

Level of Willingness to Communicate (WTC^{CR} Classroom context) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC^{RL} Real life context) in ESL among Pakistani ESL Learners at BS Level: A Comparative Study

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Received on: 05-10-2025

Accepted on: 08-11-2025

Abstract

The people of Pakistan want to communicate in English in their daily life. There are 73 local languages spoken in Pakistan, English is one of them (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2009). The language used in British rule and till today while educating children of the elite class is English while Urdu is the language of education for the common masses. The issue which ESL learners of Pakistan have to tackle is their difficulty in speaking English despite the fact that English speaking is not emphasized at school and there is also no focus on Willingness to Communicate (WTC) which means “the intention and desire to initiate communication” (MacIntyre et al., 1998). In this research, an attempt has been made to find out the level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. The study was conducted with the students studying under the Masters and BS programs of the universities of Pakistan. About 1140 students participated in the study coming from 10 different universities of Pakistan. This research study was quantitative and descriptive. It was non-experimental research and therefore, survey method has been used for conducting this research. Data collection instruments used for purpose of the data collection were the self-reported survey questionnaires. SPSS-20 software was used for the data analysis. Simple percentages and Chi-square were used as a statistical instrument to analyze the data collected. The willingness to communication of both types WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} were found to be in the category of 'Often Willing to Communicate'. The analysis performed using Chi-Square test, however, demonstrates that the difference of the levels of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} is highly significant. Based on the results of the study, recommendations were suggested.

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate (WTC); WTC^{CR} (Classroom context); WTC^{RL} (Real life context); ESL

Introduction

English is taught in Pakistani educational institutions in very poor circumstances with minimum resources and it is deemed the real cause behind the poor performance of the ESL learners (Warsi (2004). There is insufficient emphasis on teaching the English language in the Pakistani educational system. It can be seen that Pakistani ESL students at both secondary and higher levels perform poorly in oral communication skills. As mentioned by Shamim

(2011), "The current proficiency in the English language of school and university graduates cannot meet this popular demand for English in Pakistan." (p. 6) Mushtaq (2014) also highlighted this problem that exists with Pakistani ESL learners in their ability to perform in the area of oral communication.

This is evident from the following excerpt "Whereas, Pakistani students find themselves unable to express their thoughts in a confident manner. The English speaking people in Pakistan also face a lot of difficulties in oral communication" (p. 278).

In Pakistani education system, Teaching of English neglects speaking skills. Any language can be taught and learnt through four essential language abilities that include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Historically, the ESL has mainly concentrated on reading and writing skills when teaching of English as a second language in Pakistan is concerned. Listening and speaking skills have become the areas which have always been the most ignored when teaching English in Pakistan. Pakistani educational system includes diverse educational institutions including four types of schools running in the country. The British Council assigned a research project on the current state of ELT in Pakistan to Hywel Coleman in 2010. According to Coleman, there are four types of schools in Pakistan:

- Firstly, there are Private Elite English Medium Schools. They are in limited numbers in the country. They provide very costly educational facilities. Such type of schools can be termed as real English Medium Schools, as they have been established only for the teaching of the powerful classes of the country.
- Secondly, Private Non-Elite English medium schools do exist. The fees charged by these schools are moderate, and the middle class can afford to pay them. These schools have become extremely popular in both rural and urban areas because of being termed as English Medium Schools. Such schools cannot be termed as "English Medium" schools as per Andrabi, Das, Vishwanath and Khwaja (2009).
- Thirdly there are the Government Urdu Medium Schools. The education is imparted free of cost in these schools, not only that but books are also distributed free by the government. Even then these schools cannot be considered as English medium schools as English language is studied here compulsory from year one to ten.
- Fourthly, there are Dini Madaris in which Islamic oriented education is being imparted. There is no relation of these religious institutions with the teaching of English. Therefore, they are also known as Urdu medium / Arabic medium.

Language policies have been established by Government of Pakistan in regard to position of English within the education system of Pakistan. The English +Urdu policy has been adopted but is still in the process of implementation in the country. Indeed, a situation was created which was termed as "Urdu-English conflict. Shamim (2011) described this particular situation as "two streams of education in Pakistan" and Mansoor (2003) presented it as "dual medium policy". This policy resulted in simultaneous running of Urdu medium and English medium schools based on education policies framed from time to time by Government of Pakistan. In such diversified schooling system, the fate of teaching and learning English remained same for decades.

Literature Review

Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

WTC is the “readiness of an individual to participate in discourse when s/he is given opportunities” by language experts. But for MacIntyre et al. (1998), WTC was considered as “readiness to initiate discourse with a particular interlocutor or group of interlocutors at a certain point in time by using a second language” (p. 547).

It is interesting to note that the theory behind the idea of willingness to communicate (WTC) is based on the works of (Burgoon, 1976). She was the first one to coin the term “unwillingness to communicate” (UWTC). The author, while explaining individual differences which cause different types of language behaviors, has mentioned the “unwillingness to communicate” as an undesirable behavior pattern among second language learners. Initially, the objective was to build up “Unwillingness to Communicate Scale” (UCS), which would evaluate UWTC level of language learners. According to UCS, there are two sub-factors that make up UWTC: approach avoidance and reward.

As far as the researchers on language are concerned, the WTC phenomenon has been constructed in such a manner that several affective components, as well as some individual differences, influence the WTC phenomenon in an individual. WTC may be regarded as a ‘trait’ characteristic of the person and at the same time it is a ‘situation-based’ variable.

Trait Like WTC

Initially, the theory of WTC was developed with respect to the communication of the first language. The WTC trait has always been thought of as a relatively stable aspect of an individual's personality. As put by McCroskey & Richmond (1991), “WTC is a personality-based trait, similar to predisposition, that is relatively stable across a range of communication situations” (p. 23).

McCroskey (1992) defines WTC as “a personality-based predisposition which gives the communicator freedom whether to communicate or not” (p. 17). It implies that the person concerned will exhibit a fixed and constant degree of WTC in different communication settings.

Situational WTC

In the context of transfer of the idea of WTC to second language communicative situations, whereas traditionally WTC was considered a personality-based trait like construct, now WTC is regarded as a situation-based construct. It suggests that the extent of WTC of an individual will be different from one communicative situation to another. The communicative situations may be such as follows:

- Level of formality
- Level of familiarity with the topic
- Level of familiarity with the interlocutor

McCroskey, & Baer (1985)

McCroskey, & Baer (1985) changed the concept of UWTC (Burgoon, 1976) into WTC with its positive perspective. Both these scholars have been stressing the problem of the measurement of WTC. Their main goal in their research study was to make an effective and

reliable measure to measure WTC. They pointed out that WTC is basically personality related and varies with the communicative situation and they stressed that the WTC of a person decreases in the presence of large number of audiences, formal communicative situation and formal relationship with the audience.

McCroskey and Baer (1985) created an index that contained two domains to assess the level of WTC in the L1 environment. The first domain consists of four communicative contexts, namely public speaking; speaking in meetings; speaking in small groups; and speaking in dyads. The second domain, on the other hand, consists of three types of interpersonal relationships: strangers, acquaintances and friends. The WTC scale has 12 types of communicative events. These 12 communicative events were used to formulate 12 statements for the WTC scale. The scale has a total of 20 items where eight items out of 20 are used as filler items. Later on, the same scale was used by MacIntyre, & Charos (1996) in the L2 setting and thus this led to the development of WTC Pyramid Model (MacIntyre, et al. 1998), which attempts to provide explanation of WTC through various variables.

Statement of the Problem

The basic aim of Pakistani ESL teachers is to prepare their learners for the exams. As explained by Malik (2010) cited in Coleman (2010): "... the role of teaching English in Pakistani schools is basically aimed at preparing pupils for their examinations. Then, passing these examinations allows them to obtain job opportunities" (p.16). The only concern of ESL teachers in preparing their learners is to get them ready for the exams, which eventually led to what we call "Formula teaching or Selective Studies". In the case of "Formula teaching or Selective Studies", the teaching activity of such teachers is just limited to the selected parts of the syllabus, for example, the examiners require their students to prepare a formal letter writing or personal letter writing for the paper in English Composition at the intermediate level, then such teachers use this chance to teach only one out of these two topics to their students. No one can deny the fact that English is now the language of the examinations in Science courses both at the college/university level and even for tests conducted for recruitment/admission into various colleges/universities, Central Superior Services, Provincial Civil Services, Provincial Management Services, Medical and Dental College Admission Test, National Aptitude Test, Graduate Assessment Test, etc.; therefore, it is not surprising that learners as well as teachers are now developing interest in test-oriented instruction of ESL.

This indicates that the government of Pakistan has failed to tackle the issues of ESL teaching and English as medium of instruction EMI in an appropriate and effective manner in many commissions, policies and white papers issued time to time during their respective governments. The consequence is that the issue of ESL and EMI continued to be vague both for ESL instructors as well as learners. Mansoor (2003) has pointed out that even the official policy of using English medium of instruction at higher educational institutions is one of the failures because the reality of classroom practice shows that amalgamation of two languages continued to exist in the classroom.

It is observed that the ESL learners who have learnt the English for 14 years are not able to communicate in English. As stated earlier, English is a compulsory subject from 1st to 10th grade of school. It is further a compulsory subject in intermediate level (undergraduate) as

well as in graduate level in university or college education. There is no scope to improve their skills to speak English after 12-14 years of learning English language. All these have contributed towards the poor performance of the Pakistani students in oral communication skills, which is the reason that the universities have introduced English language courses at post-graduation level and at BS level with different names such as communication skills, writing skills, speaking skills, study skills, language for academic purposes and ESP courses etc. Hence, it is highly necessary that English language should focus on the communication skills and willingness of the learners to speak English which is termed as willingness to communicate (WTC).

Research Questions

1. What is the level of WTC^{CR} in class context among Pakistani BS level students?
2. What is the level WTC^{RL} in real life context among Pakistani BS level students?
3. Is there any significant difference between level of WTC^{CR} in classroom context and WTC^{RL} in real-life context among Pakistani BS level students?

Research Methodology

The present study is of a descriptive and quantitative type and survey research technique was utilized for studying the problem at hand. The data for analyzing WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} were obtained using the help of a survey questionnaire.

Population

The entire population of this study comprised all students who were enrolled at university level in Pakistan. This population was composed of students having 12-14 years of background in ESL education as a mandatory subject in their schools and colleges.

Sample

Sampling process is done by using random sampling method and the subjects were taken from 10 universities located in Pakistan. The total number of samples was 1200 BS level students, out of which only 1140 completely filled and valid questionnaires have been used for analysis.

Tool of Research

The method of data collection that was used in the study entailed administering of survey questionnaires, which were based on the Likert scale, in order to acquire the relevant data from the participants. There were two types of questionnaires used in the data gathering procedure:

Questionnaire A was used as an adapted version of WTC^{CR} Scale from Pattapong (2010) in order to gather the necessary data to establish the level of WTC^{CR}.

Questionnaire B was used as an adapted version of WTC^{RL} Scale from McCroskey, & Richmond (2013) in order to obtain data for assessing WTC^{RL}.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of data was performed with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences,

version 20). The process of data analysis involved simple percentage and value of Chi-square.

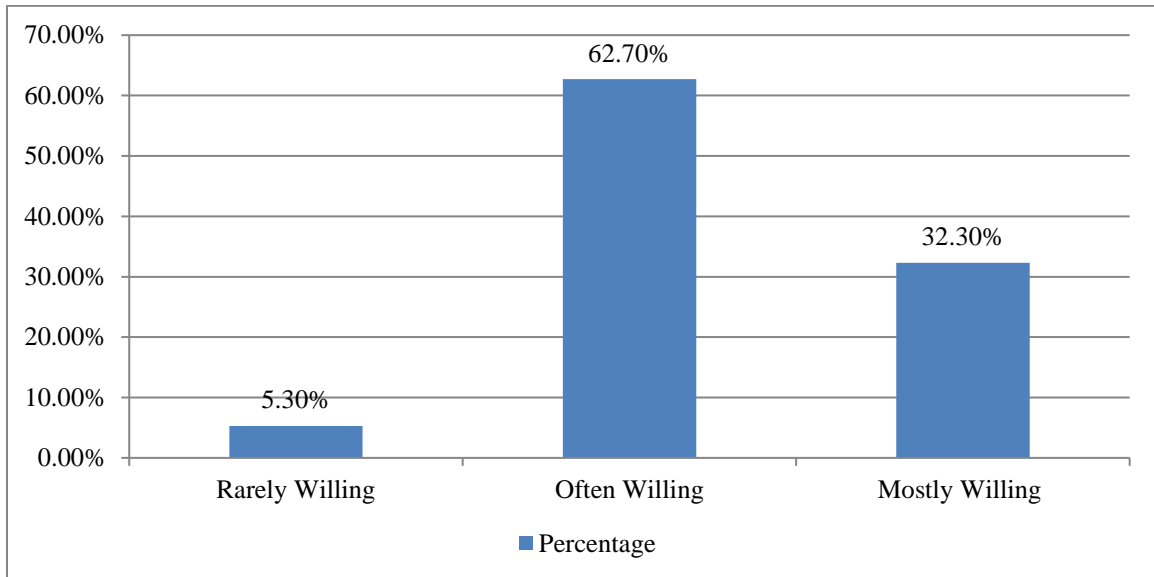
Research Question 1

What is the level of WTC^{CR} in class context among Pakistani BS level students?

Table 1: Willingness to Communicate in Classroom Context WTC^{CR}

Willingness to Communicate in Classroom Context WTC ^{CR}		
	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely Willing	60	5.3%
Often Willing	715	62.7%
Mostly Willing	365	32.3%

The Table 1 shows that out of 1140 respondents, 5.3% (f=60) ‘rarely’, 62.7% (f=715) ‘often’ and 32.0% (f=365) were ‘mostly’ willing to communicate in ESL in class room context (WTC^{CR}). These results are also presented through Graph 1 below.



Graph 1: Willingness to Communicate in Classroom Context WTC^{CR}

Research Question 2

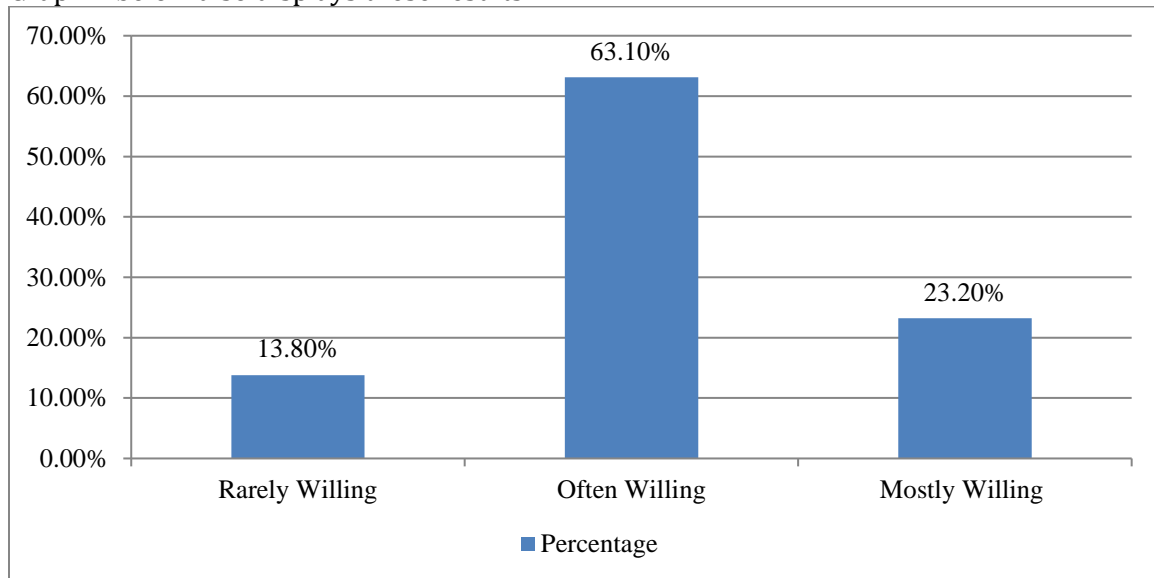
What is the level WTC^{RL} in real life context among Pakistani BS level students?

Table 2: Willingness to Communicate in Classroom Context WTC^{RL}

Willingness to Communicate in Classroom Context WTC ^{RL}		
	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely Willing	157	13.8%
Often Willing	719	63.1%
Mostly Willing	264	23.2%

The Table 2 shows that out of 1140 respondents, 13.8% (f=157) ‘rarely’, 63.1% (f=719) ‘often’ and 23.2% (f=264) were ‘mostly’ willing to communicate in ESL in real life (WTC^{RL}).

Graph 2 below also displays these results.



Graph 2: Willingness to Communicate in Classroom Context WTC^{CR}

Research Question 3

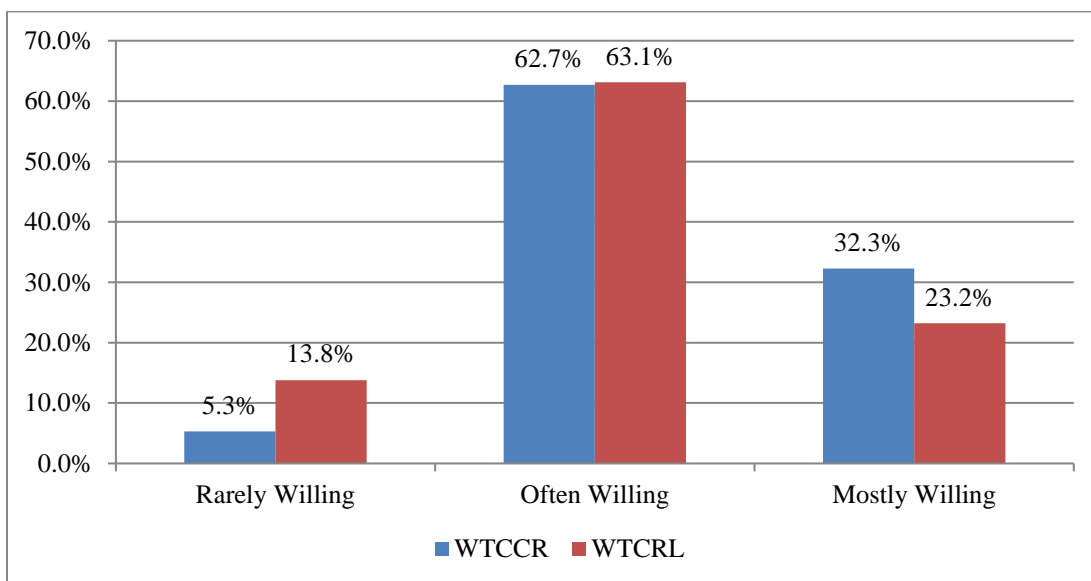
Is there any significant difference between level of WTC^{CR} in classroom context and WTC^{RL} in real-life context among Pakistani BS level students?

Table 3: Comparative Level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}

	WTC^{CR}		WTC^{RL}		Chi-Square
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Rarely Willing	60	5.3%	157	13.8%	210.658**
Often Willing	715	62.7%	719	63.1%	
Mostly Willing	365	32.3%	264	23.2%	
Total	1140	100%	1140	100%	

P-Value=0.000**

The Table 3 shows that out of 1140 respondents, 5.3% (f=60) respondents were ‘rarely’ willing to communicate in ESL in classroom context (WTC^{CR}) as compared to 13.8% (f=157) respondents who were ‘rarely’ willing to communicate in in ESL real life context (WTC^{RL}). 62.7% (f=715) respondents were ‘often’ willing to communicate in ESL in classroom context (WTC^{CR}) as compared to 63.1% (f=719) respondents who were ‘often’ willing to communicate in ESL in real life context (WTC^{RL}). The proportion of respondents who were mostly willing to communicate in ESL in class room context (WTC^{CR}) was 32.0% (f=365) compared to 23.2% (f=264) respondents who were mostly willing to communicate in ESL when they were in a real-life communication scenario (WTC^{RL}). Chi-square test indicates that the level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} had statistically significant difference as the p-value was 0.000, which was not greater than 0.01.



Graph 3: Comparative Level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}

Discussion on Findings

Research Question 1

Data analysis revealed that 5.3% (f=60) students out of the total 1140 respondents were found to be "rarely" willing to communicate in English Second Language in classroom context (WTC^{CR}). Also, 62.7% (f=715) students were "often" willing to communicate in English Second Language in classroom context (WTC^{CR}), whereas 32.0% (f=365) students were "mostly" willing to communicate in English Second Language in classroom context (WTC^{CR}).

Research Question 2

The results obtained through analyzing the collected data indicated that out of the total 1140 respondents who participated in the study, 13.8% (f=157) "rarely" communicated in ESL in classroom context (WTC^{RL}). On the other hand, 63.1% (f=719) participants were "often" willing to communicate in ESL in classroom context (WTC^{RL}), whereas 23.2% (f=264) "mostly" communicated in ESL in real life (WTC^{RL}).

Research Question 3

From the data analysis results, it can be seen that the values of WTC^{CR} were statistically different compared to those of WTC^{RL}. The significance of this can be observed through the Chi-square and p-values which indicate that there is a high significant difference between the levels of the classroom and real-life situations. The level of WTC^{CR} was highly significantly higher as compared to the level of WTC^{RL} among the Pakistani University students.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Recommendations have been given in terms of awareness-raising program about the significance of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}, English as Second Language (ESL) instructional methods, classroom setting and facilities, curriculum development, syllabus design, material development, and evaluation and assessment process:

1. From the above findings and conclusions, action has to be taken to help the students move from being “rarely” or “often” willing to communicate in ESL within classroom context (WTC^{CR}) to being “mostly” willing to communicate in ESL within classroom context (WTC^{CR}).
2. Based on findings and conclusion, measures should be taken in order to make students’ progress from the level of ‘rarely’ or ‘often’ willing to communicate in ESL in real life context (WTC^{RL}) to the level of ‘mostly’ willing to communicate in ESL in real life context (WTC^{RL}).
3. Both types of WTC (i.e., WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}) were detected on the level of being ‘often willing to communicate’. But a difference was found between the level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} which proved to be very significant according to the statistical Chi-Square test performed. That is, it was determined that the level of WTC^{CR} was significantly high in comparison with WTC^{RL}.
4. The material developers can create their work on the basis of the results of this study to develop text books to improve the level of WTC^{CR}. The findings of this research suggest that there is a big difference between the level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. Thus, further research would be necessary to enhance the level of WTC^{RL}. These two kinds of WTC (WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}) can be applied in books by writers depending on the needs of students of specific levels or classes.
5. Oral communication skills should be one of the major aspects of evaluation and assessment system of ESL. For this purpose, certain number of marks could be allotted to the scheme of study of ESL from 10 to 30. Marks can be based on two types of WTC i.e. WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. This will help both ESL teachers and learners concentrate on the WTC and they can apply WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} concepts to become competent in all areas of oral communication.
6. The government of Pakistan needs to make efforts to provide language laboratories for the institutions. Language laboratories should be equipped with software packages that educate languages, computers, internet facility and all other equipment required to facilitate the teaching and learning of ESL.

Limitations of the study and Research Gap

The author of this paper has proposed the following recommendations for future research in the area of oral communication and WTC in order to address the existing gap in the literature:

1. The present research is descriptive in nature, experiment design with regard to teaching and training for WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} can opted for future research. An experiment design for teaching and training for the use of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} may be considered helpful in increasing the level of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. From the perspective of designing a syllabus, the content developed in the study may serve as useful for developing a syllabus for WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. Teachability of WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} will be examined through the process.
 2. Current research has focused on the use of two types of WTC, WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL}. Other types of WTC might also be investigated, for example, WTC at the workplace and WTC before the interview committee.
 3. Closed ended questionnaires have been used as the instrument of data collection in the study. Other instruments of data collection might also be used with respect to WTC^{CR} and WTC^{RL} such as speaking task test battery, interviews, and open-ended questionnaires etc.
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