



Willingness to Communicate among Thai EFL Students: Does English Proficiency Matter?

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Willingness to communicate (WTC) is a key concept in English language learning and communication. The literature has shown that WTC in a non-native English speaking environment is influenced by a multiplicity of factors, one of which is English proficiency. However, findings on its effect on WTC have been inconclusive. Therefore, this study investigated whether there was a statistically significant difference in WTC levels among students with different English proficiency levels and the ability of proficiency to predict WTC. The participants were 375 twelfth-grade Thai EFL students from two Southern Thailand government secondary schools. They responded to an adapted WTC scale which had been translated into the Thai language. The one-way ANOVA followed by a Tukey HSD test were used to analyse significant differences, while a simple linear regression assessed the ability of proficiency to predict WTC inside and outside the classroom. The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in WTC between low, moderate and high proficiency students. It was also found that English proficiency could predict students' WTC inside and outside the English classroom, but it only accounted for a small percentage of the variance. Findings of the study have implications for English language teaching and WTC research.

Keywords: EFL, English proficiency, willingness to communicate

Introduction

English is taught to Thai students as a core compulsory foreign language at all levels of formal education. The Thai education system would like Thai students to have a satisfactory command of English, especially in communicative competence, to enable them to stay competitive in the English-speaking world, to meet job demands, and to enjoy social mobility as well as a better quality life. The emphasis on English is expected to become progressively stronger with the formation of the ASEAN Community 2015, of which Thailand is an active member (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015). English is the common language of communication among the ten ASEAN countries to strengthen ties and collaboration under the pillars of the Political-Security Community, Economic Community and Socio-Cultural Community. More economic opportunities across the borders and developments in health and education will mean a need to raise a Thai work force that is competent in English.

In basic education, Thai EFL learners in primary education (grades 1-6) and secondary education (grades 7-12) are required to learn English in four main areas, namely, language for communication, language and culture, language and relationship with other learning areas, and language and relationship

with the community and the world (Ministry of Education Thailand, 2008). These key strands steer the processes of teaching and learning English in the language classroom for teachers and students.

In the formal Thai EFL educational context, the teachers and students pay considerable attention to English proficiency as the ultimate goal of language learning. As English proficiency is measured by tests and exams, the teaching and learning in the language classroom focus on performance in class tests, as well as school and national exams. This is clearly reflected in the teachers' instructional practices. The dominant language skills are reading and writing skills, with a focus on grammar and vocabulary, while listening and speaking skills receive less emphasis. The teachers tend to use teaching approaches that are less interactive such as memorisation (Khamkhien, 2010; Punthumasen, 2007) and grammar translation (Khamkhien, 2010; Teng & Singwongsuwat, 2015). To make the English input in the language classroom more comprehensible and to support the learning of English, teachers also use Thai to teach English to EFL students. Given the situation in which both teachers and students readily resort to using the mother tongue, authentic and meaningful communication in English between teachers and students as well as students and students is limited and not natural in the English classroom. Likewise, the EFL environment beyond the English classroom and the school does not support the use of English. Except for certain job sectors, Thai society generally functions very well without the use of English or a need for it.

Thus, Thai EFL students generally have low English proficiency and tend to be reluctant to communicate in English when opportunities arise in real life. This is in contrast to the aspiration of English education in Thailand to produce students who are both proficient and willing to communicate in English.

Theoretical Perspectives

The notion of willingness to communicate, or WTC, has been reconceptualised by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) based on Burgoon's (1976) work on an individual's unwillingness to communicate or the predisposition "to avoid and/or devalue oral communication" (p. 60). Defined conversely by MacIntyre et al. (1998) for second language speakers, WTC is "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (p. 547). English teachers in an ESL or EFL context encounter students with varying degrees of willingness to communicate in the target language. The teachers often aim to raise WTC because of the belief that WTC facilitates language learning (Baghaei & Dourakhshan, 2012; Compton, 2002; Kang, 2005). The quest to increase WTC naturally leads to identifying the factors affecting WTC.

In this regard, MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) heuristic model of WTC in L2 has been found useful. The model has factors that come from psychological, social, cultural, affective and cognitive perspectives to account for an ESL or EFL learner's L2 use. Categorized under six layers (I - VI) of the pyramid shaped model, these variables range from the more stable influences (e.g., personality) to changing influences (e.g., intergroup motivation). Indeed, WTC is multifaceted with trait and state dimensions as found in the literature. Trait factors are those concerned with one's disposition like temperament and personality, while state factors are external situational factors such as the school environment, school culture and the people we interact with. Attempts to study influences on WTC are equally varied, as seen in the choice of factors, research approaches, participants and educational settings. For example, Muamaroh and Prihartanti (2013) examined the relationship between WTC and anxiety levels of Indonesian university students. The research design used a quantitative approach to collect and analyse questionnaire data followed by a qualitative approach to analyse interview data. Similarly, Sener (2014) used a questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations to study WTC and other variables such as motivation and attitude toward the international community in a Turkish university. In a nursing college in Japan, Matsuoka (2004) correlated WTC with motivational variables (i.e., anxiety, integrativeness, instrumentality, self-confidence, motivational intensity, intrinsic motivation and personal traits) and English proficiency. Data on WTC and motivation were collected using self-report questionnaires, while English proficiency was measured by

the CASEC or Computerized Assessment System for English Communication online test to assess the ability to communicate in English.

Fully quantitative studies have been carried out, for instance, among Chinese EFL undergraduates in a Chinese university (Peng, 2007, 2013), Japanese tertiary students (Matsuoka, 2004; Yashima, 2002), Polish students of English (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pietrzykowska, 2011; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2014) and Iranian EFL students (Alemi, Daftarifard, & Pashmforoosh, 2011; Rostami, Kashanian, & Gholami, 2016). A few quantitative studies employed structural equation modeling to test hypothesized models (e.g., MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002). Qualitative studies on WTC have also been conducted, for example, among foreign students in New Zealand (Cameron, 2015; Cao, 2011), Chinese EFL students in China (Peng, 2012) and Thai EFL university students in Thailand (Pattapong, 2015; Suksawas, 2011). All these studies across different settings contribute to the bigger picture of WTC and help to explain MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) theoretical model in greater detail.

Research Questions

The present study has chosen to focus on the English proficiency factor by using a quantitative research approach. The main aim is to examine the link between WTC inside and outside the classroom and learners' proficiency. The interest in proficiency is driven by a few reasons. The first is the observation that non-proficient learners are generally reluctant to communicate in English. This is also supported by empirical studies (e.g., Alemi et al., 2011; Rostami et al., 2016). However, there exist contradictory results showing no significant correlation between WTC and English proficiency in a Japanese EFL college context (Matsuoka, 2004) and no direct effect of English proficiency on the WTC of 297 Japanese students at a university in Osaka (Yashima, 2002). Is this the case with Thai EFL secondary school learners? Second, it does make sense to study proficiency since a poor command of English seems to be a pervasive problem among many non-native speakers of English. Could this be the hindrance to WTC in Thai learners? Third, if a strong significant link is found between WTC and proficiency, then classroom interventions can be proposed to address the proficiency issue of Thai secondary school students so as to enhance their WTC. This is a first line of attack within the control of the teacher in the classroom. The final reason is that self-reported perceived communication competence (e.g., Lahuerta, 2014; MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2014) seems to receive more attention than actual proficiency in studies on WTC (Alemi et al., 2011). De Costa (2014) has highlighted the "overreliance on self-report questionnaires" as a limitation in WTC research (p. 13). Thus, the present study would like to use data on the actual proficiency of the participants as measured by an established standardised English examination in Thailand.

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Do WTC levels inside the language classroom differ among students with low, moderate, and high levels of English proficiency?
2. Do WTC levels outside the language classroom differ among students with low, moderate, and high levels of English proficiency?
3. Does English proficiency predict WTC inside and WTC outside the classroom?

Methodology

The research design of this study was a survey in which efforts were taken to attain a large sample size for quantitative analysis and to ensure that the respondents' English proficiency levels have been measured by a common and established proficiency test. In the Thai education system, students in the 12th grade made for a suitable sample, as they had just sat for a national English examination that measures all

the four language skills (Ministry of Education Thailand, 2008; NIETS, 2017). This standardized national English exam aims to assess whether the learning outcomes (e.g., the abilities to use English for communication) as stated in the Thai Basic Education Core Curriculum (Ministry of Education Thailand, 2008) have been achieved by the students. The results are important for the 12th grade students who wish to pursue a bachelor's degree locally, as the English results are part of the general requirement to gain admission into Thai universities. Based on the scores of the exam administered each year by the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS), the respondents of the present study were divided into three groups: low proficiency (0-59 marks), moderate proficiency (60-74 marks) and high proficiency (75-100 marks).

Research Sites and Participants

Two government secondary schools in Southern Thailand that were approached agreed to be part of the study. The sampling of these two schools was based on two factors. First, the principals of the schools were willing to participate, and enlisted the staff to assist in the data collection. Second, in terms of geographical locations, it was convenient for the researcher to go to the schools for data collection. The two urban schools are located not far from each other in Trang, a southern Thai province. The province has beautiful natural landscapes which are popular recreation sites and holiday destinations among the locals. International visitors are increasing as more people come to know about Trang's scenic waterfalls, beaches, islands and conservation parks. The people of Trang are made up of Thais from different religious backgrounds. While Buddhism is the main religion, one can find Thai Chinese who practice ethnic Chinese religions like Taoism. There are also Thai Muslims and Thai Christians. Thus, Trang can be considered multicultural, as reflected in the architecture, religious practices and cuisine.

The selected schools come under the administration of the Ministry of Education of Thailand. They are categorised under the large-size school group, where the student enrolment falls in the range of 1,500-2,499. Students with different levels of English proficiency attend these schools which offer education from grade 7 to grade 12. Seven 12th grade classes in one school and eight 12th grade classes in another school yielded a total of 375 Thai EFL students for the study. The students consisted of 115 males and 260 females, aged between 17 and 18 years old. They had 11 years of formal English instruction beginning at grade 1. During the period of data collection, they were studying English as a compulsory school subject at the upper secondary level. The number of students at low, moderate, and high English proficiency levels as measured by the Thai national English exam was 163, 106, and 106, respectively.

Instrument

A WTC questionnaire was used to measure the level of willingness to communicate in English among the participants. The questionnaire was adapted from Pattapong (2010) and consists of 14 items for WTC inside the classroom and 12 items for WTC outside the classroom. The original questionnaire by Pattapong (2010) has 25 items measured using a 4-point Likert scale. The adaptation basically concerned deleting inappropriate items, simplifying wordy items, or combining two items into one item. For example, "Sing a song in English" was deleted. "Ask your teacher in English to repeat what they just said in English because you didn't understand" was simplified to "Ask your teacher to repeat his/her explanation in English." Similarly, the two items of "Do a role-play in English at your desk (e.g., ordering food in a restaurant)" and "Do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (e.g., ordering food in a restaurant)" were simplified and collapsed into a single item to become "Do a role-play in English in front of the class."

Overall, the items on the adapted scale are general situations of social interactions in which Thai participants typically have experience in communicating. The variety of situations involves different interlocutors in the classroom (teacher and classmates) and outside the classroom (teacher, classmates, and strangers). For example, "Ask your teacher in English for clarification of a task in class" and "Ask

your teacher in English to repeat his/her English explanation” initiate communication with the teacher in the classroom. Items like “Talk about yourself in a classroom activity using a prepared note in English” and “Interview friends in English using questions from the textbook in class” are communicative situations in the classroom with fellow classmates as recipients, while “Greet your classmates/friends in English outside the class” is clearly a situation outside the classroom. For communication with strangers outside the classroom, “Answer a stranger in English when he/she asks you a question in English” and “Greet a stranger in English in public places” are two items in the questionnaire.

All items are measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = Almost never willing, 2 = Sometimes willing, 3 = Willing half of the time, 4 = Usually willing and 5 = Almost always willing. These options were also used by MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod (2001) and Peng (2007) to measure WTC. The questionnaire was validated by two TESOL lecturers at a local university in Malaysia. The items were considered reasonable and suitable for the Thai context to measure students’ willingness to communicate in English. The questionnaire was then translated into the Thai language by a language expert proficient in both English and Thai. A back translation was performed to ensure the accuracy of the items. The pilot testing of the questionnaire was done with 88 12th graders from another government secondary school in the same province. The respondents did not have any problems completing the questionnaire within one class period. The Cronbach alpha value calculated was 0.944, indicating a high internal reliability of the questionnaire, as determined by DeVellis’ (2003) criterion.

Data Collection and Analysis

The Academic Affairs Division of the two schools arranged data collection schedules for the researchers. At the agreed dates and times, with the help of the teachers in the two schools selected, the WTC questionnaires were distributed to the 12th grade students in their classes and completed by them within 20 minutes in one class session. The school authorities also gave the researchers access to the Thai national exam results (NIETS, 2017). From the records the English scores of the students concerned were extracted and grouped into three levels of proficiency as explained above.

The one-way ANOVA was used to analyze the data to answer research questions 1 and 2. If the results indicated a significant difference, the analysis was followed by a post hoc test to determine which pairs of proficiency levels (i.e., high-moderate, high-low or moderate-low) had a significant difference in WTC levels. For research question 3, a simple linear regression was performed to assess the ability of proficiency level to predict WTC inside and outside the classroom.

Results and Discussion

The presentation and discussion of the results will begin with general descriptions of the variables of the study, followed by answers to each research question. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for WTC levels for the three proficiency groups of students across two locations.

TABLE 1
Means and Standard Deviations of WTC Inside and Outside the Classroom

English Proficiency Groups	WTC inside		WTC outside		N
	Mean (Mi)	SD	Mean (Mo)	SD	
Low	2.44	0.61	2.24	0.63	163
Moderate	2.58	0.64	2.35	0.65	106
High	2.81	0.78	2.55	0.82	106
Overall	2.59	0.69	2.36	0.71	375

Note. MI = mean WTC inside the classroom, MO= mean WTC outside the classroom

Students' overall WTC level inside the language classroom ($M_i=2.59$, $SD=0.69$) was higher than that outside the classroom ($M_o=2.36$, $SD=0.71$). Dividing WTC mean values into the three levels of low ($M=1.00-2.33$), moderate ($M=2.34-3.67$) and high ($M=3.68-5.00$), the 12th graders' WTC was considered to be moderate. Moreover, all proficiency groups showed greater willingness to communicate inside than outside the classroom. In both locations, students in the high English proficiency group showed the greatest WTC ($M_i=2.81$ compared to $M_o=2.55$), followed by the moderate proficiency ($M_i=2.58$ compared to $M_o=2.35$) and low proficiency ($M_i=2.44$ compared to $M_o=2.24$) groups. That is, the more proficient Thai EFL 12th graders were more willing to communicate in English. The inferential statistics in the following sections show more detailed and conclusive results. The confidence limit was set at 0.05.

Research Question 1

The first research question investigated whether a statistically significant difference in WTC levels inside the language classroom existed between students with low, moderate and high levels of English proficiency. The ANOVA results in Table 2 indicate a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 372)=9.94$, $p<0.05$. The results of the follow-up post hoc analysis using the Tukey HSD criterion are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 2
ANOVA Results for WTC Inside the Classroom

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.93	2	4.47	9.94	0.00
Within Groups	167.18	372	0.45		
Total	176.11	374			

TABLE 3
Post Hoc Tukey Results with WTC Inside as Dependent Variable

(I) Comparison Groups	(J) Comparison Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.
Low	Moderate	-0.14	0.08	0.24
	High	-0.37*	0.08	0.00
Moderate	Low	0.14	0.08	0.24
	High	-0.24*	0.09	0.03
High	Low	0.37*	0.08	0.00
	Moderate	0.24	0.09	0.03

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As reported in Table 3, two pairs of comparisons were found to be significant. WTC inside the classroom in the high proficiency group ($M_i=2.81$, $SD=0.78$) was significantly greater than for in the low proficiency group ($M_i=2.44$, $SD=0.61$) and the moderate proficiency group ($M_i=2.58$, $SD=0.64$). There was no significant difference in WTC inside the classroom between the moderate and low proficiency groups. Such findings for higher levels of WTC among students with high English proficiency corroborate with the findings of Rostami et al.'s (2016) study among Iranian EFL learners aged between 15 and 22 years old. Also in the Iranian EFL context, Alemi et al. (2011) found this to be so inside the classroom for their university students.

Research Question 2

Similar to the analysis for research question 1, an ANOVA was performed first and the results are displayed in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4
ANOVA Results for WTC Outside the Classroom

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	6.24	2	3.12	6.45	0.00
Within Groups	180.05	372	0.48		
Total	186.30	374			

The results in Table 4 indicate a statistically significant difference in WTC levels outside the language classroom among students with low, moderate and high levels of English proficiency, $F(2, 372) = 6.45$, $p = 0.00$. The analysis continued with the Post Hoc Tukey test.

TABLE 5
Post Hoc Tukey Results with WTC Outside as Dependent Variable

(I) Comparison Groups	(J) Comparison Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.
Low	Moderate	-0.11	0.09	0.44
	High	-0.31*	0.09	0.00
Moderate	Low	0.11	0.09	0.44
	High	-0.20	0.10	0.08
High	Low	0.31*	0.09	0.00
	Moderate	0.20	0.10	0.08

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As seen in Table 5, there is only one significant pair, that is, between the low and high proficiency groups. WTC outside the classroom in the high proficiency group ($M_o = 2.55$, $SD = 0.82$) was significantly higher than that in the low proficiency group ($M_o = 2.24$, $SD = 0.63$). There was no significant difference in WTC outside the classroom between the moderate and low proficiency groups as well as between the moderate and high proficiency groups.

This contrasted with Alemi et al.'s (2011) finding that for outside the classroom it was the low proficiency group that showed more WTC when compared with the high proficiency group. This led Alemi et al. (2011) to note that their results emphasized "the state-like nature of WTC" (p. 159). In the EFL context of Japan, Matsuoka (2004) found no significant correlation between English proficiency and WTC among her participants consisting of Japanese nursing college students. For them, Matsuoka concluded that "WTC is more a psychological construct than linguistic proficiency" (p. 168).

Research Question 3

To answer whether English proficiency could predict WTC, a simple linear regression was performed, and the SPSS output is shown in Appendices A and B. A significant regression equation was found for WTC inside the classroom, $F(1, 373) = 21.519$, $p < 0.05$, with an R^2 of 0.052. Similarly the regression model was also significant for WTC outside the classroom, $F(1, 373) = 13.582$, $p < 0.05$ with an R^2 of 0.033. That is, English proficiency was a significant predictor of WTC in both locations. Moreover, 5.2% of the variance in WTC inside the classroom and 3.3% of the variance in WTC outside the classroom could be explained by English proficiency. However, given the low percentages, English proficiency was not a strong predictor.

This is reflected in the less immediate influence of communicative competence on WTC in MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) six-layered heuristic model, which places competence at Layer V and WTC at Layer II. There could be moderating factors between actual proficiency and WTC. As suggested by Yashima's (2002) L2 communication model in the Japanese EFL context, higher proficiency should lead to greater confidence in L2 communication, which in turn was found to be a significant predictor of WTC. The small predictive power of proficiency in the present study points to the need to consider other factors in raising WTC. Clearly, quantitative studies to propose and test communication models for Thai speakers of English should be conducted to chart the paths of the variables (which necessarily include actual

proficiency in all four language skills) leading to WTC. These models will add to existing models like those from MacIntyre and Charos (1996), Peng and Woodrow (2010) and Yashima (2002). More importantly, these models provide details that inform the classroom pedagogy of Thai teachers.

Conclusion

The statistics showed that English proficiency mattered with respect to the Thai twelfth graders' willingness to communicate in English. Students with low proficiency in English exhibited significantly less willingness to communicate, whether inside or outside the classroom. Conversely, students with high proficiency showed significantly greater willingness to communicate inside the classroom than those with moderate and low proficiency. High proficiency students were also significantly more willing than low proficiency students to communicate in English outside the classroom. Additionally, while English proficiency can predict students' WTC, it only accounted for a small percentage of the variance in WTC inside and outside the English classroom.

The contribution of proficiency towards WTC implies that Thai students who are weak in English should be helped to reach a proficiency level that will trigger their WTC and open up opportunities for authentic communication. The students probably need an optimal level of vocabulary and grammar to be willing to engage in conversations using English. Some basic communication skills would help them get started. The teacher should set learning outcomes and lesson contents in the classroom to prioritize vocabulary acquisition and grammar learning for low proficiency students. The lessons should also include basic communication skills to enable the students to understand and participate in simple conversations in English.

Worth noting is that, as shown in Table 1, students in all three proficiency levels were more willing to communicate in English inside the classroom than outside the classroom. The classroom under the control of the teacher remains the place for meaningful interaction in English. Since the students are more willing to talk and be heard in the safe environment of the classroom, the teacher should orchestrate authentic communicative opportunities between teacher and student as well as between student and student. Conversations in English which began in the classroom can hopefully be continued in English outside the classroom, since the affiliations and distance among members of the classroom community are close. Affiliations between interlocutors have been proposed in MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) theoretical model as a factor affecting WTC. Speakers who are closely affiliated and meet more often are more willing to use English to communicate with each other. In addition to establishing interaction activities, the teacher should be mindful of his/her use of communication strategies (Maleki, 2007), questioning techniques (Nazari & Allahyar, 2012) and opportunities given (or not given) to the students to talk (Allahyar, 2014).

Other than the classroom, the teacher should explore other sites of learning and communication. The contemporary digital culture of the students shows that much interaction is happening digitally via smartphones, laptops, desktops, tablets and other devices. Texting accompanied with images, videos, audio content and emojis seems to be an acceptable and convenient way of communication. The teacher can thus use online communication in popular social networking sites to provide opportunities for interaction in English. In this respect, a number of studies have shown how English lessons have taken advantage of learners' communication in the Internet environment. Instructors have capitalized on students' enthusiasm for interacting (either one-on-one or in a group chat) on Facebook and their familiarity with Facebook functions that can serve educational purposes (e.g., Annamalai, Tan, Abdullah, & Sivagurunathan, 2015; Annamalai, Tan, & Abdullah, 2016; Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011; Razak & Saeed, 2014; Reid, 2011; Shih, 2011; Shukor & Noordin, 2014). Online discussion forums have also been employed as a pedagogical tool (e.g., Bassani, 2011; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Tan, 2017; Wang & Yang, 2012). Generally, the online forum is a common mode of synchronous or asynchronous communication among members in an interest group. When the discussion becomes too involved,

sometimes threads are created to facilitate interaction. Any member can contribute at any point in an ongoing discussion. Used academically as part of online instructional practices, the discussion forum can provide authentic opportunities for the more reserved students to communicate (Caspi, Chajut, Saporta, & Beyth-Marom, 2006). Thus, these students might be more willing to communicate in an online environment where they do not meet the interlocutors face-to-face.

The rationale for shifting from the physical classroom to virtual space is that it is a common meeting point for many young people attracted to happenings in the modern-day lifestyle. More importantly, the use of English is widespread, and resources in English are also plentiful on the Internet. This can definitely compensate for the learners' lack of exposure to English in the EFL context of Thailand and also leverage on the prevalence of digital communication to achieve WTC in face-to-face communicative situations. An implication arising from the phenomenon of online communication is that one should revisit what it means to be willing to communicate in English. Is there a relationship between WTC online and WTC face-to-face? What can researchers learn from students' WTC online to enhance their willingness to speak in English in face-to-face communication? What constitutes the language of online communication and how different is it from the language used in face-to-face communication? Are the communicative skills used so effectively to connect with fellow netizens transferable and applicable to face-to-face situations? In 21st century teaching and learning, these are relevant topics on WTC to pursue.

From a theoretical perspective, the study confirms the factor of proficiency within the complexity of influences on WTC among non-native speakers of English. Guided by MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model, further research using structural equation modelling is necessary to produce a model of the relations between WTC and other crucial (and moderating) variables that is unique to the Thai context. Furthermore, as Thailand is a large country with interesting demographic variations across the land, we should not rule out the possibility that different WTC models might apply for different locations and groups of people. Thus, it would be logical to factor into our hypothesized model the variability of learners, personality types, learners' expectations and contexts of learning.

To conclude, the limitations of the study should be discussed to suggest and strengthen future studies on WTC. This study was conducted in two large schools located in urban areas of Trang, which not only has an interesting mix of residents and cultures but also sees a daily flux of local and international tourists. All these features might have a bearing on the 375 student participants and their WTC levels. Therefore, the findings here should not be generalised to other parts of Thailand which do not share similarities with Trang. The participants were Year 12 students who might be thinking of joining the work force very soon, equipping themselves with skills via vocational training or pursuing a university education. It is likely this special group will view English differently from students at other grade levels, as they have to realistically consider the position of English in their lives. They may need to ask themselves if they are able and willing to use English. Nevertheless, while the findings generally apply to 12th graders, the findings have implications for the teaching of English in the lower grades. The finding that proficiency mattered to 12th graders' WTC should alert English teachers in Thai schools to work on the mutually supportive proficiency-WTC relationship among students in the lower grades. Finally, studies on the link between these two important constructs in language learning should include how to increase the levels of both constructs from the pedagogical perspective.

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Appendix A

Simple Linear Regression Results for WTC Inside the Classroom

Model Summary ^b						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	.234 ^a	.055	.052	.66813	2.043	

a. Predictors: (Constant), English_Score

b. Dependent Variable: Mean_In

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.606	1	9.606	21.519	.000 ^b
	Residual	166.507	373	.446		
	Total	176.113	374			

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_In

b. Predictors: (Constant), English_Score

Appendix B

Simple Linear Regression Results for WTC Outside the Classroom

Model Summary ^b						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	.187 ^a	.035	.033	.69420	1.780	

a. Predictors: (Constant), English_Score

b. Dependent Variable: Mean_Out

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.546	1	6.546	13.582	.000 ^b
	Residual	179.755	373	.482		
	Total	186.301	374			

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_Out

b. Predictors: (Constant), English_Score