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The Effect of Movie Sessions on Intermediate Students' Willingness to Communicate through Speaking

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Abstract

There has been an extensive research carried out on the role of Audio Visual Aids (AVAs) in enhancement of second language learners' engagement in the topic of the day to be covered in an educational session. This had led to the top-notch design and fruitful creation of I-TALK(movie session), which consists of movies and songs (jukeboxes, footages and movies) in addition to pre and post activities in order to boost English learners' motivation to put their knowledge into practice in Safir Language Academy. However, the measurement with which to estimate the successful performance of learners typically discovered in their oral utterances based on the Willingness To Communicate (WTC) criterion yet to be the center of attention in many of pedagogical curriculum in ELT domain. Consequently, any built-in accessories adjacent to the course book could possibly add up to the learners' involvement in the lesson procedure by default, which would result in improved communication skills more specifically, speaking skill. Nonetheless, the WTC of learners has not been by any means measured thus analyzed. To conduct a thorough study, two classes of intermediate students, both male and female, each comprising of 7 learners were chosen. Furthermore, a questionnaire was handed out, before and after the I-TALK sessions, in order to compare the results. The items of the study contained the psycholinguistic criteria to cover the learner's self-impression on their oral achievement, which is followed by the contrastive analysis, given to the results of pre and post I-Talk sessions .The findings demonstrated the positive, considerable change in the learner's self-impression on their capabilities of communication skills which ultimately denoted the boost in the WTC factor.

Keywords: *WTC, Speaking , I-talk*

Introduction

English as an international language has established a crucial position as a lingua franca. For a long time, the primary purpose of language learning was to develop linguistic competence and to

master the structure of the language. However, in recent decades, the aim of learning English has shifted from the mastery of structure to the ability to use language for communicative purposes. Therefore, the communication aspect of acquiring English has received more attention. As opportunities for oral communication have grown, ELT learners have become increasingly more preoccupied with communicating in that language. They have to apply these abilities in order to be a good communicator in different conditions. A good communicator can handle the situation by the use of all skills, specially speaking. Speaking is practical in any field such as education, job, and routines and so on. Via speaking, people express their ideas and thoughts. Therefore, the ability to speak can pave the way in any stage for the speaker. Many factors can influence this skill, i.e. cognitive and affective factors (Brown 1994), which among those, Willingness To Communicate (WTC), plays a vital role in any given speaking condition. MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, and Donovan (2002), define WTC as a state of readiness to enter a discourse at a particular time with a specific person or people using an L2. There is a distinction between second and foreign language settings that arises from more opportunities for interaction and communication in another language and context (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Therefore, students in EFL societies have less opportunities to practice and be exposed to authentic, real life materials in order to improve their speaking's motivation and ability. If learners can develop a willingness to communicate in the class, they will hopefully take those habits outside the classroom and enact them in the real world.

The concern of this research is particularly to highlight the role of WTC on the speaking of EFL learners, who are exposed to more real life materials than solely textbooks at school. These materials consist of movies, songs and footages, which are tailored and made for more fruitful opportunities for Iranian students of Safir Language Academy to be more involved in speaking. There are varieties of activities before and after these video clips. Due to the fact that such activities are not available in all language institutes and since the effect of WTC on speaking has never been analyzed, the conducting of this research was demanded.

Review of Literature

The concept of “willingness to communicate” (WTC) was originally developed by McCroskey and associates (McCroskey & Baer, 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1990, 1991), to capture the trait-like personality that individuals display in First Language (L1) communication. McCroskey and Richmond (1990) treat WTC as a personality trait and define it as “variability in talking behavior”. It started gaining importance in the field of Foreign Language Learning (FLL) among researchers. WTC offers the opportunity to integrate psychological, linguistic, educational, and communicative approaches to L2 research that typically have been independent of each other. WTC may be seen as both an individual difference factor facilitating L2 acquisition, especially in a pedagogical system that emphasizes communication, and as a nonlinguistic outcome of the language learning process (MacIntyre, 2007). The reason was that in contrast with generally accepted view that students need to practice in speaking in order to learn (MacIntyre et al., 2003), learners generally tend to be silent when they have the chance.

Considering the importance of it in terms of EFL, Dörnyei (2005, p. 210) also suggests that “developing WTC is the ultimate goal of instruction”. MacIntyre and associates applied the WTC constructing a second language context (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998). Most L2 WTC research (Warden & Lin, 2000), however, has been conducted in Western countries, who live in a typical SLA context. These L2 learners have frequent linguistic exposure to and direct contact with the L2 community. On the contrary, students in an English-as-a foreign-language (EFL) learning context mainly learn English as a compulsory school subject. There is usually no immediate linguistic need for them to use English in daily life. Moreover, cultural norms governing individuals’ communication behaviors can play a significant role in WTC (Barraclough, Christophel & McCroskey, 1988; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Pair work and group work also increase the amount of speaking involved in the activity (Brown 2001, Green 1989, Nation 1989). Nation (1989) points out that “one of the most useful procedures is the movement from individual to pair to group to whole class activity” (p.26). Adult learners should be allowed to collaborate during the learning experience; it enhances the learning situation (Green 1989). According to Hinkel (2006), contextualized uses of specific grammar structures and vocabulary help to connect the subject-matter and language learning activities. Debates and problem-solving tasks can promote increased grammatical and lexical complexity in the language of learners. They prepare learners for real life communication in an EFL environment. Researchers also place importance on learning environment, which affects how much initiative students will take to speak in a foreign language. Green (1989) pointed out that non-English speaking adults are already timid about using the English language. The teacher must help to build the self-confidence of the students by being encouraging. Learning environments can have a facilitating effect on oral production (Payne & Whitney 2002) Studies on WTC have shown that WTC is predictor of classroom participation in L1 (Chan & McCroskey, 1987) and the initiation of communication in L1 (MacIntyre, Babin, & Clément, 1999) and L2 (MacIntyre & Carre, 2000). Therefore, willingness to communicate, which was suggested as the final intention to really initiate a communication, held a great value in the research of second and foreign language learning and instruction. (cf. McCroskey & Baer, 1985). There has also been some researches conveyed on Iranian EFL learners. A study by Mohammad Aliakbari, Mohsen Kamangar, & Reza Khany on the simultaneous impact of anxiety, self-confidence, communicative competence, and international posture on 194 Iranian EFL students’ willingness to communicate has revealed that students’ willingness to communicate is directly related to their attitude toward the international community, their perceived linguistic competence and self-confidence. In another research done by Parviz Alaviniaa and Masome Agha Ali khani, willingness to communicate reappraised in the light of emotional intelligence and gender differences, which was examined on a total of 200 academic Iranian EFL learners. Through the final analysis of data, it was revealed that positive significant amounts of correlation held between learners' willingness to communicate and their emotional intelligence level. Ahmadian and Shirvani (2012) have studied ‘The Role of Gender and Academic Experience in EFL Students’ Willingness to Communicate in English in Academic Context’. They were to

investigate the status of the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) of the Iranian students of English as a foreign language and the possible roles of gender and academic experience in the degree of the students' WTC.

Vaseghi, Barjesteh and Neissi (2012) have studied Iranian EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate across Different Context and Receiver-Types. This paper investigates Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of their willingness to initiate communication across four types of context and three types of receiver. An investigation of Willingness to Communicate, Communication Apprehension, and Self-esteem in the Workplace is done by Brittany Natalie Fulmer (2010).

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study were 14 Intermediate English learners in Safir Language academy In Iran, Tehran. The learners were in two different classes of 7-students in different branches of the institute. Half of the participants were females and the other half males. They were all adult learners. The male class was held in the morning whereas the female class was held in the evening. Both classes were run by the same gender teachers similar to their students.

The Classes

The classes where the participants were learning English were two termic courses, lasting for 16 sessions. Each class takes one and half hours, 3 times a week. The course they study includes the Touchstone intermediate book and Oxford Word Skills intermediate. Two units are covered in each term.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is the revised version of Willingness To Communicate Inside the classroom (Macintyre et al., 2001). It consists of 27 questions. Responses to the items on a 5-point Likert scale anchored at one end by "Almost never willing" and at the other end by "Almost always willing". Higher scores indicate higher levels of WTC in English. The scale operationalizes L2 WTC in four basic skill areas measuring students' willingness to communicate in L2 inside the classroom in EFL setting with the concentration on speaking (You can find the questionnaire in the appendix).

Procedure

The I-Talk sessions are held at the 6th and 14th sessions of each 16-session course during a term. They include movies, footages and songs in addition to pre-, mid- and post- activities for the learners. Any blocking vocabulary or expressions would be pre-taught to students. The focus of such classes is solely for students to speak in pairs or groups. In this study, a Macintyre questionnaire was given to students before watching the video clip. They were given 10 minutes to rate how willing they are to communicate in variety of situation inside the classroom in English. After that, the footage was shown. There were some questions as pre- watch to unfold

the language related to the unit having been taught up to that session. They students were given time to share their opinions with their classmates. The teacher monitored the class and if necessary, gave help and guidance. After that, a glossary was shown and the students could write them down if felt needed .After that, a selected part of a movie was shown to the students, the average time for this part was 10 minutes. Then, another set of questions were followed which range from true/false, a/b/c or fill in the blank with suitable word, which all are designed to check the comprehension of learners. For post-watch activity, a real life situation was presented to the students and they were asked to create a solution, dialogue or discussion about that. This part usually lasts 20 minutes. The teacher monitored and if needed gave help, correction or tips. The next part is future suggestions, where three movies or songs, related to the topic would be given to the students with a 10- second trailers. Finally, the students were asked to go through the questionnaire again. This only took 10 minutes. After that the questionnaires were collected by the teacher.

Results

As shown in Table 1, the average pre- I-TALK WTC amongst 14 students was 3.30, based on the 5-likert point questionnaire (Macintyre et al) .As can be seen in table 2, after administration of I-TALK, the average WTC changed to 3.58.,and comparing the results of the pre-I-Talk and the post-I-Talk scores and do the subtraction, according to table 3, it is found that the WTC differentiation result by mathematical subtraction calculation is 0.28, and ,when put on the percentage proportion table, it demonstrates the positive change of 5.60% ,which could be concluded that, within one single session of 90 minutes, before and after the very same session there is a considerable, positive change in the rate of WTC as a result of the I-Talk session procedure.

Table 1
Pre-I-Talk WTC Results of the Students

<u>No of Student</u>	<u>WTC Score</u>	<u>Average WTC (5-likert point)out of 5</u>
1	109	3.30
2	59	
3	78	
4	74	
5	68	
6	76	
7	84	
8	97	
9	97	
10	125	
11	125	
12	100	
13	100	
14	57	

$$X = \frac{\sum WTC}{No.Students*No.Questions} \rightarrow X = \frac{109+59+\dots+57}{14*27} \rightarrow X = \frac{1249}{378} \rightarrow X = 3.30$$

Table 2
Post-I-Talk WTC Results of the Students

No of Students	WTC Score	Average WTC (5-likert point) out of 5
1	70	3.58
2	114	
3	62	
4	91	
5	72	
6	91	
7	110	
8	102	
9	103	
10	130	
11	131	
12	105	
13	106	
14	70	

$$X = \frac{\sum \text{WTC}}{\text{No. Students} * \text{No. Questions}} \rightarrow X = \frac{70+114+\dots+70}{14*27} \rightarrow X = \frac{1357}{378} \rightarrow X = 3.58$$

Table 3
Comparative Results

WTC Differentiation Result (5-likert point)	WTC Differentiation Percentage (5-likert point)
0.28	5.60%

Post-I-Talk WTC result – Pre-I-Talk WTC result= WTC Differentiation Result

$$3.58 - 3.30 = 0.28$$

Percentage Proportion Table: $\frac{\text{WTC Differentiation Result}}{\text{WTC Differentiation Percentage}}$

$$\frac{0.28}{X} = \frac{5}{100} \rightarrow X = \frac{100*0.28}{5}, X = 5.60\%$$

Discussion

The reason behind conducting this research was, to analyze the effects of audio visual aids, especially films, clips and songs on willingness to communication mainly through speaking of Iranian Intermediate English both gender students. These materials, named I-Talk, were tailored with numerous pre and post activities. By applying the Revised Version of Willingness to communicate inside the Classroom (Macintyre Et Al., 2001) questionnaire and comparing the results of pre and post I-TALK scores, it is proven that these activities had significant result on the level of willingness amongst learners to start and continue a discussion in a single class of 90 minutes. The differentiation percentage shows a 5.60% positive change to willingness to communicate, which means that with the help of I-Talk, English learners were more eager to initiate and participate in oral activities in the classroom environment. As far as the first table is concerned, the questionnaire was administered to 14 intermediate students before the I-Talk presentation and their WTC rates fluctuate between the range of 57-125, which the latter makes the average score of 3.30 for each student on the 5-likert point scale (Macintyre Et Al) – The

mathematical assessment is detailed at the bottom of the corresponding table. On the other hand, the second time administration of the questionnaire was held following the I-Talk program the content of which was explained earlier in this study. Following the second administration, it demonstrated the range between 62-130 for each individual which leads to the final average score of 3.58 for each student on the 5-likert point scale (Macintyre Et Al) the assessment of which is detailed at the bottom of the second table. When the two figures obtained as a result of the two administrations are compared together by subtraction method, it is concluded that the average differentiation is 0.28 and when put on the percentage proportion table, it denotes the considerable positive change of 5.60 % in the very one single session of I-Talk program. This can highlight the effectiveness of I-Talk application in the classroom.

Limitations

This research attempts to shed light on the potentials of the learners, which are dormant for several reasons and envisages the effective practices to make the best out of the learners for their communicative purposes. The findings were quite considerable when it comes to applying I-Talk in Intermediate English classes for boosting WTC with concentration on speaking. This finding could necessitate the application of tasked-based AVAs in accordance with the subjects students cover in their course books in that they become involved in communicative activities, which more importantly envisage oral production and would enhance it for a much more directed, encouraging and collaborative class discussions. However this research could better overcome the barriers in the way of the valid data collected from the questionnaire administered to each individual if it had been used in various levels such as elementary, pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate levels in different class timing format, for instance morning classes afternoon and evening ones in addition to applying it to different age groups. This test was already given to the number of students, having exposed to the language for more than a year ,that means they had already been motivated to some extent and the application of such device here called I-Talk could have acted as a booster to the students' willingness to communicate ,whereas should that be applied in lower levels ,it could have represented a different index whether in favor of or against the obtained results in this research. On the other hand, timing of the class could have some considerable impact on the mood of students where in our case was early morning and late evening that could cause a hinder in the way of speaking mood. The last criterion that should be taken into account is to administer this research to the variety of age groups such as teens, young adults, adults and the middle- aged who comprise the major participants of Iranian language schools which shall be good to notice for further studies in terms of the validity of our findings.

Implications

As pedagogies consider teaching spoken language as a demanding task for teachers to achieve comparing to other aspects of language teaching (Brown & Yule,1999), and for learners ,implementation of any methods with which you can lift the barriers in the way of communication in the target language more specifically through speaking and, boosting

opportunities through which speaking is not merely considered as a source of anxiety and representation of one's ignorance but a good chance to share your beliefs and opinions which can thus give one the sense of identity and importance, any attempts to facilitate the demanding process of learning could be of high importance, therefore the research could be expanded to measure other language features such as grammar, vocabulary, phonetics. Since the focus of this research is solely on speaking ability, the effect of I-Talk on other skills such as Listening, Reading and Writing are left for future studies. In addition, the impacts of other collaborative means on willingness to communicate (e.g. reading articles/essay writings) are areas in need of deeper analysis.

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Appendix: Revised Version of Willingness to Communicate Inside the Classroom (Macintyre Et Al., 2001)

We would like to appreciate you for your nice cooperation. Please, read the following statements carefully and answer them according to the instructions prepared. Directions: This questionnaire is composed of statements concerning your feelings about communication with other people, in English. Please indicate in the space provided the frequency of time you choose to speak in

English in each classroom situation. If you are almost never willing to speak English, write 1. If you are willing sometimes, write 2 or 3. If you are willing most of the time, write 4 or 5.

1 = Almost never willing

2 = Sometimes willing

3 = Willing half of the time

4 = Usually willing

5 = Almost always willing

Speaking in class, in English

1. Speaking in a group about your summer vacation.
2. Speaking to your teacher about your homework assignment.
3. A stranger enters the room you are in, how willing would you be to have a conversation if he talked to you first?
4. You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions/clarification?
5. Talking to a friend while waiting in line.
6. How willing would you be to be an actor in a play?
7. Describe the rules of your favorite game.
8. Play a game in English.

Reading in Class (to yourself, not out loud)

1. Read a novel.
2. Read an article in a paper.
3. Read letters from a pen pal written in native English.
4. Read personal letters or notes written to you in which the writer has deliberately used simple words and constructions.
5. Read an advertisement in the paper to find a good bicycle you can buy.
6. Read reviews for popular movies.

Writing in Class, in English

1. Write an advertisement to sell an old bike.
2. Write down the instructions for your favorite hobby.
3. Write a report on your favorite animal and its habits.
4. Write a story.
5. Write a letter to a friend.
6. Write a newspaper article.
7. Write the answers to a “fun” quiz from a magazine.
8. Write down a list of things you must do tomorrow.

Comprehension in Class

1. Listen to instructions and complete a task.
2. Bake a cake if instructions were in English.
3. Fill out an application form.
4. Take directions from an English speaker.
5. Understand an English movie. ...