The Relationship between Intermediate EFL Students' Oral Reproduction and their Willingness to Communicate and Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

Oral production plays a significant part in any academic field, especially in TEFL (Heyde,1979). This study aimed to illuminate and investigate the two psychological and crucial factors influencing the oral production: Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and Self-efficacy (SE). An attempt was made to assess the relationship among WTC, Self-Efficacy, and Oral reproduction. In so doing, after homogenizing the students as Intermediate ones via a placement test, two questionnaires of WTC (McCroskey, 1987, 1992) and Self-efficacy SE (Owen & Froman, 1988) were administered to 48 intermediate students. Having administered the questionnaires, the researcher asked the subjects to reproduce very short stories from the book entitled "Steps to Understanding". Based on the questionnaires, the subjects were divided into four groups: 1) High WTC, High SE, 2) High WTC, Low SE, 3) Low WTC, High SE, and 4) Low WTC, Low SE. The data collected from the questionnaires as well as the scores given to their oral reproductions were analyzed through SPSS (21.00). Results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups of High WTC, High SE and Low WTC, Low SE. The former group outperformed the latter one. The outcomes of this study can have benefits for both foreign language teachers and learners. They both can attain better results by focusing more on these two psychological factors in their roles. The findings of the present study demonstrated that more concentration ought to be placed on these two psychological factors in order to enhance students' oral reproductions.

Introduction

Two psychological constructs gaining recognition in the last decade are self-efficacy (SE) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC). Initially introduced by MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, and Noels (1998) for language studies, WTC can function as both an individual difference variable in learning L2 in addition to its being a goal for L2 instruction. Alemi (2012) asserts that both WTC and self-efficacy have been less researched in the Iranian EFL context when compared with other individual differences factors such as motivation, aptitude, and learning strategy. This gap in the literature is more evident when it comes to the potential effect WTC and self-efficacy on oral reproduction in L2 acquisition. In other words, the aim of this study was to investigate the relationships between these two psychological variables (WTC and self-efficacy) and oral reproduction among Iranian English learners.

A new concept in the psychology of language is termed as Willingness to Communicate (WTC) that emerges from the importance of interaction in language learning (Mackey & Gass, 2006; Swain, 2005). WTC is manifested in several models, of which the two most important are McCroskey's (1997) Willingness-To-Communicate Model and Clement, Baker, MacIntyre Willingness-To-Communicate Model (2003).

Willingness to communicate (WTC) has been used to illustrate a person's degree of inclination to participate in discourse in a second or foreign language (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei & Noels, 1998). Some researchers have discussed that a rudimentary aim of second language education should be the creation of WTC in the language

learning process. Expectedly, WTC is able to facilitate language learning because as it increases among learners, there is more chance for authentic L2 use (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod 2001). It is suggested that higher WTC among learners results in better opportunity for practice in an L2 (Second Language) and authentic L2 usage.

On the other hand, low self-efficacy also has been linked to low academic motivation, such as not persisting at a task or not working hard (Schunk, 1991). Bandura (1977) postulates that self-efficacy affects college outcomes by increasing students' motivation and persistence to master challenging academic tasks and by fostering the efficient use of acquired knowledge and skills. Bandura (1977) argues that if a person believes that he cannot successfully complete a task, then he is more likely to be unsuccessful—resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy. As a result, a person with low self-efficacy will also have negative expectations of themselves, thus leading to the avoidance of those certain tasks. Similarly, in lieu of avoidance, when there is an increase in self-efficacy expectations, there will be an increase in the frequency of behavior. Bandura believes that a better understanding of self-efficacy beliefs, leads to a better understanding and predictability of behavior.

Purpose of the study
This study had three main purposes. The first purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between Iranian English language learners' level of self-efficacy (SE) and their oral production in their lectures in the classes. The second purpose of this study was to explore the level WTC among these English language learners to see if there was any significant relation with their oral production skills and WTC in their class lectures. The third purpose was to probe into the interactional effect of both WTC and SE on oral production to investigate if these two variables combined, would they improve the oral reproduction?

In order to achieve this purpose, a group of English language learners' oral production were video-recorded and rated based on validate and reliable criteria introduced by Farhady, Jafarpoor, &Birjandi (1999). In order to do so, the validated questionnaires of self-efficacy CASES (Owen and Froman, 1988) and WTC (McCroskey) were used.

Research Questions
RQ1: Is there any significant relationship between intermediate EFL learners' oral reproduction and their willingness to communicate?

RQ2: Is there any significant relationship between intermediate EFL learners' oral reproduction and their self-efficacy?

RQ3: Is there any significant relationship between intermediate EFL learners' oral reproduction and the interactional effect of both willingness to communicate and self-efficacy?

Research Hypotheses
H01: There is no significant relationship between intermediate EFL learners' oral reproduction and their willingness to communicate.

H02: There is no significant relationship between intermediate EFL learners' oral reproduction and their self-efficacy.

H03: There is no significant relationship between intermediate EFL learners' oral reproduction and the interactional effect of both willingness to communicate and self-efficacy?

The participants were 58 MA EFL students (male and female) at Islamic Azad University of Zanjan and were selected on the basis of convenience sampling. Having been homogenized via a proficiency test (Cambridge Placement Test, 2010), 48 students were selected as Intermediate ones. Their age ranged between 20 and 45. The current study was ex-post – facto design, since there are two independent variables (SE& WTC) and one dependent one (oral reproduction).

Data Analysis

Research Question one

Is there any significant relationship between Intermediate EFL students' level of self-efficacy and their oral reproduction?

A Pearson correlation was run to probe any significant relationship between Intermediate EFL students' level of self-efficacy and their oral reproduction. Based on the results displayed in Table 1 (r (44) =.76, P < .05 representing a large effect size) it can be concluded that there was a significant, large correlation between self-efficacy and oral reproduction. Thus the first null-hypothesis was rejected.

Table 1 *Pearson Correlation; Self-efficacy with Oral reproduction*

		Oral reproduction
	Pearson Correlation	.766**
Self-efficacy	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question two

Is there any significant relationship between Intermediate EFL students' level of WTC and their oral reproduction?

A Pearson correlation was run to probe any significant relationship between Intermediate EFL students' level of WTC and their oral reproduction. Based on the results displayed in Table 2 (r (44) = .79, P < .05 representing a large effect size) it can be concluded that there was a significant and large correlation between WTC and oral reproduction. Thus the second null-hypothesis was rejected.

Table 2 *Pearson Correlation; WTC with Oral reproduction*

		Oral reproduction
	Pearson Correlation	.798**
WTC	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	46

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question three

Is there any significant relationship between the interactional effect of Intermediate EFL students' self-efficacy and WTC and their oral reproduction?

A one-way ANOVA was run to compare the four groups' means on the oral reproduction in order to probe the third research question. Based on the results displayed in Table (3), it can be concluded that the high self-efficacy high WTC (HSHW) showed the highest mean on oral reproduction (M = 5.43, SD = .38). This was followed by low self-efficacy high WTC (LSHW) (M = 4.25, SD = .52), high self-efficacy low WTC (HSLW) (M = 4.13, SD = .51) and low self-efficacy low WTC (LSLW) (M = 2.83, SD = .40).

Table 3 *Descriptive Statistics; Oral reproduction by Groups*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
HSHW	14	5.43	.385	.103	5.21	5.65	5	6
HSLW	10	4.25	.518	.183	3.69	4.56	3	5
LSHW	9	4.13	.524	.214	3.70	4.80	3	5
LSLW	13	2.83	.408	.167	2.40	3.26	3	4
Total	46	4.16	1.047	.180	3.75	4.56	3	6

Note. HSHW= high self-efficacy high WTC, HSLW= high self-efficacy low WTC, LSHW = low self-efficacy high WTC and LSLW = low self-efficacy low WTC
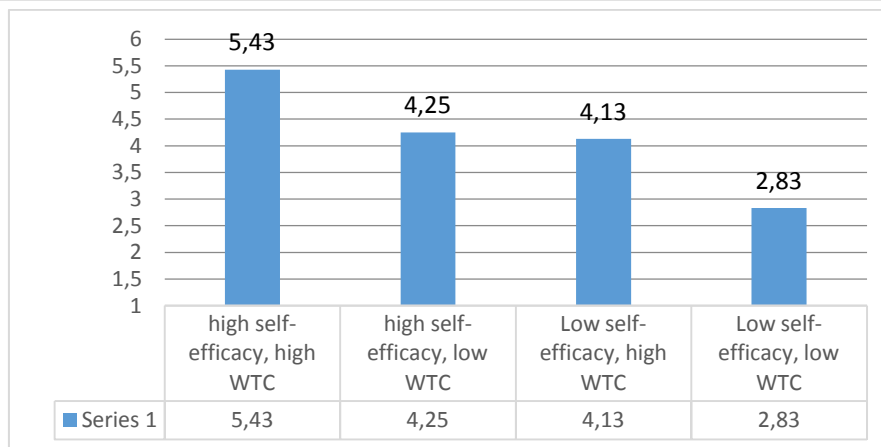
Graph 1 Oral Performance by Groups

The one-way ANOVA results (F (3, 42) = 71.48, P < .05, ω^2 = .81 representing a large effect size) indicated that there were significant differences between the means of the four groups on the oral reproduction. Thus the third null-hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4 *One-Way ANOVA; Oral reproduction by Groups*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	35.172	3	11.724	71.487	.000
Within Groups	6.912	42	.164		
Total	42.084	45			

Although the F-value of 70.487 indicated significant differences between the means of the four groups, the post-hoc Scheffe's tests (Table 5) should be run to compare the means two by two. Based on the results displayed in Table 5, it can be concluded that:

Table 5: *Multiple Comparisons*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
HSHW	HSLW	1.18*	.198	.000	.72	1.89
	LSHW	1.30*	.218	.000	.53	1.83
	LSLW	2.60*	.218	.000	1.95	3.24
HSLW	LSLW	1.42*	.242	.000	.58	2.01
LSHW	HSLW	.120	.242	.965	-.59	.84
	LSLW	1.30*	.258	.000	.65	2.18

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The high self-efficacy and high WTC group (M = 5.43) outperformed the high self-efficacy and low WTC group (M = 4.23) on the oral reproduction (MD = 1.18, P < .05).

The high self-efficacy and high WTC group (M = 5.43) outperformed the low self-efficacy and high WTC group (M = 4.13) on the oral reproduction (MD = 1.30, P < .05).

The high self-efficacy and high WTC group (M = 5.43) outperformed the low self-efficacy and low WTC group (M = 2.83) on the oral reproduction (MD = 2.60, P < .05).

The high self-efficacy and low WTC group (M = 4.25) outperformed the low self-efficacy and low WTC group (M = 2.83) on the oral reproduction (MD = 1.42, P < .05).

There was not any significant difference between the mean scores of the low self-efficacy and high WTC group (M = 4.25) and high self-efficacy and low WTC group (M = 4.13) on the oral reproduction (MD = .120, P > .05).

The low self-efficacy and high WTC group (M = 4.13) outperformed the low self-efficacy and low WTC group (M = 2.83) on the oral reproduction (MD = 1.30, P < .05).

Inter-rater Reliability

To make sure that the two raters fall in with each other over the scores assigned and don't deviate much, a Pearson correlation test is usually carried out. In this research, a Pearson correlation test was similarly run to probe the inter-rater reliability of the two raters who rated the subjects' oral reproduction. Based on the results displayed in Table 6 (r (44) = .70, P < .05 representing a large effect size) it can be concluded that there was a significant agreement between the two raters:

Table 6 *Pearson Correlation; Inter-Rater Reliability*

		Rater2
	Pearson Correlation	.704**
Rater1	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	46

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, an attempt was made to find answers to the three questions concerning the relationship among the three variables of self-efficacy, WTC, and oral reproduction. Appropriate statistical procedures were followed to obtain the required responses for each question. The analysis demonstrated that students with high WTC outperformed the students with low WTC. Both WTC and self-efficacy played an important role in students' oral reproduction. High self-efficacy alone was not enough for students to deliver satisfying lectures. In this research, cases with high self-efficacy were observed to have problems such as pausing, hemming, panicking, and mumbling while giving their lectures. However, those utilizing the high quality of both WTC and Self-efficacy didn't face such difficulties in their performances.

This study was in line with McCroskey and McCroskey's (1986a, 1986b) findings that WTC is positively associated with self-efficacy and self-perceived communication competence. In addition, this study proved that as Chan and McCroskey (1987) realized, students with higher scores on the WTC scale were more likely to have more oral reproduction in class than those who scored low on WTC.

This study was also consistent with the Yashima's (2002) findings that there is a direct relationship between WTC and students' attitude toward the international community in the EFL context. This study was also in agreement with Clément et al. (2003) outcomes that there is a relationship between WTC and students' attitude toward the target language through linguistic self-confidence. This study was in line with Çetinkaya (2007) results that WTC in English in the EFL context is directly related both to attitude toward the international community and perceived linguistic self-confidence.

According to the outcomes of this study, as Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu (2004) assert, students who showed willingness to communicate in various contact situations were more inclined to initiate communication in the classroom. As this research proved, in accordance with Yashima's (2002) study, students' self-confidence in L2 communicative competence was crucial for their willingness to be involved in L2 communication.

The findings of this research were also in line with Heidari (2013) that there was a significant difference between students' WTC and their oral presentations. Heidari (2013) in his research statistically proved that there was a strong and positive relationship between WTC degree of learners and their oral presentations.

This research was also consistent with Cao and Jiaotong' (2012) outcomes that there was a significant and positive correlation between the

subjects' WTC ratio and their oral reproduction. They found that learners with higher WTC were more inclined to produce more complex and eloquent language in their oral performances than the students with lower WTC.

Corresponding to the findings of Multon, Brown and Lent (1991) who illustrated that the higher self-efficient students received higher scores in their performances, this study shows that self-efficacy can play a great role in the quality of oral reproduction that if this significant variable is integrated with high WTC, a highly desirable result will be yielded.

In accordance with Bernhardt (1997) study, if people have high positive self-efficacy about learning a second language, then they believe that they have the power and abilities to reach this goal. On the other hand, people with low self-efficacy feel that they do not have the power and abilities to learn a language, thus admitting failure from the start. The current study was in agreement with Staikovic and Luthans (1988). There is a strong relationship between self-efficacy and general performance of the individuals were observed through a research on 114 experimental studies, which had considered the relationship between the self-efficacy and their oral performance found out that there is a strong and positive relationship between the self-efficacy and the oral reproduction.

The findings of this research was also in line with Sawyer, Graham, and Harris(1992). They found that poor self-efficacy and poor motivation negatively affect a student's ability to speak well. The current study was in agreement with Pajares et al.(1999). They proved there was a positive correlation between self-efficacy and learners' oral achievements. The current study was in agreement with Schunk(2003) and Schunk&Swarz (1993).There is evidence that active efforts to influence self-efficacy in oral reproduction will lead to improved oral performance.

As it is crystal clear, by considering group 1 (high self-efficacious students with high WTC), it can be claimed that having a high self-efficacy in addition to high WTC can guarantee the high quality of oral reproduction in terms of fluency and accuracy. In sum, it must be emphasized that the interaction of both variables of high SE and high WTC has positive effects on oral reproduction of students. The study concluded that there was a significant relationship between intermediate EFL students' self-efficacy and their oral reproduction in the first null hypothesis. The second null hypothesis was also rejected on the ground that there was a significant relationship between intermediate EFL students' WTC and their oral reproduction. The third null hypothesis was also rejected as there was a significant relationship between oral reproduction of intermediate EFL students and the interaction of self-efficacy and WTC. This study shows that self-efficacy, alone, cannot guarantee a satisfactory lecture.

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