#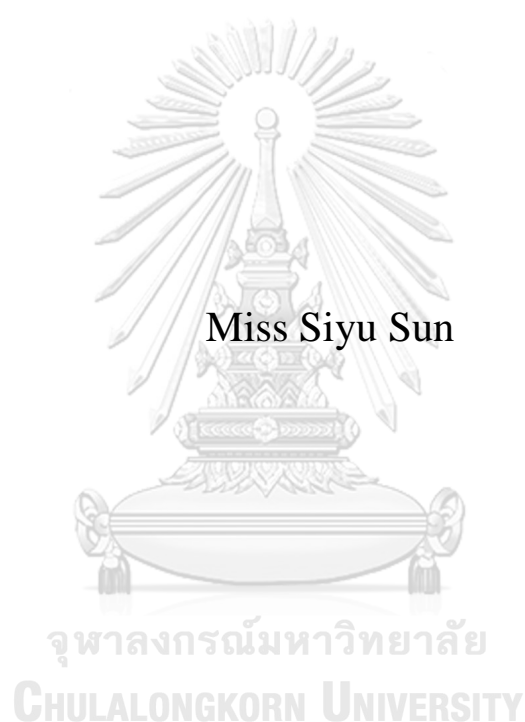 AN INVESTIGATION INTO WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH OF JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ——A CASE STUDY ON TWO MIDDLE SCHOOLS OF KUNMING, CHINA

Miss Siyu Sun

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in English as an International Language
Inter-Department of English as an International Language
GRADUATE SCHOOL
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2019

การศึกษาความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารเป็นภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้น   -
กรณีศึกษาของโรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้น 2 แห่ง ณ เมืองคุนหมิง สาธารณรัฐประชาชน
จีน

น.ส.ซื่อหยู ซุน

Independent Study Title   AN INVESTIGATION INTO WILLINGNESS TO
                           COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH OF JUNIOR
                           MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ——A CASE
                           STUDY ON TWO MIDDLE SCHOOLS OF
                           KUNMING, CHINA
By   Miss Siyu Sun
Field of Study   English as an International Language
Thesis Advisor   Assistant Professor PORNPIMOL SUKAVATEE, Ph.D.

        Accepted by the GRADUATE SCHOOL, Chulalongkorn University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts

INDEPENDENT STUDY COMMITTEE

.... Chairman
(Assistant Professor APASARA CHINWONNO, Ph.D.)
.... Advisor
(Assistant Professor PORNPIMOL SUKAVATEE,
Ph.D.)
.... Examiner
(Assistant Professor MANEERAT EKKAYOKKAYA,
Ph.D.)

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

ชื่อหยู ซุน : การศึกษาความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารเป็นภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้น   -
กรณีศึกษาของโรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้น 2 แห่ง ณ เมืองคุนหมิง สาธารณรัฐประชาชน
จีน   . (AN INVESTIGATION INTO WILLINGNESS TO
COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH OF JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENTS ——A CASE STUDY ON TWO MIDDLE SCHOOLS OF
KUNMING, CHINA) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ผศ. ดร.พรพิมล ศุขะวาที

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ1) สำรวจระดับความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารเป็นภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนของนักเรียน
ชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้นและ 2) ศึกษาสาเหตุที่ผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัยคิดว่ามีผลต่อความเต็มใจในการสื่อสาร ผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัย
ประกอบด้วยนักเรียนชาวจีนชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้นจำนวน 105 คน จากโรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้น จำนวน 2 แห่ง ที่ตั้งอยู่
ทางตะวันตกเฉียงใต้ของสาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลประกอบด้วยแบบสอบถามความเต็มใจในการ
สื่อสารและแบบสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลประกอบด้วยการใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนาและการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา
ผลการวิจัยพบว่า 1) ผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัยมีระดับความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารเป็นภาษาอังกฤษในชั้นเรียนอยู่ในระดับต่ำ และ 2)
สาเหตุที่ส่งผลต่อความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารของผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัย ได้แก่ สมิทธิภาพทางภาษาอังกฤษ แรงจูงใจอารมณ์
บรรยากาศในชั้นเรียน และวิธีการถามคำถามของผู้สอน งานวิจัยนี้ยังนำเสนอและอภิปรายเกี่ยวกับการรับรู้ของนักเรียนชั้น
มัธยมศึกษาตอนต้นที่มีต่อความเต็มใจในการสื่อสารและข้อเสนอแนะเกี่ยวกับการสอน

สาขาวิชา	ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ	ลายมือชื่อนิสิต ....
ปีการศึกษา	2562	ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก ....

6187518020 : MAJOR ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE
KEYWOR   WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE, INFLUENCING
D: FACTORS, JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS,
                    WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE QUESTIONNAIRES
                    (WTCQ)
          Siyu Sun : AN INVESTIGATION INTO WILLINGNESS TO
          COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH OF JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL
          STUDENTS ——A CASE STUDY ON TWO MIDDLE SCHOOLS OF
          KUNMING, CHINA. Advisor: Asst. Prof. PORNPIMOL SUKAVATEE,
          Ph.D.

          This study aimed to 1) explore the degree of junior middle school
students' willingness to communicate in English inside the classroom, and 2)
investigate the factors that participants consider can affect their willingness to
communicate. Participants included 105 Chinese junior middle school students
from two general schools in southwestern China. The research instruments
consisted of the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ) and Student
Interview Outline. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and content
analysis. The results revealed that 1) the participants sometimes willing to
communicate in English inside the classroom and 2) Motivation, emotions, the
classroom atmosphere and teachers' way of asking questions were the influencing
factors of participants' willingness to communicate. Junior middle school students'
perceptions towards willingness to communicate and pedagogical implications were
presented and discussed.

Field of Study:	English as an International	Student's Signature
	Language	....
Academic	2019	Advisor's Signature
Year:		....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the context of the global rapid development in the 21st century. It is necessary to have the language ability to communicate with others. One of the determining factors for successful intercultural communication is our willingness to communicate with people from other cultures (Jackson et al., 2014). English has been widely accepted and used as an international language among users with diverse lingual and cultural backgrounds(Matsuda, 2017). Willingness to communicate (WTC) was first defined as the possibility an individual chooses to communicate(McCroskey & Baer, 1985), it can be regarded as the final factor that decides whether a person will communicate with others or not. The promotion of English communication ability is a very important link in modern English teaching (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Because of the importance of WTC in language use, especially in the use of target languages, WTC has a place in research for second language acquisition (SLA). WTC has got more attention in the research area on communication and SLA. Willingness to communicate is defined as "the willingness to use a second language with a specific person to communicate at a specific time" in SLA (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Scholars argued the ultimate purpose of language teaching is to promote the generation of WTC in L2 learning (MacIntyre et al., 1998). They have proposed that the proper purpose of L2 education is to create WTC in the process of language learning. Any teaching program which can't cultivate students' WTC is a failure (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

WTC is an important element in English language learning. Researchers found

that WTC can improve students' oral expression ability (Hashimoto, 2002). Learners have to talk so as to learn and it is crucial to have the willingness to have a better L2 acquisition (Skehan, 1989). Willingness to communicate directly affects the individual's decision to communicate (P. D. Macintyre & Legatto, 2011). Furthermore, learners' WTC directly affects their language communication and expression. Some researchers think that in addition to communication ability, the purpose of foreign language teaching should involve the training of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

In China, improving students' English proficiency has continuously been emphasized since 1978 (Hu, 2002). English is taught as a required course in the mainstream education system from primary school to graduate school (Leung & Ruan, 2012). Because of WTC plays an important role in language learning, it gradually attracted the attention of Chinese researchers. It is a relatively new research topic in China. It started late and most studies were largely conducted on university students' level. However, junior middle school students are a group of English learners with a special feature because they are confronting with the challenge of the Senior High School Entrance Examination. Besides, Kunming is famous as a tourism city in China, foreign tourists often come to travel. Mastering English has a positive significance for the future of students. Junior middle school students' WTC in English during class is worth exploring. Given that students' WTC plays a vital part in L2 acquisition, making research on willingness to communicate with junior middle school students can help teachers to understand how to motivate students' English speaking and improve the teaching effectiveness.

According to the definition of WTC in L2 from MacIntyre (1998), present study defined "willingness to communicate" as "in the junior middle school English class,

individual students initiate a desire to communicate with their classmates or teachers in English".

1.2 Research Questions

Present study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. To what degree are junior middle school students' willingness to communicate in English inside the classroom?

2. What are the factors that junior middle school students consider can affect their willingness to communicate?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Present study aims to:

1. explore the degree of WTC among Chinese junior middle school students;

2. investigate the factors that junior middle school students consider can affect their WTC.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Participants included 105 junior middle school students in grade 9 of the academic year 2019 from one public school and one private school in Kunming, Yunnan province, China. The instruments were the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ) and Student Interview Outline. The degree of WTC explored in the WTCQ involved various communication tasks during class time which involved interaction with teachers, interaction with classmates, and self-initiated communication. In this study, a translated and adapted Chinese version WTCQ was

utilized to explore the WTC with Chinese junior middle school students. The factors that junior middle school students consider can affect their WTC were also explored. The factors were analyzed based on students' interview results. The findings were presented through descriptive statistics. According to the finding, Chinese junior middle school students' willingness to communicate and pedagogical implications were presented and discussed.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Present study aimed to explore the degree of Chinese junior middle school students' willingness to communicate (WTC) and the factors that they consider can affect their WTC. The results were expected to offer some insights into junior middle school students' English teaching and learning. Furthermore, the results might provide some guidelines for teachers who desired to adjust and optimize their English instruction as well as those students who wish to speak English more.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discussed the overall review of willingness to communicate (WTC), consisting of the definition of WTC in L1 and L2 and its different influencing variables. And the main empirical studies conducted by previous scholars.

2.1 Definitions of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in L1 and L2

2.1.1 Definition of WTC in L1

The concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) is originally proposed in the mid-nineteen (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). It was also comes from some earlier constructs of unwillingness to communicate (Burgoon, 1976), predisposition toward verbal behavior (Mortensen, Amstom, & Lusting, 1997), and shyness (McCroskey & Richmond, 1982).

WTC in L1 was defined as "the probability of engaging in communication when free to choose to do so" (McCroskey & Baer, 1985), with the purpose of explaining the great individual differences of communication behaviors. This concept raised by McCroskey et al. is essentially emphasized its stability in different communication contexts. WTC was seen as a individuality-based and characters predisposition that is quite stable under various communication scenarios and different kinds of recipients (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). These features imply that the intensity of an individual's WTC in a communication scenario (e.g. group discussion) is correlated with his WTC in another communication context (e.g. public speaking).

2.1.2 Definition of WTC in L2

In the mid 1990s, scholars have found that there are significant differences in the communication between L2 and the target language. MacIntyre and Charos (1996) adopted WTC in the area of second language acquisition (SLA). MacIntyre et al

improved the WTC concept in L2 through the combination of personal traits and features of the situation.

WTC is defined in L2 as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998). This kind of readiness determines how often the learner communicates with others in L2. That is, willingness to communicate in L2 will be the last step before communication. MacIntyre believes that WTC in L2 acquisition should not only be regarded as a personality-based, characteristic and stable tendency similar to WTC in L1 acquisition but should also be regarded as a situation variable affected by many other factors.

2.2 Influencing Factors of Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

The research on second language WTC is based on empirical study. WTC in L2 communication is affected by many factors. These factors can be classified as individual factors and social factors in general (Shi, 2008).

2.2.1 Personal Factors of WTC

The early studies of WTC concerned communication in the mother tongue and used it as a individual variables (McCroskey & Baer, 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1991), it is stable under different scenarios and recipients (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). Therefore, it can be seen as regularity in communication behavior of a person varies from person to person, like other factors of individual differences. McCroskey & Richmond (1991) named the variables leading to differences in WTC as "antecedents". The main variables influencing WTC were introversion, self-esteem, communication skill, and communication fear (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991).

Among the individual variables, the two individual characteristics of communicative competence and communication anxiety are considered to be the key

factors in predicting communicative competence (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001; Macintyre & Noels, 1994; McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). Other individual variables, such as gender and age (MacIntyre, Baker, Clement, & Donovan, 2002), attitudes to the international community (Yashima, 2002), anxiety (Hashimoto, 2002) have also been found to influence WTC.

2.2.2 Situational Factors of WTC

Situational factors are a multifaceted category dealing with social encounters in particular environments. Through regular repetition in a specific context of society, communication situation starts being associated with language use and structures that are specific to these situations (Ferguson, 1994). MacIntyre and associates proposed five main determinants of social context: participants, environment, objective, topics, and communication channels. In a second language context, WTC should be regarded as a situational variable that can change in different situations. As a situational variable, WTC in L2 with both short-term and long-lasting effects (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Scholars argued that the decision to initiate communication in specific situations is influenced by situational WTC (Mersereau, Dugandzic, Campbell, & MacIntyre, 1999). The influence of the situation is considered to be short-lived and depends on the specific environment in which a person functions at a specific time. Students with immersion learning have lower communication apprehension, higher WTC and self-awareness, so the bilingual education environment has a greater effect on learners' WTC (Baker & MacIntyre, 2003). WTC can change based on the potential situational variables, such as context or topics (Kang, 2005).

A number of situational factors are considered to directly predict WTC, including interlocutors (Kang, 2005), learning environment (Clément, Baker, & MacIntyre,

2003), classroom environment (Kang, 2005) and so on.

2.3 Previous Studies

According to previous literature, the willingness to communicate questionnaire (WTCQ) and the interview had been widely used by researchers to explore the students' self-reported readiness to engage in discourse and its relationship with influencing factors.

MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod (2002) surveyed 79 junior high school students by using WTCQ. The study aims to explore the influence of language learning orientation and social support on students' WTC. The results show that social support, particularly from friends, is associated with WTC.

Weaver adapted and piloted the WTCQ in the Japanese context. According to the assessment of the adaptation, the Japanese version of WTCQ demonstrated a good index of validity and reliability (Weaver, 2005). He tried to identify context-related factors that influence learners' WTC and used a scale that included a measure of willingness to speak and write in a series of tasks and situations that typically occur in a L2 classroom, such as write paragraphs, role-playing, and translate sentences in native language.

Cao and Philip (2006) did a study to examine the dual characteristics of WTC in L2: trait-like WTC and situational WTC. By means of questionnaire and interviews, participants' trait WTC was measured, factors contributing to their WTC were familiarity with interlocutors, self-confidence, participation of interlocutors and group size (Cao & Philp, 2006).

Xie (2011) examined the degree of correspondence between the WTC of rural students in China and their actual WTC behavior, and the factors that affect their

WTC in the context of EFL. In this study, students' self-report WTC was assessed adapting and using the WTCQ and the finding showed that selected participants' self-reporting of WTC do not necessarily predict their authentic WTC behavior, thus the dual characteristics of WTC are confirmed. A trait-like WTC can determine a person's overall communication tendency, while the situational WTC predicts the decision to start communication in a specific situation (Xie, 2011). Many factors seem to influence their WTC to be determined as self-confidence, self-perceived proficiency, interlocutors' identity, parental influence, and international posture.

Liu, Wang, and Yang (2012) adapted questionnaires in China to explore the diverse factors that affect Chinese students' WTC in English learning. Studies have shown that English learners' WTC is closely related to conversational objects, communicative tasks, and communication forms. It is also closely related to factors such as interest, motivation, self-confidence, and traditional culture (Liu, Wang, & Wang, 2012).

Wang and Liu (2017) utilized the quantitative method and interview to investigate 304 senior high school students WTC in English. From the study results, it can be seen that: Generally, high school students have low WTC. High level of English classroom anxiety has a significant negative impact on students' WTC (Wang & Liu, 2017).

To sum up, researchers had adapted the WTCQ and surveyed students in various research contexts. The key to influencing factors involved group size, social support, self-confidence, interlocutor participation, motivation, character, self-confidence, familiarity with interlocutors, interests, traditional culture, and anxiety. However, Chinese scholars' research objects on L2 WTC were mostly concentrated on college

students. There were few studies related to junior middle school students. Based on the theory of scholars. Through quantitative and qualitative methods to conduct an empirical study on students' WTC. Taking the students from junior middle school as the research objects, investigate students' WTC in English during the class, in order to provide some useful suggestions for junior middle school English teaching.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presented the following topics: (1) research design; (2) population and samples; (3) research instruments; (4) data collection and (5) data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized the quantitative research method to explore junior middle school students' WTC in English during the class and the qualitative method to investigate the factors that participants consider can affect their willingness to communicate.

3.2 Population and Samples

Participants included 105 junior middle school students in grade 9 of the academic year 2019 from one public school and one private school in Kunming, Yunnan province, China. Both schools are the general junior middle schools. Among these 105 junior middle school students of grade nine, there were 55 public school students and 50 private school students. Their average age was 15 years old and the average time of learning English was 6 years. All students have taken part in the questionnaire investigation. Besides, six of them had been interviewed.

3.3 Research Instruments

This study used two instruments. They were The Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ) and Student Interview Outline.

3.3.1 The Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ)

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) aimed to reply the first research question. To measure the participants' own WTC. The results should provide an overall picture of their WTC in English inside the classroom. Let participants understand the items better and to get more reliable data, this questionnaire was presented in the Chinese

version. The questionnaire had 14 items adapted from the original 42 items pool. It was adapted from Cao & Philip's (2006) and Weaver's study of willingness to communicate. It is because the present study only focused on the speaking. The modified questionnaire has 14 items in total.

The questionnaire includes a variety of communication tasks inside the classroom. These communication tasks are very common. Such as class discussion, class activities and so on. There were 4 items for interaction with teachers, 4 items for interaction with classmates, and 6 items for self-initiated communication. 14 items were presented in the format of a five-point Likert scale. Students rated from 1 to 5 according to the extent which their perception agree with these statements:

'1' means 'Never willing'

'2' means 'Hardly willing'

'3' means 'Sometimes willing'

'4' means 'Often willing'

'5' means 'Always willing'

3.3.1.1 Validation of the WTCQ

To evaluate the validity of the WTCQ, the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) form was sent to three language teachers who had experience in language teaching. Appendix D presented the background Information of these three experts. The overall IOC value of this questionnaire was 0.71, indicating the validity and acceptability of the WTCQ. Appendix C presented the validation of the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) given by three experts.

3.3.1.2 Reliability of the WTCQ

In order to assess the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted.

The questionnaire was distributed to 50 students of one junior middle school. The questionnaire was delivered in hard copies. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 22.0. The reliability of the questionnaire will be revealed. The questionnaire's Reliability Coefficient was 0.875, indicating the high reliability of WTCQ.

3.3.2 Student Interview Outline

A semi-structured interview (see Appendix B) was conducted with 6 students. Six open-ended questions were prepared beforehand. There was one question for students to indicate the factors they consider can affect their WTC. Therefore, the influencing factors can be explored through interviews from students.

The combination of these two research methods permitted the author to get more complete data and a better understanding of the research topics.

3.4 Data Collection

After getting the permission of the English teacher of the two classes, a questionnaire investigation was conducted. The questionnaire was distributed to the target participants in hard copies. Before responding to the questionnaire, the teacher will highlight the instructions, make sure the participants understand the purpose of it, and the anonymous nature of the data collection process. All copies of the questionnaire were collected. As for the interview section of 6 participants, the whole interview was conducted in Chinese and had recorded through cell-phone.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis for research question 1

Research question 1 of this study aimed to explore to what degree are junior middle school students' WTC in English inside the class. The data was drawn from the Chinese version of Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ). To

analyze the results, mean score and standard deviation (S.D) were essential. Furthermore, the mean value of each item has also been analyzed (see Appendix E).

Data analysis for research question 2

Research question 2 aimed to investigate the factors that junior middle school students consider can affect their willingness to communicate. Content analysis was applied to indicate the results.

4. FINDINGS

This chapter presented the findings of the study regarding willingness to communicate of junior middle school students along with the factors that students considered can affect their WTC.

The first part of this chapter presented the descriptive statistics of students' WTC in English inside the classroom. The mean value and S.D. of the students were presented. Then the results of the interview for students are discussed to probe more information.

4.1 Willingness to Communicate

Research question 1: To what degree are junior middle school students' willingness to communicate in English inside the classroom?

This research question aimed to explore the overall picture of junior middle school students' self-reported WTC. There are two research tools in this study. The first research instrument is Chinese version of Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ). In order to solve the research question one, participants were asked to rate their WTC in English on a scale from 1 ('never willing') to 5 ('always willing). Options include different kinds of communication tasks they may encounter during class. Based on the scale below (Table 1), the means score of their results were analyzed and interpreted. The cutoff points were set at a range (interval) of 0.5, but 1 for those in between, based on the nature of the curve of normal distribution in which the intervals of the two tails are narrower than those of the middle (D. Matte, 2014). Table 1 shows the scale rating of students' WTC.

Table 1 The Interpretation Scale of Mean Scores for the WTC Level Perceived by Participants

Range of Mean Scores	Interpretation
1.00 - 1.49	= Never willing
1.50 - 2.49	= Hardly willing
2.50 - 3.49	= Sometimes willing
3.50 - 4.49	= Often willing
4.50 - 5.00	= Always willing

Table 2 shows public school participants', private school participants' and an overall junior middle school students' WTC. Minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation are used to analyze junior middle school students' WTC in English. As stated before, for WTC in English, the scores from 1 to 5 mean that the degree of WTC in English from being 'Never willing' to 'Always willing'. Therefore, the higher the value displayed, the more willing the students were to communicate and vice versa.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of junior middle school students' WTC in English inside the classroom

Types of Students	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Public School Students' WTC	55	1.14	4.28	2.8532	.7579
Private School Students' WTC	50	1.71	4.21	2.85	.6686
Overall Students' WTC	105	1.14	4.28	2.8517	.7124

Table 2 presents the results of the participants' WTC in English between public school and private school. It can be seen that the mean score of the public school students' (Mpu=2.8532) is slightly higher than those of the private school's (Mpr=2.85). The mean of overall students' WTC is 2.8517, and its standard

deviation is .7124, it indicates that students thought they were sometimes willing to participate in communication situations inside the class, using English. Supported by the results from the interview, participants are sometimes willing to communicate in English inside the classroom under the following five situations: (1) Students are capable of answering the questions; (2) Students are in a good mood; (3) They are extroverted; (4) Good classroom atmosphere and (5) Teacher raised the questions in English.

4.2 Influencing Factors

Research question 2: What are the factors that junior middle school students consider can affect their willingness to communicate?

This research question aimed to investigate the influencing factors of students' WTC. Interview for six participants selected as the exploration of the factors that junior middle school students consider can affect their WTC.

The interview contains questions. They can be categorized from three aspects. Question 1 relates to participants' awareness of WTC in English inside the class. Questions 2 to 5 are about the factors that junior middle school students consider can affect their WTC. Question 6 is about students' perceptions and suggestions for their English class and teacher.

4.2.1 Awareness of Junior Middle School Students' WTC in English

All interviewees were very positive towards the concept of WTC. Participants thought it was necessary to cultivate their WTC. Three of them mentioned it would be beneficial for their future employment and travel abroad.

S2 said, "It will be very useful to me if I travel abroad in the future."

S4 said, "This is necessary for my future career, it could help me to find a nice

job."

4.2.2 Analysis of the Influencing Factors of Students' WTC in English

Data from the interviews revealed the factors that junior middle students considered can influence their WTC in English. These factors can be divided into two main categories, they are personal factors and situational factors.

4.2.2.1 Personal Factors

Personality. Personality factors are a type of personal difference, and different personalities have different effects on WTC. Two interviewees mentioned introverts are unwilling to communicate in English with others.

S2 said: "My personality influences me a lot on whether or not I am willing to communicate with others in English."

S5 said: "I'm outgoing, I like to communicate with my teacher very much."

Motivation. Students' motivation is an important factor for them to become a good L2 communicators. In the current study, motivation was also found to play a role in the area of WTC. Students who had a strong motivation tended to be more willing to communicate in English.

S2 said: "I want to travel abroad, so I am willing to talk in English."

S5 said: "I wish to learn English well, so I will improve it by communicating with others in English."

S6 said: "I am going to go abroad for further study, so I am willing to look for more chance to express myself."

Emotions. Both positive or negative emotions have an impact on students' WTC in second language communication. The positive emotions that students mentioned included excitement, move and joy. The negative feeling involved embarrassment,

shyness. Two interviewees talked about emotions affect their WTC.

S3 said: "Whenever I speak English, I feel nervous, so I don't like to speak English."

S5 said: "If I'm in a bad mood, I will not communicate with my teacher."

4.2.2.2 Situational Factors

The class atmosphere. Classroom atmosphere involves 'the mood, emotions or climate sensed and shared by the students' (Peng, 2012). For junior middle school students, they are not lacking English learning motivation. But many junior middle school classes are silent. Students are used to listening to teachers' lectures. Therefore, a kind of active class atmosphere is helpful for arousing students' WTC. Under such an active atmosphere, students will be influenced by each other, and inactive ones may try to use English as their peers. Three interviewees mentioned the atmosphere of the class, they mentioned if their classmates speak English actively, they are more willing to participate in them.

S2 said: "A friendly classroom atmosphere will encourage me to communicate with my teacher."

S5 said: "In English class, if my classmates speak English actively, I'm also willing to participate in them."

S6 said: "The forms of classroom activities that teacher organized can affect me on whether or not I am willing to take part in English communication in class."

Teachers' way of asking questions. Due to English education in the Chinese context, some teachers who may use Chinese to evoke a question during class-time. At this time, students will not answer the questions in English. Students think to use the same version of asking to answer the question is more appropriate. Interviewees

mentioned if the teacher asks questions in Chinese, they will answer the questions in Chinese.

S1 said: "It depends on the teachers' way of asking questions. Generally, teachers ask the questions in English, I will be able to answer the questions in English."

S4 said: "If the teacher asks questions in Chinese, I will answer the question in Chinese and vice versa."

According to the collected data, the factors that junior middle school students consider can affect their willingness to communicate are their personality, motivation, emotions, the class atmosphere, and teachers' way of asking questions.

4.2.2.3 Students' Perceptions

Question 6 is about students' perceptions of their English class and teacher. For the class, three interviewees mentioned about adding more activities in the classroom.

S2 said, "I love classroom activities, if the teacher could arrange more activities during class, I will communicate with others in English."

S5 said, "Teachers teach in small classes and try to let everyone have the opportunity to communicate".

S6 said, "Games could be a good way to learn English, I hope teacher could play more games in the classroom."

For teachers, students mentioned the type of teacher they wanted and their wishes of the teacher. Three interviewees expressed that the teacher should use more English during class-time, so they will be more willing to communicate.

S1 said, "Teachers should use English more and give an English context and atmosphere."

S3 said: "If teachers can give me more encouragement, I will be willing to speak

more English."

S4 said, "I wish my teacher could have a sense of humor, so I will be more willing to learn English."

This part shows the results of the quantitative study acquired by questionnaires through data analysis and qualitative study including interviews. Junior middle school students' WTC in English has been investigated through the questionnaire. The influencing factors have been explored thorough interviews from students. At the same time, students' perceptions of how to promote junior middle school students' WTC in English have also been obtained.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presented a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study has explored Chinese junior middle school students' WTC and the influencing factors of their WTC. Participants included 105 grade 9 students in the academic year 2019 at two junior middle schools in China. The research instruments consisted of Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ) and Student Interview Outline. The data has gone through descriptive statistics and content analysis.

The result revealed that the participants perceived themselves to be sometimes willing to engage in communication situations in the classroom, using English. Moreover, the factors that junior middle school students considered can affect their WTC can be classified as personal factors (Personality, Motivation, Emotions) and situational factors (The classroom atmosphere, Teachers' way of asking questions).

5.2 Discussion

The results of this study were discussed in relation to the previous literature.

5.2.1 Willingness to Communicate of Chinese EFL students

The mean of overall students' WTC is 2.8517, and its standard deviation is .7124, it indicates that students thought they were sometimes willing to participate in communication situations inside the class, using English. Supported by the results from the interview, participates are sometimes willing to communicate in English inside the classroom under the following five situations: (1) Students are capable of

answering the questions; (2) Students are in a good mood; (3) They are extroverted; (4) Good classroom atmosphere and (5) Teacher raised the questions in English. The selected Chinese junior middle school students' WTC is not high. The results is consistent with Wen and Clément's study, revealing students showed a low level of WTC (Wen & Clément, 2003). Moreover, the results also confirmed the findings of studies that Chinese middle school students showed a low level of willingness to communicate in English (Wang & Liu, 2017).

5.2.2 The Influencing Factors of Willingness to Communicate

In this study, the influencing factors of students' WTC are categorized into personal factors and situational factors. The results revealed that students' WTC is influenced by several factors.

The personal factors that junior middle school students considered can affect their WTC were personality, motivation, and emotions. These were consistent with the finding from Fu's study. Motivation, personality influenced students' WTC in English inside the classroom (Fu, Wang, & Wang, 2012). One participant mentioned that his mood highly affects his willingness to communicate.

The situational factors that junior middle school students considered can affect their WTC were the class atmosphere and the teachers' way of asking questions. The results supported the findings of Hassan's study. Classroom atmosphere and teacher have significant effects on students' WTC inside the English class (Hassan & Irena, 2018).

The results arouse English teachers' attention to students' WTC. English teachers will try their best to help students to be more willing to express themselves in English.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Pedagogical Implications

From the study of Kang in 2005, WTC is seen as the focus of SLA, current research is consistent with it. WTC needs to be seen as an important component of SLA (Kang, 2005). From the study of MacIntyre in 1998, the ultimate purpose of language education is to promote students' WTC. Their willingness to talk in order to learn (Skehan, 1989). In China, English is taught as a foreign language, most of the learning and use of English takes place in English classes. Therefore, it is very important for Chinese students to promote and improve their WTC in English. Based on these research findings, suggestions and advice on improving students' WTC were provided, especially in oral English communication from the view of junior middle school students.

The results show that students' WTC is influenced by several factors. Present study has found individual factors that can influence students' WTC were personality, emotions, and motivation. According to these factors, junior middle school students can try to improve their own WTC in the following aspects. Students should: cultivate their awareness towards WTC consciously; give the communication competence a positive evaluation; try to find the motivational factors (e.g. employment or travel); maintain a positive mood during class-time.

In the Chinese EFL context, the role of the teacher is very important in cultivating students' WTC. Given the results of this study, situational factors affect students' WTC include the classroom atmosphere and teachers' way of asking questions. Suggestions for teachers will be discussed as follows. Teachers should: communicate and interact more with students; speak more English and create an English communication context; change the traditional teaching mode and make the

lecture lively and interesting; arrange more group activities (Cao & Philp, 2006), so students have more occasions and opportunities to express themselves. Group activities have the potential to increase learning (Stevens & Slavin, 1990). Students can communicate with each other in group discussions. The activity will promote students' English expression so as to improve their English ability.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The research has some shortcomings in some places. The following parts are the shortcomings of the study and recommendations for future study. First, the number of subjects is not big enough, they come from one grade of junior middle school, which can't well represent all junior middle school students. Therefore, future experimental studies could be conducted in enlarging the sample to choose different grades in junior middle school and participants from more schools. Second, the present study only investigated the influencing factors that junior middle school students considered can affect their WTC. Therefore, Studies focusing on how the influencing factors affect WTC are suggested, so as to acquire a better understanding of junior middle school students' WTC in English during classtime.

REFERENCES

Baker, S. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2003). The role of gender and immersion in communication and second language orientations. *Language Learning, 53*, 65-96. doi:Doi 10.1111/0023-8333.00224

Burgoon, J. K. (1976). The Unwillingness to Communicate Scale: Development and Validation. *Communication Monographs, 43*, 60-69.

Cao, Y. Q., & Philp, J. (2006). Interactional context and willingness to communicate: A comparison of behavior in whole class, group and dyadic interaction. *System, 34*, 480-493.

Clément, R., Baker, S. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2003). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The effects of context, norms, and vitality. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 22*, 190-209.

Ferguson, C. A. (1994). Dialect, register, and genre: Working assumptions about conventionalization. *Sociolinguistic perspectives on register*(Oxford University Press), 15-30.

Fu, L., Wang, X., & Wang, Y. (2012). The Research on Willingness to Communicate in Chinese Students' EFL Study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 3*, 112-117.

Hashimoto, Y. (2002). Motivation and Willingness to Communicate as Predictors of Reported L2 Use: The Japanese ESL Context. *Second Language Studies, 20*, 29-70.

Hassan, S., & Irena, K. (2018). Dynamics of factors underlying willingness to communicate in a second language. *The Language Learning Journal*, 1753-

2167.

Hu, G. (2002). English language education in China, Japan, and Singapore. (National Technological University), 1-78.

Jackson, K. M., Roberts, M. E., Colby, S. M., Barnett, N. P., Abar, C. C., & Merrill, J. E. (2014). Willingness to Drink as a Function of Peer Offers and Peer Norms in Early Adolescence. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, 75*(3), 404-414. doi:DOI 10.15288/jsad.2014.75.404

Kang, S. J. (2005). Dynamic emergence of situational willingness to communicate in a second language. *System, 33*, 277-292.

Leung, C., & Ruan, J. (2012). *Perspectives on teaching and learning Chinese literacy in China*. New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Liu, F., Wang, X. S., & Wang, Y. (2012). The Research on Willingness to Communicate in Chinese Students' EFL Study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 3*, 112-117.

MacIntyre, Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Conrod, S. (2001). Willingness to. Communicate, Social Support and Language Learning Orientations of Immersion Students. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 23*, 369-388.

MacIntyre, Baker, S. C., Clement, R., & Donovan, L. A. (2002). Sex and age effects on willingness to communicate, anxiety, perceived competence, and L2 motivation among junior high school French immersion students. *Language Learning, 52*(3), 537-564. doi:Doi 10.1111/1467-9922.00226

MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A situational Model of L2 Confidence and

Affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal, 82*, 545-562.

Macintyre, & Noels, K. A. (1994). Communication Apprehension, Perceived Competence, and Actual Competence in a 2nd-Language. *Canadian Psychology-Psychologie Canadienne, 35*(2a), 34-34. Retrieved from <Go to ISI>://WOS:A1994NQ80700088

Macintyre, P. D., & Legatto, J. J. (2011). A Dynamic System Approach to Willingness to Communicate: Developing an Idiodynamic Method to Capture Rapidly Changing Affect. *Applied Linguistics, 32*(2), 149-171. doi:10.1093/applin/amq037

Matsuda, A. (2017). Preparing teachers to teach English as an international language. *Multilingual Matters*.

McCroskey, & Baer, J. E. (1985). Willingness to Communicate: The Construct and its Measurement Presented at the Annual Convention of the Speech Communication Association. *Denver, CO*.

McCroskey, & Richmond, V. P. (1982). Communication Apprehension and Shyness: Conceptual and Operational Distinctions. *Central States Speech Journal, 33*, 458-468.

McCroskey, & Richmond, V. P. (1991). Willingness to Communicate: A Cognitive View. *Communication, Cognition and Anxiety*, 19-37.

Mersereau, H., Dugandzic, R., Campbell, R., & MacIntyre, P. (1999). Health risk perceptions of Sydney residents: Risk communication of Sydney tar pond information. *Epidemiology, 10*(4), S91-S91. Retrieved from <Go to ISI>://WOS:000080987100267

Mortensen, D. C., Amstom, P. H., & Lusting, M. (1997). The Measurement of Verbal Predispositions: Scale Development and Application. *Human Communication Research, 3*, 146-158.

Peng, J. E. (2012). Towards an ecological understanding of willingness to communicate in EFL classrooms in China. *System, 40*(2), 203-213. doi:10.1016/j.system.2012.02.002

Shi, Y. Z. (2008). A study of Chinese English learners' willingness to communicate inside and outside the classroom. (Shandong University).

Skehan, P. (1989). *Individual differences in second-language learning*. London ; New York New York, NY: Edward Arnold ;Distributed in the USA by Routledge, Chapman and Hall.

Stevens, R. J., & Slavin, R. E. (1990). When cooperative learning improves the achievement of students with mild disabilities: a response to Tateyama-Sniezek. *Except Child, 57*(3), 276-280. doi:10.1177/001440299105700311

Wang, W., & Liu, H. (2017). An Empirical Study of Senior High School Students' Willingness to Communicate in English in the Chinese Context. *Research Gate*. doi:10.12783/dtssehs/mess2017/12163

Weaver, C. (2005). Using the Rash Model to develop a measure of second language learners' willingness to communicate within a language classroom. *Journal of Applied Measurement, 6*, 396-415.

Wen, W. P., & Clément, R. (2003). A Chinese conceptualization of willingness to communicate in ESL. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 16*, 18-38.

Xie, Q. (2011). Willingness to communicate in English among secondary school

students in the rural Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. (Auckland University of Technology).

Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context. *Modern Language Journal, 86*(1), 54-66. doi:Doi 10.1111/1540-4781.00136

Appendix A: Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (WTCQ)

Personal Information:

Gender: _____.   Age ____.   Learning English for ____ years.

Instructions: Below you will read a number of different statements which you might encounter in the English classroom. I would like you to tell me how willing you would be to do each of these in English. By 'willing' I mean 'showing strong readiness' so please circle the number after each statement that describes the level of your willingness, using the following scales.

1 = Never   2 = Hardly   3 = Sometimes   4 = Often   5 = Always

1.I volunteer an answer in English when the teacher asks a question in class.

<div align="right">1 2 3 4 5</div>

2. I answer a question in English when I am called upon by the teacher.

<div align="right">1 2 3 4 5</div>

3. I talk to my teacher in English.   1 2 3 4 5

4. I ask the teacher a question in English in front of all my classmates. 1 2 3 4 5

5. During a group discussion, I ask the teacher a question in English privately.

<div align="right">1 2 3 4 5</div>

6. During a group discussion, I present my own opinions in English.   1 2 3 4 5

7. I say 'sorry' in English when I am wrong.   1 2 3 4 5

8. I help classmates answer a question in English.   1 2 3 4 5

9. I use English for role-playing activity during English class.   1 2 3 4 5

10. I use the dialogue from the English textbook to communicate with my classmates.

<div align="right">1 2 3 4 5</div>

11. I say 'thank you' in English when my classmates help me.   1 2 3 4 5

12. I introduce myself briefly in English.   1 2 3 4 5

13. I greet my classmates or teacher in English.   1 2 3 4 5

14. I talk to my desk-mate in English.   1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B: Student Interview Outline

1. Purpose of the interview:

This interview is to better understand students' willingness to communicate in English and find out the relevant factors that affect their willingness to communicate.

2. Interview students:

gender:

Interview time:

This interview will take a face-to-face interview, all the interview information will be recorded and analyzed.

3. Interview questions

(1) What's your opinion of cultivating your willingness to communicate in English?

(2) In English class, are you willing to speak English? Why?

(3) During English class, do you often use English to communicate with your teacher or classmate? Why?

(4) What factors do you think will influence your willingness to communicate in English class? (For example, English ability, personality, feelings, motivation…)

(5) In English classroom, did you express what you wanted to say? If not, give me one example and tell me the reason.

(6) If you want to improve your willingness to communicate in English, what advice do you have for English classes or teachers?

Appendix C: The Analysis of the Index of Item Objective Congruence

Items	Analysis of IOC from Experts			Score	Results
	1	2	3		
1.Volunteer an answer in English when the teacher asks a question in class.	+1	+1	+1	1	Valid
2. Answer a question in English when you are called upon by the teacher.	+1	+1	+1	1	Valid
3.Talk to your teacher in English before or after class.	+1	+1	+1	1	Valid
4.Ask the teacher a question in English in class.	+1	+1	+1	1	Valid
5.Ask the teacher a question in English in private.	0	0	-1	0	Modified
6.Present your own opinions in English in class.	+1	0	+1	0.666	Valid
7.Participate in pair discussions in English in class.	+1	0	+1	0.666	Valid
8.Say sorry in English when you are wrong.	+1	+1	+1	1	Valid
9.Help others answer a question in English.	+1	0	+1	0.666	Valid
10.Sing a song in English.	+1	0	0	0.333	Delete
11.Read out the conversations in English from the textbook.	+1	0	+1	0.666	Modified
12.Say 'thank you' in English when your classmates help you.	+1	+1	+1	1	Valid
13.Introduce yourself in English without looking at notes.	+1	0	+1	0.666	Valid
14. Greet your classmates in English.	+1	+1	+1	1	Valid
15. Give a speech with notes in class.	0	0	+1	0.333	Modified

Appendix D: List of Experts Validating the Instruments

1. Ruedeerath Chusanachoti, Ph.D.

Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University

2. Chansongklod Gajaseni, Ph.D.

Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University

3. Jie Wang

English as an international language, Chulalongkorn University

Appendix E: Analysis of the Mean Value of Each Items

Item 1: I volunteer an answer in English when the teacher asks a question in class.	2.49
Item 2: I answer a question in English when I am called upon by the teacher.	3.22
Item 3: I talk to my teacher in English.	2.39
Item 4: I ask the teacher a question in English in front of all my classmates.	2.11
Item 5: During a group discussion, I ask the teacher a question in English privately.	2.21
Item 6: During a group discussion, I present my own opinions in English.	2.47
Item 7: I say 'sorry' in English when I am wrong.	3.77
Item 8: I help classmates answer a question in English.	2.62
Item 9: I use English for role-playing activity during English class.	3
Item 10: I use the dialogue from the English textbook to communicate with my classmates.	3.08
Item 11: I say 'thank you' in English when my classmates help me.	3.78
Item 12: I introduce myself briefly in English.	3.01
Item 13: I greet my classmates or teacher in English.	3.21
Item 14: I talk to my desk-mate in English.	2.55

VITA

NAME   Siyu Sun

DATE OF BIRTH   11 March 1996

PLACE OF BIRTH   Yunnan, China