFL classrooms.

**Q9-** If yes, justify?

**Table 9: Students' Justification of the Difficulties they Face when Speaking in the Classroom.**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Lack of Vocabulary</b>	<b>Self-Confidence</b>	<b>Lack of Motivation</b>	<b>Shyness, Anxiety...</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>100%</b>

We notice throughout table 9, that 13 students representing 32% of the whole sample who claimed that they have difficulties while speaking because of the lack of vocabulary. 14 students making up 34% are not self-confident enough to speak and participate in the classroom. While the lack of motivation is a barrier to speak in the classroom for 8 students. The personality-traits (shyness, anxiety...) affect 6 students' willingness to speak making up 15% of the whole population.

**Q10-** If you have to present in the classroom, do you prefer present ?

- a- Individually
- b- In pairs
- c- Group work

**Table 10: Students' Preferable Learning Situations**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Individually</b>	<b>In pairs</b>	<b>Group work</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Generally, most of the students prefer an individual classroom presentation; 34 participants representing 49% maybe they show their best individually more than with others. 19 students translated to 27% from the sample have chosen to present in pairs. While 17 students making

up 24% feel more comfortable in group work when they are presenting, maybe students who chose to work in groups are extroverted i.e. social people who like to interact while studying.

**Q11-** Do you think that classroom oral presentation is?

- a- Important
- b- Optional
- c- Unnecessary

**Table 11: Students' Opinions about Classroom Oral Presentation**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Optional</b>	<b>Unnecessary</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the results stated in the table above, the majority of the students (83%) see that the classroom oral presentation is important, 8 students notice that is optional. While 4 students representing just 6% out of the sample state that classroom oral presentation is unnecessary at all. Maybe they are dependent on the teachers, so they consider themselves as just listeners inside the classroom. Or they believe in the traditional classroom setting (teacher-centered).

**Q12-** According to you, classroom oral participation is:

- a- Important
- b- Optional
- c- unnecessary

**Table 12: Students' Opinions about Classroom Oral Participation**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Optional</b>	<b>Unnecessary</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the results shown in table 12, the majority of the students (90%) consider classroom oral participation as important for them to develop their speaking skill. Whereas 6 participants representing 9% see it as an option, and just one student representing 1% think that classroom oral participation is totally unnecessary, maybe they believe that the classroom should be a teacher-centered.

**Q13-** Justify?

**Table 13: Students' Justification of their Opinions Concerning the Classroom Oral Participation**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>To develop speaking skill</b>	<b>To get good TD marks</b>	<b>Did not justify</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>100%</b>

A look at table 13 shows that 36 students making up 51% consider the classroom oral participation as the main reason to develop their speaking skill. 21 participants representing 30% out of the sample notice that classroom oral participation can just help them in getting good TD marks. While the others did not justify their answers at all.

### **3.4.2. Section Three: Factors Influencing Students' WTC inside the Classroom**

**Q14-** If your teacher affects your willingness to communicate is that due to:

- a-the time he gives you to talk in the class
- b-teachers 'encouragement to you to participate
- c-teacher feedback after speaking



**Table 14: Teachers' Impact on the Students' Willingness to Communicate in the Classroom**

<b>Options</b>	<b>The time he gives you to talk in the class</b>	<b>Teachers'encouragement to you to participate</b>	<b>Teacher feedback after speaking</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results obtained from table 14 reveal that 28% of the sample represented by 20 students claimed that the time their teachers give them to talk in the class affect their willingness to participate. 32 participants making up 46% claimed that their willingness to communicate is affected by the teacher's encouragement to them to participate, maybe the teacher did not motivate the students to participate. Whereas 26% stated that the teacher's feedback affects their desire to speak. From the results of this question, we notice that all the participants answered that the teacher plays an important role in raising or decreasing their WTC inside the classroom.

**Q15-** You avoid classroom participation because of the subject matter (the module) is:

a-difficult

b-new

c- Not of your interest

**Table 15: Students Avoidance of the Classroom Participation because of the Module**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Difficult</b>	<b>New</b>	<b>Not of their interest</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown in table 15, the majority of the students (43%) avoid classroom participation when they are not interested about the subject matter. 26 students making up 37% out of the sample stated that the difficulties of the subject matter deprive them from participation in the classroom. While 14 students representing 20% do not participate at all when the subject matter is totally new for them i.e. maybe they do not have background knowledge about the module.

**Q16-** Do your classmates influence your willingness to communicate?

a-Positively?

b- Negatively?

**Table 16: Classmates Influence on Each Other's Willingness to Communicate**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Positively</b>	<b>Negatively</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results show that the majority of the students (65%) state that their classmates affect positively their WTC. While the others (25) making up 35% said that they are negatively affected from their classmates.

**Q17-** Justify?

**Table 17: Students' Justification of How their Classmates Affect their WTC**

Options	Reasons	Number	%	Total
Positively	They encourage each others	45	65%	70
	They create a kind of a competition			
Negatively	They make fun of each others	25	35%	100%
	They interrupt each others while speaking			

As shown in table 17, the majority of the students (65%) who are positively affected by their classmates claimed that they encourage each others; strengthen their ideas when speaking with supporting ideas and opinions, give them positive comments, and create a kind of a competition. Whereas students' willingness to communicate is negatively influenced by the classmates, because they make fun of the speaker's pronunciation, accuracy, and the mistakes he makes while speaking. Maybe these students do not want interruption from the others when speaking to not cut their ideas.

**Q18.** If you have any comments or suggestions, please add them here?

The majority of the students did not answer this question, but those who answered stated that the teacher has to be responsible on developing their speaking skills through creating a supportive classroom environment, providing them with a variety of activities to allow them interact and participate appropriately. Also, the teacher should give them positive feedback and try to motivate them to the maximum.

### **3.5. Summary of the Results**

The analysis of the obtained results from the students' questionnaire demonstrated the following critical points:

1. The majority of the students are motivated to learn the English language by their own choices. In addition to that, they possess a good EFL level.
2. Inside the classroom, the teacher's amount of interaction is more than the students do.

3. The speaking skill is the first skill in terms of importance that the majority of the students want to master as EFL learners.
4. Lack of vocabulary, self-confidence, lack of motivation, shyness, and anxiety are the main factors that hinder students from speaking in the classroom.
5. Individual classroom presentation is the appropriate situation for the majority of the learners, maybe they show they are introverted people and tend to do better individually more than the others who prefer to work collaboratively.
6. Most of the students believe that classroom oral presentation and classroom oral participation are of paramount importance to develop their speaking skill.
7. The teacher's encouragement and motivation is an important factor influencing the students' willingness to communicate inside the classroom.
8. The subject matter has a great effect on the students' willingness to speak, especially when they are not interested about it.
9. The majority of the students affect each others' willingness to communicate positively and create a competitive classroom atmosphere.

### **3.6. Description of the Teachers' Interview**

The semi-structured interview was adopted to collect data from oral expression teachers to conduct the study, it contains 8 different questions each of which aims at providing the research with in depth understanding of the teachers' perception on how can students' speaking ability be influenced by their willingness to communicate inside the classroom, and how this latter may be affected by the teachers, the task type, the classroom atmosphere, the classmates, and the role of the teachers in raising their willingness to communicate. In addition to that, it serves to validate the students' answers previously stated in the questionnaire. Since it is a semi-structured interview, the questions have been planned and organized before and opted to change for the teachers' opinions and attitudes.

Q1 asks the teachers how far they do agree with the idea that the most challenging aspects of teaching English is to get all the students to participate, the aim of such question is to figure out the challenges that EFL teachers experience with the students when trying to make them speaking the target language. The second question (Q2) wants to know how learners' speaking ability can be influenced by their willingness to communicate. In Q3, the teachers were asked about the main factors that hinder students from speaking in oral expression sessions, to know whether the internal or external factors affect more the students' willingness to communicate. The following question (Q4), asks the interviewee teachers in what situations do learners feel most willing to communicate? (Individually? in pairs? Or Group work? ) to know which situation suits more the students to interact in the classroom. Teacher interviewees were asked about the kind of activities that are useful in making the students willing to communicate in the classroom. (Q5), the aim behind such question, is to figure out how classroom interaction can be applied successfully in order to make students willing to communicate. Then Q6 tries to know to what extent are students willing to communicate when they are prepared, or when they are interested about the topic, this question aims at knowing the effect of the task on the students' willingness to communicate. The next question (Q7) wonders if the classmates affect each other's willingness to communicate inside the classroom. The last question (Q8) asks the teachers how they can raise the students' willingness to communicate in the classroom to develop their speaking skill, the reason behind this question is to figure out the role of the teachers in the students' willingness to communicate.

### **3.7. Analysis Teachers' Interview**

The interview was conducted in the teachers' room, it lasted approximately 20 minutes in which teachers were free to speak their minds and express their attitudes. During the interview both of the researcher and the respondents had the opportunity to ask for further information

so as to ensure a full understanding and clear description. The teachers' answers were transcribed and content analysis was conducted. So, different categories were formed based on the teachers' responses.

### **Category 01: Challenges of Teaching the Speaking Skill**

Speaking is perceived as the most fundamental skill to acquire since the onset of the communicative era. It is treated as the ultimate goal of English language teaching. However, it is a commonly known fact that achieving proficiency in foreign language speaking is not an easy task to do. Accordingly, all teachers were in favor of this idea. One of them said: "I strongly agree with this idea, because the nature of the Algerian EFL student's lack of motivation always inhibited his/her participation in the classroom". Another teacher answered "I totally agree, the learners' personality (introversion) has a great effect on his/her communicative competence, however knowing all the learners' personalities and adopt learning strategies that suit all of them is a real challenge for the teacher".

### **Category 02: The Impact of the WTC on EFL Learners' Speaking Ability**

WTC is a comprehensive term that covers a set of internal as well as external effects on the oral performance of language learners inside the classroom, it is one of the basic factors influencing the students speaking performance. In this respect, one teacher clarifies that "students' speaking ability is directly related with their willingness to communicate, and this latter is a prerequisite for the development of the speaking skill". Another teacher said: "the willingness to communicate shapes the students' speaking skill".

### **Category 03: The Influential Factors of the Learners' WTC**

Generally speaking, there is a myriad of factors influencing the learners' willingness to communicate inside the classroom. Responses were divided between three teachers believing that the internal factors affect more the learners' WTC in comparison to the external factors. Only one teachers supported this view saying: "in addition to the already mentioned shyness,

anxiety, and stress there are lack of self- confidence, fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation from peers and mainly the teacher, and especially when this latter emphasizes accuracy over fluency”. The other teacher believed that the external factors have a greater influence on the learners’ WTC in the classroom; he revealed that “Insufficient exposition to the target language (English) tremendously contributes to shaping participation/ communication barriers. Moreover, the teaching style/ method (s) and Algerian cultural norms that insist on taking for granted all what comes from the teacher”.

#### Category 04: The Learning Situation (individually, in pairs, or group work)

The learning situation where the learner is involved in inside the classroom has an important role in making the students willing or unwilling to initiate communication. For that, the teacher should not impose certain situations on the learners that can affect his/her willingness to speak. As it was supported by one teacher “when the student feels that he is placed in an adequate and dynamic learning environment and surrounded by a comfortable atmosphere of engagement, the students then will certainly communicate in any given situation that should be handled by the teacher in a non-aggressive manner; the student’s interaction will flourish at such levels”. But generally, students prefer individual learning situations.

#### **Category 05: The Effect of the Task Type**

The task type affects the learners’ willingness to communicate to a great degree. As there are plenty of activities, the teacher has to select the ones he believes are most suitable for the students. The majority of the teachers claimed that they focus on the listening and speaking tasks, discussions, and role play to assist the students to communicate appropriately in English. One teacher illustrated his case by the use of open-ended questions, individual or pair evaluation of presentation by establishing panels of three or more students to perform the task

collaboratively. This is called “Let students critique their peers” or short play performance in connection with lesson topics. Nonetheless, the list is not exhaustive.

#### **Category 06: The Effect of the Topic**

The topic is an important factor in shaping the students’ willingness to communicate in the classroom, the lack of knowledge about the topic makes the students avoid communication. Most of the teachers believe that both of the students’ preparation and interest in the topic make them highly willing to participate. However, one teacher insisted on the role of the preparation of the lesson before coming to the classroom, because students should have acquired knowledge/ information on that particular topic.

#### **Category 07: The Effect of the Classmates**

The classmates affect each other’s willingness to communicate inside the classroom. The majority of the teachers ensured that students reluctance and fear from making mistakes is commonly caused by their fear of being laughed at by their classmates. While one teacher claimed that it depends on several factors like: the situation, the topic, the teacher, and the students. Yet, there is unfortunately a prevailing phenomenon of the speaking minority versus the silent majority. It always remains beyond the teacher’s personal expectations.

#### **Category 08: The Teacher’s Role in Raising the Students’ WTC**

Teachers play vital roles in the classroom, they are best known for the role of educating the students that are placed in their care. Moreover, the fundamental role that can the teacher achieves is to make the students willing to participate in the classroom. The overall answers focus on the view that teachers should be aware of their students’ hindrance to speak, and overcome it by being friendly, motivating, and academically reliable. As well as know how to create a supporting atmosphere of learning in the class.



### **3.8. Summary of the Results**

The analysis of the results obtained from the teachers' interviews elucidated the following points:

1. Teaching the speaking skill is not an easy task to achieve, it is considered as a real challenge that EFL teachers experience in the classroom.
2. There exists a direct relationship between the willingness to communicate and the students' speaking ability inside the classroom.
3. Both of the internal and external factors influence the students' willingness to communicate in the classroom.
4. The appropriate learning situation is a significant factor where the learner feels most willing to speak. However, the majority of the students prefer individual learning situations.
5. The classmates, the topic, and the task type affect the students' willingness to communicate inside the classroom to a great degree.
6. The teacher plays a crucial role in increasing or decreasing the students' willingness to communicate in the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude this chapter, the main findings of the students' questionnaire, and the teachers' interview revealed that both of the students and teachers are aware of the relationship that exists between the students' speaking skill and the willingness to communicate inside the classroom. Moreover, the students' perceptions of the speaking skill in terms of importance and the influential factors correspond with the teachers' opinions concerning the teaching speaking in the classroom.

### **General Conclusion**

This study aimed at finding out the impact of the willingness to communicate on EFL learners' speaking performance inside the classroom. Moreover, identifying the psychological, social, and linguistic factors that are likely to affect the students' willingness to communicate. The study was conducted with EFL learners at Guelma University. It aims at testing the hypotheses that the students' speaking ability is greatly affected by their WTC inside the classroom, and how the internal and external factors influence their WTC. The research case study was third year LMD students and oral expression teachers at the English department, selected randomly for the academic year 2017/2018. Using the questionnaire for the students and the interview for teachers, as data collection tools. The obtained results answered our research questions:

1. how learners' speaking ability can be influenced by their willingness to communicate?
2. how can teachers increase or decrease the learners' willingness to communicate?

As well as the findings validated the hypotheses:

1. There may be an impact of the willingness to communicate on EFL learners' speaking ability.
2. There may be internal and external factors that influence EFL learners' willingness to communicate

As these findings revealed the big influence of the willingness to communicate on EFL learners speaking skill inside the classroom, as they are interrelated, also the results exposed the different factors that influence the students' WTC including shyness, anxiety, self-confidence, lack of motivation, as well as the teacher's behavior, feedback, and teaching methods that affect the students' WTC to a great extent.

Based on the present research findings, it is advisable to suggest some pedagogical recommendations to EFL learners and teachers in order to raise their awareness of the

importance of the students' willingness to communicate inside the classroom in order to develop their speaking skills and achieve successful FL communication.

First of all, the students have to value the importance of the speaking skill as an EFL learner and develop high oral competence through working on raising their willingness to communicate inside the classroom. They need to establish more ways to become more willing to speak such as; enriching their vocabulary through extensive reading, vocabulary building activities, and the effective use of dictionaries. Also they have to enhance their language proficiency mainly their fluency and accuracy through interaction as much as possible inside the classroom regularly to get rid of shyness and hesitation, and outside the classroom by interaction with native speakers using technology.

Secondly, oral expression teachers need to create a positive classroom atmosphere with the best learning environment, so that learners can feel more willing to speak. They have to build a friendly relationship with their students, thus they know how to motivate them according to their personality traits (introverted students) and increase their WTC. Also, the teachers need to give more importance to the speaking skill by providing opportunities for the students to practice the target language, by selecting the appropriate tasks that fit the students' needs and interests to make them willing to participate frequently. Teachers have to adapt the appropriate teaching methods that strongly affect the student's perception by equipping the classroom with a range of materials, and different strategies to meet the different learning styles, they are also advisable to give the feedback in a positive way and avoid the harsh comments that decrease the students' desire to participate and make any contribution, in order to urge students to be more willing to do their best and communicate appropriately to be praised by the teacher.

Finally, the present study faced a number of obstacles; firstly, the findings of the study cannot be generalized on the whole population, because of the limitation of the sample size. Another limitation to mention is the fact that the available time did not allow the researcher to conduct observations in oral expression sessions to gather more accurate data. Additionally, the lack of printed books related to the willingness to communicate at the level of libraries was a big barrier for the research. Besides, the majority of the studies about the willingness to communicate were previously conducted in foreign countries (USA, Turkey, China, Iran...). Further research in this area would have to rely on further tools such as; observations and oral tests, and expand the area of the study to investigate the WTC from different perspectives such as; the cultural effect on the students' willingness to communicate.

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Web Source

<http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2016/05/11/understanding-encouraging-willingness-communicate-language-classroom-1/>



## Appendix 1:

### Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which is a part of an investigation, that aims at finding out the impact of the Willingness to communicate on EFL learners' speaking performance inside the classroom. Your opinion as 3<sup>rd</sup> year students is so important in the current study, as well as your answers and help are appreciated, please tick (✓) the appropriate answers for you or give a full statement when necessary.

Department of English

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Sawssen SLIMANI

#### Section One: Background Information

1- Age: .....years.

2- Gender

a-Male

b-Female

3- How long have you been studying English ?

.....years

4- Is it your own choice to study English ?

a-Yes

b-No

5- How could you describe your level in English ?

a-Good

b-Average

c-Not satisfied

## Section Two : Learners' Attitude Toward Speaking in the Classroom

6- Who does generally interact more in the classroom ?

a-Teacher

b-Students

7- As an EFL learner, order the following skills according to their importance:

a-Listening

b-Speaking

c-Writing

d-Reading

8-Do you face difficulties when speaking inside the classroom ?

a-Yes

b-No

9- If yes, justify

.....  
.....  
.....

10- If you have to present in the classroom, do you prefer present ?

a-Individually

b-In pairs

c-Group work

11- Do you think that classroom oral presentation are ?

a-Important

b-Optional

c-Unnecessary

12- According to you, classroom oral participation is:

a-important

b-optional

c-unnecessary

13- Justify

.....  
.....  
.....

**Section Three: Factors influencing Willingness to Communicate inside the Classroom**

14-if your teacher affects your willingness to communicate, is that due to:

a-the time he gives you to talk in the class

b-teachers' encouragement to you to participate

c-teacher feedback after speaking

15-You avoid classroom participation because of the subject matter (the module) is :

a-difficult

b-new

c- not of your interest

16-Do your classmates influence your willingness to communicate:

a-positively?

b- negatively?

17- Justify

.....  
.....  
.....

18- If you have any comments or suggestions, please add them here

.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your collaboration.

## **Appendix 2:**

### **Teachers 'Interview**

Q1: How far do you agree with the idea that the most challenging aspect of teaching English, is to get all the students to participate ?

Q2: How can learners' speaking ability be influenced by their willingness to communicate?

Q3: What are the main factors that hinder students from speaking in oral expression session?

(shyness, stress, anxiety...)

Q4: In what situations do learners feel most willing to communicate?(individually, in pairs, or group work)

Q5: What kind of activities are useful in making students willing to communicate in the classroom?

Q6: To what extent are students willing to communicate when they are prepared, or when they are interested in the topic?

Q7: Do classmates affect each other's willingness to communicate inside the classroom?

Q8: How can the teacher raise the students 'willingness to communicate in the classroom?