

SITUATIONAL FACTORS SHAPING VIETNAMESE STUDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE IN EFL SPEAKING CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

Students' reluctance to speak in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes poses a major challenge for teachers. This issue may stem from either learner-related characteristics (e.g., anxiety, confidence) or environmental factors (e.g., classroom climate, peer support). The current study explores Vietnamese students' perceptions of situational variables affecting their willingness to communicate (WTC) in EFL speaking classrooms. Employing a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten third-year Vietnamese English-major students and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that students' WTC is influenced by multiple situational factors that can be categorized into task type, peer characteristics, and teacher practices. Specifically, students show greater WTC during interactive tasks such as games, videos, pair work, or small-group discussions on engaging topics. A supportive classroom climate and cooperative peers further enhance communicative readiness. Furthermore, teachers play a crucial role in fostering WTC through openness, approachability, and flexible pedagogy. The current study contributes to contextual understandings of WTC in EFL by highlighting situational factors specific to Vietnamese classrooms, thereby extending existing research beyond individual psychological variables. Pedagogical implications for designing interactive, supportive classroom environments that foster participation and communicative confidence are also offered.

Keywords: *classroom interaction; EFL; situational factors; speaking classes; willingness to communicate, Vietnamese learners.*

1. Introduction

Modern language pedagogy emphasizes equipping learners with the ability to use the target language effectively in authentic communicative contexts. Communicative language teaching requires students to actively engage in meaningful interaction. In this regard, the concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) has become central to second language acquisition research. MacIntyre et al. (1998) define WTC as learners' readiness to initiate discourse in a second or foreign language. Later, MacIntyre et al. (2003) argue that fostering WTC should be a primary objective of L2 instruction, as greater willingness to communicate increases learners' exposure to authentic language use and expands opportunities for meaningful practice.

Although opportunities to speak are provided, learners vary considerably in their communicative behavior: some readily participate, while others remain silent. Explaining this variation is complex, as communicative behavior is influenced by an interplay of individual, social, linguistic, and situational factors (MacIntyre, 2007). This interplay renders classroom silence a complex pedagogical challenge. Nevertheless, understanding the variables that enhance or inhibit learners' readiness to speak is essential for improving classroom practice and maximizing learning opportunities. Identifying the causes of communicative reluctance is especially critical in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where exposure to the target language is largely restricted to the classroom and participation becomes the primary avenue for practicing speaking skills. Reluctance to participate, therefore, reduces opportunities for linguistic development and may negatively affect progress and motivation.

Although numerous studies have examined factors affecting WTC in various EFL contexts, relatively few studies have explored situational influences on WTC among Vietnamese English-major students in tertiary education using qualitative inquiry. Existing research has predominantly relied on survey-based approaches, providing limited insight into learners' subjective experiences and perceptions. Therefore, further qualitative investigation is needed to understand how classroom-specific factors shape learners' willingness to communicate in this context. In light of these concerns, the present study aims to explore Vietnamese EFL learners' perceptions of the contextual factors that shape their willingness to speak English in language classrooms. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How do task types shape English majors' WTC?
2. How do peer-related factors influence WTC?
3. How do teacher-related factors contribute to WTC?

2. Literature review

2.1 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

L2 WTC is a complex construct shaped by communicative competence and psychological readiness. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), L2 WTC is an individual's readiness to initiate discourse at a specific moment with particular interlocutors using L2. To clarify the factors shaping L2 communication, MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed a model integrating linguistic competence, communicative processes, and social-psychological influences that collectively contribute to an individual's readiness to use L2. Structurally, the model is represented as a six-layer pyramid comprising twelve interrelated variables, which are grouped into two broad categories and reflect linguistic, communicative, and psychological dimensions (see *Figure 1*). In this model, Layers I–III represent situation-specific influences, whereas Layers IV–VI reflect more stable determinants of WTC. The model posits that progression upward increases the likelihood of L2 use, although the influence of variables—particularly from Layer III to Layer I—remains context-sensitive.

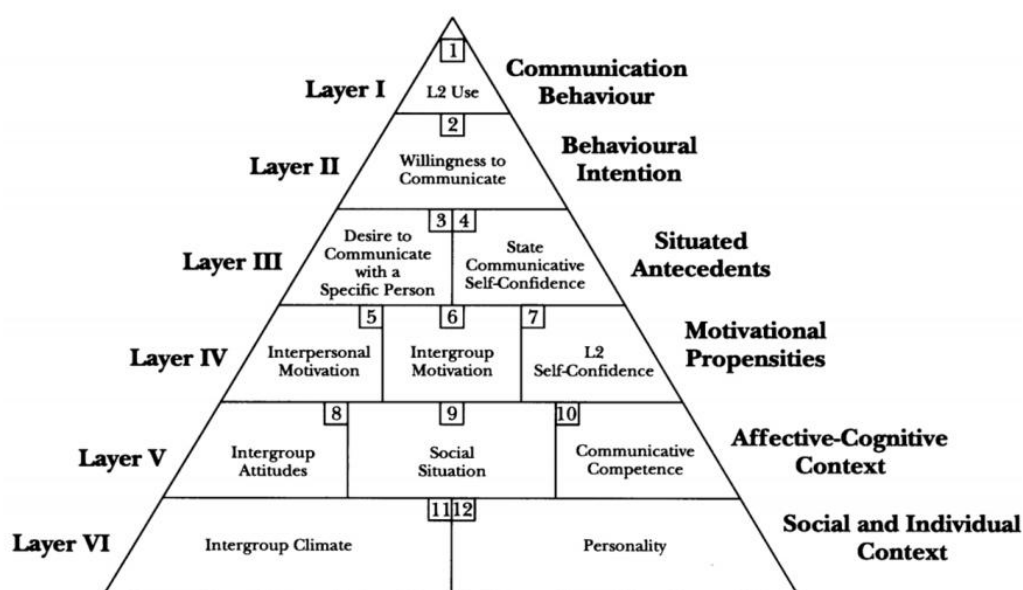
L2 WTC has proved its importance in language education as it can influence learners' engagement in meaningful communication that is necessary for their growth of L2 competency. WTC emphasizes psychological preparedness rather than solely linguistic competence (MacIntyre et al., 1998). As commented by Henry and MacIntyre (2024), fostering WTC can enhance learner autonomy and support language retention, making it a crucial factor of effective language instruction. Because language acquisition is built upon interaction, fostering WTC increases opportunities for meaningful communication and supports fluency and accuracy (Szyszka & Lintunen, 2025). Moreover, improving learners'

WTC enables them to use the target language more naturally and flexibly, particularly within diverse social and cultural contexts (Yashima, 2002).

Subsequent research has increasingly emphasized the situational and fluctuating nature of WTC. Rather than being a fixed tendency, WTC is now widely understood as varying across contexts, tasks, and interactional settings. This “dynamic turn” in WTC research has prompted closer examination of classroom-level influences on learners’ communicative decisions.

Figure 1.

Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC (Adapted from MacIntyre et al., 1998)



2.2 Situational Factors Affecting WTC

In EFL classrooms, contextual and situational variables have consistently been identified as significant determinants of students’ WTC (Basoz & Erten, 2019; Hoang & Bui, 2023; Riasati, 2012; Zahra & Mina, 2021; Afifah, 2025, Alam et al. 2022). Rather than being a fixed learner trait, WTC appears to rely on classroom conditions, including task design, topics of discussion, interlocutor variables, and teacher practices.

Task type has repeatedly emerged as a particularly influential factor. Classroom activities perceived as meaningful, engaging, and cognitively appropriate tend to foster greater communicative participation. For instance, visual aids, games, and songs increased students’ readiness to speak, as these techniques create a stimulating and supportive learning atmosphere (Hoang & Bui, 2023). Narrative tasks and descriptive activities are also found to motivate students’ participation (Afifah, 2025) because they were perceived as engaging, familiar, and manageable. Narrative tasks allowed learners to draw on personal experiences and express their identities, thereby increasing emotional involvement and motivation to participate. Descriptive tasks, on the other hand, provided concrete visual or experiential support, reducing cognitive and linguistic demands. As a result, students felt more confident and were more willing to contribute to classroom interaction. Regarding collaborative modes, Riasati (2012) found that pair and group work were generally preferred over whole-class presentations, suggesting that interactional format significantly shapes communicative comfort. In contrast, highly form-focused grammar tasks and rote style

learning were perceived as limiting opportunities for authentic communication (Alam et al., 2022). Task difficulty regulates WTC, with overly demanding or insufficiently challenging tasks reducing engagement (Zahra & Mina, 2021).

The topic of discussion is another important situational factor influencing learners' WTC. Research suggests that students are more inclined to participate when they are familiar with the topic, find it personally relevant, and have adequate opportunities for preparation. Familiarity and prior knowledge can enhance learners' perceived communicative competence, while personal interest increases motivation and engagement, both of which contribute to greater communicative readiness (Riasati, 2012; Basoz & Erten, 2019; Zahra & Mina, 2021). Conversely, unfamiliar or uninteresting topics may discourage participation by reducing learners' confidence and investment in the interaction. Building on these findings, Hoang and Bui (2023) argue that teachers can foster WTC by adapting textbook content, providing preparatory materials, and incorporating controversial or thought-provoking topics that encourage meaningful discussion. Taken together, the literature indicates that topic-related factors influence WTC through both cognitive mechanisms (e.g., background knowledge and perceived competence) and affective mechanisms (e.g., interest and engagement).

In addition to task-related influences, the qualities and behaviors of interlocutors have been found to substantially affect learners' readiness to engage in communication. Existing research suggests that students are more likely to engage in classroom interaction when they perceive their partners as supportive, familiar, and communicatively active. Familiarity with speaking partners can foster a sense of comfort and reduce concerns about negative evaluation, thereby enhancing communicative confidence (Riasati, 2012; Zahra & Mina, 2021). In addition, peers' English proficiency, willingness to participate, and attitudes toward communication have been found to shape learners' readiness to contribute to discussions (Basoz & Erten, 2019; Alam et al., 2022; Afifah, 2025). Interacting with cooperative and competent peers may encourage participation by creating a supportive communicative environment, whereas less supportive peer dynamics can heighten anxiety and reluctance to speak. Overall, the literature suggests that interlocutor-related factors influence WTC by shaping learners' perceptions of psychological safety, social support, and the potential risks associated with classroom communication.

Beyond task and peer influences, teachers contribute substantially to students' readiness to engage in classroom communication. Through studies, teachers appear to influence WTC primarily through their ability to create a supportive, engaging, and low-anxiety learning environment. Positive instructional practices, such as fostering a dynamic classroom atmosphere, providing constructive feedback, and developing strong teacher–student rapport, have been shown to encourage greater participation by enhancing learners' motivation and confidence (Hoang & Bui, 2023). Similarly, exposure to foreign teachers may stimulate students' willingness to speak by increasing the authenticity and perceived value of classroom communication (Basoz & Erten, 2019). In contrast, teacher characteristics and practices that undermine learners' confidence—such as limited pedagogical expertise, inadequate language proficiency, or overly authoritarian classroom management—can discourage participation and heighten communication apprehension (Riasati, 2012; Zahra & Mina, 2021; Afifah, 2025). Collectively, the literature suggests that teachers shape WTC not only through instructional decisions but also through the interpersonal climate they establish, which can either facilitate or constrain students' readiness to engage in classroom interaction. Unlike task- and interlocutor-related factors, which primarily influence the

immediate conditions of interaction, teacher-related factors exert a more pervasive influence by shaping the classroom climate within which communication occurs. Through their instructional practices and interpersonal relationships with students, teachers can create conditions that foster confidence, reduce anxiety, and promote active participation.

Overall, these studies underscore that WTC is highly interrelated to classroom variables. Task characteristics, topic features, peer relationships, and teacher behavior operate interactively to shape students' communicative engagement. This body of research reinforces the view that WTC in EFL contexts is a context-dependent and dynamically constructed phenomenon rather than a stable, trait-like disposition, highlighting the need for further research in Southeast Asian EFL contexts, particularly Vietnam.

3. Research Method

3.1 Participants and Settings

The current study was conducted at the Faculty of Legal Foreign Languages, Hanoi Law University. The participants were third-year undergraduates who studied English as their major. At this stage, students were expected to reach C1 proficiency.

At the moment the study was conducted, the students had just completed a compulsory course named "Advanced Listening & Speaking Skill" aiming to support and strengthen students' knowledge of IELTS test-taking skills – the standard graduation requirement for students majoring in English. The course covers a variety of topics such as: everyday life, the world, art, social qualifications, technology, and nature; as well as provides learners with vocabulary, grammar, structures, and pronunciation skills relevant to these topics. This course is preceded by previous Listening and Speaking skills courses at intermediate and upper-intermediate levels.

The researcher also served as the instructor for this course. To minimize potential researcher bias, interviews were conducted after the completion of the course and students were informed that participation or responses would not affect their academic evaluation. Participants were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process. To ensure the inclusion of students representing varying levels of willingness to communicate (WTC), a criterion sampling strategy was employed. Specifically, participants were selected to include those who self-identified as both more and less willing to communicate in English. In the final week of the course, ten out of thirty students voluntarily participated in semi-structured interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams. Of these participants, six rated themselves as having a high level of willingness to communicate, whereas four reported a low level of willingness.

3.2 Research Instruments

Qualitative research is defined by Maxwell (2013) as "research that is intended to help you better understand (1) the meanings and perspectives of the people you study, seeing the world from their point of view, rather than simply your own; (2) how these perspectives are shaped by, and shape, their physical, social, and cultural contexts; and (3) the specific processes that are involved in maintaining or altering these phenomena and relationships." In the current research, the author aimed to seek for situational factors that influence EFL learner's communicative willingness. Thus, a qualitative research design would effectively align with the author's objectives.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to prevent misinterpretations between the researcher and participants. The questions of interview were

designed by the researcher in the light of the literature on situational factors that influence WTC.

The validity of the questions was ensured after they were reviewed by another senior teacher who co-taught the course with the researcher. The questions were reviewed based on the feedback received from her. They were then piloted with three learners different from those who participated in the main interviews in order to see how well the instrument worked in practice so that any potential practical problems in the research procedure could be identified. During the pilot interviews, it appeared that the interview questions were well formulated, but that there were some questions stating similar things. Those questions were omitted from the list, and the interview questions were redesigned for the main study.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The participants were guaranteed of the privacy of their answers and the protection of their identities. The interviewees were assigned numerical codes to protect their identities. The researcher followed a semi-structured interview guide including a series of open-ended questions and follow-up questions. Each participant's interview lasted between 15-20 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

As the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, the responses were translated into English for analysis. Thematic analysis by following the steps from Creswell (2012) was used to examine the data. In relation to this, from the transcriptions of interviews, the researcher started to code the data and presented the theme, then produced the report. Initial open coding was first conducted, followed by grouping similar codes into broader categories. These categories were subsequently refined into overarching themes representing situational influences on WTC. Finally, the researcher made the explanations of the results about the factors determining the participants' willingness to communicate in English classrooms.

To ensure the accuracy of the qualitative data analysis, validation procedures were implemented. According to Creswell (2012), validating qualitative findings involves ensuring the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations. In this study, member checking was employed by inviting participants to review the reports and findings to verify their accuracy. Any feedback from participants was incorporated where necessary to ensure faithful representation of their views.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Task-related Factors

Task type was identified as a prominent situational factor influencing participants' WTC in English. The findings indicate three interrelated sub-factors shaping students' communicative readiness: game-based and video-based activities, topics of discussion, and collaborative work formats.

First, participants consistently emphasized the motivational value of engaging and game-integrated activities. When tasks incorporated elements such as competition, point calculation, or group division, students reported greater enthusiasm and readiness to speak. As one participant noted, "*Game-combined activities make me and my classmates more enthusiastic about speaking English.*" (Student 3). Similarly, Student 5 stated, "*I am more willing to speak when an activity involves calculating points or dividing class members into*

groups to determine a winner and loser.” Another participant highlighted multimedia engagement: *“I find it more enjoyable to practice shadowing or watch movies.”* (Student 4). These responses suggest that tasks involving competition, enjoyment, and multimodal input may stimulate active participation.

The topic of discussion played a vital role in shaping students’ WTC. Topics perceived as entertaining, relevant, or personally meaningful were associated with higher communicative engagement. For instance, student 8 explained, *“Entertaining topics will make us more interested to speak because they are related to our hobbies such as music, movies, or personal experiences.”* Besides familiarity, intellectual stimulation also influenced participation, as student 5 observed, *“When a topic sparks my curiosity, I will be more interested to speak.”* However, it was also reported that unnecessarily private or sensitive topics would reduce willingness, as students felt uncomfortable sharing this kind of information. These findings indicate that both emotional safety and cognitive engagement are central to situational WTC.

In addition, interactional modes significantly affected students’ communicative behavior. Collaborative formats such as pair work and small-group discussions were consistently perceived as less stressful and more supportive than whole-class speaking. As student 10 observed, *“Activities involving speaking in pairs or small groups make me more willing to speak English because it's less stressful when I can exchange ideas with my friends.”* Likewise, student 1 remarked, *“Each of my classmates has their own vocabulary and way of thinking, so when we work in pairs or groups, this allows us to improve our speaking skills.”* Students specifically mentioned discussions, talk shows, or debates as formats that encouraged participation. In contrast, public speaking activities, including formal presentations or speaking in front of the whole class, were reported as the least preferred task types. Participants described such tasks as making them feel *“embarrassed,” “scared,”* or *“unconfident.”* This finding is in line with findings in Zahra and Mina (2021) where whole-class interaction was perceived by students as anxiety-provoking due to peer pressure; that is, they felt anxious and uncomfortable giving incorrect answers in front of their classmates. Less-WTC participants mainly preferred to talk in pairs and small groups because there would be less competition in turn-taking.

4.1.2 Peer-related Factors

The classroom environment was also reported as a significant situational influence on students’ communicative desire in English. Participants’ responses indicate that this influence operates through two primary sub-factors: their classmates and the overall classroom atmosphere.

With regard to peer influence, participants consistently emphasized the importance of familiarity and interpersonal comfort. Students reported greater WTC when working with close friends or long-term classmates, as such relationships foster a sense of psychological safety. When paired with familiar peers, they felt easier sharing ideas and providing corrective feedback. *“Working with a partner or partners I am close to and have a long-term relationship with makes me want to talk more than being paired with others”* (student 3). *“My level of willingness to speak largely depends on who I am paired with. If my partner and I get along well, I'll talk a lot and work more effectively”* (student 6). In contrast, being assigned to unfamiliar partners often generated anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. *“When I am paired with someone I've never spoken to before or someone I don't have a good impression of, it makes me feel awkward and uncomfortable, so talking to each other*

becomes difficult." (student 7). In addition to familiarity, perceived partner competence was revealed as an influential factor. Some students described feeling encouraged when working with peers who demonstrated strong speaking skills, as these partners provided linguistic support and motivation. Conversely, a partner with limited participation or lower proficiency sometimes reduced their own communicative willingness. *"My partner has a very positive influence on me. His good speaking skill encourages me to speak more"* (student 2). *"I am less willing when the other person doesn't want to talk or doesn't understand what I'm saying"* (student 8). Interestingly, one participant also mentioned gender as a factor affecting communicative comfort, noting that *"same-sex partners make it easier for me to talk"* (student 10).

Beyond peer-related factors, the general classroom atmosphere became evident as another important determinant of WTC. A supportive, dynamic, and engaging environment was associated with greater communicative readiness, whereas a passive or unresponsive atmosphere tended to inhibit participation. *"When the atmosphere in the class is relaxing and supportive, and everyone is friendly, I am more ready to join the conversation"* (student 2). *"Generally, my class atmosphere is more dynamic and inspiring in speaking lessons, helping me want to practice my speaking skills more"* (student 7). *"I am not willing to speak when there's no sense of initiative in the surrounding atmosphere"* (student 9).

These findings suggest that students' WTC is strongly shaped by peer-related factors. Peer relationships and collective classroom energy jointly create either a facilitative or inhibiting communicative environment. When learners interact with supportive peers who share similar interests and demonstrate active engagement, they are more likely to participate confidently in communicative activities.

4.1.3 Teacher-related Factors

Finally, participants highlighted the significant role of teachers in shaping their WTC in the English classroom. Teacher-related influences were categorized into teachers' attitudes and instructional practices.

Regarding teachers' attitudes, participants emphasized the importance of approachability, encouragement, and emotional support. A positive and supportive teacher was associated with increased communicative confidence, whereas a strict or distant one was perceived as discouraging participation. As one student explained, *"The way teachers are approachable and encouraging will make me feel more willing to speak up"* (student 1). Similarly, student 3 remarked, *"With an active instructor, we would have a more comfortable learning environment compared to a strict one"*. These responses suggest that teachers' interpersonal behavior contributes to learners' emotional security, which in turn enhances their readiness to speak.

In addition to attitude, teaching methodology was found to significantly influence students' communicative engagement. As student 4 noted, *"The lecturer is the one who directly organizes and motivates the students, so if the lecturer's teaching style is engaging, even students who are weak in communication will want to participate."* This highlights the teacher's role not only as a facilitator of tasks but also as a motivational stimulus within the classroom. Several specific pedagogical strategies were identified as supportive of students' WTC. Pre-speaking activities and adequate preparation time were perceived as particularly beneficial, as they helped students organize ideas and prepare relevant vocabulary before speaking. For instance, student 6 stated, *"I am eager to speak when the teacher combines both listening and speaking, so I can prepare for words and ideas before saying."* In contrast,

insufficient preparation time was reported as stress-provoking: *"I am less ready if the teachers called on us unexpectedly, without any preparation."* (student 7).

Participants also emphasized the value of methodological variety. A flexible combination of speaking activities was described as stimulating and engaging, whereas repetitive or overly rigid instructional patterns reduced motivation. As student 9 expressed, *"When students are forced to follow a rigid framework, specifically a method favored by a particular teacher, and they pressure students to conform to their wishes."* Such boredom appears to limit students' sense of autonomy, potentially constraining communicative willingness.

Corrective feedback was another notable theme. Students generally welcomed feedback from their teachers, particularly when it was constructive, supportive, and delivered in a non-threatening manner. Student 1 commented, *"I think I would really appreciate it if the teacher corrected my pronunciation and other mistakes honestly because it would help me improve."* Similarly, student 7 reflected, *"When the instructor corrects my mistakes gently and constructively, I feel supported and motivated to speak English better."* However, timing was considered crucial. Participants preferred feedback after completing their speech rather than immediate interruption, as interruptions could disrupt fluency and increase hesitation: *"I like it when the teachers wait for me to finish speaking and correct my mistakes, suggest ways to express myself. If the lecturer interrupts me, it makes me hesitant to communicate."* (student 10)

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students' WTC in EFL classrooms is shaped by a dynamic interplay of task-related, peer-related, and teacher-related factors. Task types, particularly game-based activities, video integration, stimulating topics, and collaborative work appeared to foster greater engagement and communicative readiness. These activities not only stimulated interest but also enhanced students' perceived competence and reduced performance pressure. In addition, students reported greater communicative ease when interacting with familiar or supportive classmates, suggesting that relational closeness promotes psychological safety and reduce evaluative concerns. Teacher-related factors likewise functioned as powerful stimulus. Supportive attitudes, an approachable manner, constructive feedback, and flexible pedagogical practices were perceived as enhancing learners' confidence while softening communication anxiety.

The present findings partially support MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) heuristic model of WTC, particularly its emphasis on the role of social and affective contexts in shaping situational WTC. Several factors identified in this study correspond closely to the model's conceptualization of situational influences. However, some classroom-specific factors emerging from the data (e.g., preparation time, task structure, corrective feedback timing) are not explicitly articulated in MacIntyre et al.'s framework, which was developed to explain WTC across broader L2 communicative contexts. This suggests that while the model remains theoretically robust, it may benefit from contextual refinement when applied to EFL instructional environments. The present study therefore contributes to extending the ecological validity of the WTC framework within classroom-based settings.

The findings are also consistent with previous empirical studies conducted in EFL contexts. For example, Riasati (2012), Afifah (2025) and Zahra & Mina (2021) found that Iranian and Indonesian tertiary EFL learners' readiness to communicate was influenced by task type, discussion topic, interlocutor characteristics, teacher behavior, and classroom

atmosphere. Similarly, Tutku & Ismail (2019) and Alam et al. (2022) reported that Turkish and Bangladesh undergraduate learners' in-class WTC was shaped by contextual variables such as classmates, instructional methods, topic familiarity, and classroom climate. Regarding teacher-related influences, the results align with Hoang and Bui (2023), who found that Vietnamese students perceived grouping strategies, task variation, visual aids, topic adaptation, positive feedback, and game-based activities as effective in enhancing classroom WTC.

Taken together, these findings reinforce the view that WTC is a context-sensitive and dynamically constructed phenomenon. Students' communicative behavior appears to be co-regulated by task design, peer relationships, and teacher practices. By revealing these variables, the study contributes to the growing body of research that conceptualizes WTC as a phenomenon that develops through context-based classroom interaction.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated situational classroom factors shaping EFL students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. The findings reveal that WTC is shaped by a dynamic interplay of task-related, peer-related, and teacher-related variables. WTC emerged not as a fixed trait but as a context-sensitive state fluctuating with task design, peer relations, and instructional practices. The study contributes to WTC research by contextualizing the construct within Vietnamese EFL classrooms, highlighting classroom-specific variables absent from broader theoretical models. While the findings partially align with established theoretical models of WTC, they also point to the importance of classroom-specific variables typically found in EFL contexts. This study is among the few to examine WTC situationally in Vietnamese higher education, extending the ecological validity of WTC theory to Southeast Asian EFL contexts.

Pedagogically, the findings suggest that teachers can enhance students' WTC by designing engaging tasks that stimulate enjoyment, such as incorporating games or video-based activities. Speaking topics should be adapted to match with learners' interests and cognitive levels. In addition, organizing pair and small-group work can help create a sense of emotional safety, thereby encouraging students to speak more confidently. Furthermore, EFL learners should be provided with greater autonomy, including opportunities to choose their partners when appropriate. Nurturing a supportive classroom climate is also equally essential so that students can interact in constructive and encouraging ways. Also, teachers should model communicative willingness by demonstrating openness and enthusiasm. Methodologically, instructors should integrate pre-speaking input, diversify while-speaking strategies, and deliver constructive post-speaking feedback. Overall, the findings highlight that not only what is taught but also how it is taught plays a crucial role, as a psychologically safe and interaction-rich classroom environment appears central to fostering communicative engagement.

While offering valuable insights, the study is not without limitations. As the research was conducted within a single institutional context, this may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are suggested to examine how situational factors influencing WTC may vary across diverse EFL settings and educational contexts. Also, the study adopted a purely qualitative design relying on students' self-reported perceptions. Other research designs should be employed to explore this issue from more dimensions, such as longitudinal designs to explore how these situational factors influences students' WTC over time, quantitative approaches to determine the relative strength of different situational factors, or

experimental designs to establish clearer causal relationships between specific classroom-based interventions and learners' WTC.

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