

## THE EFFECT OF PEER AND SELF-EVALUATION ON WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

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**ABSTRACT:** *The enquiry why some persons are likely to communicate in definite situations when others are not is central to the willingness to communicate prototypical. Based on Willingness to communicate model, the use of second language is the result of some complicated factors that affect willingness to communicate. As some studies and teachers' reports have shown learners of second /foreign language are not in favor of being evaluated during class and also they may not perform their true ability of themselves, particularly by means of tests at the end of the course. The present study was designed to explore the relative effects of two alternative assessment tools (peer-evaluation and self-evaluation) on enhancing learners' willingness to communicate. Due to accomplishment the purpose of this study, 3 measuring instruments (Oxford placement test, willingness to communicate questionnaire and peer/self-evaluation rubric) were exploited. The 70 subjects of the research completed a questionnaire and took part in treatment sessions. Findings revealed that peer/self-evaluation had positive effect on learners' WTC. Based on these findings, pedagogical implications for English teaching and learning were also suggested to increase willingness to communicate.*

**KEYWORDS:** Peer-evaluation- Self-evaluation- Willingness to communicate, ELT intermediate learners.

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication has been one of major succeeding factors in EFL teaching and learning in educational settings. The WTC model conceptualizes L2 use as being the result of a number of intricate factors that directly or indirectly affect language learners' communicative behavior. Learners of second /foreign language always feel ill at ease in class as their teachers evaluate them, especially by means of tests at the end of the course. L2 teaching methodology has evolved based on a series of attempts to address weaknesses of each of the dominant approaches used over the past century. For example, the grammar-translation approach emphasized the development of linguistic competence, which perhaps adequately met the needs of would-be translators, but did not develop the ability of authentic use of language. Likewise, the current emphasis on communicative competence also poses another issue: facilitating learners who are technically capable of communicating, at least inside the classroom, but who may not be autonomous enough to do so in the outside world (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The communicative approach was intended to foster the development of students' communicative competence. This approach may have achieved a satisfactory level of result for the whole class; however, perhaps not at the individual level. Meanwhile, learners' attitudes, motivation, or language anxiety, have been brought up as possible causes for this

individual communicative differences in the past; however, variations in “Willingness to Communicate” or WTC have more recently emerged as a more comprehensive attempt to provide an explanation (Yashima, 2002). In communicative classrooms, teachers who favor communicative language teaching like to have motivated students who demonstrate high degree of willingness to communicate in the second/foreign language. A lack of willingness results in ineffective interaction and language production (Freiermuth & Jarrel, 2006). Therefore, in teaching field, investigating the factors that increase willingness to communicate is an issue out of question on of which is the way teachers approach evaluation.

### **The Theoretical Underpinning**

MacIntyre et al. (1998) introduced a willingness to communicate model in which they merge psychological, linguistic and communicative variables. According to this WTC model, there are two kinds of factors that affect one’s willingness to communicate in a second or foreign language, which is quite different from one’s WTC in his/her native language. Individual (enduring) factors contain the personality features of the language learner, the social situation in which he/she lives, intergroup approaches between native speakers and second language groups, and general confidence of learner as well as his/her motivation to learn English. Situational (environmental) variables, on the other hand, are identified as one’s desire to speak with a specific person, and the self-confidence that one feels in a specific situation. In this study individual and situational (environmental) are substituted to internal and external ones. About internal, students’ personalities and whatever arise from themselves can bring about some hitches that seriously affect their performances in classroom, such as being shy, lack of confidence etc.

The second problem (external) is whatever risen by outside or environment in which learners are learning language. These problems relate to text books, syllabus, classmates, and facilities, etc (Situational and dynamic). Both problems so-called external and internal culminate in unwillingness to communicate in stream of learning. As communication in second and foreign language is a desired goal in language learning, thus some students find, either themselves unable to communicate or so unwilling to do just because of situation in which they are learning foreign language. Although talk is a vital component in, interpersonal communication and the development of interpersonal interactions, people vary vividly from one another in the point to which they essentially do speak. Some people talk very little; they are disposed to speak only when they are addressed and sometimes not even then. Others have a tendency to articulate almost constantly. Not only some learners do not communicate in classrooms, but also they aren’t eager to follow the instructions. Being judged by teachers always has its own worrisome, making mistake and not knowing something which is being explained by teacher reduces learners’ self-confidence as well as their self-esteem. Hence, using judgment system in enhancement way is a crucial device to increase learners’ willingness to communicate. As a result, environment in which learners are learning second/foreign language plays a crucial role in their willingness to fulfill their goals.

As pointed out, teachers also have negative effects on students’ willingness to communicate; therefore, these negative impacts culminate in lack of willingness to communicate. We may come across with this question that "what are associations between teachers and students' problems?" Teachers have been institutionally bestowed the right to create, manage and decide different types of students’ interactions carried out in the classroom. More precisely, teachers, as those who, one way or another, could shape the curriculum in its direct application with respect to content and topics for discussion and the specific methodological procedures which

determine who talks, how they talk, who they talk to and how long they talk, hold a responsibility for creating participation opportunities and increasing them in classrooms (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Xie, 2010).

During the course teachers devote their efforts to prepare students for tests not for communication, teachers act as practitioners not facilitators. Hence, most of the course's time will be allocated to alleviate the difficulties of test, not helping to improve their ability in learning second/foreign language communicatively; possibly they don't have sufficient opportunity to interact in classrooms. While teacher-made tests and standardized tests give us information about student learning, they do not provide all the information. Alternative forms of assessment can generate that other information. The research evidence accumulating in our studies, and the data produced by other researchers, make us optimistic about the impact of one form of authentic assessment -self-evaluation -- on the learning of students and their teachers. (Kastrati 2013)

Xie (2010) pointed out that if student pressure and the observation over classroom connections are reduced, learning chances will upsurge. In this case students' participation is directing them towards learning; in other words, having less control over the classroom content lets learners get engaged in topics which are highly amusing for them. Whether in second language learning circumstances or foreign language contexts, second/foreign language learners have often been observed to be reluctant to take part in class activities. Such reluctance and passivity will make them lose their motivation in learning the language. A major concern most language teachers share is creating opportunities for their students to speak and take part in class activities and discussions (Riasati, 2014). For years teachers and experts in teaching field have been inspired by tests to assess their learners and evaluate the effectiveness of their methods, text books, syllabus... etc. In addition, they solely rely on scores taken by learners at the end of course, and also students' efficacy was determined by means of exams. Hereafter, it is seen that "students work mostly for a test grade and not for their enjoyment or understanding of the subject matter" (Airasian, 1997, p.127; O'Donnell&Topping, 1998).

Some students gain higher score at certain exam not just they have mastery over the skill while others perform badly because they aren't accustomed with form and content of particular test. Testing methods can have effect on test takers 'score because they call for certain kinds of skill or knowledge that is independent of the content itself. Responding successfully to multiple-choice tests, for example, draws on test taking skills that are different from those required for responses to other kinds of test takes. Test takers who are experienced with or skilled at certain kinds of testing methods tend to do better on those kinds of tests than do test takers who lack such experience, all other factor remaining constant (Upshur ,1996).

Students when receiving the assessment results usually pay most their attention to their scores and are almost negligent to the instructional comments given by the teacher for future improvement (Race &Brown, 1998; Crooks, 1998). Although this way of evaluating has been useful, it doesn't take learners external and internal problems into consideration, moreover, test by itself can't give us precise measurement about the success of our methods, plans and strategies that we have applied during the course. According to Bachman (1990:22-24), all tests involve measurement, but not all measurement involves testing. Language teaching program can't be evaluated by tests, test results are apparently also used when decisions are made about student placement, progress, final grade or certification, and so forth, but such decisions are not perpetually taken up in the evaluation of the teaching program itself. Tests can be of great help in collecting information for second language evaluation. But tests are

relatively limited because they can only tell us about certain aspects of student achievement; they cannot tell us much about the other factors that often figure in second language evaluation (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). To meet tests downsides, the concept of alternative assessment come to existence, which has been relief for ages in language learning and teaching. Thus in this study we want, by inspiring formative evaluation, to find out the effectiveness of peer/self-evaluation on learners' Willingness to communicate which has desperately needed working on it. As a result, primary focus of this study is, determining mutual problems of teachers and learners that lessen or eliminate learners' willingness to communicate and also by means of self and peer evaluation which are going to be tests' alternatives to enhance learners' willingness to communicate.

It is strived that the concept of evaluation to be cleared and also two sub categories of evaluation such as self and peer evaluation and their influence on readiness to communicate to be worked on. As a result, this study is going to follow two important aims that have been overlooked: Firstly, it's going to survey the effect of self/peer-evaluation on increasing learners' willingness to communicate that helps them lessen the considerable hurdles of learning second/foreign language and the second purpose will be, clearing the blur boundaries between assessment and evaluation. By far, we can find more studies on assessment than evaluation in order that; there are lots of hopes that this study contributes substantially to the current and upcoming trends in teaching.

## METHODOLOGY

The researchers utilized 3 data analysis procedures for addressing the three research questions. First of all, 120 students who were studying English in an English private school were selected. To ensure the homogeneity of the groups, students took OPT (Oxford Placement Test). As this test has a standard rate for learners' placement, 90 of them whose scores were between 40 and 45 were chosen. Secondly, to ensure that only unwilling to communicate students participated in the study, willingness to communicate questionnaire including 27 statements was distributed to 90 students, then 70 unwilling students were chosen afterward the researcher divided these students into 2 groups (self-evaluation and peer-evaluation) each group consisted of 35 people, willingness to communicate questionnaire was given to these groups as pretest after that, 10 treatment sessions which lasted 90 minutes were held. In the first session of the course, the students were given detailed information about peer and self-evaluation rubric form; an adaption of which is designed by Candler (2012).

It is worth mentioning that all these students were fully aware of different types of writing, as they already passed writing classes and also different types and strategies of listening and reading namely extensive, intensive, skimming the text for main ideas, scanning the text for specific information, were explained thoroughly, so that they would be able to evaluate selves and peers effectively. In these treatment sessions typically, learners were expected to read (e.g., a few pages of the novel and a journal article) and/or complete a task for homework, listen to different recordings, wrote essays and letters, then they were required to evaluate themselves as well as their peers. Students worked from the text or task, including linguistic difficulties, interesting topical issues etc. In the end, after these sessions finished for determination of treatments the willingness to communicate questionnaire was distributed again as posttest.

In accordance with the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated and using the procedure mention, the researchers aimed to answer them.

- 1) Does self-evaluation have any effects on learners' willingness to communicate?
- 2) Does peer-evaluation have any effects on learners' willingness to communicate?
- 3) Which method affects learners' willingness to communicate more?

## Results

The goal of this study was to investigate the effect of peer and self-evaluation on Iranian EFL learners' willingness to communicate. The data collection procedure was carefully performed and the raw data was submitted to SPSS (22) to calculate the required statistical analyses in order to address the research questions and hypotheses of this study. This chapter describes the detailed statistical analyses performed throughout the research. The research hypotheses were tested using series of paired and independent sample t-tests. Every step which was taken in analyzing the obtained data is presented in form of tables and figures in this section.

For any inferential statistics to be used normality assumption should be checked and that is the data should be normality distributed. To test the normality of the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results in Table 1 show that normality assumption in data was not violated since the significance levels of the tests across the groups (0.23, 0.31 and 0.42) are greater than the research confidence interval (0.005). So, the researchers concluded that there is no concern for normality assumption.

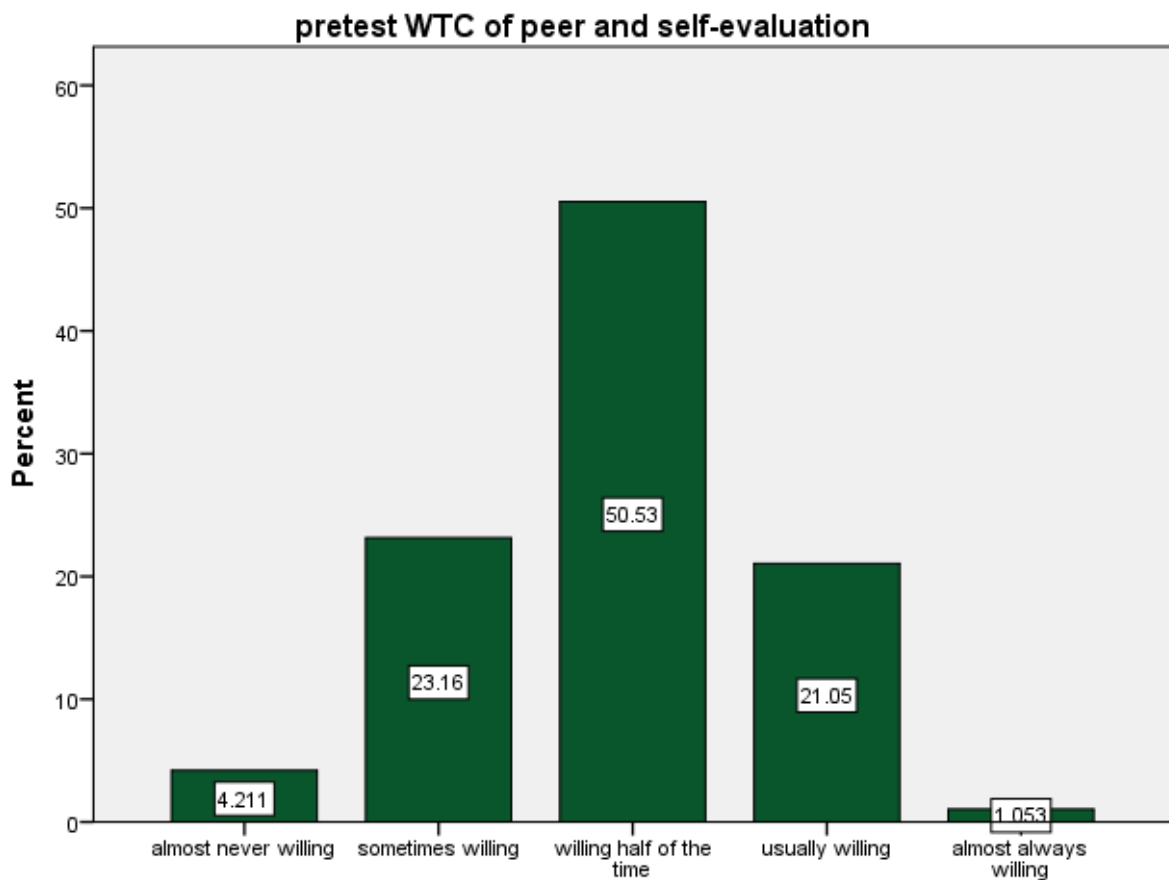
**Table 1. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.**

		<b>Pretest for wtc</b>	<b>Self- evaluation</b>	<b>Peer- evaluation</b>
N		95	35	30
Normal Parameters (a,b)	mean	2.91	3.51	4.20
	Std.Deviation	0.80	1.17	0.48
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.26	0.40	0.42
	Positive	0.23	0.31	0.42
	Negative	-0.26	-0.40	-0.30
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		2.611	2.38	2.33
Asyp.Sig.(2-tailed)		0.85	0.24	0.57

After students were placed by Oxford Placement Test, 65 unwilling students were located as they answered Willingness to communicate questionnaire, as a pretest. With regard to the quantitative questions, respondents indicated their answers on a 5-point scale to clearly indicate their degree of willingness with the questions by giving measurable feedback. A total of 95 questionnaires were returned for analysis. As table 2 shows 4, 22, 48, 20, candidates out of 95 were considered as almost never willing, sometimes willing, willing half of the time, usually willing and almost always willing respectively. The statistics are also pictured out in figure 1.

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics on pretest willingness to communicate in peer and self-evaluation group**

valid	Frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Almost never willing	4	4.2	4.2	4.2
Sometimes willing	22	23.2	23.2	27.4
Willing half of the time	48	50.5	50.5	77.9
Usually willing	20	21.1	21.1	98.9
total	95	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 1. Histogram on pretest willingness to communicate of peer and self- evaluation**

As Figure 1 indicates, 50.53 per cent of students, who answered willingness to communicate questionnaire as a pretest, are willing half of the time, however, the percentage of students who are sometimes willing is about 23.16 per cent. On the other hand, 21.05 per cent of them are determined as usually willing, 4.21 per cent students are almost never willing while only a small percentage of are almost always willing (1.05).

With the aim of realizing the efficiency of self-evaluation technique, paired sample t-test of willingness to communicate was utilized. As Table 3 shows, Paired-Sample test found a statistically significant increase in willingness to communicate treatment group from pre-test



to posttest since the significance level of test (0.005) is less than research confidence interval level (0.05), as a result, self-evaluation technique is determined to have had positive effects on students' willingness to communicate.

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics on paired sample t-test of WTC in self-evaluation group.**

	mean	N	Std. deviation	Std. Error. Mean
WTCpretest	2.51	35	0.65	0.11
Posttest WTC	3.51	35	1.17	0.19

As Table 4 indicates the significance level of paired t-test on pretest and posttest willingness to communicate of self-evaluation group (0.001) is less than research confidence interval (0.05), meaning that, there is statistically significance difference between pretest and posttest willingness to communicate of self- evaluation group. To investigate which group outperformed the other group, table 3 is recalled. The mean difference of pretest and posttest willingness to communicate of self-evaluation group shows that participants in self- evaluation group were more willing from their unwillingness to communicate status in pretest (2.51) to willing to communicate states in posttest (3.51).

**Table 4. Paired sample test on WTC of self-evaluation group.**

	Paired Differences							
				Sig.(2-tailed) 95% confidence interval of the differences				
	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error mean	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig.(2- tailed
Pre and posttest WTC for self- Evaluation group	0.86	1.39	0.23	1.47	0.52	4.24	34	0.001

As the results of the analyses show, the first null hypothesis of the research, which says there is no statistically significant difference between the students WTC in pretest and posttest, is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is confirmed, meaning that self-evaluation is a technique that assists unwilling to communicate students become willing to communicate.

Like self-evaluation group, same procedure (paired sample t-test) was done for investigation of possible effects of peer-evaluation's treatment. The results of this analysis are depicted in table 5 & 6. With regard to table 5, the mean score for pretest WTC and posttest WTC are respectively 2.80 & 4.20.

Another group, which were supposed to receive peer-evaluation as its treatment, were instructed to do the same, therefore, they answered to the same willingness to communicate questionnaire as a posttest. A paired sample t-test was also used to investigate if students went through significant change from their status as unwilling to communicate to willing to communicate. The results are indicated in table 4 and 5. As Table 5 indicates, out of 30

students, who were in this group, 1 of them was willing half of the time, 22 of them were specified usually willing and 7 of them maintained almost always willing.

**Table 5. Descriptive statistics on paired sample t-test of WTC in peer-evaluation group.**

	mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest WTC	2.80	30	0.80	0.14
Posttest WTC	4.20	30	0.48	0.88

As table 6 shows, the significance level of paired sample test of pretest & posttest willingness to communicate of peer-evaluation group is 0.013 which is less than research confidence interval (Significance level 0.013 < Confidence interval 0.05). It means that, there is statistically significant difference between participants' Willingness to communicate before and after the treatment. To investigate which phase of their performance they performed better, Table 5 is recalled. The mean difference in two performances of pretest and posttest of peer-evaluation shows that participants are more willing to communicate after the peer-evaluation treatment.

**Table 6. Paired sample t-test on pretest & posttest WTC of peer-evaluation group.**

	Paired differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Differences				
	Mean	Std. deviation	Std.Err or Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Pre and posttest WTC for peer-evaluation group	0.45	0.85	0.15	-1.71	1.08	3.96	29	0.013

The results show that the second null hypothesis which says there is no statistically significant difference in students' performance in pretest and posttest as a result of the effect of peer evaluation is rejected and the alternative is confirmed meaning that peer evaluation assists students to have a better performance in their posttest.

To investigate which group was more willing to communicate (self-evaluation or peer-evaluation), an independent sample t-test for posttest WTC of peer and self-evaluation group was administrated. The results are displayed on table 8. As it indicates the significance level of test (0.002) is less than research confidence interval 0.005 (This means that, there is statistically significant difference between posttest WTC of treatment groups (peer and self-evaluation). To explore which group performed better, table 7 is recalled. The mean difference in willingness to communicate in peer-evaluation group (4.20) and self-evaluation group (2.50) means that participants in peer-evaluation group were more willing to communicate than participants in self-evaluation group.



**Table 7. Descriptive statistics on posttest of WTC in self and peer-evaluation group.**

Posttest WTC	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Exrror Mean
Posttest WTC of peer-evaluation	30	4.20	3.53	2.50
Posttest WTC	35	3.57	1.00	0.17

**Table 8. Independent samples test for peer and self-evaluation group.**

Levene's test for equality of variances		T -test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std.Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								lower	Upper
Equal Variance assumed	11.64	0.02	2.27	33	0.021	-1.07	0.084	-2.79	0.64
Equal Variance not assumed		4.42		1.01	0.74	-1.07	2.50	32.20	30.05

The results show the null hypothesis which says there is no statistically significant difference between the effect of two methods of assessment; peer and self-evaluation, on students WTC is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted by acknowledging the fact that peer evaluation technique outperformed its counter technique, the self-evaluation.

## Discussion

To answer the research questions successively, a step-by-step statistical analysis procedure was carried out. This section provides an outline of key points arising from the L2 WTC Questionnaire, the statistical analyses carried out as well as the reasoning for their use and how they were interpreted.

In order to answer research question 1 concerning the effect of self-evaluation on learners' willingness to communicate, a series of t-tests was carried out using the constructs derived from willingness to communicate questionnaires. Paired-Samples Test found a statistically significant increase in learners' willingness to communicate of treatment group from pre-test ( $M = 2.51$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ) to post-test ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ). Since the significance of test (0.001) is greater than research confidence interval. When students evaluate their own performance they can do this without stress. The findings of this study revealed that self-evaluation has direct effects on students' affective factors. Affective factors are the most significant factors in SLA and English teaching. These factors consist of emotion, feeling, mood, manner, attitude etc. all of these factors, particularly, motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, choose the input

and output of the second and foreign language so self-evaluation is a technique by which anxiety can be reduced, in turn, willingness to communicate will be enhanced. Therefore, test results as appeared in Table 4.6 revealed that self-evaluation technique has effects on students' willingness to communicate and the first null hypothesis is rejected.

With the purpose of figuring out the effects of peer-evaluation technique on learners' willingness to communicate, a paired sample t-test was used. This test showed that mean score and standard deviation in pretest for this group are respectively 2.80 and 4.20 while in posttest mean increases to 4.20 and standard deviation is decreased to 0.88, as a result, the findings depict an increase in learners' willingness to communicate in other words, peer-evaluation technique along with treatment sessions had positive effects on learners' willingness to communicate. Second language acquisition researchers believe that when students during an interactional conversation get feedback the second language acquisition and learning will be facilitated. Investigators have proposed that interactional feedback is related to L2 learning because it stimulates learners to notice L2 forms so peer-evaluation can be good technique to help students get useful feedbacks and this may improve their willingness to communicate. The change was significant since the significance level of test (0.013) is less than research confidence interval. To sum up, the second null hypothesis was also rejected.

To understand which technique self-evaluation or peer-evaluation has more effects on learners' willingness to communicate, an independent sample test was fulfilled. Since the significance level of test (0.0021) is less than research confidence interval (0.005), the research rejected the third null-hypothesis and confirms that there is statistically significance difference between the extents to which each different technique affected students' willingness to communicate. The results of Table 4.9 show that peer-evaluation with the mean score of 4.20 affected willingness to communicate more than self-evaluation technique with the mean score of 2.80.

Ellis (1994) takes three kinds of anxiety into consideration including trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. More recently, scholars tend to give considerable attention to situational anxiety, since this type of anxiety is alike willingness to communicate situational trait like model, self/peer-evaluation can help learners stop being anxious and enhance their willingness. According to the obtained results the peer-evaluation group and self-evaluation group were homogeneous. Based on the obtained results in the post-test it was concluded that the mean differences were significant in both groups so called self-evaluation and peer-evaluation which show the better performance of both groups. However, in comparison with self-evaluation group, learners outperformed in peer-evaluation group. Since the researcher had to put aside 5 students in peer-evaluation group due to their absences, eta square was calculated (0.013) and the effect size was large, it means that students' absences did not have any effects on results of this study. As reported in the previous chapter the hypotheses were rejected. Therefore, if participants utilize peer-evaluation technique, they will be more willing to communicate.

### **Implications to research and practice**

The present study can entail certain pedagogical implications, although drawing conclusion on the basis of the observation and findings gained from limited numbers of participants would not be as reliable as the findings obtained from large samples of participants. Still, these findings can provide us with real thought-provoking evidences upon which we can draw practical conclusions.

This study has some implications for teachers. One is that by peer- evaluation and self-evaluation, the willingness to communicate may lead to more language use in the classroom increases. Creating a less threatening atmosphere to reduce anxiety and encouraging students to evaluate themselves as well as their peers may be effective in increasing willingness to communicate and frequency of L2 use in classrooms with Iranian EFL students. Peer-evaluation had a direct and strong influence on willingness to communicate, which in turn affected second and foreign language communication frequency in the classroom. It may be especially important with the Iranian EFL students to increase evaluate their peers in classroom.

These findings have an extremely important message for materials developers. First of all, English students need some books in which give capability to evaluate their performance and also their peers effectively. In other words, English books should have some exercises for students' evaluation.

Secondly, English books should prepare learners for communication not just for different international exams like, IELTS, TOEFL, FCE and so on. Although these exams are so important, students need to feel the enjoyment of communicating in English .To sum it up, material developers not only should incorporate evaluation technique but also they ought to take communication into their consideration.

Relying merely on tests cannot determine students' actual performance, as it is pointed out; test has its own drawbacks. By using the findings of this study as well as peer and self-evaluation techniques, policy makers are capable to lessen negative effects of test on students, which may culminate in willingness to communicate.

### **Final Remarks**

It is undeniable that English language is of prime importance in the world today and it continues to remain so due to political, economic and in the world today and also being able to communicate effectively in English has become a necessity for those who desire to have improvement in their academic and future goals. Therefore, enhancing learners, speakers' willingness to communicate to lessen their stress is a crucial task in classrooms.

### **Future Research**

The following recommendations for further research are presented here on the basis of the interpretations of the findings of the present study:

1. What impacts does peer-evaluation have on learners' self-efficacy?
2. How would other alternative assessment such as, portfolio, conferences and interview affect students' willingness to communication?
3. How the classroom interactions between teachers and students or learners and peers can enhance willingness to communicate.
4. How do self and peer-evaluation affect learners writing process and also other skills?

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