

## **WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN KUWAITI EFL CLASSROOM SETTINGS**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The present study investigates the variables that are believed to influence learners' in-class Willingness to Communicate (WTC). A total of 247 EFL undergraduate students participated in the study, who were studying in two colleges in Kuwait. The study was conducted with a quantitative research design by using a modified questionnaire to measure the Instructional Willingness to Communicate (IWTC). The adapted questionnaire, which was developed by Khatib & Nourzadah (2015), comprises six IWTC components containing 27 items. The data for each component was presented and followed by a detailed descriptive analysis. The findings revealed that learners' willingness or unwillingness to communicate is made up of specific influencing variables in several situations within the classroom. The study sheds light on the role of the EFL classroom environment on learners' communication behaviours. Discussing the results provided some pedagogical implications for language teachers and program designers. Suggestions for further research were provided.*

**KEYWORDS:** WTC, communication, speaking, EFL, classroom interaction

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Communication has been at the centre of English language teaching for several decades; it has been argued by many scholars that communication is one of the major contributing factors to raising students' speaking competence. The increasing importance of communication skills has necessitated that curriculum adhere to such needs and provide students with the proper environment while learning in a classroom setting. Since the introduction of communicative methodologies in the 1970s and 1980s, the focus has been on *using* the language rather than merely *learning* about it.

Although communicative teaching/learning methods do not dismiss the importance of grammar and reading, they give more emphasis on speaking and learning through a more authentic and natural setting. Through these communicative methods, teachers' roles are geared toward being facilitators rather than instructors, allowing students to increase communication amongst themselves and with the teacher.

English language teaching in Kuwait, for many years, has given more attention to grammar, writing, and reading. Although the current curriculums include several tasks that are devoted to communication purposes, the classroom settings do not seem to encourage such practices. The 'teacher-centred classroom' mentality seems to be prevalent in many classrooms, and such settings hinder students' language competency development. It is therefore important that EFL classrooms in Kuwait introduce more communication and allow students to develop language competency through exercises that encourage their communication with the teachers and their classmates.

We review some of the previous work that led to rethinking the concept of L2 WTC. In the following section, an overview of the main concepts that are related to WTC is presented.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC):**

It is widely accepted within the communication literature that the conceptualization of WTC was derived from the work of Burgoon (1976) and others, who investigated the unwillingness to communicate, which was explained in terms of an inclination to avoid communication, particularly in speaking. Burgoon's research contributions showed that a predisposition of WTC occurs and that it may change from one context to another. The construct of WTC was introduced to the literature by McCroskey and Baer (1985), who considered WTC as a possibility to participate in communication when an individual had a desire to do so. Furthermore, they designated WTC as a personality characteristic and not a situational variable, thus individuals display similar tendencies in different communication situations.

The concept of WTC was initially utilized in the context of first language (L1) communication. However, MacIntyre et al. (1998) speculated that the WTC in L1 is not equal to WTC in L2, because of "the uncertainty inherent in L2 use that interacts in a more complex manner with those variables that influence L1" (p. 546). While many variables according to MacIntyre et al. (1998) can affect one's WTC, the major influence factor is the language of discourse. MacIntyre et al. (1998) expanded the WTC from an individual trait-like conceptualization to a situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. In recognizing the situational variations in WTC in L2 communication, MacIntyre et al. (1998) defined WTC as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (p. 547). For this purpose, a heuristic pyramid-shaped like model was proposed which represents the variables influencing WTC.

The Model comprises six layers (I-VI) of conceptualization, and each layer represents a situation-specific factor. Layer I, which is on the top of the pyramid, focuses on L2 communication performance. This variable includes students' language behaviours such as the acts of reading, listening, or speaking in the class. Layer II refers to the behaviour intention in which learners who choose to commit themselves to a course of action indicate their willingness to communicate. MacIntyre et al. (2003) defined WTC as "the intention to initiate communication, given a choice" (p.369). Layer III focuses on situated antecedents which account for two factors that are affecting WTC,

specifically the desire to communicate with a definite person and the speaker's state of self-confidence. Layer IV corresponds to motivational propensities which include three factors influencing the WTC: interpersonal motivation, ingroup motivation, and self-confidence in L2. Layer V focuses on effective-cognitive context, and this is manifested in three factors: intergroup attitudes, social situation, and communicative competence. The last layer at the bottom of the pyramid, Layer VI, refers to social and individual context, which consists of two factors, the intergroup climate, and personality.

In addition to the factors presented in the pyramid-shaped situational model, researchers investigated various variables that are closely related to L2 WTC. In a meta-analytic assessment of WTC, Elahi et al. (2016) found that the most significant predictors are anxiety, motivation, and perceived communicative competence. MacIntyre et al. (2001) found that learners' positive attitude towards language learning benefited students' WTC in classrooms. As for the impact of WTC on communication in the classroom, MacIntyre & Charos's (1996) study showed that higher WTC tends to increase the possibility of learners' authentic communication in classrooms. Furthermore, L2 WTC studies examined other variables, which were found to be directly or indirectly predictors of L2 WTC. A few studies examined the effect of other variables, such as perceived communicative competence (e.g. Peng, 2015; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), L2 self-confidence (e.g. Ghonsooly et al. 2012; Peng & Woodrow, 2010), language anxiety (e.g. Khajavy et al, 2016; MacIntyre, 2007), classroom environment (Aomr et al. 2020; Khajavy et al, 2014), motivation and language proficiency (Khajavy et al, 2014), and a list of factors that influenced students' WTC in classrooms presented in Basoz & Erten (2019), which included and was not limited to learner's previous experiences of communication, fear of making mistakes, topic interest and familiarity, class size, and instructional methods.

The study of WTC was explored in a variety of contexts, such as in teaching L1 and L2 contexts, ESL and EFL settings, within and outside the classrooms, and different types of questionnaires were implemented for WTC. Furthermore, and in investigating the variation of factors that could have impacted the willingness to communicate in a foreign language, extensive studies on WTC have been conducted in diverse cultural contexts. A shift of focus in L2 WTC research, as noted by AlAmrani (2019), has been towards studying WTC in culturally diverse EFL contexts.

However, and given the importance of the concept in L2 acquisition, only a few studies as far as we know have explored WTC within Arabic contexts, all of which highlighted the importance of examining this concept in such a context. In a study conducted in a Saudi educational setting, Elshahawy (2020) found that WTC is the most significant factor influencing college students' language acquisition and learning in EFL classrooms. Similarly, a study among Omani students conducted by AlAmrani (2019) revealed that WTC in English among the students is generally low, and that the types of context and interlocutors were affective variables that significantly contributed to the variation of the learners' WTC. On examining the role of the classroom environment and its impact on Libyan EFL college students' WTC, Aomr et al. (2020) revealed that the classroom environment is a vital factor in enhancing learners' communication.

### **The Importance of the Study**

This study tries to investigate EFL learners' willingness to communicate, specifically in classes. The main goal of the study is to find out technical college learners' perceptions of their WTC in the classroom, by measuring the level of the learners' WTC in different situations presented as part of a model. The data are drawn from two colleges in Kuwait, which make it unique as this is the first study to measure WTC at instructional settings in Kuwait. WTC has been examined in nearby countries like Saudi Arabia (e.g., Elshahawy, 2020), Oman (e.g., AlAmrani, 2019), and extensively in Iran (e.g., Khajavy et al, 2016, 2017), yet this is the first study to be conducted to the best of our knowledge in Kuwait. In addition to having this study examine a new context, the findings present important observations and practical pedagogical implications for language instructors, curriculum designers, and policymakers in academic institutes. The study was set to find out the factors that contribute to EFL learners' WTC specifically inside the classroom environment, and therefore the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1. What are the affective variables that may influence EFL learners' in-class willingness to communicate in Kuwaiti colleges?

RQ2. What is the level of IWTC among college students in Kuwait?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study was conducted with a quantitative research design. A questionnaire was distributed to the students via the students' online application (myU). The survey consists of two parts. The first includes the participants' demographic information. The second part consists of 27 items to measure the Instructional Willingness To Communicate (IWTC). The adapted questionnaire, which was developed by Khatib & Nourzadah (2015), contains six components. They are the communicative self-confidence, the integrative orientation, the situation context of L2 use, the topical enticement, the learning responsibility, and the off-instruction communication. The tool used the 4-point Likert scale, and the sub score of each component was calculated. The first two components and the last one mentioned earlier include five statements, thus the possible minimum and maximum range score of each component are between 5-20, while the other components have four statements, thus their range score is between 4-16.

Unlike other questionnaires that are used in WTC research, Khatib & Nourzadah's (2015) questionnaire considered the Iranian cultural context when formulating the items of the survey. Furthermore, the questionnaire was more focused on in-class WTC in EFL contexts. This could contribute to the suitability of the tool for the research of WTC in EFL cultures. Amalia et al. (2019) adapted the same questionnaire for measuring the WTC within the classroom environment in Indonesia. Given the relative cultural proximity between the Iranian and Arabic states, the authors of this study considered the questionnaire in principle as an acceptable tool for measuring the IWTC in the Kuwaiti context. However, and before adapting this instrument for the first time in the Kuwaiti context, a preliminary validation of the research tool was implemented.

### **Preliminary Validation of the Instrument for Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

The study followed general guidelines of the validation of the research tool to assure the cross-cultural adaptation of the instrument for the Arabic context. The procedure started with the forward translation from English into Arabic, then reviewing the reliability and content validity of the instrument. However, further assessments of the psychometric properties of the tool are recommended.

The original questionnaire was translated into Arabic by following a precise procedure of forward translation. The translation was conducted by a bilingual translator whose native language is Arabic. Then the translation was reviewed by an expert committee consisting of a bilingual translator and a professional linguist. The committee reviewed the items very closely and some modifications were made to ensure the relevance and the appropriateness of the research tool item.

Descriptive statistics such as the number of the participants, colleges, mean of items, mean of the components of the questionnaire, and standard deviation was calculated. The normality of the data was assess using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test. This is a test that is commonly used to evaluate the normality of the data distribution. The findings of the test show the data were normally distributed where ( $P < 0.05$ ).

For measuring the internal reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha test was calculated. It is a measure of internal consistency, revealing the closeness of the items of the instrument to each other. Although different Alpha levels are presented by various authors, according to (Bryman, 2001) the computed Cronbach's alpha coefficient level 0.80 is considered an acceptable level of internal reliability. To measure the reliability statistics, the alpha level was set at 0.05. For validating the instrument of the research, statistical analysis was utilized using SPSS software for Windows version 25.0. The Cronbach's Alpha of the questionnaire of the study was 0.863, indicating high internal consistency of the items. In addition to calculating the means for each item of the questionnaire, the six means of the components were calculated and found to be closely related to each other, which supports the content validity of the tool.

### **Participants**

The participants were a total of 247 EFL learners (235 Females and 12 Males) studying in two colleges in Kuwait: the College of Business Studies and the College of Technological Studies. The participants are enrolled in bachelor and diploma degree programs, in both colleges. All EFL learners are required to register for general English courses and ESP courses, according to the students' majors.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

After the preliminary validation of the tool, the translated questionnaire in Arabic was distributed to the participants. The responses to the questionnaire were coded in an Excel sheet, where each label in the 4-point Likert scale of the questionnaire was given a numerical value between 1-4 starting with (1= would rather avoid) and ending with (4 = very much willing). The 27 items of the survey were divided into six categories (components) as suggested by Khatib & Nourzadah (2015). Furthermore, the mean of

every component was calculated. SPSS software was utilized to calculate the mean and the standard deviation for each item in the questionnaire as well as the mean for each component. The end results are presented in six tables corresponding with the six components of the IWTC. The questionnaire was anonymous.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Item No.	N	Statements	Mean	SD
1	247	You are willing to speak even if other students laugh at your language mistakes (score 1-4)	2.42	1.03
2	247	You are willing to speak even if you know your classmates are better than you at speaking English (score 1-4)	2.77	1.00
3	247	You are willing to give a presentation in front of your classmates (score 1-4)	2.40	1.02
4	247	You are willing to speak even if your language mistakes are frequently corrected by the teacher (score 1-4)	2.87	0.98
5	247	You are willing to talk in group-work language-learning activities (score 1-4)	2.74	0.88
Total			13.2	(5-20)

Table (1): The statistical distribution of the communicative self-confidence of the IWTC questionnaire.

Communicative self-confidence is the first component of the IWTC, and it is measured by the first five questions of the questionnaire as shown in table 1. It refers, according to Khatib & Nourzadeh (2015), to the learner's self-image in being able to efficiently produce and understand utterances in L2 (English in this case). The findings illustrate that the highest self-confidence indicator for the learners is reflected in their willingness to speak in English even if the language mistakes are frequently corrected by the teacher ( $M=2.87$ ), while the lowest variable of self-confidence is when they give a presentation in front of their classmates ( $M= 2.40$ ). This shows the EFL learners' attitude towards speaking in class to the teacher or their classmates in front of the class. This WTC with the teacher even when frequently orally corrected in front of the classroom not only shows that the learners had a high level of confidence but also comfort in speaking to the teacher in contrast to giving a presentation in front of their classmates. This result is consistent with the findings of Tavakoli & Davoudi's (2017) study in investigating the WTC orally among Iranian EFL learners, in which students were most willing to communicate with their teachers and least with their partners or a group of classmates. Tavakoli & Davoudi (2017) attributed learners' WTC to teachers more than to their classmates was probably due to the sense of social closeness and familiarity in relationship with teachers in a setting that is supportive in the class, besides the learners' desire to obtain feedback from an expert in the subject taught. In a relevant study, Kavaliauskiene & Anusiene (2012) found that Lithuanian EFL learners do not feel their confidence is undermined when their oral mistakes are corrected by the teachers in the front of the class. Besides, a great majority of the learners regarded the teacher's

immediate error correction as a useful tool of learning, which did not demotivate them or negatively affect their willingness to communicate.

Table 1 also shows that the lowest mean score is when giving a presentation in English in front of classmates (M=2.40), followed closely by when classmates laugh at the speakers' mistakes (M=2.42). Although the data do not explain the reasons behind this behaviour, it highlights that undesirable situations affect learners' self-confidence and consequently their WTC in L2. A study conducted in a Turkish context touched upon the possible reasons for such behaviour. In their inquiry to the factors that affect the in-class WTC among EFL Turkish learners, Basoz & Erten (2019), considered, among other factors, the fear of making mistakes and the fear of being ridiculed by classmates as significant factors that attribute to a learner's unwillingness to communicate in English in the class setting (p. 12).

High communicative self-confidence positively correlates with WTC. From above, we can see that learners' self-confidence is high when they are engaged in an encouraging language learning environment whether from the teacher or their classmates (e.g., group-work activity). Learners perceive making oral mistakes in L2 in classrooms is part of the learning process and welcome corrections when they are performed by the teacher, who is expected to correct learners' mistake professionally. Learners' self-confidence stays relatively high, and they do not feel discouraged to communicate even when they feel their speaking skill is lower than the other classmates. However, their self-confidence becomes low when they feel ridiculed and laughed at by other students when they make mistakes, which could explain the fear of such experience when communicating in front of their classmates.

Various implications can be derived from the findings above. Communicating in a foreign language is a challenge for beginner learners. Success in encouraging students to communicate in L2 requires a positive learning environment, where learners feel more welcomed to participate and collaborate with their classmates without the fear of being ridiculed when they do make oral mistakes. Thus, teachers should be aware of the source of pressure that learners might feel in giving presentations in front of the class. Teachers can initially utilize group activities to build up learners' communicative self-confidence before presenting in front of the class. Good class management is a key to overcome the challenge of communicating in L2.

Item No.	N	Statements	Mean	SD
6	247	You are willing to have a group discussion about the marriage tradition in English cultures (score 1-4)	2.36	0.94
7	247	You are willing to talk about the lifestyle of English people in a whole class discussion (score 1-4)	2.41	0.95
8	247	You are willing to talk to your classmates about the history of English countries (score 1-4)	2.18	0.89
9	247	You are willing to discuss cultural differences between English and Arabic people in a group (score 1-4)	3.76	0.89
10	247	You are willing to talk to your teacher about English literature (score 1-4)	2.40	0.90
Total			13.11	(5-20)

Table (2): The statistical distribution of the integrative orientation of the IWTC questionnaire.

Table 2 shows the results of the second component of the IWTC: the integrative orientation (items 6- 10) which according to Gardner (1988) refers to learners' positive impressions towards the L2 culture and its native speakers. The findings show that learners are more willing to discuss cultural differences between English and Arabic people in a group ( $M= 3.76$ ). However, they are the least likely to talk with their classmates about the history of English countries ( $M = 2.18$ ).

The variation in median scores of the items in table 2 can be related to the level of familiarity of the discussed topic in the class. Learners' willingness to communicate increases when the topic discussed is more familiar to them, and they are less willing to communicate when the topic is less familiar to them. The findings align with some studies which show the effect of the topic on WTC (Zarrinabadi; 2014, Kang, 2005; MacIntyre et al., 2011).

In a study conducted by Amalia et al. (2019) which used the same questionnaire as ours to measure the IWTC among Indonesian EFL learners, the study revealed that the students marked items within this component in terms of the highest and lowest scores that is reflected also in the findings of our study in table 2. The authors elucidated that the learners are more willing to discuss topics in the L2 culture if they have enough knowledge related to the topic (p.222). Our findings show that learners are most willing to discuss cultural differences between English and Arabic cultures since they are familiar with their own culture, but they are the least willing to talk about the history of English countries. Kang's (2005) study highlighted the psychological influence of background knowledge about the discussed topic on the security of the communicators. In discussing an unfamiliar topic, language learners feel insecure and are less likely to participate in the discussion. The familiarity of the topic according to MacIntyre et al. (1998) has a significant effect on language use and the speaker's linguistic self-confidence (p.554). Thus, teachers should be highly selective in their choice of topics of discussion among adult EFL learners. This highlights the potential usefulness of learners' relativeness and familiarity to the discussed topics that can contribute to their WTC and eventually to their language learning.

Item No.	N	Statements	Mean	SD
11	247	You are willing to speak more when a discussion is related to your own personal experiences (score 1-4)	2.88	0.93
12	247	You are willing to speak more when you are in the class of the same language teacher over several terms (score 1-4)	2.92	0.93
13	247	You are willing to find opportunities to speak no matter how crowded the classroom is (score 1-4)	2.45	1.03
14	247	You are willing to speak even if you are seated at the back of the classroom (score 1-4)	2.77	0.93
Total			11.02	(4-16)

Table (3): The statistical distribution of the situational context of L2 use of the IWTC questionnaire.



The third component of the IWTC accounts for the situational context of L2 use, which refers to "immediate situational variables in the instructional context that has a momentary impact on the learner's communication behaviours" (Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2015, p. 6). The findings reveal that learners are willing to speak more when they are in the class of the same language teacher over several terms ( $M= 2.92$ ), and they are also willing to speak more when a discussion is related to their own experiences ( $M=2.88$ ). This is in comparison to the students willing to find opportunities to speak no matter how crowded the classroom is ( $M =2.45$ ).

The effect on WTC of having the same teacher over several terms can be attributed to the familiarity toward the teacher and his/her teaching style. The participants of the study are college students, who can optionally register in classes with the desired teacher. Familiarity with interlocutors, as Kang (2005) suggested, has an impact on speakers' security to communicate. Familiar and supportive interlocutors increase security and reduce the fear to communicate in second language classes. This point is in line with Aydin (2017) who affirmed that EFL learners feel that changing teachers and classmates from one semester to another not only affects learners' confidence but also their desire to communicate in the classes.

Class size, according to Wen & Clement (2003), is one of "the contextual factors embedded in group cohesiveness" (p.27). Crowded English classes reduce cohesiveness and the ability to get the teacher's attention, and thus leads to the learners' withdrawal and unwillingness to speak in the class. Similarly, Khazaei et al. (2012) confirmed that class size strongly affects a learner's willingness to communicate, where larger classes make learners feel less at ease and more anxious to communicate. Therefore, in this Kuwaiti context, students expressed their willingness to speak up in non-crowded classes and to participate in the discussion when it is related to their personal experience, and to speak even more when they are familiar with the teachers. The data show that the significant factor here is security and familiarity. Language program designers should take into consideration the situational context in classrooms to make learners feel more secure and at ease to communicate in L2.

Item No.	N	Statements	Mean	SD
15	247	You are willing to talk to your classmates about movies and series (score 1-4)	2.96	0.95
16	247	You are willing to talk about great artists you know in a group discussion (score 1-4)	2.51	1.03
17	247	You are willing to talk to your classmates about computer games (score 1-4)	2.55	1.00
18	247	You are willing to talk about your favorite sport in a whole-class discussion (score 1-4)	2.81	0.98
Total			10.83	(4-16)

Table (4): The statistical distribution of the topical enticement of the IWTC questionnaire.

Table 4 shows four items in the questionnaire presented to measure the fourth component of the IWTC – the topical enticement – which refers to the enticement of

the topic to the learners and its effect on learners' engagement in the conversation. The findings demonstrate that learners are willing to talk to their classmates about movies and series ( $M=2.96$ ), compared to their willingness to talk about great artists they know in a group discussion ( $M= 2.51$ ), or even to their willingness to talk to their classmates about computer games ( $M= 2.55$ ).

This reveals WTC is affected by student's specific topical preference. In addition to the topic familiarity as an element of encouragement to communicate in the class, learners' interest in specific topics also contributes to the learners' willingness to communicate to their classmates. Understandably learners are inclined to be excited when they talk about their topic of interest. Excitement to Kang (2005) is a "psychological antecedent to the emergence of situational WTC" (p. 284). In a related study, Amalia et al. (2019) noted that the topic under discussion affects learners' engagement in communication, and they explained this preference to talk about certain topics more than other topics can be attributed to learners' gender and their familiarity with the topics. In alignment with this observation, the vast majority of the participants in our study are females (95 %) who are enrolled in colleges of business studies and technological studies, who might be more interested to talk to their classmates about common topics and activities that are common among their female classmates than other topics. Also, the popularity of certain topics provides learners with the comfort to use a greater choice of words than in discussing unpopular topics which could restrict students' communication abilities. Whether talking to a classmate or the whole class, learners' answers indicate a clear preference towards specific subjects and topics. Although there are always variations of interest among individuals, a group interest in certain topics can be recognized. Thus, teachers should consider learners' preferences of topics to encourage them to participate in the discussion. Age, gender, and group interest or disinterest in specific topics can help teachers in selecting suitable learning materials.

Item No.	Statements	Mean	SD
19	247 You are willing to ask your classmate about the correct pronunciation of a word (score 1-4)	3.03	0.89
20	247 You are willing to ask another student to explain a grammatical point to you (score 1-4)	3.06	0.88
21	247 You are willing to ask your teacher to repeat what he or she has just said if you did not understand it (score 1-4)	3.12	0.91
22	247 You are willing to raise your hand to ask or answer questions (score 1-4)	3.05	0.95
		Total	12.26 (4-16)

Table (5): The statistical distribution of the learning responsibility of the IWTC questionnaire.

The fifth IWTC component, learning responsibility, refers to learners' self-perceived responsiveness to their learning duty. The highest mean statement reflected learners'

willingness to ask their teacher to repeat what [the teacher] has just said when learners did not understand what has been said ( $M = 3.12$ ). The lowest mean is reserved for learners' willingness to ask one of their classmates about the correct pronunciation of a word ( $M=3.03$ ), and to ask another student for a grammatical explanation ( $M=3.06$ ). This not only highlights learners' preference of learning style but also underlines the limited channel of communication. Learners in these contexts are willing to communicate to the teacher and not to their classmates, and since allocating time to converse with every student is limited in classes, learners miss out on opportunities for developing communication skills with their classmates. In their willingness to ask their teacher rather than their classmates, learners probably perceive approaching their teacher as a less threatening move and are less apprehensive in doing this than in reaching out to their classmates. Notably, the willingness to ask teachers is an indicator of students' learning responsibility. Consequently, teachers should be aware that learners' reluctant approach to communication in class depends on the other individuals involved in the communication. Thus, teachers can employ learners' acceptance in a manner to strategically engage learners with each other. To do so, teachers' teaching styles should be flexible enough to incorporate the available learning opportunities.

Item No.	N	Statements	Mean	SD
23	247	You are willing to talk to your classmates outside of the classroom (score 1-4)	2.86	0.93
24	247	You are willing to talk to the student sitting next to you before the teacher enters the classroom (score 1-4)	2.91	0.86
25	247	You are willing to talk to your classmates when the teacher leaves the classroom for a few moments (score 1-4)	2.57	0.98
26	247	You are willing to talk with your classmates about your weekends (score 1-4)	2.42	1.01
27	247	You are willing to talk to strange students from other classrooms (score 1-4)	2.23	0.98
Total			12.99	(5 -20)

Table (6): The statistical distribution of the off-instruction communication of the IWTC questionnaire.

The sixth and last component of the IWTC addresses off-instruction communication, i.e. learners' keenness to communicate in L2 by themselves without teachers' instructions. The findings reveal that learners are willing to talk in English to the student sitting next to them before the teacher enters the classroom ( $M= 2.91$ ), compared to the last item which shows learners are less willing to talk to strange students from other classrooms ( $M= 2.23$ ).

The findings in table 6 are consistent with the findings in Amalia et al.'s (2019) study. Without the teacher's instruction, they are willing to use their knowledge and apply it to communicate to their classmates in different situations such as outside the classroom ( $M=2.86$ ), before the teacher enters the classroom ( $M=2.91$ ), and even after teacher momentarily leaves the classroom ( $M=2.57$ ), but the score drops when discussing personal weekend activities, as probably the topic here is seen as more personal. It is

worth noticing that the lowest mean score appears in willingness to interact with strange students from other classes. Whether the interlocutor is a classmate or a teacher, familiarity with the interlocutor is an important factor to WTC. Riasati's (2012) study showed that learners explained that they would feel more motivated to communicate with a familiar person than a stranger. Thus, as rightly suggested by Amalia et al.'s (2019) study, teachers can develop learners' speaking skills by providing learners with language activities that can be practiced with their familiar acquaintances.

The IWTC questionnaire consists of six components as presented in the tables above. The first two components and the last component each have 5 items, therefore the minimum score range mean for these components is 5 and the maximum score range is 20. The other three components each consist of 4 items, thus the minimum score range mean for each component is 4, and the maximum is 16. The difference in component maximum and minimum mean is reflected in percentages in table (7).

<b>Components</b>	<b>Mean (Score range)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Communicative self-confidence	13.2 (5 –20)	66 %
Integrative orientation	13.11 (5 –20)	65.5 %
Situation context of L2 use	11.02 (4 –16)	68.8 %
Topical enticement	10.83 (4 –16)	67.6%
Learning responsibility	12.26 (4 –16)	76.6%
Off-instruction communication	12.99 (5 –20)	64.9%

Table (7): The distribution of components' means and percentages of the IWTC.

Table 7 shows that a higher score in the percentage of the component mean indicates a greater tendency towards willingness to communicate. Among all of the components of IWTC, learning responsibility is the highest component (76.6%) that includes variables which were highly agreeable for EFL learners in the Kuwaiti context to positively influence learners' communication inclinations.

## **CONCLUSION**

Learners' willingness to communicate in the classroom was the focus of our study. For this purpose, a quantitative research design was conducted to analytically investigate the relation and impact of different variables on Kuwaiti college students' willingness or unwillingness to communicate in EFL classrooms. For this purpose, a modified version of Khatib & Nourzadah's (2015) questionnaire was adapted for measuring instructional WTC in Kuwaiti contexts. Six components of IWTC, as suggested by the original questionnaire, were investigated: communicative self-confidence, the integrative orientation, the situation context of L2 use, the topical enticement, the learning responsibility, and the off-instruction communication. The study highlighted learners' perspectives on speaking and the influencing variables in various situations that were affecting learners' WTC. Furthermore, it sheds light on the role of the EFL classroom environment in motivating or demotivating learners' communication

behaviours. Based on the outcome of the study, various implications for teachers and program designers were suggested. Besides this, the study preliminarily validated the instrument and found it to be reliable and valid for future use in other Arabic contexts for research purposes. However, further assessments of the psychometric properties of the tool are recommended.

Future research should consider finding out the correlation between the WTC and each of the six components of the study to underline the strongest effect on learners' communication behaviours. Also, learners' WTC in other means of communication, such as writing, can be investigated and compared to EFL learners' verbal communication.

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