



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WILLINGNESS TO
COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE
ACADEMIC CULTURE AMONG
CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS**

**BY
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Abstract

This thesis was aimed at examining Chinese college students' level of willingness to communicate in English in the classroom context (WTC) and its correlation with Chinese academic culture. Mixed-methods research was employed to collect the data to respond to 3 research questions: 1) What is the level of Chinese college students' Willingness to Communicate in English? 2) Is there any relationship between Chinese academic culture influencing Chinese student willingness to communicate in English? 3) What are the opinions of students with high WTC and low WTC towards Chinese academic culture? For the quantitative data, 120 undergraduate non-English majors were recruited to complete a questionnaire adapted from Peng (2009) that investigated students' levels of WTC and Chinese academic culture which was analyzed through 4 related aspects namely communication anxiety, learner belief, motivation, and classroom environment. Descriptive analysis was used to identify the level of students' WTC in English to answer Research Question 1. For Research Question 2, from the quantitative data, the correlation between WTC and other four aspects which are believed to relate to academic Chinese culture in classroom, was investigated. For qualitative data, upon the completion of the questionnaire, 8 students representing high level and low level of WTC in English were voluntarily recruited to explore more in-depth data through semi-structured interviews to respond to Research Question 3. Content analysis for qualitative data to explore the relations between Chinese academic culture and WTC in English. Content analysis was coded and analyzed using thematic analysis based on the suggestion of Boyatzis (1998). The results showed that the students had moderate level of WTC in English in classroom (Mean=3.71, SD=1.21). The correlation analysis suggested that the classroom environment, learner belief, and motivation were positively related to WTC in English while communication anxiety negatively influenced WTC in English. Four main themes emerged from the interview data: academic expectations and pressures, instructional strategies and learning environments, classroom culture and interactions, and extracurricular engagement and its impact on WTC. The synthesis of the results from both quantitative and qualitative data had educational implications for teaching practitioners and policy makers, urging them to create a supportive and conducive environment for effective English communication.

(Total 137 pages)

Key Words: WTC in English; communication anxiety; learner belief; motivation; classroom environment; Chinese academic culture

Student's SignatureThesis Advisor's Signature

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

China has a long tradition of valuing education and intellectual achievement, and English has become a central part of this tradition. In recent years, the Chinese government has strongly emphasized the importance of learning English, and English has become a compulsory subject at all levels of schooling. Chinese instruction has historically been teacher-centered, meaning students have not been actively engaged in learning. In 2001, the Chinese government lowered the age of mandatory English instruction from Grade 3 to Grade 5 in an effort to prioritize the learning of English in China (Liu & Pan, 2019). In addition, many schools, especially those in urban areas, offer English instruction even earlier than Grade 3 (Lee, 2007). As a result, many Chinese students are highly motivated to learn English, especially in academic settings.

In the field of language teaching, communicating in the second language (L2) is essential for optimizing language learning. The Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) and Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985) affirm Skehan's (1991) assertion that learners need to communicate to learn. However, the amount of L2 communication largely depends on the learner's Willingness to Communicate (Hereafter will refer to as WTC.) (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). WTC in English refers to a learner's readiness to enter into English discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using a L2. (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Meanwhile, exploring the foundational ideas of Confucianism and the teaching of the Confucian Classics highlights that cultural values play a crucial role in shaping an individual's perception and learning approach, which becomes apparent in second language (L2) communication (Wen & Clément, 2003). Given the paramount significance of cultural values and the vital role

of WTC, instructors may find it rewarding to support learners in enhancing their WTC by adapting to Chinese academic culture.

1.2 STATE OF THE PROBLEMS

Despite the importance of L2 communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning globally, learners often remain passive and silent in language classrooms. This is particularly problematic in contexts like China, whose culture is based on collectivism. Although the collectivist aspect of traditional Chinese society is losing its structural strength and functional importance in the process of modernization (Yang, 1981), collectivist values still play an important role in the development of Chinese society. In the Chinese culture there is a strong emphasis on respecting authority and avoiding confrontation, which may make it difficult for students to speak up and express their opinions in an English-speaking environment. The tendency for Chinese teachers to take on an authoritative role in the learning process and for Chinese students to defer to authority can be traced back to Confucianism and the teaching of Confucian classics (Pratt, 1992, p.302). Chinese students emphasize collectiveness and do not wish to "speak incessantly" in class. "Talk fluently and incessantly" and "speak volubly" are seen as rude in Chinese culture. "Silence is golden" and "Least says" are Chinese morality.

Thus, some students argue that they should not speak in class, especially while others are silent, since peers would think they are showing off. In addition, Chinese students rarely seek distinction. Fearing exclusion from their group, they constantly "follow the general tendency" and stay mute in class. Traditional Chinese cultural effects like being implicit, quiet, and courteous must be considered while studying class participation. Chinese students' EFL class engagement is clearly influenced by their subconscious cultural thinking patterns (Wen & Clément, 2003). Hence, it is desirable for teachers to find the relationship between the Chinese academic culture and WTC and increase EFL learners' WTC accordingly.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

To tackle the problem mentioned above, this study sets out to explore the relationship between the Chinese academic culture and WTC, thus advising teachers on how to increase students' WTC to promote their English proficiency.

Given the role that WTC has been determined to have in actual English communication proficiency, the exploration of factors associated with it has been the subject of extensive research (Zulkepli, 2020). Variables, such as personality characteristics, affective states, motivation and cognitive skills, have been observed to have a significant association with WTC in English as a Second (ESL) or Foreign Language (EFL) contexts (Dörnyei, 2014). However, relative research was scant in Chinese contexts and academic culture is rarely studied as a factor influencing WTC.

This research is of considerable importance from both theoretical and pedagogical perspectives, involving all relevant parties. Firstly, it addresses the lack of exploration into the relationship between Chinese academic culture and English as a Foreign Language Willingness to Communicate (EFL WTC) by examining this connection with the aim of enhancing the English proficiency of Chinese college students. Despite the existence of various studies on learning theories, WTC, and the impact of various factors on WTC in different contexts, there is limited research on the influence of Chinese academic culture on WTC. Hence, this study represents a very few effort in educational research and offers a direction for future studies on how academic culture affects students' WTC in English within Chinese educational, and cultural contexts.

Secondly, the results of this research may have significant implications for pedagogy, by highlighting the value of Chinese academic culture as an instructional tool in EFL contexts. This study may aid instructors in recognizing the importance of Chinese academic culture and provide practical guidance for teachers looking to effectively utilize it. Furthermore, institutional decision-makers may benefit from the findings, as it sheds light on the use of academic culture as a means of improving

students' language proficiency in EFL settings and reinforcing their knowledge acquisition. Given the influence that institutional settings have on students' learning styles and perceptions, the outcomes of this research may provide normative guidance for future policies at academic institutions that have previously neglected the significance of Chinese academic culture.

1.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The previous related review of literature highlights the intrinsic association between the educational aspirations of Chinese students and the encompassing ambiance of traditional Chinese academic culture (Brick, 2004). Additionally, individual personality attributes contribute significantly to this intricate framework. Consequently, the varying degrees of influence shaped by these intertwined factors impact the willingness of Chinese college students to engage in English communication during their academic pursuits (Liu & Jackson, 2008).

Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to carefully explore the complex relationship that exists between Chinese academic culture and students' tendency to communicate effectively. The study was conducted at a college in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China. The selection of Chinese college students as the focus of this study was based on the similar educational background.

The subjects of this survey were non-English major college students from the above college. For their first two years at the college, non-English majors have to take a compulsory English course. Each class consists of approximately 30 students from a variety of disciplines. The structure of the program consists of two 1.5-hour classes per week, divided into four different sections: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, a full assessment is required each semester, including a personal statement and a written examination.

A total of 120 representative students were selected as samples to complete a questionnaire. And then some of the participants were interviewed for further understanding of the research objectives.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In the academic culture of Chinese students, Confucianism has an impact on students' study and life. Under the influence, students may be more inclined to collectivism and pay more attention to others' evaluation of themselves. So, they may be likely to be more careful and anxious when communicating. To find out if the above assumptions are accurate, the study had the following two purposes:

1.5.1 To investigate the level of Chinese college students' willingness to communicate in English.

1.5.2 To explore why and how Chinese academic culture influence Chinese college students' willingness to communicate in English.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.6.1 What is the level of Chinese college students' willingness to communicate in English?

1.6.2 Is there any relationship between Chinese academic culture influence Chinese student willingness to communicate in English?

1.6.3 What are the opinions of students with high WTC and low WTC towards Chinese academic culture?

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Despite extensive research on factors affecting students' WTC, Chinese academic culture has rarely been considered as a contributing factor. The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between Chinese academic culture and WTC.

The scope of the study was limited to recruiting 120 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 24 who were contacted using their email accounts. All the volunteers were from 4 majors other than English. Each volunteer to the study was asked to complete a short questionnaire in order to find out any possible link between Chinese academic culture and WTC. In addition, 4 students exhibiting high to very high levels of WTC in English and 4 other students exhibiting low to very low levels, were selected for semi-structured interviews. The total number of the interview participants were 8 students.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given that the Second Language Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC) is a construct rooted in SLA, the theories of SLA formed the crucial conceptual basis of this study. As the research was centered on Chinese students, incorporating the influence of Chinese academic cultural aspects on learning and communication behaviors was deemed essential. The factors which may contribute to the Chinese academic culture and in turn affect the way students engage in the communication in English were observed (see Figure 1.1).

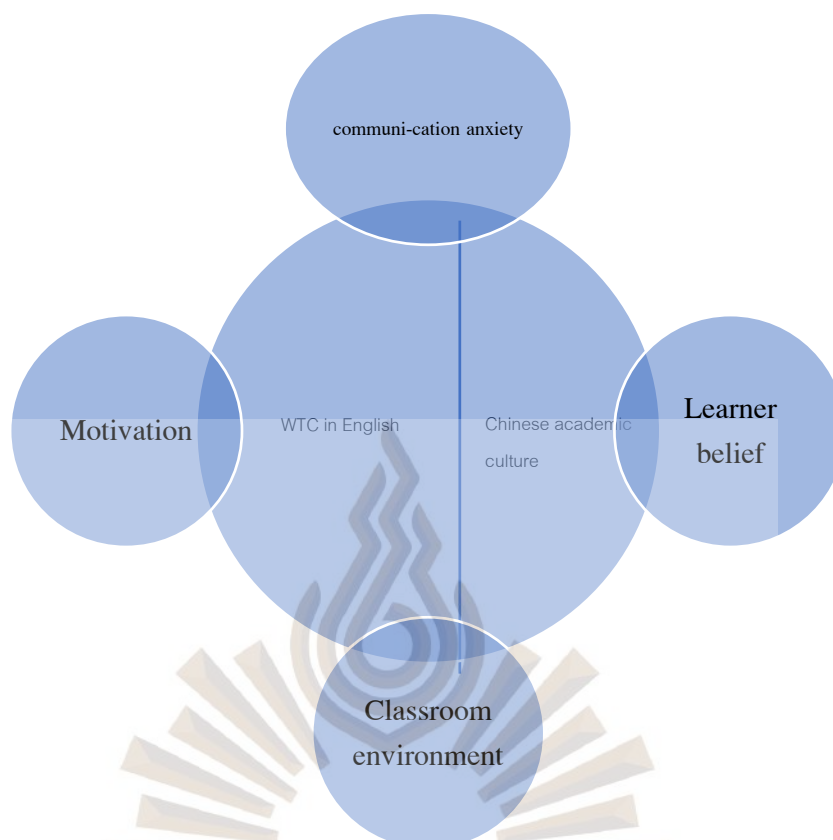


Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework

Specifically, four variables, namely communication anxiety in language classroom, motivation to learn English, learner belief about English learning, and classroom environment, were investigated in the study. The level of each variable was first found out and then its relation to the WTC in English was further analyzed.

1.9 RESEARCH CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study sought out to find out Chinese students' levels of WTC in English and the relations between WTC in English and Chinese academic culture (see Figure 1.2).

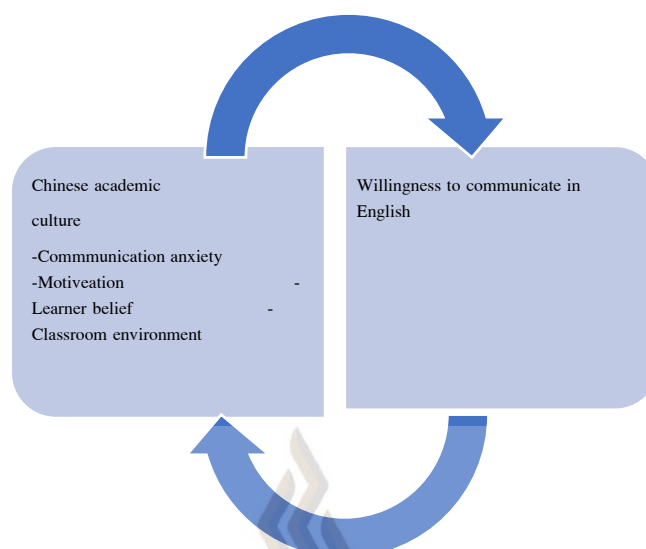


Figure 1.2 Research Conceptual Framework

From the above, the two factors, i.e., Chinese academic culture and willingness to communicate in English, are closely related. Chinese academic culture consists of four elements, namely communication anxiety in language classroom, motivation to learn English, learner belief about English learning, and classroom environment. These four elements could exert either positive or negative impact on WTC in English, which could in turn influence Chinese academic culture. The current study was based on the above assumption and tried to find out the possible relationships between the two factors.

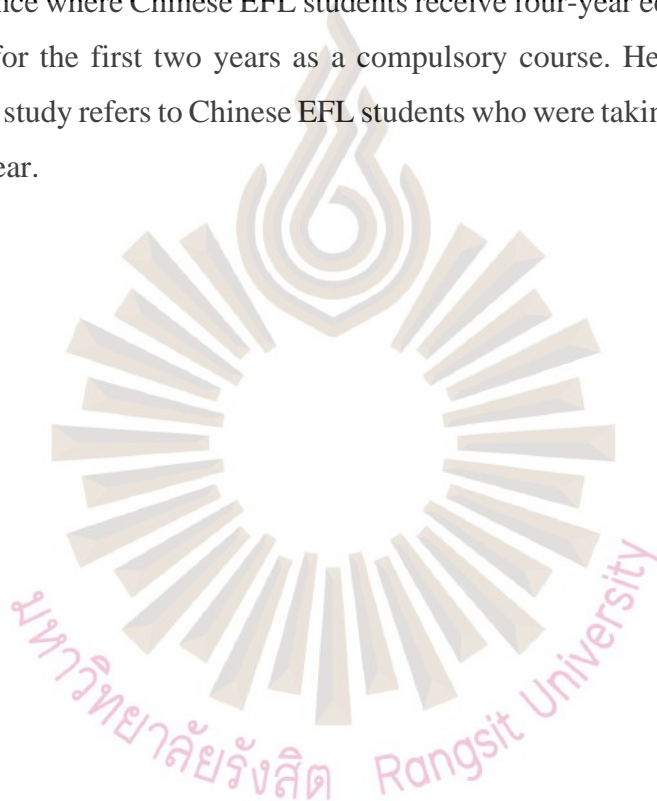
1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Willingness to Communicate Willingness to Communicate, or WTC in short, is defined as the intention to speak in L2 or to remain silent when given free choice. In this study, it was measured by a questionnaire adapted from Peng (2009) and semi-structured interviews, of which the interview questions were adapted from Peng (2009) as well.

Chinese academic culture In the study, Chinese academic culture refers to the way students perform their learning activities. This culture is characteristic of Confucianism, which is considered as a system of social and ethical philosophy stressing

the importance of correct behavior, loyalty and obedience to hierarchy. In this study, it was measured by a questionnaire, for Chinese academic culture-related variables (including Communication anxiety, motivation to learn English, learner beliefs about English learning, and classroom environment) adapted from Peng (2009) (See Appendix A-1).

Chinese College Students The current study was conducted in a university in Yunnan Province where Chinese EFL students receive four-year education with English being taught for the first two years as a compulsory course. Hence, Chinese college students in the study refers to Chinese EFL students who were taking the English courses in their first year.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide a holistic picture of the research topic in point, this chapter reviews relevant literature including willing to communicate in English and Chinese academic culture. In addition, related studies will also be reviewed so as to illustrate a clear research gap.

2.1 WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH

The notion of willingness to communicate (WTC) was initially introduced by (McCroskey & Baer, 1985) as a characteristic of language learners, reflecting their inclination to interact with others using their native language. This trait-like aspect of WTC suggests that it is a stable personality feature that remains constant across different situations and contexts. (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990) posit that learners' self-perceived communicative competence and low level of anxiety are two critical prerequisites for WTC. In other words, learners are more willing to engage in communicative activities when they believe they can communicate effectively and feel less anxious.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) incorporated WTC into the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and defined it as the preparedness to engage in discourse at a specific moment with a specific individual or persons using an L2. They proposed a six-level pyramid model of L2 WTC to illustrate learners' communicative behaviors (see Figure 2.1).

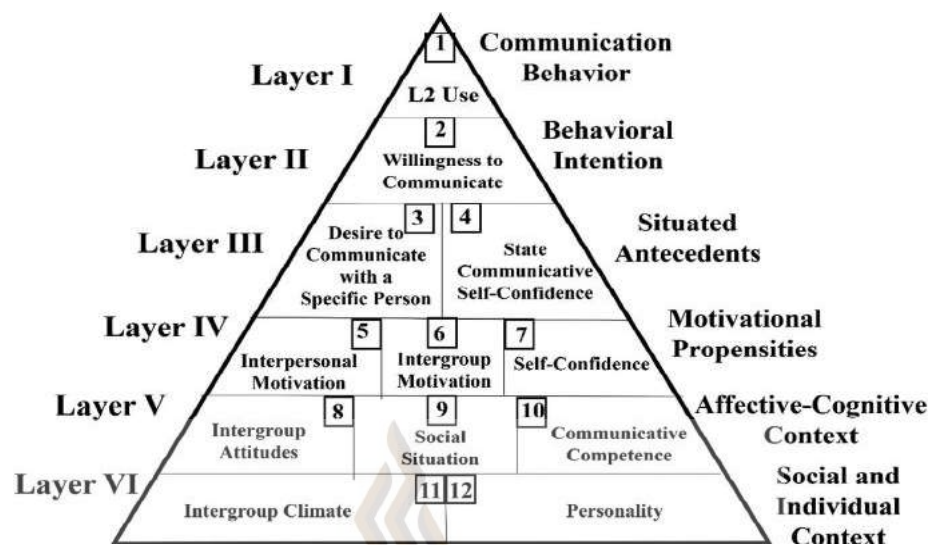


Figure 2.1 Pyramid Model of L2 WTC

Source: MacIntyre et al., 1998, p.547

The model consists of communication behavior at the top layer and behavioral intention, situated antecedents, motivational propensities, affective-cognitive context, and social and individual context in the following five layers. The variables in each layer are influenced by the variables in the lower layers, while the variables in each layer have the most direct impact on the layer above it. In other words, WTC has a direct impact on L2 use and is the decisive factor in determining whether learners will eventually participate in L2 communication. Therefore, increasing EFL learners' WTC can be an effective strategy to encourage them to communicate more in English and overcome the fear of communicating in a foreign language.

2.1.1 Personality Traits

According to various studies (Chen, He, Swanson, Cai, & Fan, 2021; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), personality factors have a significant impact on learning-related behaviors. The Big Five personality traits, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience, are commonly used to categorize human personalities into five broad dimensions. Different personality traits are linked to different aspects of learning. For example, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) suggest that extraversion can reduce language

anxiety, openness to experience can enhance learner confidence, and agreeableness can promote communication and interaction in L2. Oz (2014) found that extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience are significant predictors of WTC in English.

Regarding other studies, personality traits do not always have a direct correlation with WTC, but rather an indirect influence on factors that affect WTC. (Ghonsooly, Khajavy, & Asadpour, 2012) noted that openness to experience impacts international posture, which then affects learners' WTC. In the heuristic model of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998), personality traits are considered antecedent factors at the foundational level. Previous research has shown that openness to experience and conscientiousness are positively associated with intrinsic motivation, while extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism are related to extrinsic achievement motivation (Hart, Stasson, Mahoney, & Story, 2007; Komarraju & Karau, 2009; Komarraju & Karau, 2005). These results validate that personality may have both direct and indirect associations with WTC, and in many cases, the effects of personality on WTC are mediated by attitudes, motivation, communication competence, and a lack of communication apprehension. As an integral aspect of language acquisition, the Big Five personality traits represent the furthest variable in the individual context (Layer VI).

2.1.2 Affective Variables

In L2 WTC research, affective variables such as integrativeness and attitudes towards the learning situation are often considered to impact language learning (Lee & Hsieh, 2019; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Wang, Derakhshan, & Zhang, 2021). Gardner's (1985) socioeducational model suggests that integrativeness and attitudes towards the learning situation are effective in explaining learners' desire to become a part of the target language community. However, in EFL contexts where English learning primarily takes place in the classroom, it is unlikely that learners will develop integrativeness towards native English speakers and their communities (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002).

Yashima (2002) proposed international posture as a more appropriate variable for EFL contexts, which encompasses interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to travel overseas for work or stay, and a readiness to engage with intercultural partners, as an affective variable influencing EFL learners' motivation and communication behavior. Subsequent research has supported the significance of international posture as an affective factor impacting EFL WTC (Ghonsooly et al., 2012; Oz, Demirezen, & Pourfeiz, 2015; Peng & Jian-E, 2015; Yashima, 2002) (Layer V).

2.1.3 Motivation

The significance of motivation in language acquisition cannot be overstated, although individuals have varying reasons for learning English. Integrative motivation is driven by the desire to belong to a community, extrinsic motivation is fueled by the anticipated rewards of learning the language, and intrinsic motivation arises from personal gratification. For specific research objectives, various motivational factors such as integrative motivation (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002; Munezane, 2013), motivational intensity (Ghonsooly et al., 2012; Oz et al., 2015; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004), intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Peng & Woodrow, 2010), instrumental orientation (Oz et al., 2015), and ideal L2 self (Munezane, 2013) have been explored.

In an EFL setting where English is mostly confined to the classroom for academic and career advancement purposes, the theoretical framework utilizing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation appears more suitable (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Wen & Clément, 2003). According to the self-determination theory, motivation exists on a continuum, with a motivation on one end, intrinsic motivation on the other end, and extrinsic motivation falling in the middle (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000). To sustain language learning, learners must be convinced that learning the language has personal significance to them, in addition to learning for personal pleasure. As a result, learners possess both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations when learning English (Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000). In their WTC research in the Chinese context, (Peng & Woodrow, 2010) also used intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

as a collective motivational set (Layer IV).

2.1.4 Communication Confidence in English

The relationship between second language (L2) willingness to communicate (WTC) and communication competence as well as communication apprehension has been extensively studied by various researchers (Fushino, 2010; Lin, 2019; MacIntyre et al., 2002; MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Some scholars consider communication competence and apprehension as distinct variables that impact L2 WTC (MacIntyre et al., 2002; MacIntyre, 1994; Oz et al., 2015), while others view them as constituents of self-perceived communication confidence (SPCC) in using L2 (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Wen & Clément, 2003; Yashima, 2002).

There are two components in SPCC, namely self-perceived language competence (SPLC) and self-perceived communication apprehension (SPCA). SPLC is a vital determinant of L2 WTC, as it reflects how an individual evaluates their English proficiency and social skills to communicate effectively (MacIntyre et al., 1998; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Conversely, SPCA refers to the feeling of anxiety when communicating in English, often arising from the learners' inability to convey their ideas effectively (Horwitz E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Ideally, learners would have a high level of SPLC and a low level of SPCA as situated antecedents for optimal EFL WTC (Layer III).

2.1.5 Frequency of English Use in the Classroom

The primary objective of learning English is to utilize it for communication purposes. In EFL settings, English is predominantly restricted to classroom environments, and its frequency of use on a daily basis is quite low. Previous studies have examined WTC in various contexts, such as in and outside the classroom, and with different interlocutors (Fushino, 2010; Khajavy, Ghonsooly, Hosseini Fatemi, & Choi, 2016; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). WTC reflects an individual's willingness to

communicate in English, and the frequency of English use is often used to assess its ultimate goal (MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Therefore, in the context of EFL, the frequency of English use in the classroom occupies the highest level in the proposed EFL WTC model.

2.1.6 Learner Beliefs and WTC

Research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has increasingly focused on learner beliefs since the 1980s, exploring their influence on learning behavior. Learner beliefs, a complex and elusive concept, are studied under various terminologies like metacognitive knowledge and culture of learning languages (Barcelos, 2003). These beliefs, categorized into cognitive and sociocultural, play pivotal roles in language acquisition processes (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996).

Cognitive beliefs focus on learners' perceptions about language and language learning, often equated with metacognitive knowledge. Such beliefs might evolve from learners' past instructional experiences and influence their performance (Ellis, 1994; Mori, 1999).

Sociocultural beliefs, garnering increasing research attention, refer to the intuitive knowledge, cultural assumptions, and values learners hold regarding language learning processes. They underscore that language learning is embedded within specific cultural and social contexts, affecting learners' interactions and experiences within classroom environments (Alanen, 2003; Barcelos, 2003).

Learner beliefs, dynamic and contextual, can change over time and interaction with varied learning environments. These beliefs interact with multiple learner variables like learning strategies, attitudes, motivations, autonomy, and language achievements, indicating their multifaceted impact on SLA (Benson, 2013; Ellis, 1994). Thus, understanding learner beliefs, both cognitive and sociocultural, is essential for comprehending and facilitating the SLA process.

Learner beliefs play a significant role in Second Language Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC) research. These beliefs align with Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action and its extension, Theory of Planned Behavior, which involves personal and social factors in determining behavioral intentions (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod, 2001). Particularly, sociocultural beliefs resonate with the social factors in these theories, emphasizing the influence of subjective norms or beliefs about how significant others evaluate certain behaviors (Dörnyei, 2014).

Research has begun to explore the relationship between L2 WTC and learner beliefs more deeply. Studies suggest that learner beliefs, encompassing cognitive and sociocultural aspects, influence individuals' willingness to communicate in a second language within educational settings (Fushino, 2008; Peng, 2007). Learner beliefs in this context refer to the value judgments concerning how English should be learned and taught and the appropriateness of various learning and communication behaviors in the English classroom.

Learner beliefs, differentiated from related concepts like self-efficacy beliefs and motivational beliefs, are considered pivotal in understanding classroom WTC, more so than integrativeness or international posture. They offer a more context-specific understanding of WTC, providing deeper insights into learners' attitudes and behaviors and thus hold significant implications for teaching practices (Benson & Lor, 1999; Mantle-Bromley, 1995).

2.1.7 Ecological Perspective on Classroom Dynamics

Pertaining to the manifestation of willingness to communicate (WTC) within the classroom environment, it is imperative to meticulously examine classroom-specific contexts to avoid cultural stereotypes (Cheng, 2000). The ecological perspective in language learning focuses on the dynamic interactions between learners and their multifaceted environments, encompassing physical, social, and cultural aspects (Leather & Dam, 2003; Lier, 2002). This perspective aligns with sociocultural theories, such as Vygotsky's, emphasizing learning's situative nature within various

contexts (Vygotskij, 1979). The language classroom, from this viewpoint, is seen not merely as a physical space for learning but as a micro-society involving rich, interactive social engagements where learners and teachers communicate, negotiate, and compromise (Breen, 1985). This viewpoint necessitates a holistic understanding of the willingness to communicate (WTC) in the language classroom, recognizing it as a dynamic construct influenced by the interplay of individual and environmental variables, including past experiences and broader sociocultural influences (Bronfenbrenner, 2014; Tudor, 2001). Thus, the ecological perspective deeply informs research, guiding the inclusion of the classroom environment as a vital variable and framework for interpreting research findings.

2.1.8 L2 WTC in Relation to Other Variables

Personality traits, age, and gender have been quantitatively studied, revealing their indirect impact on L2 WTC through variables such as perceived competence and anxiety (MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Social variables, like language immersion programs, social support, and L2 contact, also affect L2 WTC. Particularly, immersion experiences, social support from peers, and frequent quality L2 contact enhance L2 WTC (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Liu & Jackson, 2008; MacIntyre et al., 2001).

Moreover, L2 WTC is identified as a precursor to L2 communication behavior and directly impacts L2 communication frequency and proficiency (MacIntyre et al., 2001; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996).

Qualitative studies focusing on classroom and cultural contexts have uncovered insights into the situational nature of L2 WTC. These studies emphasize the role of psychological conditions, situational variables, and cultural factors in influencing L2 WTC (Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; Peng, 2007). Such qualitative inquiries show that L2 WTC can be dynamic and situationally emergent, affected by familiarity with interlocutors, topics, and instructional practices (Cao, 2006; Kang,

2005). Thus, multiple interconnected factors, ranging from personality traits to cultural and situational contexts, contribute to shaping L2 WTC.

2.2 CHINESE ACADEMIC CULTURE AND WTC IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT

According to Keesing (1974), culture offers its participants a tacit theory about how to act in various circumstances and how to understand the actions of others in these circumstances. Deeply rooted in Confucianism, Chinese culture has molded the ways Chinese students learn and thus led to the development of Chinese academic culture.

Chinese academic culture is characterized by two aspects, namely an other-directed self and a submissive way of learning, as proposed by Wen and Clément (2003). Individualism and collectivism occur in all societies, but one form tends to prevail, as Gudykunst (1998) described it. Collectivistic values have a significant impact on how the Chinese self is shaped and how people perceive their interactions with others or the outside world (Yang, 1981). In the meantime, Confucianism is the source of Chinese culture's collective values. Its central notion, Jen, a combination of the words "two" and "man," emphasizes the idea that the individual will only be meaningful when the other is present. When complimented, they are glowing with happiness and exhibit little control when with friends, but once in public, they are very cautious and monitor how they act in order to win over the favor of others. Chinese students are probably even more self-conscious about how other people perceive their linguistic prowess, making them less apt to participate in class discussions. This could result in a dearth of oral practice and hinder the growth of L2 speaking skills (Williams & Burden, 1997).

A feeling of group belongingness, which clearly distinguishes ingroups from outgroups while also maintaining a significant psychic gap between insiders and strangers, is another attribute of the other-directedness. Therefore, the Chinese keep away from outgroup members as well as the outgroup culture. This social and psychological distance prevents adaptation to a new culture, and as a result, when given the chance to engage in outgroup culture or use outgroup language, they feel uneasy and

avoid it, demonstrating a reluctance to engage in the social interaction necessary for L2 learning to be successful (Hinenoya & Gatbonton, 2000).

Another character of Chinese academic culture is Chinese students' well-known propensity towards submission to authority. In the classroom, the Confucian paradigm of the social hierarchy is observed. The teacher's statements are always true, and students are expected to repeat and remember them without challenging them (Ting, 1987). Students may not feel like they are learning once they are not in the teacher-centered classroom to which they are so used to. They exclaim that the instructor is wasting too much time and demand that he lectures more. Both students and instructors frequently think that students' ability to speak English is based more on the teacher's lessons than on their own practice. Apart from this, Chinese students believe grammar is the ultimate arbiter of every linguistic occurrence. When statements can be rationally explained and supported by grammar, it gives one a tremendous sense of fulfillment (Ting, 1987). Students start spending a lot of time and effort studying language in preparation for written exams. Due to their mastery of so many rules, it is only normal that students eventually become rule-obsessed and have a propensity to continually review their work against their cognitive understanding of English. They tend to pause, avoid saying, or retreat when communicating because they are so preoccupied with being right. Even when they speak out, they might continually edit themselves, leaving a statement incomplete. They become discouraged by their lack of true proficiency and become less eager to interact. Students frequently blame their poor command of grammar for their lack of conversation ease and focus even more on grammar at the cost of engaging in language practice.

Another two characteristics of the Chinese academic culture are learning through memorization and face concern. In Chinese educational culture, the emphasis on learning predominantly through memorization, imitation, and repetition as opposed to interactive methods is quite pronounced. Such pedagogical inclinations are historically rooted in the ancient "sishu" private schools, where the prioritization was towards memorizing and reciting Confucian classics, with minimal expectation for learning through interactive communication (Chen-Chung, 1984). The scholars Cortazzi

and Jin (1996) elucidate that these conventional methodologies are also intertwined with the manner in which students acquire their native language, emphasizing a structured progression from learning individual characters and words to the construction of sentences and texts.

This ingrained style of learning, characterized by repetitive memorization, naturally extrapolates to the domain of acquiring new languages. It is a pervasive observation that Chinese learners invest significant effort and time in the meticulous memorization and repetition of English vocabulary, grammar structures, and texts. Brick (2004) provides an analysis suggesting that the foundational assumption of these methodologies perceives language knowledge as compartmentalized into discrete, manageable units, which are considered essential for mastering the language.

While this meticulous memorization strategy may be strategically advantageous in the context of written examinations, focusing primarily on reading and writing skills, its efficacy in the broader spectrum of language acquisition, particularly in foreign languages, has been subject to scrutiny. Several scholars posit that while this repetitive learning strategy might facilitate deep learning leading to a nuanced understanding of the first language or various content subjects, its application appears somewhat limited in the realm of foreign language acquisition (Biggs, 1996). A more critical examination reveals that in the absence of interactive practice, memorization alone might not suffice. Given that the essence of language learning is instrumental for effective communication, the absence of practical interaction and language utilization seems rather incompatible with the development of competent communicative proficiency. This discrepancy might elucidate why some Chinese students, despite demonstrating proficiency in grammar-based written assessments, encounter challenges in effective communicative engagements (Wen & Clément, 2003).

In the context of interpersonal communication within Chinese society, the concept of 'face' is emblematic of an individual's aspirational self-image cultivated within relational and societal networks, intricately linked to societal perceptions and evaluations (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998). The socio-cultural fabric of China assigns

significant precedence to the public manifestation of an individual's image, rendering individuals particularly susceptible to societal appraisals and judgments. In this cultural environment, the loss of 'face' is synonymous with the incurring of societal disapprobation and humiliation, thereby diminishing one's social standing and acceptability (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998).

The implications of losing or acquiring 'face' resonate beyond the individual, extending its influence to familial and community realms. For example, academic accomplishments, such as securing admission to a reputable university, bestow 'face' or honor, not just upon the individual student but resonate as a collective achievement within the family.

The subtle concept of 'face' profoundly influences the communicative behaviors exhibited by Chinese students, particularly within language learning environments. Dörnyei and Muir (2019) underscore the language classroom as a domain rife with potential threats to one's 'face' due to the vulnerability associated with limited language competence and the concomitant risk of errors and negative evaluations. Given the societal orientation towards external validation, adverse assessments and perceptions wield significant influence over an individual's 'face' and self-worth.

To navigate these potential vulnerabilities, students are inclined to adopt protective strategies aimed at safeguarding their 'face'. Such strategies may encompass communication minimization tactics like maintaining silence or limiting expressive interactions (Liu, 2001). This tendency elucidates the observed predisposition among Chinese learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) towards minimizing risks and exposures to potential errors and criticisms (Peng, 2007; Wen & Clément, 2003). Additionally, cultural considerations imbued with respect for hierarchical authority might dissuade students from posing potentially challenging queries to instructors, reflecting a subtle strategy to preserve the 'face' of the educational authorities (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Liu & Littlewood, 1997). Consequently, this pervasive 'face' consciousness significantly shapes the willingness to communicate (WTC) within the EFL educational contexts among Chinese learners.

Based on the observations of Chinese academic culture, Wen and Clément (2003) proposed a schematic representation of the impact of Chinese cultural values on WTC (see Figure 2.2). They argue that wanting to communicate doesn't always mean being ready to communicate. It's only when students feel completely at ease that they won't feel embarrassed in front of important people, and will be ready to participate in conversation. Group cohesiveness is strongly associated with class size, as students tend to feel less comfortable and more self-conscious when they don't receive sufficient attention from teachers in overcrowded classrooms. In larger English classes, students may be reluctant to interact due to the sheer number of people, which makes it difficult to establish close connections and leads to a lack of cohesiveness. This, in turn, can cause students to feel insecure about speaking up in class. According to Connell and Wellborn (1991) and Skinner and Belmont (1993), if students believe that their teachers are actively engaged with them, they will feel less scrutinized and judged, leading to increased emotional stability. Additionally, they are more likely to participate in class interactions and demonstrate greater levels of enthusiasm. According to Krashen (1982), Chinese students are often described as careful and risk-averse language learners who place a significant emphasis on self-correction. They tend to prioritize accuracy over fluency and may avoid engaging in conversation for fear of making mistakes or being mocked. Nevertheless, there are still individual differences among Chinese students, with those who possess personality traits such as extraversion, impulsiveness, sociability, and flexibility being more inclined to take risks in language learning. However, the cultural importance placed on maintaining face remains a constant factor for all students. Despite its great importance in studying WTC in the Chinese context, the proposed model is solely a theoretical framework, and further research is necessary to verify or refute the suggested variables and their influence on WTC. The current study set out to explore the relations between Chinese academic culture and WTC based on the theories mentioned above.

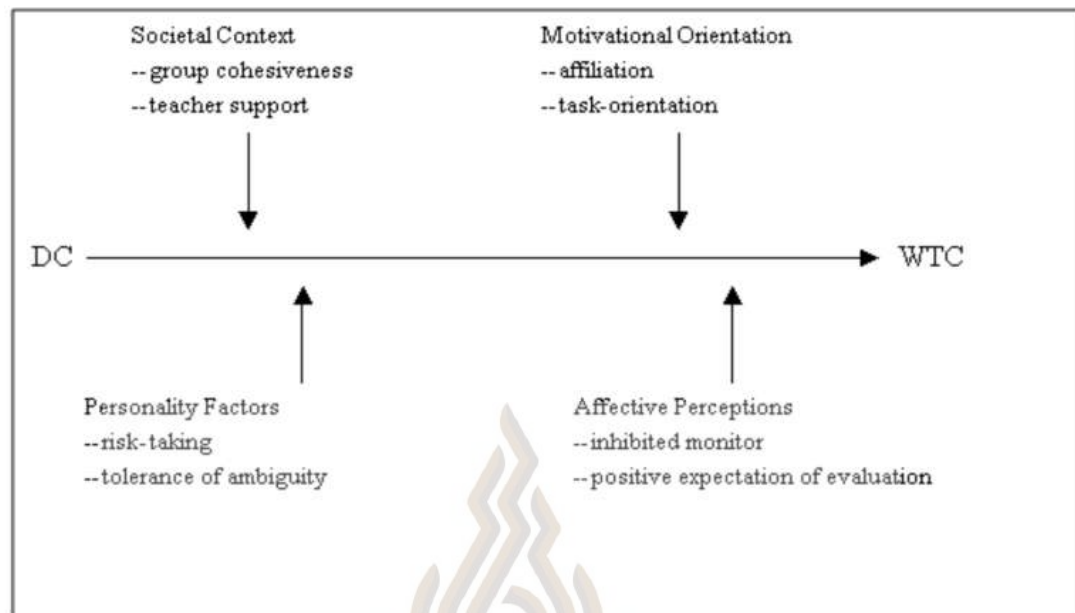


Figure 2.2 A Schematic Representation of the Impact of Chinese Cultural Values on WTC

Source: Wen and Clément, 2003, p.25

2.3 RELATED STUDIES

In their study, Wen and Clément (2003) conducted an examination of fundamental concepts related to Confucianism and the teaching of Confucian classics. This exploration revealed that cultural values play a crucial role in shaping learners' perceptions and approaches to learning. Building upon MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model, the researchers made adjustments to the relationships between constructs and redefined certain variables from a Chinese perspective. Their resulting model encompassed four key perspectives as illustrated in Figure 2. One notable distinction made in their research is the differentiation between desire and willingness to communicate, which is particularly relevant within Chinese culture. Wen and Clément (2003) explain that "desire" refers to a conscious choice or preference, whereas "willingness" emphasizes the readiness to take action. It is observed that most Chinese students possess the desire to communicate in English; however, due to various reasons, they may lack the willingness to do so.

Peng (2007) conducted a qualitative study aimed at analyzing the communication and learning culture in China. The study focused on identifying factors that contribute to L2 WTC in Chinese EFL classrooms. The research specifically examined both individual and social contexts. The individual context encompassed factors such as communicative competence, language anxiety, risk-taking, and learners' beliefs, which have been previously explored in similar studies. In contrast, the social context exhibited some differences and included elements such as classroom climate, group cohesiveness, teacher support, and classroom organization.

Ma, Yu, Reynolds, & Jiang (2022) conducted a research aimed to fill a gap in the existing literature by examining the factors that influenced the WTC in English among four Chinese postgraduate students during English-taught classes. The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing individual interviews, focus group interviews, and class observation field notes to gather data. Through rigorous analysis of the collected data, the findings revealed that the students' WTC in English during class was influenced by multiple dimensions, namely individual, environmental, social-cultural, and educational factors. These dimensions collectively played a significant role in shaping the students' WTC in English within the classroom setting. Specifically, in terms of social-cultural factors, participants in the study expressed anxiety and concern about potential negative judgments from their peers, which led to a decrease in their WTC. One participant acknowledged his eagerness to express himself in class and make a positive impression on others. However, despite being actively engaged in class discussions, he constantly worried about being perceived as pretentious or dominating by his classmates. In contrast, another participant expressed concerns about speaking too much in class and potentially disrupting her peers' thinking processes. Interestingly, in contrast to prior research that indicated a passive learning style hindered students' WTC (Wen & Clément, 2003), the study revealed that the participants were primarily concerned about their perception by peers when taking an active role in classroom discussions.

In their study on 100 non-English major college students in a province in China, Fu, Wang, X., & Wang, Y. (2012) found that 80% of students expressed their

unwillingness to take the initiative to speak in class, while 85% expressed a desire for equal opportunities for everyone to speak. This phenomenon can be attributed to the high value placed on collectivism in Chinese culture. Talking excessively or volubly is viewed as impolite and ill-mannered, while silence is considered virtuous and adhering to the principle of "least says" is seen as proper conduct. Consequently, some students refrain from speaking frequently in class, especially when others are silent, to avoid being perceived as show-offs. They prefer to blend in with the group and avoid standing out.

Despite the great role of traditional Chinese culture in impacting students' WTC, it is important to recognize that culture is not fixed and unchanging. Recent studies have shown that modern Chinese students are receptive to communication-oriented pedagogy (Littlewood, 2010; Shi, 2006). This indicates that research on L2 WTC should adopt a dynamic cultural perspective, rather than relying on static assumptions. Furthermore, as Ushioda (2009) cautioned, it is crucial not to overlook the variability of culture at local or individual levels when employing a macro-cultural perspective. In addition, in spite of the extensive studies on various factors influencing Chinese students' WTC in English, there are little on the Chinese academic culture. Therefore, the current study tries to explore what role the Chinese academic culture plays in influencing students' WTC in a university located in the southwest of China.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter reviews literature related to WTC in English and Chinese academic culture as well as relevant studies about the effects of Chinese academic culture on WTC in English. The review suggests that there is a dearth of studies on the influence of Chinese academic culture on WTC in English. In addition, a mixed-methods approach was rarely used in previous studies.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methods of the study, including research design, population and sample, research instruments, data collection, data analysis, and ethical consideration.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study utilized a mixed-methods research design, gathering both quantitative and qualitative information. It focused on identifying the possible correlations between students' WTC in English classroom and the Chinese academic culture. By integrating the findings with insights from semi-structured interviews, the study aimed to uncover the predictive effect of Chinese academic culture on participants' willingness to communicate in English (see Figure 3.1).

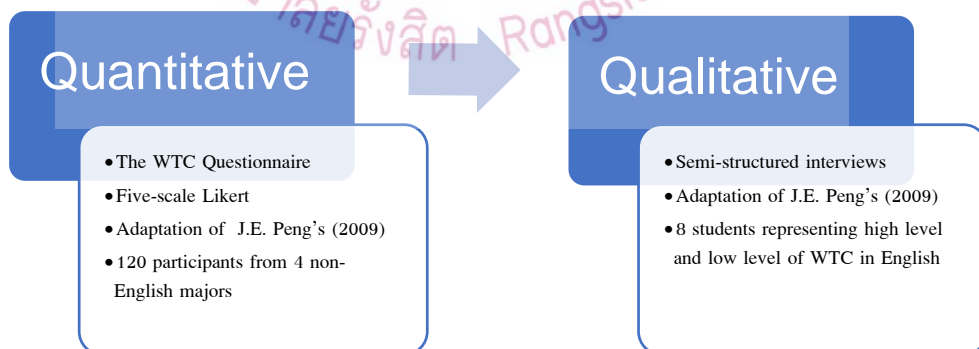


Figure 3.1 Research Design

Quantitative and qualitative methods are not necessarily in opposition. They are considered to be on a continuum, with mixed methods lying in between (Johnson &

Onwuegbuzie, 2004). There has been a noticeable increase in the adoption of the mixed methods approach recently, reflecting a pragmatic philosophy embraced by numerous researchers. They seek solutions by optimizing the use of various methods, disregarding their foundational epistemology. A practical viewpoint discards the idea that a single method can unveil the ultimate truth (Maxcy, 2003). Advocates of this practical perspective emphasize shifting attention away from paradigm disputes, focusing instead on research issues and applying all necessary methods to gain insights into a problem (Creswell, W., & Creswell, D., 2017). In the context of second language acquisition research, a pragmatic approach, which encompasses such flexible utilization of methods, has also been endorsed by Dörnyei (2007).

To be more specific, this study employed both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Students from four non-English majors were chosen as the sample for the questionnaire, following stratified sampling techniques. The students' WTC in English was assessed using an adapted version of Peng's (2009) questionnaire. Likewise, semi-structured interview questions were also adapted from Peng's (2009) and then conducted on 8 students, focusing on unfolding the influence of Chinese academic culture on participants' readiness to engage in English communication.

3.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The participants in the current study came from a university in a southwest China's province. All the participants were non-English majors in their first year when English courses were mandatory for all freshmen. Based on annual recruitment of freshmen, the number of first-year non-English majors was around 5, 700. English majors were excluded because they were considered enthusiastic about learning English and being willing to communicate in English. Only first-year students were selected because for most non-English majors, English classes were the sole chance they got to communicate in English and those classes were offered in the first two years.

Since the students were admitted to the university based solely on their Gaokao scores, there was no significance difference among the freshmen in terms of their

English proficiency. By randomly selecting 30 students from each major, the researcher selected 120 students from 4 majors in total. Those 120 students completed the questionnaire. Saunders et al., (2018) emphasized that qualitative research should focus on information saturation of the largest difference when choosing subjects. This means selecting interview participants based on the relevance to the research queries and the depth of information they can provide, rather than setting a numerical target for sample size. In line with this approach, for the purpose of assessing the predicative effect of the Chinese academic culture on WTC in English among students, the researcher chose 4 students exhibiting high to very high levels of WTC in English (with scores of WTC from 3.50-5.00) and 4 other students exhibiting low to lower levels (with scores of WTC from 2.49-1.00) for semi-structured interviews.

3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The research instruments of this study included the questionnaire and the students' semi-structured interviews. Though the instruments were adapted from validated ones by Peng's (2009), it was still necessary to conduct a pilot study due to some changes made to the original instruments, e.g. six-point scales were converted to five-points scales and six-round interviews were reduced to one round interview due to time constraints.

3.3.1 The WTC Questionnaire

This study recognized that second language (L2) communication encompasses various forms such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing; however, it specifically focused on the speaking component of Willingness to Communicate. The primary interest of this research was in English oral communication within the classroom context, which included the students' readiness to ask questions, response to inquiries from both teachers and classmates, and their voluntary participation in presentations or performances.

The measurement of WTC in English and correlation between WTC and Chinese academic culture was based on a set of items in a questionnaire which evaluated the degree to which participants feel inclined to engage in particular communicative scenarios in the classroom. Responses were gauged using a 5-point Likert scale, with "1 = definitely not willing" and "5 = definitely willing" as the endpoints. High scores on this scale indicated a greater willingness among participants to communicate. The WTC questionnaire, adapted from Peng's (2009), functioned as a quantitative research instrument, yielding data that was both objective and dependable. For the convenience of data analysis and unity of the questionnaire, the researcher converted the original 6-point and 100 scales into 5-point ones. Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher clarified the questionnaire's purpose, its research significance, and the instructions for answering it to the students to alleviate any of their concerns. Given the length of the questionnaire, each participant was awarded some money for the efforts they put in the research.

The questionnaire was originally composed in both English and Chinese. To avoid possible misunderstanding, participants were asked to complete the Chinese version. The original English and Chinese versions of the questionnaire are shown in Appendix A-1 and A-2. Prior to the survey, a pilot study was conducted to screen the questionnaire items. As a result, some items from the original questionnaire were eliminated and a revised version of questionnaire was compiled accordingly. All 120 participants completed the revised questionnaire and their responses were collected as data.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

One week following the collection of the questionnaire data, the semi-structured interviews, which were part of qualitative research, were carried out. The researcher personally interviewed 8 selected students. These students were selected based on their levels of WTC in English: 4 with the highest scores and 4 with the lowest scores. These interviews were held in Chinese to ensure that language did not hinder the participants' ability to self-report. The interview questions were adapted from the

question items proposed by Peng (2009). The original six-round interviews was reduced to one round interviews due to the time constraints and limited number of participants. The original questions were in both English and Chinese (see Appendix B-1 and B-2) and the interviews were conducted in Chinese. Then the responses were transcribed into English and then analyzed. Prior to the study, a pilot study was conducted to screen the interview items. As a result, some items from the original interview questions were eliminated and some relevant items were added. The revised interview questions were used in the semi-structured interviews on the 8 selected students.

3.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

3.4.1 Validity

Validity measures the effectiveness of a comprehensive evaluation system in accurately reflecting the assessment of its objectives and requirements. It determines how well a measuring tool captures the desired characteristics. A high validity indicates that the measurement results align closely with the intended characteristics, while a low validity suggests the opposite. To assess the validity of a research instrument, content validity was applied. The three experts, in the area of English language education and research, were invited to evaluate and comment on the content validity of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview questions using the item-objective congruence index.

The Item Objective Conference (IOC) is a system introduced by Rovinelli and Hambleton (1976). It offers a mathematical framework suitable for multi-dimensional indicators in project development. The researcher used the IOC to check the validity and accuracy of the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, ensuring the content matches its intended purpose (see Appendix C and Appendix D).

The IOC is scored on a range from -1 to +1. Three experts assign scores of -1, 0, or +1 to each item:

3.4.1.1 +1 means the item aligns well with its objective.

3.4.1.2 0 indicates uncertainty about the item's alignment, suggesting potential modification or removal.

3.4.1.3 -1 shows the item does not align with its objective and requires changes.

Each item's total score should exceed 0.67 to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with the measurement objective (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1976). An item's IOC value is computed by averaging the experts' scores. For instance, if the first item receives scores of 1, 1, and 1 from the experts, its final score would be 1. This result demonstrates that the item effectively aligns with its objective. Experts also provided feedback on each item. The researcher ensured that the revision was appropriately done before data collection.

The IOC results showed that 8 questions concerning Chinese academic culture (i.e., the 17th and 21st questions in the "motivation to learn English" subdimension, the 24th, 26th, 28th questions in the "learner belief about English learning" subdimension, and the 32nd, 35th, 41st questions in the "classroom environment" subdimension) in the questionnaire had values less than 0.67 and were eliminated.

As for the interview questions, 2 items (i.e., the 6th and 7th questions) got IOC values less than 0.67 and were eliminated. Those items were deleted for several reasons. First, those eliminated items had little to do with the research objective. For example, the 6th (If the direct link between your academic degree with the CET-4 was canceled, or if the College English was changed from a mandatory course, would you nonetheless study English?) and 7th (According to you, what student behavior is wrong or inappropriate in class?) questions had little relevance to the purpose of the semi-structured interview, i.e., to find out the relations between the Chinese academic culture and WTC in English. Then, some items were overlapping in meaning, such as the 15th (Because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language.) and 17th (Because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak English) questions in the original questionnaire and thus one of them was removed.

Two experts pointed out that there might be some problems with the research questions. However, the study was designed to be a mixed-methods one. Therefore, the proposed research questions were kept as it was.

3.4.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability and reliability of test results. Generally, internal consistency is used to prove the reliability of the test. The higher the reliability coefficient is, the more consistent, stable and reliable the test results will be. The researcher used Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability of questionnaire. Specifically, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha to test the correlation coefficients of five dimensions (WTC in language classroom, communication anxiety in language classroom, motivation to learn English, learner beliefs about English learning, and classroom environment) and the overall dimension to determine whether the scale has internal reliability. In general, the reliability coefficient should be 0-1. If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire scale is more than 0.9, the reliability of the scale is excellent; If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire scale is between 0.8 and 0.9, the reliability of the scale is acceptable; If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire scale is between 0.7 and 0.8, some items of the scale need to be revised; If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire scale is less than 0.7, some items of the scale need to be discarded.

Due to the changes made to Peng's (2009) instruments, a pilot study was carried out before the treatment to validate the instruments. The pilot study was administered in another university similar to the university where the current study took place in terms of scale, location, number of students. 30 volunteers were recruited to complete the questionnaire and 3 of them was interviewed afterwards. Then the results from the questionnaire were analyzed for reliability (Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.81, suggesting an acceptable reliability) and the participants were required to share their opinions on the comprehensibility and accuracy of the questionnaire items and interview questions and offered their suggestions accordingly. The participants found that 12 items in the original questionnaire were confusing and irrelevant to the study. After

Careful consideration, the researcher agreed with those comments and thus eliminated the items accordingly. Moreover, the participants suggested that 3 more questions should be added to the semi-structured interview due to their relevance to the study. After rounds of idea exchanges and careful deliberation, the researcher added those questions to the semi-structured interview. Finally, the researcher refined the questionnaire and interview questions based on the comments both from those participants and IOC experts. The revised English and Chinese versions of the questionnaire are shown in Appendix F-1 and F-2 and the revised interview questions in Appendix G-1 and G-2.

The questionnaire had a high level of internal consistency among the survey questions (overall reliability value=0.928). For the 5 dimensions, the Cronbach's alpha values were 0.897 (WTC in language classroom), 0.900 (communication anxiety in language classroom), 0.907 (motivation to learn English), 0.789 (learner belief about English learning), and 0.958 (classroom environment).

To check the reliability of qualitative data emerged from the semi-structured interview, inter-coding reliability was applied. The researcher and another instructor who also taught the course were trained to analyze the qualitative data based on theme analysis. Then, they both independently analyzed the data. Then the result was compared and found that the inter-coding reliability value was high and acceptable at 0.921.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

The data gathering process was divided into two stages. In the first stage, the researcher gathered questionnaire data to answer the first and second research questions. A week later, in the second stage, the researcher selectively interviewed 8 students in accordance with their questionnaire responses. The primary aim of these interviews was to explore deeper into the possible predicative effect of the Chinese academic culture on students' WTC in English.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Upon concluding data collection, the gathered data were subjected to rigorous descriptive statistical analysis. The first research question was addressed by employing SPSS software to compute the means, standard deviation of the administered questionnaires.

Subsequently, the second research question was explored through correlation analysis to find out whether Chinese academic culture exerts a predictive influence on individuals' willingness to communicate in English.

finally, the third research question was investigated through content analysis of the semi-structured interviews on 8 selected students.

Table 3.1 Data Analysis Scale

Research question	Research instrument	Type of the data collection	Data analysis / interpretation
1. What is the level of Chinese college students' Willingness to Communicate in English?	Questionnaire	Quantitative data	Descriptive analysis for quantitative data to identify the level of students' WTC in English. The interpretation of WTC Likert Scale criteria was set as follows: Lower 1.00-1.49; Low 1.50-2.49; Moderate 2.50-3.49; High 3.50-4.49; Very High 4.50-5.00.

Table 3.1 Data Analysis Scale (Cont.)

Research question	Research instrument	Type of the data collection	Data analysis / interpretation
2. Is there any relationship between Chinese academic culture influence Chinese student willingness to communicate in English?	Questionnaire	Quantitative data	The correlation analysis between WTC and other four aspects.
3. What are the opinions of students with high WTC and low WTC towards Chinese academic culture?	Semi-structured interviews	Qualitative data	Content analysis for qualitative data to explore the relations between Chinese academic culture and WTC in English. Content analysis was coded and analyzed using thematic analysis by Boyatzis (1998).

3.7 RESEARCH ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

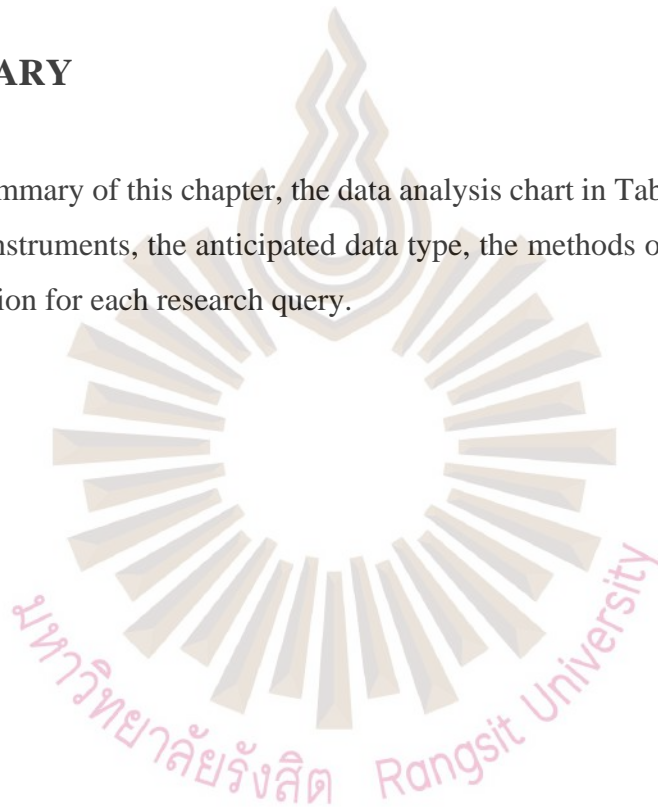
To uphold ethical standards, the researcher notified participants beforehand and sought their consent to use their written or spoken responses as data sources. The actual names of the university and its students did not appear in the final research

document. The researcher received approval from the Academic Ethics Committee of Rangsit University to conduct the study. (see Appendix E)

Once the interview data was transcribed, participants reviewed the transcripts for accuracy prior to data analysis. This step was crucial for ethical reasons, as affirmed by Measor and Sikes (2013) that respondent validation offers the most robust ethical protection.

3.8 SUMMARY

In summary of this chapter, the data analysis chart in Table 3.1 aims to outline the research instruments, the anticipated data type, the methods of data collection, and the interpretation for each research query.



CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter offers a detailed exploration of the study titled "Investigation of Willingness to Communicate in English: A Mixed-Methods Research of Chinese Academic Culture Among Chinese College Students." The study was carried out during the second semester of 2023. It explored the complex dynamics of Chinese college students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English and examined how Chinese academic culture impacts their willingness to do so. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, the study tried to identify the key factors that either supported or prevented English communication among college students. The first research objective was to find out the level of WTC in English among Chinese college non-English major students. This aspect was quantitatively measured using a structured questionnaire. With descriptive statistics drawn from the questionnaire, 4 sub-dimensions were analyzed to paint a holistic picture of the participants' WTC in English.

The second research objective was to explore the underlying reasons and modalities through which Chinese academic culture shapes students' WTC in English. The correlation analysis was conducted to find out the possible relation between students' WTC in English and 4 other aspects. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to provide an in-depth qualitative data. The content analysis of these data offered a detailed understanding of the interrelations between Chinese academic culture and WTC in English. The synthesis of correlation analysis and content analysis painted a holistic picture of how Chinese academic culture impacted WTC in English.

This chapter is divided into four main parts and each of the first three parts focuses on a different research question and the fourth part deals with synthesis of qualitative and quantitation data. The first part deals with the quantitative data to find out students' levels of WTC in English. The second part explores both the quantitative

to figure out how Chinese academic culture affects this willingness. The third part tries to find out students' opinion towards the Chinese academic culture. And the final part synthesizes data from both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews to explicitly show the correlation between WTC and Chinese academic culture. This format makes it easy to present the findings clearly so as to pave the way for a detailed discussion in the next chapter.

4.1 INVESTIGATING THE LEVEL OF CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS' WTC IN ENGLISH

To answer the first research question, i.e., "What is the level of Chinese college students' willingness to communicate in English?", a questionnaire was completed by all the 120 participants and descriptive data were collected. First, mean scores and standard deviation values were calculated and interpreted (see Table 4.1, Table 4.2, Table 4.3, Table 4.4, Table 4.5). Then, the level of each dimension was analyzed based on the criteria set.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Analysis of WTC in English

WTC in English	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.I am willing to do a role-play in English at my desk, with my peer (e.g. ordering food in a restaurant).	1	5	3.61	1.17	High Level
2.I am willing to ask the teacher in English to repeat what he/she just said in English because I didn't understand.	1	5	4.18	1.02	High Level
3.I am willing to give a short speech in English to the class about my hometown with notes.	1	5	3.36	1.33	Moderate Level

Table 4.1 Descriptive Analysis of WTC in English (Cont.)

WTC in English	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Interpretation
4.I am willing to ask my peer next to me in English how to say an English phrase to express the thoughts in my mind.	1	5	3.67	1.24	High Level
5.I am willing to ask my group mates in English the meaning of a word I do not know.	1	5	3.85	1.18	High Level
6.I am willing to translate a spoken utterance from Chinese into English in my group.	1	5	3.60	1.18	High Level
Total WTC in English	1	5	3.71	1.21	High Level

Table 4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Communication Anxiety in Language Classroom

Communication Anxiety in Language Classroom	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Interpretation
7.The level of anxiety I feel when speaking informally to my English teacher during classroom activities.	1	4	2.02	1.14	Low Level
8. The level of anxiety I feel When asked to contribute to a formal discussion in class.	1	4	2.17	1.12	Low Level
9.The level of anxiety I feel when giving an oral presentation to the rest of the class.	1	4	2.44	1.24	Low Level
10.The level of anxiety I feel when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	1	5	3.14	1.29	Moderate Level
Total Communication Anxiety in Language Classroom	1	5	2.44	1.24	Low Level

Table 4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Motivation to Learn English

Motivation to Learn English	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Interpretation
11.I am learning English in order to increase my chances of winning scholarship or prize in my university.	1	5	2.20	1.09	Low Level
12.I am learning English in order to get a more prestigious job later on.	1	5	2.27	1.16	Low Level
13.I am learning English in order to have a better salary later on.	1	5	2.83	1.18	Moderate Level
14.I am learning English in order to prepare myself for the application to overseas universities in the near future.	1	5	1.88	1.17	Low Level
15.I am learning English because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language.	1	5	2.60	1.22	Moderate Level
16.I am learning English because I think it is good for my personal development.	1	5	3.29	1.17	Moderate Level
17.I am learning English for the satisfied feeling I get in finding out new things.	1	5	2.83	1.19	Moderate Level
18.I am learning English because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the English-speaking community and their way of life.	1	5	2.75	1.30	Moderate Level
19.I am learning English for the pleasure I experience when surpassing myself in my English studies.	1	5	2.77	1.29	Moderate Level
20.I am learning English for the "high" I feel when hearing English spoken.	1	5	2.43	1.28	Low Level
Total Motivation to Learn English	1	5	2.63	1.26	Low Level

Table 4.4 Descriptive Analysis of Learner Belief about English Learning

Learner Belief about English Learning	Min	Max	Mean	SD
21. You should not say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.	1	5	2.91	1.16
22. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	1	5	2.38	1.07
23. To understand English, it must be translated into Chinese.	1	5	2.92	1.17
24. The student who always speaks out in class is showing off his/her English proficiency.	1	5	1.63	1.04
25. The student who always speaks up in class will be loathed by other classmates.	1	5	1.77	1.13
26. Students should not speak up without being invited by the teacher.	1	5	2.29	1.34
Total Learner Belief about English Learning	1	5	2.32	1.25

Table 4.5 Descriptive Analysis of Classroom Environment

Classroom Environment	Min	Max	Mean	SD
The teacher asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions.	1	5	3.78	0.96
The teacher provides a timely response to students.	1	5	4.05	0.98
I make friends among students in this class.	1	5	3.60	0.92
I am friendly to members of this class.	1	5	3.92	0.92
I work well with other class members.	1	5	3.78	0.90
I help other class members who are having trouble with their work.	1	5	3.85	0.88
Tasks designed in this class are attracting.	1	5	3.76	0.99
Tasks designed in this class are useful.	1	5	3.73	1.05
Activities in this class are clearly and carefully planned.	1	5	3.78	0.93
Class assignments are clear so everyone knows what to do.	1	5	3.90	0.91
Total Classroom Environment	1	5	3.81	0.95

4.1.1 WTC in Language Classroom

The first dimension of the questionnaire included Questions 1-6. The overall mean score of willingness to communicate in English within the language classroom was 3.71, suggesting a high level of willingness among the participants (see Table 4.6). The standard deviation for the overall data was 1.21, indicating that there was a modest spread in the responses. This suggests some variability in students' willingness to communicate in English. Different students potentially experienced varying levels of comfort or readiness to engage in the English-speaking activities described.

Table 4.6 Criteria for Assessing WTC in English

Likert Scale	Answers	WTC in English	Scores
5	Definitely willing	Very High	4.50-5.0
4	Probably will	High	3.50-4.49
3	Neutral	Moderate	2.50-3.49
2	Probably not willing	Low	1.50-2.49
1	Definitely not willing	Lowest	1.00-1.49

With the highest mean score (4.18), Question 2 was related to students' willingness to ask the English teacher to repeat something they did not understand. The standard deviation for this item was 1.02, which was lower than the overall standard deviation. The data shows that responses to this item were quite consistent in showing a generally high willingness to communicate. This suggests that students likely feel comfortable asking for clarification in the classroom. It demonstrates their active participation and recognition of the importance of understanding the material being taught.

Question 3 asked students about their willingness to give a short speech in English on their hometown using notes. The relatively low average score of 3.36 suggests that students might be hesitant or anxious about public speaking in English. The high standard deviation of 1.33 shows that comfort levels with speaking in front of

peers vary greatly among students. This could be due to differences in individual confidence, anxiety about public speaking, or proficiency in English.

The detailed analysis offers insights into what affects the willingness to communicate among Chinese college students in English language classrooms. Students generally showed a readiness to communicate, especially during one-on-one interactions with the teacher for clarification. However, their enthusiasm declined for public speaking tasks. This area might need specific support to help improve their confidence and skills. Understanding these can help educators and curriculum developers tailor their approaches to foster a more conducive environment for all students to enhance their willingness to communicate in English.

4.1.2 Communication anxiety in language classroom

The second dimension consisted of 4 questions from Question 7 to Question 10. The overall mean score for communication anxiety was 2.44, which indicates a low level of anxiety among the students when communicating in English in the classroom (see Table 4.7). The standard deviation across all items was 1.24, pointing to a similar spread in responses as seen in the first dimension. This suggests some variability in students' communication anxiety in language classroom.

Table 4.7 Criteria for Assessing Communication Anxiety

Likert Scale	Answers	Communication Anxiety	Scores
5	Definitely anxious	Very High	4.50-5.0
4	Probably anxious	High	3.50-4.49
3	Neutral	Moderate	2.50-3.49
2	Probably not anxious	Low	1.50-2.49
1	Definitely not anxious	Lowest	1.00-1.49

Question 10, with the highest mean score (3.14), suggests that students feel most anxious when they had to speak without preparation in English class. The standard deviation for this question was 1.29, slightly above the overall standard deviation. This suggests that being asked to speak without preparation was the situation that tended to elicit higher levels of anxiety among students, and there was considerable variability in how students responded to this situation. The higher mean score could indicate that unprepared speaking engagements were particularly anxiety-provoking.

Question 7, with the lowest mean score (2.02), suggests that students felt less anxious when speaking informally to English teacher during classroom activities. The standard deviation for this question was approximately 1.14, indicating a moderate variation in student responses. The lower mean score here suggests that informal interactions with the teacher were less anxiety-inducing compared to other communicative activities. This might be due to the perceived lower stakes of informal communication, where errors may not be judged as harshly, or it might reflect a more relaxed rapport with the teacher.

The analysis highlighted key areas where communication anxiety was most and least pronounced among Chinese college students in English language classrooms. Anxiety peaked in situations requiring spontaneous communication, underscoring the need for educational strategies that build confidence and skills in impromptu speaking. Conversely, more structured interactions with teachers or within formal discussions came with lower anxiety levels, suggesting these as potential areas to leverage for encouraging communication in English. Tailoring classroom activities to gradually build from lower-anxiety situations to more challenging ones could help mitigate communication anxiety and enhance students' willingness to communicate in English.

4.1.3 Motivation to learn English

The third dimension included 10 questions from Question 11 to Question 20. The overall mean score for motivation to learn English was 2.63, which indicated a

moderate level of motivation among the students (see Table 4.8). The overall standard deviation was 1.26, which indicates variability in students' motivational levels.

Table 4.8 Criteria for Assessing Motivation to Learn English

Likert Scale	Answers	Motivation to learn English	Scores
5	Extremely true for me	Very High	4.50-5.00
4	Very true for me	High	3.50-4.49
3	Moderately true for me	Moderate	2.50-3.49
2	Slightly true for me	Low	1.50-2.49
1	Not at all true for me	Lowest	1.00-1.49

With the highest mean score of 3.29, Question 16 showed that students were learning English because they thought it was good for their personal development. The standard deviation for this question was approximately 1.17, which indicates that students were somewhat consistent in their response. They tended to believe that personal development was a motivating factor for learning English.

With the lowest mean score of 1.88, Question 14 showed that only a small number of students are learning English to prepare themselves for the application to overseas universities in the near future. The standard deviation for this question was about 1.17, suggesting that while there was some agreement on this item, it was not a predominant motivator for the majority of the students. The lower mean score on this question might indicate that the immediate goal of studying abroad was not a significant motivator for all students, possibly due to different career plans, a lack of interest or practicality in studying abroad, or a focus on other priorities.

These results highlight the importance of personal development as a motivating factor for learning English among Chinese college students. They also suggest that while some students may be motivated by more instrumental reasons such as overseas study, this was not as strong a motivator as personal development.

4.1.4 Learner Belief about English Learning

The fourth dimension encompassed 6 questions from Question 21 to Question 26. The overall mean score for this dimension was 2.32, indicating that the respondents tended to disagree with the belief statements presented. It suggested a more progressive or communicative approach to learning English rather than a traditional one focused on correctness and formality. The overall standard deviation was 1.25, which reflected a moderate level of variability in student beliefs.

With the highest mean score of 2.92, Question 23 showed students believed that translation was needed to understand English. The standard deviation for this question was 1.17, which suggested that students were somewhat divided on this belief. However, the mean score indicated a slight inclination toward the belief that translation was necessary for understanding. This may reflect a reliance on the native language as a tool for comprehension in the learning process. The relatively higher agreement with this statement could reflect a transitional phase in the English learning process where students still relied on their first language to make sense of the second.

With the lowest mean score of 1.63, Question 24 showed that only a small amount of students believed that speaking out in class was a show-off of English proficiency. The standard deviation for this question was 1.04, showing that most students did not agree with the idea. This suggests that the students see classroom participation as an important part of learning. It also calls for a supportive classroom environment where speaking up is encouraged and viewed positively.

4.1.5 Classroom Environment

This dimension included 10 questions from Question 27 to Question 36. The overall mean score for classroom environment was 3.81, indicating a generally positive perception of the classroom environment among students. The standard deviation was 0.95, which suggested a strong consensus among the students about their classroom environment.

With the highest mean score of 4.05 and standard deviation value of 0.98, Question 28 showed that most students believed that the teacher provided a timely response to students. The high mean score for this item suggested that prompt feedback was valued by students and was likely to contribute positively to their willingness to communicate in English.

With the lowest mean score of 3.60 and standard deviation value of 0.92, Question 29 showed that some students tended to make friends among students in English class. This suggests that although students generally felt they could make friends in class, this social aspect of the classroom environment seemed less important compared to how responsive the teacher was. The low average score on this point might indicate that the social side of the classroom isn't as influential as other factors.

These results indicated that elements like teacher responsiveness are viewed as crucial for a supportive classroom environment. The social dynamics of the classroom also played a significant role. Understanding these factors can assist educators and school administrators in shaping classroom settings that enhance students' willingness to communicate and enrich their overall language learning experience.

4.1.6 Conclusion

Students exhibited a moderate to high willingness to communicate, especially in scenarios involving clarifications from teachers. Yet they showed less enthusiasm for public speaking and experienced moderate communication anxiety, particularly in spontaneous speaking situations. In contrast, structured interactions and formal discussions induced less anxiety, indicating these as areas to potentially enhance communication skills.

Motivation levels among the students were moderate overall, with personal development being a significant motivator. This suggests that internal motivations related to personal growth were more influential than external ones like the opportunity to study abroad. While there was moderate agreement with potentially inhibitive beliefs,

such as the need to speak correctly before communicating or relying heavily on translation, a strong disagreement with the idea that class participation is boastful indicated a positive attitude towards engaging in English learning activities.

The classroom environment was viewed positively, characterized by responsive teachers, a friendly atmosphere, and clear assignments. All of these characters crucially supported students' willingness to communicate in English. Despite a solid foundation of willingness to communicate, the analysis identified communication anxiety and motivational strategies focused on personal development as key areas needing improvement. By addressing these aspects and enhancing supportive classroom environments, educators and curriculum designers can significantly improve the English language learning experience, ultimately boosting students' linguistic skills and communicative confidence in a conducive environment.

4.2 EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHINESE ACADEMIC CULTURE AND WTC IN ENGLISH

To answer the second research question, i.e., "Is there any relationship between Chinese academic culture influence Chinese student willingness to communicate in English?", the correlation analysis was first conducted to find out the possible relations between WTC in English and 4 other aspects, namely communication anxiety, motivation to learn English, learner belief about English learning, and classroom environment. Pearson's correlation coefficient was conducted to solicit correlations between WTC in English and other dimensions (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Correlations between WTC in English and Other Dimensions

	Communication Anxiety	Motivation	Leaner Beliefs	Classroom Environment
WTC in English	-0.334	0.245	0.146	0.486

By exploring the relationship between the first two dimensions (WTC in English and communication anxiety), a negative relation was found. The average correlation across all questions was approximately -0.334, indicating a moderate inverse relationship between WTC and communication anxiety. This means that as willingness to communicate (WTC) in the language classroom increases, communication anxiety in the language classroom tends to decrease, and vice versa.

An average correlation across all questions of approximately 0.245 indicated that there was a positive correlation between the first dimension of WTC in English and the third dimension of motivation to learn English across the corresponding items. This suggests that as students' motivation to learn English increased, so did their willingness to communicate in English.

An average correlation across items of 0.146 indicated a generally weak positive relationship between students' beliefs about English learning and their willingness to communicate in English. The strongest correlation appeared in the first question in this dimension, suggesting that beliefs closely related to the correctness of language usage and the importance of speaking accurately may have more impact on a student's willingness to communicate. However, the overall weak correlations suggested that while learner beliefs did play a role in influencing willingness to communicate, they were not the sole or most dominant factor.

An average correlation across all items of approximately 0.486 indicated a moderate to strong positive relationship between WTC in English and classroom environment. This suggested that a positive classroom environment was closely associated with a higher willingness to communicate. This might be due to factors like feeling comfortable, supported, and engaged in the classroom setting. An environment like this could lessen students' nervousness about communicating and boost their motivation and chances to use English, ultimately improving their ability to communicate effectively.

To sum up, the correlation analysis suggests that the classroom environment, learner belief, and motivation were positively related to WTC in English while communication anxiety negatively influenced WTC in English.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF OPINIONS FROM HIGH AND LOW WTC STUDENTS

To answer the third research question, i.e., "What are the opinions of students with high WTC and low WTC towards Chinese academic culture?", the content analysis was conducted on the data from semi-structured interviews to find out how Chinese academic culture influenced WTC in English.

4 students with the highest WTC scores and 4 students with the lowest WTC scores were selected to complete semi-structured interviews and their responses were collected as data. Thematic analysis by Boyatzis (1998) was utilized to systematically examine the data. Initially, all records from the interviews were meticulously transcribed verbatim to ensure fidelity to the original data. This transcription process is crucial as it transforms oral communication into written text, which can then be analyzed in depth. Following transcription, the data underwent a process of open thematic coding. This initial phase of coding was explorative and aimed to identify and categorize data based on emerging themes without preconceived categories. It involved reading through the transcribed data multiple times to note patterns and recurrent ideas, which reflected the students' perceptions. This stage is fundamental in thematic analysis as it sets the groundwork for deeper analysis by highlighting significant aspects of the data related to the research question. Subsequently, the identified themes were refined and organized through axial coding. This step involved connecting and integrating the initial codes to form a coherent and structured representation of the data. The themes were grouped and regrouped, as connections between them were identified, helping to construct a narrative that accurately represents the underlying data structures and relationships. Finally, each thematic group was labeled accurately to reflect the essence of the themes contained within each group. Labeling is a critical step in thematic analysis as it provides distinct

and descriptive titles that encapsulate the core idea of each theme group. These labels not only aid in the organization of the data but also assist in conveying the analytical conclusions more effectively. Throughout the process, an iterative and inductive approach was employed, emphasizing the reevaluation and refinement of themes and subthemes. This approach ensured that the analysis remained grounded in the data, allowing for adjustments and refinements as new insights emerged. By iterating between different phases of coding and continually reflecting on the data and its interpretation, the analysis remained dynamic and adaptable to new understandings, thereby enhancing the depth and reliability of the findings. Finally, themes as well as sub-themes were developed accordingly (see Table 4.10). To protect participants' privacy, their real names were not given and only initials were used in quotes.

In addition, students' responses to the fourth dimension in the questionnaire, i.e., learner belief about English learning, were further analyzed to find out students' general beliefs concerning Chinese academic culture, which had a positive influence on students' WTC in English as shown in the above analysis.

Table 4.10 Themes and Subthemes of Interviews

Themes	Subthemes	Code	Definition	Example Keywords/Phrases
Theme 1: Academic Expectations and Pressures	Subtheme 1.1: Academic and Social Expectations	Exam Motivation	External pressures from exams as a motivator for studying	"motivation from exams", "looming exams", "necessary motivators"
		Teacher Expectations	Expectations from teachers driving effort	"teacher expectations", "pressure from teacher", "drive me towards excellence"

Table 4.10 Themes and Subthemes of Interviews (Cont.)

Themes	Subthemes	Code	Definition	Example Keywords/Phrases
		Stress Reduction	Preference for less pressure to reduce anxiety	"more relaxed", "without external pressures", "hindering willingness"
	Subtheme 1.2: The Role of English in Academic Success	Academic Success	English proficiency necessary for academic success	"academic credits", "essential for communication", "personal development"
	Subtheme 1.3: Individual Responses to Academic Culture	Career Development	Importance of English for future career prospects	"career prospects", "professional development", "essential for communication"
		Personal Interest	Intrinsic motivation for learning English	"personal mission", "importance for my future", "recognize its value"
Theme 2: Instructional Strategies and Learning Environments	Subtheme 2.1: Effective Learning Methods	Multimedia Learning	Use of videos, movies, and songs for learning	"watching English movies", "listening to songs", "watching TV shows with subtitles"
		Reading	Learning through	"reading English novels", "reading

Table 4.10 Themes and Subthemes of Interviews (Cont.)

Themes	Subthemes	Code	Definition	Example Keywords/Phrases
			reading English books and novels	"books", "immersing in English-speaking environments"
		Interactive Practices	Engaging in conversations and language exchange programs	"practicing speaking with others", "language exchange program", "engaging in conversations"
		Structured Learning	Use of structured methods like workshops and apps	"language workshops", "learning apps", "structured learning methods"
	Subtheme 2.2: Role of Oral Communication	Confidence Building	Importance of oral communicatio n for building confidence	"building confidence in speaking", "showcases my ability", "improving my speaking skills"
		Real-Life Skills	Practicing speaking in real-life situations	"real-life communication skills", "practice speaking",

Table 4.10 Themes and Subthemes of Interviews (Cont.)

Themes	Subthemes	Code	Definition	Example Keywords/Phrases
				"chatting it up in English class"
		Anxiety in Speaking	Nervousness or jitteriness in speaking	"feel nervous sometimes", "tad jittery", "apprehension when addressing the teacher"
3: Classroom Culture and Interactions	Subtheme 3.1: Respect and Behavior in Class	Respectful Behavior	Importance of respectful behavior in class	"respectful behavior", "disruptive conduct", "respect the teacher's authority"
		Inappropriate Behavior	Condemnation of disruptive or disrespectful behavior	"being disrespectful", "talking during lectures", "disregarding instructions"
	Subtheme 3.2: Cultural Norms and Classroom Debate	Respectful Expression	Expressing differing viewpoints respectfully	"respectfully express my viewpoint", "share it respectfully", "raising questions for clarification"
		Constructive Dialogue	Fostering open communication	"find a compromise",

Table 4.10 Themes and Subthemes of Interviews (Cont.)

Themes	Subthemes	Code	Definition	Example Keywords/Phrases
			and finding compromises	"constructive dialogue", "open communication"
		Discretion in Expression	Exercising discretion in expressing differing perspectives	"exercise discretion", "keep it chill", "tactful and respectful expression"
Theme 4: Extracurricular Engagement and its Impact on WTC		Active Participation	Engagement in extracurricular activities to enhance English skills	"actively participating in extracurricular activities", "joined a language exchange club", "attended workshops on public speaking"
		Perceived Benefits	Recognizing the value of extracurricular activities for language learning	"could jazz up my English game", "great opportunity to practice", "potential in enhancing language skills"
		Barriers to Participation	Challenges preventing engagement in extracurricular activities	"busy schedule", "commitment to academic performance", "haven't had the chance"

4.3.1 Theme 1: Academic Expectations and Pressures

This theme investigates the specific expectations and pressures inherent in Chinese academic culture and their impact on English language learning.

Subtheme 1.1: Academic and Social Expectations

Both high WTC level and low WTC level students recognized the role of external pressures in motivating their studies, but they differed in their preference for the intensity and nature of these pressures. High-level students saw these pressures as necessary for driving excellence and maintaining accountability, indicating a more positive reception. In contrast, low-level students, while acknowledging the motivating aspect of exams, generally preferred a more relaxed learning environment without constant external pressures. For example, for students with high level of WTC, WXM viewed external pressures such as exams and teacher expectations as necessary motivators driving towards excellence and HF found moderate external pressure beneficial for accountability and motivation. As for students with low level of WTC, ZX preferred learning without external pressures but acknowledged exams as a helpful motivator and ZT enjoyed studying without external pressures, feeling more relaxed and able to learn better. This finding highlights the need for a balanced approach in educational settings to create a supportive learning environment.

Subtheme 1.2: The Role of English in Academic Success

Both groups exhibited a high motivation to improve their English proficiency, understanding its importance for future career and personal development. However, high-level students were more specific about the indispensable nature of English for career prospects and academic success, whereas low-level students emphasized its general importance for communication and overall development. For students with low level of WTC, SW saw mastering English as crucial for academic and career advancement: "Even if the direct correlation between my academic degree and language exams were to be severed...my dedication to mastering English would remain steadfast."

Similarly, LXS emphasized the significance of English proficiency for effective communication: "Even if the direct link between my academic degree and the CET-4 exam were canceled, I would still study English because it's essential for communication in today's world." WXM and HF of the high WTC level recognized English proficiency as indispensable for career prospects and academic credits.

Subtheme 1.3: Individual Responses to Academic Culture

This subtheme explores the impacts of individual differences in response to Chinese academic culture on students' WTC in English. Individual differences such as personal interests and career goals helped shape students' engagement in English learning.

While some students relied on external pressures to stay motivated, others drew on internal motivations to fuel their learning efforts. The interconnection between these external and internal factors created a complex dynamic that influenced their WTC in English. High WTC level student QDD's comment captured this dynamic: "Even if English wasn't tied to my degree or exams, I'd still be on it. It's like a personal mission, you know?" This highlights how personal interest and future career prospects played a significant role in motivating language learning. It suggests that enhancing the personal relevance and long-term value of learning English could boost students' internal motivation and their willingness to communicate.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Instructional Strategies and Learning Environments

This theme highlights the variety of strategies students used to learn English and their preferences for different types of learning. Students mentioned a range of effective methods, such as using multimedia resources and participating in language exchange programs. This variety indicates that a one-size-fits-all approach to English education might not be effective. It's important to recognize and accommodate different learning styles to better support each student's unique path to language proficiency.

Subtheme 2.1: Effective Learning Methods

Students mentioned a wide variety of methods for learning English, including watching videos, participating in language exchange programs, and using language learning apps. High-level students tended to use a more structured and diverse set of learning methods, including interactive practices and technology-based tools. They valued a mix of formal and informal learning strategies. Low-level students, on the other hand, preferred more passive methods like watching movies and reading, indicating a preference for less structured, more relaxed approaches to learning.

High-level student HF shared his approach: "I believe a combination of methods works best for me. I enjoy practicing speaking with native speakers, watching English movies with subtitles, and reading English books." Meanwhile, low-level student LSW found her own effective strategies: "I've found that reading English novels and watching English TV shows with subtitles are effective ways for me to learn." These statements emphasize the need to incorporate multiple learning styles into the educational framework.

Subtheme 2.2: Role of Oral Communication

All students agreed with the importance of oral communication in class, recognizing its benefits in improving their speaking skills and building confidence. However, they also acknowledged that feelings of nervousness were common. High-level students were more focused on using oral communication to gain immediate feedback and demonstrate their comprehension, whereas low-level students viewed it as essential for building confidence but also experienced significant anxiety, indicating a need for supportive and less intimidating speaking environments.

For example, low-level student LXS mentioned the vital role of speaking practice in boosting confidence: "English oral communication in class is very important to me because it helps me build confidence in speaking." Similarly, high-level student QDD advocated the significance of speaking English while admitting the accompanied

nervous feeling: "Chatting it up in English class? It's pretty crucial, I'd say. Though, I'll admit, I get a tad jittery talking in front of the teacher." These comments suggest that increasing opportunities for speaking practice in a supportive environment could help alleviate anxiety and promote more active participation.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Classroom Culture and Interactions

This theme explores the complex interaction of classroom dynamics and how they influence students' willingness to communicate in English. It seeks to find out how cultural and interpersonal dynamics shape the atmosphere for communication and how these elements impact language learning environments.

Subtheme 3.1: Respect and Behavior in Class

Respectful behavior towards teachers and classmates was universally recognized while disruptive or disrespectful actions were condemned. This cultural expectation of authority and respect in Chinese academic settings was deeply rooted. High-level students stated it in terms of maintaining authority and classroom order, while low-level students focused more on the general wrongness of disrespectful behavior. This indicates a shared value but with slightly different emphases on authority versus general decorum. For example, high-level student WXM considered any behavior undermining teacher authority as inappropriate by saying: "Any behavior that undermines the authority of the teacher or disrupts the learning environment, like speaking out of turn or disregarding instructions, is unequivocally inappropriate." Low-level student ZT highlighted the importance of this norm: "In my opinion, being disrespectful to the teacher or classmates, or talking during lectures, is wrong and inappropriate behavior in class." This emphasis on respect could impact students' willingness to communicate, as it may shape the classroom dynamics and overall learning atmosphere.

Subtheme 3.2: Cultural Norms and Classroom Debate

Both groups showed a willingness to express differing opinions respectfully. High-level students were more confident in fostering constructive dialogue, while low-level students emphasized a more cautious approach, seeking to understand before asserting their views. This reflects a difference in confidence levels and assertiveness in classroom interactions. For example, high-level student HF advocated for expressing different viewpoints respectfully during class discussions: "In a group assignment, if there's a divergence of opinions, I would try to find a compromise and work together with my team members to achieve our goals." Low-level student SW spoke about the importance of tactic and respect when expressing different opinions in class: "While I hold the teacher's expertise in high regard, if confronted with a differing perspective during lectures, I would exercise discretion." This statement reflects a commitment to engaging in constructive dialogue while maintaining respect for teacher authority.

The analysis suggests that promoting respectful dissent and open dialogue in the classroom may do more than just enhance critical thinking; it may also boost students' confidence in using English to express complex ideas.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Extracurricular Engagement and its Impact on WTC

This theme explores the significant role of extracurricular activities in language learning. Extracurricular activities like language exchange programs and workshops were viewed as a great way to practice English beyond the classroom and improve overall language skills. High-level students were more actively engaged in extracurricular activities and recognized their direct benefits for language learning. For example, HF's experience illustrates this point well. He was actively involved in a language exchange club and attended workshops on public speaking. When asked about the benefits of getting involved in those activities, he replied: "These activities have enabled me to enjoy my English learning and effectively promoted my English proficiency." Low-level students, while acknowledging the value of these activities,

cited busy schedules as a barrier to participation. Students like LXS and ZT have not joined extracurricular activities recently but acknowledged their importance.

The perceived benefits indicate the value of providing diverse and engaging platforms for English communication. Such activities could complement formal education by offering informal contexts for language use, thus potentially increasing students' willingness to communicate in more formal settings. Low-level students' low participation suggests a potential area for intervention to help these students balance their time and benefit from extracurricular opportunities.

4.3.5 Learner Belief about English Learning and Chinese Academic Culture

As indicated by the results from the correlation analysis, learner beliefs about English learning were positively related

to students' WTC in English. These beliefs suggested Chinese academic culture norms held by students. To find out how the beliefs influenced the level of WTC in English, an in-depth analysis was conducted by revisiting mean scores and SD values of the fourth dimension of the questionnaire (see Table 4.11). The criteria for assessing the extent to which students were displayed in Table 4.12.

Table 4.11 Mean and SD for Learner Belief about English Learning

Learner Belief about English Learning	Min	Max	Mean	SD
21. You should not say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.	1	5	2.91	1.16
22. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	1	5	2.38	1.07
23. To understand English, it must be translated into Chinese.	1	5	2.92	1.17

Table 4.11 Mean and SD for Learner Belief about English Learning (Cont.)

Learner Belief about English Learning	Min	Max	Mean	SD
24. The student who always speaks out in class is showing off his/her English proficiency.	1	5	1.63	1.04
25. The student who always speaks up in class will be loathed by other classmates.	1	5	1.77	1.13
26. Students should not speak up without being invited by the teacher.	1	5	2.29	1.34
Total Learner Belief about English Learning	1	5	2.32	1.25

Table 4.12 Criteria for Assessing Learner Belief about English Learning

Likert Scale	Answers	Learner Belief about English Learning	Scores
5	Strongly agree	Stronger	4.50-5.0
4	Agree	Strong	3.50-4.49
3	Neutral	Moderate	2.50-3.49
2	Disagree	Weak	1.50-2.49
1	Strongly disagree	Weakest	1.00-1.49

The analysis of the questionnaire data revealed insights into how Chinese academic culture influences students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. Mixed results were found regarding students' ideas of Chinese academic culture.

One prominent aspect that reflected traditional Confucian values was the importance placed on correctness and precision in language learning. This was evident from the response to the statement: "You should not say anything in English until you can speak it correctly," (Mean = 2.91, SD = 1.16). Such a response suggested that many students still felt that accurate language use was crucial before engaging in communication. This could potentially hinder their WTC due to fear of making mistakes. The finding was further underscored by students' responses to the role of translation in understanding English (Mean = 2.92, SD = 1.17). This suggested a

continued reliance on direct translation, a method aligned with more traditional approaches.

In contrast, the response to "Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules, " (Mean = 2.38, SD = 1.07) indicated a low agreement and pointed to a gradual shift from the traditional focus on rote learning towards a more functional and communicative approach to language education.

Significantly, responses to statements about classroom participation challenged traditional Confucian norms that typically discourage outspokenness to maintain harmony and respect for authority. For example, the statement "The student who always speaks out in class is showing off his/her English proficiency" received a low mean score of 1.63 (SD = 1.04). This indicated a disagreement that outspokenness was seen as show-off. Similarly, the item "The student who always speaks up in class will be loathed by other classmates" also scored low at 1.77 (SD = 1.13), suggesting that students did not perceive communicative participation as leading to social exclusion. All this represented a cultural shift towards valuing individual expression in academic settings. In contrast, the response to "Students should not speak up without being invited by the teacher, " (Mean = 2.29, SD = 1.34) reflected mixed feelings. It highlighted the ongoing tension between upholding respect for hierarchical teacher-student dynamics and fostering a classroom environment that encourages spontaneous student participation.

Overall, these results depicted a complex interaction between traditional educational values and evolving attitudes towards language learning and classroom behavior in Chinese academic culture. While certain conventional beliefs persisted, there was evidence of a significant cultural transformation that promoted a more interactive and communicative approach, potentially enhancing students' willingness to communicate in English. This evolution could lead to educational environments that are less restrictive and more supportive of verbal expression. Those results seem to align more closely with modern pedagogical practices that emphasize practical language use and learner engagement.

4.3.6 Conclusion

Chinese academic culture may influence students' willingness to communicate in English (WTC) both positively and negatively through various factors embedded in the educational system. The culture's emphasis on exams and teacher expectations may serve as a significant motivator for some students. However, this same pressure could also induce anxiety and reluctance. Therefore, it may be beneficial to create an environment that leverages these pressures to motivate without overwhelming students. Respect for authority and structured classroom dynamics was deeply rooted in Chinese academic settings. However, students valued participation in classroom as well. It may be worthwhile to create a formal yet supportive environment that enhances communication by establishing clear norms and expectations.

Furthermore, the recognition of English proficiency as crucial for personal and professional development acts as a strong motivator, driving students to improve their language skills irrespective of external academic pressures. This intrinsic motivation is further supported by individual differences, where personal interests and career goals shape engagement and encourage active participation in English learning. Accommodating diverse learning preferences through various instructional strategies, such as multimedia resources and language exchange programs, also plays a crucial role. These methods could cater to different learning styles and help integrate practical language use, thus enhancing students' comfort and competence in communication.

Finally, classroom interactions that respect differences in opinion and encourage open dialogue may not only foster critical thinking but also boost confidence in using English to express complex ideas. This approach combined with extracurricular activities provide real-world contexts for language use and may further motivates students. Through these diverse interactions and learning opportunities, Chinese academic culture may shape students' willingness to communicate in English by balancing rigorous academic demands with supportive strategies that cater to individual needs and preferences.

4.4 SYNTHESIZING QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW DATA

The synthesis of data from both the questionnaire and interview offers a comprehensive understanding of how various aspects of Chinese academic culture influence students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. The four key variables, i.e., communication anxiety, motivation to learn English, learner beliefs about English learning, and classroom environment were major contributors to Chinese academic culture. The data from the questionnaire showed how the four variables were related to students' WTC. Meanwhile, the data from semi-structured interviews provided specific details on how these variables influenced students' WTC.

Communication anxiety posed a significant barrier to WTC according to the questionnaire findings. The interviews further showed how Chinese academic culture, which emphasizes on exams and teacher expectations, could aggravate this anxiety in most cases. As a result, it is advisable to develop a conducive environment for communication by reducing communication anxiety.

Motivation to learn English was found to be influenced by both internal and external factors. While personal development was a significant motivator for students, the interviews showed indicated the cultural perception of English proficiency as being essential for personal and professional development. This internal motivation and individual interests and career aspirations determined students' engagement with English learning, thus illustrating how cultural values and personal motivations influenced WTC.

Learner beliefs about English learning included a range of attitudes and perceptions towards language learning. The interviews highlighted how these beliefs were intertwined with cultural norms and expectations, such as the importance placed on speaking correctly and the perceived value of class participation. Balancing these beliefs within the cultural context is essential for creating a supportive learning environment to enhance students' WTC.

The classroom environment was found to be positively connected with WTC in the questionnaire. The finding was in line with students' ideas expressed in the interviews. Clear norms and expectations as well as respectful classroom interactions were identified as facilitators of WTC within this cultural context. By integrating these elements, educators can provide necessary support for students to engage confidently in English communication.

Overall, the synthesis of questionnaire and interview data illustrates how various aspects of Chinese academic culture influence students' WTC in English. Accordingly, educators can tailor their approaches to foster a supportive environment that allows students to communicate effectively within the Chinese academic context.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter addresses the discussion of the study focused on the Chinese college students' level of the WTC in English and its relations with Chinese academic culture. It includes a summary of the study, the research findings, discussion of these findings, limitations of the study, pedagogical implications, as well as suggestions for future studies.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study has two objectives: first, to find out Chinese college students' level of the WTC in English; secondly, to explore possible relations between Chinese academic culture and students' WTC in English. The study involved 120 students in the second semester of 2023 and utilized a mixed-methods design.

The methodology consisted of two key steps: first, the participants completed a questionnaire on their level of the WTC in English; then 8 of them were selected based on their levels of the WTC in English and went through semi-structured interviews. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively through descriptive statistics while responses from the interviews were coded and analyzed through themes and subthemes.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Three research questions were addressed in the study. The first question investigated students' WTC in English. The data suggested a moderate to high level of the WTC among college students. The second question concerns the possible relations between WTC and Chinese academic culture. It was found that there were complex

interactions between the WTC and factors like anxiety and motivation, learner beliefs, and the classroom environment. The third question attempted to figure out students' opinions towards Chinese academic culture. The analysis of the interviews showed that students had mixed feelings towards Chinese academic culture, thus it could affect the WTC both negatively and positively.

5.2.1 The Results of Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were collected and analyzed in accordance with the research questions.

5.2.1.1 What is the level of Chinese college students' willingness to communicate in English?

A questionnaire was administered to all 120 participants, and descriptive data were gathered. Initially, the mean scores and standard deviation values were calculated and interpreted. Subsequently, each dimension's level was analyzed according to the established criteria.

The first dimension of the questionnaire included Questions 1-6, focusing on willingness to communicate in English within the classroom. The overall mean score was 3.71, indicating a high level of willingness, with a standard deviation of 1.21, suggesting some variability in responses. Question 2, regarding willingness to ask the teacher to repeat something, had the highest mean score of 4.18 and a lower standard deviation of 1.02, showing consistent and high willingness. Conversely, Question 3, about giving a short speech, had a lower mean score of 3.36 and a higher standard deviation of 1.33, indicating greater variability and hesitation among students. This analysis highlights that while students are generally willing to communicate, particularly in one-on-one interactions for clarification, they are less enthusiastic about public speaking.

The second dimension of the questionnaire, encompassing Questions 7-10, focused on communication anxiety in English. The overall mean score was 2.44, indicating a low level of anxiety, with a standard deviation of 1.24, showing some variability in responses. Question 10, which had the highest mean score of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 1.29, revealed that students felt most anxious when required to

speak without preparation. In contrast, Question 7, with the lowest mean score of 2.02 and a standard deviation of 1.14, indicated that students felt less anxious during informal interactions with the teacher. This analysis shows that spontaneous speaking tasks induce higher anxiety, while structured, informal interactions with teachers are less anxiety-provoking.

The third dimension, encompassing Questions 11-20, assessed students' motivation to learn English, with an overall mean score of 2.63, indicating a moderate level of motivation, and a standard deviation of 1.26, suggesting variability in motivational levels. Question 16 had the highest mean score of 3.29, showing that students viewed learning English as beneficial for personal development, with a standard deviation of 1.17, indicating some consistency in this belief. Conversely, Question 14 had the lowest mean score of 1.88, indicating that few students were motivated to learn English for future applications to overseas universities. The standard deviation for this question was also 1.17, showing moderate agreement among students.

The fourth dimension, encompassing Questions 21-26, had an overall mean score of 2.32, indicating a general disagreement with the belief statements, suggesting a preference for a progressive or communicative approach to learning English over a traditional one focused on correctness and formality. The standard deviation was 1.25, reflecting moderate variability in student beliefs. Question 23 had the highest mean score of 2.92, indicating a slight inclination toward the belief that translation is necessary for understanding English, with a standard deviation of 1.17, suggesting some division among students. This reflects a reliance on the native language for comprehension during the learning process. Conversely, Question 24 had the lowest mean score of 1.63, showing that few students believed speaking out in class was a show-off of English proficiency, with a standard deviation of 1.04, indicating most students disagreed with this idea.

The last dimension covered Questions 27-36 that evaluated the classroom environment. The overall mean score was 3.81, indicating a generally positive perception among students while a standard deviation of 0.95 suggests strong consensus. Question 28, with the highest mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.98, showed that students highly valued the teacher's timely responses, which positively impacted their willingness to communicate in English. Question 29, with the lowest

mean score of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 0.92, indicated that while students felt they could make friends in class, this social aspect was less significant compared to the importance of teacher responsiveness.

5.2.1.2 Is there any relationship between Chinese academic culture influence Chinese student willingness to communicate in English?

To address the second research question, a correlation analysis was conducted. This analysis explored the potential relationships between WTC in English and four other aspects: communication anxiety, motivation to learn English, learner beliefs about English learning, and classroom environment. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the correlations between WTC in English and these dimensions.

A negative relationship was found between WTC in English and communication anxiety, with an average correlation of approximately -0.334. This moderate inverse relationship indicates that as WTC increases, communication anxiety tends to decrease, and vice versa. There was a positive correlation of approximately 0.245 between WTC in English and motivation to learn English, suggesting that higher motivation to learn English is associated with a greater willingness to communicate in the language. A weak positive relationship (average correlation of 0.146) was observed between students' beliefs about English learning and their willingness to communicate. The classroom environment showed a moderate to strong positive relationship with WTC in English, with an average correlation of approximately 0.486.

In summary, the correlation analysis indicates that the classroom environment, learner beliefs, and motivation are positively related to WTC in English, while communication anxiety has a negative impact on WTC in English.

5.2.2 The Results of Qualitative Data

To answer the third research question, "What are the opinions of students with high WTC and low WTC towards Chinese academic culture?", a content analysis of semi-structured interviews with four high WTC and four low WTC students was conducted.

Both high and low WTC students recognized external pressures as motivating but had different preferences for their intensity. High WTC students viewed these pressures positively, seeing them as necessary for excellence and accountability. In contrast, low WTC students preferred a more relaxed environment, although they acknowledged exams as helpful motivators.

Students from both groups were highly motivated to improve their English proficiency, recognizing its importance for career and personal development. High WTC students emphasized English as crucial for career prospects and academic success, while low WTC students saw it as important for general communication and development.

Personal interests and career goals influenced students' engagement in English learning. High WTC students were motivated by personal missions and future career prospects, while low WTC students were more affected by external pressures.

Students used various methods to learn English, with high WTC students favoring structured, interactive practices and technology-based tools, and low WTC students preferring more passive methods like watching movies and reading. All students agreed on the importance of oral communication for improving speaking skills and building confidence, though low WTC students experienced significant anxiety.

Respectful behavior in class was universally valued, with high WTC students emphasizing authority and order, while low WTC students focused on general decorum. Both groups were willing to express differing opinions respectfully, but high WTC students were more confident in fostering constructive dialogue.

High WTC students were more engaged in extracurricular activities and recognized their benefits for language learning, while low WTC students cited busy schedules as a barrier to participation.

The correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between learner beliefs and WTC in English. Traditional beliefs about correctness and precision in language use persisted, potentially hindering WTC due to fear of making mistakes. However, there was also evidence of a cultural shift towards valuing individual expression and communicative participation in the classroom.

5.3 DISCUSSION

This study aimed to understand Chinese college students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English and explore the relationship between Chinese academic culture and students' WTC. By integrating quantitative and qualitative findings, we can draw detailed insights into the factors influencing students' communication behaviors in an academic setting. For this part, I will discuss the conclusions drawn from each research question, elaborating on the key findings and their implications.

5.3.1 Discussion of Students' WTC Level

The study revealed that Chinese college students generally exhibited a moderate to high level of WTC in English. This suggests a considerable interest and confidence among students in engaging in English communication. The quantitative data indicated that a significant proportion of students were willing to participate in English communication activities in class or in informal settings.

The moderate to high WTC among students highlights a positive trend towards English learning, likely influenced by the increasing importance of English in global communication and professional contexts. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that proficiency and confidence in a second language are critical determinants of WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Educators can make use of this willingness by incorporating more interactive and communicative practices in their teaching methods, thereby enhancing students' engagement and proficiency in English. The finding is also in line with the study by Wen and Clément (2003). It found that

students' have high level of WTC in English but the desire to communicate varies in different situations. As shown in this study, students had the highest level of WTC when seeking clarifications from the teacher, but showed less enthusiasm for public speaking. Interestingly, a moderate to high willingness to communicate was found in the current study. This contradicts Fu et al.'s (2012) findings that collectivism led to a general reluctance to speak out. And this change is in line with what Littlewood, (2010) and Shi (2006) in their studies. They found that modern Chinese students are receptive to communication-oriented pedagogy.

5.3.2 Discussion of Correlations between WTC and Chinese Academic Culture

The second objective explored the complex relationships between WTC and Chinese academic culture. The study identified four key variables impacting this relationship: communication anxiety, motivation to learn English, learner beliefs about English learning, and the classroom environment. Generally, the current study had results similar to Peng's (2007) study. Peng's (2007) study suggested that the social context such as classroom climate and teacher support are closely connected with WTC. This finding is corroborated by the current study's finding that a positive classroom environment enhances WTC. The correlation analysis underscored the complex interactions between factors like anxiety and motivation, learner beliefs, and the classroom environment in influencing students' willingness to communicate in English. Similar to what Bronfenbrenner (2014) and Tudor (2001) found out, the strong link between the classroom environment and willingness to communicate especially highlighted the critical role educators play in creating environments that encourage communication. Motivation, particularly personal development, emerged as another key factor. This is consistent with findings by Noels et al., (2000), Peng and Woodrow (2010). Learner belief about English learning was found to be positively related to WTC, which aligns with findings by Fushino, (2008) and Peng (2007). Meanwhile addressing communication anxiety could further enhance students' communicative efforts.

Quantitative findings indicated that communication anxiety is a significant barrier to WTC. The Chinese academic culture traditionally emphasizes exams and teacher expectations. In the interviews, students expressed pressure to perform well in exams, which could lead to increased nervousness and reluctance to participate in English communication. Therefore, this emphasis could make communication anxiety worse.

The high levels of communication anxiety can also be attributed to the traditional Chinese educational focus on accuracy and high-stakes testing (Liu & Jackson, 2008). To mitigate this, educators should strive to create a more supportive and low-pressure environment. Strategies such as providing positive reinforcement, encouraging peer collaboration, and integrating low-stakes speaking activities can help reduce anxiety and foster a more conducive atmosphere for English communication.

Motivation emerged as a critical factor, influenced by both internal and external elements. Internally, students were motivated by personal development and career aspirations. Externally, cultural perceptions of English proficiency as essential for professional success further drove this motivation.

These findings align with Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, which highlights the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in language learning. By understanding the multifaceted nature of motivation, educators can design curriculum and activities that align with students' personal interests and career goals to enhance their engagement and WTC.

Learner beliefs encompassed attitudes towards language learning and were deeply connected with cultural norms. The interviews revealed that students valued speaking correctly and participating in class, reflecting cultural expectations of academic rigor and respect for authority.

These beliefs are crucial in shaping students' language learning experiences (Horwitz, 1988). Educators should acknowledge these cultural norms while encouraging

a balanced approach that values fluency over accuracy. Promoting a growth mindset and emphasizing the importance of practice and participation over perfection can help students develop more positive and productive beliefs about language learning.

Both the quantitative and qualitative data highlighted the positive impact of a supportive classroom environment on WTC. Clear norms, respectful interactions, and well-structured activities were identified as key facilitators.

A positive classroom environment is fundamental to enhancing WTC (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). Educators can foster this by setting clear expectations, promoting mutual respect, and designing collaborative activities that encourage active participation. Creating an inclusive and supportive atmosphere can significantly boost students' confidence and willingness to communicate in English.

Students expressed mixed feelings towards Chinese academic culture, which in turn affected their WTC both positively and negatively. While the culture's emphasis on academic excellence and respect for authority was seen as beneficial, the high levels of pressure and anxiety were noted as significant challenges.

These mixed sentiments highlight the dual-edged nature of Chinese academic culture. On one hand, the drive for excellence and respect for education can motivate students to achieve high proficiency in English. On the other hand, the associated pressures can hinder communication and learning. To address this, a balanced approach is needed. Educators should aim to maintain high academic standards while reducing undue pressure and anxiety. This can be achieved by incorporating stress-relief practices, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging open dialogue and support within the classroom.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study employed a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to find out Chinese non-English majors' willingness to communicate in English and the effects of

Chinese academic culture on students' WTC in English. Students were found to have a moderate to high level of WTC in English, which was influenced by factors such as communication anxiety, motivation to learn English, learner belief about English learning, and classroom environment. Furthermore, Chinese academic culture had positive or negative influence on WTC in English. To be specific, while pressure could exert positivity or negativity on WTC, other cultural norms were found to be generally positively linked with WTC.

5.5 LIMITATIONS

First, the sample size was relatively small (N=120) and not sufficiently diverse (only 4 majors included). Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to all non-English major students in China.

Second, while semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth exploration of individual experiences, they might not always capture broader societal and institutional influences unless explicitly targeted. Conversely, questionnaires may fail to explore deeply into the personal and subtle reasons behind students' WTC.

Third, external factors such as recent educational reforms, global events, or changes in societal attitudes towards English communication in China might not be adequately accounted for but could significantly affect students' WTC. For example, the increasing emphasis on students' Chinese proficiency may influence students attitudes towards English.

5.6 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

First, educators could tailor their instruction and support mechanisms to enhance communication willingness in English language classrooms in the following ways: first, create a supportive learning environment that gradually builds students' confidence in speaking English, starting with structured and prepared activities and progressing towards more spontaneous communication tasks; second, provide ample

preparation time before speaking tasks, and introduce gradual exposure to more challenging communicative activities; third, focus on enhancing intrinsic motivation to learn English by connecting language learning with personal growth and self-improvement.

Second, teachers could be trained to equip themselves with cultural sensitivities and communication strategies that are effective in the Chinese academic context. This includes understanding the distinctions of Chinese students' reluctance or eagerness to communicate in a second language.

Third, university administrators could tap into Chinese academic culture and set up courses in line with cultural norms, thus promoting students' WTC in English.

5.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the limitations stated above, the following suggestions are proposed for future research.

First, future studies could increase the number of participants and include a broader range of academic majors. This could help ensure that the findings are more representative of the diverse interests and experiences of non-English majors across the country. Besides, demographic variables such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and geographic location could also be taken into account to ensure a more comprehensive representation of the student population.

Second, future studies could use multiple data sources to gather comprehensive insights. For example, documentary analysis (e.g., academic policies, curriculum descriptions) or observational methods (e.g., observing classroom interactions) can be beneficial. This triangulation helps validate findings across different data types and offers a more detailed understanding of the research topic.

Third, future studies could include analysis of recent educational policies and reforms that might influence language learning attitudes and practices. This can involve reviewing government documents, educational reforms, and official statements to understand how policy changes are likely to influence students' WTC.



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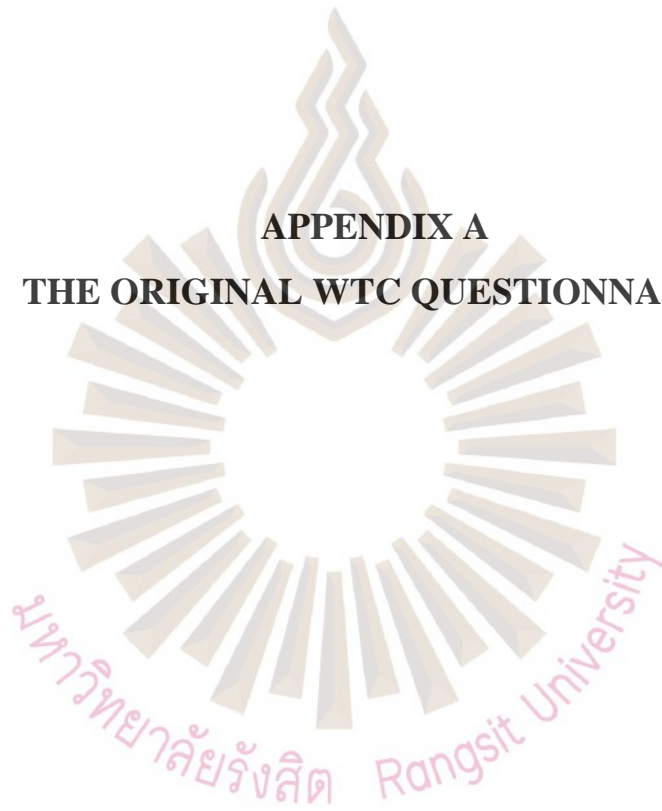
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The logo of Rangsit University is a circular emblem. At the top is a stylized flame or sunburst. Below it is a ring of radiating lines, and at the bottom is a ring of rectangular blocks. The word "APPENDICES" is centered over the middle of the emblem.

APPENDICES

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University

APPENDIX A
THE ORIGINAL WTC QUESTIONNAIRE



The Original WTC Questionnaire (English Version)

The questionnaire presented comprises six parts. It seeks to assess the respondents' willingness to communicate in English in the classroom and their self-perception of variables relating to the Chinese academic culture.

Part I WTC in language classroom

Directions: The following statements describe some communicative situations/tasks in an English class. Please indicate how willing or unwilling you are to engage in these communication activities using English.

1 = Definitely not willing

2 = Probably not willing

3 = Neutral

4 = Probably willing

5 = Definitely willing

1. I am willing to do a role-play in English at my desk, with my peer (e.g. ordering food in a restaurant).
2. I am willing to ask the teacher in English to repeat what he/she just said in English because I didn't understand.
3. I am willing to give a short speech in English to the class about my hometown with notes.
4. I am willing to do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (e.g. ordering food in a restaurant).
5. I am willing to ask my group mates in English how to pronounce a word in English.
6. I am willing to ask my peer next to me in English how to say an English phrase to express the thoughts in my mind.
7. I am willing to ask my group mates in English the meaning of a word I do not know.
8. I am willing to ask my peer next to me in English the meaning of an English word.
9. I am willing to give a short self-introduction without notes in English to the class.
10. I am willing to translate a spoken utterance from Chinese into English in my group.

Part II Communication anxiety in language classroom

Directions: Please indicate how anxious you may feel when you communicate with the teacher and classmates in the following situations using English in your classroom.

1 = Not at all anxious

2 = Slightly anxious

3 = Moderately anxious

4 = Very anxious

5 = Extremely anxious

11. When the teacher asks me a question in English
12. When speaking informally to my English teacher during classroom activities.
13. When taking part in a role-play or dialogue in front of the class.
14. When giving an oral presentation to the rest of the class.
15. When asked to contribute to a formal discussion in class.
16. When have to sneak without preparation in English class.



Part III Perceived communication competence in English

Directions: A number of situations are described below that involve classroom communication using English. Please rate your confidence from the following scales that you can adaptively and efficiently communicate with the teacher and classmates using English.

1 = Not at all confidence

2 = Slightly confidence

3 = Moderately confidence

4 = Very confidence

5 = Extremely confidence

17. I am able to do a role-play in English at my desk, with my peer (e.g. ordering food in a restaurant).

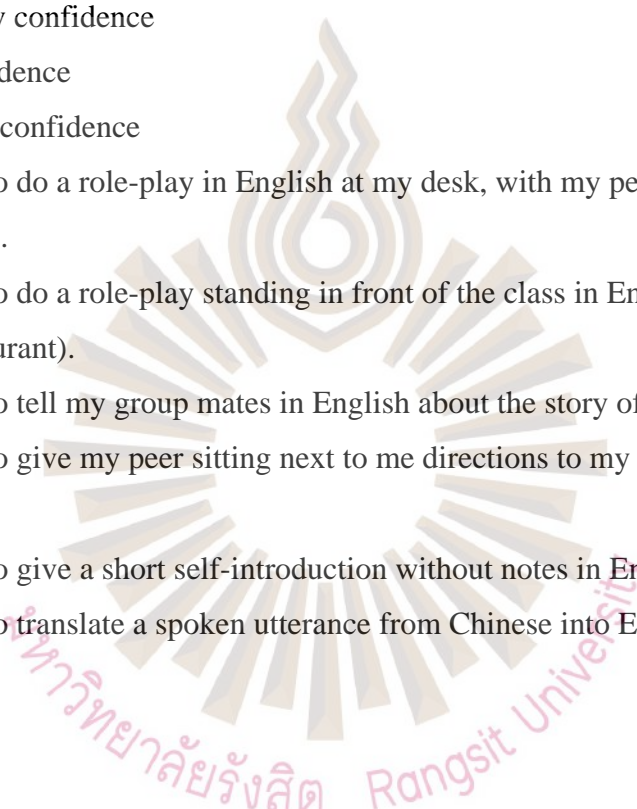
18. I am able to do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (e.g. ordering food in a restaurant).

19. I am able to tell my group mates in English about the story of a TV show I saw.

20. I am able to give my peer sitting next to me directions to my favorite restaurant in English.

21. I am able to give a short self-introduction without notes in English to the class.

22. I am able to translate a spoken utterance from Chinese into English in my group.



Part IV Motivation to learn English

Directions: The following statements describe some reasons for learning English.

Please indicate to what extent these statements correspond with your own reasons for learning English.

1 = Not at all true for me

2 = Slightly true for me

3 = Moderately true for me

4 = Very true for me

5 = Extremely true for me

Why are you learning English?

23. In order to increase my chances of winning scholarship or prize in my university.

24. In order to get a more prestigious job later on.

25. In order to have a better salary later on.

26. In order to prepare myself for the application to overseas universities in the near future.

27. Because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language.

28. Because I think it is good for my personal development.

29. Because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak English.

30. For the satisfied feeling I get in finding out new things.

31. Because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the English-speaking community and their way of life.

32. For the pleasure I experience when surpassing myself in my English studies.

33. For the enjoyment I experience when I grasp a difficult.

34. For the "high" I feel when hearing English spoken.

Part V Learner beliefs about English learning

Directions: The following statements describe some beliefs people have about learning English. Please indicate to what extent you agree with these statements.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

35. You should not say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.

36. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Chinese.

37. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.

38. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Chinese.

39. To understand English, it must be translated into Chinese.

40. I learn little by participating in communication activities in class.

41. The student who always speaks out in class is showing off his/her English proficiency.

42. The student who always speaks up in class will be loathed by other classmates.

43. Students should not speak up without being invited by the teacher.



Part VI Classroom environment

Directions: The following statements describe some characteristics of a language classroom. Please indicate how often you feel in this way in your English language.

1 = Never

2 = Sometimes

3 = Often

4 = Usually

5 = Always

44. The teacher is patient in teaching.

45. The teacher asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions.

46. The teacher provides a timely response to students.

47. The teacher smiles at the class while talking.

48. I make friends among students in this class.

49. I am friendly to members of this class.

50. I work well with other class members.

51. I help other class members who are having trouble with their work.

52. Tasks designed in this class are attracting.

53. I know what I am trying to accomplish in this class.

54. Tasks designed in this class are useful.

55. Activities in this class are clearly and carefully planned.

56. Class assignments are clear so everyone knows what to do.

The Original WTC Questionnaire (Chinese Version)

问卷共分为六个部分。旨在评估受访者在课堂上用英语交流的意愿，以及他们对与中国学术文化相关的变量的自我认知。

1. 英语课堂上的英语交际意愿

作答说明：以下项目是关于英语课堂上一些交际情景或交际任务的说明，请描述你在多大程度上愿意或不愿意使用英语参与这些交际活动。

1=肯定不愿意

2=很可能不愿意

3=无所谓

4=很可能愿意

5=肯定愿意

1. 我愿意使用英语和身边同伴在座位上作角色扮演（如：在饭馆点菜）。
2. 我愿意使用英语请老师重复他/她刚才说的英文，因为我听不懂。
3. 我愿意借助笔记提示，在全班面前使用英语对我的家乡做简单介绍。
4. 我愿意使用英语在全班面前作角色扮演（如：在饭馆点菜）。
5. 我愿意使用英语请教小组成员某个英语单词如何发音。
6. 我愿意使用英语向身边同伴请教一个能够表达我脑海中想表达的意思的英语词组。
7. 我愿意使用英语请教小组成员某个英语单词的意思。
8. 我愿意使用英语请教身边同伴某个英语单词的意思。
9. 我愿意在没有笔记提示的情况下，使用英语在全班面前做简短的自我介绍。
10. 我愿意在小组活动中将一段中文的口头表达话语翻译成英语。

2. 英语课堂上的交际焦虑

作答说明：在以下英语课堂情景下，请描述当你使用英语和老师、同学进行交际

时可能感到的焦虑或紧张感。

1=一点也不焦虑/紧张

2=非常轻微的焦虑/紧张

3=较为焦虑/紧张

4=非常焦虑/紧张

5=极度焦虑/紧张

11. 当老师用英语向我提问题的时候。
12. 在课堂活动中当我跟英语老师随意交谈的时候。
13. 在全班面前参与角色扮演或对话表演的时候。
14. 在全班面前作口头报告的时候。
15. 当我被要求在课堂的正式讨论中发表意见的时候。
16. 课堂上当我在毫无准备的情况下被要求发言的时候。



3. 自我知觉的英语交际能力

作答说明：以下列出一些需要使用英语进行交际的课堂情景。请从1到5之间估计你能够使用英语和老师、同学进行恰当、有效交际的自信程度。

1=一点也不自信

2=有点自信

3=比较自信

4=非常自信

5=极度自信

17. 我能够使用英语和身边同伴在座位上作角色扮演（奶：在饭馆点菜）。
18. 我能够使用英语在全班面前作角色扮演（如：在饭馆点菜）。
19. 我能够使用英语向小组成员讲述我从电视节目上看的一个故事。
20. 我能够使用英语告诉身边同伴如何去某个我喜欢的饭馆。
21. 我能够没有笔记提示的情况下，使用英语在全班面前做简短的自我介绍。
22. 我能够在小组中将一段中文的口头表达话语翻译成英语。

4. 英语学习动机

作答说明：以下叙述列举了学习英语的一些原因，请描述每一项叙述在多大程度上跟你学习英语的原因相符合。

上跟你学习英语的原因相符合。

1=一点也不符合我

2=非常轻微地符合我

3=较为符合我

4=非常符合我

5=极度符合我

你为什么学习英语？

23. 为了增加我在学校获得奖学金或其它奖励的机会。

24. 为了以后找一份更优越的工作。

25. 为了以后赚更高的薪水。

26. 为以后申请入读国外的大学做准备。

27. 因为我要成为会说两种或两种以上语言的人。

28. 因为我觉得对我的个人发展有好处。

29. 因为我要成为那种会说英语的人。

30. 为的是那种发现新鲜事物时的满足感。

31. 因为我喜欢那种对英语社会和人们生活方式了解后的感觉。

32. 因为我喜欢英语学习过程中那种超越自我的喜悦。

33. 因为我喜欢那种掌握了很难的英语结构/知识时所感受的快乐。

34. 因为英语语音听起来让我有种“兴奋愉快”的感觉。

5. 学习者对英语学习的信念

作答说明：以下叙述列举了一般人对学习英语的看法或信念，请描述在多大程度上你同意这些观点。

上你同意这些观点。

1=强烈不同意

2=不同意

3=中立

4=同意

5=强烈同意

35. 在能够说得正确无误之前，你不要开口说英语。

36. 英语课上，我更喜欢老师提供中文解释。

37. 学习英语很大程度上就是学习语法规则。

38. 学习英语很大程度上就是将中文翻译成英文。

39. 要弄懂英文意思，必须将英语翻译成中文。

40. 我从课堂交际活动中学不到什么东西。

41. 课堂上经常发言的人是在炫耀他/她的英语水平。

42. 对课堂上经常发言的人，其他同学会感到讨厌的。

43. 课堂上如果没有得到老师要求或邀请，学生不应该发言。

6. 课堂环境

作答说明：以下是关于英语课堂环境的一些叙述，请描述印象中这些叙述在你的

英语课上发生的频率。

1=从不

2=极少

5=有时候

3=较多

6=总是

44. 老师教学上很耐心。

45. 老师提的问题能够引发学生的观点或意见。

46. 老师会对学生担心的问题做出及时回应。

47. 老师说话时会向全班微笑。

48. 我和班上的同学能建立友谊。

49. 我对班上的同学很友好。

50. 我和班上其他同学相处得很好。

51. 我会帮助学习上遇到困难的其他同学。

52. 课堂上老师设计的任务很吸引人。

53. 我知道自己在课堂上要完成的事情。

54. 课堂上老师设计的任务很实用。

55. 课堂上老师安排的活动是经过仔细、精心设计的。

56. 老师布置的课堂作业或任务很清楚，大家都知道要做什么。



APPENDIX B

THE ORIGINAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Original Interview Questions (English Version)

1. How do you generally feel about your English class recently?
2. Have you ever attended any extracurricular activities recently?
3. What do you think are the most effective ways for you to learn English?
4. In your English study, do you hope there is external pressures forcing you to study, for instance, from the teacher or expected exams, or do you hope there are no such pressures?
5. As far as you are concerned, to what extent is English oral communication in class important or unimportant to you?
6. If the direct link between your academic degree with the CET-4 was cancelled, or if the College English was changed from a mandatory course to an optional course, would you nonetheless study English?
7. According to you, what student behavior is wrong or inappropriate in class?



The Original Interview Questions (Chinese Version)

1. 最近你对英语课的总体感觉怎样？
2. 你最近有参加过什么英语课外活动吗？
3. 对你来说最有效的学习英语的方法是什么？
4. 英语学习中你希望由外在压力逼着你去学，比如老师啊，要考试啊等，还是希望没有这些压力逼你？
5. 对你来说英语课堂上的口语交流在多大程度上是重要或不重要的？
6. 如果学校取消了英语四级和大学学位的挂钩或者英语从必修课转为选修课，你还会学英语吗？
7. 你觉得英语课上，同学中有什么行为是不对或不恰当的？



The image features a large, faint watermark of the Rangsit University logo in the background. The logo consists of a central flame-like symbol above a circular arrangement of radiating lines, with the university's name in Thai and English below it.

APPENDIX C

ITEM OBJECTIVE CONGRUENCE: QUESTIONNAIRE

Item Objective Congruence (IOC)					
<i>The Relationship between Chinese Academic Culture and Willingness to Communicate in English among Chinese College Students</i>					
The experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D).		Experts Review			Remark
Objective: To test the levels of engagement in Chinese academic culture and WTC in English; to explore possible correlation between the two variables.					
	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
WTC in English	1. I am willing to do a role-play in English at my desk, with my peer (e.g. ordering food in a restaurant).				
	2. I am willing to ask the teacher in English to repeat what he/she just said in English because I didn't understand.				
	3. I am willing to give a short speech in English to the class about my hometown with notes.				

	4. I am willing to ask my peer next to me in English how to say an English phrase to express the thoughts in my mind.				
	5. I am willing to ask my group mates in English the meaning of a word I do not know.				
	6. I am willing to translate a spoken utterance from Chinese into English in my group.				
Communication anxiety in language classroom	7. When speaking informally to my English teacher during classroom activities.				
	8. When giving an oral presentation to the rest of the class.				
	9. When asked to contribute to a formal discussion in class.				
	10. When have to sneak without preparation in English class.				
Motivation to learn English	11. In order to increase my chances of winning scholarship or prize in my university.				

	12. In order to get a more prestigious job later on.				
	13. In order to have a better salary later on.				
	14. In order to prepare myself for the application to overseas universities in the near future.				
	15. Because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak more than one language.				
	16. Because I think it is good for my personal development.				
	17. Because I choose to be the kind of person who can speak English.				
	18. For the satisfied feeling I get in finding out new things.				
	19. Because I enjoy the feeling of acquiring knowledge about the English-speaking community and their way of life.				

	20. For the pleasure I experience when surpassing myself in my English studies.				
	21. For the enjoyment I experience when I grasp a difficult.				
	22. For the "high" I feel when hearing English spoken.				
Learner beliefs about English learning	23. You should not say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.				
	24. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Chinese.				
	25. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.				
	26. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Chinese.				
	27. To understand English, it must be translated into Chinese.				
	28. I learn little by participating in communication activities in class.				

	29. The student who always speaks out in class is showing off his/her English proficiency.				
	30. The student who always speaks up in class will be loathed by other classmates.				
	31. Students should not speak up without being invited by the teacher.				
Classroom environment	32. The teacher is patient in teaching.				
	33. The teacher asks questions that solicit viewpoints or opinions.				
	34. The teacher provides a timely response to students.				
	35. The teacher smiles at the class while talking.				
	36. I make friends among students in this class.				
	37. I am friendly to members of this class.				
	38. I work well with other class members.				

	39. I help other class members who are having trouble with their work.				
	40. Tasks designed in this class are attracting.				
	41. I know what I am trying to accomplish in this class.				
	42. Tasks designed in this class are useful.				
	43. Activities in this class are clearly and carefully planned.				
	44. Class assignments are clear so everyone knows what to do.				

Results

Item Objective Congruence (IOC)						
<i>The Relationship between Chinese Academic Culture and Willingness to Communicate in English among Chinese College Students</i>						
The experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D).			Experts			IOC
Objective: To test the levels of engagement in Chinese academic culture and WTC in English; to explore possible correlation between the two variables.						
	Question	1	2	3		
WTC in English	1	1	1	1	1	
	2	1	1	1	1	
	3	1	1	1	1	
	4	1	1	1	1	
	5	1	1	1	1	
	6	1	1	1	1	
	7	1	0	1	0.67	

Communication anxiety in language classroom	8	1	0	1	0.67
	9	1	0	1	0.67
	10	1	0	1	0.67
Motivation to learn English	11	1	0	1	0.67
	12	1	0	1	0.67
	13	1	0	1	0.67
	14	1	0	1	0.67
	15	1	0	1	0.67
	16	1	1	1	1
	17	0	0	1	0.33
	18	1	0	1	0.67
	19	1	0	1	0.67
	20	1	0	1	0.67
	21	1	1	-1	0.33

	22	1	0	1	0.67
Learner beliefs about English learning	23	1	1	1	1
	24	1	1	-1	0.33
	25	1	1	1	1
	26	1	1	-1	0.33
	27	1	1	1	1
	28	1	-1	1	0.33
	29	1	1	1	1
	30	1	1	1	1
	31	1	1	1	1
Classroom environment	32	1	1	-1	0.33
	33	1	1	1	1
	34	1	1	1	1
	35	1	1	-1	0.33

36	1	1	1	1
37	1	1	1	1
38	1	1	1	1
39	1	1	1	1
40	1	1	1	1
41	1	1	-1	0.33
42	1	1	1	1
43	1	1	1	1
44	1	1	1	1



APPENDIX D

**ITEM OBJECTIVE CONGRUENCE: SEMI-
STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Item Objective Congruence (IOC)					
<i>The Relationship between Chinese Academic Culture and Willingness to Communicate in English among Chinese College Students</i>					
The experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D). Objective: To test the predicative effect of Chinese academic culture on WTC in English		Experts Review			Remark
No.	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
1	How do you generally feel about your English class recently?				
2	Have you ever attended any extracurricular activities recently?				
3	What do you think are the most effective ways for you to learn English?				
4	In your English study, do you hope there is external pressures forcing you to study, for instance, from the teacher or expected exams, or do you hope there are no such pressures?				

5	As far as you are concerned, to what extent is English oral communication in class important or unimportant to you?				
6	If the direct link between your academic degree with the CET-4 was cancelled, or if the College English was changed from a mandatory course to an optional course, would you nonetheless study English?				
7	According to you, what student behavior is wrong or inappropriate in class?				
8	What would you do if you spot any mistakes produced by the teacher in class?				
9	If you have a different idea from what your teacher lectures, would you say it directly or keep the idea to your own?				
10	In a group assignment, would you say no to your team members if divergence arises?				

Results

Item Objective Congruence (IOC)					
<i>The Relationship between Chinese Academic Culture and Willingness to Communicate in English among Chinese College Students</i>					
The experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D). Objective: To test the predicative effect of Chinese academic culture on WTC in English		Experts			IOC
No.	Question	1	2	3	
1	How do you generally feel about your English class recently?	1	1	1	1
2	Have you ever attended any extracurricular activities recently?	0	1	1	0.67
3	What do you think are the most effective ways for you to learn English?	1	1	1	1
4	In your English study, do you hope there is external pressures forcing you to study, for instance, from the teacher or expected exams, or do you hope there are no such pressures?	1	0	1	0.67
5	As far as you are concerned, to what extent is English oral communication in class important or unimportant to you?	1	1	1	1

6	If the direct link between your academic degree with the CET-4 was cancelled, or if the College English was changed from a mandatory course to an optional course, would you nonetheless study English?	0	0	1	0.33
7	According to you, what student behavior is wrong or inappropriate in class?	1	0	-1	0
8	What would you do if you spot any mistakes produced by the teacher in class?	1	1	1	1
9	If you have a different idea from what your teacher lectures, would you say it directly or keep the idea to your own?	1	1	1	1
10	In a group assignment, would you say no to your team members if divergence arises?	1	1	1	1

The image features a large, faint watermark of the Rangsit University logo in the background. The logo consists of a stylized flame or sunburst at the top, with a circular base containing radiating lines. Below the logo, the text 'มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University' is written in a semi-circle.

APPENDIX E
ACADEMIC ETHICS COMMITTEE OF RANGSIT
UNIVERSITY TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต Rangsit University



COA. No. RSUERB2024-009

**Certificate of Approval
By
Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University**

COA. No.	COA. No. RSUERB2024-009
Protocol Title	The Investigation of Chinese College Students' Willingness to Communicate in English: the Mixed Method Research of Chinese Academic Culture
Principle Investigator	MAHONGYANG
Co-Investigator	Associate Professor Dr. Sumalee Chinokul
Affiliation	Suryadhep Teachers College, Rangsit University
How to review	Expedited Review
Approval includes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project proposal 2. Information sheet 3. Informed consent form 4. Data collection form/Program or Activity plan
Date of Approval:	9 January 2024
Date of Expiration:	9 January 2026

The prior mentioned documents have been reviewed and approved by Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University based Declaration of Helsinki, The Belmont Report, CIOMS Guideline and International Conference on Harmonization in Good Clinical Practice or ICH-GCP

Signature.....

(Associate Professor Dr. Panan Kanchanaphum)

Chairman, Ethics Review Board for Human Research



Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University, 5th floor, Arthit Ourairat Building (Bldg.1) Rangsit University

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