# The Relationship between Students' Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English and Their Teacher Immediacy Behaviours

Ainun Nurdzizati[1], Nur Aeni[2*], Ryan Rayhana Sofyan[3]

[1,2,3]English Education Department, State University of Makassar, Indonesia
*Corresponding E-mail: nur.aeni@unm.ac.id

**Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the relationship between students' WTC and teacher immediacy behaviors, to reveal what kind of immediacy behaviors are used in English classrooms, and to understand how students perceive teacher immediacy that affects students' WTC. The researcher employed a QUAL-quan model or exploratory mixed methods design. The data was collected through observation, questionnaire, and interview to achieve the research objective. The sample of this study was 30 students in second grade in MAN Pangkep. The questionnaire analysis using Pearson Product Moment found that students' WTC and TI have a positive correlation of 0.7013. And observation results showed that the teacher used various immediacy, including verbal and non-verbal behaviors. And students have a positive viewpoint on teacher immediacy affects their willingness to communicate.

Keywords: *Relationship, WTC, Students, Behaviours.*

## 1. Introduction

One of the important aspects of human life is communication. Communication is a necessity for every single person. People need to communicate to share their ideas and express their feelings. In the teaching and learning process, especially for language teaching and learning, having the ability to communicate with the target language becomes one of the goals of the learning process. Hence, students' willingness to communicate (WTC) using the target language becomes a vital aspect of the learning process in language classes. Having students with a high willingness to speak or communicate in the language classroom can be determined as one of the successful aspects of the teaching and learning process, and it is essential. Simic (2014) says that willingness to communicate (WTC) is related to a personal general personality orientation toward talking.

However, in most EFL classrooms in Indonesia, the rate of students' willingness to communicate is quite low. Rihardini, Yaniafari, & Mukminatien (2021) state that in Indonesia, many English teachers have a common problem during the process of teaching and learning in their English classes, which is the students' unwillingness to communicate using the target language, hence communicating using the target language is essential and beneficial for the students. Aeni, Rahman, & Strid (2017) also found that students commonly felt afraid or apprehensive when facing oral communication. Students with a high apprehension will have more symptoms than the other students in the low group of apprehension.

Kang (2005) states that learners' willingness to communicate can be increased by arranging as much as possible the opportunities that might construct a comfortable environment for the

learners to initiate to communicate, because the higher the learners' willingness to communicate with the target language, the more significant for them to reach the second language acquisition. Therefore, teachers, as the key factor, the facilitator, and the guide in the classroom, have a big responsibility to create an opportunity and comfortable environment for the students to increase their enthusiasm to be a part of the learning process; hence it could increase their willingness to communicate.

Havwini (2019) states that students with high WTC are also affected by their teachers' consistency in using English during classroom activities to communicate and explain the instruction to the students. Hence, teachers' immediacy attributes subsidize students' willingness to participate in classroom activities. No matter how good or proficient an individual is in their second language ability, their effort at establishing sound communication will not be as good as the one who is fully willing to communicate (Mohammadzadeh & Jafarigohar, 2012).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2. 1. EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

The heightened learning and teaching of English around the world over the recent years has made new professionals in terms of teachers of EFL (Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, Hill, & Pincas, 2003). The EFL term refers to the use of English in a state or place where the English language itself is not the primary language of that state or place. English as an international language ranks second as the mother tongue after Chinese. And of the 4.000 and 5.000 living languages, English is the most widely used. We can find around 300 million native speakers on every continent.

In Indonesia, English is used and taught as a foreign language, and over the years, there has been a lot of work to increase the quality of EFL teaching for learners. In 1994, a policy was arranged to allow the schools to teach English to their 4th until 6th graders. There had been a lot of activities to revise the syllabus and curriculum to match the students' needs. For instance, in Madya's 1968 and 1994 versions (2001), English becomes a foreign language in Indonesia. There has been a growing tendency in many cities that English must be learned and taught from the 1st grade of primary schools, even from kindergarten.

Today, the 2013 curriculum is applied in all educational systems in Indonesia. English, as one of the important subjects, has regularly being taught every week. However, Madya (2001) indicates that EFL teaching at school has failed to develop the students' English communicative skills. Lie (2007) also explains that even though English is taught throughout secondary school until the university level, the competence of EFL learners at high school and university levels is generally low.

### 2. 2. WTC (Willingness to Communicate)

McCroskey & Bear (1985) in Shamsudin, Othman, Jahedi, & Arlas (2017) state that willingness to communicate (WTC) is a trait that is consistent in various communication situations and receivers. Simic (2014) says that willingness to communicate (WTC) is related to a personal general personality orientation toward talking. Dorney (2013) explains that willingness to communicate refers to a person's motivation to use the target language to communicate in a situation.

a.   Heuristic Model of WTC

MacIntyre et al. (1998) illustrate a Heuristic model of the variable influencing the willingness to communicate in the L2, which has six layers or six parts in its pyramid form. Each layer on the Heuristic model of WTC in the L2 demonstrated two basic structures, which are representatives of situation-specific that influence WTC at an exact time and representatives of the stable and enduring influence of the process. The first three up layers: (layer I, II, and III), including communication behavior, behavioral intention,

and situated antecedents, took place as representatives of situation-specific that influenced WTC at an exact time. And the next three layers (layers IV, V, and VI), including

motivational properties, affective-cognitive context, and social-individual context represent the stable and enduring influence of the process.
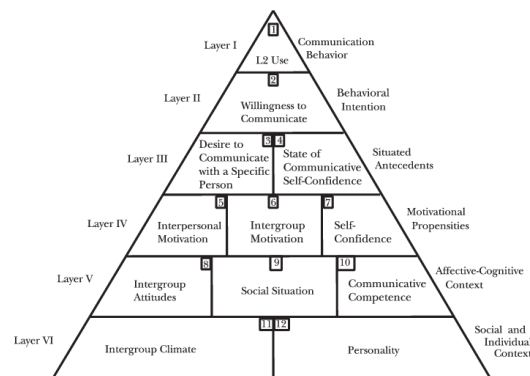


Figure 1. Heuristic Model of WTC

b.   The Importance of WTC

Riasati (2012) explains that the willingness to communicate (WTC) is vital in learning a second and/or foreign language. To initiate communication, the willingness to communicate from the individual to start communication with one another is needed. The situation of difficulty faced by students to speak and express their thought can lead students to kill their potential (Fitri & Aeni, 2022). Some researchers have explained that willingness to communicate (WTC) becomes a fundamental aspect to reach the goal of the target language. WTC is hoped to help language learners access the language learning process easily, to lead them to open wide opportunities to practice their target language (Riasati,2018).

c.   Factors Affecting WTC

Riasati (2012) finds some factors affecting the WTC of Iranian students. They are task type, gender and age of interlocutor, closeness and participation with interlocutor, grading, discussion topic, personal characteristics, teacher's role, classroom environment and atmosphere, and speaking ability. Azwar, Harahap, & Azwandi (2021) mention various factors affecting learners' willingness to speak, such as the topic discussion (topic interest, familiarity, preparation, comfort, and topic level), size of the group among the students,

task level, gender and age of the student partner, anxiety of making a mistake and evaluation. Riasati, (2018) sums up two categories affecting students' willingness to communicate. The two categories are environmental factors and individual factors.

## 2. 3. Teacher Immediacy Behavior

Paul, Maiti, & Nath (2019) define that teacher immediacy as an implicit and explicit behavior in communication to minimize psychological and emotional barriers, Christophel & Gorham (1995) categorize teacher immediacy into two categories: verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Tawil (2019) mentions that verbal communication is delivered through spoken or written words. In contrast, nonverbal communication is caught through emotions, characteristics, and attitudes.

a.   Verbal Immediacy

Wahyuni (2018) explains that the verbal immediacy of the teacher can give clear instructions and explanations. The teacher can help the learner use their ideas in words, improve their communication skills, and help them understand the meaning of the text. Other verbal abilities of the teacher can communicate orally and/or written. Sofyan & Mahmud (2018) find some teacher interactions in their study, which consists of the teacher encouraging and praising the students to make

interaction with them, involving the ideas that come from students in classroom discussion to increase their confidence to participate in classroom activities, dealing with students' feeling, having question and answer section, giving direction, and interrupt students' behavior.

b.    Nonverbal Immediacy

Wahyuni (2018), nonverbal communication is an activity of conveying the meaning of a message through body language, and multi-media communication, both spontaneous and natural.

## 2. 4. Teacher's Role

Aeni, S, Hasriani, & Asriati (2021) explain that educators become one of the measurement elements to measure the successes of the teaching and learning process. Educators are expected to improve the teaching and learning process which is vital for communication activities. The teacher as the chief in the classroom has the main job of leading the teaching and learning activities; the teacher takes the role of a tutor, manager, and facilitator (Fitri & Aeni, 2022)

## 3. Research Methodology

## 3. 1. Research Design

This research employed the QUAL-quan model or exploratory mixed methods design. Exploratory mixed method design collected the data using the qualitative method first, which is more profoundly weighted than the quantitative method. There are three types of mixed methods research designs; the QUAL-quan model, the QUAN-qual model, and the QUAN-QUAL model (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011). However, in this study, the researchers employed the QUAL-quan model to reach a significant analysis of this research.

## 3. 2. Source of Data

The data source consists of two types of data: primary and secondary. The primary data requires interaction with research subjects and in-depth attention from researchers, such as interviews, observation, surveys, questionnaires, and others. While secondary data is the type of data that does not require interaction with research subjects, such as books, research journals, articles, blogs, and any other sources related to this research.

## 3. 3. Research Participants

Research participants are subjects in an experiment or trial who agree to participate in a study voluntarily. 30 students in the second grade in MAN PANGKEP are part of the research participants. The researchers observe the classroom activity, distribute questionnaires on WTC and teacher immediacy, and have an interview to have a deep understanding of how students perceive teacher immediacy that affects their willingness to communicate.

## 3. 4. Research Instrument and Technique of Data Collection

a.    Observation

In the first stage of collecting the data, the researchers observed the teaching and learning process in the English classroom by recording the activities from the beginning until the end of the classroom activities. The researchers then took a note from the tape recording of what kind of teacher's immediacy applied in the teaching and learning process.

b.    Questionnaire

The questionnaires were distributed after the classroom observation and obtained data on how significant the relationship between the two variables was. The questionnaires consist of WTC and teacher immediacy (TI).

## c. Interview

The interview was conducted to synchronize and support the data from observation and questionnaires with the participants to have a deep understanding of how teacher immediacy behavior affects students' willingness to communicate. The researchers interviewed some students based on their answers to the questionnaires.

## 3. 5. Data Analysis

a. Observation checklists and video recordings were analyzed and classified teacher's immediacy behaviors applied in their teaching process through notes or script.

b. The questionnaire uses five-point scales as follows:

Table 1. Questionnaire Scale

| Series of Statement | Score |
|---|---|
| 1. Very High | 5 |
| 2. High | 4 |
| 3. Moderate | 3 |
| 4. Low | 2 |
| 5. Very Low | 1 |

The data were analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) through the Microsoft Excel program. Pearson correlation is used to measure the correlation when both variables to be correlated are expressed as continuous (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011).

The final result of data analysis of the correlation coefficient ranges from -1.00 to + 1.00. The positive value between two variables represents a positive correlation which is move in the same direction, while the negative value represents a negative correlation between two variables, which move in opposite directions.

c. The data gained from the interview was transcribed, identified, classified, and interpreted to have a deep understanding of how the students perceive teachers' immediacy behaviors (verbal and non-verbal immediacy) that affect their willingness to communicate using the English language.

## 4. Findings

## 4. 1. RQ 1

Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was applied to provide the answer to the research question: is there any significant relation between EFL students' WTC and their teacher's immediacy behaviors? The data of students' questionnaire result and Pearson product-moment result is presented in the following table:

Table 2. WTC Questionnaire Result

| No. Respondent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 98 | 97 | 86 | 98 | 103 | 91 | 94 | 88 | 94 | 88 | 89 | 60 | 88 | 102 | 75 |

| No. Respondent | 19 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 104 | 103 | 87 | 113 | 115 | 73 | 79 | 92 | 110 | 80 | 97 | 82 | 95 | 74 | 113 |

Table 3. TI Questionnaire Result

| No. Respondent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 108 | 103 | 96 | 102 | 109 | 93 | 94 | 90 | 96 | 110 | 103 | 95 | 85 | 103 | 98 |

| No. Respondent | 19 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score | 108 | 105 | 102 | 113 | 113 | 92 | 83 | 104 | 113 | 91 | 105 | 101 | 110 | 111 | 114 |

Table 4. TI Total Score

| Total Score of WTC questionnaire | 2789 |
|---|---|
| Total Score of TI questionnaire | 3047 |

Table 5. Correlation Analysis Result

| Model | Pearson Correlation |
|---|---|
| WTC and TI | 0.7013 |

Using Microsoft Excel assistant, the result shows the Pearson correlation value is 0.7013 which can be concluded that the two variables can be categorized as a high positive correlation (r=0.70 to 0.90). Hence, it can be summed up that students' willingness to communicate (WTC) and teacher immediacy behavior has a strong or high positive correlation.

## 4. 2. RQ 2

The observation results provide information on what kind of teacher immediacy is used by teachers in their English classroom from the beginning of the learning process until the closing phases.

Table 6. Observation Result (Verbal Immediacy)

| Phases | Teacher's Verbal Immediacy |
|---|---|
| **Beginning** | • Asking students to prepare the class<br>• Praying before starting the class<br>• Taking register<br>• Saying greeting to students<br>• Asking students' condition<br>• Calling students by name<br>• Asking students about the previous material<br>• Inserting humours |
| **Main Activity** | • Encourage students to speak<br>• Calling students by their name<br>• Calling students by their group name<br>• Give feedback<br>• Give advice to students<br>• Motivate students<br>• Saying 'hello' or 'hi' to get students attention<br>• Inserting humour while teaching<br>• Praising students for their work, action, comments, opinion, and feedback |

| Closing | <ul><li>Asking students' question</li><li>Encourage students to speak by asking question or opinion</li><li>Give students advice</li><li>Give students motivation</li><li>Praising students</li><li>Praying after the class</li><li>Saying greeting to close the teaching process</li></ul> |
|---|---|

Table 7. Observation Result (Nonverbal Immediacy)

| Phases | Teacher's Nonverbal Immediacy |
|---|---|
| Beginning | <ul><li>Being enthusiastic while teaching</li><li>Looking at students while teaching</li><li>Using gestures</li><li>Smiling to students</li><li>Dressing neatly</li><li>Having eye contact whit students</li></ul> |
| Main Activity | <ul><li>Using various vocal variety (non-monotone) while teaching</li><li>Smiling at the class</li><li>Smiling at individual students</li><li>Having relax body posture during the classroom activity</li><li>Having eye contact whit students</li><li>Nodding along students' responses</li><li>Walking around the classroom when teaching</li><li>Looking very short at board or notes while teaching</li><li>Using gestures</li></ul> |
| Closing | <ul><li>Smiling at the class</li><li>Having eye contact whit students</li><li>Nodding along students' responses</li><li>Using gestures</li></ul> |

From the observation result, it can be concluded that teachers used various immediacy behaviors in the classroom to engage the students in classroom activity and encourage them to speak or be active during the lesson. The teacher's verbal immediacy is used in the class, including taking the register, praying before starting the class, calling students by name, giving feedback, delivering humor, asking questions, and praising students' work. While teacher's nonverbal immediacy used in the classroom consists of being enthusiastic, having eye contact, using gestures, smiling at individuals and the whole classroom, using vocal variety, dressing neatly, having a relaxed body position, nodding, coming closer to students, walking around the classroom, and looking very little at board and/or notes.

## 4. 3. RQ 3

These data from the interview section are shown to support the result of the correlation between two variables. It also answers the research question about how the students perceive teachers' immediacy behaviors (verbal and non-verbal immediacy) that affect their willingness to communicate in English. The third research question aims to investigate how the student perceives teacher immediacy in their willingness to communicate. In this study, the finding shows that students have a

positive viewpoint on teacher immediacy affects their willingness to communicate.

## 5. Discussions

The findings confessed that students' WTC and teacher immediacy behavior have a high positive correlation with the r-value of 0.7013, which means the more effectively the teacher applied their immediacy behavior (verbal and nonverbal immediacy), the more willing the students to engage in the classroom activities. This result is agreeable with former commensurate studies.

Sheybani (2019), investigates Iranian EFL's willingness to communicate and their instructor's immediacy and finds that they have a great association between Iranian EFL WTC and their instructor's immediacy qualities. Havwini (2019) states that students' high WTC is also affected by their teachers' consistency in using English during classroom activities, which will lead the students to participate in oral communication. In inference, the finding of this research is supported by numerous former investigations from Indonesia and other countries.

The second research question leads to finding what teacher immediacy is applied in English classrooms. The finding shows that the teacher used various signs of verbal and nonverbal immediacy in her classroom. Verbal immediacy behaviors used in this classroom are praying before starting the class, taking the register, giving advice, calling students by name, giving feedback, inserting humor, asking questions, and praising students. Havwini (2019) also supports that teacher strategies in terms of asking students question effectively increase students' participation in the classroom. Another support by Sofyan & Mahmud (2018) explains that teacher effort to encourage and praise can increase their confidence to participate in classroom activities. While teacher's nonverbal immediacy used in this class, including being enthusiastic, looking at the student, using gestures, using vocal variety, smiling, having eye contact, dressing neatly, having a relaxed body position, nodding, walking around the class, focusing on students, and coming closer to students.

The third research question aims to investigate how students perceive teacher immediacy in their willingness to communicate. In this study, the finding shows that students have a positive viewpoint on teacher immediacy behaviors that affect their willingness to communicate. This finding is aligned with the finding on the first research question where the r value of WTC and TI is 0.731. Wulandari (2015) finds that students' willingness to communicate is influenced by teachers' roles in the classroom. Educators are expected to improve the teaching and learning process which is vital for communication activities. The teacher, as the chief in the classroom, has the main job of leading the teaching and learning activities. Teacher takes a role of a tutor, manager, and facilitator (Fitri & Aeni, 2022)

However, the researchers found the difference between this study and former studies, which is the way teachers take closer steps toward students when speaking seems to have the lowest positive effect on students because it may increase students' anxiety and uncomfortable atmosphere for them. Hence, teachers should pay attention to their steps to attract the students to speak.

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the deliberation of the findings and discussion part, the researchers accomplish that students' willingness to communicate has a positive correlation with teacher immediacy behaviors, both verbal and non-verbal. The more effectively the teacher applies their immediacy behavior (verbal and nonverbal immediacy), the more willing the students are to engage in classroom activities. However, the teacher also should pay attention to their behaviors to make the students engage in their learning process because some of the behaviors may create uncomfortable situations

for students that may lead them to be unwilling to communicate in the classroom.

## References

Aeni, N., S, N. F., Hasriani, & Asriati. (2021, December). Inserting ELSA Application in Hybrid Learning to Enhance the Students' Motivation in Speaking. Celebes Journal of Language Studies, 1(2), 271-277.

Fitri, N., & Aeni, N. (2022). The Contribution of Active Learning Strategies in Activating Students' Oral Communication. Uniqbu Journal of Social Sciences (UJSS), 2(3), 98-106.

Gay, L., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2011). Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Applications (10th Edition). Pearson.

Havwini, T. (2019). Indonesian EFL students' willingness to communicate in the 2013 curriculum implementation: A case study. TEFLIN Journal, 30(1), 105-119.

Madya, S. (2001). Developing Standards for EFL in Indonesia as Part of the EFL Teaching Reform. TEFLIN, XIII (2), 142-151.

Riasati, M. J. (2012). EFL Learners' Perception of Factors Influencing Willingness to Speak English in Language Classrooms: A Qualitative Study. World Applied Sciences Journal, 17(10), 1287-1297.

Riasati, M. J. (2018). Willingness to speak English among foreign language learners: A casual model. Cogent Education, 5(1), 1-17.

Rihardini, A. A., Yaniafari, R. P., & Mukminatien, N. (2021). Students' willingness to communicate using English: A survey study. Paramasastra, 8(1).

Hamsudin, M., Othman, M., Jahedi, M., & Arlas, D. (2017). Enhancing English Learners' Willingness to Communicate through Debate and Philosophy Inquiry Discussion. English Language Teaching, 10(8), 145-152.

Sheybani, M. (2019). The relation between EFL learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) and their teacher immediacy attributes: A structural equation modelling. Cogent Psychology, 6(1), 1-14.

Simic, I. (2014). Willingness to Communicate: A comparison between Australian and Serbian students. Graz: zur Erlangung des akademichen Grades, 1-104.

Sofyan, R. R., & Mahmud, M. (2018). Teacher Talk in Classroom Interaction: A Study at an English Department in Indonesia. ELT Worldwide, 1(1), 45-58.

Tawil, R. A. (2019). Nonverbal communication in text-based, asynchronous online education. IRRODL, 20(1), 144-164.

Wahyuni, A. (2018). The power of verbal and nonverbal communication in learning. ASSEHR, 125, 80-83.

Wulandari, S. (2015). Factors influencing students' willingness to communicate in transactional speaking courses.