Willingness to Commmunicate and Oral Proficiency in EFL

Filipović, Mirijam

Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2013

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:177230

Rights / Prava: In copyright / Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-03-29**

FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET
SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU

Repository / Repozitorij:

FFOS-repository - Repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Osijek

zir.nsk.hr

SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU

dabar
DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJI

Sveučilište J. J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet

Diplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i njemačkog jezika i književnosti

Mirijam Filipović

Willingness to Communicate and Oral Proficiency in EFL

Diplomski rad

Mentorica: izv. prof. dr. sc. Višnja Pavičić – Takač

Osijek, 2013.

Content

1. Introduction 1

2. Willingness to Communicate (WTC) 2

2.1. Evolution of the WTC Model 2

2.2. The Pyramid Model 4

2.2.1. Description of Layers of the WTC Pyramid Model ……..... 5

2.2.2. Some Reconceptualizations of the WTC Model ……. 8

2.3. WTC in SLA Research …….…. 9

2.3.1. Research on WTC in the Foreign Language Learning Context ……..….. 9

2.3.2. Research on WTC in the Second Language Learning Context …...…….. 12

2.4. Importance of WTC in Communication ……..….. 16

3. Oral Language Proficiency (OLP) ……..….. 18

3.1. Defining Oral Language Proficiency …….…...……..…….. 18

3.2. Developing Oral Language Proficiency ……..... 19

3.3. Assessment of Oral Language Proficiency ……23

4. Empirical Research …….. 30

4.1. Aim ……... 30

4.2. Methodology …… 30

4.2.1. Sample ……... 30

4.2.2. Instruments …… 32

4.2.3. Oral Language Proficiency Levels ……...……. 32

4.2.4. Procedure ……... 33

4.3. Results ……..…. 34

4.3.1. Descriptive Statistics ……..…… 34

4.3.2. Correlation Analyses ….…… 34

4.4. Discussion …….……... 35

5. Conclusion ……... 38

Literature ……..……. 39

Summary

This study examined the relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC), perceived communication competence (PCC) and oral language proficiency (OLP) in English as a foreign language. More precisely, the correlations between these variables were explored. Comparisons indicate that there are statistically significant positive correlations between willingness to communicate and oral language proficiency, and between perceived communication competence and oral language proficiency, whereas a significant relationship between PCC and WTC has not been found. Although the results only confirm the interrelationship between these three variables, and do not show casual connections between them, they imply that perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate may affect students' oral language proficiency. Therefore, foreign language teachers should consider these two factors when assessing students' oral expression and oral proficiency, and they should encourage students to speak in their classes, in order to develop their speaking skills, and gain more confidence as speakers of English as a foreign language.

Key words: second language acquisition (SLA), willingness to communicate (WTC), perceived communication competence (PCC), oral language proficiency (OLP)

1. Introduction

Second language acquisiton (SLA) is a study about the different ways people acquire a language other than their mother tongue. The goals of SLA are: the description of how L2 acquisition proceeds, and the clarification of the process of L2 acquisition, as well as the explanation of reasons why some students seem to be better at it than others (Ellis, 1997).

Individual differences (IDs) play an important role in the second or foreign language acquisition. IDs can be defined as "dimensions of enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree" (Dörnyei, 2006: 4). They are considered to be consistent predictors of second or foreign language success, because the process of second and foreign language learning and language proficiency are strongly affected by various student's characteristics. Five most important second language ID domains are: personality, ability/aptitude, motivation, learning strategies, and learning styles. Besides these ID domains, there are five more, and these are: anxiety, self-esteem, creativity, willingness to communicate (WTC), and learners' beliefs (Dörnyei, 2005).

The aim of this diploma paper is to examine the relationship between willingness to communicate in class, which belongs to the IDs, perceived communication competence (PCC), and oral language proficiency (OLP). Therefore, in the second chapter of this paper the concept of WTC in L2, MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) WTC pyramid model will be discussed, and layers of the WTC pyramid model will be described. Furthermore, research on WTC in foreign and second language learning contexts will be presented, in order to display significant relationships between WTC and other variables, like perceived communication competence and oral proficiency. Also, the importance of higher WTC in three general interpersonal environments (school environment, organizational environment and social environment), and its positive effect on the quality of human life will be discussed.

The third chapter explains the development of oral proficiency, defines its four key traits (syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy, lexical diversity, fluency), and describes relevant research on the relationship of oral proficiency and several individual factors. Also, different types of rating scales for the assessment of oral proficiency are presented, and a detailed description of the CEFR scale for qualitative aspects of spoken language use is offered. The empirical research exploring the relationship between willingness to communicate in class, students' perceived communication competence, and oral language proficiency is described in the final (fourth) chapter of this paper.

2. Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

2.1. Evolution of the WTC Model

According to Simic and Tanaka (2008), the concept of *willingness to communicate* (WTC) was introduced three decades ago, and since then it has been subject to many studies. The term WTC has evolved from a number of other terms, such as *unwillingness to communicate*, *predisposition toward verbal behavior*, and *shyness*. First research was about WTC in the native language, and WTC was considered as "a stable personality-based, trait-like predisposition" (Simic and Tanaka, 2008: 71) that was "resulting in a global, personality-based orientation toward talking" (MacIntyre et al., 2003: 591). From this perspective, WTC was defined as a tendency of an individual to begin communication when free to do so (McCroskey & Richmond 1990).

McCroskey and Richmond (1990) said that WTC originates from two variables – lack of anxiety and perceived communication competence. That means that willingness to communicate is higher, when people are not apprehensive, and when they perceive themselves to be a competent communicator. This suggestion was first empirically supported by MacIntyre (1994, as cited in Simic and Tanaka, 2008) who developed a model which proposed that WTC is based on a combination of greater perceived communication competence and a lower level of communication apprehension. This model surmises the possibility that anxiety influences the perception of competence.

The development of a construct of WTC in the first language (L1) was followed by the development of an instrument for its measurement. In many empirical studies the WTC scale was applied and some researchers have investigated WTC in the L1 from cross cultural perspectives (Simic and Tanaka, 2008).

Individuals' decisions whether to initiate a conversation in a L2 or to participate in such a conversation depend on their WTC. As already mentioned, WTC in one's first language is seen as a fairly stable personality trait, but it is highly unlikely that WTC in the second language (L2) is just a manifestation of WTC in the L1 (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The concept of WTC is more complex with regard to L2 use, because the level of one's L2 proficiency, and especially that of the individual's L2 communication competence, is an additional powerful modifying variable (Dörnyei, 2005).

MacIntyre and Charos (1996) have applied the WTC model for the first time to L2 communication. They combined the WTC model with Gardner's socio-educational model to

predict the frequency of daily L2 use among Anglophone students learning French. The results confirmed that students who are more motivated for language learning will use the language more frequently and students who are more willing to communicate are more likely to do so. Both language anxiety and perceived communication competence influenced WTC, and the influence of anxiety on perceived communication competence was also supported. Furthermore, it was proven that personality traits affected motivation and WTC, which, in turn, influenced L2 communication frequency, and that being exposed to more opportunities for interaction in L2 influenced the frequency of L2 use directly and indirectly through perceived competence and WTC. These results support the suggestions by MacIntyre et al. (1998) that social context and personality are variables that affect the WTC.

WTC in L2 is more complex and includes a much greater range of communication competence than WTC in L1. Moreover, MacIntyre et al. (1998) claim that L2 use depends on many intergroup issues, which carry social and political implications, and which are usually irrelevant to L1 use. They also stressed that after extending WTC to L2 communication situations, there was no need to limit WTC to a trait-like variable only, since the use of L2 introduces the potential for significant situational differences, based on wide variations in competence. Furthermore, they argued that WTC needs to be perceived as a situated construct that includes both state and trait characteristics. According to that, they defined the concept of WTC as "the individual's readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre et al. 1998: 547).

MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed a pyramid model (see 2.2.) of the WTC construct that consisted of multiple layers. This pyramid model included a range of linguistic and psychological variables that influence the WTC, but, according to Dörnyei (2005), it failed to describe the interrelationship and the weighting of the various components. Therefore MacIntyre and his colleagues have conducted several studies in order to empirically validate some parts of the complex construct, and this research effort has confirmed the communication anxiety and perceived communication competence as two of the strongest predictors of WTC.

By linking the concept of WTC to the theory of planned behavior, MacIntyre et al. (2001) have added an important dimension to WTC. According to this theory, the persons' behavioral intention, such as WTC, alone is insufficient to explain action in situations where people do not have complete control over their behavior. Therefore another modifying component - perceived behavioral control - needs to be taken into account. Perceived behavioral control concerns the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior. Combination of people's intention to

perform the behavior and their perceptions of control over the behavior is used to predict the behavioral performance. Additionally, MacIntyre et al. (2001) state that perceived control over behavior and behavioral outcomes are influenced by the beliefs concerning opportunities, such as the opportunity for L2 communication.

To conclude, WTC is a complex ID variable that consists of multiple linguistic and psychological layers. It is a situated construct that includes both state and trait characteristics and affects the SLA and use of the L2. Additional importance is lent to the concept by the fact that it can be seen as the ultimate goal of L2 instruction (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Numerous studies on WTC have been conducted, but there are still several interesting questions about the WTC that need to be explored and answered. MacIntyre et al. (2001) raised the question about how WTC correlates across various modalities of communication (speaking, listening, reading or writing). Another important issue, that needs to be explored, is whether WTC ends at the initiation of communication or it exerts its influence at the initiation of each conversational turn in an ongoing manner (Kang, 2005). Since SLA is a learning process that relies heavily on learning through participatory experience in communication, MacIntyre et al. (2003) have linked WTC to both L2 acquisition and use. Language acquisition and language use processes can be mixed up, because they may be related to different types of antecedents or attributes. Therefore more research about these two aspects of L2 in relation to WTC needs to be conducted in order to acquire relevant and useful information about them.

2.2. The Pyramid Model

MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) proposed a multilayered pyramid model that shows the range of potential influences on WTC in the L2. The pyramid shape is chosen as the heuristic model, because it shows the immediacy of some factors and a relatively distant influence of others. The broadest factors, like personality, are the foundations on which the pyramid is built. They represent the platform on which the rest of the influences operate. The pyramid model consists of six layers. The layers I, II, and III represent situation specific influences on WTC at a given moment in time. The layers IV, V, and VI represent stable, enduring influences on the WTC. We will begin this discussion from the top of the pyramid, and describe the most immediate, situation-based contexts, and gradually move to the bottom of the pyramid, and discuss stable, enduring influences on L2 communication situations (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

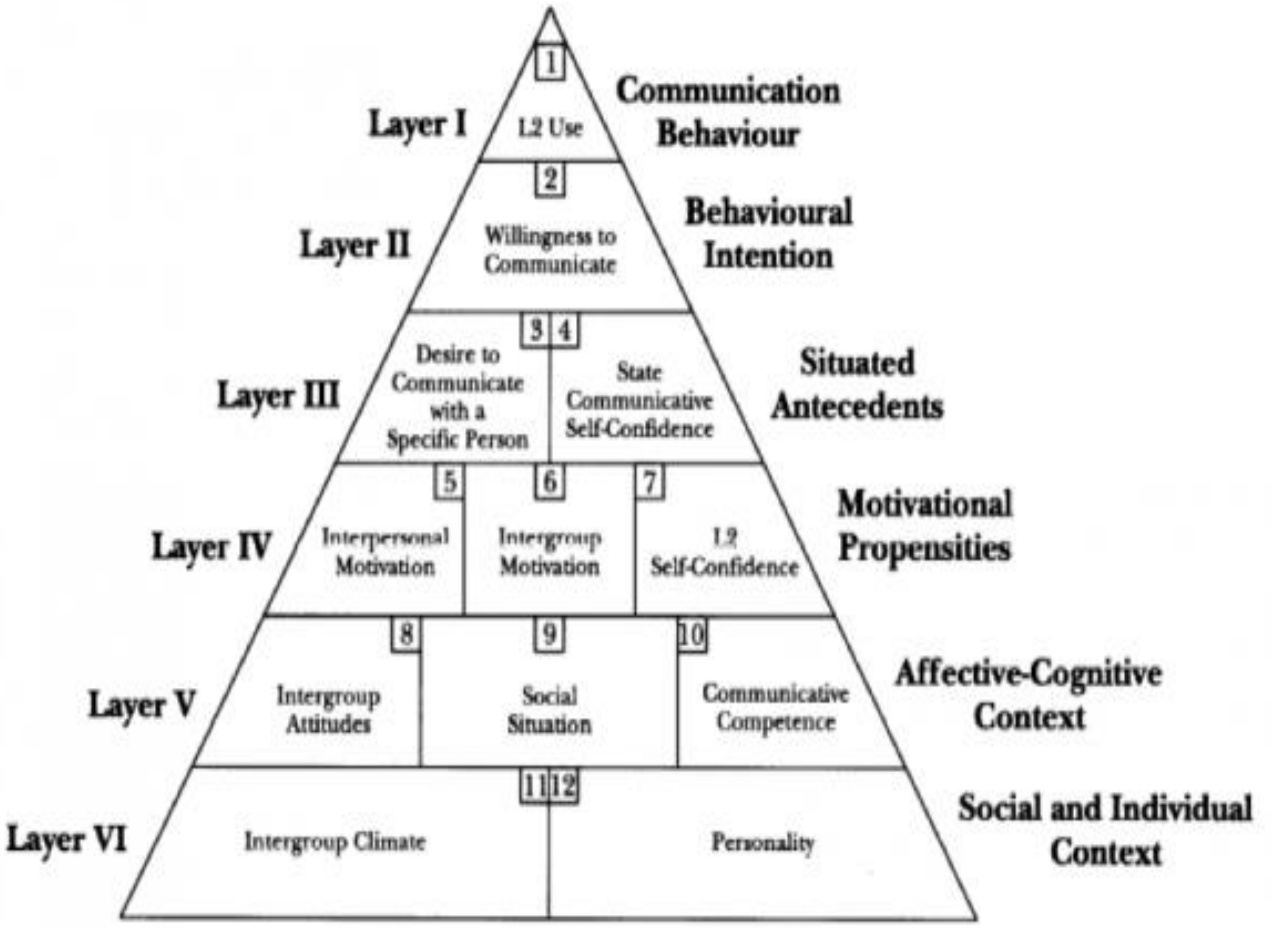


Figure 1: Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels, 1998: 547)

2.2.1. Description of Layers of the WTC Pyramid Model

Layer I is *communication behavior* which is an outcome of a complex system of interrelated variables. Communication behavior includes such activities as speaking up in class, reading L2 newspapers, watching L2 television, and using the L2 at the workplace. The authors argue that the ultimate goal of the learning process should be to provoke in language students the willingness to seek out communication opportunities, initiate conversation when they have such opportunities, and to participate in L2 communication. That means that "a proper objective for L2 education is to create WTC" (MacIntyre et al., 1998: 547).

Layer II is *willingness to communicate*. MacIntyre et al.'s concept of WTC is different from McCroskey's trait-like WTC, because MacIntyre et al. conceptualize WTC as construct that is influenced by situation specific factors. Therefore WTC is defined as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998: 547). This means that the opportunity to communicate is not necessary for the WTC to

exist. MacIntyre et al. (1998) argue that language learning program should produce students who are willing to use the L2. If the program does not produce such students, it is a failed program.

Layer III are *situated antecedents* of communication. First antecedent of WTC is the *desire to communicate with a specific person* and the second is *the state of communication self-confidence.*

(3) Desire to communicate with a specific person is a result of a combination of interpersonal and intergroup motivations that include motives like affiliation and control, which are considered to encourage the desire to communicate. Affiliation occurs with persons who are physically attractive and similar to us in a variety of ways. MacIntyre et al. (1998) pointed out that affiliation may be the most important motive for L2 communication in informal situations. If the main motive for interpersonal communication is control, the use of L2 will depend on the interlocutor's L2 self-confidence.

(4) State communicative self-confidence includes two factors: state perceived competence and a lack of state anxiety. State anxiety changes over time and its increase reduces self-confidence, which affects WTC negatively. State perceived competence is a personal self-evaluation of one's communication abilities at a particular time. If a person has developed satisfactory language knowledge and skills, state perceived competence can increase WTC. The desire to interact with a specific person and state self-confidence are the most immediate determinants of WTC (MacIntyre et al. 1998).

Layer 4 is made up of *motivational propensities* that consist of three important variables: *interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation,* and *L2 confidence.*

(*5) Interpersonal motivation* is related to the communicator's individual characteristics and is derived directly from the social role-playing within a group. It is triggered by two motives: control or affiliation. Control initiates communication behavior whose goal is to limit the cognitive, affective and behavioral freedom of the communicators. This type of communication is usually found in hierarchical, interpersonal, task-related situations and derives from the more powerful party. Affiliation is stimulated by personal characteristics of the interlocutor, such as attractiveness, similarity, physical proximity and frequent encounters (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

(6) Intergroup motivation is related to the belonging to a particular group. As with interpersonal motivation, control and affiliation are the basic components of the intergroup motivation. Control represents contact which result is the maintenance of power established between groups. Affiliation is a motive for communication which goal is to establish or maintain agreement with a member of another group, because of different group memberships (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

(7) L2 self-confidence is connected with the individual's belief in its ability to communicate in the L2 in an adaptive and efficient manner. There are two components to L2 confidence. The first component is self-evaluation of L2 skills, and the second component is language anxiety. The results of many studies have shown that self-confidence is related to aspects of intergroup contact, ethnic identity and actual competence in L2 (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Layer V is called *affective and cognitive context*. It consists of three less situation-specific variables: *intergroup attitudes, social situation,* and *communicative competence.*

(*8) Intergroup attitudes* are influenced by integrativeness, fear of assimilation, and motivation to learn L2. Integrativeness is connected with increased frequency and quality of contact with L2 speakers. Fear of assimilation is the fear of losing one's identity as a member of L1 community by acquiring a L2. It lowers the frequency of contact with the L2 community. Motivation to learn the L2 is influenced by the attitudes toward the L2 itself. Positive attitudes toward the L2 can be a result of positive experiences in the language classroom, positive stereotypes, and they can make the process of language learning more enjoyable (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

(9) Social situation describes a social encounter in a particular setting. Five factors influence social situation: the participants, the setting, the purpose, the topic, and the channel of communication. The most important variables for participants are age, gender, and social class. The setting refers to the place and time of communication. The purpose is related to the goals or intentions of communication. Topic of the communication can affect the ease of language use. If a person possesses knowledge about the topic, it can boost his or her linguistic self-competence. A lack of knowledge about the topic can inhibit even a generally confident speaker. Communication channel (speaking and writing) involves the medium chosen for the communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

(10) Communicative competence is a product of five competences: linguistic competence, discourse competence, actional competence, socio-cultural competence, and strategic competence. Linguistic competence includes knowledge of the most important elements of communication, including syntactic and morphological rules, phonological and orthographic systems, and lexical resources. Discourse competence is connected with selecting, sequencing and arranging word structures and sentences in order to achieve a unified spoken or written text. Actional competence refers to matching communicative intent with linguistic form. Socio-cultural competence is knowledge of how to express messages appropriately within the social or cultural context. Finally, strategic competence refers to knowledge of communication strategies

that allow a speaker to compensate for deficiencies in his competencies of communicative competence, and it contributes to one's linguistic self-confidence (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Layer VI is *the societal* and *individual context*. It is influenced by two factors: the society and the individual. The societal context involves *the intergroup climate*, and the individual context refers to *stable personality characteristics*.

(11) Intergroup climate consists of structural characteristics of the community and perceptual and affective correlates. Structural characteristics are represented through ethnolinguistic vitality and personal communication networks. Language of a group with higher ethnolinguistic vitality has more prestige, attracts more speakers, and is used more frequently in daily exchanges. The effects of ethnolinguistic vitality can be modified with personal communication network which refers to the group with which we communicate regularly. Perceptual and affective correlates focus on the attitudes and values directed toward the L2 community. Generally, positive attitudes toward an ethnic group will result in more positive interactions with that group, whereas a negative attitude will be followed by less positive interactions with that group (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

(12) Personality predicts individual's reactions to members of another group. Individual dispositions will affect individual's positive or negative reactions toward a different ethnic group. The intergroup context and the personality are thought to influence the L2 WTC to a lesser degree than other variables and therefore they are placed at the bottom of the pyramid model (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

2.2.2. Some Reconceptualizations of the WTC Model

The WTC heuristic model was successfully applied in the context of second and foreign language learning. Researchers were mostly interested in the effect of personality traits, attitudes and motivation on the differences in WTC (Simic & Tanaka, 2008).

According to Wen and Clement (2003), there was a need to add the role of culture as a new dimension to the WTC theoretical concept. The WTC heuristic model was mainly based on research that was conducted in the Western context. Therefore Wen and Clement (2003) suggested that the model should be adapted to the target language cultural context. For example, Chinese communication behavior is deeply rooted in Confucianism, which determines their cultural values and submissive way of learning that have a strong effect on WTC in a L2. Similar features can be seen in the Japanese cultural background, and therefore this model should be

tested in the Japanese context as well. According to Simic and Tanaka (2008) it is unknown whether this new model was actually applied empirically.

Second reconsideration of the WTC came from Kang (2005) who applied a qualitative approach to examine how situational L2 WTC dynamically emerges and changes during a conversation. He suggested situational WTC as a multilayered construct that could change during the conversation under the mutual effect of the psychological conditions of excitement, responsibility and security. Moreover, Kang (2005: 291) offered a new definition of WTC in L2 according to which WTC is "an individual's free will to engage in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic, and conversational context, among other potential situational variables." Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica (2009) have also reconceptualized the concept of willingness to communicate in class as a situational variable. More about their research will be said in the chapter 2.3.1.

2.3. WTC in SLA Research

WTC was explored in both foreign and second language learning context. A foreign language is learned in a place where that language is not used for daily communication. In contrast, a second language is learned in a place where majority of people use that language as a main tool for daily interaction (Simic & Tanaka, 2008). In the following discussion several studies on WTC in foreign language context (see 2.3.1.) and in the second language learning context (see 2.3.2.) will be presented.

2.3.1. Research on WTC in the Foreign Language Learning Context

In a foreign language learning context the language classroom is the only place where learners receive stimulation in the target language. Outside the classroom learners are surrounded with their native language and do not have many opportunities for interaction in L2. Several studies that were conducted in the Japanese context will be discussed, because Japan has recently become a fruitful ground for WTC research. Yashima et al. (2004) point out that English is an important school subject in Japan, and for many learners it represents the world around Japan, something that connects them to other countries and foreigners. In addition to Japanese studies, two studies on WTC in the Croatian foreign language context will also be presented.

Yashima (2002) conducted the first comprehensive research on WTC in EFL in the Japanese context. She examined relations among international posture[1], L2 learning motivation, L2 proficiency, confidence in L2 communication (combination of language anxiety and higher levels of perceived communication competence) and WTC. A L2 communication model was constructed and tested using structural equation modeling with a sample of 297 Japanese university students. The results of this research demonstrated that L2 communication confidence and international posture were variables that directly influenced WTC in a L2. Furthermore, international posture also indirectly influenced WTC in a L2 through motivation to learn L2 and communication confidence in L2. According to this study international posture and confidence in L2 seem to play a great role in both understanding and promoting L2 learning and communication in the Japanese EFL environment.

Later Yashima et al. (2004) conducted another research with Japanese adolescent learners of English. The results pointed out that WTC predicts frequency and amount of communication. Students who are more willing to communicate in the L2 tend to initiate communication in the classroom. Furthermore, perceived communication competence is most strongly related to WTC. Self-confidence in communication in a L2 is crucial for individual's WTC in that L2. Additionally, international posture also affects WTC in L2. Students who are interested in international affairs and activities are more willing to communicate in the L2. Furthermore, international posture influences motivation to learn L2, which affects the L2 self-confidence. The results of this study confirmed the results of Yashima's (2002) research. In Matsuoka's studies (2004, 2005) international posture was also an important predictor of WTC in EFL, together with motivation, anxiety, perceived communication competence and others.

In his study, that partially replicated MacIntyre and Charos' (1996) study, Hashimoto (2002) examined affective variables as predictors of reported L2 use by Japanese ESL students in classrooms. Perceived communication competence in L2 and L2 anxiety were found to be the cause of WTC in L2. L2 anxiety was found to influence the perceived communication competence. These results supported the results of MacIntyre and Charos' (1996) study. In MacIntyre and Charos' (1996) study a significant path from L2 WTC to motivation was not

[1] International posture is "a general attitude toward the international community that influences L2 learning and motivation in L2 learning, which, in turn, predicts proficiency and L2 communication confidence" (Yashima, 2002: 63).

found, but in Hashimoto's (2002) study that path was found to be significant. The results have also shown that perceived communication competence directly influenced motivation.

The above mentioned studies that were conducted in the foreign language context were concerned with trait-like willingness to communicate. Moreover, they demonstrate that perceived communication competence and L2 anxiety are two main variables that directly affect the WTC in L2 which entirely confirms MacIntyre's (1994, as cited in Simic & Tanaka, 2008) theory according to which L2 anxiety has a negative, while perceived communication competence has a positive effect on WTC in L2. Therefore, Simic and Tanaka (2008) claim that MacIntyre's models (1994, 1998) are sufficient for foreign language context, because they explain most of the WTC, and in this case, these models do not need any adjustment.

The study by Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica (2009) on WTC in the Croatian foreign language learning context differs from the above mentioned studies, which were conducted in the Japanese context, because the authors reconceptualized WTC in the context of oral communication in foreign language classes as a situational variable, whereas the mentioned studies were concerned with the trait-like WTC. Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica (2009) explored the relationship between WTC, self-evaluation of competence, foreign language learning success, and period of language learning. The results have not shown a significant correlation between WTC, self-evaluation, foreign language success, and period of language learning. WTC in the foreign language environment is mostly defined as a general and stable personality trait, but Mihaljević Djigunović and Letica (2009) argued that WTC in the foreign language classes does not have to be learner's personality trait. Therefore, they reconceptualized WTC in foreign language, and defined it as willingness to take risks in classes, level of social behavior in classes, and foreign language anxiety which will more or less determine learner's WTC in class. The results revealed significant correlation between WTC in classes and foreign language success, and negative correlation between WTC in classes and period of foreign language learning.

Pavičić-Takač and Požega (2012) have investigated the relationship between personality traits, willingness to communicate, and oral language proficiency in EFL among Croatian high school students. The main aim of their study was to discover possible relationship between each of the five factors of the Big Five personality traits (extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) and each of the eight groups of the willingness to communicate (group discussion, meetings, interpersonal communication, public performance,

strangers, acquaintances, friends, and total WTC). Furthermore, the aim was to examine the relationship between the two above mentioned factors and oral language proficiency.

This research was conducted in one high school in Osijek and the sample consisted of 324 learners of EFL. The Croatian version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) was used for measuring personality traits, and the Willingness to Communicate scale, constructed by McCroskey and Richmond, was used for measuring the WTC. Average values of students' grades in oral expression in English were used as measure of their oral language proficiency. The results have shown significant positive correlations between personality traits (except neuroticism and conscientiousness) and WTC. It is found that openness, as one of the personality traits, correlates positively with all WTC groups, except interpersonal communication. Agreeableness, which is also one of the personality traits, correlates negatively with oral proficiency. Among WTC groups, only group discussion correlates positively with oral language proficiency. These results imply that personality traits and WTC may affect students' oral language proficiency, and that foreign language teachers should consider these two important factors when assessing students' oral language expression and proficiency.

2.3.2. Research on WTC in the Second Language Learning Context

Second language learning context provides learners with continuous audio and visual stimulation. The difference between immersion and non-immersion students is similar to the difference between foreign and second language students. Like students in a L2 context, immersion students have more contact with the target language and receive more stimulation in the target language which is necessary to master communication in that language more successfully. MacIntyre and his colleagues have conducted three studies which show the positive effects of the immersion program on WTC.

Baker and MacIntyre (2000) examined 71 immersion and 124 non-immersion high school students in Canada. English was their L1 and they were learning French as their L2. Immersion students had all their courses taught in French. They were higher in L2 WTC, lower in language anxiety, higher in perceived L2 competence and higher in frequency of communication in French than non-immersion students. Furthermore, anxiety was a better predictor of WTC among the immersion students, whereas perceived competence was the main predictor of WTC among the non-immersion students. These results suggested that the impact of the variables underlying WTC might change overtime as students gain more experience in the second language.

The study by MacIntyre et al. (2002) investigated sex and age differences in relation to WTC, and differences in perceived L2 communication competence, anxiety, and motivation among 268 students in a junior high French late immersion program (7^{th}, 8^{th} and 9^{th} grades). The results indicated no significant correlation between anxiety and perceived communication competence for 7^{th} grade students. This is maybe the result of students' lack of experience, because the language anxiety has not yet developed this association with lower perceived communication competence. For the 8^{th} and 9^{th} grade students there was a significant negative correlation between these two variables. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989, as cited in MacIntyre et al., 2002) have argued that this significant negative correlation between the anxiety and perceived competence among 8^{th} and 9^{th} students is a function of repeated experience. L2 perceived communication competence was the strongest correlate of L2 WTC in all three grades.

Furthermore, the results have shown that L2 WTC, perceived communication competence, and frequency of communication in the L2 increased from grades 7 to 8 and were maintained between grades 8 and 9. Additionally, it has been noticed that motivation decreases between grades 8 and 9. This decrease in motivation that is experienced after grade 8 may be explained as an inevitable reduction in motivation, which is the result of an intense language learning program. Furthermore, it can be a result of a more global decline in motivation among adolescent learners, because "school achievement motivation generally tends to decline during the adolescence, because of a number of factors, among which are the increasing amounts negative feedback children receive as they progress through school, the onset of puberty, and cognitive growth that allows them to assess their abilities more realistically" (Sigelman, 1999 as cited in MacIntyre et al., 2002: 559).

Girls show an increase in WTC and a decrease in anxiety from grade 8 to grade 9, whereas boys' WTC and anxiety levels are mainly the same across the three grades. The reason for this can be found in the increased self-consciousness which is associated with the onset of puberty. For girls, puberty begins between 12 and 13 years (grades 7-8), whereas for boys it begins between 13.5 and 14 years (grade 9). Therefore, grade 9 girls are less anxious and more willing to communicate, because the most anxiety-provoking phase of their puberty is behind them. Second reason for increase in girls' WTC and decrease in anxiety from grade 8 to grade 9 can be found in the favoring of girls in the language classroom (MacIntyre et al., 2002).

Language anxiety involves the concern and negative feelings and reactions when learning or using a second language (MacIntyre et al., 2002). Language anxiety affects the second language learning significantly, because it correlates negatively with second language course

grades and the ability to take in, process and output L2 information. Conceptually similar to language anxiety is communication apprehension, because they both relate to anxiety about communicating. The product of communication apprehension is the reduced desire to communicate (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996).

Baker and MacIntyre (2000) point out that individuals' perceptions of their competence will affect the WTC. In addition, McCroskey and Richmond (1991) claim, that the individual's choice whether to communicate or not is a cognitive one, and therefore it will probably be more influenced by one's perceptions of competence (of which one is usually aware) than one's actual competence (of which one may be totally unaware). Anxiety and perceived L2 communication competence have been linked through Clement's (1980, as cited in MacIntyre et al., 2002) model of linguistic self-confidence.

Furthermore, MacIntyre, Noels and Clement (1997, as cited in MacIntyre et al., 2002) point out that anxiety can influence the perceived L2 communication competence. Individuals, who have higher levels of communication anxiety, tend to underestimate their communication competence. Anxiety lowers individuals' self-confidence and, even if their communication competence is relatively high, they are unwilling to use their L2 for communication. On the contrary, there are students who have minimal linguistic knowledge, but they are communicating in L2 whenever possible. That is because they are not anxious about communication in L2 or their level of anxiety is relatively low which positively affects their perceived communication competence and augments their self-confidence. That proves that "the effect of one's perceived competence can override one's actual competence in communication situations, especially when it comes to the initiation of communication (WTC)" (MacIntyre et al. 2002: 540).

Anxiety and perceived communication competence are variables that contribute to WTC, and the relation between them is complex and may vary over time, across situations, and among languages. In their research MacIntyre and Charos (1996) discovered that among beginner adult learners L2 perceived competence was more strongly related to L2 WTC than language anxiety. Results from another research conducted by MacIntyre and Baker (2000) indicate that perceived competence and L2 WTC were strongly correlated among less advanced high school language learners, whereas language anxiety was a better predicator of L2 WTC among learners of similar age with more L2 experience. Therefore, MacIntyre et al. (2002) argue that, when exploring relationships between variables that are affecting L2 communication behavior, it is important to take into consideration the learners' experience and engagement with the target language.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed a conceptual scheme underlying situation-specific L2 WTC, which demonstrates that motivation contributes substantially to setting the conditions in which L2 communication becomes possible, but effects of motivation on authentic L2 communication are likely to be channeled through variables such as perceived communication competence and language anxiety as they arise in context. "Voluntarily initiating a L2 conversation with a native speaker or a more competent fellow student can be an informal language acquisition context if learners are willing to talk in order to learn" (MacIntyre et al., 2002: 542). The avoidance of communication, because of immediate anxiety arousal seems to surpass the impact of language learning motivation. Therefore, the relation between motivation and L2 WTC will probably be indirect (MacIntyre et al., 2002).

The last study along this research line was conducted by MacIntyre, Baker, Clement and Donovan (2003). They explored the effect of prior immersion experience on the relationships between WTC, anxiety, perceived competence, and frequency of communication in French. 27 students with and 39 students without immersion experience participated in this research. Students with immersion experience possessed increased WTC and they communicated more often in French.

The described studies conducted by MacIntyre et al. (2000, 2002, 2003) clearly demonstrate that immersion program has positive outcomes, such as higher frequency of L2 use and higher levels of WTC. They support MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) pyramid model partially. Anxiety and perceived communication competence are variables associated with L2 WTC, but here the experience factor is very important, because it affects the relationship between anxiety, perceived competence, and WTC. Anxiety is found to be the better predictor of L2 WTC among the more experienced students, whereas communication competence is found to be the better predictor of L2 WTC among less experienced students (Simic & Tanaka, 2008).

Cao (2006, as cited in Simic and Tanaka, 2008) conducted a qualitative study which examined the two characteristics of L2 WTC: the trait-like and situational-like WTC. The results have shown a gap between state and trait WTC. Trait-like WTC was measured by self-report study and could predict a tendency to communicate, but classroom observation of situational WTC, and interviews with individual students stressed actual behavior of students and the effect of contextual factors on the decision to engage in communication with other students. Factors that were perceived by students to affect WTC behavior in class were: group size, familiarity with interlocutor(s), familiarity with topics under discussion, interlocutors' participation, self-confidence, medium of communication, and cultural background.

In another qualitative study, that was carried out by Compton (2007), the effects of content and context of the international teaching assistants at U.S. university, and their participation in the classroom, were investigated. The pyramid model was used to examine the different factors that affect this research context. The results indicated that L2 perceived confidence increases L2 WTC. Additional important variables influencing the participant's L2 WTC, which were not covered under the pyramid model, were discovered, and these are: shared topical knowledge that has an effect when it comes to content and international posture, and cultural factors that have an effect when it comes to context.

These qualitative studies in L2 context, as well as the studies in immersion context, approach the WTC concept from a situational point of view, and they support the pyramid model only partially. Furthermore, in qualitative studies on foreign students, other factors, which were not included in the pyramid model, like shared topical knowledge and international posture, were affecting the L2 WTC significantly. Additionally, in the immersion context the experience in L2 was found to have a strong influence on anxiety and perceived competence, which, in turn, affect the L2 WTC. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the target language context MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) model does not completely explain the nature of WTC. These studies also suggest that the WTC variable in the target language context is more state-like than trait-like, and that it varies and changes across different contexts and receivers, but also with experience (Simic & Tanaka, 2008).

2.4. Importance of WTC in Communication

WTC is very important for individual's well being and happiness, because individuals who communicate more are usually better accepted and appreciated in different contexts. Reduced WTC results in "an individual being less effective in communication and generating negative perceptions of him or herself in the minds of others involved in the communication" (McCroskey and Richmond, 1990: 32). Interpersonal communication occurs within three general environments: school environment, organizational environment and social environment (McCroskey and Richmond, 1990).

In the school environment students who posses high WTC have more advantages and teachers have positive expectations from such students, whereas from students who are less willing to communicate they have negative expectations. Furthermore, student achievement is in accordance with these positive expectations, in spite of the fact that intellectual ability has not been found to be related with communication orientations. Additionally, students who are less

willing to communicate are negatively perceived by their peers. Such negative perceptions have been present all the way from the lower elementary level through graduate school. Students who are willing to communicate have more friends and are more satisfied with their school experience and themselves, because of that they are more likely to remain in school and graduate than those who are less willing to communicate (McCroskey and Richmond, 1990).

In the organizational environment people who are willing to communicate have higher chances to get the job, and to be promoted to the positions of importance in the organization. People who are less willing to communicate usually occupy positions of lower importance in the organization, and so they insure themselves lower social status and lower economic standing. People who have high levels of WTC are more satisfied with their job, and will probably stay in an organization. People who are less willing to communicate tend to provoke negative perceptions about themselves in the minds of their co-workers, because of that they are usually considered to be incompetent for responsible roles within an organization, and rejected for leadership positions (McCroskey and Richmond, 1990).

On the social level, people who are more willing to communicate have more friends, which means, that they are not lonely. They are likely to have more dates than people who are less willing to communicate, and to marry immediately after they complete their education. People who are highly willing to communicate are happier, and are more open towards other persons, which automatically makes them socially and physically attractive by others (McCroskey and Richmond, 1990).

People who possess higher levels of WTC are more likely to be satisfied with themselves, with their school achievement, job, social life, which, in turn, makes them more self-confident, successful, and enables them to live a happy and fulfilled life. On the contrary, people who are less willing to communicate are likely to be less confident and less satisfied with themselves, which, in turn, makes them less appreciated by others, which supports the claim from Simic and Tanaka (2008: 71) that “having a low WTC refers to communicational dysfunction that can diminish one’s social and emotional happiness.”

3. Oral Language Proficiency (OLP)

3.1. Defining Oral Language Proficiency

Oral proficiency is a very complex construct that is affected by many factors, including cognitive, affective, demographic, personality, social, and many others. Therefore, it is not unusual that some students excel in learning a foreign language, whereas many students do not succeed in achieving the desired level of oral proficiency (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2001).

Proficient speakers are considered to be fluent, good, competent, bilingual, and knowledgeable. The term *oral proficiency* can be used and interpreted differently from researcher to researcher, because there are many factors contributing to foreign language proficiency. Therefore, in order to create a baseline view of the various interactions among traits, researchers focused on four key traits of oral proficiency: syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy, lexical diversity and fluency (Iwashita, 2010).

The first trait is the *syntactic complexity.* Many studies have investigated syntactic complexity through analyzing speech samples, and various measures have been used to examine syntactic complexity in learner language. Also, various definitions of syntactic complexity have been offered, but the most appropriate definition is given by Ortega (2003: 492 as cited in Iwashita, 2010: 34) who defined syntactic complexity as "the range of forms that surface in language production and the degree of sophistication in such forms." Measures used for examining syntactic complexity include length of production unit, amount of embedding, subordination and coordination, range of structural types, and structural sophistication (Iwashita, 2010).

Lexical diversity refers to lexical richness, and it is an important indicator of language learners' active vocabulary and how it is used. The usually used measure for it is the Type-Token Ratio (TTR), whose measurements are based on a comparison between the number of different words (types) and the total number of words (tokens). Despite the widespread use of this measure, a question has been raised as to whether it really measures lexical richness. TTR is a function of sample size, which means that larger samples of words will produce lower TTR than small samples, and even commonly used measures derived from TTR, which are considered to be independent of sample size, are problematic (Malvern and Richards, 2002). In order to overcome this problem, Malvern and Richards (2002) developed a new measure of vocabulary diversity, D, which was based on mathematical modeling how new words were introduced into

larger and larger language samples. The authors have also created software (*vocd*) that was used for calculating the lexical diversity, D.

Grammatical accuracy can refer to global accuracy and specific type of errors. In the global accuracy approach any and all types of errors are identified, because of that it has the potential to be the most comprehensive approach. Specific type of errors approach identifies only specific errors and it is more precise and less inclusive of all possible features related to accuracy found in learner discourse (Iwashita, 2010).

The last trait of oral proficiency is *fluency*. The definition of fluency varies widely, because it depends on the researcher. It can include the temporal features of the speech, e.g. words or syllables spoken per minute, and the length or number of pauses, and the automaticity of language use, e.g. the extent to which learners are able to produce a second language without attending to rules of the L2 grammar. When assessing fluency of different languages, the cross-linguistic differences need to be taken into consideration, because stress-timed languages, such as English, differ from syllable-timed languages, such as Japanese and Spanish (Iwashita, 2010).

3.2. Developing Oral Language Proficiency

Genesee et al. (2006: 14) point out that developing proficiency in English oral language involves "acquiring vocabulary, gaining control over grammar, and developing an understanding of the subtle semantics of English." It also includes learning how to use language for successful oral interactions with others speakers of that language. Furthermore, oral interactions cannot be classified in one category, because they can differ from exchanging simple greetings to initiating and sustaining conversations to discussing collaborative tasks to giving or receiving directions to telling or listening to stories to giving or understanding lectures. Therefore, the development of English oral language has a fundamental importance in the education of English language learners (ELLs) (Genesee et al., 2006).

Although there is no controversy about the fundamental importance of English oral language development in both theory and practice, only a small number of studies on oral language development in English language learners can be found. Genesee et al. (2006) have collected several studies that explored that theme. They have thoroughly reviewed and analyzed them in order to obtain information about some of the major characteristics of English oral language development.

According to Genesee et al. (2006) two domains that are important for L2 oral language development are question formation and vocabulary. The acquisition of question formation is

similar to that observed among monolingual English-speaking children. Moreover, more proficient ELLs have shown a wider repertoire of question forms, but even less proficient ELLs demonstrate some command over English question forms and show considerable growth over six months to one year period. A study by Lindholm (1987) supports these statements.

Lindholm (1987) conducted an analysis of natural language samples from young fluent and limited English proficient (LEP) Spanish speakers. She found that sophistication in ELLs' questions increases over one-year period, and that students with limited oral proficiency also use question forms. Furthermore, she noticed significant differences in the kinds of questions used by limited and fluent English proficient students. These differences indicate that the increase in ELLs' proficiency also increases their use of more sophisticated question types.

Studies on vocabulary development show that higher proficiency leads to the ELLs' greater capacity to define words. Initially, ELLs tend to define words through simple associations, termed *informal definitions*. For example, *My aunt has one and it's all furry and has a long tail* would be an informal definition of a cat. After the students reach a higher level of proficiency, they define words through explication, termed *formal definitions*. In this case a cat would be defined as a *domesticated mammal which is related to the lion* (Genesee et al., 2006).

The research by Snow et al. (1987, as cited in Genesee et al., 2006) is the source that is relevant to the examples of vocabulary development listed previously. The authors attempted to operationalize and examine empirically the nature of oral language use for academic purposes. In order to obtain results, Snow and her colleagues were asking students what relatively common words mean. Their definitions were marked as formal or informal, and rated for quality. The most effective responses, or high quality formal definitions, included more sophisticated vocabulary and syntax, did not presume shared knowledge with the interlocutor, and did not attempt to elicit interactive support from the interlocutor. These three elements are, according to Snow and her colleagues, main characteristics of a language that is appropriate for academic use. Furthermore, the authors found among middle-class second through fifth graders a significant correlation between L2 proficiency and the quality of students' formal definitions, which strength increased over grades.

ELLs develop their oral language proficiency gradually during their education. Genesee et al. (2006) have analyzed studies on rates of oral language development. The authors found that ELLs usually require several years to develop oral English proficiency, and that they tend to make more rapid progress from lower to middle levels of proficiency (from level 1 trough 3),

and slower progress as they move beyond level 3. In addition, they noticed that rates of L2 oral language progress are strikingly consistent.

Genesee et al. (2006) point out that ELLs' language use during interactive classroom activities is also one of the factors that could affect the oral language development. Several studies have shown that ELLs use more English when talking with their peers in classes where teachers tended to use more English throughout instruction. The increased use of L2 in classroom is usually associated with the development of oral language proficiency. Some studies support this statement, and some do not.

Johnson (1983) analyzed oral outcomes associated with L2 use and did not find statistically significant correlations between individual students' L2 use and their gains in L2 proficiency. In contrast, among pre-school ELLs and over a longer duration of time Chesterfield et al. (1983, as cited in Genesee et al., 2006) discovered significant correlations between increased L2 use and increased L2 oral proficiency. Results suggest that among less proficient students, gains in L2 proficiency correlated significantly with increased interactions with the teacher. Among more proficient ELLs, gains in oral proficiency correlated significantly with increased interactions with peers. Saville-Troike (1984) found significant correlations between English use and oral proficiency among nineteen ELLs in primary school (grades 2-6). The year of the study represented the first year of L2 exposure for all nineteen ELLs. The results displayed a significant correlation between the ELLs' overall L2 use and their end of year language proficiency rankings.

The most frequently documented non-school factor that influences oral language development positively is language use outside of school, especially at home with family members and also among peers. The study by Pease-Alvarez (1993) confirms this claim. Pease-Alvarez (1993) collected self-reports on immigration history and language use from the parents of fifty-five ELLs of Mexican origin. Four groups were formed ranging from *child and parents born in Mexico and speak mostly Spanish in the home* (Group 1) to *child and at least one parent born in USA and speak mostly English in the home* (Group 4). Oral English proficiency results correlated positively with immigration history and home language use. The results also indicated that oral English proficiency was increasing successively from group 1 to group 4.

Although Pease-Alvarez's (1993) research, as well as several other studies, indicates a positive correlation between L2 use outside school and oral language proficiency, Genesee et al. (2006) argue that at least three elements need to be taken into account when discussing the relationship between these two factors. First, although the L2 oral development is likely to be

positively affected by the L2 use outside of school, it is not necessarily impeded by continued development and use of L1. Second, English use outside of school may be less critical than English use in school. Finally, L1 and English use in the home are interrelated and the impact of that relationship on L1 and English proficiency is likely mediated by socio-cultural factors. While the L2 use in the home has a positive influence on the development of L2 oral language, the use of the L2 at school probably plays a more critical role in supporting higher levels of language development.

Iwashita (2010) has conducted in-depth analyses of the four traits of oral proficiency of learners of English and Japanese as a foreign language, and how these traits affect the oral language proficiency. The sample consisted of 72 learners of EFL (in Japan) and JEF (in the US) at two levels of proficiency (high and low level), and data were drawn from their oral performances. The results of the EFLs have shown that some features of lexical diversity and fluency affected proficiency level, which could be seen in some features of task performance, but no measures of syntactic complexity showed any proficiency effect. Lower proficiency EFLs produced more speech and significantly fewer pauses than higher proficiency students. The results of the JFLs have displayed that most features of oral proficiency showed a proficiency effect. The higher proficiency JFLs produced significantly faster and more complex speech with a wider variety of words, but their speech was not more accurate than that of the lower proficiency JFLs. Furthermore, the frequency of their pauses was the same as that of the lower proficiency JFLs.

The following two studies by Kimura (2000) and Medvedeva (2007) examined the relationship between several individual factors and oral proficiency. In her research Kimura (2000) investigated the influence of the two affective factors anxiety and high self-esteem with the related strategy of risk-taking on the oral proficiency. These affective factors are discussed based on the self-report data collected in the two communicative speaking tasks. Self-esteem can be defined as "a self-judgment of worth or value, based on a feeling of efficacy – a sense of interacting effectively with one's environment" (Kimura, 2000: 6). Language anxiety is the opposite of high self-esteem and willingness to take risks, and can be defined as excessive worry, frustration, helplessness, insecurity, fear and physical symptoms felt in the language learning (Kimura, 2000).

The sample was divided into three groups: low proficiency or less successful learners, middle proficiency learners, and high proficiency or successful learners. The students were asked to answer five questions in English about themselves and their families. All answers were

recorded for evaluation. The students were graded in three categories: 1. Responsiveness, organization, length, 2. Fluency, intonation, pronunciation, rhythm, 3. Vocabulary, grammar, word usage. The results of this study have shown that successful learners do not necessarily have higher self-esteem than the less successful learners. Furthermore, successful learners have shown as much anxiety as the less successful learners in the speaking tasks, but they have been more willing to take risks wisely than the less proficient students (Kimura, 2000).

Medvedeva (2007) investigated the effect of self-esteem, importance of ethnic identity, consonant context of assimilation[2], and perceived discrimination on oral proficiency in English and non-English languages, and on a probability of change in oral proficiency among children of immigrants in the United States. The results indicated that the ethnic identity has a positive effect on oral proficiency in English and non-English languages, and on the probability of a positive change in oral language skills. Self-esteem exerts positive influence on the probability of being proficient in English and non-English languages, but it does not have effect on the change in language skills. Furthermore consonant context of assimilation has a negative impact on English oral proficiency and its change, but it does not affect non-English language proficiency. Perceived discrimination affects the probability of being proficient in non-English language negatively, but it does not influence language skills in two languages and their change in the long term.

3.3. Assessment of Oral Language Proficiency

Speaking is the most frequently used skill, and it is an important part of language teaching and learning. Therefore, it is a significant object of assessment as well. Assessing speaking is quite challenging, because there are many factors that can affect our impression of persons' speaking abilities, and because we hope for the test results to be just, accurate and appropriate (Luoma, 2004). Also, there are many components of speaking that need to be taken into consideration when assessing oral proficiency, like grammar, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, and others.

[2] Consonant context of assimilation: "When children and their parents agree about their ways of lives – we call it a consonant context of assimilation - children are more likely to choose a selective assimilation path associated with bilingualism and gradual integration into American society. These children are likely to succeed academically and socially, to maintain and preserve their non-English language and ethnicity, and are likely to have higher self-esteem" (Medvedeva, 2007: 7).

Speaking scores, which usually take the form of numbers, are indicators of how well the examinees can speak the language that is being tested. Additionally, there is usually a shorter statement that describes what each score means, and a number of statements from lowest to highest create a rating scale for speaking. Scales are difficult to write because of the lack of solid evidence about language learning, and because of the need to invent descriptors that are in form of short, clear statements that can be easy understood and used (Luoma, 2004). Nevertheless, several rating scales that are used by examination boards are published.

According to Luoma (2004) there are three different types of scales: 1. Rater-oriented scales that should help raters make consistent decisions, 2. Examinee-oriented scales that give information about overall level and particular strengths and weaknesses, 3. Administrator-oriented scales that give overall information in a concise form. Holistic scales display an overall impression of an examinee's competence in one score. They are practical for decision making and flexible, because they allow different combinations of strengths and weaknesses within a level. An example of a holistic scale, which is used by raters and score users, is the Speaking scale designed by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). It has ten levels which focus on the beginning and intermediate stages of language learning. The level descriptors describe the situations that the learners can successfully cope with, activities they are able to do, strong and weak points of their language. This speaking scale is used in foreign language programs in North American academia, especially in colleges and universities (Luoma, 2004).

Analytic scales usually consist of 3-5 criteria, each of which has descriptors at the different levels of the scale. The advantages of analytic scales are: they provide a detailed guidance for the raters, and rich information on specific strengths and weaknesses in examinee performances. The Test of Spoken English (TSE) scale is a combination of holistic and analytic rating scales. It has five levels. There are three versions of this scale: the administrator-oriented scale that describes communication ability in one sentence per level, the examinee-oriented scale which is upgraded by four additional statements per level that describe the examinee's functional, sociolinguistic, discourse, and linguistic competence, and rater-oriented scale that contains descriptions of what the examinee's language is like at the different bands (Luoma, 2004).

The Council of Europe developed the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2001) that describes what language learners have to learn, in order to be able to use a language for communication, and what knowledge and skills they have to develop, in order to act

efficiently. It is designed to help learners, teachers and assessors to set adequate goals for language learning and to support them in reaching those goals. CEFR includes different proficiency levels, and these are Basic User (A1 is *Breakthrough* and A2 is *Waystage*), Independent User (B1 is *Threshold* and B2 is *Vantage*), and Proficient User (C1 is *Effective Operational Proficiency* and C2 is *Mastery*). A1 is the lowest level, whereas C2 is the highest level of language proficiency. Furthermore, it contains scales that display proficiency levels for all aspects of the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). The scales include descriptors of language ability which are concrete, clear, context-free, and practical statements of what learners should be able to do at each of the six levels.

According to CEFR (2001) the aspect of speaking consists of spoken interaction and spoken production as demonstrated in the Common Reference Levels self-assessment grid (see Table 1).

Table 1: Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid (CEFR, 2001: 26)

	SPEAKING	
	Spoken Interaction	Spoken Production
C2	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skillfully to those of other speakers.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
B1	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest, or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes, and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.

A2	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or more recent job.
A1	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.

The self-assessment grid (Table 1) is a draft for a self-assessment orientation tool based on the six levels. It also covers the aspect of understanding, which consists of listening and speaking, and the aspect of writing, but since these aspects are not relevant to the theme of this diploma paper, the Table 1 presents only the aspect of speaking. The descriptors for the spoken interaction and spoken production are in form of *can do* statements, which describe the students' language proficiency at each of the six levels.

As can be seen from Table 1, students at the A1 level can interact in a simple way and use simple phrases. Their oral language proficiency becomes stronger through levels, so students at the B2 level are fluent enough to interact with native speakers without any significant difficulties, and to present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest. Students at the C2 level can participate effortlessly in any conversation or discussion, and present clear description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure. This grid shows the development of students' oral language proficiency through the six levels, and it helps them to self-assess themselves and decide to which level of oral proficiency they belong.

The scale of qualitative aspects of spoken language use (see Table 2) is used to assess spoken performances.

Table 2: Common Reference Levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language use (CEFR, 2001: 28)

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C1	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in different linguistic forms to convey finer	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in	Can express himself/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonation cues apparently	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of

	shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	monitoring other's reactions).	backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it	effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turntaking, referencing, allusion making, etc.	a variety of organizational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.
C2	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional, or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy: errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him7herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skillfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structures speech, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connections and cohesive devices.
B2+					
B2	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground conforming comprehension, inviting others, etc.	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution.
B1+					
B1	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, esp. in longer stretches of free production.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.

	interest, work, travel, and current events.			confirm mutual understanding.	
A2+					
A2	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorizes phrases, groups of few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are evident.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can link groups of words with simple connections like "and", "but" and "because".
A1	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorized repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly prepackaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way, but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like "and" or "then".

In the scale of qualitative aspects of spoken language use (Table 2), there are five aspects of the speaking skill, and these are range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence. Range concerns reformulating ideas in different linguistic forms to convey shades of meaning. Accuracy refers to grammatical control of language. Fluency represents natural flow, spontaneity, and tempo of speaking. Interaction is connected with the easiness or difficulty, which occur when communicating with others. Coherence refers to organizational patterns and connectors. Since it has five criteria, each of which has descriptors at the different levels of the scale, it is obvious that this is an analytic scale, and given that it describes what the examinees actually do, it is also a behavioral rating scale. The descriptors have been written for more general purposes, and not for specific ones. Therefore, they can be modified, and used as a basis for creating test-specific criteria. Scaled descriptors encompass aspects of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence (CEFR, 2001).

Croatian National Curriculum for Primary School (2006) is a document that defines knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by pupils at different levels. English as a foreign language has been used in numerous countries, it has been present throughout various cultures,

and today it is a main language used for communication in the whole word. Therefore, acquiring English language is very important. The goal of English learning, even in the primary school, is the development of communication competence in order to prepare students for the international labour market.

Croatian National Curriculum for Primary School (2006) offers a list of expectations of what the pupils should be able to do at different levels/in different grades. The speaking skill consists of spoken interaction and spoken production. This division of the speaking skill in two areas is the same as in CEFR (2001). In the first grade, it is expected from pupils to be able to give simple answers to simple questions about familiar topics. The second graders should be able to name and briefly describe objects, persons, and actions. In the third grade pupils should be able to present independently the results of a group work. Fourth grade is marked by even more independent speaking. For example, pupils should be able to have short dialogues about familiar topics. In the fifth grade students should be able to produce short dialogues, in which they change different elements. The expectations of pupils' speaking skills get even higher in the sixth grade, because they should be able to summarize a sequence of events by using only visual help (usually pictures). The seven graders should be able to give directions in order to help a person to find a particular place. In the final (eight) grade of primary school pupils' speaking skills are relatively strong, and they are able to reproduce learned language contents precisely and without any help.

The expectations of what pupils should be able to do grow throughout the grades, and as the grades are higher, the expectations are more focused on the independent and accurate use of oral language. These expectations of pupils' speaking abilities at different levels are similar to the descriptors at the different levels of the scale of qualitative aspects of spoken language use (see Table 2) which is used to assess spoken performances.

4. Empirical Research

4.1. Aim

The global aim of this research was to explore the relationship between willingness to communicate in class, perceived communication competence, and oral proficiency in English as a foreign language.

4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. Sample

The research was conducted in the Primary School Grigor Vitez in Osijek. The sample consisted of 38 learners of English as a foreign language. Table 3 summarizes the demographic data.

Table 3: Demographic data

	Frequency	Percent
M	21	55.3
F	17	44.7
Total	38	100.0

As can be seen from Table 3, the sample included 21 (55.3%) boys and 17 (44.7%) girls. All of the students were in the 7th grade, and have been learning English for seven years.

Most of the students were very good learners of English. Table 4 displays students' last year's final English course grades.

Table 4: Last year's final English course grades

	Frequency	Percent
Sufficient	9	23.7
Good	11	28.9
Very good	12	31.6
Excellent	6	15.8
Total	38	100.0

Table 4 shows that twelve students (31.6%) had a very good grade in English at the end of the last year. Eleven students (28.9%) had a good grade in English. Nine students (23.7%) finished their English course with a sufficient and 6 students (15.8%) with an excellent grade.

The students' oral English language skills are between sufficient and good. Student's oral proficiency grades are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Oral proficiency grades

	Frequency	Percent
Fail	2	5.3
Sufficient	10	26.3
Good	11	28.9
Very good	8	21.1
Excellent	7	18.4
Total	38	100.0

The number of students who have good and sufficient oral proficiency is almost the same; 11 students (28.9%) have good oral proficiency, and 10 students (26.3%) have sufficient oral proficiency. There are 8 students (21.1%) who have very good oral proficiency, and 7 students (18.4%) who possess excellent oral proficiency. There are also two students (5.3%) with insufficient oral English language skills.

Table 6 presents a descriptive statistics for students' last year's final English course grades, oral proficiency grades (OP grades), and grades which they have given themselves for their communication competence in English language (students' self-evaluation of communication competence).

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for last year's final English course grades, OP grades and students' self-evaluation of communication competence

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Last year's final English course grades	2.00	5.00	3.39	1.02
Oral proficiency grades	1.00	5.00	3.21	1.18
Students' self-evaluation of communication competence	1.00	5.00	3.47	1.08

Table 6 gives us an overview of the mean values of the three mentioned variables. As can be seen, students' self-evaluation of their communication competence has the highest mean value (3.47), which is followed by the mean value of students' last year's final English course grades (3.39). In the third place are oral proficiency grades with the lowest mean value of 3.21.

4.2.2. Instruments

Willingness to communicate in class was measured by means of the questionnaire that was created by Mihaljevic Djigunović and Stela Letica (2009). The questionnaire is in Croatian, and consists of twelve statements, which include students' feelings about English language learning, speaking in class, and communicating with other students and teacher. It also contains a five points Likert scale, in which number 1 stands for *It absolutely applies to me,* and number 5 represents *It absolutely does not apply to me*. The students had to express the extent to which each of the statements applies to them by circling one number from 1 to 5.

Perceived communication competence was measured by a self-evaluation questionnaire, which was also in Croatian. It consists of twelve statements about spoken interaction (levels A1 and A2), which include students' evaluations of what they are able to do when participating in an English conversation. The statements are taken from the European Language Portfolio for Learners aged 11 to 15 in Republic of Croatia (2006). The thirteenth statement in this questionnaire is actually a question *Which grade would you give yourself for your communication competence in English language?*, which the students have to answer by circling the grade, which, according to their opinion, best describes their communication competence.

This second questionnaire also contains a five point Likert scale, in which, for the first twelve statements, number 1 represents *It absolutely applies to me,* and number 5 means *It absolutely does not apply to me*. The evaluation scale is different for the question, where numbers in the scale represent grades. Therefore number 1 stands for *insufficient grade* or *fail*, number 2 for *sufficient*, number 3 for *good*, number 4 for *very good* and number 5 for *excellent*.

In the introductory part of both questionnaires students had to circle their gender, to write down their last year's final English course grade and their ID number, so that the researcher could extract their oral proficiency grades from the register (see 4.2.3.).

4.2.3. Oral Proficiency Levels

After the students have filled in the questionnaires, their grades in oral expression in English were extracted from the register and copied onto their questionnaires. Various speaking aspects were graded, e.g. pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, accuracy, message, overall

comprehensibility and topic. Therefore, average values of these grades were calculated. Since these values were decimal numbers, they needed to be categorized according to the Croatian grading system, in which the highest grade is 5 (excellent), and the lowest is 1 (insufficient, fail). Final oral proficiency grades were obtained according to the following criterion: grade 1 ≤ 1.4, grade 2 = 1.5 to 2.4, grade 3 = 2.5 to 3.4, grade 4 = 3.5 to 4.4, and grade 5 ≥ 4.5. These grades are used as a measure of oral language proficiency (see Table 5).

4.2.4. Procedure

The two questionnaires were administrated as a single test battery during students' regular English classes by the author of this diploma paper. After entering the classroom, the author introduced herself and informed the students about the aim and the nature of the study. Then she explained both of the questionnaires, and the meaning of numbers from 1 to 5 in the Likert scale. After that, she drew students' attention to the question in the self-evaluation questionnaire, and explained that in that case numbers from 1 to 5 represent grades that are in accordance with the Croatian grading system. Finally, she distributed the questionnaires to students, and it took them approximately ten minutes to complete both questionnaires.

As has already been described, students' grades from the grading element called oral expression in English language were collected, and their average values were used as a measure of their oral language proficiency.

The data was analyzed by using the program SPSS Statistics 20 for Windows. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data, e.g. to present the mean values of students' final English grades, oral proficiency grades, and students' self-evaluation of communication competence, as well as to describe the data of willingness to communicate in class and perceived communication competence. Correlation analyses were used to explore the relationships between willingness to communicate in class, perceived communication competence, and oral language proficiency.

4.3. Results

4.3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics for willingness to communicate (WTC) and perceived communication competence (PCC).

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for WTC and PCC

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WTC total	2.08	3.75	2.78	.43
PCC total	2.25	5.00	4.19	.68

As can be seen from Table 7, willingness to communicate in English language is quite moderate with its mean value of 2.78, whereas perceived communication competence is high. Its mean value of 4.19 is even higher than the mean value of students' self-evaluation of communication competence, which is 3.47 (see Table 6).

4.3.2. Correlation Analyses

The relationship between willingness to communicate, oral language proficiency, and perceived communication competence was explored by correlation analyses (Paerson product-moment). Two variables, also included in analyses, were students' last year's final English grades and students' self-evaluation of communication competence. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Correlation between WTC, OLP and PCC

	Last year's final English course grades	Oral proficiency grades	Students' self-evaluation of communication competence	PCC total
WTC total	.127	.364*	.361*	.248
PCC total	.474**	.538**	.599**	

As can be seen from Table 8 there is a large significant correlation between oral proficiency and perceived communication competence (.538), and between students' self-

evaluation of communication competence and perceived communication competence (.599). These large correlations suggest quite strong relationships between the mentioned variables.

There is a medium significant correlation between last year's final English course grades and perceived communication competence (.474), and between oral proficiency and willingness to communicate (.364), as well as between students' self-evaluation of communication competence and willingness to communicate (.361). All of the paerson correlation coefficients are positive, which indicates that these variables affect each other positively. That means, if the value of one variable is rising, the value of other variable is rising too. For example, higher oral proficiency grade will be followed by greater perceived communication competence, and vice versa.

No correlations between final English grades and willingness to communicate, as well as between perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate have been found.

4.4. Discussion

The results of the data analysis show that students' perceived communication competence is very high (4.19), which means that they consider themselves to be competent speakers who can interact with the teacher or other students without greater difficulties. This is also supported by students' self-evaluation of communication competence, i.e. by grades that students have given themselves for communication competence (3.47). Although they have high perceived communication competence, the 7^{th} graders' willingness to communicate is quite moderate (2.78), which means, that, although they see themselves as good speakers, who can interact with others effectively, the positive perceptions of their own speaking skills are not significant predictors of their willingness to start or participate in a conversation.

The main aim of this research is to explore possible relationships between willingness to communicate, perceived communication competence, and oral language proficiency. Two variables that are added to the correlation analyses are students' last year's final English grades and students' self-evaluation of communication competence. Significant positive correlation is found between students' last year's English final grades and their perceived communication competence (.474), which means that better students are probably more confident about their speaking skills, and consider themselves to be able to interact with others in an effective way. These students are likely to have greater perceived communication competence, than students with lower final English course grades.

Students' self-evaluation of communication competence correlates positively with willingness to communicate (.361), which means that the greater the willingness to communicate the higher the grades students give themselves for their communication competence. Students with greater willingness to communicate feel comfortable while speaking in class, they do not panic when having to speak without any preparation, and they like to communicate with their teacher and their classmates about familiar topics during their English classes. That all contributes to their perception of their own speaking skills, augments their speaker self-confidence, and therefore they assess themselves with high grades for their communication competence in English language.

A strong relationship between students' self-evaluation of communication competence and their perceived communication competence has been found (.599). That means, that the greater the perceived communication competence the higher the grades students give themselves for their communication competence. The existence of a strong correlation between these two variables was expected, because it is logical that students who perceive themselves as competent speakers, who are able to talk with others about familiar topics, express their opinion about familiar matters, talk about past events, ask simple questions and give simple answers, and participate in a conversation with their classmates and teacher, would give themselves high grades for their communication competence.

There is a statistically significant correlation between oral proficiency and perceived communication competence (.538). Students with greater oral proficiency have high grades in oral expression in English, which means that they are good, competent, and relatively fluent speakers of English language. Therefore, they are able to interact with others without any greater difficulty, they do not feel uncomfortable when speaking in class, and they can convey the meaning and express their opinion. In education, knowledge is measured by grades, and better grades are an indicator of greater knowledge. According to that, higher oral proficiency grades reflect greater speaking skills, so it can be expected that students with greater oral proficiency will probably have higher perceived communication competence, because their good grades are giving them self-confidence, which positively affects their perception of their speaking skills.

Willingness to communicate in class correlates positively with oral proficiency (.364). This means that students who have high level of willingness to communicate in class are likely to have high oral proficiency in English as a foreign language. In other words, students who are not anxious when it comes to speaking without preparation, who like to communicate in English with other students and their teacher, who speak English without worrying about simple rules,

who are not afraid of using more complex grammatical structures, who feel comfortable when speaking in front of others, and who do not avoid participation in a conversation about more complicated themes will probably speak English fluently, with grammatical accuracy and a lot of lexical diversity.

Teachers should be aware of their students' willingness to communicate in class, which can be affected by various factors, and consider these factors when evaluating their students' knowledge. Furthermore, students should be evaluated and graded in many different ways and classroom situations by using adequate criteria, so that all students have the possibility to express themselves in ways that suit them best.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore the relationship between willingness to communicate, perceived communication competence, and oral language proficiency. The results of the study indicate that there is not a statistically significant correlation between perceived communication competence and willingness to communicate. This is somewhat contrary to the results of several other studies (Yashima, 2002, Yashima et al., 2004, Hashimoto, 2002, MacIntyre and Charos, 1996, MacIntyre et al., 2002, Baker and MacIntyre, 2001) which have discovered significant correlations between these two variables.

Furthermore, it has been found that students who possess high levels of oral proficiency are likely to have greater perceived communication competence. That means that students with good grades in oral language expression will probably be more competent speakers, who participate in classroom conversations more regularly, and are not anxious when it comes to speaking in front of their classmates, which, in turn, makes them more confident about their speaking skills, and we can expect them to have greater perceived communication competence.

Statistically significant positive correlation has been found between willingness to communicate in class and oral proficiency. Students with high levels of willingness to communicate do not have problems to talk in front of their classmates, and they will probably easily share their ideas, give good arguments while participating in discussions, and feel comfortable during the speaking tasks in class. These students also usually have high oral language proficiency levels. Students who are not willing to talk in classroom are likely to have low oral proficiency.

However, this study has limitation in the sense that the sample is relatively small (only 38 students) and the subjects are only 7^{th} graders. Future research should include more subjects and different grades, e.g. grade 6, grade 7, and grade 8. Also, other important variables, like speaking apprehension, motivation, and gender should be added to the existing variables and explored. Future research should also investigate casual connections between the variables, not just confirm their interrelationship, but discover how and why some factors influence the other ones. It is important to find out new information about how and which factors to change in order to improve language learning and provide our learners with the chance to develop their willingness to communicate to the maximum, because, as MacIntyre et al. (1998) have stated, willingness to communicate should be one of the main aims of foreign language learning.

Literature

Compton, L. (2007) The Impact of Content and Context on International Teaching Assistants' Willingness to Communicate in the Language Classroom. *TESL-EJ* 10 (4). Available at: http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume10/ej40/ej40a2/ (visited on 17th July 2013).

Council of Europe (2001) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_en.pdf (visited on 15th June 2013).

Council of Europe (2006) *Europski jezični portfolio: Za učenike i učenice od 11 do 15 godina u Republici Hrvatskoj*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.

Dörnyei, Z. (2005) *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Dörnyei, Z. (2006) Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition. *AILA Rewiev* 19, 42-68.

Ellis, R. (1997) *Second Language Acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Genesee, F., Lindholm – Leary, K., Saunders, W. M., and Cristian, D. (2006) *Educating English Language Learners.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hashimoto, Y. (2002) Motivation and Willingness to Communicate as Predictors of Reported L2 Use: The Japanese Context. *Second Language Studies* 20 (2), 29-70.

Iwashita, N. (2010) Features of Oral Proficiency in Task Performance by EFL and JFL Learners. In Prior, M.T., Watanabe, Y. (eds.) (2008) *Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Second Language Research Forum*. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 32-47.

Johnson, D.M. (1983) Natural Language Learning by Design: A Classroom Experiment in Social Interaction and Second Language Acquisition. *TESOL QUARTERLY* 7 (1), 56-69.

Kang, S. (2005) Dynamic Emergence of Situational Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language. *Science Direct* 33, 277-292.

Kimura, M. (2000) Affective Factors of Japanese EFL Learners at Junior College in the Oral Communication Tasks. *The Society of English Studies*, 5 – 20.

Lindholm, J., K. (1987) English Question Use in Spanish-Speaking ESL Children: Changes with English Language Proficiency. *Reasearch in the Teaching of English* 27 (1), 64-91.

Luoma, S. (2004) *Assessing Speaking.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Malvern, D., Richards, B. (2002) Investigating Accomodation in Language Proficiency Interviews Using a New Measure of Lexical Diversity. *Language Testing* 19 (1), 85-104.

MacIntyre, P.D., Charos, C. (1996) Personality, Attitudes, and Affect as Predictors of Second Language Communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 15 (1), 3-26.

MacIntyre, P.D., Clement, R., Dörnyei, Z., Noels, K.A. (1998) Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal* 82, 546 - 562.

MacIntyre, P.D., Baker, S.C., Clement, R., Conrod, S. (2001) Willingness to Communicate, Social-Support, and Language-Learning Orientations of Immersion Students. *SSL* 23, 369-388.

MacIntyre, P.D., Clement, R., Donovan, L.A. (2002) Sex and Age Effects on Willingness to Communicate, Anxiety, Perceived Competence, and L2 Motivation Among Junior High School French Immersion Students. *Language Learning* 52 (3), 537-564.

MacIntyre, P.D., Baker, S.C., Clement, R., Donovan, L.A. (2003) Talking in Order to Learn: Willingness to Communicate and Intensive Language Programs. *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 59 (4), 589-607.

Matsuoka, R. (2004) Willingness to Communicate in English among Japanese College Students. Available at: http://www.paaljapan.org/resources/proceedings/PAAL9/pdf/Matsuoka.pdf (visited on 25th August 2013).

Matsuoka, R. (2005) Willingness to Communicate among Japanese College Students. Available at: http://www.paaljapan.org/resources/proceedings/PAAL10/pdfs/matsuoka.pdf (visited on 25th August 2013).

McCroskey, J.C., Richmond, V.P. (1990) Willingness to Communicate: A Cognitive View. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 5 (2), 19 – 37.

McCroskey, J.C., Richmond, V.P., Sallinen-Kuparinen, A. (1991) Willingness to Communicate, Communication Apprehension, Introversion, and Self-Reported Communication Competence: Finnish and American Comparisons. Available at: http://www.jamescmccroskey.com/publications/154.pdf (visited on 20th June 2013).

Medvedeva, M.A. (2007) Oral Proficiency in English and Non – English Languages Among Children of Immigrants in the United States. Available at: http://immigrationseminar.uchicago.edu/events/20070328_pres.pdf (visited on 26th May 2013).

Mihaljević Djigunović, J, and Letica, S. (2009) Spremnost na komunikaciju i učenje stranog jezika. In Pavičić Takač, V., Bagarić, V., Brdar, M., and Omazić, M. (eds.) (2009) *Lingvistika javne komunikacije: Komunikacija u nastavi i komunikacijska gramatika.* Osijek: Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera, pp. 1 – 11.

Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu (2006). Zagreb: Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i športa. Available at: http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=2197 (visited on 27th August, 2013).

Onwuegbuzie, A.J., Bailey, P., and Daley, C.E. (2001) Cognitive, Affective, Personality and Demographic Predictors of Foreign Language Achievement. *Journal of Educational Research* 94 (1), 3-15.

Pallant, J. (2002) *SPSS Survival Manual*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin

Pavičić-Takač, V., Požega, D. (2012) Personality Traits, Willingness to Communicate and Oral Proficiency in English as a Foreign Language. In: Pon, L., Karanalić, V., Cimer, S. (eds.) *Applies Linguistics Today: Research and Perspectives.* Frankfurt am Mein: Peter Lang, 67-82.

Pease-Alvarez, L. (1993) Moving In and Out of Bilingualism: Investigating Native Language Maintenance and Shift in Mexican-Descant Children. Available at: http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/78p4t7hk#page-19 (visited on 25th August 2013).

Saville-Troike, M. (1984) What Really Matters in Second Language Learning for Academic Achievement? *TESOL QUARTERLY* 18 (2), pp. 8-28.

Simic, M. and Tanaka, T. (2008) Language Context in the Willingness to Communicate Research Works: A Review. 71-88. Available at: http://ousar.lib.okayama-u.ac.jp/file/14186/20090106041457/26_71.pdf (visited on 26th May 2013).

Yashima, T. (2002) Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language: The Japanese EFL Context. *The Modern Language Journal* 86 (1), 54-66.

Yashima, T., Zenuk – Nishide, L., Shimizu, K. (2004) The Influence of Attitudes and Affect on Willingness to Communicate and Second Language Communication. *Language Learning* 54 (1), 119-152.

Wen, W.P., Clement, R. (2010) A Chinese Conceptualization of Willingness to Communicate in ESL. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 16 (1), 18-38.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire no. 1

Upitnik o spremnosti na komunikaciju

Ovaj se upitnik sastoji od niza tvrdnji o osjećajima pri učenju i komunikaciji na engleskom jeziku. Odredite koliko sljedeće tvrdnje dobro opisuju vaše osjećaje. Zaokružite odgovarajuću brojku prema ovoj legendi:

1 = potpuno se odnosi na mene
2 = djelomično se odnosi na mene
3 = ponekad se odnosi na mene, a ponekad ne
4 = većinom se ne odnosi na mene
5 = uopće se ne odnosi na mene

Napišite koji ste broj u imeniku: _____

Zaokružite koji ste spol: M / Ž

Napišite ocjenu koju ste imali prošle godine iz engleskog jezika: _____

1. Volim se na engleskom jeziku izražavati bez razmišljanja o sitnim gramatičkim pravilima.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Mislim da je zabavnije učiti u grupi nego sam.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Prije nego počnem koristiti neku riječ na engleskom, želim biti siguran/a da točno znam kako se koristi.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Volim razgovarati s nastavnikom i ostalim učenicima na engleskom jeziku.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Ne volim na nastavi koristiti komplicirane rečenice na engleskom.	1 2 3 4 5
6. Pri formulaciji rečenica radije se držim osnovnih struktura kako ne bih pogriješio/la.	1 2 3 4 5
7. Ne volim na nastavi raspravljati na engleskom o kompliciranim temama.	1 2 3 4 5
8. Volim komunicirati s ostalim učenicima na nastavi.	1 2 3 4 5
9. Neugodno mi je javljati se na nastavi.	1 2 3 4 5
10. Nije mi ugodno kada moram govoriti engleski pred drugim studentima.	1 2 3 4 5
11. Često mi se ne da ići na nastavu engleskog.	1 2 3 4 5
12. Uspaničarim se kad na nastavi moram govoriti na engleskom bez pripreme.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix 2: Questionnaire no. 2

Upitnik o samovrednovanju vlastitih sposobnosti

Ovaj se upitnik sastoji od niza tvrdnji koje opisuju što znate i što biste mogli uraditi prilikom sudjelovanja u razgovoru na engleskom jeziku. Odredite koliko sljedeće tvrdnje dobro opisuju vaše sposobnosti (kompetencije). Zaokružite odgovarajuću brojku prema ovoj legendi:

1 = potpuno se odnosi na mene
2 = djelomično se odnosi na mene
3 = ponekad se odnosi na mene, a ponekad ne
4 = većinom se ne odnosi na mene
5 = uopće se ne odnosi na mene

Napišite koji ste broj u imeniku: _____

Zaokružite koji ste spol: M / Ž

Napišite ocjenu koju ste imali prošle godine iz engleskog jezika: _____

1. Kada sudjelujem u razgovoru mogu se sporazumjeti služeći se poznatim riječima i izrazima, uz pokrete.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Kada sudjelujem u razgovoru mogu odgovarati na jednostavna pitanja kratkim odgovorima.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Mogu pitati u razredu za ono što mi treba, što mi nedostaje ili što ne razumijem i zahvaliti.	1 2 3 4 5
4. U razgovoru mogu postavljati jednostavna pitanja da bih dobio/la jednostavne obavijesti (kako se tko zove, koliko ima godina, gdje stanuje itd.).	1 2 3 4 5
5. Mogu sudjelovati u razgovoru s učiteljem/učiteljicom ili vršnjacima (3 do 4 rečenice) o poznatom sadržaju.	1 2 3 4 5
6. Kada sudjelujem u razgovoru mogu tražiti i dati podatke (npr. o športskom događaju, slobodnom vremenu, javnom prometu, smještaju nekog spomenika, ulice, o cijeni nekog proizvoda itd.).	1 2 3 4 5
7. Mogu razgovarati s nekim o poznatim temama ako mogu sam/a izabrati sadržaje (u trgovini, na pošti, u restauraciji, turističkoj agenciji).	1 2 3 4 5
8. Kada sudjelujem u razgovoru mogu izraziti svoje mišljenje o poznatim sadržajima (što volim, a što ne volim).	1 2 3 4 5
9. Mogu se ispričati i prihvatiti ispriku, zahvaliti i prihvatiti zahvalu, pozvati nekoga i prihvatiti poziv.	1 2 3 4 5
10. Mogu odigrati kratku ulogu u dramatizaciji koja se odnosi na poznate situacije (npr. u restoranu, u trgovini).	1 2 3 4 5
11. Kada sudjelujem u razgovoru mogu postavljati pitanja o događajima koji su se već dogodili ili će se dogoditi i odgovarati na njih.	1 2 3 4 5
12. Kada sudjelujem u razgovoru mogu nešto ponuditi, prihvatiti ili odbiti ponudu, izraziti slaganje i neslaganje, radost ili žaljenje.	1 2 3 4 5
13. Kada biste trebali ocijeniti svoju sposobnost komuniciranja ili sudjelovanju u razgovoru na engleskom jeziku koju biste si ocjenu dali?	1 2 3 4 5