

'To will or not to will'

**Exploring Advanced EFL Learners'
Willingness to Communicate in English**



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List of abbreviations and acronyms

CA	communication apprehension
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
FL	foreign language
ID	individual differences
L1	first language/mother tongue
L2	second language/ foreign language
PCC	perceived communication competence
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
UP	University of Pécs
WTC	willingness to communicate

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Introduction

Although I am a third year student of English and Italian, I felt most willing to speak in English in Venice a few years ago. To tell the truth, at that time I had learnt Italian only for a year, so I thought my English knowledge was better than my Italian one. Accordingly, I have chosen the English language to communicate. My friend wanted to buy a present, a lighter for her boy-friend. I offered her my help, so I tried to convince the costermonger to sell us the lighter at a smaller expense. My attempt was successful; I beat down the price with 10 euros. It was a real-life situation and I came through well. Instead of being shy, quiet and embarrassed, I was convincing, concrete, and of course proud. (#909)

Two years ago me and my family went on holiday in Croatia. We found some motels in Trieste so we decided to ask for the prices. First we bumped into troubles because my mother couldn't get on with German or Croatian as the receptionist spoke only Italian and English. As only I could speak English in my family, I had to communicate with him. Fortunately he spoke the language slowly so it was really easy to understand him. I could inquire about the prices and other information as well. I had to use English almost everywhere because Italians didn't really speak other foreign languages. Finally, we managed to find a proper accommodation. (#935)

These are real-lifestories written by Hungarian English majors studying at the University of Pécs (UP)*. In each situation, student's willingness to initiate a conversation led to a positive outcome, i.e., a cheaper souvenir or a value for money accommodation. In the back of their minds, they were both aware that the only way to achieve their goals was speaking up in English which they had been learning as a foreign language. Had they been shy, too anxious to speak, or worried about making grammar mistakes the friend of Student #909 would never have got a lighter for 10 euros and Student #935 and her family would not have found a nice and reasonable holiday apartment. They both believed in themselves and had the inner strength to speak in a language other than their mother tongue.

Having the courage to speak up in a situation is the 'sine qua non of superior performance', according to Goleman, a social psychologist (2004a, p. 69). The advantages of being highly willing to speak have been supported by empirical investigations. Research in psychology and communication has shown (see summary in

* See Chapter 6 for details of the writing task.

e.g., McCroskey & Richmond, 1990a, p. 33) that individuals who are highly willing to initiate conversations are perceived socially and physically as more attractive by their peers or colleagues, whereas those who are less talkative and sociable are regarded more negatively and thought to be less effective communicators. People who are highly willing to converse are likely to have a wider social network, they report being more satisfied with school experience or with employment, are more likely to stay in education and graduate, and are more likely to be preferred in the job hiring processes. Regardless of the kind of job or the type of organization people work at, the most confident ones will be the most willing to take the risk of speaking up and pointing out issues or injustices about which their colleagues might only moan about (Goleman, 2004a, p. 72). These facts point in the direction of willingness to communicate being more than a communicational variable, as it may contribute to success in social and professional life.

My interest in what makes a language learner more talkative while others stay rather quiet stems from my academic and language learning background. Many years ago, as a first-year English major, I realized that in seminars, where we were supposed to discuss various topics and actively contribute to the flow of the lesson, my peers could be categorized into two main types. Some students always seemed to be eager to participate in classes regardless of what the topic was. These students were relatively fluent in English – most of them had lived abroad and worked as au pairs – and had lost their strong Hungarian accent. To the other category belonged those who often seemed embarrassed and quite inhibited when the tutor asked them a question and they hardly ever volunteered in class. They usually had not spent any or an extensive time in an English speaking country and seemed to have difficulties when expressing themselves in English in front of their peers. A few years later, I observed similar phenomena as a student teacher and then as a teaching assistant among other learners of English as a foreign language. Despite I having spent a couple of months in the UK after secondary school, as a first-year undergraduate I remember that I often felt a bit envious of the students who always had an opinion that they were more than willing to voice regardless of which seminar we were at.

So why are some learners more willing to speak up in a foreign language than others? Are they better language learners than the quiet types? And why do other learners

rather stare at their course books in order to avoid being asked by the teacher? Why do these students seem uncomfortable when they eventually have to speak up in English? The present dissertation was motivated by these questions.

Research questions and overview of the dissertation

In the past few years, new directions have emerged in language learning motivational research. One of the latest models providing a complex explanation for second language development was put forward by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels in 1998. They proposed language learners' willingness to communicate in the target language (L2 WTC) to be in the centre of their model, a concept originating from communication research in the native language in the USA. To further understand the nature of this concept in a monolingual environment (in Hungary) and to be able to find strategies for how to promote a special group of EFL learners' WTC, three separate but closely related empirical studies were conducted at the University of Pécs.

The purpose of these studies was to characterize English majors' communication profile and to explore how communications and motivational factors contribute to their L2 use. Further on, it aimed to provide insights into what makes language learners willing to speak in certain situations and what factors may affect negatively their decision to use the target language. For an overview of the main research questions see Table 1 on page 12.

The dissertation is divided into two parts and six chapters. The theoretical background to the research studies is outlined in Part 1, which entail Chapters 1 and 2. The first chapter gives an overview of the individual variables that play a role in second language acquisition (SLA); the emphasis is on affective variables: language learning motivation, language anxiety and linguistic self-confidence. In addition, the most influential second language (L2) motivational theories are also outlined. Chapter 2 gives an overview of three communicational variables and synthesises findings of past research on willingness to communicate in an L2.

Table 1 The data sources and methods of analysis used for the main research questions

	Research question	Data sources	Methods of analysis
Study 1 137 participants	How willing are participants to communicate in English when they have relatively limited opportunity to use the language with speakers of English, even though they are in contact with the English language on a daily basis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment questionnaire on three communicational measures and on motivation and attitudes • Background questionnaire 	Descriptive statistics
	Is there a relationship between participants' willingness to communicate (WTC), communication apprehension (CA), perceived communication competence (PCC) in English, and their level of English language proficiency? Are MacIntyre et al. (1998) right to claim that a suitable goal for language learning is to increase one's WTC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment questionnaire on three communicational measures and on motivation and attitudes • Vocabulary test • Background questionnaire 	Correlational analysis
	To what extent do PCC in English and CA in English explain the variance in participants' WTC in English? Is the correlation between PCC and CA in relation to L2 WTC the same? Or does one of the two antecedents have a more influential role?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment questionnaire on three communicational measures and on motivation and attitudes • Vocabulary test • Background questionnaire 	Linear regression analysis
	Do attitudes and motivation play a role in L2 WTC, CA, and PCC among Hungarian EFL learners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment questionnaire on three communicational measures and on motivation and attitudes • Vocabulary test • Background questionnaire 	Correlational analysis
Study 2 227 participants	Is there a significant relationship between participants' WTC, CA, PCC in English, and their level of English language proficiency, their motivation, and their communicative behaviour in English?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment questionnaire on three communicational measures and on motivation and attitudes • Vocabulary test • Background questionnaire 	Correlational analysis
	Does the data support the proposed model of L2 communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment questionnaire on three communicational measures and on motivation and attitudes • Vocabulary test 	Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)
Study 3 64 participants	What situational variables play role in Hungarian English majors' willingness to speak in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' written narratives 	Thematic analysis of students' written accounts

Part 2 comprises four chapters. Chapter 3 provides background to the context and to the participants of the research studies as well as outlines the research methodology employed in the three studies. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 outline the three empirical studies aimed at exploring learners' willingness to speak in English from different angles and perspectives. Chapter 4 contains the first, exploratory study, which involved 137 English majors. The aim was to describe and analyse learners' communicational predispositions in relation to language learning motivation, frequency of communication, and to see how

these conditions were related to their language proficiency. Data were collected with the help of questionnaires, and descriptive and correlational statistical analyses were employed to obtain results. The second study is outlined in Chapter 5. This research study was based on 227 English majors' data (the database used in the first study was expanded by an additional 90 students' data) and was used to build and test a model of L2 communication with advanced statistical methods. The third, a qualitative study, is outlined in Chapter 6. Data were elicited by a writing task, involving 64 English majors. The primary goals of this investigation were to identify in what contexts students felt most and least willing to communicate and what factors influenced their willingness and reluctance to speak in English in that particular situation. The results were intended to complement findings of the first two studies.

Part I

Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition Research

In the past forty years of second language acquisition (SLA) research, the focus from the language as a system of rules has shifted to the learner. This process has resulted in an increased interest in the psychological and sociological aspects of language learning. Researchers have confirmed that L2 learners' linguistic development and the vast differences between individuals' achievements do not only depend on external influences such as the social and educational context of L2 learning, but they are also greatly influenced by internal factors, for instance, learners' cognitive abilities and their psychological states (Clément & Gardner, 2001; Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002; Ellis, 1994). These internal factors are often referred to as individual difference variables (ID variables) and they are defined as the 'dimensions of enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree' (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 4). The relationship between four individual difference variables of Hungarian EFL learners are at the forefront of my dissertation and will be discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

There is no consensus on the number of ID variables or the rank of their importance, yet most sources on the SLA literature agree that there is a complex relationship between them as they continuously interact with each other and therefore, they affect each other in a dynamic way. Individual variations in the language learning process have become one of the most thoroughly studied psychological aspects of SLA.

There have been various attempts to categorize ID variables as they may be grouped according to several governing principles. Despite the differences in terminology and conceptualisation, there is a consensus on the most influential cognitive and affective variables. For instance, Gardner and Clément (1990, p. 497) distinguish three classes that have influenced L2 learning:

- (1) cognitive characteristics, embracing language aptitude and language learning strategies;
- (2) attitudes and motivation including integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and motivation;
- (3) and personality variables such as anxiety, sociability, extroversion, field dependence/independence, and empathy.

Somewhat differently, Ellis (1994, p. 274) identifies three sets of closely related variables when he discusses learners' features that interact with language learning achievement. The first set consists of three types of factors:

- (1) L2 learners' beliefs about language learning such as the role of aptitude in their L2 development and beliefs about their most effective language learning strategies;
- (2) their affective states, for example trait anxiety, state anxiety, or situational anxiety (p. 479);
- (3) and general factors such as language aptitude, motivation, age, gender, and learning style.

The second set of variables comprises learning styles, whereas the third set of variables consists of overall L2 proficiency, achievement and rate of L2 acquisition (p. 473).

In discussing the concept, Dörnyei (2005) identifies three key ID variables:

- (1) personality,
- (2) ability/aptitude,
- (3) motivation and two other important factors,
- (4) learning style and
- (5) language learning strategies.

He also outlines five additional learner features that overlap with these categories. These are:

- (6) anxiety,
- (7) self-esteem,
- (8) creativity,
- (9) willingness to communicate,
- (10) and learners' beliefs.

He claims that although these variables have substantial theoretical and practical potential, further research is necessary to fully justify their roles.

My dissertation aims to fill in this gap by closely looking at one of these variables: willingness to communicate in English in relation to four other affective ID variables. This part of the dissertation provides the theoretical background to the key concepts, models, and past research on individual differences related to L2 communication. Next, in Chapter 1, I outline three affective factors that fall within the traditional categorisation of ID variables: language learning motivation, language anxiety, and linguistic self-confidence. First, I give an overview of the various definitions put forward for language learning motivation; then, I discuss three of the most influential models of SLA in relation to motivation and examine the role of language learning anxiety and linguistic self-confidence in L2 learning. In Chapter 2, I describe three individual variables which, in the past couple of years, have received substantial attention in motivational research and which are the main focus of this dissertation. These are learners' willingness to communicate (WTC), their communicational apprehension (CA), and self-perceived communicational competence (PCC). See list on page 6 for frequently occurring abbreviations in my dissertation.

Chapter 1

Affective variables in Second Language Acquisition

1.1 Introduction

Affective variables are emotionally relevant characteristics of the learner that influence how they will react to a situation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a, p. 3). This chapter gives an overview of four key factors that fall within the traditional categorization of ID variables: language learning motivation and attitudes, language anxiety, and linguistic self-confidence. In the final section of this chapter, I give an overview of a new approach to human behaviour: the communibiological perspective.

1.2 Motivation

Psychologists have long been interested in what makes people pursue their goals (e.g., Baróczy & Séra, 1970; Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Kozáki, 1980; Nagy, J, 1995; 1998; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Empirical research has shown that besides language learning aptitude, which is a cognitive factor, (e.g., Carroll, 1990; 1993; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992; Harley & Hart, 1997; Ottó, 1996; Skehan, 1991, 1998) the second best predictor of L2 proficiency is language learning motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 1998, 2001; Gardner, & MacIntyre, 1993a; McGroarty, 2001; Spolsky, 2000).

Motivation is an elusive concept and has been researched in numerous scientific fields; therefore several definitions have been proposed. This section summarises the various descriptions L2 researchers have applied to motivation, and the types of motivation they have identified. Further on, it provides a brief overview of the models researchers proposed to explain the role of language learning motivation in L2 development. In the second part of this section, I describe a closely related concept: language learning attitudes.

1.2.1 Definitions

Generally, motivation is responsible for the initial reason why people decide to do something. As Goleman (2004a, p.106) points out ‘*motive* and *emotion* share the same Latin root, *motere*, “to move”. Our feelings drive our motivation and our motivation in turn affects our perceptions and influences our actions (Goleman, 2004a). He argues that although incentives play a role in the extent to which one will be motivated to pursue a goal, the most powerful drive is internal and not external. In other words, although external drives are important, the strongest motivation tends to come from within the learner. Here is a typical example that clearly illustrates this point. You might have a very well paid job which allows you to go on exotic holidays, go to expensive restaurants, or enjoy the finer things in life; yet if you do not find pleasure in your work or if it does not give you any satisfaction, then your motivation is most likely to diminish over time and may possibly lead to your resignation from your post. As for language learning too, instrumental motives (e.g., getting a good grade in school, getting a good job, salary revisions) are powerful, but being intrinsically motivated, for instance, finding pleasure in learning a new language and using it with its native speakers are the best recipe to success in the long run.

The strength of people’s motivation to do something determines the length of time for which they are willing to carry out the activity and how hard they are going to work towards it (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 8). Take Alexandra, a third year undergraduate student who is awarded a prestigious scholarship to study in Spain for a semester; something she has wanted to do for so long and for which she has worked hard in the past. She knows that in order to complete a term in Spain successfully and to manage well in the foreign country she needs to have good working knowledge of the target language. Therefore she is extremely motivated to improve her Spanish and her knowledge of Spanish culture prior and during her time in Seville. Alexandra will attend Spanish classes, she will read books and newspapers in the target language and look out for every opportunity to get to know Spanish people and their culture better.

This is a simplified example of a committed language learner and it is unlikely that one would often come across straightforward cases like Alexandra’s. In reality, language learning motivation is a much more complex and elusive construct, for which various

definitions have been proposed by theoreticians and researchers of numerous disciplines. One of the most often cited definition was put forward by Robert Gardner (1985, p. 10); in his view, language learning motivation is ‘the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity’. This definition considers not only how novices approach learning a new language, but also the process and the outcome of the activities related to becoming more and more proficient in it. According to Gardner, motivation entails three components:

- motivational intensity,
- desire to learn the language,
- and attitudes towards the language learning situation.

Take the example of Tibor, an imaginary 15-year-old secondary school student. He has been studying German at school, a language he is really keen on, since in his town, situated close to the Austrian border, he often meets German speaking tourists. He enjoys the activities in classes and he always completes his homework eagerly. He is also highly motivated to learn German so he can interact with the visitors his family hosts during the summer. He has just got a new teacher who is inexperienced and under-trained and who has got a harsh manner in addition to her unpleasant personality. In the course of just a few months, Tibor’s enthusiasm gradually fades and his performance in classes deteriorates. He has clearly become de-motivated as a result of his new teacher’s incompetence combined with continuous unchallenging grammar exercises she assigns.

McDonough (1998, p. 220), in the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* claims that motivation is often defined ‘as a psychological trait which leads people to achieve some goal’; however, features of motivation that are relevant to a certain state are often emphasised. Dörnyei and Ottó propose a temporal model of language learning motivation when they define motivation from a slightly different angle. According to them, motivation is

the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor

processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out (quoted in Dörnyei, 2001, p. 9).

This definition is different from other authors' construct as Dörnyei and Ottó, by emphasising state motivation, attempt to integrate not only how motivated learners behave, but also how their motivation, changes over time, as their experiences accumulate.

The difference between general learning motivation and language learning motivation is pointed out by Cohen and Dörnyei (2002). They propose that general learning motivation 'is often seen as the key learner variable because without it, nothing much happens' (2002, p. 172). Let us look at an example. Laura is a 12-year-old pupil keen on maths classes as she really enjoys adding up numbers and solving logical problems. She is always motivated to do her homework and participate in class. However, when it comes to English, the situation is more complex, as the motivation to learn a language differs to a great extent from the motivation to learn any other subject in school curricula or skills (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002, p. 172). Learning a second or foreign language does not only mean the acquisition of an abstract system used for communication but also involves a certain kind of identification with the target language group (Gardner, 2002, p. 160). In other words, students need not only to learn the grammar rules and the vocabulary but would also need to alter their identity to some extent, as language learning involves 'the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being' (Williams, 1994, p. 77 quoted in Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002, p. 172). Learners will need to acquire the social and pragmatic norms of the target community (e.g., when and how to say things appropriately in an L2) as well as they would need to be able to identify with the cultural and social values of the speakers of the L2. Unfortunately, this is an aspect that sometime lacks from foreign language classes in Hungary as there is still too much focus on grammar tasks. Learners' general attitudes towards the target language group will influence their motivation to learn the language, which in turn is likely to affect the level of proficiency they will eventually attain. Language learning attitudes will be discussed in section 1.2.3.

1.2.2 Types of motivation

So far, various types of motivation have been identified on various different scales, yet language learning motivation is too subtle to be classified into clear-cut categories. Ellis (1997, p. 76) points out that the different types ‘should be seen as complementary rather than as distinct and oppositional’. The five types most often used in the literature are

- (1) intrinsic,
- (2) extrinsic,
- (3) instrumental,
- (4) integrative motivation,
- (5) and resultative motivation.

Researchers generally describe language learners’ motivation along two continua. One of them is the intrinsic-extrinsic continuum. When a task is intrinsically motivating learners’ enthusiasm is within the task itself (McDonough, 1998, p. 220) and involves ‘the arousal and maintenance of curiosity’ of the learner (Ellis, 1997, p. 76). In other words, the learner is motivated to complete the language task because he or she finds pleasure in doing so. For instance, an intrinsically motivated language learner interested in US hip-hop culture would be stimulated by a challenging reading task involving collecting information on hip-hop music. On the other end of the continuum are the extrinsically motivated learners who find the motivation of language learning outside the framework of the task that is of utilitarian value to them (McDonough, 1998, p. 220), for instance, getting a good grade for the same reading task. Extrinsically motivated learners are enthused to engage in an activity as a means to an end, like getting a certificate or obtaining a higher position at work, getting extra points at the entrance exam to higher education institutions or an increase in pay at a workplace in Hungary.

The other continuum along which motivation types are positioned is the instrumental-integrative scale. In this framework, both ends of the continuum represent external reasons. An instrumentally motivated learner would put all the effort in learning for a functional reason: for example, to get a reward in class, to get a better job, to be able to read academic writing in the target language, or to pass a language examination (Ellis,

1997, p. 75). In this respect there is an overlap between extrinsic and instrumental motivation, as in both cases the learner is keen to learn the language for pragmatic reasons. The other extreme is the integratively motivated learner who is interested in the L2 culture, and is keen to learn the language in order to interact with the speakers or ‘even become similar to valued members of that community’ (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002, p, 173). Integratively motivated language learners of, for instance, French would most likely watch French movies, read French magazines and books, attend French social groups and seek out other opportunities to interact with French speaking people. She would be keen on French cuisine and would probably love to acquire a native French accent.

As a language and its speakers are inseparable concepts, it is no wonder that the conceptualisation of integrative motivation has been the centre of debates. Gardner perceives the construct ‘integrative motive’ in most of his works (e.g., 1985, 2001, 2002; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993a) as a somewhat different and broader concept. It embraces three constructs:

- (1) integrativeness, referring to integrative orientation, interest in foreign languages and attitudes towards the L2 community;
- (2) attitudes toward the learning situation, referring to attitudes towards the teacher and the course; and
- (3) motivation, referring to motivational intensity, desire to learn the L2, and attitudes towards learning the L2 (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 69).

Gardner’s conceptualisation has often been criticised as ‘integrativeness’ appears on three levels (Dörnyei, 2005). Also, sub-components of these constructs may occasionally overlap. For instance, integrative orientation and desire to learn a language may be related to the same phenomenon: as in the case of a learner whose desire to learn the L2 is to be able to converse with native speakers of the target language.

Another criticism the Gardnerian view of integrativeness received is related to the learning context. One of the components of integrative motive refers to the learner’s desire to interact and identify with the L2 community; however, this may be valid only in a multicultural context, where L2 native speakers are physically present and where L2

learners can directly interact with them. Pointing out this problem area, a group of scholars has recently called for a proposal of a different approach to the term ‘integrativeness’ (e.g., Dörnyei, 1990; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002). Dörnyei and his colleagues base their argument on the fact that foreign language learning contexts are often different from the Canadian context, as the target language group is almost totally absent in the learning context. For example, in the case of Hungarian learners of English, who do not have as many opportunities to meet native L2 speakers as for instance French Canadians thus they cannot easily identify themselves with native speakers of the L2.

Yet, the situation seems to change slowly but steadily. Recently, advances in information technology and communication have enabled language learners to ‘meet’ native English speakers from around the world via new virtual platforms. Software applications such as Skype or Windows Messenger allow users to make free PC to PC voice and video calls over the Internet and soon on mobile phones too. Today, internet users are also able to play strategic games in collaboration with other people online, which is another way to interact. Further on, learners can channel language and culture related information through an increasing number of media sources, for instance, through international news broadcasts and music radio stations, foreign magazines and dailies, or online blogs. Yet, as Dörnyei and Csizér claim, there is definitely ‘a need to seek potential new conceptualization and interpretation that extend or elaborate on the meaning of the term without contradicting the large body of relevant empirical data’ (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002, p. 456).

Further on, in the case of English, which has achieved a substantially unique status among other languages, a different approach may need to be taken when defining the target language community. English has been increasingly used for international communicational purposes (e.g., the Internet, media, international business and politics). As a result of this, English as a Foreign Language is in the process of becoming more of a Global English with a less complex linguistic structure. It is also less associated with any specific L2 community or its culture (e.g., British English, US culture) but it is more and more often associated with a ‘global culture’ (e.g., Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006, p. 8; Canagarajah, 2006; Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Phillipson, 1992; Seidlhofer, 2004; Seidlhofer, Breiteneder, & Pitzl, 2006).

In the light of these developments, and in an attempt to broaden the concept of ‘integrativeness’, for example, Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand (2000, p. 60) propose four orientations that may be relevant to sustain motivation in FL learning contexts: travel, friendship, knowledge, and instrumental orientation. Another example is Yashima and his colleagues’ study (2004), in which the authors propose the factor ‘international posture’ that incorporates an interest in international affairs, willingness to move abroad and to engage in intercultural interactions. Noels and his colleagues’ and Yashima and his associates’ studies are unique in a sense that they all incorporated the intercultural element in their research, which is highly relevant, especially in the case of English.

Most recently, a new conceptualisation of integrativeness has been put forward by Csizér and Dörnyei (2005). Building on an empirical study, Csizér and Dörnyei explored the internal structure of language learning motivation with the help of a complex statistical procedure. They looked at 14-year-old Hungarian EFL learners’ data elicited by motivational questionnaires. Their results indicated that integrativeness was closely linked to two unlike factors: a faceless practical instrumentality and personal attitudes toward members of the L2 community (2005, p. 19). In the light of this as well as drawing on theories of personality psychology and self research, Csizér and Dörnyei propose an innovative label for integrativeness: ‘Ideal L2-self’. This concept is the key element of motivated L2 learning behaviour and it refers to one’s imaginary self who is fluent in the L2 and who the learner would like to become. Thus, the learner’s desire is to reduce the discrepancy between one’s actual self (the persona who is not yet fluent in the L2) and the ideal L2 self (persona who is an excellent user of the L2).

As a wider framework, Dörnyei proposes a new L2 Motivational Self System (2005, p.105), which is composed of three dimensions: (1) the aforementioned Ideal L2 Self; (2) Ought-to L2 Self, referring to the characteristics of one believes one must have in order to avoid negative outcomes; and (3) L2 Learning Experience related to immediate learning environment and situation specific motives. He argues that this framework does not conflict with Gardner’s original view of integrativeness related to the identification process; it only provides a broader interpretation of the notion. In other

words, Dörnyei views the motivational framework from a different angle and therefore the two views do not exclude each other.

Dörnyei posits (1990; 2003, p. 6) that in FL contexts ‘the identification can be generalized to the cultural and intellectual values associated with the language, as well as to the actual L2 itself’. Since Gardner’s concept of integrative motive was developed in reference to the Canadian bilingual context, it is more relevant to follow Dörnyei’s suggestion for integrative motivation in the case of Hungarian EFL learners, who live in a monolingual environment and who are the participants of the present studies.

Extrinsic or intrinsic, integrative or instrumental, these types of motivation are all seen as the cause of L2 learning and achievement. Yet, the result of language learning may also be a motivating or de-motivating factor in the course of language learning. Those students who experience success may become more stimulated and the accumulation of negative experiences may dishearten and de-motivate the learner (Ellis, 1997, p. 76). It is expected that students achieving working levels of L2 proficiency are more motivated to maintain and improve their language skills than learners who fail to come up to expectations in the short term; the latter rarely succeed over time.

There is no agreement on which type of motivation has the greatest impact on L2 learning. Ellis claims (1997, p. 75) that in some learning contexts ‘an instrumental motivation seems to be the major force determining success in L2 learning’. In other cases, for instance, as Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) found, integrative motivation had a longer lasting effect on individuals’ persistence in learning the language. In their study they contrasted integrative and instrumental motivation of language learners and they found that both forms of motivation facilitated certain language learning tasks. Although the effect of instrumental motivation on learners’ achievement was much greater than that of integrative motivation, as soon as the instrumental motivation was no longer relevant, for instance, they passed the exam, these students stopped learning. Nevertheless, integratively motivated students sustained their level of motivation until the end of the experiment, thus, it seems that ‘an instrumental motive may not be as long-lasting as an integrative motive’ (Gardner, 2002, p. 177). This view is in line with Goleman’s position (2004a) on intrinsic motivation, outlined earlier in this chapter. It seems that although incentives influence one’s motivation to some extent, the most powerful drive to pursue a

goal is internal and not external, just as the example of the well paid person with a boring job outlined earlier illustrated it.

Despite the suggestions for various types of motivation, it is clear that a learner cannot be described as exclusively intrinsically or instrumentally motivated. Depending on learners' personal aims, one type or the other will have greater influence on their overall motivation and on their linguistic attainment. Types of motivations should not be considered as exclusive but rather perceived as complementary. In continuous interaction, a wide range of factors will determine why a person will stay motivated to learn a specific language or perhaps will abandon it. For instance, a two-minute-long negative experience with a native speaker of the target language or a bad grade or negative comment given by the teacher can substantially slash one's enthusiasm for learning an L2. It is reasonable to accept that among the reasons why an individual starts and continues to learn a language there are a mixture of intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental, integrative, and resultative stimuli; however, they will influence overall L2 learning motivation to different extents at different stages of learning and depending on the context and on situational factors.

In the Hungarian context various studies have investigated foreign language learners' motivation (e.g., Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994, Dörnyei, Nyilasi, & Clément, 1996; Dörnyei, et al., 2006; Józsa & Nikolov, 2005; Nikolov, 1995, 2003; Nikolov & Nagy, 2003). After the initial enthusiasm for learning foreign languages after the communist era, in general terms, learners' interest in foreign learning has faded over the past decade. However, the motivational profile of Hungarian pupils is complex. On the one hand instrumental motivation related to social and physical mobility (e.g., getting a good job, travelling) has become stronger, especially in the case of English, which has become ever so popular. Not surprisingly, pupils perceive learning English as a 'must' in order to cope in life, as in many domains of everyday life English has achieved a *lingua franca* status (e.g., pop music, Internet). Yet, on the other hand, Hungarian foreign language learners' intrinsic motivation, their attitudes towards the L2 culture and the L2 itself have become less prominent. In addition to the quality of language teaching this may be the result of the blurred boundaries between target language and L2 community

as is the case in Global English. Two of these concepts, attitudes towards the L2 speakers and towards the learning situation, will be discussed in detail in the next section.

1.2.3 Attitudes

Besides language learning motivation, attitudes have also been found to be strongly related to language achievement (e.g., Ellis, 1994; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993b; Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1996; Nikolov & Csapó, 2002). Attitudes represent language learners' beliefs and feelings towards the target language, its speakers, its culture, the social value of learning the target language, and 'towards themselves as members of their own culture' (Ellis, 1994, p. 198). In a formal language learning context, attitudes toward the situation, such as towards the teacher and the course, are considered to play a major role in learners' linguistic development (Gardner & Clément, 1990, p. 499). Attitudes, like motivation, are affective factors; therefore they are not genetically endowed but they develop throughout our lives and can be modified and reinforced by experience (Gardner & Clément, 1990 p. 198). For instance, if learners go through success, their attitude towards the language and its speakers may be strengthened. However, when they repeatedly encounter unpleasant linguistic and cultural events and continuously experience failures their negative attitude may be also intensified, as was the case of learning Russian in Hungarian schools (Nikolov, 2001).

Most often, language learners' positive attitudes towards the target language, its speakers, and its culture will promote increased motivation and proficiency. However, the relationship between attitudes and language achievement may not be so straightforward in certain cases. Positive attitudes alone may not necessarily result in the development of learners' language skills, for instance, in the Hungarian context despite the extremely positive attitudes towards learning modern languages, the level of foreign language proficiency of the population has not improved as spectacularly since 1989 as could have been expected. Under certain circumstances, negative attitudes may also promote the L2 language learning process (Ellis, 1994, p. 200). For instance, learners may have very strong instrumental motivation for learning the target language and may be successful in

doing so, despite their negative perception of its speakers and culture (e.g., Inbar, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Shohamy, 2001).

Increased opportunities for intercultural interactions, for instance, residing in the target language country, are often perceived to have beneficial effects on learners' attitudes as it may result in an 'enhanced understanding of the target language culture and a more sympathetic attitude to native speakers (Coleman, 1997, p. 7; also, e.g., Nagy, 2003; 2008 in press). In such context, learners can use the L2 for meaningful communication in real life situations, are able to get to know the L2 culture in its depth, and they are provided with extensive opportunities to shape their attitudes that otherwise a classroom environment would not allow them to do so. Nevertheless, living abroad does not necessarily result in learners' favourable attitudes towards the language and its speakers. Coleman found (1996, 1998) not only that British language majors had strong stereotypes about host country citizens prior to departure but also that during and after the residence abroad period this remained unchanged. Moreover, 30 percent of the participants rated native speakers more negatively on several qualities after returning home. Willis, Doble, Sankarayya, and Smithers (1977) and Masgoret, Bernaus, and Gardner (2000) reported similar findings. Most likely, for one reason or the other (e.g., lack of pragmatic competence, inadequate language proficiency), these learners accumulated negative experiences on a day-to-day basis while living abroad which resulted in the reinforcement of their perception of the native L2 speakers.

Yet, too much intercultural contact may negatively influence language attitudes, which in turn can impede language learning motivation and achievement. In the Hungarian context, a number studies have inquired into the role of language learning attitudes by a few researchers (e.g., Dörnyei, 1994; Józsa & Nikolov, 2005; Nikolov, 2003; Nikolov & Csapó, 2002). Most recently, Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh (2006) looked at the effects of intercultural contact on language attitudes. Among Hungarian learners increased contact with L2 speakers promoted positive language attitudes and enhanced language learning motivation up to a certain extent; however, when the amount of contact exceeded a threshold, it exerted a negative influence on attitudes. Drawing on Brown and Hewston's theory of intergroup contact (2005, quoted in Dörnyei, et al., 2006, p. 128) the authors propose that there is a certain point, beyond which interethnic contact

may no longer promote positive attitudes but may even affect it negatively. Hungarian students living in towns and smaller settlements where native L2 speakers (e.g., foreign visitors) were perceived as peculiar or were rare expressed more positive attitudes towards them; whereas in the capital, where tourists were more noticeable due to their large number and opportunities for contact were more superficial, students perceived them less favourably, despite the fact that both groups reported the same amount of personal contact. As the study on Hungarian learners did not include qualitative data, it is not possible to examine in detail how intercultural contacts actually influenced learners' attitudes.

The extent to which attitudes towards the target language group and its culture influence motivation is likely to be different in a foreign language setting as opposed to an immersion setting, and it may also vary from one language to another. In a FL learning context native L2 speakers are absent; therefore, their role in the learning process often turns out to be negligible. However, as outlined in Section 1.2.2, the physical absence of the L2 native speaker seem to increasingly be replaced by 'virtual speakers of the L2' with the help of technological innovations (e.g., Internet), new softwares (e.g., Skype), and new forms of media (e.g., online blogging). As a result, learners of, for example, EFL are not likely to have strong attitudes towards native speakers of English, but are more likely to develop attitudes towards other EFL or ESL speakers and towards the language itself (e.g., Dörnyei et al., 2006, p. 9). As outlined previously, this was the gap that some researchers aimed to bridge when by conceptualising 'integrativeness' differently.

The focus of the following section is the effects of attitudes and motivation on language learning processes. It gives a brief overview of theoretical models that attempted to incorporate motivation and attitudes in relation to L2 learning.

1.2.4 Four models of language learning motivation

To account for language learning motivation in relation to other affective variables that contribute to one's language proficiency, a number of theoretical frameworks have been proposed. In the past thirty years, a vast amount of scholarly research studies have been conducted to explain the precise effects of motivation on L2 learning. In this section, I

outline the four most influential second language acquisition models, in chronological order.

The earliest investigations of individual differences in the field of SLA were conducted by two social psychologists, William Lambert and Robert Gardner in 1959 in Canada, in a bilingual context. They investigated English speaking secondary-school students' language achievement who studied French as L2. From the social psychological perspective, they identified two factors that contributed to learners' linguistic achievement in French: aptitude and motivation. Based on their findings, Lambert proposed the initial social-psychological model (1967; 1974, quoted in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a, p. 3) of second language learning. He centred the model around three variables that promote the development of individuals' proficiency in a second or foreign language namely, aptitude, orientation, and motivation, which in turn could affect the learner's self-identity (Lambert, 1974, quoted in Gardner, 2002 p. 163). Although their model was based on L2 learners in a bilingual context, it was frequently applied to FL contexts. Since then, several other models have been developed, each with a slightly different focus but with similar variables. Among them is Gardner's socio-educational model, which is considered to be one of the most influential ones, and is discussed next.

The first version of the socio-educational model of second language learning was put forward by Gardner and Smythe (1975) and has been modified and developed on a number of occasions since then (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993a; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997). It attempts to give an account for linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes of second language learning, but it also takes into consideration the language learning situation in formal and informal contexts. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993a), besides incorporating the components of Lambert's social-psychological model, propose further elements to be added to their model. These include

- (1) antecedent factors such as gender, age, and language learning history;
- (2) learner variables such as language aptitude, attitudes toward the learning situation, integrativeness, language learning strategies, motivation, language anxiety, and language achievement;
- (3) informal and formal language acquisition contexts; and

(4) linguistic and non-linguistic learning outcomes.

Gardner and Tremblay (1995) extended Gardner's 1985 model even further by incorporating new elements such as goal salience, valence, and self-efficacy drawn from expectancy-value and goal theories (quoted in Dörnyei 1999, p. 528).

The socio-educational model was further elaborated when Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret (1997) investigated the relationship between various learner characteristics and language achievement. Based on their findings, Gardner and his associates revised the model. According to their results,

- (1) language attitudes had an influence on motivation;
- (2) motivation had an effect on linguistic self-confidence and language learning strategies;
- (3) motivation, aptitude, and language learning strategies were all found to be the antecedents of language achievement;
- (4) field independence was related to aptitude; and
- (5) language achievement was the antecedent of self-confidence (summarized in Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003, p. 615).

The second model, following the social psychological tradition, is Richard Clément's social context model (1980; Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994). Clément based his model on empirical research on the interrelationship between social contextual variables, attitudinal and motivational factors, self-confidence, and L2 acquisition and acculturation processes (Dörnyei, 1999, p. 528). It is similar to Gardner's model; however, Clément views attitudes towards the learning situation somewhat differently and therefore, he puts the linguistic nature of the community (unicultural or multicultural) to the forefront of the model. He includes further constructs in his model; such as fear of assimilation, contact with the language, and most importantly, linguistic self-confidence.

The dominant Canadian social psychological approach of the 1960s was based mostly on immersion or bilingual settings. In the 1990s, it was taken over by new motivation theories from the field of educational psychology as a result of advances in

cognitive psychology and as there was a need to narrow down the macro perspective of L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 75). This shift in motivational research is most widely known as the educational shift (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 11). The new stream of research, often referred to as the cognitive-situated period, provided new insights into the role of motivation in L2 learning while shifting the focus to the learners themselves. These theories offered practical implications for L2 education in a classroom context as opposed to the Canadian tradition which tried to explain L2 learning motivation in a wider multicultural and multiethnic setting.

One of the most influential new proposals was put forward by Crookes and Schmidt (1991). They based their model on existing SLA research and also drew upon other motivation theories from mainstream psychology. According to them, L2 motivation operates at four separate levels: (1) at the micro level; (2) at the classroom level; (3) at the syllabus/curriculum level; and (4) at the outside classroom level. They argued that their motivational framework can be applied both to language learning in an informal, naturalistic context, as well as to classroom contexts, since in both situations the same motivational issues apply.

The second alternative model of L2 motivation is Dörnyei and Ottó's process-oriented model (1998; Dörnyei, 2000, 2001) which incorporates the time element in motivation. It is different from previous models, as motivation is perceived to be a continuous process of change instead of being stable and static. In their model, they break down the motivational process into discrete temporal segments including at least three separate phases. The process of change is a cyclic one. First of all, motivation has to be generated which, lead to the selection of aims or purposes to pursue. Thus, in the pre-actional phase, initial wishes and desires are transformed into personal goals. They refer to this dimension of motivation as choice motivation. Next, in the actional phase, the motivation generated needs to be preserved and safeguarded until the particular activity lasts. This dimension of motivation is what they call executive motivation. Finally, in the post-actional phase, which follows the completion of the action, learners retrospectively evaluate how the action went. The way learners look back on their past experiences will determine the types of activities they will be motivated to engage in during the next motivational cycle.

This multidimensional model integrates Dörnyei's earlier work and distinguishes between three levels of motivation (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 280): the language level (social dimension), the learner level (personal dimension), and the learning situation level (educational dimension). The latter dimension includes course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific motivational components. Although the socio-educational model included aspects of the learning situation, it provides a broader spectrum of features. Therefore, this last model offers the most useful framework to the focus of the study in this dissertation.

All four models outlined in this section provide valuable insights into the role of motivation in the dynamic process of language learning. Although motivational studies have filled up many pages in linguistic journals, there is also a large body of literature dealing with further affective variables. Empirical research papers have confirmed that language learning anxiety, linguistic self-confidence, and perceived L2 competence also play a significant role in L2 development. The following section discusses these closely related constructs in detail.

1.3 Language anxiety, linguistic self-confidence, and perceived L2 competence

Language learning anxiety, linguistic self-confidence, and perceived communication competence are inter-related concepts and are similar in a sense that they all develop as a result of experiences encountered during language learning and language use.

1.3.1 Language anxiety

Anxiety is one of the main reasons why some people avoid communication in the L2. Language anxiety is the 'apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient' (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a, p. 5). It refers to speaking, listening, reading, and writing in L2 and is considered to be a rather stable personality trait. In most cases it will negatively influence language learning by impeding cognitive functions including language production and reception. The neuro-biological explanation is the following (Goleman, 2004a). When feeling calm,

the working memory – responsible for cognitive processes such as comprehension, understanding, planning, reasoning, and learning – functions at its best. However, when stressed or anxious, the brain shifts resources (blood) from the working memory (that is the pre-frontal lobe) to other areas in the brain responsible for more essential life functions related to survival skills (e.g., mobility) that evolved throughout millions of years of human evolution. Therefore, as a result of a stressful experience, functions of the working memory may become temporarily paralysed and therefore it could impede language production alongside of other cognitive processes - an amygdala hijack, as Goleman (2004a, 2004b) calls it.

In a classroom context, anxiety is seen as a result of three features: worry about a test, social evaluation, and communication apprehension (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). The term ‘communication apprehension’ originates in communication research in the native language where it is understood as one’s level of the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or a group of people (McCroskey, 1992, p.1). However, it is conceptually similar to L2 anxiety, since they both refer to nervousness about communication (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991). Therefore, as the present dissertation focuses on communication variables, I will refer to this construct as L2 communication apprehension (L2 CA).

A large number of empirical studies on second language acquisition have focused on the effects of language learning anxiety on L2 development (e.g., Horwitz, 1986, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Results have been relatively consistent: there is a negative relationship between L2 performance and language anxiety (e.g., Gardner, Smythe, Clément, & Glikzman, 1976, quoted in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a, p. 5; Horwitz, 1986). Findings indicate that in general, more anxious learners will get lower grades in courses (e.g., Horwitz, 1986), will have more difficulty in learning and production, and will be less adventurous and less likely to participate in classroom activities (Tucker, Hamayan, & Genesee, 1976 quoted in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a, p. 5).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) identified two dimensions of language anxiety by factor analysis: general anxiety and communicative anxiety. They found that those

participants who had higher communicative anxiety in L2 situations achieved significantly less in L2 vocabulary learning and production; however, general anxiety did not correlate significantly with L2 development measures. To provide a theoretical explanation, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a) argue that in the early stages of L2 learning, anxiety is not likely to play a major role in L2 development. This is due to the fact that negative experiences, related particularly to speaking, have not yet generated the negative emotions or feelings of failure that would normally make learners anxious. As they accumulate language-related experiences, frequent negative encounters will reinforce anxiety in them. Once L2 anxiety has developed, it will permeate the entire language learning process and is likely to impede overall L2 performance. Yet, as learners' L2 skills improve and as they accumulate more positive experiences the debilitating effects of L2 anxiety are expected to diminish. In short, beginner language learners are expected to be more anxious, whereas advanced learners' apprehension is presumed to have diminished by the later stages of the language learning process.

In a Croatian context, Dijgunović (2006) found supporting evidence that younger and less proficient learners are more likely to be affected by anxiety than their older peers when she compared two age groups' oral and written performance in terms of the effects of language anxiety. She also found that for year 8 learners, the relationship between affect and production skills was much stronger than for year 12 learners.

Nevertheless, empirical evidence does not fully support the view that more experienced language learners are less likely to be anxious than pupils with lower proficiency. Tóth (2007), explored advanced EFL learners' anxiety and she reported that although most participants did not have high levels of anxiety, every fifth student displayed 'high levels of anxiety with rather severe affective, psycho-physiological as well as behavioural symptoms' (p. 243). The five most anxious English majors did not recall any particular negative personal experience related to language learning in compulsory education, and they all explicitly stated that their English-related anxiety started in their university English classes. As Tóth's participants were at least at an intermediate level and were experienced learners of English, she concluded that proficiency level and stage of learning cannot be the primary cause of high apprehension.

These learners developed anxiety at later stages of language learning despite early positive experiences. Tóth's results suggest that language anxiety may be more situation-dependent than it was previously believed. Among this special group of EFL learners, most likely it was the transition from secondary school to higher education context and the very different language learning environment that stimulated language learners' apprehension.

Results of empirical studies also showed that learners' least favourite activities are oral tasks, as they consider speaking in an L2 the most anxiety generating activity (e.g., Bailey, 1983; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). For instance, Young's (1990) study revealed that in classroom settings, participants were most anxious when they had to carry out tasks which involved public communication and evaluation. Further on, a negative correlation has been found between learners' level of anxiety and scores achieved on oral tests (e.g., Philips, 1992; Scott, 1986; Young, 1986). Philips also investigated the quantity and quality of oral L2 output of learners in relation to their anxiety and found that the more anxious students spoke less, used shorter speech units, and employed less complex sentence structures than those who were more relaxed. Similar findings were reported by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994). In their study, more anxious students were perceived as less fluent, to have less native-like accent, and to use less complex sentence structure.

Whether it is chatting to peers or presenting a paper in front of classmates, oral production in an L2 will induce most anxiety among all language related activities. In the Croatian context, Djigunović (2006) found that as she expected, anxiety had a stronger effect on learners' oral production when they performed argumentative talk than carrying out simpler conversational tasks in different situations such as answering questions or describing pictures. Further on, for 16-year-old learners of English it was success in speaking rather than success in writing that was more closely associated with anxiety.

In the Hungarian context, Tóth (2006) inquired into the role of anxiety in advanced learners' speech production. She looked at learners' perceptions of language anxiety in relation to their oral production with native speakers. She found that highly anxious students felt that their anxiety impeded their oral communication skills. Students claimed that their anxiety stopped them from understanding properly what was said or

written in the L2; it caused them difficulties in generating ideas, to argue and to propose a hypothesis, and their anxiety made it more difficult for them to retrieve vocabulary. This result is in line with the theoretical grounding outlined in the beginning of this section (e.g., Goleman, 2004a).

Numerous studies have explored the effects of anxiety on language achievement, yet, to unveil the causes of language anxiety seems to be even more important. Tóth's dissertation (2007) revealed that one of the key factors contributing to English majors' anxiety was the learning situation. Specifically, fear of inadequate performance in university seminars was found to be a distinct feature of their language anxiety, and it was related to the transition from language classes in secondary education to advanced university seminars conducted fully in English. Besides personality traits, certain demographic features were also found to contribute to learners' anxiety. Highly anxious students were females who were at an intermediate level and who had very little or no experience in living in an English speaking country. They felt inhibited in the presence of others who had advanced certificates in English and who had previously lived abroad. Participants of the three studies I report on in my dissertation were also English majors with intermediate or more advanced levels of English; therefore, most of them were not expected to have high levels of communicational anxiety. In my discussion on empirical findings I will draw on Tóth's (2007) results.

The ongoing debate about whether language anxiety depends primarily on proficiency level and language learning experience remains open. Most probably these factors interact in complex ways depending on the context and how individuals perceive the actual tasks, their outcomes, and their peers.

1.3.2 Linguistic self-confidence and perceived L2 competence

There are two main conceptual variations of linguistic self-confidence across the literature. Some researchers argue that the opposite of an anxious language learner is the self-confident student, whereas others consider linguistic self-confidence as a super-ordinate construct to anxiety. The concept of 'linguistic self-confidence' has been introduced in the L2 research literature by Clément by putting forward his social-

contextual model of L2 learning (1980), which was discussed earlier in detail in this chapter. Clément, Major, Gardner, and Smythe (1977 quoted in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a, p. 6) define linguistic self-confidence as the ‘lack of language anxiety and positive self-rated proficiency in the second language’ which implies that the concept is more than simply the lack of anxiety. Findings of Clément’s (1986) investigation, carried out in a multicultural setting, indicate that the best predictor of L2 development was self-confidence.

Drawing on their factor analytical study carried out in the Canadian multicultural setting, Clément and his colleagues (Clément, Major, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977, quoted in Gardner & MacIntyre 1993a, p. 6) found that the self-confidence factor was determined by positive teacher ratings, positive course evaluation, use of L2 outside the classroom, and their lack of anxiety. Further studies conducted in the Canadian bilingual setting (e.g., Gardner, Smythe, & Lalonde, 1984, quoted in Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a, p. 6) also showed that when learners had the opportunity to use the L2 in the community, language anxiety diminished and language proficiency improved. Clément and his colleagues argue that positive contact with members of the target language community can enhance learners’ self-confidence, yet, in a monolingual setting, the role of self-confidence may not be so prevalent due to the less frequent intergroup contacts. Labrie and Clément’s results (1986 quoted in Dörnyei, et al. 2006, p. 128) also showed that intercultural contact positively affected self-confidence and in turn had an effect on L2 motivation. Nevertheless, as outlined earlier in the section on attitudes, empirical studies have shown (e.g., Dörnyei et al., 2006) that sometimes too much contact with L2 speakers may exert negative influence on language attitudes, which in turn will negatively affect language learning motivation and possibly achievement.

The second view of self confidence is that the concept entails perceived competence only without taking anxiety into account. Perceived confidence, also often referred to as self-efficacy – the positive judgement of one’s own abilities to perform – has been well researched in psychology (e.g., Goleman, 2004a, p. 70). It refers to individuals’ beliefs of their skills, as having the skill alone is not enough to be able to use it at their best. Clément’s language-related concept of ‘self-rated proficiency’ or ‘self-evaluation of second language proficiency’ (Clément, 1986, p. 24) is conceptually similar

to ‘perceived communication competence’ which, originates from L1 communication research. According to McCroskey (1982), perceived communication competence (PCC) refers to the individual’s self-assessment of their communication abilities. Numerous studies from various fields, including education and management studies, have confirmed that it was participants’ self-efficacy that was a stronger predictor of one’s performance in a task and not their actual skills (e.g., Saks, 1995). In the present dissertation, I refer to this construct as L2 perceived communication competence meaning the individual’s self-assessment of their communication abilities in the L2.

Both conceptualisations confirm that anxiety and perceived competence are closely related. In relation to self-confidence, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993b) found that language anxiety showed a stronger correlation with learners’ perceived L2 competence than their actual results on a language test. As will be seen, the present dissertation provides further insights into the relationship between these three variables. Another study (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997) gives further evidence to the relevance of anxiety in relation to their linguistic self-confidence. Their findings indicate that more anxious students were more likely to underestimate their language skills, whereas more relaxed students tended to overestimate their L2 competence.

Because of the goals of the present study I treat L2 communication apprehension and L2 perceived communication competence as two separate variables. In Chapter 2, I describe these two variables in relation to a closely related concept also originating from L1 communicational research: willingness to communicate and their roles in motivational research.

1.4 The communibiological perspective: a new approach to human behaviour

All the variables outlined in the previous section will influence one way or the other how the individual behaves in particular situations. Some learners, despite their favourable attitudes towards the target language and their great motivation to learn it will choose not to interact with L2 speakers as a result of introvert or timid personality. Past research from the field of psychology, biology, and communications studies have provided

evidence for the relationship between of some personality traits and communication style and communicative behaviour (e.g., Eysenck, 1947, 1970, 1990, all quoted in McCroskey, 2006, p. 33; McCroskey, Daly, & Sorensen, 1976; McCroskey, Heisel, & Richmond, 2001, McCroskey, Richmond, Heisel, & Hayhurst, 2004). Meanwhile, recent advances in neurobiology and developmental psychology have provided evidence for the impact of genetics in areas of human behaviour. One of the latest news of such research is that human temperament – the moods that characterize our emotional life such as extraversion, neuroticism, psychotism – is biologically determined at birth, in other words, is genetically based (Goleman, 2004a, 2004b; McCroskey, Heisel, & Richmond, 2001; Wahba & McCroskey, 2004). According to Kagan (1997, quoted in Goleman 2004b, p. 215), different temperamental types are the result of a different pattern of brain activity. Yet, as McCroskey stresses, ‘communication behaviour is not caused by temperament’ but both are rather the products of the neurological systems in the brain (2006, p. 33). Another argument McCroskey and Beatty (2000) put forward is that the capacity of the cerebral cortex, the area that is responsible, for instance, for the production of abstract ideas, judgment, conscience, or social behaviour is genetically related. In other words, we are born with a certain temperament which drives our personality and which is very difficult to change.

These advances gave way to a new paradigm in communicational research that is in contrast with the social learning theory: the communibiological approach which refers to the study of the connection between communication and biology (Wahba & McCroskey, 2004). McCroskey and Beatty put forward that ‘inborn, neurobiological structures are responsible for communication behaviour and associated processes’ (2000, p. 2, also in Beatty, McCroskey, & Valencic, 2001; McCroskey, Heisel, & Richmond, 2001), thus (communicational) behaviour is genetically based. Research on identical twins has revealed that the three general dimensions of communicative behaviour - extraversion, neuroticism, and psychotism – are also inherited traits (Eysenck, 1986 quoted in McCroskey & Beatty, 2000, p. 3).

From these recent findings, a very important question arises that has triggered an endless scientific debate: Is it possible to change one’s biologically predestined emotions and consequently their behaviour by experience and learning? McCroskey and Beatty

(2000) argue that cultural, situational, or environmental effects contribute to only 20 percent of the variance in human behaviour, whereas the remaining variance is genetically related, therefore it is difficult to change.

Based on past research, McCroskey and Beatty claim that most people are not likely to be able to change their behaviour much; furthermore, much of the change is 'due to unfolding genetic programming, not individual volition (e.g., 'the reason one slows down in a 50 yard dash after age 35 is not because experience mellows runners' 2000, p. 3). They conclude that even with radical behaviour therapy it is hard to change for instance highly anxious adults to become more relaxed as only about 15 percent achieve lower scores on a measure of communication apprehension. According to evolutionary biology, the cerebral cortex - which makes humans different from other living beings - is the latest addition to the human brain structure; therefore, following the evolutionary principle 'older is stronger', McCroskey and Beatty argue that 'the emotional brain systems usually prevail in a struggle against the cerebral cortex' (2000, p. 4). In short: emotions and feelings (for instance, stage fright and shyness) will sometimes override actions that common sense might dictate (for a similar line of arguments see also Goleman, 2004a). However, they argue that it is possible to influence the content of the cerebral cortex - our belief system and factual knowledge - by experience.

The latest evidence from neuro-scientific research provides a more optimistic view: genes are not destiny (for a summary see Begley, 2007). Neuroscientists claim that genes are more flexible than they were considered in the past. Genes can be dormant or active depending on very early childhood experiences, most importantly on how one was treated as a baby by the people who cared for it the most. In other words, genes, including those responsible for one's basic traits such as fearfulness or neuroticism (and therefore responsible for one's behaviour and temperament) are determined by the environment, most crucially by maternal care for babies. Goleman draws studies from developmental psychology (e.g., Kagan, 1997 quoted in Goleman, 2004b) and posits that 'the emotional lessons of childhood can have a profound impact on temperament, either amplifying or muting an innate predisposition' (p. 221). Kagan's research (1997, quoted in Goleman, 2004b, p. 223) showed that allowing shy or timid children to acquire greater social competence and encouraging them to be more outgoing enabled them to overcome their

timidity as their accumulated positive experiences with other children. Goleman argues that even within genetic constraints there is a range of possible behavioural outcomes. The environment, especially personal experiences and learning, affect how a temperamental predisposition expresses itself as we grow up. Teaching and raising awareness from early childhood about the types of behaviours that could lead to more effective communication can make people understand each other and the underlying processes of interpersonal communication better; yet, there is no guarantee that they will also exhibit those behaviours in situations when it would be desirable. However, McCroskey (2006, p. 34) points out that not all human behavioural patterns are temperament related, for instance homophobia and ethnocentrism were found to have very weak relationships with temperament (Wrench & McCroskey, 2003).

From the previous arguments it is clear that the two views complement each other. Continuous education and socialisation starting in early childhood are necessary for us to acquire the socially desirable traits and in turn to become an effective communicator. If this is left too late, for instance, in the case of adults, only with rigorous cognitive training and with awareness raising would it be possible to change their emotional and behavioural patterns. Although, this would be extremely difficult, it would not be an impossible task.

Personality traits that are believed to play an important role in the language acquisition process have been explored by SLA researchers too (e.g., Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 1991). Past investigations have yielded somewhat inconsistent results (e.g., Lalonde & Gardner, 1984; Skehan 1989 both quoted in MacIntyre & Charos, 1996, p. 9), although according to Dörnyei (2005, p. 29), this is likely to be due to the wide variation in the research methodologies and instruments authors used.

A few studies have investigated the effects of personality traits on L2 production and willingness to communicate. For example, extraversion was a good predictor of fluency of oral production (e.g., Berry, 2004; Wakamoto, 2002; both quoted in Dewale, 2005, p. 373). In their path analysis model, which is a statistical procedure that allows testing causal relations between measured variables, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) found that five global personality traits directly affected other learner variables such as perceived competence and communication apprehension. Their findings showed that

intellect determined perceived communication competence; that is, participants who considered themselves more sophisticated or open to experience also thought they were more competent in the L2. Also, extroversion had a negative effect on anxiety and agreeableness determined L2 willingness to communicate. Jung and McCroskey (2004) found that personality traits as genetic markers were almost equally predictive of communication apprehension of L1 as of L2. Therefore, they conclude that communication anxiety is a cross-linguistic trait that is genetically based (p. 179).

1.5 Conclusion

As this chapter illustrated it, successful language learning depends on a vast number of factors. This chapter outlined the major differences in individual learners' features and their impact on language learning achievement. Researching students' motivation, attitudes, anxiety, and self-confidence over time could shed light on their L2 development or the lack of it. From the available literature, it is clear that motivation has been given more emphasis than any of the other four ID variables discussed in this chapter. In the present study, five learner variables are taken into account. Besides L2 motivation and attitudes, L2 communication apprehension, L2 perceived communication competence, and a relatively new concept in L2 research, learners' willingness to communicate in the L2 is also taken into consideration. This concept and findings of relevant research are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Communicational variables in L2 motivational research

2.1 Introduction

Cognitive theories of second language acquisition (e.g., Skehan, 1998; Swain, 1985) and research into second language use (e.g., Seliger, 1977; Swain & Lapkin, 1995) emphasize the central role of communication in the process of SLA. It is often assumed that L2 learners who talk a lot are proficient in the language and have excellent language skills, whereas others who are not so talkative must have problems with their language skills. Most probably, every language teacher and learner has come across students who were proficient in a foreign language but were not willing to communicate and with those who were not proficient at all, but were keen to talk in the target language all the time. For instance, one of my peers in English classes in secondary school, who was one of the chattiest, always had something to say whatever topic we were discussing despite his far-from-perfect language skills. He never seemed to care about the mistakes he made and never seemed to mind when this was pointed out by the teacher in front of the class. (For a collection of examples see Chapter 6 that outlines English majors' own accounts).

There have been discussions on the role of language learners' L2 verbal and written output in L2 development. Krashen believes (1985, p. 2) that L2 'speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause'. Building on Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Swain (1985; also Swain & Lapkin, 1995) proposed that when producing the L2, a learner will, on occasion, notice a linguistic problem (either by internal feedback or by explicit or implicit external feedback such as clarification requests). This, in turn, might push the learner to modify output, and the syntactic processes in which they engage may promote L2 learning. In other words talking in the target language will facilitate language learning, therefore, the more talkative the learner is the more proficient she is expected to be.

Following Swain's Output Hypothesis, Skehan (1995 quoted in Ellis, 2003, p. 113) distinguishes three aspects of L2 production: fluency, accuracy, and complexity. He suggests that L2 learners may pay attention to these aspects to different extents depending on the task or context. Learners would rely on different systems of the language: for fluency they would rely on their memory-based system, whereas when focusing on accuracy and complexity they would utilize their rule-based systems. This might be a possible explanation for the phenomenon why not so proficient learners speak fluently. Hence, fluency refers to 'the capacity of the learner to mobilize his/her system to communicate meaning in real time' (Skehan 1995, quoted in Ellis, 2003, p. 113).

Ellis (2003, p. 113) stresses that although Swain's and Skehan's proposals are convincing, they do not provide evidence to support them. He believes that production may have an effect on L2 development, as it contributes to greater control and automaticity of discourse; however, the effect might be only indirect. In short, more talkative students will not necessarily be more proficient. Gass, Mackey and Pica (1998, p. 299) have similar views, as they argue that 'although interaction may provide a structure that allows input to become salient and hence noticed, interaction should not be seen as a cause of acquisition, it can only set the scene for potential learning'. As these discussions show, the picture is not quite clear. Chapter 6 will provide some insights into students' perceptions on speaking with native L2 speakers and other users of English as a valuable source of learning.

Lately, SLA researchers have started to pay increasing attention to why one person is more willing to use an L2 than another. The social-psychological construct of willingness to communicate (WTC), referring to learners' psychological readiness to speak in an L2, is in the centre of a recent extension of L2 motivation research that 'has considerable theoretical and practical potential' (Dörnyei, 2003, p. 12).

Focusing on this construct and its antecedents would enable SLA specialists to better understand what makes one student more talkative than the other. If WTC is found to promote efficient learning, then by exploring this area, it would be possible to put forward strategies to encourage learners to speak in a second language in formal and informal contexts. In their heuristic pyramid model of L2 confidence and affiliation, MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998, p. 545) integrated psychological,

linguistic, and communicative approaches to L2 teaching and research which have been typically treated separately in the past. They perceive willingness to communicate 'as the final step in preparing the language learner for communication, because it represents the probability that a learner will *use* the language in authentic interaction with another individual, given the opportunity' (1998, p. 558). Their model is based on Fishbein-Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein, 1980; both quoted in MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 548) and Ajzen's (1988) Theory of Planned Behaviour model which stipulates that the most immediate cause of behaviour is the intention to engage in behaviour (quoted in MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 548). Therefore, in the focus of their model is the individual who 'has some control over his or her actions and is behaving in a reasoned manner to achieve his or her goals' (1998, p. 548). MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 548) refer to Van den Putte's meta-analytic review of 113 studies (1991, cited in Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p.176) where they reported a mean correlation of $r = .62$ between intention and behaviour.

Their multi-level model (See Figure 1) consists of six layers, which are conceptually divided, referring to situational and enduring influences. The top three layers refer to situation-specific influences and they entail L2 use, willingness to communicate, desire to communicate with a specific person, and state communicative self-confidence. In other words, these variables depend on the particular situation in which the individual functions at a certain time; therefore, their influence on the learner is temporary. Variables in the bottom three layers are believed to have more stable influences on learners' willingness to communicate, as they are not likely to change from situation to situation or over time. These layers entail motivational variables, affective and cognitive context, and social and personality variables.

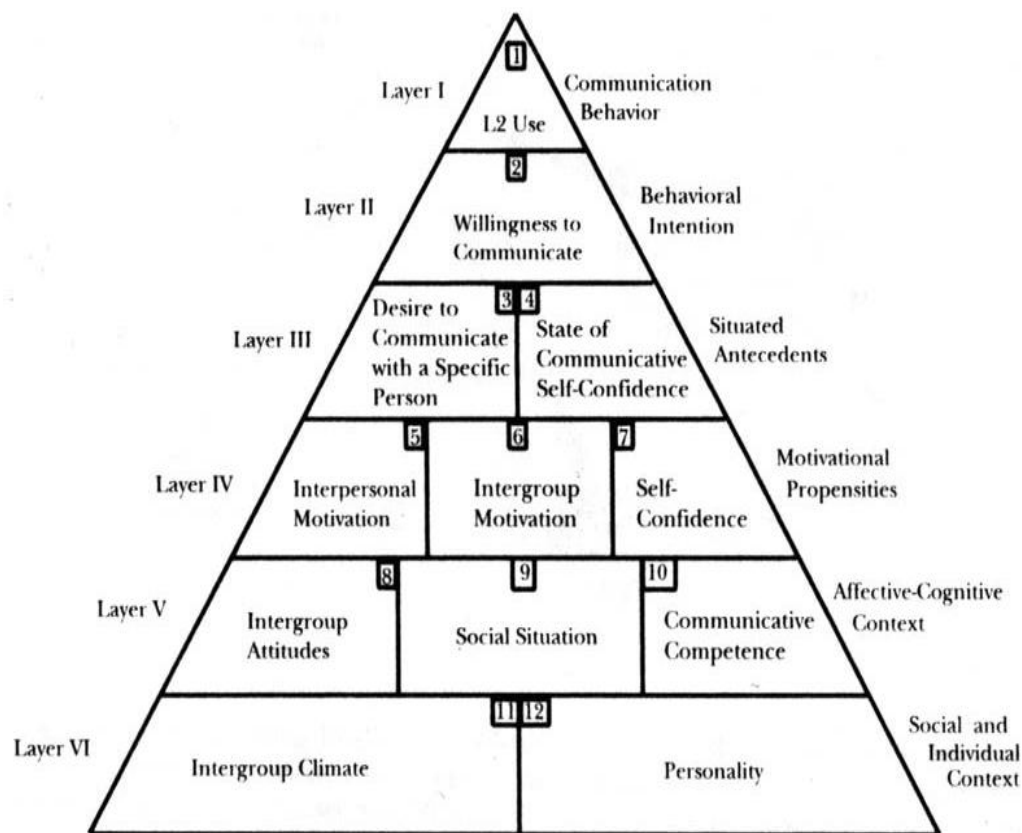


Figure 1 Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547)

Moving beyond linguistic and communicative competence as the main goal of L2 pedagogy, MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 558) propose that ‘a suitable goal of L2 learning is to increase W(illingness) T(o) C(ommunicate)’. They treat L2 communication behaviour in its broadest sense (e.g., participating in conversations, reading newspapers, watching television) and argue 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 to actually communicate in them’ (p. 547).

MacIntyre and his colleagues point out that the model is a ‘work-in-progress, more as a starting point than a finished product’ (p. 559) and that there are some points for caution. First, the pyramid model is one dimensional, whereas the transition from distal influences to proximal influences is not. Also, in certain cases some of the distal influences may bypass proximal ones. Third, the model can be applied to situations when the individual has the choice to initiate a conversation; however, when choice is not an issue, the pyramid model may not work so well.

Despite the model's promising potentials relatively few investigations have inquired into L2 WTC and its role in SLA (Dörnyei, 2003). The three studies presented in the proceeding chapters aim to fill in this gap by looking at the concept and its relation to certain variables in a foreign language learning context where learners have limited opportunities for using the target language for authentic communication.

2.2 Communicational variables: willingness to communicate, perceived communication competence, and communication apprehension

The concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) originates from communication research in the native language in the United States of America. In order to explain why certain people communicate more than others in various contexts, McCroskey (1992, p. 2) proposed the construct of WTC. In his view, WTC refers to the probability that an individual will initiate a conversation in a situation when he or she is given the opportunity to do so (McCroskey, 1992). In other words, it is the willingness to approach or avoid communication. When referring to WTC in a second or foreign language, MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 547) define it as the individual's 'readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using a L2.

Underlying the construct of WTC are two key variables of individual characteristics: communication apprehension (CA) and perceived communication competence (PCC) (MacIntyre, 1994; McCroskey, 1992). Communication apprehension is defined as 'the individual's level of the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons' (McCroskey, 1992, p.1). It is conceptually similar to L2 anxiety (see Chapter 1), as they both refer to nervousness about communication (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). As my dissertation focuses mainly on communication variables, I will refer to this construct as L2 communication apprehension (L2 CA) following MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donovan's conceptualization (2003). Although it is related to one's willingness to communicate, a behavioural construct, McCroskey and Richmond (1990a, p. 28) stress that communication anxiety is not a behavioural but a cognitive concept. This means, as they point out, that simply by being alerted by a future possible communicative situation with

someone may cause cognitive disruption (Booth-Butterfield, 1988a, 1988b both quoted in McCroskey & Richmond, 1990a, p. 28). In other words, just by thinking about a stressful interpersonal encounter that is likely to take place might generate apprehension. One can easily become anxious without engaging in actual communicative behaviour. Communication anxiety is believed to be mediated through personality traits which are genetically related (McCroskey & Beatty, 2000, Beatty et al., 2001) and therefore, it is perceived to some extent as a cross linguistic trait which is consistent in one's L1 and L2 (Jung & McCroskey, 2004).

The other key variable underlying one's predisposition towards speaking is perceived communication competence, which refers to the individual's self-assessment of his or her communication abilities (McCroskey, 1982). This construct is similar to some of the conceptualisations of linguistic self-confidence and self-efficacy outlined in Chapter 1. Here, I will refer to this construct as L2 perceived communication competence (L2 PCC) meaning the individual's self-assessment of his or her communication abilities in the L2.

Besides its two key antecedents, more distant personality traits were also found to be related to one's willingness to speak, as shown in the pyramid model. For instance introversion/extraversion, emotional stability, communicative competence (e.g., MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Clément, 1999) are all considered to influence to some extent how willing somebody is to talk. These variables are positioned at the very bottom of MacIntyre and his colleagues' Pyramid model meaning that they will have more stable effects on the individual's willingness to communicate. Moreover, as these variables are most likely to exert their influences through other variables, it is difficult to determine their exact roles in one's behavioural intentions. McCroskey and Richmond emphasize (1990a, p. 25) that it is not possible to clearly state that these antecedents of WTC are also the causes of variability in the construct. They argue that they are more likely involved 'in mutual causality and even more likely that both the antecedents and WTC are produced in common by other causal elements'.

Findings on the relationship between these two variables and WTC have been consistent; they were both found to be significantly related to WTC in L1 (e.g., McCroskey & Richmond, 1990a) and L2 (e.g., Yashima, et al., 2004; MacIntyre, Baker,

Clément, & Donovan, 2003; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996); however, as for which antecedents predict best an individual's predisposition towards speaking is not straightforward. The relationship between WTC and its antecedents may depend on numerous factors ranging from learning contexts to learners' linguistic and non-linguistic experiences but it may also vary across cultures (e.g., Barraclough, Christophel, & McCroskey, 1988; Daun, Burroughs, & McCroskey, 1988 quoted in McCroskey & Richmond, 1990a, p. 32). Section 2.3 offers a summary of studies focusing on learners' willingness to communicate in an L2 and that inquired into this complex relationship.

Whether WTC is a state-like or more a trait-like variable has been a point for investigation. 'State-like' refers to one's current emotional state at a specific moment in a time and in a specific situation which is likely to change over time and vary from situation to situation, whereas 'trait-like' refers to one's emotional disposition that is rather stable throughout various circumstances. One's predisposition towards speaking in their mother tongue is considered to be more like a stable personality trait which does not change over time (e.g., McCroskey & Richmond, 1990a). McCroskey and Richmond point out that people's predisposition towards communicating is to a great extent situationally dependent, yet individuals show consistent WTC tendencies across situations.

There is no doubt that one's willingness to speak in a foreign language is more complex than one's willingness to converse in their mother tongue. Besides learners' general level of proficiency, it also depends on learners' communicative abilities in the L2, and it may change as the learner gains more language experience and as intergroup relations change (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Therefore, the conceptualization of WTC is perceived differently by communication researchers in the native language and second language researchers. MacIntyre and his colleagues argue that, on the one hand, L2 competence may vary from zero to an advanced level; on the other hand, 'L2 use carries a number of intergroup issues, with social and political implications, that are usually irrelevant to L1 use' (p. 546). Therefore, they conceptualize L2 WTC as a state-like variable influenced by the context; in other words, it is a 'situation-based variable representing an intention to communicate at a specific time to a specific person' (p. 559).

Although communication is a universal human trait, its norms may vary across cultures. Studies have shown that certain cultural groups are more willing to communicate in their mother tongue than others. For instance, Barraclough, Christophel, and McCroskey (1988) found that US college students had stronger willingness to converse than similar students in Australia. McCroskey, Burroughs, Daun and Richmond (1990) also found US students to be more willing to communicate than Swedish students; however, college-aged Swedish participants believed that they were more competent and introverted than their American counterparts. Yet, there was no significant difference between the two groups' communication apprehension.

Willingness to communicate in an L2 may also vary from culture to culture (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990b). Studies have shown (McCroskey, Gudykunst, & Nishida, 1985) that, for instance, Japanese EFL learners were the most apprehensive ethnic group in the Pacific Basin and reported even higher communication apprehension than Oriental ethnic groups on the US mainland. Moreover, Japanese students were equally apprehensive about communicating in their mother tongue as they were about speaking English. McCroskey and his associates explain this by the different cultural values of Japanese people. They argue that according to Japanese cultural norms 'talkativeness' is not valued within the community; therefore, maintaining positive cultural identity would mean being less open and more reticent. As Hildebrandt and Giles's point out (1980, p. 78 quoted in McCroskey, et al., 1985, p. 14), the dominant attitudes toward speaking English in Japan usually discourage confidence and encourage timidity and shyness. It is likely that L2 learners would not be able to adopt a totally new cultural identity; hence they will be more likely to stay highly apprehensive and less willing to communicate in the L2 than other ethnic groups.

In the present study, MacIntyre and his associates' paradigm (1998) was adopted, as they built their model in relation to an L2 context. In the two quantitative studies outlined in Chapter 4 and 5, the assessment scales measure learners' general predisposition towards speaking in English in a hypothetical situation, whereas in the qualitative study, student's 'state-like' L2 WTC is explored through students' written accounts.

2.3 Empirical studies on L2 WTC

The empirical studies on L2 WTC that were available to me are based on the same theory and share similar research designs yet they often show conflicting results. Inconsistencies in findings may be due to the diversity of groups (in terms of age, cultural background, language course they took part in, levels of proficiency) and sometimes limited numbers of participants that do not allow researchers to draw clear conclusions. Nevertheless, some general tendencies can be observed across the research studies. In this section I overview studies inquiring into L2 WTC.

The majority of these studies have been carried out in immersion or bilingual settings, in Canada and only a few have been implemented in foreign language contexts: in Japan, Hawaii, and Micronesia. Results of these studies are comparable to a certain extent, as to measure communication variables, they all used the same validated self-assessment scales developed by McCroskey and Baer (1985, quoted in McCroskey & Richmond, 1990a, p. 24) for WTC, and the scales of McCroskey and Richmond (1987) for PCC and for CA, or adapted versions of these instruments. The majority of studies followed a quantitative research methodology and only three qualitative explorations (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Kang, 2005; MacDonald, Clément, & MacIntyre, 2003). What follows is a brief overview of the main findings of existing literature on WTC according to the following organizational principles:

- (1) WTC and its relation to CA and PCC;
- (2) WTC and motivation;
- (3) L2 WTC as related to L2 proficiency; and
- (4) L2 communication variables in relation to L2 use and context.

2.3.1 L2 WTC and its relationship to CA and PCC

Researchers agree that the closest influence on one's willingness to communicate is communication apprehension and perceived communication competence (e.g., MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre et al., 1998; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). Yet, studies have shown that the extent to which the two antecedents influence learners' WTC often

varies. In most of the studies, researchers have found that one or the other antecedent played a more influential role in learners' predisposition to speak in an L2 (e.g., MacIntyre, Babin, & Clément, 1999; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). So far no study focussed specifically on this area, but it is likely that the strength of antecedents on WTC will vary according to learning context and learners linguistic and non-linguistic experiences.

A number of studies reported that PCC affected more strongly one's WTC. What the majority of these studies had in common is that of they involved learners studying in an FL or SL context and not in an immersion setting. MacIntyre and Charos' (1996) study was carried out among beginner learners of French in the bilingual Ottawa. The correlational coefficients showed that PCC was more strongly correlated with WTC than CA. However, their path analysis, which allows testing causal relation between measured variables, revealed that the effects of these two antecedents on WTC were equally strong. Also, it showed that communication anxiety directly affected students' perceived competence. Yashima (2002) and Yashima et al. (2004) also found a stronger correlation between EFL learners' perceived communication competence and WTC than between communication apprehension and WTC. The findings of Hashimoto's (2002) study, conducted in a Japanese ESL context, were similar to the previous ones, as the statistical analysis showed that PCC had a stronger effect on WTC than CA. Although their study was carried out in an immersion setting, MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Donovan (2002) also found that PCC had a stronger relationship with WTC than CA.

In another set of studies, it was reported that CA had a stronger relationship with L2 WTC than PCC. MacIntyre and his colleagues (2003) compared two groups of university students in the bilingual Canadian context: those who had had immersion experience and those who had only learnt French as a second language (FSL). In the group of students with immersion experience, they found a correlation only between communication apprehension and WTC. The opposite was reported about the group with FSL experience: WTC was related to perceived communication competence only. Baker and MacIntyre (2000) came to somewhat similar conclusions after investigating the role of gender and immersion in communication. Their participants were secondary-school students, from 14 to 18 years of age. The WTC of those who took part in immersion

programmes correlated moderately only with communication apprehension, whereas the WTC of non-immersion students showed significant yet weak correlation both with communication apprehension ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$) and strong correlation with perceived competence ($r = .72$, $p < .01$). However, the correlation between L2 CA and L2 WTC was slightly weaker in the non-immersion than in the immersion group. In all these studies the WTC of students with previous immersion experience was related solely or mostly to their communication anxiety.

As these studies showed, the effect of communication anxiety and perceived competence on one's willingness to speak is likely to depend on, to a certain extent, the learning context. In immersion settings, it was speaking anxiety that had a greater or exclusive impact on students' predisposition towards speaking, whereas in foreign language or second language contexts it was mostly learners' perceived competence that was more strongly related to their eagerness to converse. It has emerged from communication research in the native language that L1 CA is the stronger predictor of L1 WTC. As students master a second or foreign language and their level of proficiency approaches native-like level, it may be L2 CA that would best predict learners' L2 WTC. Immersion students who already possess a higher level of proficiency may be more confident in using the language and have more positive attitudes towards speakers of the L2 and the learning situation; these are the reasons why in their cases it was speaking anxiety that predicted better their willingness to converse in the target language. Although some studies revealed a significant positive correlation between one's willingness to speak in the mother tongue and in a second language (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002), it is not possible to draw a parallel between the two cases.

These results imply that it is essential for language learners to have an adequate level of linguistic self-confidence in order to initiate conversation in the L2 in a foreign language learning context, whereas it might be less crucial in the case of speaking in one's mother tongue or in an immersion context. The two studies outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 look into which antecedent, if any, has a stronger relationship with Hungarian EFL learners' willingness to speak in English. Based on previous studies conducted in a FL setting, it is expected that learners' perceived competence would have a greater influence

on their predisposition to talk in English. If evidence is found for this, it would support my assumption that in a FL context students' level of willingness to use the target language largely depends on their perceived competence. If findings are in line with previous results, one of the possible aims of L2 instruction could be to boost these learners' self-confidence in order to achieve higher L2 WTC which in turn will hopefully result in higher L2 attainment.

2.3.2 Willingness to communicate and language learning motivation

A number of studies investigated the connection between learners' readiness to speak and their motivation and findings indicate that there the two constructs are significantly related. Studies implemented in immersion contexts have been consistent in that motivational factors played a significant role in determining one's willingness to communicate as well as most studies carried out in FL or SL settings or those investigating non-immersion settings.

Although this was not the focus of Baker and MacIntyre's study (2000), their correlation matrix, which shows the correlations between all pairs of data sets (see Table 1 in Baker and MacIntyre, 2000, p. 324-5), indicates differences in immersion versus non-immersion students' motivation in relation to the communicational variables. Although motivation as measured by the Guilford version of Gardner's attitude/motivation test battery (AMTB) (see Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993b) was positively correlated with second language willingness to speak in both groups, the correlation between the two variables was stronger among the immersion students ($r = .61, p < .01$ as opposed to $r = .38, p < .01$ in non-immersion group).

MacIntyre and his colleagues (2003) reported similar findings in their study involving students with previous immersion or intensive experience versus students with traditional SL experience. They found a strong correlation between learners' motivation and their predisposition towards speaking among students in the ex-immersion/intensive group but not among students who were studying the L2 in a SL context. Focusing on the effects of gender and age on communicational and L2 motivational variables among three

age groups of immersion students, MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Donovan (2002) also reported significant correlations between motivation and WTC.

Most of the studies carried out in a foreign language learning context provided further evidence for the significant relationship between motivation and willingness to communicate. In an EFL setting in Japan, Yashima et al. (2004) found that the more motivated students were to learn English the more willing they were to speak in the target language. Likewise, Hashimoto (2002) found that the motivation of ESL learners in Honolulu was a positive indicator of their WTC.

From the empirical studies it can be concluded that regardless of the learning context, learners' motivation and their predisposition towards speaking in English are closely related. On the one hand, the more interested learners are to acquire the target language and to meet native speakers, the more willing they are to initiate a conversation in the target language. Interacting in English may be a conscious attempt to practice speaking in the target language and obtain meaningful linguistic input from native L2 speakers. Yet, it may also be an attempt to learn more about the L2 culture or simply to prove to themselves that they are proficient users of the L2. On the other hand, the more willing they are to speak in English, the more motivated they will be to meet speakers of English and to learn the target language. In other words, the more talkative the learners are the more motivated they will become to perfect their English skills to be able to converse with other L2 speakers. These two possibilities show that the relationship between language learning motivation and willingness to communicate is a complex one.

It would be difficult to tell which factor is the antecedent of the other. In fact, it is more likely that these two factors will be intertwined and will interact with each other continuously and simultaneously. It may well be that motivation and willingness to communicate share some conceptual features.

However, learning context may have an effect on the strength of the relationship between motivation and willingness to communicate. Possibly, in an immersion context or where learners have extensive opportunities for interactions with members of the target language community, they will develop stronger instrumental and integrative motivation and ideally more positive attitudes towards the native speakers. This may in turn result in an even stronger influence on to their willingness to speak or vice versa. Nevertheless,

there are learners who are keen on learning a language and have positive attitudes towards the target culture and its members but they may not be eager to speak in the target language. MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 553) point out that ‘motivation for language learning may take the form of WTC, but not necessarily so, as certain learners may opt for silent ways’ of studying such as reading books or listening to music. To further explore the relationship between EFL learners’ WTC and their motivation, one of the aims of the present study is to investigate how language learning motivation is related to EFL learners’ willingness to speak in the target language.

2.3.3 Language proficiency and willingness to communicate

Baker and MacIntyre (2000) argue that it is learners’ perceptions of competence that will affect learners’ willingness to speak rather than their actual ability. However, considering the amount of debate that was generated on the relationship between language production and language acquisition, it is surprising that only one study has examined how learners’ language proficiency influences their willingness to speak in the target language. Neither have there been a large number of studies that inquired into how learners’ willingness to speak, and ultimately their language production might affect their language skills. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the role of L2 production and interaction in L2 development is not clear cut. However, it seems that it may facilitate language acquisition (e.g., Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998), therefore, it is reasonable to suppose a positive relationship between language proficiency and L2 WTC. One might think that if language learners have linguistic means to communicate their ideas or obtain information, there is no reason why they should not do so. Also, if learners do not have adequate language skills it does not come as a surprise that they will be reluctant to speak up in the target language. On the other hand, on some occasions and under certain circumstances proficient L2 learners may be unwilling to speak in the target language. So far only one study (Yashima et al., 2004) explored the connection between L2 WTC and the linguistic outcomes of foreign language learning. The research was carried out in Japan, with Japanese adolescent learners of EFL as participants. In the study, L2 proficiency was measured objectively by using a standardized language test (TOEFL

ITP); however, no significant correlation was found between the TOEFL scores and the communication or motivational variables. According to the available literature, this neglected area of research provides further opportunities for addressing the relationship between L2 WTC and L2 competence. If the two variables are related then MacIntyre et al. (1998) are right to claim that ‘a suitable goal of L2 learning is to increase willingness to communicate’ (p. 558). One of the aims of the present dissertation is to test this relationship.

2.3.4 Amount of contact, frequency of communication, and willingness to speak

High willingness to speak is associated with increased frequency of communication which in turn, at least in western culture, is related to a wide variety of positive communicative outcomes. However, this may not be true in more distant cultures (e.g., Japan), as the degree to which cultures value oral communication varies (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990b). Drawing on literature on intercultural communication, they conclude (p. 34) that ‘the most basic difference in communication patterns between cultures may indeed be the amount of verbal communication which is preferred and the circumstances calling for talk as opposed to those which call for silence’.

The relationship between the amount of contact with the target culture and its speakers and learners’ willingness to speak has been the centre of a number of investigations conducted in Canada. Researchers explored whether learners were more willing to communicate in the target language when they had plenty of opportunities to speak in the target language in both classrooms and authentic, out-of-classroom settings, or after gaining more experience in L2 learning. In a bilingual/immersion context, students are naturally provided with an opportunity to meet native speakers and are exposed to the language on a daily basis. Foreign language learners often complain that their opportunities to practice their language skills in authentic situations are limited; therefore, one would expect that if learners had the chance, they would grab the opportunity and converse in the target language.

These are valid and relevant expectations, as language learners were found to speak more when they had extensive opportunities for meaningful L2 contact. MacIntyre and Charos' investigation (1996) gave support to the above expectations: the degree to which adult French learners encountered L2 in their neighbourhoods and at work, in other words, had increased opportunities for interaction, directly determined how frequently they used the L2. Moreover, their results confirmed that participants' intention to speak in the target language resulted in actual language use. They found that the more eager participants were to speak, the more frequently they conversed in the target language.

Similarly, Baker and MacIntyre (2000) found that learners with more linguistic opportunities were more eager to speak in the L2. They investigated the non-linguistic outcomes of a French immersion and a non-immersion secondary school programme. Participants were 71 immersion and 124 non-immersion students with English as their L1 and French as their L2. They found that students who attended the French immersion programme and therefore had more opportunity to use the L2, had a higher WTC and PCC in French, had lower CA, and reported to use French for communication more frequently than those who attended non-immersion secondary schools. MacIntyre and his colleagues reported similar findings (2003). In their study, conducted in a bilingual context in Canada, 59 English speaking university students were involved. Participants either had had previous French immersion experience (either full immersion or an intensive language programme) or had participated in traditional French as a Second Language programme. Results were similar to findings of other enquiries: those with previous immersion experience had higher WTC and reported more frequent L2 communication as opposed to those who took part in the traditional FSL stream.

MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Donovan's findings (2002) also support the claim that more willing students will speak more frequently in the target language. They inquired into the non-linguistic outcomes of 268 English native speaking junior secondary school students who took part in a French immersion programme in grades 7, 8, and 9. When progressing from grade 7 to grade 8, students reported more frequent use of French; however, in grade 9 there was no further quantifiable difference in the amount of their communication. It seems that in terms of non-linguistic outcomes, it was promising that students, by grade 9, maintained the amount of interaction they initiated in

the target language; yet, it was not assuring that this did not increase among these groups of learners. The authors suggest that anxiety might be putting a constraint on learners' willingness to speak and this in turn might be impeding actual language production.

In all cases, immersion or intensive linguistic experiences stimulated participants' willingness to speak in the target language. In addition, the more exposure learners had the more positively they perceived their communication competence (e.g., MacIntyre et al., 2003) and they seemed to be less anxious about speaking (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000) as opposed to those who did not have previous immersion experience. A likely explanation for this may be that learners who have extended opportunities for interacting with L2 native speakers, for instance, who have lived in an L2 speaking country, are more likely to acquire the L2 pragmatic and socio-cultural norms (e.g., Barron, 2003; Felix-Brasdefer, 2004; Lafford, 1995; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Schauer, 2006). For example, Matsumura (2001) found that those participants who studied abroad and had initially lower pragmatic skills gained more socio-cultural competence than those learners who stayed at home, and continued learning EFL. Kinginger and Farrell (2004) also found that L2 learners who studied abroad managed to acquire subtle features of key sociolinguistic features of French. Generally, students are also more likely to have become confident and less anxious users of colloquial English in communicative contexts. For instance, Allen and Herron (2003) found that after a study abroad period students were more relaxed to speak in both informal and out-of-classroom settings. The positive effects of study abroad on language anxiety were also documented by Dewey (2004) and Masgoret et al. (2000). Yet, insufficient levels of L2 proficiency may lead students to avoid interactive situations with residents of the target country (e.g., Rivers, 1998).

Knowing how to express themselves appropriately according to the pragmatic and sociolinguistic rules of the target language is a crucial element in L2 communication. Pragmatic knowledge enables learners to be more confident about themselves and with native speakers, and this might compensate them for defects in their proficiency. Studies from interlanguage pragmatics (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998, Schauer, 2006) have also shown that FL learners were less aware of pragmatic errors than their peers who were learning English as a second language. Although grammatical errors are easier

to recognize as they are more striking, learners making pragmatic errors may be perceived as rude or impolite by the conversational partner. This in turn may lead to communication breakdown or misunderstanding, and may well harm learners' self-confidence.

As MacIntyre, Clément, and Donovan (2002, p. 3) argued at the Second Language Research Forum in Toronto these results serve as evidence for the claim that immersion, in other words, increased opportunity for contact, promotes willingness to communicate in an L2 in authentic settings and encourages more frequent use of L2.

Drawing on this, one would expect EFL learners in a monolingual setting like Hungary not to be extremely willing to communicate, as they do not have many opportunities to use the language outside their classrooms compared to those Canadians who live in bilingual cities. However, as participants of the present study attend English classes every day, where they are encouraged to take part in discussions and participate in group work actively this might not be the case. Also, it is possible that, even without extensive interaction with L2 native speakers, extensive and authentic exposure to the target language and culture can boost learners' self-confidence as they get to know the culture better which in turn can result in more positive attitudes, increased motivation, and higher levels of WTC. A large number of the participants involved in the present study is likely to become teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) or translators or interpreters for whom communicating in English is a must; thus, a lack of desire to use the L2 would not help them to become effective and successful professionals. If these students themselves are not very willing to use the L2, they cannot be expected to fulfil the fundamental goal of L2 instruction, which is to increase learners' WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

2.4 Conclusion

The role of L2 communication has been at the forefront of second language research. Recently, in order to propose a new motivational framework for exploring why certain learners are more willing to speak in an L2, while others rather stay quiet SLA researchers have imported the concept of 'willingness to communicate' from

communication research in the native language. The heuristic model of L2 confidence and affiliation put forward by MacIntyre and his colleagues (1998) is focussed around the concept. This chapter provided an overview of three communicational variables that have been incorporated in the model and which are the main focus of my dissertation, namely willingness to communicate, communication apprehension and perceived communication competence. Empirical research on L2 willingness to communicate shows that there are still gaps in our understanding of the concept.

First, there has been evidence that language learners' anxiety and self-confidence will influence their predisposition towards speaking in the target language, yet, it is not clear to what extent they are going to do so. The path analysis in Study 2 will provide insights into this area among Hungarian advanced EFL learners.

Second, motivation and willingness to speak showed close relationship in most of the cases; however, there might be a conceptual overlap between the two constructs. The two quantitative studies of my dissertation explore which motivational aspects are related to learner's predisposition towards speaking in English and how they affect actual L2 behaviour.

Third, although it seems straightforward that students with better language skills will be more willing to converse in the target language, there is no empirical evidence that would confirm this. Moreover, some sources have suggested that not actual language skills but perceived language skills will be more prominent in determining one's willingness to communicate. To what extent perceived competence and language proficiency influence individuals' predisposition towards conversing in English is one of the focuses of my dissertation.

Finally, does being more willing to speak actually mean the person will interact more in the target language? Empirical research suggests that the answer is yes, but what if enthusiastic learners lack opportunities for interaction? Will they still grab every opportunity to use the target language? All three studies will shed light on this issue in the case of Hungarian English majors studying at the University of Pécs. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 explore these areas in depth.

Part II

Three Empirical Studies on English Majors' Willingness to Communicate

Chapter 3

Background to the empirical studies

3.1 Introduction

Part I provided an overview of the theoretical framework of research on three affective ID variables - language learning motivation, language anxiety and linguistic self-confidence - and the most influential SLA models. In addition, the social-psychological construct of willingness to communicate (WTC) was introduced and findings of past research on communicational variables were overviewed. As has been outlined in Part I, theories of second language acquisition and empirical research studies suggest a highly complex relationship between language learners' individual characteristics and their predisposition towards communicating in English. To further understand the nature of communicational variables among Hungarian EFL learners and to examine how they interact with one another, and in order to be able to propose strategies and activities that would enhance students' willingness to communicate in English three studies were designed and implemented among Hungarian university students between April 2005 and May 2006 (for an overview of studies see Table 1 on page 12). Part II comprises this introductory chapter that gives an overview of the research setting and the methodology followed by three empirical chapters examining English majors' willingness to communicate from different angles and perspectives by using both quantitative and qualitative research methodology.

3.2 The research context

The Hungarian educational context in which my study is embedded is unique for several reasons. On the one hand, attitudes and motivation to learn foreign languages have been extremely positive over the last 15 years (Dörnyei et al., 2006), but the ratio of Hungarians proficient in modern foreign languages has been low. According to the latest survey published by the European Commission (*Europeans and languages*, 2005), the lowest percentage of EU citizens speaking modern foreign languages was found among Hungarian citizens, lagging behind even the Britons who are often considered to be the most unmotivated and unsuccessful language learners in Europe. In 2005, 29 percent of the Hungarians surveyed said they spoke another language besides their mother tongue. This is well below the EU average of 50 percent. Other ex-communist countries outshine Hungarians in this respect, for instance, 49 percent of Polish, 60 percent of Czech, and 69 percent of Slovakian citizens speak a second or foreign language. This shows a bleak picture of Hungarians; nevertheless, since the early 1990s, a slow but steady dynamic trend has emerged in the population's foreign language skills. A study conducted in 1993 showed that only 12 percent of the population could speak at least one foreign language (Terestyéni, 1996), yet according to census data published in 2001, their number rose to 19,2 percent. Four years later, 29 percent of the population claimed to be able to communicate in a language other than their mother tongue (*Europeans and languages*, 2005).

In line with the principles of European language policy, the Hungarian *National Core Curriculum* (Nemzeti alaptanterv, 2003) stipulates that the aim of foreign language education is to educate plurilingual citizens proficient in two languages in addition to their mother tongue. The majority of Hungarians agree with these policy principles, as 68 percent acknowledge that nowadays, in the EU, speaking two foreign languages is a must (*Europeans and their languages*, 2006). In the survey, when they were asked which two languages their children should learn, they chose English (85%) and German (73%). Due to the English language's recently achieved status of a potential lingua franca, it is not surprising that the most popular foreign language among Hungarians is English.

3.3 Setting and participants

The three research studies were carried out at UP, situated in the city of Pécs with a population of around 156,500. Due to its optimal geographical location, its highly skilled work force, and its large number of historical sites and cultural heritage, Pécs is popular among foreign tourists, attracts foreign businesses and international students. In 2003, the number of foreigners visiting the country was 31,412 but less than 10 percent of them came from an English speaking country (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2005, quoted in Dörnyei et al., 2006, p.6). The majority of the visitors were from Germany and Austria. The number of foreign visitors in Hungary seems to be increasing. According to the latest data on the website of the Central Statistical Office (A Magyarországra érkező külföldiek országok szerint, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, www.ksh.hu), the number of foreign visitors in Hungary has risen from 38,555 in 2005 to 40,963 in 2006. However, the number of foreigners is increasing in Baranya County; there were 5,231 foreign visitors in the first quarter of 2007, almost 10 percent more than a year earlier (A külföldi vendégforgalom országok szerint Baranyában, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, www.ksh.hu).

My dissertation investigates a special group of Hungarian EFL learners: English majors studying at the UP. They are most likely to play an important role in achieving the objectives outlined in language policy documents and the *National Core Curriculum* as many of them are assumed to become EFL teachers, stay in academia, or other areas of education after graduation. A number of them may take up jobs in business, most frequently at multi-national companies where speaking English fluently and being able to understand various foreign accents is a must. Whatever future these students will decide to pursue, the bottom line is that they will earn their living by their exceptional English language skills for whom being an eager and effective communicator across cultures is a must. The long years they spend studying for their degree should equip them to use these skills at an advanced level.

Throughout the time of the research (from April 2005 to May 2006), and since then, the English Language and Literature undergraduate programme at UP has undergone a number of structural changes as a result of the Bologna process. At the time

of the study, the curriculum of English majors covered 140 credits to be gained in eight or ten semesters: single majors studied for eight, whereas double majors for ten semesters (*Tantervek*, 2002, 2003). On completion of their studies they graduate with a university degree equivalent to an MA degree in the European educational system (according to the 1993 Higher Education Act). Students have the option to major in English only or become double majors in another subject in the humanities or sciences (e.g., history, Hungarian, another foreign language, geography). The time scale of the completion of studies depends on a number of factors; for instance, on the number and type of majors, on how hard working the student is, whether they have part-time jobs, take a gap year for travelling or child bearing. Course completion can be as short as four years for a single major, but can be as long as 13-16 semesters depending on the aforementioned factors (Nikolov, personal communication, 10 December 2006). Most students enrol in their first year at the age of 18-22 and graduate at the age of 23-28.

The curriculum for English majors offers two tracks: students can choose if they want to graduate with a degree in English, or they may take a track in teacher education in addition to their English major studies. The latter allows them to teach English as a foreign language in any type of primary or secondary school or in tertiary or adult education in Hungary.

The English major curriculum, according to Marianne Nikolov, the head of the Department of English Applied Linguistics at UP (personal communication, 10 December 2006), follows an academic tradition with a heavy content load to be memorized in literature, linguistics and cultural studies and a few credits on applied linguistics. English language skills and competencies are developed in the first phase of the curriculum in three courses (six credits in total). The overall ratio of practical courses over theoretical ones is 43 percent (*Tantervek*, 2002, 2003). Students' language proficiency is expected to be on near native user level (C1 on the CEFR scale).

It is important to examine, in connection with the curriculum English majors follow, what their real life needs and wants are and how they use their English proficiency and other components of the curriculum. A large-scale study (Kormos, Hegybíró-Kontra, & Csölle, 2002) involved a representative sample of 279 Hungarian English majors investigating their language needs. As UP students were also involved in

this survey, the findings are highly relevant for participants in my dissertation. The study revealed that 51 percent of the undergraduate students were unsure what job they wanted to take after graduation. Twenty-eight percent wished to become teachers and nine percent translators or interpreters (despite the fact that the curricula did not include such training). Others said they wanted to take up various types of jobs, for instance, in tourism and catering, in the business sphere, in the media, or in IT. Kormos et al. (2002) conclude that students' university studies serve only as a springboard: after graduation, most of the English majors take up jobs either as language teachers (31.3%) or in business (25%) and others get employed as translators, journalists, educational managers, or stay in academia.

In their survey, Kormos et al. (2002) also looked into how frequently students used English in a number of situations in four domains (private sphere, academic environment, while teaching English, other professional domain). Participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point scale (1=never and 5=very frequently) how often they used English in those situations. Results showed that throughout their studies, English majors most often used their receptive skills in study-related activities (e.g., reading fiction and professional books, listening to lectures and student presentations, watching films and the news on TV, taking notes) and they hardly used English outside the university (e.g., conversing with non-native speakers of English, translating or interpreting in job-related situations, writing letters). As for the productive skills, in the private domain, conversing with non-native speakers of English was the 6th most frequent situation (Mean= 3.12) in which they used English, whereas conversing with native speakers was only the 11th (M= 2.61) most frequent context and emailing was the 12th (M= 2.58). Since they were not in full-time employment, they hardly used English in job related conversations (M= 2.21).

After graduation, although this varied according to job type, the degree educated language professionals reported to use English in different situations. After finishing their studies and being already in full-time employment, participants reported using their productive skills substantially more often than while at university. In the private domain, writing emails was the second most frequent situation in which they used English (M = 3.61), conversing with non-native speakers was 5th (M = 3.46), and conversing with a native speaker was 6th (M = 3.37). While in full time employment, they used English

quite frequently in job-related conversations ($M = 3.73$). These findings also indicate that while at university English majors converse more with non-native speakers of English than with native speakers. Once they are in full-time employment the difference diminishes between the two types of interlocutors, as they converse with both of them quite often.

At present there is a discrepancy between the needs of current English majors and those who have already graduated and are employed. Kormos and her colleagues' study showed that while in university education the emphasis is on learners' receptive skills and memorized knowledge of traditional content areas, at work graduates rely more on their productive skills, as they interact more with native English speakers and other foreigners and apply their skills for purposes not envisaged in the curriculum. From European statistics, it is clear that in Hungary there is a fast growing demand for well-trained and confident language specialists who can communicate in English appropriately and with ease. To meet these needs language education should start with training well qualified confident language specialists with excellent linguistic, intercultural, and interpersonal skills and advanced-level communicative competence.

Ideally, undergraduates should be provided with opportunities to acquire transferable linguistic, communicational, and interpersonal skills that they might benefit from in the long run besides attending a wide range of compulsory seminars on various subjects such as 18th century British literature or phonology. Enabling learners to acquire transferable skills is especially important as apart from the optional teaching EFL qualification, English majors, on completion of their studies, do not have a profession in the traditional sense and only one-third take up EFL teaching jobs (Kormos et al., 2002).

Among a list of recommendations for curriculum design, Kormos and her colleagues stress the importance of developing learners' oral skills, especially with regards to their ability to express complex ideas and to participate in argumentative conversations. Further on, they call for the incorporation into the curriculum of classes with native English speakers and for the promotion of specific strategies to seek out opportunities to communicate with them. To be able to propose types of strategies and activities that would enhance students' willingness to communicate in English it is necessary to shed light on the problem area. Therefore, the present dissertation aims to

investigate the underlying affective and communicational factors in depth. Findings outlined in the following three chapters should allow higher-educational decision makers and curriculum planners at UP to come up with solutions to improve the undergraduate English language programme that would prepare students better for their future jobs, be it a teacher, a translator, or a manager assistant.

3.4 Overview of research methodology: a mixed approach

To better understand the construct of willingness to communicate in L2 learning, I designed the empirical studies using both quantitative and qualitative research methods as the use of multiple research techniques and multiple data sources contributes to the credibility of the investigation (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 164). The two approaches should be viewed as complementary, since they are not mutually exclusive (Johnson & Saville-Troike 1992, p. 602) and also 'being bimethodological or multimethodological is a mark of scholarly sophistication' (Eisner & Peshking, 1990, quoted in Johnson & Saville-Troike, 1992, p. 602). Findings of quantitative research design provide a numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of the sample, which then can be generalized to the whole population (Creswell, 2003, p.153). In Study 1 and Study 2, quantitative design and statistical data analyses were applied. Using the survey method with a large and full sample enabled to identify the characteristics of the whole population - all English majors studying at the UP - from a group of individuals with the help of statistical analysis (Creswell, 2003, p. 154). Both surveys are cross-sectional, as data were collected on two occasions in 2005 and 2006 with the help of paper questionnaires. The third study follows a qualitative design, which provides a different perspective on the same concept. For this purpose, written narratives were elicited from 64 English majors in 2006. Data for the three studies were collected on three occasions, each of which will be discussed in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, in chronological order.

The dissertation applies a sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell, 2003, p. 215), as findings of the qualitative study are used to help explain and interpret the findings of the primarily quantitative studies. It is hoped that this straightforward research design will serve the purpose of the study well. Although such research design involves a

longer period of data collection than using concurrent strategies, the sequential strategy may allow me to explain unexpected results in the qualitative data. What follows next is a brief description of research methodology applied in the three studies.

3.4.1 The first study: A correlational study on English majors' willingness to communicate

Study 1 is a correlational research study in which three statistical procedures (descriptive, correlation, regression) were applied involving 137 students. First, descriptive statistics were used to capture participants' communicational characteristics in numerical terms. Results of descriptive statistics provide a picture of the data without drawing any conclusion (Davidson, 1996, p. 152). Then, degrees of the relationships were determined between six variables (willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, perceived communication competence, language learning motivation, L2 proficiency, and frequency of L2 communication). Correlation is 'an index of the degree to which two variables covary, or tend to rank observations similarly' (Davidson, 1996, p. 151). In order to do this, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated (Brown & Rodgers, 2002, p. 288). According to Bachmann (2004, p. 114), correlation coefficients can be interpreted in two ways. The square of the coefficient (r^2) can indicate 'the proportion of variance shared by the two variables' or 'the slope of a regression line between the two variables'.

Finally, linear regression analysis was used, which is the statistical procedure to determine whether a dependent variable (willingness to speak in an L2) can be predicted - and if yes, to what extent - by one or more independent variables (communication apprehension and perceived communication competence) (Davidson, 1996, p. 152). This statistical analysis revealed how much each individual predictor contributed to the variance in learners' willingness to communicate in English (L2 WTC, the dependent variable).

The majority of WTC studies were similar in terms of research methodology. A great number of studies aimed to shed light on the relationship between certain variables by using correlational analysis, for instance, L2 WTC and motivation (e.g., MacIntyre, et

al., 2003) or to investigate the effects of one variable on another variable by employing analysis of variance, for instance, the effects of immersion programmes on L2 WTC (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000).

Although the statistical analyses employed in Study 1 provide valuable insights into the relationships between the observed variables, they do not reveal the directions of the relationship between them (i.e. which variable had an effect on which one). To be able to better understand the causal relationship between the factors better, a more complex statistical analysis was necessary. This led to the design of Study 2, in which data were collected from an additional 90 participants.

3.4.2 The second study: A structural model of English majors' willingness to communicate in English

The main aim of Study 2 was to test the hypothesized causal relationships between observed variables with the help of a complex statistical procedure: structural equation modelling (SEM) or covariance structure analysis. It is used 'to investigate relationships among multiple independent and dependent observed variables' (Bachman, 2004, p.112). It is similar to factor analysis in that it is used 'to investigate relationships between observed and unobserved variables, or factors, and the relationship between factors' within one framework (Bachman, 2004, p.112). In other words, this procedure allows the researcher to understand not only how certain variables form clusters but also the directional paths between them. Researchers and academics often use the term 'path analysis' synonymously with 'structural equation modelling'. Generally (e.g., Smith & Langfield-Smith, 2004, para 4.), structural equation modelling is regarded as a family of techniques (including path analysis, partial least squares models, and latent variable SEM). In my dissertation, I use a type of structural equation modelling, path analysis, which concerns only measured variables and does not take into account latent variables. According to Byrne (2001, p. 1), the term SEM refers to the fact that 'the causal processes under scrutiny are represented by a series of structural (i.e. regression) equations [which] can be modelled pictorially to enable a clearer conceptualization of the theory under study'. In sum, the crucial advantage of this analysis is that it enables the

researcher to confirm or reject the causal correlations between certain variables within a theoretical model.

The purpose of such analysis is to test a comprehensive model based on a set of variables; therefore, SEM takes a confirmatory approach (Byrne, 2001, p. 3). Such an approach is based on the researcher's assumption of how certain variables possibly interact in a proposed theoretical model. If the data supports the model, the analysis has confirmed the validity of the model; if not, then the model has to be rejected. Therefore, the prerequisite of this statistical procedure is the specification of a theoretical model. According to Jöreskog (1993 quoted in Byrne, 2001, p. 8), specification may be either theory or data driven; however, the main objective is to find a model that is both meaningful and statistically well-fitting. Specifying the model entails describing the expected or hypothesized relationship between the observed, measured variables (and if applicable the unobserved, latent variables) and specifying the causal links between them (Bachman, 2004, p. 113). Then, these structural relationships are tested by a series of regression equations, after which the computer software provides a goodness-of-fit measure as well as modification indices, i.e. suggestions for revision to attain a stronger model. Based on these results, the validity of the model can be confirmed or rejected.

As for sample size, a general rule of thumb is 'the more the merrier'. For instance, Stevens (1996, quoted in *Structural Equation Modeling...* Section 3, para 1) suggests a minimum of 15 cases per predictor in multiple regression analysis, if dealing with normally distributed data without any missing data. Loehlin (1992, quoted in *Structural Equation Modeling...* Section 3, para 1) suggests that for a model of two to four factors at least 100 cases are needed but 200 should be better. Stevens (1996, quoted in same source) argues that when using smaller samples there are more chances of failures. In Study 2, I aimed to have a sample size that was over 200; thus, altogether 227 students took part in the survey.

In most of the research studies on willingness to communicate, authors used only correlational or ANOVA statistics (e.g., MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan 2002; 2003); however, in three studies researchers employed the more advanced SEM (Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima, et al., 2004).

3.4.3 The third study: English majors' perspectives on their willingness to communicate in English: A qualitative study

To triangulate and to complement the findings of the two quantitative studies a qualitative research study was carried out. Its aim was to shed light on the situational variables that contribute to learners' willingness to communicate in English and to their L2 behaviour. Qualitative research design is based on descriptive data that enable the researcher to interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people attach to them and to view it holistically (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 163). Due to the nature of this approach, the aim of the qualitative researcher is not to test a hypothesis that she seeks to confirm or reject but to observe and explore phenomena of interest. Therefore, the primary aim of a researcher who follows this approach is the description of the observed phenomena; however, the researcher should also recognize the necessity of data interpretation. In the present study, I follow this 'interpretative-descriptive' approach (Belenky, 1992, quoted in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 125).

Although qualitative research is primarily descriptive, scholars employing it have some preconceptions as 'theory and method are inextricably bound together in conducting and reporting interpretative qualitative research' (Davidson, 1996, p. 2). Therefore, when designing a qualitative study, the first step should be to determine the theories that might affect the study. As Davidson points out, qualitative studies are both affected by and affect theory. Study 3 allows us to gain an in depth view of situational variables affecting willingness to communicate in an L2 via participants' personal experiences; thus it contributes to our understanding of the complex phenomena of WTC. So far in L2 WTC research, only three studies analysed qualitative data (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Kang, 2005; MacDonald, et al., 2003) to explore language learners' willingness to communicate, which will be outlined in more detail in Chapter 6.

3.5 Conclusion

The main aim of the three empirical studies conducted at the University of Pécs were to further understand the nature of learners' willingness to communicate in a monolingual environment, in Hungary – so far not examined in this foreign language learning context – and to be able to find strategies for how to promote a English majors' predisposition towards speaking in English. The use of multiple methods and a sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell, 2003, p. 215; Morgan, 2007) are expected to provide an opportunity to examine and interpret the construct of willingness to communicate from multiple perspectives. As will be seen, the steps of the empirical studies fall into separate stages: data for the three empirical inquiries were collected over three semesters, and are outlined in the following three chapters.

Chapter 4

A correlational study on English majors' willingness to communicate

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a detailed account of the first of three studies, implemented in April 2005. It explored 137 undergraduate English majors' willingness to communicate in English and its relationship to its antecedents and other related variables, and how they contribute to the development of learners' foreign language competence in English. Due to the low number of studies on L2 WTC in a foreign language learning context, one of the aims of the investigation was to identify general patterns between the variables that would provide useful directions for further research and grounds for more advanced analysis (presented in Chapter 5 and 6). In the light of this, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How willing are participants to communicate in English when they have relatively limited opportunity to use the language with speakers of English, even though they are in contact with the English language on a daily basis?
2. To what extent do perceived communication competence (PCC) in English and communication apprehension (CA) in English explain the variance in participants' WTC in English? Is the correlation between PCC and CA in relation to L2 WTC the same? Does one of the two antecedents have a more influential role?
3. Is there a relationship between participants' WTC, CA, PCC in English, and their level of English language proficiency? Are MacIntyre et al. (1998) right to claim that a suitable goal for language learning is to increase one's WTC?

4. Do attitudes and motivation play a role in L2 WTC, CA, and PCC among Hungarian EFL learners?

4.2. Method

4.2.1 Participants

Participants were undergraduate students majoring in English at the University of Pécs (UP), Hungary. All of them were enrolled in one of the nine Language Practice courses and were all native speakers of Hungarian, except for one, whose first language was German. Altogether, 141 participants filled in the research instruments but In addition to four had to be eliminated for the various reasons; therefore, the total number of students taking part of this study and whose data were used in the analysis was 137. Two of the excluded students were ERASMUS exchange students and were not full-time English majors at UP, and the third one was late for class, and the fourth was a full-time student but was non-Hungarian native speaker.

4.2.2 Data collection instruments

Five instruments were administered to all participants. A questionnaire contained four self-assessment scales: three communication-related measures and a scale of attitudinal and motivation measures (See Appendix A). The fifth instrument was a vocabulary test. All instruments were written in English. Participants were expected to be able to understand the instrument because their level of proficiency was expected to be beyond the intermediate level. Also, as data were collected in English language seminars, students expected to do tasks in the target language.

4.2.2.1 Willingness to communicate in English. (Alpha= .87)

A 20-item self-assessment scale was adapted from McCroskey's (1992) WTC scale in L1. The original scale was designed as a direct measure and aims to tap into 'the respondents' predisposition toward approaching and avoiding the initiation of

communication' (p. 17). It contained the 12 (4 x 3) possible combinations of four communication contexts (in small groups, in large meetings, in public, to one person only) and three common types of interlocutors (stranger, acquaintance, friend). Even though only a limited number of situations were included in the instrument, the twelve situations 'were assumed to be broadly representative' (McCroskey, 1992, p. 17), McCroskey also quotes Chan (1988, quoted in McCroskey, 1992, p. 17; Chan & McCroskey, 1987), whose results indicated a strong correlation between college students' overall WTC score and scores on an instrument that measured willingness to communicate in a classroom context. They found that the higher score participants achieved on the scale the more frequently they participated in classroom activities.

Participants were requested to indicate the percentage of times they would initiate a conversation in the 20 situations. Scores for the scale fall within the range of 0-100; scores of higher than 82 indicate high overall WTC and scores; lower than 52 indicate low overall WTC.

In order to make sure that the three self-assessment scales were clear and that they made sense to would-be participants, four undergraduate senior English majors were asked to complete the scales prior to the main stage of the research study. Simultaneously to filling in the scales, the volunteers were asked to formulate their opinions on the questionnaire and its items that were not clear cut or were ambiguous. These students were not participants of the main study. After conducting the think-aloud interviews, minor changes were necessary to make the instrument more straightforward and realistic for the participants. Besides rewording the instructions and adding an example, all original items were extended with the phrases 'in English' and 'English speaking' (e.g., talk in English with an English speaking waiter/waitress in a restaurant). The original version of the scale contained eight dummy items (e.g., talk to the policeman); however, four of them were eliminated from the instrument used in the studies, as all four participants found them confusing, unrealistic, and misleading.

Therefore, the final 16-item scale that was used in the present study included the twelve situations measuring participants' willingness to initiate a conversation in English and the four dummy items that participants of the think-aloud interviews did not find confusing. Items were listed in a random order.

4.2.2.2 Communication apprehension in English. (Alpha= .90)

The 24-item communication apprehension self-assessment scale was adapted from McCroskey (1982). The items tap into communication apprehension in four context types: in public speaking, in dyadic interaction, in small groups, and in large groups. Participants were instructed to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree) to what extent they agreed with the 24 statements. Scores can range from 24-120; scores lower than 51 indicate low CA, 51-80 indicate average CA, whereas scores above 80 indicate high level of CA.

4.2.2.3 Perceived communication competence of English (Alpha= .91).

Twelve items were adapted from McCroskey and Richmond's scale (1987). The items were related to the same communicative situations as in the WTC scale. Participants were instructed to indicate in percentages how competent they believed they were in each situation. As a follow-up of the think-aloud protocols described in 1.1, the instructions were reworded and, similarly to the adapted version of the WTC scale, 'in English' and 'English speaking' were included in the items (e.g., Talk in English with an English speaking stranger).

All three self-assessment scales showed very high Alpha level which indicates that the internal cohesion of all three questionnaires' items were adequate. In other words, participants' answers were consistent and the scales measured what they were intended to measure.

4.2.2.4 Motivational and attitudinal measures

The attitudinal and motivational scale contained eleven items on motivational and attitudinal factors and two related to learners' reported frequency of communication in English. All items were based on the results of a previous pilot study carried out at the UP in the fall semester of 2003/2004. In this pilot study, English majors enrolled in the course 'Introduction to Applied Linguistics' were requested to fill in a motivational measure including open questions on why they wanted to become an English major, what

their expectations were, what they liked most, and what plans they had with English as a major. Students were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale how true they thought each statement was for them (1=absolutely not true and 5 = absolutely true).

The motivational and attitudinal scale covered general aspects of language learning motivation related to the intrinsic/extrinsic and integrative/instrumental dichotomy discussed in Chapter 1. In order to uncover the latent structure of participants' motivational and attitudinal patterns, eleven items were submitted to factor analysis. This type of statistical analysis is used to explore which variables in a single data set form coherent sub-sets which are relatively independent from each other. These sub-sets, or values, refer to broader underlying dimensions of learners' motivation. The purpose of creating the motivational factors was to explore whether one of the motivational components was more relevant to L2 communication than the other dimensions.

A principal component extraction method was applied with variance maximising (varimax) rotation on the responses to the motivational items. I used this type of rotation as the criterion for the rotation was to maximize the variance of the latent variable or factor. The loadings for each of the variables on four factors that emerged are shown in Table 2.

The first factor is related to participants' openness towards foreigners or English native speakers with a clear intention of verbal communication (meeting and speaking with non-Hungarians) and it is also related to their fondness of learning English. This factor has both integrative and intrinsic features and is named as affective/integrative component. The second dimension is related to instrumental orientation as the items refer to the pragmatic benefits of L2 proficiency (getting a good job, travelling, living abroad) and is labelled as 'instrumentality'. The third factor covers learners' attitude towards the English language and their intrinsic motivation for learning it; it is named 'intrinsic motivation'. The fourth factor is related to the vitality of the English language (without a reference to the L2 communities) and also concerns the importance of the English language in learners' everyday life.

Frequency of communication in English was measured by two items related to verbal and written communication (*I often write emails or letters in English, I try to meet as many speakers of English as possible to practice English*), (Alpha= .64).

Table 2 Results of the factor analysis

Components			
Affective/ integrative orientation	Instrumentality	Attitude toward the English language	Vitality of the English language
MOT61			
MOT62			
MOT58			
	MOT57		
	MOT56		
	MOT63		
		MOT60	
		MOT59	
			MOT55
			MOT53
			MOT54

Key:

- 53. Knowing English makes it possible to communicate with people from all over the world.
- 54. Nowadays knowing English is a must for everyone.
- 55. English is a world language.
- 56. Knowing English will give me a better chance to get a good job.
- 57. English is useful for me because I would like to travel a lot.
- 58. I enjoy learning the English language.
- 59. I love the way the English language sounds.
- 60. I like the English language better than any other foreign language.
- 61. I would like to meet native speakers of English.
- 62. I would like to meet foreign people with whom I can speak English
- 63. I would like to live in an English speaking country.

4.2.2.5 Vocabulary test (Alpha = .90)

To measure students' general level of English proficiency a vocabulary test was chosen for practical reasons. Vocabulary tests are not only easy to administer, require minimal reading, and save time, but they also 'provide some indication of a learners' vocabulary size, which is related to overall language proficiency' (Schmitt, 2000, p. 164; Morris & Cobb, 2004). Besides being one of the most important factors in reading skills (Schmitt, 2000, p. 163), vocabulary knowledge is also essential for the three other skills (p. 155) and it is believed that vocabulary knowledge can assist grammar acquisition (Ellis, 1997). Most often these tests measure how many words learners know, in other words the 'breadth of knowledge' (Schmitt, 2000, p. 164), or as in the case of the test used in the present study, it determines knowledge of words at different frequency levels. According

to Schmitt (2000, p. 157), an L2 learner needs 2,000 words to take part in basic conversations on everyday subjects, 3,000 to 5,000 words to start reading authentic texts, 10,000 to read difficult academic texts such as university course books, and 15,000 to 20,000 word families to equal the breadth of knowledge of a native speaker.

For the purpose of this study, a vocabulary test was compiled based on Version 1 of Schmitt's (2000) Vocabulary Levels Test (Lehmann, 2006). The original version measures learners' knowledge of words at five levels: 2,000 word-level, 3,000 word-level, 5,000 word level, 10,000 word-level, and it has a special level for academic English word families. Each level contains 10 x 3 items (30 sub-items), altogether 150 sub-items. Because of time constraints, the instrument used in this study contained the following items: 30 items at the 3,000-word level, 15 items at the 5,000- and 15 at the 10,000-word level, and 30 items at the academic vocabulary level. Each item consisted of a list of six words on the left hand-side, and from this participants had to choose the words that matched each of the three words (synonyms or explanations) on the right hand side. The maximum score was 90; 1 point was awarded for each correct item (Lehmann, 2006). See Figure 2 for example of an item. Although the vocabulary test proved to be slightly easy (skewedness = -.78), it was included in the analysis.

1. abolish	
2. drip	_____bring to an end by law
3. insert	_____guess about the future
4. predict	_____calm or comfort someone
5. soothe	
6. thrive	

Figure 2 Sample item from Vocabulary test (Lehmann, 2006)

4.2.3 Procedures

The study was designed and implemented as part of a departmental project at UP in the spring semester of 2004/2005 academic year. The instruments were designed with the help of the head of department in agreement with all tutors (Nikolov, personal communication, 11 January, 2005). All students in Language Practice courses were asked

to fill in the vocabulary test and the self-assessment scales during a normal 90-minute Language Practice seminar in March 2005. The enrolment of one seminar per semester was compulsory for English majors. Participants were invited to ask questions if they did not understand something or if the instructions were not clear. They could also opt out, but none of them did. The administration procedure took 60 minutes. The administration of the tests and the questionnaires in all nine groups was supervised by me. All participants' questionnaires and tests were coded, thus their protection of personal rights and anonymity were ensured (Creswell, 2003, p. 66). The statistical programme SPSS for Windows, version 11.0 was used for descriptive statistics, calculating reliability, and analysing correlations. I opted for the 2-tailed significance test for the correlational analysis, as it would not have been possible to determine the direction of the observed correlations. To obtain the final scores of the vocabulary test, results were submitted to ITEMAN software. This software is used for classical item analysis for tests, questionnaires, and scales.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Research Question 1

How willing are participants to communicate in English when they have relatively limited opportunity to use the language with speakers of English, even though they are in contact with the English language on a daily basis?

To find out how participants performed on communication measures, descriptive statistics were used (see Table 3 for a short summary and Appendix B for all results). Descriptive statistics are numerical representations of how participants performed on a test or questionnaire (Brown, 1996). The results show that on average, English majors scored 67 on the L2 WTC scale ($SD=15$) where 0 was the minimum and 100 was the maximum. According to the original scale (McCroskey, 1992), a score above 82 indicates high WTC and a score below 52 indicates low WTC. Applying this categorization to the L2 WTC scale, it can be asserted that the majority (60%) of participants attained an average score on the WTC in English scale. However, 20 percent scored below 52,

indicating a low level of overall WTC. On the other hand, approximately 20 percent scored above 82, thus they can be categorized as highly willing to communicate.

Table 3 Measures of frequency of WTC, PCC and CA scales

	N valid	N missing	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
WTC	137	0	66.80	67.08	61.67	15.11
PCC	137	0	66.67	67.50	67.5	15.56
CA	137	0	68.33	69.00	53	16.79

The mean, median, and mode are indicators of the central tendency of the scores. The mean score and standard deviation for students' perception of their English communication competence (PCC) is identical to the mean score on WTC scale (Mean = 67, SD = 16). On this scale 0 indicates the lowest self-perceived competence and 100 indicates the highest level of self-perceived competence. The mean score falls within the range of 59 and 87, which, according to McCroskey and McCroskey (1988), is the range that indicates average self-perceived competence. Around 10 percent of the students perceived themselves as very competent in communicating in English in certain situations, whereas 30 percent reported low competency in communication.

In the original communication apprehension (CA) scale, the minimum score is 24, indicating the lowest level of apprehension and the maximum is 120, indicating the highest apprehension. Those who score between 51 and 80 can be considered to have a normal level of communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1982). In the case of this group of EFL learners, over half of them (55%) seemed to have an average level of apprehension about communicating in English, as the mean score for the group is 68 (SD = 17). In the case of this variable, 20 percent of the students reported high, and 25 percent low communication apprehension. There was one participant who scored 24, the lowest possible score, indicating the greatest anxiety about communicating in English.

4.3.2 Research Question 2

To what extent do perceived communication competence (PCC) in English and communication apprehension (CA) in English explain the variance in participants' WTC

in English? Is the correlation between PCC and CA in relation to L2 WTC the same? Or does one of the two antecedents have a more influential role?

To find out how much variance in English majors' L2 WTC is explained by the combination of their perceived communication competence and their communication apprehension, a linear regression analysis was used. This statistical analysis also revealed how much each individual predictor contributed to the variance in L2 WTC and thus explained whether the two variables affected L2 WTC to the same extent, or if not, which of the two had a greater influence on L2 WTC.

L2 WTC was entered as the dependent variable and CA and PCC were entered as predictors/independent variables. They were entered step-wise: first CA, then PCC. See Appendix C for the model summary. Results indicate that the model tested predicts a significant amount of the variance ($F_{(1,134)} = 110,68$; $p < .01$). The r^2_{change} suggests ($r^2_{\text{change}} = .23$) that CA can explain 23 percent of the variance in L2 WTC; whereas PCC can explain an additional 38 percent of change. Altogether, these two variables can explain approximately 62 percent of the variance in L2 WTC ($r^2_{\text{adj}} = .617$).

However, when the order of entering the two predictors is reversed and PCC is entered as the first layer, the obtained coefficient indicates a somewhat different result (see Appendix D). Since the r^2_{change} ($r^2_{\text{change}} = .62$) is equivalent with r^2_{adj} ($r^2_{\text{adj}} = .62$) this suggests that besides PCC, there is no additional affect of CA on this group of English majors' WTC in English. This result shows that there is an overlap between PCC and CA, and it also implies that PCC alone can explain 62 percent of the variance in L2 WTC.

4.3.3 Research Question 3

Is there a relationship between participants' WTC, CA, PCC in English, and their level of English language proficiency? Are MacIntyre et al. (1998) right to claim that a suitable goal for language learning is to increase one's WTC?

In order to investigate the relationship between (1) participants' WTC in English and their English language proficiency; (2) their CA in English and their level of proficiency; (3) and their PCC in English and proficiency, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated (see Table 4). The correlation coefficient that was

obtained for WTC in English ($r = .21$) was significant ($p < .05$), likewise the one for CA and proficiency ($r = - .29$; $p < .01$), and for PCC ($r = .27$; $p < 0.01$). These correlation coefficients indicate a modest relationship. I opted for the 2-tailed significance test for this analysis, as it was not possible to tell for 100 percent sure the direction - positive or negative - of the observed correlation.

Table 4 Correlation matrix of communicational variables and English proficiency

	WTC in English	PCC in English	CA in English
PCC in English	.789 ^{**}		
CA in English	-.493	-.606 ^{**}	
English proficiency	.213 [*]	.271 ^{**}	-.292 ^{**}

^{**}Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

^{*}Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

4.3.4 Research Question 4

Do attitudes and motivation play a role in L2 WTC, CA, and PCC among Hungarian EFL learners?

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated between the motivational factors and the communicational variables and English language proficiency (see Table 5). The statistical analysis revealed a significant positive relationship only between the integrative/affective factor and L2 WTC ($r = .178$; $p < .05$). In addition, only the integrative/affective factor showed a significant correlation with perceived communicational competence in English. Yet, communicational apprehension was significantly related to three motivational components (integrative/affective, attitude toward the English language, instrumentality). Only the vitality component was not significantly related to any of the communicational variables. English language proficiency, as measured by the vocabulary test, was significantly correlated with two motivational components, integrative/affective factor and attitude towards the English language (see Table 5).

Table 5 Correlation matrix of communicational and motivational factors and frequency of communication in English

	English language proficiency	WTC in English	PCC in English	CA in English	FREQ
MOT1	.224(**)	.178(*)	.298(**)	-.176(*)	.252(**)
MOT2	.124	.095	.100	-.195(*)	.255(**)
MOT3	.193(*)	.084	.066	-.192(*)	.145
MOT4	.154	.162	.157	-.124	-.040
FREQ	.299(**)	.248(**)	.230(**)	-.385(**)	-

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Key:

MOT1 = integrative/affective

MOT2 = Instrumentality

MOT3 = Attitude towards the English language

MOT4 = Vitality of the English language

FREQ = Frequency of communication in English

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Hungarian EFL learners' willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, and perceived communication competence

Past research has shown (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre 2000; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) that the more opportunity students have for interacting with native L2 speakers, the more willing they are to use the L2 for authentic communication. As English majors have relatively limited opportunities to speak in English outside the classroom on a daily basis, as opposed to those Hungarians who, for instance, live and/or study in an English speaking country, they were expected to have low levels of WTC. Contrary to expectations, the majority (60%) of the participants reported average willingness to use the language for communication and only 20 percent of them showed low levels of willingness to speak in English. Similarly, most of the students (60%) had average level of self-perceived competence and half of them had an average level of communication anxiety (55%). The good news – according to the descriptive statistics – is that every fifth student seemed to be highly willing to speak in English and that every fourth student had low anxiety when it came to talking in English. It is slightly less promising though that only one in ten thought they had the necessary skills and abilities to speak in the specific situations.

Even though the participating Hungarian students are not immersed in the English

culture and rarely meet a native speaker, they have been learning about the language, the culture, and English literature on a daily basis, as they have been attending seminars and lectures on these topics for at least a term. It is possible that opportunities for using the L2 only in a classroom setting can also promote willingness to communicate. This might be one reason why the majority of the participants did not report low overall willingness to use the English language for communication, nor high apprehension about communication and low self-perceived English competence. To test this assumption, it would be useful to compare their self-reported WTC levels with those of other EFL learners or non-English majors. If this assumption is right, it would indicate that without having personal contact with members of the target culture, it is possible that students' WTC improves merely by the relatively frequent contact with the target culture and language in a classroom setting. If so, even more classroom input could enhance the English majors' WTC. So far, no such comparative investigation has been carried out in an FL setting. It is also possible that students' average overall WTC in English is due to their relatively high level of English proficiency. Previous findings (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000) suggest that learners' WTC improves as their experience with the language grows.

Nevertheless, it is somewhat worrying that every fifth participant fell in the highly anxious group and one third thought that they had low language skills. It seems that there is a substantial number of students who are nervous about talking in English and even more who lack self-confidence. Chapter 6 will provide more in-depth explanation for these learners' anxiety and their unwillingness to communicate

The results are very similar to Tóth's findings (2007), concerning Hungarian English majors' language anxiety. In her study, 22.2 percent of the participants claimed to be considerably or very anxious, whereas 58.1 percent stated to be slightly anxious and only 19.7 percent of the English majors reported to be non-anxious. It seems that this is a general anxiety profile of Hungarian English majors. Tóth study also revealed that learners' high level of anxiety was the result of the combined effect of situational, personality, and L2-related factors such as L2 competence and communication experience. Whether this is also applicable to other Hungarian English majors will be shown in the last Chapter 6. This study will explore in depth the situations and

experiences of UP English majors' anxiety through their accounts of their unwillingness to communicate.

4.4.2 Predictors of WTC: Perceived communication competence, communication apprehension, or both?

As was expected, a significant relationship was found between both L2 CA and L2 PCC in relation to L2 WTC. The more anxious English majors are about communicating in English, the less willing they are to use the language. On the other hand, the more positively they perceive their language skills, the more prepared they are to talk in English. Also, the significant negative correlation between L2 CA and L2 PCC suggests that the more anxious these students are, the less they value themselves. Since findings of other studies (e.g., Hashimoto, 2000; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) indicated that FL/SL learners' WTC was more likely to be influenced by their perceived communication competence than their communication apprehension, in the present study, PCC was expected to be more influential in determining English majors' L2 WTC. In line with expectations, the regression analysis revealed that PCC alone can explain 62 percent of the total variance in their WTC in English. In other words, for these participants, their perception of their English language proficiency is the only predictor of how willing they are to use the target language.

The results of the present study are similar to some of the previous findings, where PCC was found to be a better predictor of WTC. In these studies, participants did not have experience in intensive language learning programmes, nor did they take part in immersion education, but were, for instance, Japanese EFL learners in Japan (Yashima et al., 2004), Japanese ESL learners in Honolulu (Hashimoto, 2002), or English native speaker beginner learners of French as a foreign language in Ottawa, a bilingual city (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). In order to understand what effects the learning context (immersion/non-immersion/FL/SL) has on L2 CA and PCC as well as their relation to L2 WTC, further research is necessary. It might be possible that for those learners who have relatively little contact with the target language, with its speakers, or the target culture, PCC has a stronger influence on WTC than for those who are immersed into the target

culture and are in regular interaction with the language. However, it is also possible that as L2 proficiency develops and learners internalize the social, cultural, and pragmatic norms of the target culture, the effect of the two antecedents turns around and eventually CA will predict best WTC, which was the case with the immersion students (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2003). As findings of communication research in the native language are consistent that CA is the stronger predictor of WTC, it might be possible that the more fluent learners become in a language, the more their apprehension will direct their willingness to initiate conversations.

The remaining one third (38%) of the variance in learners' WTC stays unexplained, as this is beyond the scope of this study. However, previous research studies have provided possible explanations, for instance, increased opportunities for interaction (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) or interest in international affairs and desire to be involved in international activities (Yashima et al, 2004). As in the present study no data were collected on these areas, it is not possible to compare findings.

4.4.3 Relationship between learners' communicational variables and their English proficiency: The more proficient, the more willing to speak?

In this study, evidence has been found for the existence of a significant positive yet weak relationship between advanced EFL learners' level of proficiency and their willingness to communicate in English as well as their perceived communication competence in English.

One would expect learners' WTC to be related to their level of L2 proficiency. Surprisingly, no empirical evidence supports this hypothesis. The only study that took into account L2 proficiency besides WTC failed to find evidence for this relationship. In Yashima et al.'s study (2004) correlation coefficients did not indicate a significant relationship between learners' L2 proficiency (measured by TOEFL scores) and communication or attitudinal variables. If we assume some sort of similarity between the contexts of the present enquiry and Yashima et al.'s study, the result of English majors at UP are not in line with expectations, as the aforementioned study was one of the few conducted in an EFL setting and not in the Canadian bilingual context.

However, as willingness to communicate in an L2 may vary from culture to culture, it is possible that the discrepancy between findings of the present study and Yashima et al.'s (2004) findings is due to differences between Japanese and Hungarian cultural and conversational norms. Japanese people are considered to be more introverted and reserved with foreigners, whereas Hungarians are perceived to be open and hospitable with foreign nationals. Another explanation for the different results of my and the Japanese study's findings is the participants' differing age and/or their level of proficiency. Yashima and his associates researched 16-year-old adolescents with a lower intermediate proficiency in English (average point achieved on TOEFL test 345.16) as opposed to my university student participants.

Nevertheless, correlation does not mean causation. Whether these Hungarian students' English is good because they use the language whenever they have the opportunity (in other words, they talk in order to learn), or whether they are more often willing to communicate because their proficiency in English develops over time is still unclear. Both directions make sense and most probably they are in continuous interaction throughout the learning process. Further statistical analyses should be carried out to investigate this problem area and to confirm the weak relationship between the two constructs. Chapter 5 will explore this relationship further and provide a possible explanation.

Some caution should be taken when interpreting these results. The WTC scale does not measure the actual frequency of communication, only participants' willingness to initiate conversations; yet, as previous studies found significant positive correlations between reported frequency of communication in the L2 and L2 WTC (e.g., Yashima et al., 2004; Hashimoto, 2002), and between actual frequency of communication in classroom and L2 WTC (Chan & McCroskey, 1987) it is reasonable to assume that it is the case. The study outlined in the next chapter will also aim to further examine these relationships.

It is also clear from the results that the more anxious students are about using the language, the lower they score on the proficiency measure; whereas the better they think they are at communication, the better they perform on the test, thus the higher their level of English is. Moreover, the variable of L2 anxiety showed the highest negative

correlation with the proficiency measure. This finding is in line with past inquiries into language anxiety and linguistic self-confidence in relation to L2 proficiency (e.g., MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986).

4.4.4 Motivational and attitudinal factors and communicational variables

More motivated English majors were expected to be more willing to use English for communication as previous studies reported significant positive correlation between the two variables. The present study provided evidence that some aspects of language learning motivation are related to L2 WTC in an EFL context. Among the four components of language learning motivation, only the integrative/affective factor showed a significant positive correlation with both L2 WTC and L2 PCC. However, in the case of L2 CA, except for 'vitality of L2', all the other three motivational sub-components showed significant negative correlations with the construct. This result suggests that the more motivated these students are to learn English and to interact with speakers of English, the more willing they will be to speak it. As the items covered by the integrative/affective factor are all related to talking with a foreigner or a native speaker of English as well as to enjoying learning English, this outcome does not strike as a surprise. This result supports MacIntyre, Clément, and Donovan's (2002, p. 3) argument that immersion, or increased opportunity for contact, promotes willingness to communicate in an L2 in authentic settings and it encourages more frequent use of the L2.

4.4.5 Other relevant findings

Besides addressing the four research questions, the present study also shed light on other issues. Even though the English language proficiency variable was included solely to determine how it is related to L2 WTC, this study also confirmed that there is a positive correlation between components of language learning motivation and L2 proficiency (see Table 5). Two components, integrative/affective and attitude towards the English language were found to exert a positive influence on participants' level of English

proficiency. In future, it would be useful to look at the intercorrelations between the motivational components and to explore what motivates these English majors to learn the language for their would-be profession.

Further on, in line with previous studies (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002; MacIntyre et al., 2003), evidence was found for willingness to communicate in the target language to result in more frequent communication. A significant yet weak positive correlation was found between learners' willingness to speak in English and the frequency they use English for authentic communication (writing letters and emails and speaking with non-Hungarians in English). Also, it seems that the better language skills students have, the more often they are going to use the target language for verbal and written communication.

4.5 Conclusion

The primary goal of the present study was to obtain a clear picture of a special group of Hungarian EFL learners' use of the target language, more precisely, to see how willing they are to communicate in English, how anxious they are about using the language, and how competent they feel about communicating in it. Despite their limited opportunities for authentic communication, participants are characterised by average levels of willingness to communicate, communication apprehension and perceived communication competence in EFL. Even though the majority of them reported average willingness to communicate, communication apprehension, and perceived competence in English, as future English teachers or language experts it would be desirable for them to become even more willing to use the language as well as to be less anxious about communicating in English.

English majors' apprehension about speaking in English is not an isolated phenomenon in Hungary. It seems that it is a general characteristics of undergraduate students majoring in English that that every fifth participant claim to be considerably or very anxious, whereas about 60 percent claim to be slightly anxious and only one in five of the English majors report to be non-anxious. It is likely that learners' high level of anxiety was the result of the combined effect of situational, personality, and L2-related

factors such as L2 competence and communication experience, as was reported by Tóth (2007), however, the study outlined in Chapter 6 will provide further insights into this problem area.

The second aim of the study was to investigate whether learners' proficiency levels are related to their willingness to speak in English. One would expect a direct relationship between L2 learners' proficiency and their L2 WTC; however, so far only one study took L2 proficiency into account and disappointingly, the authors (Yashima et al., 2004) found no connection between the two variables. In this study, participants' willingness to use English showed a moderate connection to their English language proficiency. What is clear from the evidence is that learners who are better at English are keener on communicating in English. Yet, it is still not clear whether these students are good because they talk a lot in English or they use the language more often because they are more capable of doing so. The present study does not provide an explanation for why certain people are able to become fluent in a language and have excellent language skills while they rarely use the language. It may be that there are only an exceptional few but it would be interesting to explore what learning strategies these students employ or what sort of personality traits they have in order to compensate for their shyness and low level of willingness to communicate.

It was highly relevant to shed light on the relationship between L2 WTC and L2 proficiency in order to be able to support MacIntyre and his colleagues' (1998, p. 547) argument that a suitable goal of 'the learning process should be to engender in language students the willingness to seek out communication opportunities and the willingness to actually communicate in them'. Yet, it should be noted that this relationship was weak, and for instance, L2 anxiety showed almost twice as strong correlation with L2 proficiency than L2 WTC. These results imply that, among this group of EFL learners, L2 WTC may play a minor role in achieving high level of proficiency; however, it is necessary to replicate the study in order to confirm this relationship.

Thirdly, the extent to which its two antecedents influence L2 WTC was explored in order to find effective ways to promote L2 WTC among English majors. As L2 PCC was found to be the best predictor of students' predisposition towards communicating in English, it seems that the most sensible way to encourage English majors to speak would

be boosting their self-confidence in the target language. This could be achieved by, for example, giving students challenging and exciting tasks slightly beyond their level, so that they would be able to accomplish them and receive positive feedback. To reduce their language anxiety, they could be, for instance, paired up with international students with whom they could use English for authentic communicative purposes via creative tasks and would act as mentors for them. Another similar solution could be giving students assignments which would involve interviewing native speakers or foreigners in English who work or study in their own environment. Language learners should be encouraged to use new multimedia technologies (e.g., Skype, Windows Messenger) in and outside of classroom which opens up a whole new world of opportunities for them to meet and chat online with native and non-native speakers of English without even having to leave the house.

Based on the present and past findings, it might be possible that as these students develop their L2 proficiency the best way to promote their L2 WTC would be to focus more on reducing CA first and then to boost their PCC. To test these hypotheses further research is necessary in which classroom observations should be integrated with longitudinal data from students and their tutors.

Finally, this study aimed to explore the connection between English majors' motivation and their willingness to communicate in English. Results suggest that only learners' integrative/affective motivation is associated with their predisposition towards speaking in English. Therefore, developing learners' intercultural understanding and their pragmatic awareness would be a step towards promoting more successful intercultural contact between English majors and speakers of English. This would also be expected to result in learners' more positive attitudes towards native and non-native speakers of English.

Despite the high number of participants, the limitations of the present study should be noted. First, due to time constraints a vocabulary test was used to measure students' overall English language proficiency instead of a complex proficiency test. It is possible that with the use of a standardized proficiency measure tapping into all language skill areas, the present study might have yielded slightly different results. In the long run, it would be important to investigate the relationship between WTC and oral proficiency

to see if students really talk in order to learn. Classroom observations and teachers' reports would be necessary to obtain in order to test whether reported willingness to communicate correlates with actual L2 use in a classroom setting, as it would be very difficult to measure objectively out-of-classroom English language use. To explore the frequency of out-of-classroom communication, students could be offered the opportunity to get involved in research projects. For instance, they could keep a diary for a certain period where they would log their language experiences in detail, analyse it and present it in class or to the tutor.

Another limitation of the study is that correlation analyses were used to explore the relationship between the observed variables and this type of analysis does not allow concluding causal directions. In the next chapter, a more advanced statistical analysis will be employed in order to investigate further how these factors operate in a dynamic system.

For future directions, it would be important to shed light on the extent to which other variables are responsible for the remaining 38 percent of the variance in L2 WTC. For this, other learner variables would need to be included, for instance, personality variables. Also, for further research, it would be worthwhile to develop a WTC scale related to classroom communication for foreign language learners or to adapt it to a FL setting, as the situations in the original scale might not be highly relevant for learners who do not have much prospect to meet native speakers of English or travel to an English speaking country or use English as a means of communication with proficient users of English as a lingua franca. Even though an adapted version of the WTC scale was used in this study, asking students who have never been to an English speaking country and may or may not visit one in the near future, to imagine they are in an English speaking context might not be fully appropriate. The third study outlined in Chapter 6 will explore this issue further.

Chapter 5

A structural model of English majors' willingness to communicate in English

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored English majors' communicational characteristics and found that (1) they had an average level of general predisposition towards using the English language; (2) only their perceived communicational competence affected it directly; and (3) there was a weak but significant relationship between their willingness to communicate and their English language proficiency.

In order to better understand how these factors interact among Hungarian English majors, a second study was designed and implemented. Data was collected from additional participants which allowed for more complex statistical analyses. The main goal was to build a model that incorporated the communicational characteristics of these learners. Confirming a valid model which can describe the dynamic interaction between Hungarian EFL learners' willingness to communicate, its antecedents, motivation, L2 language proficiency, and L2 language use would allow us to put forward recommendations for curriculum planning that would foster L2 language use.

To my knowledge, this is the first attempt to build such model in the Hungarian context. In the present study, the proposed model was tested by a complex statistical procedure: structural equation modelling (SEM). This type of data analysis method enabled me to test the causal relationships between multiple variables. This was crucial, as the correlational analysis, outlined in the previous study, shed light only that the significant relationships between the observed variables, but it did not show which factors caused changes in the other factors. All six variables of Study 1 were to be included in the model; however, only five of them got to be incorporated in it, due to lack of significant correlation between one variable and the other five variables. In addition to the 137 participants of Study 1, further data were collected from the same population a

term later, increasing the total number of participants to 227.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Research questions

In Study 1, a significant relationship was found between learners' willingness to communicate in English and their language proficiency, yet, the statistical analysis revealed that WTC explained only 4 percent of the variance in their proficiency. Also, among the other observed variables in Study 1, language proficiency showed the weakest relationship with WTC. Before incorporating this construct into the model, it was necessary to confirm this connection within the enlarged sample. Before integrating them into the model it was also crucial to confirm the significant relationships between all the other variables within the enlarged sample as the structural equation model is built on significant correlations between the factors. After exploring the significant correlations between the six variables, I propose and test a model of L2 communication. Therefore, the following questions motivated the present study.

1. Is there a significant relationship between participants' WTC, CA, PCC in English, and their level of English language proficiency, their motivation, and their communicative behaviour in English?
2. Does the data support the proposed model of L2 communication?

5.2.2 Participants

The model proposed and tested in this study was built on 227 students' data, collected in two phases. The sample involved the 137 participants whose results were analysed in Study 1 and a further 90 English majors who were surveyed in March 2006. The additional participants were also undergraduate students at the University of Pécs (UP), and they were all enrolled in one of the four compulsory Language Practice courses. With

one exception, a Hungarian-Croatian bilingual, they were all native speakers of Hungarian. Altogether, there were 53 male and 174 female participants.

5.2.3 Materials

Data were elicited by the five research instruments measuring the six observed variables (WTC, CA, PCC, language proficiency in EFL, frequency of communication, language learning motivation) described in the previous chapter. Based on the results of the 227 participants, the reliability of the communicational measures was adequate: Willingness to Communicate in English scale (Alpha = .87), Communication Apprehension in English scale (Alpha = .95), and Perceived Communication Competence of English scale (Alpha = .92); and so was the Vocabulary test. Since results in Study 1 indicated that only one integrative/affective motivational sub-component was linked to learners' willingness to communicate in English, I include only this in the model of L2 communication, in the present study.

5.2.4 Procedures

This study was designed and implemented as part of the same departmental project as was Study 1, therefore, the procedures were identical. Data collection was carried out in two subsequent phases. The first set of data involving 137 participants was collected in March 2005 (as described in Chapter 4), whereas the second, additional set of data was elicited in March 2006. In the second phase, 90 students attending four Language Practice courses were requested to fill in the instruments during a normal 90-minute Language Practice seminar in the spring semester of 2005/2006. As in the first phase, participants were invited to ask questions if they did not understand something or the instructions were not clear. They were offered the opportunity to opt out. Administration of the questionnaire and the vocabulary test took 60 minutes. This time, course tutors supervised the administration of the tests and the questionnaires in all four groups. All participants were coded, thus their anonymity and the protection of their personal rights

were ensured. The 90 students' results were added to the spreadsheet that already contained the 137 students' data collected in the first phase.

5.3 Results

The SPSS version 14.0 statistical programme was used to calculate the correlational coefficients and Amos version 4.0 was used to test the hypothesized model using structural equation modelling (SEM). The final scores of the vocabulary test were obtained by Excel for Microsoft Office Windows.

5.3.1 Relationships between six variables

The first research question aimed at confirming the significant relationships between the six variables within the extended sample of 227 participants. Results of Study 1 indicated only a weak relationship among some of the variables. Therefore, prior to outlining the base model, it was essential to see if data of a larger sample yielded similar results. Contrary to the findings of the Study 1, results based on the extended sample showed fewer significant correlations among the observed variables. In total, 12 significant relationships were identified out of the possible 15 as opposed to Study 1, where all 15 relations were found to be significant. Table 6 shows the correlation matrix of the six variables observed in this study.

Table 6 Correlation matrix of 227 students

	English proficiency	Frequency of communication	Integrative/affective motivation	Perceived communication competence	Communication apprehension
Frequency of communication	,041				
Integrative/affective motivation	,157(*)	,333(**)			
Perceived communication competence	,080	,286(**)	,265(**)		
Communication apprehension	-,151(*)	-,389(**)	-,273(**)	-,608(**)	
Willingness to communicate	,089	,300(**)	,341(**)	,804(**)	-,535(**)

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Language proficiency was not significantly related to three of the variables: WTC, PCC, and frequency of communication in the L2. On the basis of these findings, language proficiency was eliminated due to lack of significant connection between three of the other variables. Therefore, the model put forward included five variables. In addition, the correlations between proficiency and motivation and proficiency and PCA were weaker than in Study 1 (see Table 7). However, all but one of the remaining significant correlations either equalled or were slightly stronger in Study 2.

Table 7 A comparison of correlations in Study 1 and Study 2

	English proficiency	Frequency of communication	Integrative/affective motivation	Perceived communication competence	Communication apprehension
Frequency of communication	S1 ≠ S2				
Integrative/affective motivation	S1 > S2	S1 ? S2			
Perceived communication competence	S1 ≠ S2	S1 < S2	S1 > S2		
Communication apprehension	S1 > S2	S1 = S2	S1 < S2	S1 = S2	
Willingness to communicate	S1 ≠ S2	S1 = S2	S1 < S2	S1 = S2	S1 < S2

Key:

S1 = Study 1

S2 = Study 2

“≠” = there was a significant correlation between the variables in Study 1 but not in Study 2

“>” = correlation was stronger in Study 1

“<” = correlation was stronger in Study 2

“=” correlation was about the same in Study 1 and Study 2

5.3.2 Structural equation modelling: From a proposed theoretical model to a model of willingness to communicate in English

The proposed theoretical model (see Figure 3 on page 108) was constructed following the results of Study 1 and the correlation analysis of 227 students' data described above. It was not a replication of any of the previous models, yet, it was very similar in structure to those proposed by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) and Hasimoto (2002). On the theoretical grounds reviewed in Chapter 2 (e.g., MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre et al., 1998; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987), it was conceived that a lack of communication anxiety and perceived communication competence defined L2 WTC; therefore, two paths were proposed from CA and PCC to WTC. Although in Study 1, it was found that learners' communication anxiety did not explain any additional variance in their predisposition towards speaking in English, in order to test whether the SEM analysis yielded different results a path was suggested between these two in the base model. In some of the studies (e.g., Yashima et al., 2004) these two antecedents affected a latent 'self-confidence' variable; however, in the present study they were treated as separate observed variables.

A negative correlational relationship was proposed between CA to PCC. These two constructs were hypothesised to co-vary, in other words, to be related to each other, but not to directly cause changes in each other. It was expected that, on the one hand, the more anxious students were when it came to speaking in English the less satisfied they would be with their competence. On the other hand, the more confident they were with their language skills the less worried they would be when speaking in English.

Voluntary communication in English (verbal and oral) was added as a consequence of WTC, which was consistent with Study 1 and with previous findings (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Chan & McCroskey, 1987; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002).

Further on, L2 WTC was also hypothesised to have a direct effect on the integrative/affective motivational component which was in line with findings of previous research studies where WTC was found to exert its influence on the motivational variable (e.g., Hashimoto, 2000; Yashima et al., 2004). Therefore, it was assumed that the more willing students were to speak in English in general terms, the more motivated they

would be to meet foreigners or English native speakers with whom they could interact in the target language. The two variables would in turn determine actual L2 communicative behaviour. These two concepts were expected to be very closely related, as WTC is associated with speaking in English in general terms, whereas the integrative motivational component refers to interacting with English speakers and being keen on learning the English language. However, in certain circumstances, it is possible that these two factors would affect one another the other way round. For instance, in an emergency situation, after being an eyewitness of an accident abroad, one would be more willing to speak up because he or she would need to report the crisis to someone, i.e. call the ambulance. In such cases one would be keen to communicate, in fact, one would not really have a choice to speak or not to speak. When describing the pyramid model, MacIntyre and his colleagues (1998) point out that the model does not account for non-voluntarily communication. Such cases would count as exceptional; therefore, such possibilities are not included in the model.

Following Clément's contextual model (1980, 1986), which suggests that besides willingness to communicate, motivation for language learning also contributes to the frequency of L2 communication, and also drawing on previous findings (e.g., Hashimoto, 2000; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), a path was proposed from the integrative motivational construct leading to L2 behaviour.

Structural equation modelling, or analysis of covariance structures, is a statistical method that takes a confirmatory hypothesis-testing approach to the analysis of a theoretical model (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999). This method is used to test the extent to which a theoretical model is consistent with the quantitative data collected from a specific sample. If statistical indices are adequate, the model is plausible, meaning that the model explains the variances in the data well. However, if goodness of fit indices are inadequate, it indicates that the model is not accurate enough to describe well the variances in the dataset; therefore, the validity of the model has to be rejected. Although one set of data can explain several valid structural models, they all have to be theoretically grounded. In the present model, only measured variables are included and no latent variables are incorporated. This type of structural equation modelling is also known as path analysis.

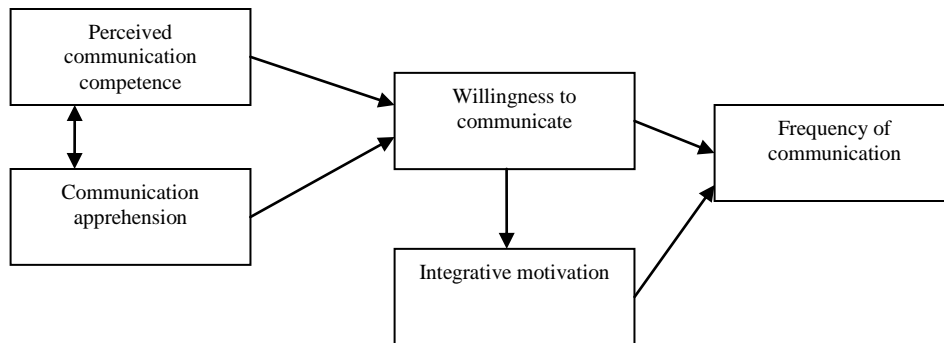


Figure 3 Proposed theoretical model

To evaluate the overall model fit, a number of measures can be used (Byrne, 2001). The chi-square and the CMIN/df (chi square divided by the degrees of freedom) are the most frequently used measures. If the probability value of chi-square is below 0.05 (as a rule of thumb in social science), then the difference between the sample and the proposed model is significant; therefore, the null hypothesis - that the model fits the data - has to be rejected. These two measures are sensitive to sample size and to the non-normality of the sample (Byrne, 2001, p. 81), therefore, it is useful to consult other fit indices to assess the model-data fit.

The choice of which index to use, however, is a matter of dispute among statisticians (Garson, 2006). For instance, Jaccard and Wan (1996, p. 87 quoted in Garson, 2006, Key Concepts and Terms section, para. 14) suggest using at least three fit indices, whereas Kline (1998, p. 130 quoted in Garson, 2006, Key Concepts and Terms section, para. 14) suggests using four. The most often used indices include the following:

- 1) goodness-of-fit index (GFI);
- 2) adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI);
- 3) Bentler-Bonett normed fit index (NFI);
- 4) the Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI);
- 5) the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA);
- 6) the expected cross-validation index (ECVI);
- 7) and the comparative fit index (CFI).

For the indices GFI, AGFI, NFI, TLI a value very close to 1.00 would indicate a very good fit and RMSEA indicates a close fit if its value does not exceeds 0.1 (suggested by Browne & Cudek, 1993, quoted in Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005, p. 25). For ECVI, a value closest to 0 would indicate the model's good fit to the data. While the chi-square test is an absolute test of model fit (the model is rejected if the probability value is below 0.05), the other measures of goodness-of-fit are descriptive where researchers decide on values of adequacy by rules of thumb (*Structural Equation Modelling using AMOS....*).

In the present study the CFI and RMSEA measures will be reported, as they are considered to be less sensitive to sample size than others (Fan, Thompson, & Wang, quoted in Garson, 2006, Key Concepts and Terms section, para. 18). However, additional indices will also be reported.

Table 8 Fit measures

	Base Model	Revised model	Final Model	Good values
Chi-square	20.26	6.044	6.857	
Df	4	4	5	
P	< 0.001	0.196	0.232	> 0.05 (ns.)
Chi-square/df	5.065	1.511	1.371	< 2
GFI	0.967	0.989	0.988	Close to 1
AGFI	0.875	0.960	0.964	Close to 1
NFI	0.953	0.986	0.984	Close to 1
TLI	0.902	0.988	0.991	Close to 1
CFI	0.961	0.995	0.996	Close to 1
RMSEA	0.134	0.048	0.041	< 0.05
ECVI	0.187	0.124	0.119	Smaller

The base model was tested with AMOS 4.0. This software package enables users to build and test a model by using computer-aided drawings and point-to-click menus (Thompson, 2000). The outcome is an easily read, visual representation of the results of the structural equations. The results with standardised path coefficients are shown in Figure 4; the goodness-of-fit statistics are listed in Table 8. A path is significant if the critical ratios of the structural regression weights are below 1.96. Except for the path from communication apprehension to L2 WTC, all paths were found to be significant. Looking at Table 8, the chi-square for the base model was 20.26 with 4 degrees of freedom and the probability

value of the test was less than 0.01. A significant value indicates that the model tested was significantly different from the dataset; therefore, it suggests the model's poor goodness-of-fit. The Chi-square value is often considered to be unreliable with a relatively large sample by some researchers (e.g., larger than 200 according to Garson, 2006) and therefore, the significance of the chi-square test may be discounted. However, the number of participants in the present study was just over 200; therefore, this possibility was dismissed. Further on, the CMIN/df was 5.065 where a value below 2 would be an indicator of adequate goodness-of-fit. Nevertheless, the CFI, alongside four other measures showed good fit measures but not RMSEA and ECVI. Based on the goodness-of-fit measures and the significant chi-square value it was concluded that the base model did not fit the sample and therefore it was rejected.

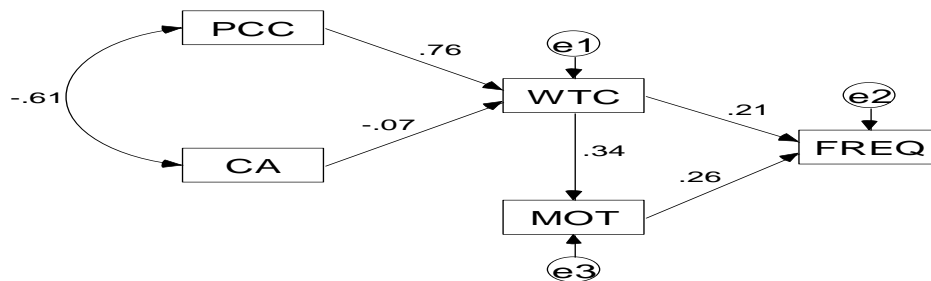


Figure 4 Base model

The initial hypothetical model did not provide acceptable model-fit indices; also, the path from communication apprehension to L2 WTC was not found to be significant. To obtain a better fitting model, some modifications to the base model were necessary. The revision involved, on the one hand, the deletion of the non-significant path from CA to L2 WTC. On the other hand, in the modification indices table, AMOS may also

suggest possible paths that can be added to the model in order to generate the expected reduction in the overall model fit chi-square. Based on the modification indices table, a new path was added from communication apprehension to frequency of communication, as suggested by AMOS.

The model then was re-submitted to evaluation (see results in Figure 5). All paths were significant, except for the one from L2 WTC to frequency of communication. The revised model shows acceptable goodness-of-fit measures (see Table 8). The chi-square was not significant, which indicates the model's good fit and so does the value of CMIN/df which is below 2. The other seven fit indices all indicate very good fit of the model with a CFI of 0.996. Nevertheless, it was decided to revise the model the second time, as the path from L2 WTC to frequency of communication (FREQ) was not significant.

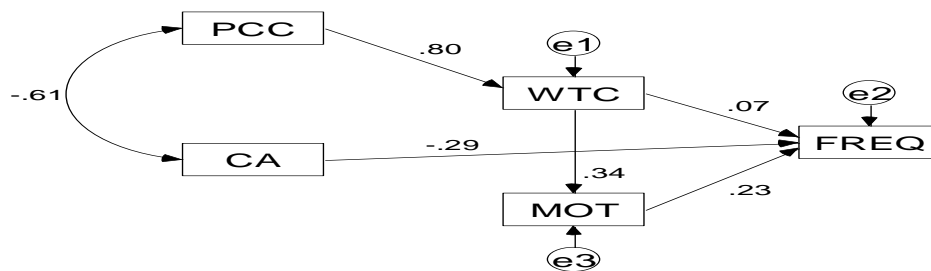


Figure 5 Revised model

To obtain the final model, the non-significant path from WTC to FREQ was removed and the model was re-submitted to evaluation for the third time. Figure 6 shows the final, revised model. As can be seen in Table 8, the chi-square value of 6.857 with four degrees of freedom was non-significant, meaning that the model cannot be rejected.

All paths were found to be significant and all indices show very good fit of the model with a CFI of 0.996 and RMSEA 0.041. Therefore, the second revision is appropriate to describe the data and thus, represents the final model in this study.

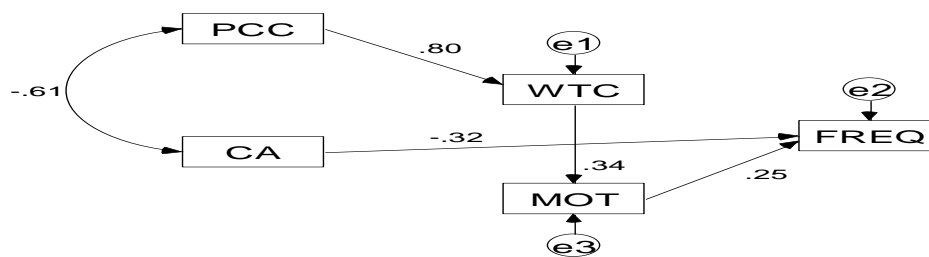


Figure 6 Final model

5.4 Discussion

5.4.1 Revising the relationship between learners' willingness to communicate and its antecedents

Although the initially proposed base model did not fit the dataset, the second revision provided a model that was appropriate to describe the dataset. The final model shows that these advanced EFL learners' predisposition towards communicating in English depends solely on how they perceive their own communicational abilities in English and is not directly determined by their communicational anxiety. This outcome supports the findings of Study 1, where the regression analysis revealed that communication apprehension did not explain additional variance in learners' willingness to communicate, as it was solely determined by their perception of their linguistic abilities. This is also in

line with Clément's structural equation modeling analysis (1999) that revealed similar findings.

However, these findings on L2 WTC contradict McCroskey and Richmond's view on L1 communication: namely, that 'any impact of CA on behaviour must be mediated by WTC in interaction with situational constraints' (1990a, p. 29). It is possible that this is the result of the difference between the nature of L1 communication and conversing in an L2. The lack of direct effect of anxiety on participants' predisposition towards speaking in English may also be due to the fact that the relationship between willingness to communicate and its antecedents is dependant on learners' experiences with the L2 and its speakers (MacIntyre et al., 1998). It is not necessarily learners' level of language proficiency that might affect this relationship, but the quality of contact with native speakers of the L2 or foreigners using the L2, where learners have the opportunity to observe and acquire the pragmatic, intercultural and socio-cultural norms of the community speaking the target language. For example, Arcangeli's study (1999) revealed that learners of German found that conversing with native speakers of the L2 was extremely useful to overcome their initial inhibitions about communicating in German.

For these Hungarian EFL learners, the only chance for face to face interaction with English speaking people in informal situation is with foreign tourists in Pécs and international students studying at the faculties at UP. For English majors, there are still not as many opportunities for intercultural contacts as for those who, for instance, live and study in Budapest, which is a more popular destination for tourists and foreigners or for those who live, study or work in an English speaking country. As pointed out in the literature, it might be possible that the differences in learning context determine which antecedents influence more learners' willingness to speak. A number of research studies (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2003, MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002) have confirmed that with more experienced language learners (i.e. immersion) it was communication anxiety that better predicted their willingness to communicate in English, whereas for less experienced students (i.e. non immersion, foreign language learners) it was their perceived competence that had a greater effect on their readiness to start a conversation in English. Findings of the present study support the latter claim.

These learners are not likely to have as high pragmatic and socio-cultural competence as for instance those who have lived in the target country or took part in immersion education. They may not be able to express themselves appropriately as native speakers would expect; therefore, this may lead to communication breakdown or misunderstanding, and may even lead to damage in their self-confidence. It is likely that the more confident learners get with the language the more they will be able to control their anxiety and its effect on their readiness to initiate a conversation and on language production. By the time the learner is an absolutely confident and fluent user of the language, perceived competence may no longer be an issue as learners may no longer be aware of their almost flawless language skills. Therefore, proficient users' willingness to speak may depend solely on their apprehension. Possibly, for fluent L2 speakers, the relationship between communicational variables will be similar to that of L1 communicational variables, as in both cases, participants will have advanced, or native like competence.

This would make sense, since when you initiate a conversation in your mother tongue you do not consider how good or adequate your language skills are, as it should always be excellent. Also, it is likely that as language learners get more used to native speakers of English or speakers of other languages via first hand linguistic experiences, or they are simply in situations where regardless of their language skills they need to speak up in the L2 (e.g., asking for directions abroad), perceived competence is no longer a strong determinant of their willingness to speak in the L2.

5.4.2 The relationship between communication apprehension and perceived communicational competence

Communication anxiety may not be an immediate component of the willingness to communicate construct among these participants; however, it is closely related to their perceived communication competence. This is in line with Clément's structural equation modeling analysis (1999) that yielded similar results. It seems that the more anxious learners are about initiating conversation in the target language, the less positively they will evaluate their communicational skills in the L2. As McCroskey and Richmond argue, the antecedents are more likely to be involved 'in mutual causality and even more likely

that both the antecedents and WTC are produced in common by other causal elements' (1990a, p. 25).

5.4.3 The effects of communicational anxiety on L2 behaviour

Nevertheless, the dataset showed that communication anxiety exerted its effect directly on the frequency of communication outside the classroom. This indicates that the more anxious students are, the less frequently they are going to use English in communicational situations with speakers of English. In other words, if learners have very strong anxiety about communicating, then even despite having high willingness to communicate they might still not initiate a conversation in English.

Interestingly, in communication research, Phillips, Smith and Modaff (2001) reported similar findings when they investigated the effects of self-esteem, introversion and extroversion, and communication anxiety on undergraduate students' classroom participation in the mother tongue. Contrary to their expectations, they found that despite moderate correlation between the variables, neither introversion and extraversion, nor self-perceived competence was an independent predictor of classroom participation; yet, it was best predicted by their communication apprehension. It seems that in one's first language too, even being motivated to learn and being interested in the topic may not always be enough for students to speak up as a result of their anxiety.

The result makes sense, since trait anxiety is a deeper psychological construct than self-confidence, which would permeate one's behaviour. Therefore, most often one's temperament and emotional reactions would override one's conscious intention and action, since personality variables, as McCroskey and Richmond argue (1990a), are very deeply rooted in our brain. When being exposed to something threatening or stressing, certain cognitive processes may become temporarily out of order to give way to other brain functions. In other words, emotional reactions would drive actual language behaviour. For instance, one's communicational anxiety – the combination of low extraversion and high neuroticism – would be likely to suppress one's willingness to communicate with another person in a stressful situation.

This fits well in the neurobiological approach (e.g., Goleman, 2004a; McCroskey

& Beatty, 2000) which stipulates that emotions and feelings (for instance, stage fright or communicational anxiety) will usually override actions that one's common sense might dictate. It is likely that language anxiety may hinder learners' language production via cognitive constraints such as inability to access L2 vocabulary or encountering problems when formulating ideas. These findings are also in line with numerous research studies where language anxiety was significantly related to the quality of language production (Djigunovič, 2006; MacIntyre, & Gardner, 1989; Tóth, 2006, 2007). The qualitative study outlined in the next chapter provides some insights into the types of situations where this may apply.

Based on their study of Japanese EFL learners, McCroskey, Gudykunst, and Nishida (1985) point out that speaking in an L2 does not necessarily contribute significantly to one's communicational anxiety but it is likely that communication apprehension in one's mother tongue may be the major cause of the level of L2 communicational anxiety. Therefore, they suggest that to diminish one's L2 CA and to help one to become an effective L2 learner, anxiety in one's mother tongue should be tackled first in order. However, as for perceived communicational competence, this might not be the case, as it is highly unlikely that L1 PCC will determine PCC in the L2.

5.4.4 The effects of willingness to communicate on motivation and on L2 behaviour

Contrary to expectations, the path leading from L2 willingness to communicate to frequency of communication was also found to be non-significant in the final model. For these English majors, the probability of engaging in communication when they are free to do so is not the most immediate factor that determines their actual language behaviour. This also illustrates that often, in highly stressful situations, one's emotions (e.g., nervousness about speaking) may override one's conscious intention (willingness to converse) and therefore, would drive the individual's behaviour.

This finding was not expected since in previous studies, including Study 1, a significant correlation was found between participants' willingness to communicate and their reported frequency of communication in and/or outside of classroom. Some studies

(e.g., Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Yashima et al., 2004) even reported a causal relationship between the two constructs where intention resulted in behaviour. In these studies, however, the instrument was aimed at measuring frequency of communication in the classroom, whereas most of the items of the WTC and PCC scale were measuring willingness to communicate in out-of-classroom contexts (e.g., speaking in a small group of friends/strangers/acquaintances) and only a few could be related to a classroom context (e.g., give a presentation). This could explain the discrepancy between these studies and the present study, as here the items measuring frequency of communication were related to informal contexts. Although these Hungarian EFL learners might not have a lot of opportunities to interact with foreigners, the two items measuring frequency of communication were related to realistic situations for these students (writing emails, trying to meet speakers of English or native speakers of English).

According to the final model, L2 willingness to communicate exerted its influence on frequency of communication through the motivational component. This path suggests that willingness to communicate is a positive indicator of motivation and thus has motivational properties. This reasoning makes sense: the more proficient learners think they are in the target language, the more willing they will be to communicate in L2 and more open to foreigners. As a result of students' motivation to learn English and to enhance their intercultural experiences, they will interact more frequently in the target language. This would last as long as learners do not find themselves in particularly stressful situations in which their communicational anxiety would stop them from doing so. The model also confirmed that students' desire to meet speakers of English actually resulted in concrete action (e.g., writing letters and emails and speaking to them). This is in line with Yashima et al.'s study (2004) who found that Japanese learners' interest in intercultural contact and in international affairs directly affected the frequency of communication.

5.4.5 The more proficient in English, the more willing to speak: is it for real?

Not likely – based on these results. Despite the weak but significant relationship found between communicational variables and language proficiency (as measured by a vocabulary test) in Study 1, in the present study, no relationship was found between language proficiency and willingness to communicate or between language proficiency and perceived communicational competence. Yet, language anxiety was significantly, although weakly correlated with this measure. It makes sense, as there are a great number of learners who do not have very good language skills but are eager to interact in the target language and also there are many who have excellent language skills but are reluctant to speak in a given situation. It seems that in addition to frequency of contact with speakers of English, willingness to communicate in an L2 does not depend on one's L2 competence but, as McCroskey and Richmond (1990a) point out, WTC does indeed depend on how one perceives his or her competence rather than the actual objectively measured level of proficiency. This is supported by findings of Yashima et al. (2004) who did not find a correlation between levels of proficiency and WTC but reported a strong correlation between perceived communication competence and WTC. If this is the case, boosting learners' self confidence may be the first step to promote intercultural contact among English majors.

However, there is a possibility that the vocabulary test was not sensitive enough to measure learners' overall proficiency objectively and that with more complex proficiency measure different results would have been found. Also, the proficiency measure proved to be too easy for these students and therefore it was not sensitive enough to identify the variation in learners' proficiency. In order to confirm the findings of the present study, it would be necessary to measure learners' conversational skills, both in informal and classroom contexts. Then, the relationship could be examined between oral skills and their willingness to communicate in English.

5.4.6 Limitations of the study

Despite the substantial findings of the statistical analysis, there are also limitations to the study. A potential problem may be that the present model included only four variables that may be related to L2 willingness to communicate and L2 language use whereas MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 558) list at least 30 variables that ‘may have potential impact on L2 WTC. In order to fully understand the WTC construct further factors, for instance, personality variables could be incorporated into a model. Further information could be collected on English majors’ willingness to communicate in formal situations, for example, by interviewing seminar instructors or requesting them to fill in an assessment scale for each student, of course, in a confidential manner.

Another limitation lies in the proficiency measure. The vocabulary test used in the study gives only a rough indication of overall level of proficiency. It gives no detail about reading and writing skills, and most importantly about speaking and listening skills. The lack of correlation between learners’ proficiency, as measured by the vocabulary test and their eagerness to converse in English might also due a ceiling effect of the proficiency measure. As they were all on at least an intermediate level of proficiency, the measure proved too easy for them. Therefore, less variation in students’ proficiency might be an explanation to the weak relationship between the two variables in Study 1 and the lack of correlation between them in this study. This finding indicates that further exploration is needed in the future involving proficiency tests tapping into English majors’ four skills. This, however, was not possible in the present study.

5.5 Conclusion

The goal of this study was to build and test a model of L2 communication that would adequately describe Hungarian English major’s communicative behaviour in English. Contrary to expectations, the final model did not confirm that willingness to communicate is the most immediate influence on these language learners’ communicative behaviour. The structural equation analysis showed that learners’ communication anxiety and their integrative motivation are the two factors that seem to directly determine their

L2 language use. Learners' predisposition towards communicating in English seems to be a motivational component related to the intention of communicating in English with other speakers of English. This argument sounds reasonable, since the WTC scale measured participants' general predisposition towards communicating in English, whereas the motivational items measured a more concrete construct: learners' conscious intention to communicate with speakers of English and their dedication to the English language.

Contrary to the findings of Study 1 and to my expectations, the data did not support the positive relationship between language proficiency (assessed by a vocabulary test) and willingness to communicate. The lack of significant connection between language proficiency in relation to willingness to communicate and frequency of communication suggests that learners' linguistic behaviour is more likely to depend on other factors rather than how good learners they actually are. Therefore, if one of the aims of L2 learning is to promote intercultural contact with speakers of English and engender L2 language use, it is extremely important to boost these learners' self-confidence in language classes and to provide them with opportunities to engage in meaningful conversation with other speakers of English.

The findings also confirm that the more students are inclined to meet foreigners, the more frequently they will be using the target language. Hence, besides improving learners' language proficiency, it is equally, if not more important to raise learners' intercultural awareness and promote willingness to interact with foreigners and native speakers of English. Consequently, if students are open towards foreigners and they also have opportunities for meeting them (i.e., native speakers teachers of English, a number of foreign visitors and international students in town, and travel, live and work abroad), it is most likely that they will have some sort of contact with them. No matter whether they just engage in a brief encounter with a tourist on the street or become life long friends; what counts is that they have the opportunity to engage in meaningful communication where the English language serves as a means to an end.

The more opportunities L2 learners have for interacting with fluent speakers of English, the more likely it is that they will pick up the pragmatic and socio-cultural norms of the target language. Subsequently, fewer linguistic and cultural misunderstandings will occur and more successful interpersonal interactions will take place. These positive

experiences will most likely boost learners' self-confidence and in turn will lead to more frequent contact with speakers of English.

To support them in acquiring pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence, it would be desirable to integrate such courses into the curriculum. Perhaps in Language Practice classes and other introductory classes, English majors' awareness should be raised about the intercultural differences which often cause a breakdown in communication and most often result in unpleasant experiences for learners of a foreign language. These recurring negative experiences then contribute to the gradual loss of learners' self-confidence and can be a source of anxiety. It would be extremely important to tackle this problem among these learners, as it seems that communication anxiety plays a major role in their L2 language use.

There have been some developments in this area, as in the new bachelor programme at UP a new mandatory course has been offered to English majors from the fall semester of 2006: *An introduction to intercultural communication*. This new course provides opportunities for students to explore and to understand what cultural and conversational norms may operate among speakers of different languages. The next chapter will shed light on further problem areas that still need to be tackled by tutors and students.

Chapter 6

English majors' perspectives on their willingness to communicate in English: A qualitative study

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the causal relationship between L2 willingness to communicate and five closely related variables by drawing on quantitative data from 227 English majors. Contrary to expectations, results showed that learners' predisposition towards communicating in English was directly influenced only by their perceived communicational competence and not by their communication anxiety. Further on, it was found that learners' actual L2 use was determined by their strong integrative/affective motivation and their lack of communication anxiety. Results also showed that learners' English proficiency did not play a role in how willing they were to talk in English or in how frequently they used it for communication in real life situations. In fact, English language proficiency was not related to any of the observed variables. In order to shed light on what situational factors might contribute to English majors' willingness to communicate and their L2 use a qualitative enquiry was also carried out.

As data collected by the survey instruments in Study 1 and 2 were related to learners' general predisposition towards willingness to communicate it allowed us to draw conclusions about learners' communicational behaviour in general terms. However, as MacIntyre and his colleagues (1998) conceptualised L2 WTC in their pyramid model as a state-like construct, which depends on the particular situation at a particular time it was also necessary to investigate how Hungarian English majors' readiness to enter into a discourse changes from situation to situation. To deepen our understanding of this group of FL learners' willingness to communicate on the situational level, a qualitative research study of 67 English majors was carried out. Looking at participants' personal experiences did not only shed light on the circumstantial variables that affected their L2 WTC and L2 use but it also enabled us to provide pedagogical implications. In addition, in the light of

the findings the original WTC scale was reviewed in terms of validity in FL learning. In this chapter I present the findings of this qualitative study.

6.2 Method

6.2.1 Aim of study

McCroskey's (1992) original WTC scale gives a general description of one's willingness to communicate; however, when conversing in a language other than one's mother tongue, the speakers' willingness to communicate will also be affected by circumstantial factors depending on the actual situation.

As outlined in Chapter 1, in MacIntyre et al.'s pyramid model (1998) there are two situational variables which directly influences one's WTC. One of them is the desire to communicate with a specific person; this is associated with affiliation (e.g., physical proximity, physical attraction, similarity) and control (achieved via sophisticated or powerful speech). The other situational antecedent is state communicative self-confidence embracing two key constructs: state perceived competence and state anxiety.

So far, only three qualitative research studies have been carried out on situational willingness to communicate in an L2. Most recently, Kang (2005) explored how learners' L2 WTC changed throughout conversational situations and proposed a multi-layered construct of L2 WTC (see Figure 7). Kang investigated four Korean ESL undergraduates' situational willingness to communicate in English who were enrolled in conversational classes with native English speaking university student tutors. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and video-recorded conversational classes. The author first identified three main groups of situational variables: 1) topic of conversation (e.g., how interesting, prior knowledge, personal experience); 2) characteristics of the interlocutors (e.g., L1, social proximity, interest and attitudes); and 3) conversational context during conversation (e.g., when misunderstood, when making mistakes).

Then, Kang looked at how these variables contributed to three psychological antecedents of situational WTC (see Figure 7): security, excitement, and responsibility. Security refers to 'feeling safe from the fears that non-native speakers tend to have in L2

communications' (p. 282); excitement relates to a 'feeling of elation about the act of talking' (p. 284); whereas responsibility refers to 'a feeling of obligation or duty to deliver and understand a message, or make it clear' which arise out of personal, interpersonal, or intergroup motives (p. 285). According to Kang, while security, the fear learners tend to have is a hindering factor for one's WTC, excitement and responsibility are stimulating factors which L2 learners tend to lack (p. 289). The author argues that these three psychological antecedents of situational WTC are in constant interaction and they may fluctuate during conversation. Therefore, the extent to which they will determine one's willingness to speak in English may also fluctuate during conversation. Situational WTC and trait-like WTC will also be in constant interaction and this combined effect will determine one's ultimate WTC, and in turn, the actual communication. The main findings of Kang's study are the following:

- Participants got most excited when the conversational partner was a native speaker of English. They found useful talking to them, as they were able to learn colloquial vocabulary from them and it helped them improve their conversational skills.
- The least preferred conversational partners for the Korean participants were fellow nationals.
- Korean students felt more secure when their tutor provided extensive social support and showed interest in what the student was saying.
- Participants were more eager to speak when they had something at stake such as clarifying a misunderstanding.
- Participants felt insecure and reluctant to communicate when the non-native interlocutor possessed more advanced language skills.
- The more interested students were in a theme, the more excited they became; however, talking about the same thing several times made the conversation boring.

In light of these findings, Kang proposes a new definition of WTC which 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 variables' (p. 291). In the study outlined in this chapter, I look for evidence for these situation variables in the Hungarian context and for the existence of potential others that may contribute to situational WTC. I also look for evidence for the psychological antecedents of situational WTC among English majors.

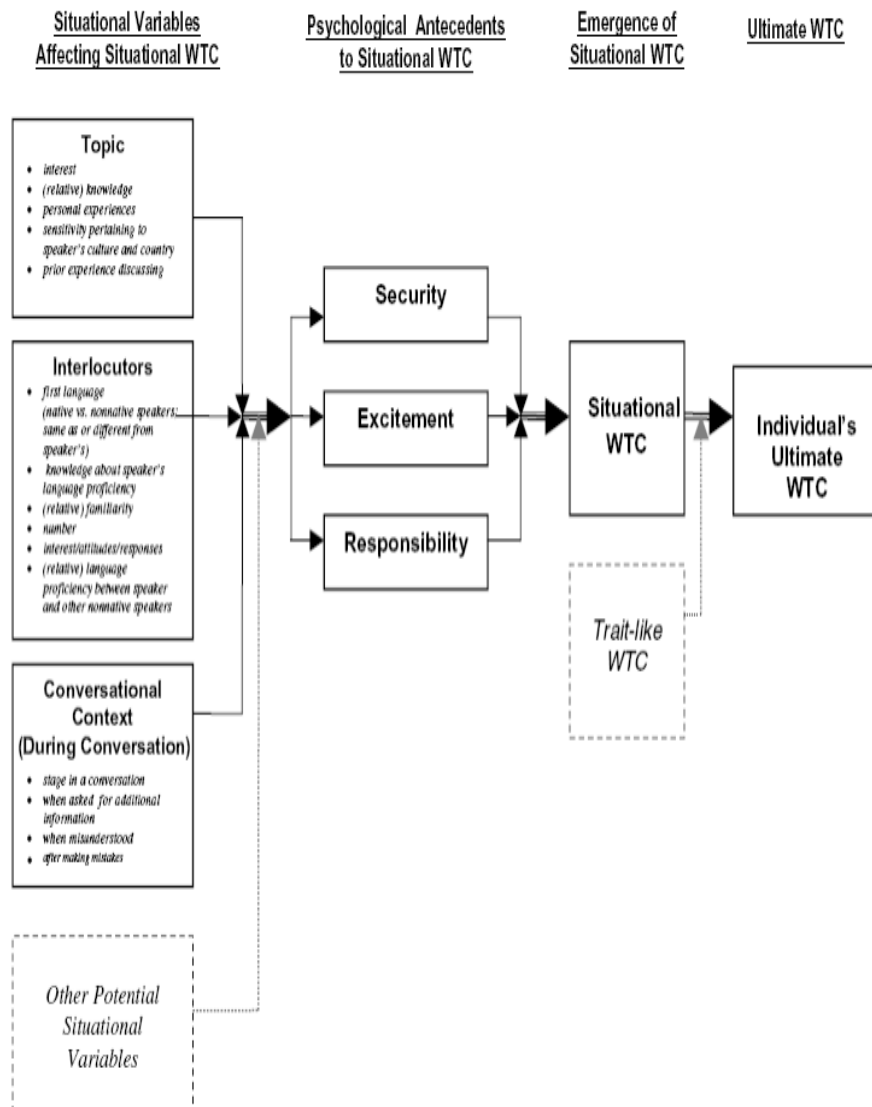


Figure 7. A preliminary construct of situational WTC (Kang, 2005, p. 288)

In the Canadian, bilingual context, MacDonald, Clément, and MacIntyre (2003) examined in what situations L2 speakers were most and least willing to speak in the

target language by eliciting data with focused essays. Participants were asked to describe in details a situation when they would be keen to speak in the target language and another one when they would be reluctant to do so. University students were most eager to speak in the L2 when the interlocutor was asking for assistance in the target language or when the interlocutor did not speak the student's language. They were also eager to chat when they were confident that their linguistic mistakes will not be corrected. Also, they were most willing to speak in the L2 when they perceived themselves to be as competent as everyone else in the context. Students felt least willing to use the target language in situations when they lacked self confidence or when they had to speak with strangers. Similarly to Kang's (2005) participants, some learners felt least willing to speak in the target language with speakers of their own language.

In a similar context, Baker and MacIntyre (2000) also looked at the situational variables that affected immersion and non-immersion students' willingness to communicate. They reported that non-immersion participants were more willing to communicate when meeting new friends, travelling, and giving class presentation, but less willing when they spoke French to a Francophone and got a reply in English. Immersion students felt more relaxed when speaking in French to a close friend, giving presentation in class, and speaking to a French native speaker. They felt less willing to communicate in similar situations than the non-immersion students when they experienced negative reactions from native speakers. However, after the negative experiences, both groups reported that they had become more determined to learn the French language.

The aim of the present study was to explore what situational variables play a role in Hungarian English majors' willingness to speak in English. Unlike in the previous two quantitative studies, in Study 3, no specific research questions were put forward as the study was exploratory and interpretative (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). The two main goals of the study were to identify in what contexts students felt most and least willing to communicate and what factors influenced their willingness and unwillingness to speak in English in that particular situation. As a secondary aim, I wanted to shed light on the extent to which participants' narratives and the situations in the original WTC self-assessment scale overlap. Since the original scale by McCroskey (1992) was designed to

measure one's predisposition towards speaking in the mother tongue, it was highly desirable to confirm that the self assessment scale was valid for FL learners as well. So far, to my knowledge, no other study in which the scale was used to assess L2 WTC has tackled this issue. By doing this, I was able to identify the extent to which the scale represented communicational situations in a foreign language learning context for the participants in the specific Hungarian tertiary educational context.

6.2.2 Participants

Participants were 64 English majors enrolled in the *Introduction to Applied Linguistics* course. This course covers a wide range of applied linguistics topics, such as learning strategies, language assessment, and neuro-linguistics. It also touches upon language learning motivation as well as on the concept of willingness to communicate. The module is mandatory for all English majors, but a prerequisite is a language proficiency exam which is organized by the Department of English Applied Linguistics. Therefore, all participants had passed an important milestone in the curriculum prior to taking the course. Previously, out of the 64 students, 26 had also filled in the self-assessment scales and completed the vocabulary test of Study 1 and 2.

Students' average age was 22 years; the oldest student was 28, whereas the youngest was 19. There were 48 female and 16 male participants. The majority (75%) were in their second or third year (34 students in their second year, 15 in their third); however, there were six in their 4th year, and four in their 5th. There were no data available on five students concerning their age and their years of studying at the University of Pécs.

6.2.3 Materials

Participants were invited to complete a task as a home assignment. They were requested to write a short essay in English of about 150 words on an occasion when they felt most willing, and another time when they felt least willing to use English. They were also

instructed to include when, where, with whom they talked on what topic and why they felt willing and unwilling to speak English. Examining these two extreme situations would allow identifying the characteristics of situations in which students are most and least willing to use English and consequently, to provide data for analyses and opportunities to highlight pedagogical implications.

6.2.4 Procedures

In the fall semester of the academic year of 2005/2006, students enrolled in the mandatory course were offered a choice for completing course requirements. They could opt for sitting a final test or complete three tasks related to the content of the syllabus during the semester. One of these tasks was the aforementioned writing task. All students were informed that their written assignments would be read and assessed by the course instructor on the basis of content, style, and language. The following class focused on language learning motivation and willingness to communicate, and the tutor used the students' experiences as authentic examples to underpin claims concerning the content area. Students were informed that their coded writings (without their names) would form a database and be further analyzed at a later stage. Participants were required to submit their written work within one week; the completion of the task itself required about 30 minutes. As the task was relatively simple, students were discouraged from using a dictionary or any kind of materials while doing the assignment; however, they could consult reference materials if they chose to.

Students volunteered to do the tasks; thus submitting their work indicated their consent that their writings be used for academic research purposes. This was pointed out to them when giving them a detailed description of the task. Participants were asked to submit their work in electronic format to the tutor through an internet platform. Their writings were coded to three digit numbers (from 901 to 964) to ensure data protection. For the purpose of this paper, written accounts were analyzed only for content and not for style or language; therefore, typographical errors and spelling mistakes were corrected in the quotations used in the present paper.

The analysis of students' narratives took part in the spring semester of 2006 based on Creswell's guidelines of qualitative data analysis (2003, p.191). As a

preparatory step, all scripts were collated into one document ensuring that all writings were coded to protect students' anonymity. Then, scripts were read to obtain a general sense of the information provided in the texts. The second reading explored common themes and emerging patterns. During the coding process, five main themes were identified,

- whether an incident happened in classroom or out-of-classroom settings;
- what language speaker students were most/least willing to talk to;
- in which country students were most/least willing to talk in English;
- when incident happened; and
- why they were most/least willing to speak in English in a specific situation.

According to these themes, participants' writings were highlighted by different colour and number codes and key words were entered in a matrix using Microsoft XP Excel. Interpretations of the findings are based on the themes and categories outlined in Table 9.

Table 9 Framework of analysis: five emerging categories

Themes	Sub category
1. Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classroom/formal setting • non-classroom/informal setting
2. Mother tongue of interlocutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • native speaker of English • foreigner speaking in English • Hungarian native speaker
3. Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in Hungary • in an English speaking country (UK, USA, Canada) • in a non-English speaking country
4. Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when in compulsory education (primary and secondary school) • more than one year ago (with overlaps) • in past year/recently/ while at UP
5. Reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why communication took place or did not take place

Most students gave a precise account of the specific incident when they were most/least willing to talk in English as they were required; however, some did not mention certain aspects of the event, most probably because they did not consider that aspect very

important (e.g., mother tongue of receiver, when incident happened) or because they described a general state when they did or did not feel willing to use English rather than a particular situation.

6.3 Results I: Most willing to speak in English

As for the positive experiences, the main themes that emerged from students' scripts were language learning context, followed by the mother tongue of the interlocutor and the country where the incident took place. Only a small number of students referred to the time when the situation happened (e.g., a year ago, at primary school). Therefore, in the sections below, I look at participants' reasons for feeling most willing to speak in English according to context and country where the incident took place (classroom setting, in Hungary or informal setting, abroad) and according to the mother tongue of the interlocutor (Hungarian, English, or any other language).

Although these English majors have been attending English classes daily, from their writings it is clear that a great majority (54) felt most willing to use English outside of the classroom walls, in an informal context. Only a few (6) described situations which happened in a classroom setting. Four students told two stories each that happened in both contexts. See Figure 8 below.

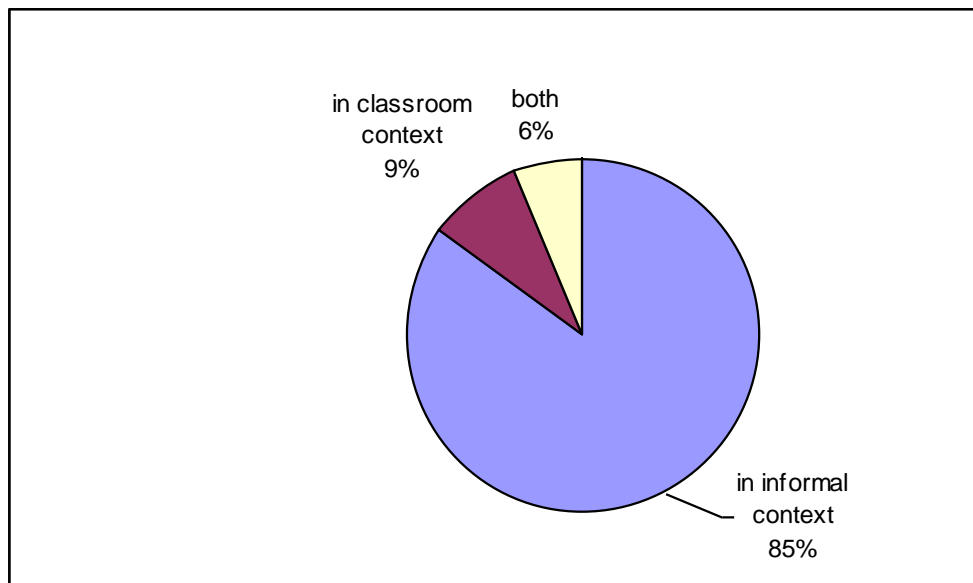


Figure 8 Contexts where students felt most willing to speak in English

On the whole, it seems that these positive encounters had a great impact on students' lives as a few of them got emotional when they wrote about them (codes in brackets identify respondents):

I had an experience which changed my life. (#932)

Maybe I wouldn't have become English major if that situation hadn't been as satisfying as it was for me. (#942)

Never forget that moment... my liver was to fall out I was so proud myself. (#938)

I think it was the period when I decided to pick up as much English as I can. (#940)

6.3.1 Out-of-classroom context abroad and in an English speaking country

In general, Hungarians still do not have a lot of opportunities to spend an extensive time in the second language environment; however, even occasional trips and short-term stays can provide opportunities for positive experiences. Altogether, 54 students (85%) said they felt most willing to speak in English in an out-of-classroom context. Ten wrote about a situation that happened while they were living in an English speaking country (UK, USA, and Canada) as an au pair, as a student, or as a short-term visitor, and 15 students wrote about encounters that occurred in a country (e.g., Germany, Italy, Croatia) where English is not an official language. In 13 cases the conversational partner was a native speaker of English and on twelve occasions it was a foreigner with whom they could and felt most willing to talk in English. These students' positive experiences are similar in terms of the location and to the mother tongue of the interlocutor; therefore, their writings will be discussed together below.

LANGUAGE AS A TOOL

A number of students mentioned situations that were not necessarily pleasant, but as they could use English for meaningful communication, they felt most enthusiastic to do so. Students felt keen on talking because they had an aim they wanted to achieve and the only way they could realize their goals was through the English language. They

mentioned interpersonal objectives such as making friends, asking for directions, or surviving in a foreign country. To quote some remarks:

That was the first time I had to use the public transport there and it was late at night and I totally got lost. The only way to get to where I wanted to was to ask locals. Probably this was the time I was most willing to speak English. (#917)

I had to encourage myself at the beginning, but I soon got used to it that if I would like to survive, I need to talk. (#950)

They [English customers at a cafe] began to behave really offensively and rudely, made fun out of me being Eastern European. Then I felt like showing them how good I was in English and I tried to save the Hungarians' honour. My Hungarian temperament came out very nicely and I told my opinion of English people's behaviour towards foreigners and also managed to shower abuse on them. (#920)

I was most willing to speak English when I could not.... When I wanted to make friends and participate in their discussion, showing that I am not rude and that I have good humour, I felt terrible. (#908)

Only I could speak English in my family, I had to communicate with him [Italian travel agent]. ...I had to use English almost everywhere because Italians didn't really speak other foreign languages. (#935)

POSITIVE FEEDBACK AND FEELING OF SUCCESS

Several students reported that they felt they were the most eager to speak in English in the UK, in situations where they received positive feedback from or were encouraged by a native speaker. Sometimes, even without encouragement from others, they felt content with their own language skills when they became conscious that they were able to talk in English in a way that other people understood. To give sample comments:

At that moment I realised that he [student's English cousin] was determined to teach me his language. I cheered up immediately, and I started to answer - in English. I was most surprised when I noticed what I was doing. But I started to enjoy it; yes, it felt great to pronounce those strange words, and form whole sentences, although they were full of mistakes. I had never really been willing to speak that language before - but in that moment I could clearly feel that in one day I will do it. I will be able to speak English fluently, correctly, and I will understand native speakers. (#930)

Three years ago I travelled to Scotland and on the first night (when we met the families we stayed with) a native Scottish lady told me very kindly that I didn't have

to be afraid, I could speak English very well. I know she wanted to be polite, but I was in training, indeed. (#945)

She [tourist guide] asked in Hungarian that was there anyone who could answer him [an American tourist]. That was my huge moment. I said yes with trembling voice. And I told him where he could find that place what he was searching for. ...I was very satisfied with that one and the half sentence, what's more the group as well. (#942)

It [talking in English with Australian relatives] was useful not only because I have learnt a lot of everyday Australian language, but also because I could recognize that my former studies of English had utilitarian value as well. (#925)

She [Irish roommate] was always happy, smiled a lot and she was interested in that what I wanted to say. She did not really care about the grammar, but if I made some failures, she corrected me kindly. She encouraged me to speak English. (#960)

One time it happened that I started to speak English with a girl who lived in the UK whom was Hungarian, what I didn't know that time, just when I introduced myself, and she was amazed that she didn't observed that I'm not English. In that moment with her statement she made my day happy. (#938)

With my host family I could talk about everything, politics, history, countries, animals, life... they always listened to me and helped if I had problems. (#918)

NOBODY IS PERFECT

A number of students felt most willing to speak in English with people whose mother tongue was neither Hungarian nor English and whom they met abroad while they attended a course, or participated in a cultural festival or an exchange programme. These students felt more relaxed to speak in English among a group of other international students because they were in the same boat: none of them were native speakers of English and none were perfect in English either. For this reason, they were not worried that if they made a mistake others would laugh at them as was the case in the classroom context. For them, English was the only way to communicate and to make themselves understood.

Our lingua franca was English and I was forced to speak and I did it with pleasure. I forgot about my shyness, fears, I was relaxed and willing to communicate even at late night about any kind of topic. I got a lot of self-confidence, I realised that I can express myself in a foreign language quite well. (#905)

During the group meetings it did not cause any problem to talk in English because I felt that anybody can make mistakes and nobody cared about it. (#922)

Luckily when I have to communicate in abroad I feel free to ask anything, that happened in Germany too, when I have lived there for a week...In the case of totally unknown people from whom I have to ask only information I also willing to speak maybe because I know that they will not see me anymore, so it does not matter what they think of me and my English. (#939)

TOPIC

Only one student referred to the topic of the conversation as the main motivating factor to participate in a conversation in English. As the student put it:

I was shy and quiet in the first two days but after that I managed to defeat my nervousness. Luckily I had great conversations with the father of the family named, Charles. It soon turned out that he is an ex-soldier. As a result I desperately wanted to communicate with him about all that military stuff. This was the first book in English that I wanted to read. (#940)

6.3.2 Out-of-classroom context in Hungary

Twenty-eight students mentioned informal situations when they felt most willing to communicate in English that happened in Hungary. Despite this fact, all but two English majors felt enthusiastic to speak with a non-Hungarian. The interlocutor was a native speaker of English in 14 cases and in ten cases it was a speaker of another language (e.g., Turkish, German). There were only two students who felt most motivated to speak in English with a fellow Hungarian. They were motivated to speak in English in order to practice their language skills. Two respondents did not specify who their conversation partners were as they gave only a general description of the event.

Although the number of foreign tourists and international students in Hungary is increasing, it still does not happen every day that one bumps into a native speaker of English or a foreigner with whom one can have a friendly chat in English. Most likely, these contacts are superficial and short (e.g., asking for directions) and do not allow for extensive communication in the target language. Yet, from the students' writings it seems that English majors sought out the opportunities and took their chances to use their

language skills whenever they could. In most of the cases it was the student who initiated the conversation in the particular situation.

Seven participants mentioned experiences when they helped a foreigner or English native speaker at the train station to buy tickets or at the bus stop to give directions. Three of them described situations when they were working as a tourist information officer or a customer services representative and they offered their help to stranded foreigners. Five students felt most willing to speak in English while being at a family gathering or when attending a wedding where there was a friends' friend or a family friend who could speak English only. Seven students were most willing to communicate in English in a group gathering where either one member of the group was a foreigner, for instance in a hockey team or in secondary school, or where there were other temporary foreign members of the group, such as in a choir that a foreign group visited, at an international handball festival, at a youth congress, or at a cultural festival. Three of the students also pointed out that they still kept in touch with the person they met accidentally at a wedding or on the train and they felt most willing to speak to.

The reasons why students felt so eager to speak in English were fairly similar to those students' reasons who felt so while they stayed abroad. While some of them gave only one reason, others gave more complex explanations for why they felt keen on talking in English in the particular situation.

TO PROVIDE HELP AND TO USE THE LANGUAGE FOR MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

A number of students felt most willing to speak in English when they wanted to achieve something by verbal means. In most cases, this goal was to help a non-Hungarian speaker buy their bus/train ticket or to find their way around in Hungary. It is clear that students enjoyed using the English language for a meaningful purpose, especially as they provided help for others in need. The fact that they were of assistance to other people because of their language skills made them feel worthy, which gave them self-confidence. To quote some remarks:

Usually I feel most willing to speak in English, when foreigners ask for help on the street. (#939)

I felt willing to speak English because I could really help not just to talk nonsense (as I often do) to practice and to show off that I'm able to speak the language. (#962)

I bought him the tickets and I thought it was worth learning English, because I could help him. (#951)

In those days the streets were full of foreign students, and if they walked without any guide, they stopped you to ask for information and I enjoyed directing them. (#956)

I felt most willing to speak in English when I was in a situation, in which a foreigner tried to explain something or to ask for help from an other person who did not speak any foreign languages, and in which I as an outsider later involved myself in the communication with the aim of helping the others.... My motivation of speaking in English in these situations was purely to help those foreigners who did not speak our most beautiful but extremely difficult mother tongue, and of course those Hungarians who did not speak English. (#936)

POSITIVE ATTITUDES OF THE LISTENER

A number of students felt more confident and most willing to speak when they sensed their English speaking non-Hungarian interlocutor's positive attitudes. When the person they were talking to was attentive, kind and showed interest in what the student was saying and not in how the student was saying it, they felt less apprehensive about the mistakes they might make and felt that they were able to speak more fluently. In their own words:

I spoke with an English man about the national parks in Hungary. He was smiling at me and his kindness encouraged me to speak more easily. Consequently, I was able to speak fluently and without thinking it over several times. (#961)

I think this occasion, which was in this year's September was the first that I had spoken English fluently for more than a decade of English learning. I think the reason why I took pleasure in it was firstly that they were encouraging towards me. (#904)

We understood each other without any problem and this gave me self-confidence. (#916)

PRAISE FROM THE CONVERSATIONAL PARTNER

Several students pointed out that they felt most inclined to communicate when they received positive verbal feedback from the non-Hungarian they were talking to. They were flattered and pleased when a native speaker of English or a foreigner commented on their English in a positive way, which in turn boosted their self-confidence. This is something a teacher should normally do in the classroom to motivate language learners. To give sample comments:

Although I could not understand everything at first, they said that I am quite good for a non-native speaker. (#959)

They were really surprised, and after some minutes of talk, it turned out that they are Americans; they praised my pronunciation and knowledge of their native language. It was a very good feeling. (#941)

When my friends praise me and when foreigners mistake me for an Englishwoman, that's what really makes me happy and satisfied. (#939)

My classmates considered me to be the best English speaker in our class, so they dragged me out to help the guy who seemed quite lost...I know I made a lot of mistakes, but the others didn't realise them and Dave, the English guy was too polite to correct them. Ever since this happened I realized my English is much better when my audience is not as proficient as I am. (#955)

SPEAKING FOR PLEASURE

For some students, spotting an opportunity to use their language skills outside the classroom gave pleasure and made them feel happy and content. It seems that some English majors enjoy speaking in English to a great extent. To quote some observations:

First I didn't understand what he wanted, because it was still in the morning and to be honest I was really surprised and also happy that I heard English words. (#946)

I felt happiness that I could communicate with a man who represented a different culture from mine. (#963)

I had a good chat with all of them with the help of the English Language. (#919)

We had a great conversation. (#907)

ENGLISH AS THE SOLE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

As in the foreign context, a couple of the respondents referred to the fact that the only way that they could communicate in the particular situation was in English. In their own words:

We could only communicate in English. (#907)

We had to use English but we were all second language users. (#913)

Fortunately he used English perfectly so there was no language barrier between us. My English knowledge saved me from a communicative crash. (#910)

We spent a great time together, got new friends. I had only one problem, that my English was not good enough. I wanted to tell my new friends how happy I was and how much I loved them. I hope they could understand despite the gaps in my knowledge. (#932)

TO SHOW OFF

Some of the participants were extremely willing to talk in English because they wanted to show off how good their language skills were or they wanted to demonstrate it to other people listening to the conversation. To give a few examples:

I wanted to show off with my English knowledge hearing that they can also speak in English from their accent. (#941)

I felt willing to speak English [...] to show off that I'm able to speak the language. (#962)

When I wanted to speak English more than anything, was about three years ago [...] I think I wanted to prove the visitors, the fellow Ravens and of course to myself, that I can speak English well' (#919)

My classmates considered me to be the best English speaker in our class, so they dragged me out to help the guy who seemed quite lost. I never claimed to be able to converse with a native English speaker, but I had to maintain my reputation... (#955)

OTHERS ARE WORSE

A few students were most willing to speak when they felt that they had better language skills than the interlocutor or when they felt that they were the best:

...we usually have a discussion on hockey which is one of my favourite topics. In my opinion I feel so free to speak in English is mainly because his pronunciation is worse than mine (although his vocabulary is much bigger).... (#926)

This contrastive approach is typical in previous examples as well, but the emphasis was not always on the negative comparison.

TOPIC

A number of students were most eager to speak in English when they shared something in common with the person they were talking to; therefore, they had something intrinsically motivating to talk about. For some of them, it was enough if the conversational partner had a nice personality. If they got on well they could discuss all sorts of topics. In most cases, the students and the interlocutor(s) were of the same age. The conversational partner was either a friend/relative of someone the student knew or was a stranger the student just met, for instance, on the train. To quote some remarks:

With Cathy we discussed films, books, music, teachers, boys and almost everything two girls at the age of sixteen were interested in... (#948)

He is such a great person, that I do not hesitate to ask anything, be it a question on linguistics or on politics. (#928)

Of course we talked also about less “sophisticated” things such as: where I’m from, what do I do, about my family, about his family, hobbies In general the usual things two people talk about when they want to get to know to each other. (#946)

We play on the same amateur hockey team so we usually have a discussion on hockey which is one of my favourite topics. (#926)

6.3.3 Willingness to speak in English in classroom context

Considering that participants were most likely to have decided to become English majors because they were passionate about the language, the number of respondents who felt most willing to grab the opportunity to speak in a classroom was rather low: only ten students felt most willing to speak in English in a formal learning situation. In all cases students put emphasis on the teacher’s positive qualities or stressed the authenticity and

meaningfulness of the communicative situation. Two students mentioned recent events while attending university and one said that it happened during his secondary-school years. The other seven students felt most eager to talk in English in a slightly different educational setting: in a private lesson, in an exam situation, in a summer camp or in a language course abroad, which they all attended on an optional basis.

One of the two students whose experiences were related to a classroom setting at UP said that she was most willing to speak in English because they were debating a certain issue; therefore, the communication was meaningful and spontaneous. The other student's recollection was slightly different; she felt that because nobody else wanted to participate in class, it was an opportunity for her to make herself heard. Both perceived the classroom contexts as non-threatening and one of them also pointed out that the teacher was nice. To quote two students:

Not the concrete topics were important, but rather the general feel of sensible disputes, as I am open to converse with my peers as well as my tutors. I am willing to participate in disputes and discussions because they are meaning-focused, demanding, and they emerge spontaneously. (#953)

Our teacher was nice and patient. On the first lesson I realised that no one was very talkative among the students. Due to this fact I felt that this would be an ideal class for me. No one was embarrassed because everybody shared almost the same qualities and we could talk about any topic. (#915)

One student felt at ease with the native speaker teacher she met once a week at secondary school because she and her other classmates did natural and spontaneous activities such as talking about topics students could personally relate to.

With him we never had to anything else, but talk to each other. No grammar, no silly texts, only having a conversation. I always wanted to add something to the topics we were talking about - I was the best in the group. I haven't stopped learning English, even after I got my language certificate. Moreover, in the last two years, I attended the elective courses too and I really felt, that I was good at English. (#902)

Two students mentioned that they were most willing to speak in English when they had private lessons. In one case the teacher was a native speaker of English and the student explained her eagerness by saying 'I enjoy that I can talk to a native speaker and learn

typical English expressions and can get used to speaking in English' (#957). In the other case the teacher was Hungarian and was 'very kind and she could speak English very well' and the student 'could speak freely about my opinion without fearing of that I would say something stupidity or I would make a mistake'. She went on by saying that 'it's very important thing that the person, to whom we talk, be attentive and sensitive to our feelings, our mood and our thinking of way. In the company of my private teacher I could speak in English more fluently and relaxed than with anybody else' (#943).

Another student, who described an exam situation, gave reasons similar to the ones above when he referred to the tutor asking questions at the exam. He said that he had an 'amazing asking teacher who eased my anxiety with some very simple everyday question. She was very patient to me, and I have never felt before so much calmness and peace – while speaking English' (#923).

Two students wrote about their encounters in a language class abroad. One worked as an au pair and attended a language class in the UK, whereas the other respondent studied in Germany with a scholarship where she took part in a language practice class. In both cases they were the only Hungarians attending the class. Both of them felt most willing to speak in English because they wanted to make themselves understood and wanted to get to know the others and English was the only language they could all speak.

The students were very friendly and fortunately there were no Hungarians in it except me. Getting to know each other made us more motivated to talk in English properly because that was the only language we could communicate with. (#929)

Two other students shared their experiences when they attended an English language camp in Hungary. One of them thought it was the teacher's personality that made her so eager to communicate and the other student felt keen to talk because he was considered to be the best in the group and this gave him self-confidence.

Our teacher was Neal Patel from Illinois who is an impressive and awesome guide with a powerful enthusiasm. (#927)

I felt myself very good and I was happy because all the teachers found me the best. I simply enjoyed talking, expressing my thoughts in English. It wasn't a

problem for me that with whom I talked on what. My inhibitions disappeared and I had self-confidence like never before (and after). (#954)

6.4 Results II: Least willing to speak in English

The most dominant aspect of the unpleasant situations that students described was the learning context in which they felt least willing to speak in English, as could be identified in almost all (61) students' narratives. The situations students mentioned fall into two categories:

(1) a formal language learning context which refers to an experience that happened in a language class or during an exam; and

(2) an informal context including all situations outside language classes e.g., giving directions to a tourist on the street, talking to fellow students after class, and speaking with a family friend.

Only three students did not mention in their writings in what context they were least willing to speak in English as they outlined only in general terms when they felt so.

Of all 61 students, about the same number described unpleasant situations that happened in a formal, classroom setting (31) as those who described events which occurred in an informal, non-classroom setting (29) (see Figure 9). One student described two situations: one in a classroom and another one in an informal setting. Despite the similarity between the two categories, different trends can be observed in the two contexts regarding the reasons why students felt unwilling to speak in English. First, I will analyze those students' experiences who were least willing to communicate in English at university; then I discuss the encounters of those who felt most unwilling to speak in English in compulsory education; third, I will look at the experiences of those who were least willing to use the target language in an informal context abroad, and finally, I will analyze those students' writings who were least willing to speak in English in an informal setting but in their home country, in Hungary.

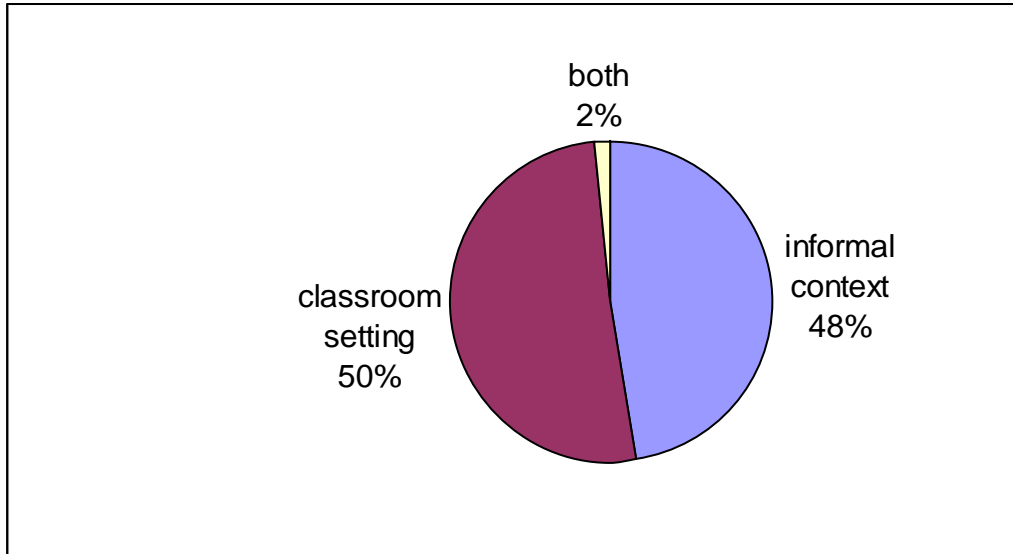


Figure 9 Contexts where English majors were least willing to speak in English

6.4.1 Classroom setting

Altogether, 30 students' experiences were related to a classroom setting in Hungary where the conversational partners were native speakers of Hungarian. The respondents' accounts can be further grouped into two categories:

- situations at the University of Pécs where they were currently attending courses on English Linguistics, Culture, and Literature; and
- events that happened in EFL classes at primary or secondary school.

There was one student who was least willing to speak in an English speaking country, where he studied at a secondary school. His reason for feeling unwilling to speak, especially in Math class, was that he thought the teacher had difficulties understanding his English and he was reluctant to talk in front of the whole class. However, he said that he had no problems talking outside the classroom.

6.4.1.1 Classroom setting at university

Almost twice as many students gave an account of a negative event that happened during university classes (18) than in their compulsory education (10). As their reasons slightly differ in the two types of language classes, it is possible that they were not biased to choose the most recent negative experience but the one they felt the most unpleasant.

Out of the 18 students who mentioned an unpleasant experience within the past year, 16 stated explicitly that the event happened during one of the courses offered at university. Sadly, all these students sound extremely negative and bitter about communicating in English in university seminars and it seems that for some of them their discouraging experience is a recurring issue. To quote some remarks:

My only horrible experience was almost a year ago, at one of the first courses, when we had to introduce ourselves. (#945)

I am very disappointed and sorry to say, but I felt least willing to speak English first in my life at university. (#901)

Ever since I attend this university, I often find myself less than willing to speak English. (#955)

To speak English in classroom has always been problematic, a real vicious circle for me. (#918)

OTHERS ARE BETTER

The students gave extensive explanations why they felt so negative about speaking English in courses. In their writings, a number of themes emerged. The most obvious reason why numerous students felt inhibited to speak was their perception that other students in the class were more proficient and linguistically more experienced than themselves. A few of these students supposed a direct relationship between time spent in an English speaking country and having better language skills. They felt the others were better at English as they had lived abroad where they had the chance to learn to speak English fluently. To give sample remarks:

I was surrounded by those who already were in England/US so they could speak in English better than me. I don't think I am bad but I get timid when because of others. (#943)

I was worried, and felt uncomfortable. "My English must be the worst; later I realized that others aren't experts either. (#916)

Many students have spent years in an English-speaking country, so they are better at speaking' (#918)

I do not want to speak, I will sit in silence. The reason was that I felt ashamed. Everybody could speak better than me! I will never forget that first day sitting terrified in the room. They told stories about their journey in England or in the USA, how long they lived there. Sometimes I could not even understand what they were talking about. (#932)

Usually I don't like to speak since I have become a major of English. I noticed that many of my peers are better than me. Some of them seem to be quite proficient, self-assured. This makes me feel inferior, so average. (#954)

Although the task was very simple, we had to introduce ourselves to the teacher, but I was absolutely terrified. The reason was that almost every student introduced themselves before me, and 5 students said that they had spent some years either in the USA or in Great Britain. Besides this fact, they said it as natural as a native speaker. (#961)

This often happens when I'm surrounded with speakers with a better command of English (like my teachers and some of my fellow students). (#955)

So, I'm afraid of saying anything during classroom activities, especially when I see that others have much better English. (#951)

I wonder what others are thinking about me, I think that others are much better. (#918)

These comments reminded me again of my junior years as an English major when I often felt a bit jealous of my peers who had an excellent British or American English accent as they had spent some time abroad. It seemed to me at that time that these students were the ones who were always willing to voice their opinions..

TOPIC

Students also referred to the topic of the conversation that made them uneasy about speaking in English. They felt that if they could not relate to the topic they were required to talk about in a class or they did not know much about the subject of the conversation

they felt less willing to talk in English. Those who also referred to a specific class mentioned classes on cultural studies and literature. As they put it:

I didn't know anything about topic. (#916)

Those bloody topics can freeze you in your unsuspecting moments. When you are asked in connection with a poem, or a literary work you have to think over every word. I do not like very much the 'author then thought of'... kind of speech. Once my literature teacher (the name is not important) asked us about a certain poem. In my life then I was least willing to speak English'. (#923)

It was a cultural class in the first year, and we had to speak about something we had had to read before the class, which we did not understand and did not care about. (#901)

This often happens to me when I have to speak about topics I'm not really interested in (like literary critique, history or theoretical linguistics). (#955)

Although I always have opinions about the topic we are discussing, I like to keep it in myself. Usually I was frustrated by the group or I wasn't really interested in the theme. (#950)

This situation occurred some weeks ago when in a psychology class held by an American I totally disagreed with the teacher, but since I was surrounded by classmates, furthermore I was not sure about the jargon of psychology I found it better to keep silent. (#904)

The topic (how terrorism could be surmounted) also was such a kind that I hadn't any special point of view of it. I knew the importance of the topic but in my opinion it was such a question which ordinary people can't solve, and often experts, whose duty is to deal with it, aren't able to find an adequate solution for terrorism. So I preferred not to speak at all. (#943)

AFRAID OF NOT BEING PERFECT

Some respondents exhibited a very high level of language anxiety related to using the L2. They seemed to be very cautious to appear and sound perfect in front of their classmates and their tutors in English classes. A number of students expressed their worries about making mistakes when speaking in English which fellow students might notice, moreover, they might laugh at them.

I was afraid of making mistakes. (#905)

I was afraid, that when I speak, they will laugh at me. (#932)

I feel I'm going to make mistakes and I know the others will notice them. This really should not bother me, but it does. (#955)

The only thing why I felt least willing to speak English is the fear of failure. My main problem is that usually I can't express my thoughts as a result of the gap in my vocabulary. (#951)

I am too nervous to speak well. This is the main reason for making mistakes all the time while I speak English and that is why I am not willing to speak in front of a bunch of people. (#952)

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Others explicitly referred to their anxiety about communicating in English. Most of them explained their apprehension when talking in front of a group of people or when giving a presentation to their classmates. Some of them gave other explanations of their debilitating anxiety (e.g., student felt tired, student was afraid of not being able to understand the lecture). To quote some comments:

“When I speak English in classroom (for example when I have a presentation), I always feel nervous, I become inattentive, speak worse, feel anxiety, rather do not speak, and so on. (#918)

I'm more willing to talk to the teachers in private than give a simple presentation before my mates. When this last comes, I become nervous. I can only think about how accurate I use the language, and naturally I'm not accurate. (#954)

The simplest task to do but I was shocked and didn't know what to say about myself. It sounds ridiculous! Maybe the new circumstances were the reason that I had never spoken in front of twenty strangers in English before. I was so ashamed. (#945)

I really like the language and I enjoy writing or speaking in English but not in a crowd. In those cases I get confused. (#952)

I had a serious problem and I was so tired and terribly worried about my difficulty. Because of this I couldn't put my words into the right order and I couldn't find the proper expressions. (#910)

Some teachers seemed not to respect us, I was afraid of how to understand the lessons, nobody really cared of us, and because there was no motivation at all, I wanted to give up English. However, I did not. (#960)

6.4.1.2 Classroom setting in compulsory education

As pointed out earlier, ten students gave an account of an unpleasant situation in an English class during their compulsory education. This happened to eight of them while studying in secondary school (from the age of 14 to 18), and one described a situation which occurred in an English lesson at primary school. One student did not mention which school she was attending when she felt least willing to speak in English; however, as she said it was a few years ago, it must have happened in secondary school. The factors contributing to students' inhibition about communicating in English were slightly different from those who felt unwilling to speak in university seminars.

TEACHER

Two students pointed out that it was the teacher of English whose personality or teaching skills made them unwilling to speak in English in classes.

My teacher was not the best and very often she did not know even the meaning of words so she usually spent the classes busy looking up words in the dictionary. It was awfully boring and I just wanted to run away. (#909)

...actually I hated the whole atmosphere. The teacher acted like she had been a good one and she pretended that she was strict but she did lack talent for teaching in fact. Once I was asked to speak about myself but in that atmosphere it was almost impossible. At that time I still needed encouragement to speak at all but that old lady could not observe the problem, so she did not help me out. (#934)

INADEQUATE LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY

Two of the students felt that their insufficient language skills prevented them from communicating in English:

In the 12th grade of the secondary school I had a class with a young teacher and only a small group of peers, and we usually had discussions about various current issues topics. I felt I was lack of vocabulary and the other students were better than me, and these feelings undermined my confidence at the time. (#953)

I could not find certain words for my report. Certainly, I did not have them in my mental dictionary. Even so, I was unwilling to speak English because there was a lack in my knowledge. (#933)

EXAM SITUATION

Three students described a situation related to taking an oral exam and identified this as the cause of their unwillingness to talk in English.

I was very tired, I could hardly remember words. (#959)

Me (and probably someone else) sitting opposite examiners, answering their questions, talking about pictures, acting various situations out is what I truly dislike. When I know I will be judged by my English knowledge and that something important stands or falls on how and what I speak, it makes me feel nervous and the situation uncomfortable. I concentrate too much on the words I say, and it may occur that I perform with less efficiency. (#939)

Two of the students gave other reasons why they felt unwilling to communicate in English in secondary school or primary school language classes. One of them wrote:

I was afraid of being on focus if I had mispronounced a word and I would have had to repeat it many times. (#956)

6.4.2. Non-classroom setting

Almost the same number of students (29) felt unwilling to speak in English in a non-classroom setting as in a classroom context; however, their reasons for feeling so differed. Some students encountered unpleasant experiences abroad, whereas others felt least willing to speak in English in Hungary outside the framework of institutional language education. Also, the interlocutors' native language seemed to matter to the participants.

6.4.2.1 Non-classroom setting abroad

About half of the students felt unwilling to talk in a country other than Hungary: seven in an English speaking country and six elsewhere abroad. In eight cases the conversational partners were native speakers of English and on four occasions they were foreigners who spoke EFL.

Three of the students gave an unexpected reason for feeling unwilling to speak in English abroad: two wanted to talk in the language of the host country (German, Italian) which they wanted to practise and one student gave up trying to use English while living in Paris for a year. This student felt that French people looked down on her because she wanted to make herself understood in English and she thought that if she spoke French, she could integrate more easily in the host society. She describes her experience as ‘after a few shy attempts to communicate in English (a language which according to them is inferior to French) I gave up trying’ (#949).

One said she was unwilling to use English because her parents pushed her into talking as they wanted her to ask for directions on a family holiday and she felt ashamed of being lost.

Four students out of the seven who felt unwilling to communicate in the United Kingdom mentioned situations when they received negative feedback. When a member of their host family or another native speaker directly or indirectly commented on their English language skills in a negative way they felt embarrassed and upset. However, from their writings it seems that besides the negative feedback they received there were other factors (e.g., student felt stressed, host lady did not pay much attention to student) that might have contributed to their feeling of unwillingness to communicate, though probably students were not aware of this.

One day the man [host father] told me that breakfast was ready and asked me where Móni was. I said to him that she was in the bathroom. But he replied that they didn't have a bath. At that very moment I realised that I forgot that they had a wall-shower, so the name of the place wasn't bathroom but shower-bath. I got so confused that I wished the earth would have swallowed me up. After that incident I felt least willing to speak in English to anybody in England. (#915)

I felt that I didn't know English words just Hungarian ones. At that time I was stressed and depressed far away from my home and I was afraid that my host family would mock me of my English. And sometimes they did. (#931)

It was her with whom I did not wanted to speak ,because firstly she didn't pay much attention, secondly she always corrected us out, mostly in pronunciation of course, but in an intolerant and rude way. (#921)

Another student highlighted similar reasons for being unwilling to speak in English. She described the circumstances of her arrival to the customs at the UK border.

I had to go to a lady; she was fat and most unfriendly. She asked me questions about where I was from, where I was going to, how long I was staying and where. I couldn't say a single word in English. She got more and more aggressive, and I didn't even want to say anything in English any more. I still wasn't able to say a simple sentence in English, let alone introduce myself or ask questions when I received an invitation from my English relatives... I felt like a lost foreigner, someone who is unable to speak the most important language in the world. I felt humiliated and angry and sad at the same time and I decided not to care about English any more. (#930)

The others described events when they felt uneasy about speaking not because of language and communication issues but because of situational factors: two mentioned being on a street late at night when a beggar approached them, whereas one was ill at hospital in England and she did not feel well enough to communicate even in her mother tongue. Only two students felt that they were unwilling to communicate in English abroad because they felt that they did not have good enough language skills.

6.4.2.2. Non-classroom context in Hungary with native speakers of English or speakers of other languages

Most of those students who felt unwilling to speak in English in a non-classroom situation in Hungary felt so when talking with a native speaker of English (6) or with a speaker of another language (5). Two of these respondents mentioned that in these situations when they were pushed into talking in English with a foreign family friend or with a parent's colleague they felt embarrassed in front of the parents who were listening to them. Another student felt annoyed that he had to translate for a Canadian person at a family gathering as he was the only person who could speak English.

Two felt uneasy to communicate in English because they thought they were not good enough or they were not as good as a native speaker ('What if she will laugh at my pronunciation?' #924). Three other students were unwilling to speak to a foreigner because there was another Hungarian present who had much better language skills and found it embarrassing to talk in front of another Hungarian who spoke better English. As one of them put it, 'I felt so stupid, so ashamed before this guy that he can speak much

better than me' (#941)

Two English majors found it frustrating that the foreigner they were talking to spoke 'just like a native speaker' (#914). Only one student mentioned the topic of the conversation as the reason for being unwilling to speak ('I didn't like the idea of talking to missionaries of God' #912).

6.4.2.3 Non-classroom context in Hungary with Hungarians

Only three students mentioned that they felt least willing to talk in English to another Hungarian. For two of them it just did not feel natural (e.g., '*I believe it seems posh*' #908; '*I just feel embarrassed to speak English with a Hungarian, maybe because it became some sort of a fashion to speak English even when it is not necessary*' #944), whereas one felt inhibited because she was practising with her parents who teased her about her language skills.

6.5 Results III: Mother tongue of the interlocutor

Another factor that seems to play an important role in participants' (un)willingness to speak in English was the mother tongue of the interlocutor. When students described a situation when they were most willing to speak in English, in 54 cases the interlocutors were non-Hungarians and on seven occasions they were Hungarians (See Figure 10). Three students did not specify who they felt most willing to talk to, as they gave only general description of a theoretical situation.

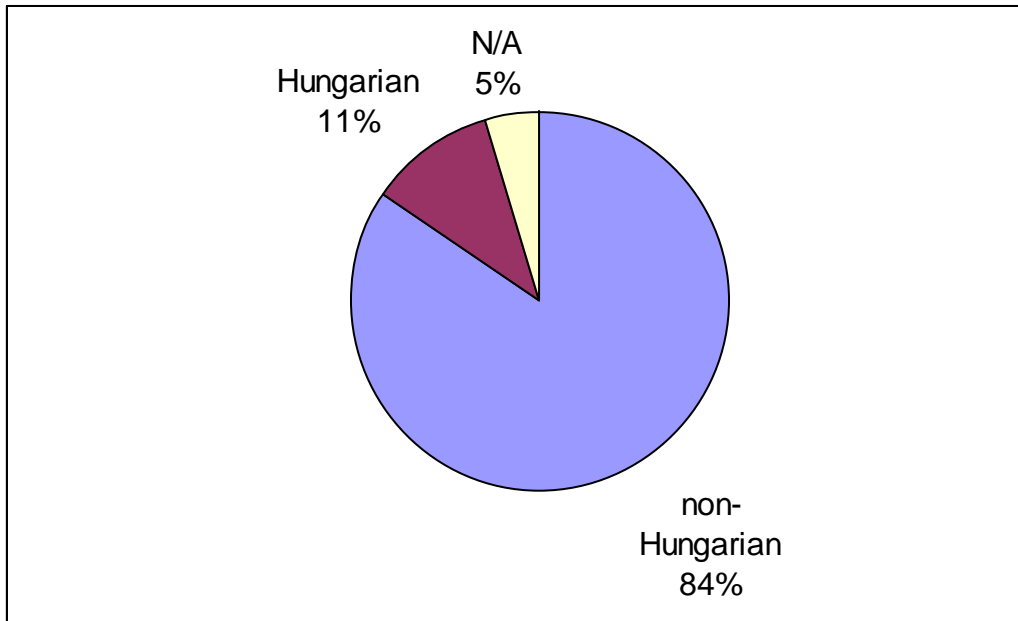


Figure 10 Mother tongue of interlocutor students felt most willing to speak to

As illustrated in the previous sections, the non-Hungarian speaking interlocutors' positive attitudes towards the student as well as the continuous positive feedback regarding their language skills contributed to students' willingness to speak in English to a great extent. This is something that Hungarian language teacher could also practice more often in a classroom context.

Out of the seven who felt most confident to speak in English in the presence of other Hungarians or to a Hungarian, two described an event when they decided to speak in English with a friend for fun or to practice English. In one case, it turned out well, as the student described it:

*...were laughing at each other if we made any mistake and we were doing well.
(#952)*

However, in the other case, despite the student's motivation to practice her English skills with a fellow English major, it did not work out, and this occasion discouraged her.

...we managed to carry on a few conversations, but only a few occasions later I had noticed she gave up on the idea because she started to speak Hungarian to me from that moment on. Since then I feel very uneasy and unwilling to speak English to her and people of my mother tongue, because I constantly feel I'm

viewed as a 'show off' instead of one that wants to practice her second language in an environment where it should be normal. (#958)

A number of students explicitly stated that they were so enthusiastic to speak in English because there were no other Hungarians present.

There were no Hungarians speaking English who could disturb me by hearing me speaking English. (#904)

'The students were very friendly and fortunately there were no Hungarians in it except me. (#929)

Personally, I am most willing to speak when I have to communicate with native speakers. (#944)

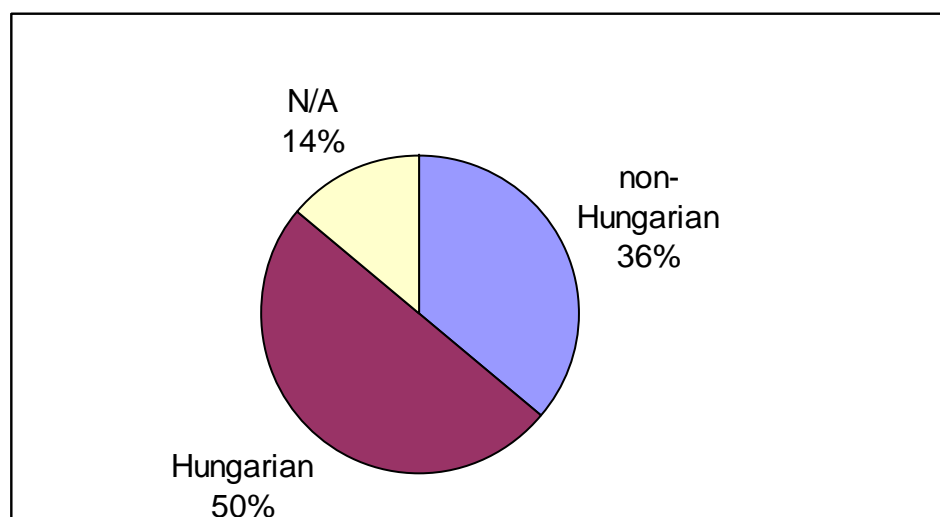


Figure 11 Mother tongue of interlocutor students were least willing to speak to in English

When students wrote about the circumstances in which they felt least willing to speak in English, half of them (32) felt so with a Hungarian or in the presence of other Hungarians (see Figure 11). Some of them directly referred to this factor:

To will or not to will? [I feel least willing to speak in English] when I am surrounded by both Hungarian and native speakers of English. (#904)

For a long time, I felt unwilling to speak English with Hungarian people. (#903)

I'm very unwilling to speak to Hungarian speakers of English, but fortunately I'm most willing with everybody else. (#958)

Others associated this fact indirectly by describing a classroom experience:

I always feel nervous, wonder what others are thinking about me, think that others are much better, become inattentive, speak worse, feel anxiety, rather do not speak, and so on' (#918)

I was surrounded by such students, who already were in England or America, so they could speak in English better than I' (#943)

Fewer students (23) mentioned situations when the interlocutor was a native speaker of English or a foreigner and they felt least eager to talk in English. All the events happened in out-of-classroom contexts. In most of the cases, students were in such unpleasant and inconvenient circumstances in which they would have felt uncomfortable to speak even in their mother tongue (e.g., refusing a beggar).

6.6 Results IV: Students' perceptions: Talking in order to learn and learning in order to talk

Some of the students referred to their beliefs about the role of speaking in the language learning process and about the relationship between speaking in English and level of proficiency. On the one hand, some thought that they were good at speaking in English because they had learnt how to speak English in school:

After the conversation my colleague asked me how come I spoke English so fluently. I responded that learning English for more than 10 years in an active way might result in achieving a high level of speaking a foreign language. (#934)

After I was taught how to speak properly in high school I have lot more times when I'm willing to talk. I felt extremely willing when Kim and Tony returned to Hungary one and a half year ago. (#912)

On the other hand, several respondents thought that speaking in English (with an English native speaker in almost all cases) allowed them to acquire good English; therefore, they were talking in order to learn the language.

Not only the topic was interesting, but it was also quite useful to gather new words, phrases and idioms. It is always a pleasure to learn new things about a different culture. (#944)

I really enjoyed talking to native [English speaker] Americans because this can help a lot to develop the pronunciation. (#959)

I enjoy that I can talk to a native speaker and learn typical English expressions and can get used to speaking in English'. (#957)

It [talking in English with Australian relatives] was useful not only because I have learnt a lot of everyday Australian language [...] (#925).

6.7 Discussion

6.7.1 Formal vs. informal setting

From the accounts it is clear that students' willingness to speak in English is affected by a number of contextual factors, most importantly, whether they are in a classroom or in an informal context, outside the classroom walls. The majority (85%) of English majors were most eager to talk in an informal setting where conversation had a natural flow, when it was meaningful and had a clear purpose. Also, in most of these cases, English was the only language both students and the interlocutors shared; therefore, its use was the only means of communication. This is in line with other studies (e.g., Kormos & Csizér, 2005, p. 37; MacDonald et al., 2003) where it was found that language learners felt more motivated when they had the opportunity to converse with other L2 speakers in everyday situations. In addition, in an informal context students did not feel as apprehensive about making mistakes as in the classroom setting, whereas the formal context seemed to put more pressure on the learners: half of the respondents felt least willing to talk in English in classes, especially in university seminars. Participants' extremely negative feelings towards speaking in English seminars were also a recurring theme in Tóth's study of English majors (2007). She concluded that the reason for this was learners' transition from secondary school to university seminars, the more intensive and challenging learning situation they had to deal with, and the higher academic expectations they had to face.

There are several possible explanations for students' high willingness to communicate in an out-of-classroom setting and their reluctance to speak in English in a formal context. First, conversations in a classroom setting usually lack a natural flow, as students *must* talk and participate in the activities in order to get a good grade; therefore,

they assume that they *must* talk correctly and they feel assessed all the time.

Second, a high number of participants were extremely worried about other students' better language skills and their peer's perception of their 'bad' English that is full of mistakes. Constant competitiveness, made participants terrified that their mates would laugh at them. They experienced a lot of peer pressure in classroom settings where the atmosphere was more competitive than supportive. In addition, among the participants of the present study, there were a few cases when learners were more willing to speak in English because the other(s) had weaker language skills than theirs. Interestingly, only students referring to university classroom experiences mentioned this. Competing with peers in terms of linguistic skills, in other words 'the desire to excel in comparison to others' (Bailey, 1983, p.96) is not an unknown phenomenon in second language research and it has been found to be related to language anxiety (e.g., Bailey, 1983; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Tóth, 2007).

Another personality trait, perfectionism, the intention to achieve perfect native like L2 proficiency, has also been found to be related to language anxiety (e.g., Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Similarly, Tóth (2007) found that English majors most often felt anxious as they had fears of making mistakes: 46 percent of the students were worried about this in English classes. Likewise, their second major concern was their fear of being laughed at and their 'Hunglish' accent (p. 91) by their peers. It seems that these are general characteristics of FL language majors in Hungary but may not necessarily describe other FL learners.

Participants believed that their peers had better language skills and were more fluent because they had lived abroad. This could be just a game of their imagination but they did not exaggerate. An in-depth interview study (Nagy, 2008 in press) with ten English majors who used to work as au pairs in the UK confirmed that participants were not just being modest. The ex-au pairs strongly believed that they had improved their language skills to a great extent, especially their oral skills while living in the UK. Furthermore, au pairs-turned-English majors assumed that as a result of spending an extensive period in the country they had gained an advantage in contrast with those who had never lived in an L2 environment, and they also considered themselves linguistically superior and more mature than other students. The same theme emerged in Tóth's study

(2007) who found that English majors' biggest concern was that they had not lived abroad in an English-speaking country, which, they felt put them at a disadvantage compared to those peers who had. Her statistical analysis showed that residence abroad experience affected significantly students' anxiety scores. Tóth argues that feeling not good enough made participants anxious and frustrated and this suggested a common trait of competitiveness in these learners. It seems that English majors compare themselves to others who may speak English better and this may lead to anxiety if they are less competent than their classmates.

The common belief that residing in the host country would contribute to increased proficiency is popular among both language learners and teachers (e.g., Freed, 1995). It is likely that students who have studied or lived abroad might use English with more ease and with more native-like pronunciation (e.g., Allen & Herron, 2003; Isabelli-Garcia, 2003), which are the two most obvious features of spoken language. Yet, immersion in the host environment does not necessarily result in gains in all linguistic aspects (e.g., Collentine, 2004; Diaz-Campos, 2004). As pointed out in Chapter 2, it is more likely that those who have lived in the target language environment have acquired a deeper understanding of the pragmatic and socio-cultural norms of the L2 and therefore have become less anxious and more confident in using the target language.

Third, a great number of participants were extremely worried about talking in English in front of a group of people, especially in front of their fellow Hungarian classmates at the university. In general, speaking in front of a group, for example, when giving a presentation, can be very nerve-wrecking even if it is carried out in one's mother tongue. Participating in an English seminar means that students usually have to perform in front of their classmates (e.g., present a topic, talk to the teacher while others are listening eagerly) some of whom they hardly know. Group or pair work does not appear to be very common in classes; however, perhaps their apprehension would be less extreme if they were involved in more group activities where they could get to know each other better. Yet, my recollections from the times when I was an English major are that we were not too keen on pair work, as it did not provide us opportunities for learning new things that would prepare us for the exam or help us succeed in our course paper. We had all our hopes in the tutor, as we knew that he/she would be most likely to want to hear

his/her main ideas in the exam or course paper. We never really considered that we could learn anything useful from one another.

Interestingly, participants did not mind at all talking in front of a group of non-Hungarian people. Moreover, some of them claimed to be most willing to talk in situations when they were surrounded by other international students. They argued that they wanted to talk because they knew that nobody in the group had perfect language skills, therefore there was no reason to worry about making mistakes. As English was the only language everyone shared students felt it natural to talk in English, as it was more important to make themselves understood than to speak impeccable English. It seems that competitiveness and perfectionism were not issues in these circumstances.

Those who were least willing to speak in an everyday situation gave various explanations. Some had become discouraged to speak because they received negative feedback from native English interlocutors, or because they felt they were not as good as their non-Hungarian conversational partners or other Hungarians present in the group. Some, however, mentioned external factors that were not directly related to L2 communicational issues. They described situations in which they would not have been eager to speak even in their mother tongue (e.g., illness, being on the street late at night). A few students gave an unexpected explanation: they wanted to speak in another foreign language which they had been learning for a while and therefore they wanted to practise that language instead of speaking English.

Participants were most willing to speak in English when the conversation was spontaneous and had a specific goal, which in most of the cases happened outside the classroom walls. For those lucky ones, who had the chance to travel abroad, this meant getting directions, finding accommodation, making friends, or simply surviving in a foreign culture. Other learners, who mentioned situations that took place in Hungary, referred to similar situations such as helping foreigners to find their ways in the country, to understand the customs and culture, or just having a chat about a certain topic with someone they met by accident on the train or through a friend or relative. When helping foreigners or giving directions, students felt a sense of social responsibility and this made them willing to use the language and to speak up. Also, as they were the helpers, the relationship between conversational partners was unbalanced: in favour of students.

These findings confirm what MacDonald and her colleagues (2003) and what Kang (2005) have previously reported.

6.7.2 Linguistic characteristics of the interlocutor

The interlocutor's mother tongue seemed to play a role in students' willingness to communicate, although not everybody referred to this fact directly. About 85 percent of the students felt most eager to speak in English with a native speaker of English or with a foreigner, whereas only 11 percent described a situation in which the interlocutor was Hungarian or when there were Hungarians in the group. Consistently, half of the students felt least happy to speak in English to another Hungarian or among a group of Hungarians, especially in a classroom context. This suggests that participants felt more uncomfortable when there was another language, their mother tongue, they could use more proficiently and with the least effort and which they all understood perfectly well. This makes sense, as it seems unnatural and even pointless to use a language other than one's mother tongue among speakers of the same language. Yet, in an out-of-classroom context, two Hungarian students wanted to chat in English, as they wanted to practise their language skills with their mates.

There is also anecdotal evidence that some Hungarian learners found conversing in English with their peers to be the most formative in their language skills development. However, my data suggests that these students might belong to a group of an exceptionally few, as a number of participants explicitly stated that they felt embarrassed to talk to each other in English outside classes. In fact, other sources have reported identical findings: for instance, Kang (2005) found that the least preferred conversational partners for the four Korean participants were fellow Koreans, as one of them put it 'I feel like I'm wearing a mask' (p. 284). Korean participants felt less secure about talking in front of other Koreans than conversing with international students, as they felt ashamed of their non-fluent English speaking skills in front of their fellow nationals. Similarly to the Hungarian participants, the Korean students got most excited when talking to native speakers of English as they perceived them as a source of help to improve their conversational skills. MacDonald and her colleagues (2003) also found that

a number of students felt least motivated to speak to someone with whom they shared the same mother tongue. Why certain students feel it easier to talk in English with or among fellow nationals while others feel embarrassed to speak and feel aloof remains an open question. It might be that learners who are keen to chat with their friends in the L2 have less inhibition or more advanced L2 proficiency, yet the present study cannot provide a straightforward answer. This exciting problem area calls for further investigation of preference of L2 use with L2 native or non-native speakers in different situations.

A number of English majors emphasised how useful it was to talk to a native speaker of English, as they were able to learn colloquial vocabulary from them or were able to perfect their pronunciation, similarly to Kang's participants. They perceived talking to a native speaker as an opportunity for practice and learning and they pinpointed areas where they provided them with valuable information not available in the classroom context. Only very few were least willing to talk to an English native speaker but those who said so had similar reasons to others: they were worried what the interlocutor would think of their 'bad' language skills. It is likely that non-native English speakers are more tolerant to language mistakes and hesitations than native speakers. In fact, a recent article in the *Financial Times* states that business men often complain that meetings and discussions do not run as smoothly in the presence of English native speakers as it would without them (Skapinker, 2007). The reason for this, on the one hand, is that native English speakers do not speak the Global English (e.g., they use too complex language structure and sophisticated vocabulary) and on the other hand, non-native speakers often feel inhibited to speak with native English speakers.

In life, it is unlikely that an intelligent native speaker of English would laugh at non-native speakers' language skills or consider them 'stupid'. However, it is possible that in certain circumstances, especially in an L2 environment, some native speakers of an L2 for one reason or another might get annoyed and as a result have hostile attitudes towards foreigners. In other cases, there might be a communicational breakdown due to learners' inadequate language skills. This could result in unpleasant situations or intercultural misunderstanding where students would feel embarrassed or hurt by their comments.

From the students' writings it is not clear whether they prefer talking to someone

who has better language skills than their own or to someone whose English is inferior to theirs; however, it is evident that they constantly compare themselves to their peers and keep reflecting on how they are perceived by them. Some of them said that they were most willing to talk to someone who had worse language skills because this made them feel as if they were better speakers, i.e. they were more confident. A few participants mentioned that they were not too keen to talk to less proficient partners, as this slowed the flow of the conversation and made the participant '*perform poorly*' (#944).

The above findings suggest that it is extremely important to stream students with similar language skills in language classes to ensure strong group dynamics. In addition, some respondents stated that they felt most willing to speak in English because they were the best in the group or because they were considered to be the best by the teacher and their classmates. These results support the findings of Study 2, where it was found that learners' willingness to communicate was influenced solely by their perception of their own language skills. Further more, this explains partly why some English majors hinted that they were least eager to speak when there was someone present (especially another Hungarian) who was more proficient. This phenomenon of disinterest does not come as a surprise. In foreign language education in Hungary (and most likely in other subject areas in compulsory education) it is continuously stressed how important it is to make no mistakes and to be perfect in every sense. It is a widely accepted myth that the best and most talented students are the ones who never make mistakes and thus, get the highest grades. Yet, language learning is a long trial and error process: in life, some of the most successful people are the ones who were not afraid to make mistakes and to learn from them. Most participants in the study believe that it is unacceptable to make mistakes in language classes. Further more, most students are terrified to say something wrong or are embarrassed when they notice a slip of the tongue. There seems to be a tendency for competitiveness and perfectionism among English majors, as was found by Tóth (2007) who surveyed university students majoring in English in Hungary.

6.7.3 Personal characteristics of the interlocutor

Students referred to certain personal qualities of the interlocutor (who was a non-Hungarian speaker in the majority of the cases) as a factor that influenced their intentions about speaking in English. The person they felt most relaxed to talk with was nice, kind, supportive, smiling at them and showed positive attitudes towards them and was interested in what they said. This in turn made them feel more secure and gave them the impression that they were able to speak more ‘fluently’ in English. Kang (2005) reported almost identical findings: Korean students felt more secure when their tutor provided extensive social support. In both studies, students’ security was mainly determined by the interlocutor. At the time, students most likely have focused on linguistic signs such as intonation and non-linguistic signs such as their body language, emotions, interest, among other signs reflecting acceptance.

Also, when the interlocutor was patient and calm towards the students and was attentive to what they were saying, they felt more confident and less anxious. Students pointed out several times that it was a positive thing that the person they were talking to showed interest in the message they were trying to communicate. Just like the Korean students, Hungarian participants became excited and more enthusiastic to speak when the interlocutor asked questions and when they believed that the interlocutor was interested in what they were talking about. These characteristics of the interlocutor are also relevant to L1 communication; however, the ones discussed in the following section are applicable only to second/foreign language communication.

When the interlocutors were helpful and encouraged them to speak in the L2, English majors felt more confident and motivated. They were happy when native speakers corrected their English but only when they did so politely and not in a hurtful way. When participants sensed that the interlocutors were trying to point out a linguistic problem it was fine to accept their help as they were all eager to learn the language. However, when they felt that the person was rather annoyed by their mistake and wanted to correct them, participants took it as negative rather than constructive criticism. We do not have the full picture of how these situations happened exactly, as only one side of the story is documented, but it is possible that some of these personal conflicts might have

been generated by misunderstandings of the L2 pragmatic and cultural norms.

Participants became extremely confident to speak in English when they received positive feedback concerning their language skills, especially when this was done by a native speaker of English or a foreigner. When they were told how brilliant their English was, or when someone commented that they were almost as good as a native speaker they believed it and such comments boosted their self-confidence. On the other hand, the lack of positive feedback and encouragement concerning students' language skills, the interlocutor's hostile attitude, or disinterest in what students were saying discouraged them from using English. This is how students felt; however, it is also important to explore the other side of the story. Although interlocutors' negative attitude might be unintentional, Tóth's study (2007) suggests a few possibilities. In a conversational task, native speaker interlocutors and independent assessors pointed out that highly anxious English majors seemed to encounter problems understanding native English speech as they gave inappropriate responses. Also, they seemed to give brief and less detailed answers, and responded more slowly. In all cases, highly anxious students were perceived by the interlocutor as having weaker language skills based on several criteria. The most prevalent aspect of highly anxious students' speech that assessors commented on was the lack of fluency, and interlocutors had the impression that students struggled with their vocabulary and grammar to pass on their message. All these factors might influence some English speaking individuals to lose interest and become impatient with a language learner, however, not adequate pragmatic knowledge may have also contributed to learners appearing as inappropriate.

English majors seemed to be most willing to speak to a non-Hungarian with whom they had something in common and they were of the same age group. Sharing interests and having a topic that they could both talk about spontaneously were also factors that made students most eager to speak in English.

Few mentioned that they were most willing to speak in English because they were so good at English; also, few participants pointed out that they were least willing to speak because they did not speak English well enough. Moreover, when they were talking to or among non-Hungarians in an informal setting they emphasised that it did not matter if their English was imperfect because what mattered was to communicate their message

successfully. This suggests that there might be stronger and more direct factors that influence one's willingness to communicate in English than their language proficiency, for instance, the topic of conversation or language anxiety.

6.7.4 Topic

Learners' willingness or reluctance to communicate seemed to depend somewhat on the topic of the conversation. Some of the students who felt most eager to speak in English in Hungary described a situation when they were chatting with a friend or a friend's friend about a topic they were both interested in (e.g., hockey). This suggests that background knowledge about the topic affects learners' security: the more familiar the topic was the more eager the students were to talk about it not only in classroom context but also in informal situations too. However, familiarity with topic is a two-edged sword: it may give the feeling of safety, but intrinsic motivation may decrease over time, as talking about the same thing several times may make the conversation boring. It is extremely important to bear this in mind in order to maintain learners' motivation from class to class.

For others the topic of the conversation did not seem to be too relevant, as the situations were related to coping in everyday life abroad or helping foreigners to get by in Hungary (e.g., finding their way around, asking for information).

Many students mentioned the topic of the conversation as a reason why they felt least willing to speak in English, especially in a formal setting, at the university. In seminars, English majors did not feel confident to talk because they

- did not know anything about the issue;
- did not have an opinion on the issue;
- were not interested or could not personally relate to the topic; or
- did not understand the topic.

As a solution to this problem, a wider choice of optional courses should be offered to students and tutors should involve them in the compilation of the course outline.

6.7.5 Talking in order to learn or learning in order to talk?

Wrong question. Students are more likely to talk in order to learn AND learn in order to talk. A few participants touched upon the relationship between L2 proficiency and willingness to communicate in the L2 and their perceptions on this issue provide qualitative information about the relationship between L2 production and L2 development. Some students' views support Krashen's opinion, namely that 'speaking is the result of acquisition, not its cause' (1985), as they felt that being able to speak (or not to speak) in English was the result of active learning (or not learning). Others felt that conversing allowed them to develop their pronunciation, their vocabulary and to become more fluent in the target language. This echoes Swain's output hypothesis (1985), as students were engaged in a conversation with a native speaker who not only provided them with comprehensible and authentic input, but also with an opportunity for L2 production. It is clear that these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Students practise English in the classroom and in informal contexts, which contributes to automaticity in L2 use (Ellis, 2003 p. 112). In sum, L2 production and L2 proficiency are in interaction and they affect one another over time.

6.7.6 Findings in relation to L2 WTC questionnaire

The qualitative data allowed us to reflect on the validity of the research instrument, used in Studies 1 and 2 in a foreign language learning setting. McCroskey's original scale was designed to measure willingness to communicate in one's mother tongue, whereas our adapted version was designed to measure WTC in English as a foreign language. Both measures contained twelve possible combinations of four communication contexts (in small groups, in large meetings, in public, to one person only) and three common types of receivers (stranger, acquaintance, and friend). These hypothetical situations were assumed to be broadly representative. When students described the situations in which they were most and least willing to speak in English, most of the references they made were in relation to the personal characteristics of the interlocutor including his/her mother tongue and the level of their L2 proficiency, the topic of the conversation, and to the

learning context (formal or informal). To participants in these three studies, these issues seem to be even more relevant than communicational context or type of receiver as defined by the original scale. From the narratives it is clear that both the original and the adapted instruments fail to address important issues that might be relevant not only to Hungarian English majors but also to other foreign language learners.

The sequential explanatory strategy applied in the dissertation allows us to explain and interpret the findings of the first two studies through the insights gained in the third study (Creswell, 2003). In fact, Study 3 suggests areas for further explorations and may lead to the development of a new instrument.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter reported the findings of a qualitative inquiry into the role of willingness to communicate in English in students' L2 behaviour. Students' narratives provided empirical evidence that willingness to communicate in an L2 and actual L2 use are dependent on a number of situational factors which are in constant interaction with each other. The primary goal of the study was to shed light on the main situational variables that contribute to English majors' willingness to communicate in English and to their language use. On the micro level, the narratives not only helped us to understand in *what* real life situations Hungarian English majors are most or least willing to engage in a conversation in English but also shed light on *why* they are willing or reluctant to do so. Participants were most willing to speak in English, abroad or in Hungary under the following circumstances:

- in authentic interpersonal situations when learners could use the language for meaningful communication to fill in an information gap (e.g., usually in out of classroom situations such as giving directions to tourists);
- when the interlocutor or the teacher had positive attitudes towards the learner, showed interest in what he/she was saying, and encouraged him/her by providing positive feedback (or constructive feedback in a positive way), which in turn boosted the learner's self-confidence;

- when learners could engage in discussions on topics they were interested in, had some background knowledge about, that was relevant to them, and that they understood well enough;
- when the interlocutors were native English speakers or non-Hungarian speakers of English as L2.

On the other hand, students were least motivated to speak in English under the following conditions:

- in classrooms, especially in university seminars, where students were aware of the relative difference between their and the others' levels of proficiency. Peers were not seen as a source of support but as threat;
- when the interlocutor or teacher stayed indifferent to what the learner had to say, gave negative feedback to the learner, and showed negative attitudes towards them;
- when the topic was irrelevant, required too advanced L2 skills, or it was unknown or boring;
- where the interlocutors were fellow Hungarians;
- in unpleasant situations such as at a hospital or responding to a beggar;
- when they wanted to practise another foreign language they were learning.

Based on these findings, four main situational variables were identified that would affect learners' willingness to speak in the target language. English majors' predisposition towards a communicative situation largely depends on:

- (1) the context of the conversation (classroom vs. informal);
- (2) the topic of the conversation (e.g., how interesting it is, how much prior knowledge students have on the issue, how relevant it is to the student);
- (3) personal characteristics of the interlocutor; and
- (4) the mother tongue (Hungarian, English native speaker, or foreign but a speaker of English as L2) and level of proficiency of interlocutor in relation to their own L2 skills (higher, lower or same level as student).

The results of the present study are in line with previous findings (Kang, 2005; MacDonald et al., 2003) which allow me to generalise my findings to a wider framework. I found that the situational factors observed in the study exerted their influence on the three psychological antecedents of state willingness to communicate: security, excitement, and responsibility. These results confirm Kang's proposed multilayered construct of willingness to communicate. Although students' willingness to communicate in English will fluctuate from situation to situation, according to the data, learners seem to behave in a consistent way under certain circumstances (e.g., they always tend to be less willing to speak with a Hungarian and they always tend to be more willing to speak with a native speaker of English or a foreigner using English as a lingua franca) and develop certain patterns of communication which is likely to be consistent over time. These findings support MacIntyre and his colleagues' views (1998, p. 549) that 'people do possess considerable cross-situational consistency in their communicative behaviour'. This does not, however, mean that one's communicative behaviour will not change over time or that it cannot be altered.

The second aim of the study was to relate the findings to the 12-item WTC scale. Although this instrument was intended to measure learners' general willingness to enter into conversation in English, the present study focused on the situational variables affecting learners' disposition towards communicating in English. Nevertheless, we expected at least a certain overlap between the two studies. From the results, it is clear that the WTC scale fails to tackle significant issues concerning these foreign language learners. In fact, the WTC scale does not tap into any of the variables identified above. From the WTC scale, only a few items may be related to classroom situations (e.g., giving a presentation) and not many of these learners had the opportunity to experience authentic use of English in real-life situations. In the future, to measure foreign language learners' L2 willingness to communicate it is desirable to develop a new scale which addresses the aforementioned aspects.

One would assume that a peer in university seminar would fall into the category of "friend" and not "stranger". The narratives of these learners indicate that this is not always the case at the University of Pécs. Classroom environment does not provide a relaxed environment for successful learning and development. The lack of interesting

topics in classes, the often impersonal relationships between classmates and the large difference between learners' linguistic and non-linguistic experiences all contribute to this. Instead of classmates being perceived as non-threatening and encouraging conversational partners, they seem to prevent each other from practising the language in class by generating unintentional stress among anxious students. This is the result of their competitiveness among peers and their constant need to demonstrate perfect L2 skills. Therefore, learning from peers is a limited option for many of the participants in Study 3 which most probably indicates the lack of cooperative learning in university classes and strong competition among students. In other words, the social reality of classrooms is not what humanistic approaches to English teaching methodology would make us believe.

6.9 Pedagogical implications

Students' writings allowed me to explore their (un)willingness to speak in English more in depth and enabled me to identify factors that influence participants' readiness to enter a discourse in the target language. The qualitative analysis provided the English Departments at UP with invaluable data where staff could use the results to tailor the courses according to students' needs and for their better progress. Ellis (2003) gives a complete overview of features of foreign language learning tasks that promote L2 production and interaction. This may be helpful in designing tasks not only in Language Practice seminars but also in advanced literature, culture and linguistics classes. What follows is a series of recommendations based on the findings:

- (1) Students' extreme apprehension about speaking in English in classrooms should be reduced. It should be reinforced in students that making mistakes is fine and that there is no need to be afraid of experimenting with the target language. This should be stressed not only in Language Practice seminars but also in culture, literature and linguistics classes especially in students' first semester at university. One tutor has indicated to me that he has been covering this theme in his Language Practice course.
- (2) Students' self-confidence and perceived communication competence should be boosted by assigning them meaningful tasks with achievable goals.

- (3) A student-friendly and stress-free environment should be created in classes so as students do not worry about speaking in a peer group. In seminars, students should be involved in small group discussions where they can freely contribute their ideas to the topic without being apprehensive about performing in front of a large number of people. Teacher-student interactions should be replaced by other activities where the teacher's role is a mediator or coordinator.
- (4) In seminars, conversations should have a meaningful purpose and the topics for discussions should be chosen by consulting the students wherever it is possible.
- (5) Students' public speaking and presentation skills should be enhanced explicitly and not necessarily in English conversational exercises. They should be trained how to give a successful presentation and should be made aware of the qualities and skills that are needed to become a successful and anxiety-free speaker.
- (6) Students' awareness should be raised about social and psychological factors that allow one to be willing or unwilling to speak in English. This in turn would enable them to face reality and perhaps would prompt them to become a more eager speaker of the target language.
- (7) Students should get to know each other better and interaction among them should be enhanced, for instance by giving them occasional projects through which their team spirit would be strengthened. Such project could include for instance researching a certain topic that would involve conducting interviews with other students and out-of-classroom activities which would provide opportunities for students for socialising. For example, students could write blogs, where they would speak about themselves and comment about others (only positive things are allowed to be said!). Another option would be to resort to fun tasks and games that are specifically designed for corporate team-building events and that aimed designed to help groups develop effective communication and problem-solving skills and for which there is a wide range of materials available to download for free on the Internet (e.g., www.businessballs.com, www.wilderdom.com). Perhaps if they know one another better they will not feel so inhibited about speaking in English in front of one another.

(8) Students' answers showed that, when they had the chance, many used English in Hungary in everyday situations (e.g., on the street, in camps) and while abroad, in an English speaking country. Students should be encouraged to make friends with international students or with foreigners in Pécs which would be an excellent opportunity for them to practice their English in a real-life situation. At UP alone, about a thousand international students take courses at different faculties every year. Hungarians could be given tasks which would involve getting in touch with them. In this way, English majors would not feel so awkward about approaching foreign students they do not know, as they would have a purpose of getting in touch with them. In Archangeli's (1999) study, international students in Austria admitted that such interview assignments were extremely useful to overcome their initial inhibitions about communicating in German, as they felt a sense of accomplishment in communicating with a native speaker without the help of a teacher. They also felt that after carrying out the task they were more willing to initiate conversations and did so during the rest of their stays. They advised other students not to be afraid of mistakes and to be willing to initiate conversations. As it takes two to tango, foreign students should also be encouraged to a greater extent to get involved with Hungarian students and develop a positive attitude towards them. However, this is the responsibility of the International Studies Centre at UP.

More idealistic goals would be

(9) To employ English native speaker teachers or other foreign teaching assistants at the English departments. This would allow students to gain first-hand experience with the English language and culture as half of these respondents have never been to an English speaking country or abroad. Background data on all participants in the study indicate that around half of the 227 students have been to English speaking countries and 36 (15%) have spent an extended period there. Participants in Tóth's study (2007) had similar demographic data: only a small minority (8.5 %) had spent considerable time an English-speaking country (a year or more) and 19.7 percent had stayed for a couple of weeks or months but most of them (71.8 %) had never been to the target language environment.

(10) Students should be encouraged and offered opportunities to spend some time abroad in an English speaking country which could help boost their self-confidence as it would provide them with opportunities for practising their English skills in an authentic setting. An in-depth interview study with ten English majors (Nagy, 2008 in press) revealed that despite hardships, working as an au pair had extremely positive effects on students' attitudes towards native speakers of English, towards other speakers, and towards the target culture.

Numerous other studies have also confirmed the positive effects of intercultural contact on self-confidence and on L2 motivation (e.g., Dörnyei et al., 2006; Labrie & Clément, 1986, quoted in Dörnyei, et al., 2006, p. 128). Nevertheless, from Dörnyei et al.'s study it seems that with the same amount of contact those students had more positive attitudes towards L2 speakers who came from towns that were less frequently visited by foreigners, i.e. where the L2 group was less salient as opposed to those who lived in Budapest. Since Pécs is a smaller city than the capital, this is not likely to be the case.

Moreover, a number of English majors claimed that they made great friends with non-Hungarians they got to know by pure coincidence. Yet, intercultural contacts in the host environment may some of the time result in learners' negative attitudes towards speakers of the target language (e.g., Masgoret et al., 2000; Willis et al., 1977; Coleman, 1998). Students should also be encouraged to travel abroad in order to broaden their horizons and to learn about cultural differences while earning some pocket money. The study on au pairs (Nagy, 2008 in press) has documented that extensive stay abroad also meant "growing up", becoming independent and becoming more open to other cultures. Spending time in the host environment boosted not only English majors' linguistic self-confidence but also their positive self-image in more general terms. All ten students believed that they had improved their language skills to a great extent, especially their oral communication skills (including fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and pragmatic and strategic competence) while living in the UK. Nevertheless, many of them encountered difficulties when trying to make friends with native speakers of English. Today, staying for a while in an English speaking country is not an unrealistic goal, as it

is no longer so difficult to find a summer job, for instance, in England. There are specialized agencies (e.g., CCUSA) that help university students of any major to find a summer job in the USA and to arrange all their paperwork. All students need to do is to apply and invest a relatively small amount of money which they can pay back from their earnings on their return. The ERASMUS programme also offers opportunities for undergraduate students to live and study abroad; however, financial support for the scholarship is scarce. Although there is an opportunity for students to take up part-time work, some of them may find it difficult to juggle with work, study, and social life at the same time.

Finally, the study has provided insights into how motivated students are in their first years of study as English majors and how apprehensive they have become during a short course of time. More needs analysis would be needed to explore how the curriculum and the methodology it is implemented with should be adjusted to students' needs and wants.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and future directions

Why do some users of a second or foreign language seek out more opportunities in the real world to initiate conversations with other speakers of that language? Why are some learners more eager to speak up in a new language while others avoid opportunities in real life contexts and rather retrieve to the back row of the classroom in order to avoid performing in class? Results of the three studies suggest that the effects of certain psychological factors play a more influential role in one's predisposition towards willingness to speak in an L2 than their actual linguistic competence in that language; in fact, these variables will in turn determine learners' L2 behaviour.

The three empirical studies outlined in the dissertation were concerned with advanced EFL learners' willingness to communicate in the target language. The primary aim was to investigate the underlying affective and communicational factors that contribute to English majors' predisposition towards using the target language and towards their actual L2 behaviour. The main findings show that English majors' communicational profile can be described as average and that communication anxiety is a major issue for them. This is not very encouraging, as these students' main strength is expected to be their communicative and intercultural competences when they enter full-time employment. The responsibility to train them to become confident language specialists with excellent linguistic, intercultural, and interpersonal skills lies mainly within the English Departments at UP. Findings outlined in the present dissertation are relevant to decision makers and curriculum planners not only at UP but at other and higher-educational institutions. The three studies address problem areas and suggest solutions for the improvement of the undergraduate English language programme that would prepare students better for the highly competitive employment market by enabling them to acquire transferable communication and interpersonal skills.

My secondary aim was to contribute to the understanding and relevance of the new construct of willingness to communicate that has emerged from recent research into language learning motivation - so far not examined in the Hungarian context. To address these points,

data collected in a departmental research project were analyzed. Two quantitative investigations were conducted involving 227 English majors from UP and a qualitative study was carried out concerning 64 undergraduates.

Some of the findings of the project are already being implemented now in the new three-year bachelor degree programme in the Bologna process. The curriculum includes new courses on Intercultural Communication Skills and Oral Presentation Skills. One of the courses also addresses issues in group dynamics in seminars; however, as students' accounts document, changing tutors' and students' belief systems may prove to be time consuming – if not impossible.

7.1 Summary of findings

7.1.1 The first study: A correlational study of English majors' willingness to communicate

The first, quantitative study revealed that Hungarian English majors are characterized by an average level of willingness to communicate, perceived communicational competence, and communicational apprehension. Results also showed that besides learners' self-confidence, communicational anxiety did not explain any additional variance in their willingness to communicate. The study confirmed that willingness to communicate in an L2 has a motivational component, as suggested by MacIntyre et al. (1998): the integrative/affective component was significantly related to learners' willingness to communicate and two components (integrative/affective and instrumentality) had a similar relationship with L2 behaviour. Yet, it seems that the more pragmatic aspects of language learning motivation (instrumental motivation, attitude towards the English language, vitality of the English language) do not influence these learners' predisposition towards communicating in English. This finding makes sense, as only the affective/integrative component was concerned with speakers of English which indicates how communicational variables are intertwined with interpersonal and intercultural factors. Although in MacIntyre et al.'s pyramid model a number of motivational components were conceptualized as factors underlying (situational) willingness to communicate, in Study 1, only the integrative/affective component was found to be related to one's intention to communicate.

Further on, evidence was found for the relationship between language proficiency and willingness to communicate among the sample of Study 1. Learners' level of English proficiency was weakly correlated with learners' predisposition towards communicating in English and with actual L2 behaviour. However, this relationship was not confirmed among the larger sample of Study 2.

7.1.2 The second study: A structural model of English majors' willingness to communicate in English

In the second study, a unique model of L2 communication was proposed and tested based on the results of Study 1 and past research by structural equation analysis. The final model confirmed what was previously found in Study 1, namely that among English majors, only learners' self-perceived skills influenced their willingness to communicate, whereas language anxiety was not directly related to the construct. Nevertheless, learners' communicational anxiety was significantly related to their perceived competence.

Contrary to expectations, the construct willingness to communicate was not directly related to actual L2 behaviour. The structural model showed that simply having a strong predisposition towards communicating in English did not necessarily result in the actual use of the language. Results suggest that there are more prominent factors that contribute to learners' language use than their willingness to speak. In the model, two factors were found to be the most direct causes of learners' actual L2 communicative behaviour: English majors' level of anxiety and their integrative/affective motivation. In other words, besides having the desire for intercultural contact and having favourable attitudes towards learning English, learners also have to have a low level of anxiety in order to carry out the intended communicative act. Nevertheless, willingness to communicate was found to exert its influence on L2 behaviour through the integrative/affective motivational factor.

Further on, unlike in Study 1, no significant relationship was found between English majors' language proficiency and their willingness to communicate in English and learners' actual language behaviour among the extended sample. This outcome seems to confirm what a few other sources have already suggested that not actual language skills but perceived language skills are the more prominent in determining one's willingness to communicate and actual L2

behaviour. This area needs further exploration in order to draw a conclusion regarding the connection between learners' proficiency, their willingness to speak in English and frequency of communication. For this purpose, a more sensitive proficiency measure would need to be employed that would assess learners' oral communication skills and their overall proficiency.

In short, the proposed model in this study suggests that the more motivated these students are to make intercultural contacts and the more they enjoy learning the language, the more frequently they are going to use English in meaningful communicative situations regardless of their levels of proficiency. Yet, this act can fall through under high anxiety generating conditions, where students' apprehension impedes their intention for interpersonal contact and their language production. The circumstances under which English majors were least willing to speak were at the forefront of Study 3.

7.1.3 The third study: English majors' perspectives on their willingness to communicate in English: A qualitative study

The third study was intended to complement the two quantitative inquiries. The qualitative study explored English majors' situational willingness to communicate and L2 behaviour in depth. Looking into the situations in which they were most and least willing to use the language allowed me to understand what factors might influence English majors' predisposition to speak in English and in turn their communicative behaviour. The majority of the undergraduates were most willing to speak in English with non-Hungarian speakers in informal situations in which they could use the language for meaningful communication for instance for bridging an information gap or articulating their opinions. When the interlocutor expressed positive attitudes towards the learner (e.g., showed interest in what he/she was saying, provided positive feedback) and when learners could engage in discussions on topics they were interested in they were most willing to speak in the target language. They were least willing to converse in English with Hungarians in university classes or when the interlocutor did not show much interest in what the learners had to say. If the topic was uninteresting, unknown, or too sophisticated for their level of proficiency, learners lost interest in talking about it.

English majors' diverse language learning background seems to be a source of apprehension for some. Whereas a number of learners have superior proficiency and extensive linguistic and intercultural experiences, others had learnt English only in secondary education, in an EFL context. Less experienced learners felt extremely inhibited in front of fellow Hungarian classmates, as they were aware of the differences between their levels of proficiency and they regarded classrooms as highly competitive. This phenomenon is not unique to students at UP, as a similar trend has been found among other Hungarian English majors

7.2 Theoretical implications: the Pyramid model

In their situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation, MacIntyre and his colleagues' (1998) proposed that the most immediate cause of learners' engagement in communication is their intention to do so. In other words, being willing to communicate would lead to communicative behaviour. Yet, the causal model based on 227 English majors' data showed that willingness may not always be enough to initiate a conversation. The advanced structural equation analysis revealed that learners' willingness to communicate did not directly influence their actual L2 use but it exerted its influence on L2 behaviour through the integrative/affective motivational element. The more willing students were to speak in English, the more motivated they were to interact with speakers of the target language and more eager they were to learn English and this in turn, affected how frequently they used the target language for meaningful communication. In addition to their motivation, learners' low level of apprehension about using the target language also directly contributed to English majors' communicative behaviour.

English majors' narratives in Study 3 supported the model put forward in my dissertation. Students' extreme apprehension - partly the result of competitiveness and perfectionism and partly the result of other situational variables - prevented them from contributing to classroom conversations. However, they were not only most willing to speak in English but actually initiated conversations when they had the opportunity to speak with non-Hungarians in out-of-classroom contexts (e.g., give tourists information, chat with foreigners). These outcomes as well as findings of previous research confirm that (increased) opportunities

for meaningful interaction in the target language will contribute to learners' willingness to converse with speakers of the target language and will indeed result actual L2 use.

Communication anxiety has emerged as a highly prominent factor in all three studies and it seems to have a more influential role in L2 communication than it was previously thought within the 'willingness to communicate' framework. Among these participants, it can be concluded that the effect of language anxiety on L2 behaviour is stronger than their willingness to speak in English; in other words, within this population the most immediate cause of behaviour may not always be the intention to engage in conversation in L2. Previous findings in L1 communication research have also shown the overriding effects of learners' communication anxiety over their intention (e.g., Phillips, et al., 2001). This makes sense, as being willing to communicate – as well as evaluating our own language skills - might be a conscious process, whereas anxiety is a more deeply rooted, personality-based trait. For instance, even though someone is ready to speak up in a university seminar (i.e., knows the answer to the question, has the linguistic abilities to express the idea) he or she might not do so because of the unconscious apprehension caused by the fear of being laughed at or facing embarrassment. Yet, as learners get more confident and become more fluent in the L2, they may be able to control their trait apprehension better and therefore, their willingness to speak may depend solely on situation specific communication anxiety, if at all applicable. For those speakers who have attained a near native level in the L2, the dynamics of the communicational variables may be similar to those interacting in L1. This would make sense, since when you decide to speak up in your first language you do not dwell on how good or adequate your language skills are. It is necessary to explore how the effects of communication apprehension and perceived confidence may change with fluent L2 speakers in order to back up this proposition.

Based on the findings, willingness to speak and its most immediate antecedent, self-confidence, seem to be more state-like; for instance, when the interlocutor makes a disheartening comment, does not show interest in the learner, or gets annoyed by what he/she has to say. On the other hand, communication anxiety may have a more prominent effect on one's predisposition towards speaking in an L2 which is not very likely to fluctuate throughout situations, perhaps only when learners' confidence is strong enough to override their anxiety. In future, it would be necessary to gain insights into what other factors might influence one's

perceived competence and in turn, one's predisposition towards conversing in an L2. These findings suggest that although willingness to communicate is a relevant construct, more attention should be paid to decreasing learners' apprehension and raising their self-confidence and intercultural awareness.

In line with the neuro-biological approaches put forward in Chapter 1 (e.g., McCroskey & Beatty, 2000), the three studies confirmed that emotional reactions would often override one's conscious intention to communicate. Students' communicational anxiety – conceptualized as the combination of low extraversion and high neuroticism – may impede their communicative behaviour with another person despite having positive attitudes and high willingness to do so. In short, in these cases, emotional reactions would drive actual behaviour, for instance language use, and not one's intention to communicate. Even MacIntyre and his associates (1998) call for caution when interpreting the pyramid model as they stress that in some cases the distant factors may bypass the more proximal factors, although they do not suggest any specific factors.

There is a slight discrepancy between the neuro-biological view and the pyramid model, which is based on the assumption that the most immediate cause of behaviour is the intention to engage in behaviour (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Yet, this may lie in the different conceptualization of willingness to communicate and its relations to its antecedents. While MacIntyre and his colleagues conceive the construct willingness to communicate as the combined effect of two of the most proximal factors, anxiety and self confidence, in addition to other more distant factors (e.g., anomie, alienation, self-esteem) this psychological construct is absent from the neuro-biological approach. So the question arises: is there really a need to incorporate this concept in SLA studies? The present study indicates that there is; however, in the case of these intermediate-to-advanced learners, the antecedents of their willingness to communicate may need revision as learners' language apprehension was not directly related to it and depended merely on their self-confidence. It is expected, that situational circumstances will affect whether learners' personality-based emotions such as apprehension or rational intentions determine their actual language use. Future research should investigate how other variables such as personality variables or learners' intercultural experience may affect their predisposition towards communicating in an L2 and, on top of that, actual L2 language behaviour. This area of exploration would be in line with recent calls in SLA research for a

stronger focus on emotional and other personality trait factors that could provide a theoretical frame and further insights into the process of L2 acquisition (Dewale, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005).

7.3 Limitations

Despite its valuable findings, the dissertation has some limitations. One of them lies in the research instrument aimed to measure learners' proficiency in Study 1 and Study 2. The proficiency measure used in the two quantitative studies was a vocabulary test which gives only a rough indication of participants' overall level of proficiency. Further on, the test proved to be too easy, and therefore may not have been sensitive enough to track the variance in learners' levels of proficiency. In order to confirm the findings of the present study, it would be necessary to measure learners' conversational skills with proficient speakers of English, both in informal and classroom contexts, which could then be related to their willingness to communicate in English. The qualitative study also revealed that the communicational measures did not address certain issues that were highly relevant for English majors. Therefore, in the future, it would be necessary to develop new instruments that would measure learners' predisposition towards conversing in English in the classroom context.

While the present studies focused on advanced EFL learners majoring in the target language, future studies could explore how these learner characteristics interact among more heterogeneous samples of different learner populations. English majors are a special group of EFL learners. They already possess a very good level of English, attend content-based classes in English, they are adult language learners, they are well educated and cognitively able, have university professors as their teachers, and they chose English as their profession. Therefore, findings can hardly be generalized for secondary-school students or adult learners in a language school. Also, it would be interesting to explore how these variables interact within a sample of a more balanced male-female ratio, as the majority of my participants were females.

Further studies are needed involving samples learning a less widely spoken language, as the English language occupies a special status and is the lingua franca of many domains of our lives.

Although the findings of this study may be generalized to the whole population of English majors studying at the University of Pécs, in Hungary, they may not be fully

applicable to English majors studying at other higher educational institutions for several reasons. For instance, not only the curriculum may vary at other universities but also Pécs and its physical surroundings are different compared, for instance, to Budapest or to smaller towns. There are a few foreign nationals in Pécs (e.g., international students, employees of multinational companies, professionals, retired expatriates); yet, not as many as in Budapest and not as few as in smaller towns. The ratio of foreign nationals present in learners' environment is likely to affect their attitudes towards them and in turn towards the target language and to the learning situations (e.g., Dörnyei, et al., 2006). Those who live in places where L2 speakers are less salient may have more positive attitudes towards them compared to those who live in more touristy places and have more opportunities for intercultural contact. Replication studies carried out in different geographical locations could provide information on the extent to which findings are similar in new contexts.

7.4 Pedagogical implications

I agree with MacIntyre and his colleagues (1998) when they claim that the fundamental aim of language instruction is to promote language learners' willingness to make meaningful intercultural encounters in the target language. In light of the findings of this dissertation, their proposal has important pedagogical implications.

The most crucial messages of this investigation for foreign language teachers are the following. First, it is essential that learners have an interest in interacting with speakers of other languages and have the opportunity to use the language for meaningful communication. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the main reason why Hungarians failed to achieve useful levels in Russian was the relative absence of native Russian speakers and therefore learners' lack of interest in interpersonal contacts with them. Further on, it is equally important to enhance learners' intercultural awareness so that they become more open to foreigners and will know how to interact with them according to the sociolinguistic and pragmatic rules of the L2.

Second, the issue of learners' communication apprehension and their unnatural competitiveness and perfectionism in classroom should be addressed. It is crucial that learners are relaxed and confident about speaking in English as anxiety not only stops them from interacting in the target language (as shown in Study 2) but it also make them appear to be less

proficient and less fluent in the L2. The first step to reduce learners' nervousness about speaking in an L2, is tackling their apprehension in their mother tongue (e.g., McCroskey et al., 1985; McCroskey, Valencic, & Richmond, 2004). As anxiety is believed to be a stable personality trait, it may need a lot of effort to reduce it. Yet, in the US, some college and university instructors are making an attempt to diminish undergraduates' trait apprehension. They enhance their speaking classes and modules by incorporating techniques that help students overcome their anxiety about speaking, such as systemic desensitization, cognitive restructuring, visualization, and skills training (Dwyer, 2000 quoted in Phillips et al., 2001, p. 84). If such courses were offered at Hungarian higher-educational institutions specifically aimed at young adults, they would most likely be extremely popular among undergraduates.

An additional point that should be highlighted is related to the learner's personality. As personality traits are largely responsible for our behaviour and are wired into our brains, adults' communicative behaviour may be changed substantially only with rigorous training including awareness raising. Therefore, it is highly important that English majors are explicitly taught not only about human communicational principles and theories but also about effective communicational strategies both in the first and in the second language. As for L2 communication, this would also have essential implications regarding cultural (e.g., different communicational and behavioral norms across cultures) and linguistic (e.g., level of proficiency, size of vocabulary) aspects. Integrating modules on intercultural pragmatics into seminars would be a potential way to tackle this issue.

Further on, the three studies carry specific implications for language instructors at UP and beyond. It would be highly beneficial for English majors to incorporate classes with native speakers of English or non-Hungarian speakers of English into the curriculum and encourage them to seek out opportunities for contacts with other English speakers in their environments. As was pointed out in Study 3, English majors not only find this a useful way to perfect their pronunciation, to learn new words and expressions, and to acquire pragmatic competence, but this would also allow them to become more self-confident in communicating in the L2. Yet, having English as the mother tongue is not enough to promote L2 use among the learners, it is equally important that the person is sensitive to the learners' needs, keeps up with learners' interest, and is aware of the affective variables that influence learners' self-confidence. On the other hand, students would benefit equally, if not more, from contact with fluent non-native

speakers of English, as they are all in the same boat: learning English as a foreign language, or more increasingly, English as a Global Language. This would allow them to experiment with their language skills and gain linguistic self-confidence. In addition, non-native English speakers are likely to be more tolerant to language mistakes and hesitations than native speakers. In fact, some sources suggest that English native speakers may even be a hindrance in the communication process, for instance, in the world of international business, meetings and discussions seem to run more smoothly in the absence of native English speakers as they seem use too complex and sophisticated language (Skapinker, 2007).

Finally, students' accounts of their anxiety related to peer pressure and threatening classroom atmosphere provided insights into why they are unwilling to communicate in a formal educational context. Measures should be taken to enhance classroom interaction and to develop group dynamics among English majors in seminars to enhance learners' opportunities in meaningful communicative situations. This would allow them to benefit from their proficient peers' contributions and to boost their self confidence. Small-scale projects in pairs or teams might help anxious students and improve their personal and professional development.

Despite its limitations, my dissertation has provided valuable insights into the understanding of the motivational construct of willingness to communicate in the Hungarian context. I hope I have succeeded in showing the reader how a number of factors contribute to English majors' willingness to communicate and to their L2 use, and the inquiry into the construct of WTC has taken us beyond the simple "to will or not to will".

On a personal note, since I first read about willingness to communicate, I have started to pay more and more attention to my communicative behaviour. As I have become more conscious of my behaviour and have been more aware of how my anxiety sometimes stops me from speaking, for instance, reading the train timetable instead of asking a member of staff for information in English while living abroad. As a result, my behaviour has slowly changed. Growing more confident has allowed me to become more talkative regardless of my potential conversational partner and I no longer hesitate to initiate a conversation in English in all kinds of social situations. I believe that a combination of all these factors has enabled me to become a more effective communicator not only with foreigners and native speakers but also with my fellow nationals. Yet, perhaps living in a cosmopolitan English speaking city where I am

surrounded by various nationalities and native speakers of English has given me some advantage over young language learners whose opportunities to speak in English are limited to within the classroom walls. Foreign language teachers, with a bit of creativity and with the help of technology, could create learning environments where students can use the language for meaningful interactions with non-Hungarians and could attempt to lower their apprehension so they would enjoy using the target language both with each other in classes and beyond.

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Appendix A

Students' questionnaire

1. Willingness to communicate in English

Imagine that you won a scholarship to study for one semester in an English speaking country: You find yourself in situations in which you have the chance to talk in English to a native speaker of English. Suppose you have completely free choice to start or avoid communication in these situations on any topic. For each situation, indicate in percentages how often you would be willing to talk in English.

0 % never and 100 % always

Example: Talk in English to an English speaking bus driver. —> 75% I would be willing to initiate a conversation in English 75 times out of 100 when I met a bus driver.

1. Give a presentation in English to a group of English speaking strangers.
2. Talk in English with an English speaking acquaintance while standing in line.
3. Talk in English with an English speaking salesperson in a store.
4. Talk in English in a large meeting of English speaking friends.
5. Talk in English in a small group of English speaking strangers.
6. Talk in English with an English speaking friend while standing in line.
7. Talk in English with an English speaking waiter/waitress in a restaurant.
8. Talk in English in a large meeting of English speaking acquaintances.
9. Talk in English with an English speaking stranger while standing in line.
10. Talk in English with an English speaking secretary.
11. Give a presentation in English to a group of English speaking friends.
12. Talk in English in a small group of English speaking acquaintances.
13. Talk in English in a large meeting of English speaking strangers.
14. Talk in English with an English speaking girl/boyfriend.
15. Talk in English in a small group of English speaking friends.
16. Give a presentation in English to a group of English speaking acquaintances.

2. Communication apprehension in English

Below are 24 statements about how you might feel about communicating in English with others. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you: strongly disagree 1; disagree 2; are neutral 3; agree 4; strongly agree 5

Statements

1. I dislike participating in group discussions in English.
2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions in English
3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions in English.
4. I like to get involved in group discussions in English.
5. Engaging in a group discussion in English with new people makes me tense and nervous.
6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions in English.
7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting in English.
8. Usually, I am comfortable when I have to participate in a meeting in English
9. I am very calm and relaxed when I am called upon to express an opinion in English at a meeting.
10. I am afraid to express myself in English at meetings.
11. Communicating in English at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
12. I am very relaxed when answering questions in English at a meeting.
13. While participating in a conversation in English with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
14. I have no fear of speaking up in English in conversations.
15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations when I have to speak in English.
16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations when I have to speak in English.
17. While conversing in English with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
18. I'm afraid to speak up in English in conversations.
19. I have no fear of giving a speech in English.

20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech in English.
21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech in English.
22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech in English.
23. I face the prospect of giving a speech in English with confidence.
24. While giving a speech in English, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

3. Perceived communication competence in English

Imagine that you are in an English speaking country studying for one semester at a university and you find yourself in the 12 situations below. Please indicate how competent you believe you are in each of the situations described below. Estimate your competence and put a percentage in the box.

0 % completely incompetent and 100 % competent.

Situation

1. Present a talk in English to a group of English speaking strangers.
2. Talk in English with an English speaking acquaintance.
3. Talk in English in a large meeting of English speaking friends.
4. Talk in English in a small group of English speaking strangers.
5. Talk in English with an English speaking friend.
6. Talk in English in a large meeting of English speaking acquaintances.
7. Talk in English with an English speaking stranger.
8. Present a talk in English to a group of English speaking friends.
9. Talk in English in a small group of English speaking acquaintances.
10. Talk in English in a large meeting of English speaking strangers.
11. Talk in English in a small group of English speaking friends.
12. Present a talk in English to a group of English speaking acquaintances.

4. EFL Motivation and anxiety

Please read the statements below. Think about how true they are for you.

1 absolutely not true, 2 somewhat false, 3 in between, 4 somewhat true, 5 absolutely true

Statement

1. Knowing English makes it possible to communicate with people from all over the world.
2. Nowadays knowing English is a must for everyone.
3. English is a world language.
4. Knowing English will give me a better chance to get a good job.
5. English is useful for me because I would like to travel a lot.
6. I enjoy learning the English language.
7. I love the way the English language sounds.
8. I like the English language better than any other foreign language.
9. I would like to meet native speakers of English.
10. I would like to meet foreign people with whom I can speak English.
11. I would like to live in an English speaking country.

Appendix B

Descriptive statistics for the communication variables

Statistics

		vocab test	WTC	CA	PCC	L2 motivation	L2 anxiety	motivational intensity
N	Valid	137	137	137	137	137	137	137
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		67,78	66,8005	68,33	66,675	56,29	21,73	28,80
Mode		74	61,67	53	67,5 ^a	53	24	28
Std. Deviation		10,943	15,11366	16,797	15,5607	6,385	6,607	5,536
Variance		119,746	228,42273	282,134	242,1349	40,767	43,654	30,649
Skewness		-,783	-,282	-,071	-,071	-,694	,192	-,296
Std. Error of Skewness		,207	,207	,207	,207	,207	,207	,207
Kurtosis		,482	-,631	-,439	-,741	1,529	-,603	,272
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,411	,411	,411	,411	,411	,411	,411
Range		57	67,50	84	65,8	39	28	30
Minimum		31	27,50	24	32,5	31	9	11
Maximum		88	95,00	108	98,3	70	37	41
Percentiles	10	52,00	46,2500	46,00	43,333	48,80	12,80	21,00
	20	59,00	52,3333	53,00	51,250	52,00	16,00	24,00
	25	60,00	55,2917	54,50	56,875	53,00	17,00	25,00
	30	62,00	59,1667	58,00	58,650	53,00	18,00	26,00
	40	67,00	63,3333	64,00	62,083	54,20	19,00	28,00
	50	70,00	67,0833	69,00	67,500	57,00	22,00	29,00
	60	72,80	72,3333	73,00	71,167	58,00	23,80	31,00
	70	74,00	77,0833	79,00	75,250	60,00	25,00	32,00
	75	77,00	78,4583	80,50	78,750	61,00	25,00	33,00
	80	78,00	80,9333	83,40	82,083	62,00	27,00	33,00
90	80,00	86,7500	90,00	88,267	64,00	32,00	35,00	

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Appendix C

Regression Analysis for WTC (dependent variable), CA (first predictor), and PCC (second predictor)

Regression

Variables Entered/Removed^b

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	CA		Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter <= ,050, Probability-of-F-to-remove >= ,100).
2	PCC ^a		Enter

a. All requested variables entered.

b. Dependent Variable: WTC

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,493 ^a	,243	,238	13,19511
2	,789 ^b	,623	,617	9,34996

a. Predictors: (Constant), CA

b. Predictors: (Constant), CA, PCC

ANOVA^c

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7560,506	1	7560,506	43,423	,000 ^a
	Residual	23504,985	135	174,111		
	Total	31065,491	136			
2	Regression	19350,970	2	9675,485	110,676	,000 ^b
	Residual	11714,521	134	87,422		
	Total	31065,491	136			

a. Predictors: (Constant), CA

b. Predictors: (Constant), CA, PCC

c. Dependent Variable: WTC

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	97,131	4,739		20,497	,000
	CA	-,444	,067	-,493	-6,590	,000
2	(Constant)	18,150	7,585		2,393	,018
	CA	-2,18E-02	,060	-,024	-,364	,716
	PCC	,752	,065	,774	11,613	,000

a. Dependent Variable: WTC

Excluded Variables^b

Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	
1	PCC	,774 ^a	11,613	,000	,708	,633

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), CA

b. Dependent Variable: WTC

Appendix D

Regression Analysis for WTC (dependent variable), PCC
(first predictor), and CA (second predictor)

Variables Entered/Removed^b

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	PCC		Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter ≤ ,050, Probability-of-F-to-remove ≥ ,100).
2	CA ^a		Enter

a. All requested variables entered.

b. Dependent Variable: WTC

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,789 ^a	,623	,620	9,31988
2	,789 ^b	,623	,617	9,34996

a. Predictors: (Constant), PCC

b. Predictors: (Constant), PCC, CA

ANOVA^c

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19339,376	1	19339,376	222,650	,000 ^a
	Residual	11726,115	135	86,860		
	Total	31065,491	136			
2	Regression	19350,970	2	9675,485	110,676	,000 ^b
	Residual	11714,521	134	87,422		
	Total	31065,491	136			

a. Predictors: (Constant), PCC

b. Predictors: (Constant), PCC, CA

c. Dependent Variable: WTC

Coefficients^d

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.		
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	15,705	3,516		4,467	,000		
	PCC	,766	,051	,789			14,921	,000
2	(Constant)	18,150	7,585		2,393	,018		
	PCC	,752	,065	,774			11,613	,000
	CA	-2,18E-02	,060	-,024			-,364	,716

a. Dependent Variable: WTC

Excluded Variables^e

Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	
1	CA	-,024 ^a	-,364	,716	-,031	,633

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), PCC

b. Dependent Variable: WTC

Doktori (Ph.D.) értekezés tézisei



'To will or not to will'

**Exploring Advanced EFL Learners' Willingness to
Communicate in English**

Nagy Borbála

Konzulens: Dr. Horváth József

Alkalmazott Nyelvészeti Doktori Program

Nyelvtudományi Doktori Iskola

Pécsi Tudományegyetem

2007

Az értekezés témája és kutatási feladatai

Bizonyára minden nyelvtanár-olvasó találkozott már olyan nyelvtanulóval, aki igen jó idegen nyelvi tudással rendelkezik, mégsem hajlandó a tanórán megszólalni és olyannal, aki számos nyelvi hibát ejt, mégis lelkes résztvevő az órai munkában és aktívan használja a célnyelvet. Az ilyen nyelvtanulókat kivételnek tekintjük, de arra nehéz magyarázatot adni, hogy az egyik diák miért hajlandóbb megszólalni a célnyelven, mint a másik, és hogy ez hogyan függ össze a nyelvtudásukkal. Az idegen és második nyelv elsajátításának kognitív elméletei (pl. Swain, 1985; Skehan, 1998) és az e területen végzett kutatások (pl. Seliger, 1977; Swain és Lapkin, 1995) egyértelműen a kommunikáció központi szerepét hangsúlyozzák a nyelvelsajátítási folyamatokban. Ebből kifolyólag gyakran azt feltételezzük, hogy azok a nyelvtanulók, akik többet szerepelnek a tanórán, és rendszeresen jelentkeznek, jobban tudnak a cél nyelven. Sokan úgy vélik, hogy azok, akik nem igyekeznek eléggé az órákon, és nem szívesen szólalnak meg a célnyelven, minden bizonnyal nyelvi képességeik hiánya miatt viselkednek ilyen visszahúzódóan.

Disszertációmban annak feltárására végeztem el három vizsgálatot, hogy milyen szociálpszichológiai tényezők határozzák meg a magyar nyelvtanulók angol nyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóságát, és ezek milyen összefüggésben vannak a nyelvtudásukkal. Ehhez szorosan kapcsolódóan, az angol nyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóság, a nyelvtanulási motiváció és az aktuális nyelvhasználat közötti kapcsolatra is igyekeztem fényt deríteni. Továbbá arra is választ kerestem, hogy bizonyos nyelvtanulók milyen kommunikációs helyzetekben motiváltak és milyen szituációkban kevésbé hajlandóak megszólalni angolul. A tanulmány alapjául szolgáló felmérésbe olyan diákok speciális csoportját vontam be, akik Magyarországon az angolt idegen nyelvként tanulják, de mégis napi kontaktusban vannak az angol nyelvvel és kultúrával. Egy tanszéki projekt keretében, a Pécsi Tudományegyetemen tanuló alsóbb éves angol szakos hallgatói vettek részt a felmérésben. Célom ezzel nem csak az volt, hogy bővítsem a rendelkezésre álló kis számú irodalmat, hanem az is, hogy javaslatokat és stratégiákat terjesszek elő az angol szakos program tervezőinek annak céljából, hogy hogyan tudnák úgy fejleszteni a

programot, hogy az a hallgatókat olyan készségekkel és képességekkel ruházza fel, amelyet majd a munkaerőpiacon sikeresen tudnak kamatoztatni.

Az elmúlt évek során a második és idegen nyelv elsajátításával foglalkozó kutatók egyre komolyabb figyelmet szenteltek az egyéni különbségek szerepének, és annak, hogy egyes nyelvtanulók miért hajlandóbbak a célnyelven kommunikálni, mint társaik. A kérdéssel kapcsolatos nyelvtanulási motivációs vizsgálatok a szociálpszichológia területéről származó kommunikációs hajlandóság fogalmát helyezik a középpontba. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei és Noels (1998, 545. o.) nevéhez fűződik egy komplex modell, amely rendkívüli elméleti és gyakorlati potenciállal rendelkezik (Dörnyei, 2003, 12. o.). MacIntyre és munkatársai egy piramis-modellben összegzik a másodiknyelv-elsajátítás és -kutatás pszichológiai, nyelvészeti és kommunikatív irányzatait. A modell összesen hat szintből áll, amelyek további két szempont alapján csoportosíthatóak. A felső három szint szituáció-specifikus hatásokat tartalmaz: ezek a változók csak az éppen adott szituációban érvényesek, tehát hatásuk időleges. A csúcson a célnyelv tényleges használata áll, ez alatt helyezkedik el az idegennyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóság, a harmadik szinten egy adott személlyel való kommunikációs hajlandóság és az egyén kommunikációs önbecsülése áll. Az alsó három szinten található változók tartósabb hatást fejtenek ki a nyelvtanuló kommunikációs hajlandóságára. Ezek vélhetően nem változnak az idő múlásával, tehát hatásuk minden szituációban többnyire azonos lesz. Ezek a rétegek a motivációs tényezőket, az affektív és kognitív állapotot (mint például a csoportok közötti attitűdöket vagy a kommunikatív kompetenciát), valamint a társadalmi változókat és személyiségjegyeket tartalmazzák.

McIntyre és munkatársai (1998, 558. o.), túllépve a nyelvi és kommunikatív kompetencia fontosságán, a nyelvtanulók idegennyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóságának erősítését tartják a nyelvtanítás egyik fő céljának. A célnyelven történő kommunikációt a legtágabb értelemben kezelik, például nemcsak a párbeszédben való részvételt tekintik ennek, hanem idegen nyelvű újság olvasását és a tévénezést is. Úgy vélik (547. o.), hogy a nyelvtanulási folyamat legfőbb célja a nyelvtanulók ösztönzése a kommunikációs lehetőségek kihasználására. A modell ígéretes jövője ellenére azonban a nyelvtanulási motiváció területén végzett kutatások eddig nem szenteltek elég figyelmet az idegen nyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóság szerepének (Dörnyei, 2003) és a hazai kontextusban

sem vizsgálták azt. Disszertációmmal ezt a hiányt próbáltam pótolni úgy, hogy olyan környezetben vizsgáltam az idegen nyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóság és az egyéb tényezők közötti kapcsolatot, ahol a nyelvtanulóknak igen kevés lehetősége van a célnyelv használatára osztálytermen kívüli, autentikus szituációkban.

A kommunikációs hajlandóság (KH) fogalma, az Egyesült Államok-beli anyanyelvi kommunikáció-kutatás területéről származik. Azt, hogy egyesek miért beszélnek többet, vagyis, hogy miért hajlandóbbak beszélgetést kezdeményezni és folytatni, míg mások inkább visszahúzódnak, és csendben maradnak különböző helyzetekben, McCroskey (1992, 2. o.) a kommunikációs hajlandóság fogalmával magyarázza. A koncepció arra utal, hogy mennyire valószínű, hogy az egyén egy adott helyzetben beszélgetést kezdeményez, vagy inkább elkerüli azt. Az idegen és második nyelvre vonatkozóan a kommunikációs hajlandóság azt fejezi ki, hogy az egyén mennyire kész a célnyelven egy adott időben egy adott személlyel diskurzust kezdeményezni (MacIntyre és mtsai., 1998, 547. o.).

Az egyén kommunikációs hajlandóságát a legjobban mind az anyanyelven, mind egy másik nyelven két személyiségjegy határozza meg: a kommunikációs szorongás (KSZ) és a kommunikációs önbecsülés (KÖ) (pl. MacIntyre, 1994; McCroskey, 1992; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément és Donovan, 2003; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide és Shimizu, 2004). A kommunikációs szorongás az egyén anyanyelven való kommunikációtól való szorongására vonatkozik egy feltételezett vagy igazi szituációban egy vagy több személlyel (McCroskey, 1992, 1. o.). A fogalom nagyon hasonló a második- és idegennyelv-elsajátítás területén használatos nyelvi szorongáshoz hiszen: mindkettő a célnyelv használatával kapcsolatos feszélyezettségre vonatkozik (Horowitz, Horowitz és Cape, 1986). Mivel disszertációm egy idegen nyelven történő szóbeli kommunikációval kapcsolatos kérdésekre keres választ, a fogalom alatt a nyelvtanulónak az idegen nyelvű kommunikációval kapcsolatos szorongását értem. A kommunikációs hajlandóságot megjósoló másik személyiségjegy a kommunikációs önbecsülés, amely az egyén kommunikációs képességeinek önértékelésére vonatkozik (McCroskey, 1982). Disszertációmban ez a fogalom a nyelvtanuló idegen nyelvi kommunikációs képességeinek önértékelésével azonos.

A kutatás ismertetése és a disszertáció felépítése

Az angol szakos hallgatók számára rendkívül fontos az erős kommunikációs hajlandóság, hiszen nagy valószínűséggel nyelvtanárként, fordítóként vagy egyéb nyelvspecialistaként fognak elhelyezkedni, és a kommunikációs hajlandóság alacsony szintje korlátozná őket a minőségi munkavégzésben. Ha a hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandósága alacsony szintű, ezen változtatni kell annak érdekében, hogy a nyelvtanulás egyik lehetséges céljának eleget tegyünk: tehát a nyelvtanulók kommunikációs hajlandóságának erősítésére kell törekednünk (*MacIntyre és mtsai., 1998*). Mindezek alapján disszertációmban kevert kutatási módszertant alkalmaztam (Creswell, 2003; Mackey és Gass, 2005): két kvantitatív és egy kvalitatív empirikus kutatást végeztem.

A disszertációm két fő részre és azon belül hat fejezetre oszlik (lásd 1 sz. Táblázat). Az első részben a kutatásokhoz kapcsolódó elméleti háttérrel vázoló fel, amely az első két fejezetet foglalja magában. Az első fejezet általános áttekintést ad a másodiknyelv-elsajátításban szerepet játszó egyéni különbségeket befolyásoló tényezőkről. A hangsúly három, a témához kapcsolódó affektív változón van, a nyelvtanulási motiváción és attitűdön, a szorongáson, és a nyelvi önbecsülésen. Továbbá, a legbefolyásosabb másodiknyelv-elsajátítási motiváció elméleti modelljei is felvázolásra kerültek. A második fejezet három, a kutatásban fő szerepet játszó kommunikációs változóról, a kommunikációs hajlandóságról, a kommunikációs szorongásról és a kommunikációs önbecsülésről, valamint az ezekhez kapcsolódó empirikus kutatásokról nyújt elemző áttekintést.

A disszertáció második része négy fejezetből áll. A harmadik fejezet a kutatást helyezi el a kontextusban, és információt nyújt a résztvevőkről, valamint a kutatómódszertanról. A negyedik fejezet tartalmazza az első empirikus tanulmányt, amelyben 137 angol szakos hallgató vett részt. A fő célom az volt, hogy megvizsgáljam a résztvevők kommunikációs hajlandóságának és a nyelvi motivációjuknak kapcsolatát, és hogy ezeket milyen összefüggésben állnak a nyelvi szintjükkel. Az adatokat kérdőív és szókinccs teszt segítségével gyűjtöttem, és az elemzésekhez leíró, korrelációs valamint lineáris regresszió statisztikát alkalmaztam. A tanulmány eredményei további vizsgálatok szükségessége felé mutattak.

I. Az egyéni különbségek a második nyelv elsajátítás kutatási területén

1. fejezet. Affektív változók a második nyelv elsajátításában

- Nyelvtanulási motiváció és attitűdök
- Nyelvi szorongás, önbizalom és idegennyelvi önbecsülés
- A kommuni-biológiai nézet: új megközelítés az emberi viselkedés tanulmányozásához

2. fejezet: kommunikációs változók az idegennyelvi motiváció kutatásban

- Kommunikációs változók: kommunikációs hajlandóság, kommunikációs önbecsülés, és kommunikációs szorongás
- Korábbi kutatások a második nyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóság területén

II. Három empirikus tanulmány angol szakos hallgatók idegennyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóságuk területén

3. fejezet: Háttér a kutatásokhoz

- Kutatás kontextusa
- Résztevők ismertetése
- Kutatás módszertani ismertetése

4. fejezet: Angol szakos hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandósága: egy korrelációs tanulmány

- Az eljárás
- Eredmények
- Az eredmények tárgyalása

5. fejezet: Angol szakos hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságának strukturális modellje

- Az eljárás
- Eredmények
- Az eredmények tárgyalása

6. fejezet: Angol szakos hallgatók szituációs kommunikációs hajlandósága

- Az eljárás
- Eredmények
- Az eredmények tárgyalása

7. fejezet: Konklúzió és jövőbeni kutatási irányok

- A tanulmányok összefoglalása
 - Elméleti implikációk
 - A vizsgálatok korlátai
 - Pedagógiai vonatkozások
-

Annak érdekében, hogy összetettebb statisztikai elemzést tudjak végezni az első tanulmányban vizsgált változókkal, további diákokat vontam be a felmérésbe. Az ötödik fejezet mutatja be a második kvantitatív tanulmányt, amelyben 227 angol szakos hallgató vett részt (137 diák az első vizsgálatból, valamint 90 további hallgató). Az első tanulmány eredményei, valamint a rendelkezésre álló irodalom alapján vázoltam fel, és teszteltem le, egy második nyelvi kommunikációs modellt strukturális egyenlet elemzéssel (structural equation modelling). Ez az eljárás, arra enged következtetni, hogy egy általunk előterjesztett modell mennyire illeszkedik a rendelkezésre álló számszerű adatokra. Az elemzés eredményeként elfogadhatjuk, vagy elvethetjük a modellt. További különlegessége az eljárásnak, hogy a mért változók között ok-okozati összefüggésre is enged következtetést levonni. Fontos ennél az eljárásnál, hogy a modell elméletileg megalapozott legyen, mivel az adatokra több jó modell is illeszkedhet. A végső modell értelmezése is ebben a fejezetben kerül megtárgyalásra.

Annak érdekében, hogy a hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságát egy másik szemszögből is megvizsgáljam, az első két tanulmányt egy kvalitatív elemzéssel egészítettem ki. A harmadik tanulmány a hatodik fejezetben kerül bemutatásra. Az adatokat egy írás feladattal gyűjtöttem 64 angolszakos diáktól. A vizsgálat fő céljai között szerepelt annak feltárása, hogy a hallgatók milyen beszédhelyzetekben használják az angol nyelvet a legszívesebben és a legkevésbé szívesen, valamint melyek a hajlandóságukat befolyásoló tényezők.

A vizsgálatok kutatási kérdései, adatgyűjtő eszközei, és az adatok elemzésének módszerei a 2 sz. táblázatban találhatók. A következőkben a három kutatás lényeges eredményeit ismertetem részletesebben.

2 sz. táblázat: A disszertáció három tanulmánya, kutatási kérdései, adatgyűjtő eszközei, és kutatás módszertana 1.

	Kutatási kérdések	Adatgyűjtő eszközök	Adatok elemzésének módszere
Első tanulmány 137 résztvevő	Milyen kommunikációs hajlandósággal rendelkeznek az angol szakos hallgatók, akiknek viszonylag kevés lehetőségük van arra, hogy kapcsolatba lépjenek anyanyelvi beszélővel, ugyanakkor napi kapcsolatban állnak az angol nyelvvel az egyetemi tanulmányaik keretében?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kérdőív, amely a következő három változót vizsgálta: kommunikációs hajlandóság, kommunikációs önértékelés, kommunikációs szorongás • kérdőív háttéradatakról 	Leíró statisztika
	Milyen összefüggés található a résztvevők kommunikációs hajlandósága és a nyelvi szintje között? Jogosan állítják-e <i>MacIntyre</i> és mtsai. (1998), hogy a nyelvtanulás egyik fő célja az idegen nyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóság fejlesztése?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kérdőív, amely a következő három kommunikációs változót vizsgálta valamint a nyelvtanulási motivációt • szókincs teszt • kérdőív háttéradatakról 	Korreláció analízis
	Milyen mértékben határozza meg a hallgatók kommunikációs önbecsülése és kommunikációs szorongása idegen nyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóságukat? Mindkettő azonos mértékben befolyásolja, vagy esetleg valamelyik nagyobb hatással van rá, mint a másik?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kérdőív, amely a következő három kommunikációs változót vizsgálta valamint a nyelvtanulási motivációt • szókincs teszt • kérdőív háttéradatakról 	Lineáris regresszió analízis
	Van-e összefüggés a tanulók nyelvtanulási motivációja és kommunikációs hajlandósága között?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kérdőív, amely a következő három kommunikációs változót vizsgálta valamint a nyelvtanulási motivációt • szókincs teszt • kérdőív háttéradatakról 	Korreláció analízis
Második tanulmány 227 résztvevő	Van-e szignifikáns összefüggés a hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandósága, kommunikációs önbecsülése, kommunikációs szorongása, nyelvtanulási motivációja, nyelvi szintje és aktuális nyelvhasználata között?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kérdőív, amely a következő három kommunikációs változót vizsgálta valamint a nyelvtanulási motivációt • szókincs teszt • kérdőív háttéradatakról 	Korreláció analízis
	Támogatja-e a második nyelvi kommunikációs modellt a rendelkezésre álló adathalmaz?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kérdőív, amely a következő három kommunikációs változót vizsgálta valamint a nyelvtanulási motivációt • szókincs teszt 	Strukturális egyenlet modellezés (Structural Equation Modeling)
Harmadik tanulmány 64 résztvevő	Milyen szituációs tényezők befolyásolják a hallgatók angol nyelvi kommunikációs hajlandóságát	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hallgatók írott beszámolója 	A hallgatók írott szövegeinek tematikus elemzése

A kutatás eredményei

Első vizsgálat: Angol szakos hallgatók kommunikációs profilja

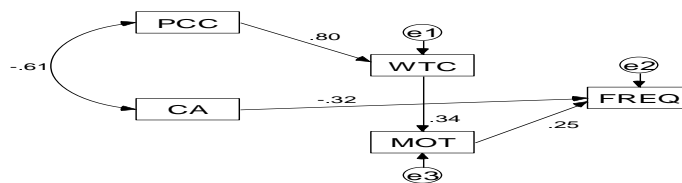
A vizsgálat egyik célja az volt, hogy kiderítsem, a PTE-n tanuló angol szakos hallgatók mennyire hajlandók angolul kommunikálni, mennyire szoronganak a kommunikációval kapcsolatban, és mennyire érzik magukat kompetensnek, ha angolul kell megszólalniuk. Úgy tűnik, hogy annak ellenére, hogy a kutatás résztvevőinek kevés lehetőségük van arra, hogy anyanyelvi beszélővel, életszerű szituációkban használják a nyelvet, átlagos szintű kommunikációs hajlandósággal, átlagos kommunikációs szorongással és szintén átlagos kommunikációs önbecsüléssel rendelkeznek. A helyzet azonban lehetne kedvezőbb is. Az angol szakos hallgatókból előbb-utóbb angol szakos nyelvtanár, tolmács, angol nyelvi ügyintéző vagy egyéb nyelv specialista lesz. Számukra az angol nyelvű kommunikáció és mindenek előtt az átlagon felüli kommunikációs hajlandóság fontos előfeltétele a szakmának.

Továbbá, a regresszió analízis azt mutatta, hogy a diákok kommunikációs önbecsülése egymaga megmagyarázza kommunikációs hajlandóságuk varianciájának 62 százalékát, és a szorongásuknak ezen felül nem volt kimutatható hatása. Ez azt sugallja, hogy a diákok kommunikációs képességeinek fejlesztésével és egyúttal önbizalmuk növelésével erősíthetnénk kommunikációs hajlandóságukat. A vizsgálat eredményei azt is mutatták, hogy a hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandósága nemcsak a kommunikációs szorongástól és a kommunikációs önbecsüléssel áll kapcsolatban, hanem gyenge de szignifikáns összefüggést mutatott a nyelvi szinttel is, amelyet egy rövid szókinccs teszt segítségével mértem.

A motivációs komponensek közül csak az integratív-affektív motivációs faktor függött szorosan össze a hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságával, ami nem meglepő, hiszen csak ez a faktor vonatkozott angolul beszélő személyekre és arra, hogy mennyire szeretik tanulni az angol nyelvet.

Második kutatás: Angol szakos hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságának strukturális modellje

Az első kutatás eredményeire építve, a második vizsgálatban egy második nyelvi kommunikációs modellt igyekeztem felvázolni és letesztelni az adatok tükrében, komplex statisztikai eljárással. A végső modell (lásd 1. sz. ábra) azt bizonyította, hogy az angol szakos hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságát egyedül a kommunikációs önbecsülésük határozza meg, és a szorongásuk nem játszik ebben további szerepet.



1 sz. ábra: Az angol szakos hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságának modellje

A várakozásokkal ellentétben úgy tűnik, hogy nem elég a hajlandóság az aktuális nyelvhasználathoz. Az adatok azt mutatják, hogy a kommunikációs hajlandóság változó nem határozta meg direkt módon a nyelvhasználat tényezőt, hanem hatását arra az integratív és affektív motiváción keresztül fejtette ki. Továbbá, az eredmények azt is mutatták, hogy az erős interkulturális motiváció mellett, a tanulók alacsony nyelvi szorongása is közvetlenül befolyásolja a hallgatók nyelvi viselkedését.

Az első tanulmány eredményeivel ellentétben, ebben a kutatásban nem találtam összefüggést a hallgatók angol nyelvi szintje és a kommunikációs hajlandóságuk között, ezért ez a változó nem került beépítésre a modellbe. Ez az eredmény azt bizonyítja, amire már korábbi források is utaltak: a nyelvtanulók önbizalma és önbecsülése az, ami jobban meghatározza a résztvevők kommunikációs hajlandóságát és az aktuális nyelvhasználatát.

Más szóval, nem biztos, hogy azok a nyelvtanulók, akik beszédesebbek a célnyelven, egyben magasabb nyelvi szinttel is rendelkeznek. A tény, hogy nem találtam összefüggést a két változó között azt jelzi, hogy az önbizalmon kívül egyéb pszichológiai tényezők is hozzájárulnak a résztvevők beszédre való hajlandóságához és célnyelvi viselkedéséhez. Ezen a területen további vizsgálatokra van szükség. Erre a célra érzékenyebb nyelvi szintfelmérő eszközre lenne szükség, amely a tanulók beszédképességét és általános nyelvi szintjét is felmérné.

Röviden összefoglalva: a tanulmányban előterjesztett modell azt mutatja, hogy minél motiváltabbak az angol szakos hallgatók arra, hogy külföldiekkel, illetve az angolt második nyelvként beszélőkkel angolul beszéljenek, és minél szívesebben tanulják a nyelvet, annál nagyobb az esély, hogy az angol nyelvet használni fogják kommunikációs célokra. A nyelvhasználat nagy eséllyel nem valósul meg rendkívül stresszes helyzetekben, amikor a hallgatók szorongása megakadályozza a személyközi kapcsolatot és a nyelvhasználat létrejöttét. Más szóval, ha például egy angol szakos hallgató hajlandó szerepelni a szemináriumon, hiszen tudja a választ a kérdésre, és a nyelvi készsége is elégséges a válasz közlésére, meg nem biztos, hogy meg is fog szólalni. Megeshet, hogy annyira szorong attól, hogy társai kinevetik, mert valami rosszat vagy rosszul mond, hogy úgy dönt, biztonságosabb meghúzódni a padban mintsem megkockáztatni az órai szereplést.

A kutatás eredménye párhuzamban áll a neuro-biológia terén folytatott kutatások eredményeiből származó megközelítéssel (pl., Goleman, 2004; McCroskey és Beatty, 2000) miszerint, az érzelmi reakciók, mint például a szorongás, gyakran akadályozhatják cselekvési szándékunkat, többek között a beszédaktust. A szorongás kognitív változó, amely bizonyos személyiségjegyek hatásából áll össze, amelyek pedig, a legutóbbi kutatások szerint genetikai alapúak. Épp ezért ennek megváltoztatását csak kitartó és következetes munkával, korai gyermekkorban kezdődő neveléssel lehet elérni. Nem véletlen, hogy újabban számos szakember (pl., Dewale, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005) az érzelmi változók és egyéb személyiségjegyek vizsgálatára szólítanak fel a második nyelv elsajátítása kapcsán.

Arra, hogy milyen szituációkban voltak hajlandóak a hallgatók a legkevésbé megszólalni és milyen helyzetekben beszéltek angolul a legszívesebben, a harmadik tanulmány derített fényt.

Harmadik kutatás: Angol szakos hallgatók szituációs kommunikációs hajlandósága

A harmadik felmérés a korábbi két kvantitatív kutatást egészíti ki. A kvalitatív vizsgálat az angol szakos hallgatók szituációs kommunikációs hajlandóságát és aktuális nyelvhasználatát tárja fel részletesen azt kutatva, hogy milyen helyzetekben hajlandóak a diákok beszélni a legszívesebben, és mely szituációkban szeretnek legkevésbé beszélni. Arra kerestem választ, hogy milyen szituációs tényezők járulnak hozzá az angol szakos egyetemisták kommunikációs hajlandóságához és ez által a nyelvi viselkedésükhöz. A vizsgálatban résztvevők két nyitott kérdésre adtak írásban választ, amelyeket részletesen elemez a fejezet.

Az eredmények azt mutatják, hogy a hallgatók többsége legszívesebben nem magyar anyanyelvűekkel kezdeményez beszélgetést informális helyzetekben, ahol a nyelvet életszerű helyzetekben, valós célokra tudják használni, például külföldi turistákat útbaigazítani vagy külföldön információt kérni. Akkor beszélnek angolul a legszívesebben a diákok, amikor a beszélgető partnernek pozitívan állnak hozzájuk, érdeklődést mutatnak a beszélő és közlendője iránt, vagy pozitív visszajelzést adnak. Továbbá, az is szerepet játszott, hogy olyan témáról beszéljenek, ami érdekli őket, vagy amiben jártasak.

Legkevésbé azonos anyanyelvű egyetemista diáktársaikkal szeretnek beszélgetést kezdeményezni a hallgatók, valamint amikor a beszélgető partnerük nem mutat érdeklődést irántuk és a mondandójuk iránt. Akkor sem lelkesednek megszólalni a hallgatók és hamar érdeklődésüket veszítik, amikor a téma unalmas, ismeretlen, vagy túl magasröptű a nyelvi szintjükhöz képest.

Fontos eredménye a vizsgálatnak az, hogy a hallgatók rendkívül gátlásosak magyar egyetemista kortársaik társaságában, mivel tudatában vannak nyelvi szintbeli különbségeknek, és versenyszelleműnek tekintik a szemináriumokat. Szorongásuk fő oka

az, hogy úgy vélik, nem elég jó a nyelvtudásuk a többiekhez képest, és rettegnek attól, hogy nyelvi hibát ejtenek órai szereplés közben, ami miatt társaik majd kinevetik őket. Ez a jelenség főként azokra a diákokra jellemző, akiknek még nem volt szerencsájük huzamosabb időt eltölteni angol nyelvterületen azokkal szemben, akik már éltek külföldön, és folyékonyabban, jó intonációval, gazdagabb szókinccsel beszélnek angolul. Ez a jelenség nem egyedülálló a PTE angol szakosai körében, hiszen hasonló trend volt megfigyelhető más angol szakosok esetében is (Tóth, 2007).

A kvalitatív kutatás eredményei alátámasztják a kvantitatív vizsgálatban kidolgozott modellt. A hallgatók rendkívüli szorongása, amely részben az osztálytermi versengés, részben pedig a tökéletességre való törekvésük eredménye, gátolja őket abban, hogy angolul szerepeljenek a szemináriumokon. Ugyanakkor, informális helyzetekben, amikor lehetőségük nyílik arra, hogy nem-magyar anyanyelvűekkel kontaktusba kerüljenek (pl. turista útbaigazítást kért), nem haboznak megszólalni angolul. Ez azt mutatja, hogy az ilyen autentikus kommunikációs lehetőséget erősítik a hallgatók hajlandóságát arra, hogy angolul megszólaljanak.

A kutatások korlátai

A kutatások eredményei mellett fontos megemlíteni azok korlátait is. Elsőként, a mérőeszközökkel kapcsolatosan fontos két megjegyzést tenni. A két kvantitatív vizsgálatban a nyelvi szint felmérésére egy rövid szókinccstesztet használtam komplex, kommunikatív kompetenciákat mérő angol tesztek helyett praktikus okokból kifolyólag. Ez a mérőeszköz ad ugyan egy általános képet a tanulók nyelvi szintjéről, azonban szóbeli képességeikre vonatkozóan nem szolgál objektív adatokkal. A teszt továbbá túl könnyűnek bizonyult az angol szakos hallgatóknak. Elképzelhető, hogy egy standardizált komplex nyelvi szintfelmérő eszköz segítségével nyert adatokkal eltérő eredményeket kapnánk. Hosszú távon fontos a diákokkal szóbeli felmérést végezni annak érdekében, hogy egyértelmű következtetéseket vonhassunk le a kommunikációs hajlandóság és a kommunikációs képességek közötti közvetlen kapcsolatáról.

A kvalitatív vizsgálat rámutatott a kommunikációs hajlandóságot mérő kérdőív néhány hiányosságára. A diákok beszámolóiból kiderült, hogy a kérdőív elemei nem térnek ki jó néhány olyan szituációs változóra, például a beszélgetés témájára vagy a beszélgető partner anyanyelvére, amelyek leginkább relevánsnak bizonyultak a magyar nyelvtanulók számára. A jövőben hasznos lenne kidolgozni egy olyan mérőeszközt, amely osztálytermi környezetben tárja fel és méri a hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságát, hiszen az eredeti önértékelő skálán található szituációk nem minden esetben reálisak egy Magyarországon idegen nyelvként angolul tanuló egyén számára. Bár a jelen felmérésben az eredeti mérőeszköz adaptált és validált verzióját használtuk, a kérdéseket olyan nyelv-tanulóknak tettük fel, akiknek a fele még sosem járt angol nyelvterületen. Habár a lehetőségek egyre bővülnek, az átlag magyar nyelvtanulónak, köztük az angol szakos egyetemistának, még mindig viszonylag kevés alkalma van arra, hogy megismerkedjen angol anyanyelvűekkel, illetve az angol nem anyanyelvként de jó szinten használókkal, illetve, hogy angol nyelvterületen tanuljon és éljen.

Feltételezhetjük, hogy a hasonló idegen nyelvi környezetben tanuló angol szakos diákokra is általánosíthatóak a jelen vizsgálatok eredményei. Nem kizárt az sem, hogy egyéb magyar anyanyelvű idegennyelv-szakos hallgatók esetében is hasonló eredményeket kapnánk.

Fontos megemlíteni azt is, hogy az angol szakos hallgatók egy kivételes nyelv-tanulói csoport, hiszen már eleve viszonylag magas nyelvi szinttel és kognitív képességekkel rendelkeznek, és naponta vesznek részt magasan képzett egyetemi oktatók tartalom alapú angol nyelvű előadásain és szemináriumain. Ezért a vizsgálatok eredményeit nem általánosíthatjuk átlagos középiskolás vagy nyelvviskolában tanuló diákokra. Lényeges lenne egyéb szociokulturális háttérrel rendelkező diákokat is felmérni az angol szakos egyetemisták mellett. Továbbá, hasznos lenne egyéb idegen nyelven tanulókat is megvizsgálni, hiszen az angol mára világnyelvi státuszt ért el, ezért a többi nyelvtől eltérően értékeli a nyelv-tanulók. Végezetül hasznos lenne külföldön elvégezni a vizsgálatokat haladó szintű nyelv-tanulók körében, hogy az eredményeket összehasonlíthassuk a Magyarországon élőkével.

Összegzés

Adisszertációban vizsgált tényezők egymásra hatásának elemzése előtt egyértelműnek tűnt a nyelvtudás és a kommunikációs hajlandóság közötti összefüggés. Kutatásaim azonban azt mutatják, hogy a vizsgált angol szakos hallgatók nyelvi viselkedését és kommunikációs hajlandóságát nem nyelvtudásuk befolyásolja, hanem fontosabb szerepet játszik abban nyelvi szorongásuk, önbecsülésük, és integratív motivációjuk szintje. Az eredmények azt mutatják, hogy az angol szakos hallgatók nyelvi viselkedését erős integratív motivációjuk és alacsony nyelvi szorongásuk határozza meg közvetlenül. Úgy tűnik, hogy minél motiváltabbak a hallgatók arra, hogy angolul beszéljenek nem-magyar anyanyelvűvel, és minél erősebb a motivációjuk az angol nyelv tanulására, annál gyakrabban beszélnek angolul. Azonban erős kommunikációs szorongásuk gyakran akadályozhatja kommunikációs szándékukat és beszédüket. Ebből kifolyólag célszerű lenne a diákok integratív motivációját erősíteni és kommunikációs szorongásukat csökkenteni, amennyiben az egyetemi angol szakos program egyik kimondatlan célja a hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságának erősítése.

Legelőször is, lényeges a nyelvtanulók őszinte érdeklődésének felkeltése arra, hogy, ha arra alkalma adódik, akkor személyes kapcsolatba lépjen nem-magyar anyanyelvűekkel, akikkel a célnyelvet valós élethelyzetben használhatja. Ehhez az is szükséges, hogy a nyelvtanulónak esélye legyen arra, hogy ilyen egyénnel találkozzon. Erre a modern technológia szerencsére számos megoldást kínál: például ingyen letölthető szoftverek (pl., Skype, Windows Messenger) segítségével lehetséges két számítógép közötti telefonhívás vagy írásbeli instant üzenet küldése.

Továbbá az is fontos, hogy az angol szakos hallgatók megfelelő interkulturális kompetenciával, valamint idegennyelvi pragmatikai képességgel, és szociokulturális tudással rendelkezzenek.

Több figyelmet kell szentelni a hallgatók nyelvi szorongásának csökkentésére, a túlságos versengésre való késztetés elkerülésére, valamint a tökéletességre való törekvésüknek az enyhítésére. Fontos, hogy a hallgatók nyugodtak és magabiztosak legyenek az angol nyelv használata során, hiszen a feszélyezettségük nemcsak akadályozza őket a beszéd kezdeményezésében, de idegességük olyan színben tünteti fel őket, mintha

kevésbé jól beszélnének angolul. Másodiknyelvi szorongásuk mérséklését az anyanyelvi szorongás enyhítésével kell kezdeni: például olyan nyílt légkörű szemináriumokkal, szabadon választható kurzusokkal, amelyek beszédtechnikai tréningen és hatékony kommunikációs stratégiák tanításán túl segítik a diákok nyelvi és személyiségfejlődését (Dwyer, 2000 idézi Phillips és mtsai, 2001. 84. o.). Hasznos lenne hasonló képzés az idegen nyelvre vonatkozóan is.

A nyelvórákon barátságos és fesztelen hangulat megteremtésére kell törekedni, ahol a diákok önként használják ki az alkalmat az értelmes kommunikációra és arra, hogy egymástól tanuljanak. Annak érdekében, hogy a hallgatók leküzdjék kommunikációs szorongásukat, érdemes lenne olyan nem magyar anyanyelvű, de az egyetemen tanuló diákokkal összeismertetni őket, akiket mentorként segítenének egyetemi tanulmányaik és az új környezetben való eligazodás során. Ilyen helyzetekben az angol nyelvet a diákok életszerű, valós szituációkban használnák. Olyan interjúfeladatok is segítenék a hallgatókat, amelyek keretében adott témákról kellene információt gyűjteni és elbeszélgetni egy angol anyanyelvű beszélővel vagy egy külföldivel. Elképzelhető hogy a hallgatók nyelvtudásának fejlődésével a kommunikációs hajlandóságot jósoló két tényező hatásának mértéke változik, ezért a kommunikációs hajlandóság erősítésére kidolgozott feladatok is változtatásra szorulnak majd, és kommunikációs szorongásuk csökkentésére helyeződik a hangsúly. Ennek a feltételezésnek alátámasztására hosszú távú felmérés szükséges osztálytermi megfigyelésekkel kiegészítve.

A szorongás enyhítése mellett, az angol szakos tanterv keretében hasznos lenne olyan feladatokat kidolgozni, amelyek elősegítik a kommunikációs hajlandóság és az önbecsülés erősítését. Mivel a hallgatók kommunikációs hajlandóságát a kommunikációs önbecsülésük jósolta meg legjobban, ennek növelése tűnik a legcélszerűbbnek. Ez olyan motiváló feladatokkal volna elérhető, amelyek a jelenlegi nyelvi szintjüknel egy fokkal nehezebbek, tehát elvégzésük nem okozna gondot, de mégis kihívást jelentenek, és megoldásuk során sikerélményre tudnának szert tenni. A sikerélmény elérése által nőne angol nyelvi önbecsülésük. Érdemes lenne megvizsgálni, hogy milyen tanulási és kommunikációs stratégiákat használnak, és milyen személyiségjegyekkel rendelkeznek azok a diákok, akik kiválóan teljesítettek a szókinccsteszten, de mégis alacsony szintű a kommunikációs hajlandóságuk.

A disszertációmban felvázolt három empirikus tanulmány üzenetei nem csak az angol tanszékek oktatói, tantervi döntéshozói, de angol nyelvtanárok és nyelvtanulók számára is fontosak lehetnek.

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