

# Influences on Japanese Students' Willingness to Communicate Across Three Different Sized EFL Classes

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigated factors which contributed to willingness to communicate (WTC) as it manifested from moment-to-moment in a Japanese EFL classroom for three different sized class types: a one-on-one classroom, a small group classroom, and a large group classroom. A classroom observation scheme, participant interviews (including stimulated recall) and a questionnaire were adopted as methods to examine factors which predict state-like WTC behaviour in each class type. Inter-group analysis between class types revealed that class size was a very strong factor affecting WTC. In addition, the approach of communicative language teaching (CLT) was found to increase WTC only if students had a positive attitude towards CLT. The attitudinal construct of international posture was also found to be a significant factor which motivated students to communicate more using English. A number of other factors were revealed in interviews: topic relevancy, group cohesiveness, anxiety, perception of teacher participation, and level of activity difficulty. However, the influence of each factor was found to vary in significance depending on class size. These findings, although tentative, contribute to an understanding of WTC behaviour in different class sizes and point to future research that can be done in this field. By considering implications on L2 pedagogy, suggestions are made on how teachers can improve their students' WTC in larger classes.*

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# Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Chapter 1. Introduction .....	6
1.1. Communicative Language Teaching.....	6
1.2. Willingness to Communicate.....	7
1.3. The Japanese Context – International posture .....	8
1.4. Acceptance of CLT in Asia.....	9
1.5. Class size.....	10
1.6. Purpose of the study .....	11
Chapter 2. Method .....	12
2.1. Participants.....	12
2.2. Procedure .....	13
2.3. Instruments .....	15
2.3.1. International posture questionnaire .....	15
2.3.2. Class observations .....	16
2.3.3. Post-class interview.....	16
2.3.4. Methodology observation scheme .....	19
Chapter 3. Analysis .....	21
Chapter 4. Results.....	24
4.1. Inter-group comparisons of WTC.....	24
4.2. Inter-group communicative differences .....	26
4.2.1. One-on-one classes .....	26
4.2.2. Small group classes.....	27
4.2.3. The large group .....	28
4.3. Factors which predict WTC.....	29
4.3.1. One-on-one classes .....	30
4.3.2. Small group classes.....	33
4.3.3. The large group .....	38
Chapter 5. Discussion and pedagogical implications.....	42
5.1. Can CLT be used to overcome disadvantages in larger classes?.....	42
5.2. Why is international posture important?.....	43
Chapter 6. Limitations of the study .....	46

Chapter 7. Conclusion.....	47
References.....	48
Appendix 1. International posture questionnaire.....	52
Appendix 2. Interview questions.....	54
Appendix 3. Classroom observation scheme .....	56
Appendix 4. Results table .....	57

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

Research has supported the case that high levels of interaction in the language classroom creates learning opportunities and facilitates the process of second language acquisition (Long, 1996, 1983; Pica, 1992). However, for learners to acquire a L2 through meaningful interaction, there must be use of the L2 for the purpose of authentic communication. Thus, language teachers should aim to instil a *willingness to communicate* (WTC) in their students (MacIntyre et. al., 1998); that is, they should create an environment that maximizes the probability that students voluntarily engage in meaningful L2 interaction.

The challenge of creating this ideal classroom environment is likely to be easier in smaller classes (Glass and Smith, 1980) than in larger classes where teachers often find themselves “unable to organize the kind of interactive activities considered so essential to language teaching” (p. 30, Kumar, 1992). However, Coleman (1989) suggests that it is possible to overcome this handicap if teachers change certain conditions in the classroom.

This study investigated factors which affect WTC behaviour in 3 different sized classrooms and will suggest how situational factors can be manipulated to optimize WTC and ultimately increase the amount of L2 communication.

### **1.1. Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is the methodology favoured in most second language classrooms because it emphasizes the importance of using a L2 in meaningful communication; that is, the goal of CLT is to teach communicative competence, as opposed to grammatical competence (Richards, 2006, p. 2). Earlier views of language learning placed importance on the process of habit formation, where mechanical drills, memorization of dialogs, and production of error free sentences were standard practice in the classroom. CLT, on the other hand, encompasses a range of activities which are based on “interaction between learners” rather than individualistic approaches to learning (Richards, 2006, p. 2). Specific methodological proposals such as task-based teaching, task-supported teaching, and content-based instruction have been implemented in classrooms which provide a more concrete framework for teachers to work with. However, there is a lack of clarity of what CLT actually means and which methodology is the best practice (Littlewood, 2007, p. 4).

Brown (1994) defines CLT as an approach which includes all of the following: 1) “classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence”; 2) “language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes”; 3) “fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques”; and 4) “students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed context” (p. 245). Littlewood (2007) proposed a methodological framework that spells out the degrees to which language activities in the classroom can be considered communicative; the categories are: (1) non-communicative language learning, (2) pre-communicative language practice, (3) communicative language practice, (4) structured communication, and (5) authentic communication (p. 247). Classrooms which embrace activities categorized under (5) fall under the *strong* version of CLT, whereas classrooms that employ activities under (2) through (4) could be considered as implementing a *weak* version of CLT.

Littlewood’s (2007) methodological framework is adapted in this study and used as part of a classroom observation scheme.

## **1.2. Willingness to Communicate**

In order for CLT to be effective, learners must be willing to participate in activities which focus on “communication of messages where the language forms are correspondingly unpredictable” (Littlewood, 2007, p. 247). In other words, students must possess a willingness to communicate (WTC). WTC, a recent construct in L2 instruction theory, is defined as the probability of engagement in communication when free to do so (McCroskey and Baer, 1985). However, studies have concluded that there is not a positive correlation between WTC in the L1 and the L2 (see for example, MacIntyre and Charos, 1996).

In a L1, a high level of competence has usually been achieved, thus WTC can be predicted by personality attributes only. MacIntyre et. al. (1998) proposed a heuristic model which accounts for L2 WTC behaviour, and listed the following as possible influences: situated antecedents, motivational propensities, affective-cognitive context, and social and individual context. Research has shown that a host of other factors partially account for L2 WTC; these include perceived communication competence, communication anxiety (Baker and MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre et al., 2001; McCroskey and Richmond, 1991), sex, and age (MacIntyre et. al., 2001; MacIntyre et al, 2002).

Recently there has been focus on the distinction between trait, situational, and state WTC behaviour. At the trait level, variables are the relatively stable, personality qualities that are “constant across situations”; situational variables are highly changeable and are “confined within situations”; at the state level, concern is for “experiences rooted in a specific moment in time” (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 565). MacIntyre (2007) has called for future research to investigate the “momentary restraining forces that come into play when a speaker is choosing whether or not to initiate communication” (p. 572); that is, investigations into situational or state WTC is required for research to progress. Recent studies (Cao and Philp, 2006; De Saint Leger and Storch, 2009) have looked at the more situation-specific elements of WTC and have found that group cohesiveness could be an important factor when students participate in class activities.

Kang (2005) looked even more deeply at the specific moment-to-moment dynamic nature of WTC and found that situational variables such as topic, interlocutors, and conversational context could influence the psychological conditions of a learner. In light of this, Kang (2005) proposed a new definition:

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is an *individual’s volitional inclination towards actively engaging 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 (p. 291).

This study adopts Kang’s (2005) definition of WTC and attempts to uncover the influences behind state-level WTC behaviour in different contexts.

### **1.3. The Japanese Context – International posture**

Yashima (2002) suggested another attitudinal factor of WTC which may be specific to Japanese culture: *international posture* (IP). Yashima describes IP as including “interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and, one hopes, openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures.” (p. 57). Because the EFL context of Japan provides few opportunities for learners to interact with foreigners in English, most Japanese have a vague concept of the culture of English; Japanese who can more easily identify with the international world of English (or those who have a high IP) are more likely to be motivated to use it. When Yashima (2002) first used IP as a WTC variable in a study of Japanese EFL

students, she concluded that “the path from international posture to WTC, although not strong, was significant” (p. 62). A similar conclusion was drawn in Yashima’s (2004) research involving communication interactions of Japanese students on exchange programs in the US. Her adjusted WTC model showed “that those who are more willing to communicate in various interpersonal situations [involving foreigners] in the L2 tend to initiate communication in the classroom, ask teachers questions outside of class, or communicate with friends/acquaintances outside the school context” (p. 135).

In light of past research, this study investigates whether IP is a strong predictor of WTC behaviour of the Japanese students participating in this study.

#### **1.4. Acceptance of CLT in Asia**

In addition to IP, the degree to which methodologies associated with CLT is accepted by students may be a particularly sensitive variable for EFL students in Asia. MacIntyre’s (1998) heuristic model of WTC is exclusively based on research conducted in the western world and may not be entirely applicable to Asian students. According to Wen and Clement (2003), the influence of Confucianism in Chinese education changes the linguistic, communicative, and social variables that affect students’ WTC in a Chinese setting. They argue that a sense of ‘belongingness’, ‘oneness’, and ‘we-ness’ characteristic of ‘ingroup’ members are essential for successful interaction in the classroom. In East Asia, CLT is considered to diverge from traditional teacher-centered approaches which focus on transmitting information from teacher to student (Watkins 2005, p. 8–12) where audiolingualism, grammar-translation, and situational language teaching are characteristic methods. Academics have suggested that CLT poses a conflict between western educational values and East Asian traditional education (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Hu, 2005). Samimy and Kobayashi (2004, p. 253) describe the relationship between CLT and the Japanese learning system as a “cultural mismatch” and argues that the view of language learning as a process rather than learned content causes considerable difficulties. Furthermore, the importance of passing university entrance examinations in Japan has led to the continuation of traditional grammar-translation methods of learning English in high schools, which emphasizes teacher-centeredness and encourages reticence on the part of students (Takanashi, 2004, p. 4). Japanese students, who are subjected to the CLT approach, are often mystified at the requirement to speak and interact with other students as part of the learning process, and an outright rejection of this approach by the student can occur. However, arguments have been made to the contrary. According to

Littlewood (2000), Asian students want to “explore knowledge themselves...together with their fellow students” (p. 34).

The variable *acceptance of CLT* is perceived to be one cultural factor that could be very influential on Japanese learners' WTC. Part of the purpose of the study will be to investigate whether Japanese students are accepting of the methodologies associated with CLT, and how this affects their WTC.

### **1.5. Class size**

Studies to date have not yet addressed WTC as it occurs in separate class sizes. However, some studies, which have focused on group and paired work in the same class (Cao and Philip, 2006; Saint Leger and Storch, 2009), appear to support Wen and Clement's (2003) claim that class size is “part of the contextual factors embedded in group cohesiveness” (p. 27). These and other studies seem to indicate that class size may be an important influence on WTC.

“It is felt that the teaching-learning process itself is hindered in large classes” (p. 30, Kumar, 1992). Evertson and Folger (1989) support this view, and argue that students in small classes have more opportunity to talk to the teacher about problems. Additionally, Glass and Smith (1980) found that student morale, achievement, attitude, and student satisfaction was higher in “smaller” classes. However, Hanushek (1988), in a review of literature on this topic concludes that differences are always scientifically small. Interestingly, Hess (2001) takes the view that more communication and interaction can occur in a large classroom, and through group tasks, students benefit through peer-teaching.

To add evidence to Hanushek's claim, it was Pica (1992) who originally suggested that student-student interaction, without the participation of the teacher, can provide opportunities to modify a learner's interlanguage. A similar conclusion about the benefits of group learning was drawn from Swain and Lapkin's (1998) study of French immersion students working together. More recently, Storch's (2002) study on patterns of interaction of ESL students suggests that not only do students learn through expert/novice collaboration but also when “there is no one fixed expert. Instead, both learners either alternate in that role or more often pool resources whenever uncertainties arose concerning language choices” (p. 147). These findings give hope to large classes and create a theoretical basis through which L2 learners don't need to rely on purely interacting with the teacher.

The underlying factor which affects the success of interactional negotiation in the classroom is the extent to which students actually talk. Some claim it is true that small groups stimulate more student talk-time, namely student utterances (Wells & Chang-Well, 1992). Kumar's (1992) comparisons on the amount of teacher/student talk-time/turns produced in large and small classes were inconclusive; however, one flaw with this study that should be pointed out is that the lesson focus across all classes was not consistent. Some classes had a grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary focus, and some purely focused on role-play activities. In fact, the conclusion drawn from this study is that teaching methodology and activities greatly affected students' interaction; class-size ended up having an unknown influence.

Part of the purpose of this study is to uncover whether WTC, and hence participation, differs between class sizes and whether methodology can be partly responsible for the difference.

### **1.6. Purpose of the study**

In order to deepen our understanding of the causes of actual WTC behaviour in the contexts of different class sizes, this qualitative and quantitative study examines the following research questions:

1. How does state-level WTC differ across three different sized classes?
2. What are the differences in language activities between three different sized classes?
3. What factors contribute to state-level WTC in three different sized classes?

## Chapter 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

22 adult Japanese subjects took part in this research. All subjects were learners drawn from the same private language school in Tokyo, Japan – a school known for its communicative curriculum and methodologies. Participants in this study belonged to 9 separate classes, each taught by the same teacher: 6 “one-on-one” private classes, 2 “small group” classes consisting of 4 students each, and 1 “large group” class consisting of 8 members. All classes were studying the same material from the same curriculum and have roughly similar language abilities. Participants had documented TOEIC scores of between 480 and 620 so could be classified as having intermediate level English proficiency. All participants were studying English for the purpose of business, and all group classes consisted of students who worked for the same company. A summary of the participant information is provided in Table 1.

Class Name	Class Type	Number of Students in Class	Gender
Class A	One-on-one	1	Female
Class B	One-on-one	1	Male
Class C	One-on-one	1	Female
Class D	One-on-one	1	Female
Class E	One-on-one	1	Male
Class F	One-on-one	1	Female
Class G	Small Group	4	4 Males
Class H	Small Group	4	1 Female, 3 Males
Class I	Large Group	8	2 Females, 6 Male

**Table 1. Classification of Classes**

## **2.2. Procedure**

The study was completed over 6 weeks. The data collected consists of (a) a total of 18 audio-recorded, 80-minute classroom observations, carried out once per week for each class type; (b) 18 30-minute interviews with each participants at separate times throughout the study; and (c) a questionnaire given to 18 subjects on day 1 which measures IP.

The classes were not chosen at random, but were selected so that each class was studying the same course. Although some classes were at different stages in the course, all participants were using the same materials. The classroom text used was self-published by the language school and was designed to accompany a very communicative teaching approach. Role-plays, discussions, debates and an assortment of communicative activities unfolded in the classroom, most of which focussed on speaking production. This avoids Kumar's (1992) problem of observing classes where the different focus of each class greatly affects results. Table 2 outlines the class observation and interview data.

## Chapter 2. Method

Class Name	Class Type	Participant	Number of recorded observations/interviews.	Time of data collection
Class A	One-on-one	Student 1	1	Week 1
Class B	One-on-one	Student 2	1	Week 2
Class C	One-on-one	Student 3	1	Week 3
Class D	One-on-one	Student 4	1	Week 4
Class E	One-on-one	Student 5	1	Week 5
Class F	One-on-one	Student 6	1	Week 6
Class G	Small Group	Student 7	1	Week 1
		Student 8	1	Week 2
		Student 9	1	Week 3
		Student 10	0	
Class H	Small Group	Student 11	1	Week 4
		Student 12	1	Week 5
		Student 13	1	Week 6
		Student 14	0	
Class I	Large Group	Student 15	1	Week1
		Student 16	1	Week 2
		Student 17	1	Week 3
		Student 18	1	Week 4
		Student 19	1	Week 5
		Student 20	1	Week 6
		Student 21	0	
		Student 22	0	

**Table 2. Class observation and interview data collection**

As can be seen from Table 2, data were collected from each student in Classes A – F, three students each from Class G and H, and six students from Class I. Data were not collected

from students 10, 14, 21, and 22 because it was desirable to acquire data from an equal number of students in each class type.

Fortunately, all participants from the one-on-one classes (classes A to F) were present and punctual during the 6-week period of the study. Unfortunately, one student in class I (the large group) was absent 3 times over the course of this study. Additionally, class G (a small group) had a student who was habitually late 10–15 minutes for each class. To minimize the negative effects of lateness and absences, the tardy student and the student who was absent 3 times were included in the four students whose data weren't collected.

### **2.3. Instruments**

Instruments used in this research include a) a questionnaire measuring IP; b) a methodology class observation scheme; and c) a post-class interview which included stimulated recall.

#### **2.3.1. International posture questionnaire**

Data collection began with an 18-item questionnaire given to the 24 subjects on day 1 of the study; the questionnaire was designed to measure IP. This questionnaire attempted to capture “the general individual attitudes toward intercultural communication, international vocation or activities and foreign affairs” (Yashima, 2002, p. 62). Questions were taken from Yashima's (2002) study of IP among Japanese university students. However, items were modified slightly for this study to describe examples that adult working professionals could more easily relate to. Participants agreed or disagreed with each of the items in regards to their own behavioural inclinations based on a 7-point likert scale (see Appendix 1 for the full IP questionnaire).

Intercultural friendship orientation was measured by the first 4 items in the questionnaire, which was adapted from Yashima's factor analysis of Japanese learners' orientations (2000). This attempts to capture the motivations of students to seek out *relationships* of members from other cultural groups. The next seven items describe the concept of approach avoidance tendency, which Yashima (2002) adopted from Gudykunst (1991) and Kim (1991). These items attempt to capture the willingness to *interact* with members of different cultural groups. Interest in international vocations or activities was measured using the next 6 items and were based on a study by Tanaka, Kohyama, and Fujiwara (1991). This element attempts to capture the motivation of seeking *experience* in other cultures. Interest in foreign affairs was

represented by the last 2 items and was taken from a study of Kitagawa and Minoura (1991). These items together try to capture the interest in accumulating *knowledge* of outside cultures.

### **2.3.2. Class observations**

Each class was audio-recorded and periods of spoken participation were investigated. Thus, state-level WTC – actual WTC behaviour – is approximated by spoken participation. State-level WTC was measured in two ways: talk-time and turns of talk by one specific student per observation. Therefore state-level WTC is defined as having two parts: *student talk-time (minutes) and turns of talk*.

### **2.3.3. Post-class interview**

Immediately after each class observation, a selected student from the observed class was interviewed. For investigating influences on WTC, MacIntyre (2007) recommends a methodology which encapsulates the “moment-to moment processes that both lead to and prevent action” (p. 572). For this reason, this study attempts to capture the “moment-to-moment” motivations behind specific WTC behaviour by using stimulated recall. Stimulated recall is an introspective method that “represents a means of eliciting data about thought processes involved in carrying out a task or activity” (Gass and Mackey, 2000. p. 1). Interviewees listened to a 10 to 15 minute audio recording of their task performance in the proceeding class; during this time they were told they could pause the recording at any time if they wished to describe their thoughts. The audio recording was rewound and paused several times during the interviews by both the researcher and the interviewees, and questions were asked with the intent to elicit feelings about performances. The ultimate goal of this stimulated recall was to prompt the student to recall thoughts they had while performing a particular classroom activity, thus shedding light on thought-processes that led to observed WTC; the audio excerpts that were played for the students acted to enhance access to students’ memories.

The success of stimulated recall relies on one important assumption: actual thought processes of the task event are directly accessible and available for verbal reporting at a later time. Gass and Mackey (2000) argue that this assumption is “better justified with only a small amount of intervening time between the event and the recall” (p. 105). To ensure maximal accuracy in this study, stimulated recalls were done immediately after the conclusion of the observed

class (no longer than 2 hours after the task performance). This avoids possible inaccuracies of similar studies (for example, Cao and Philp, 2006) where days pass between event and recall, causing a greater chance that interviewees fabricate plausible explanations for their event behaviour as their memories become less clear. During the listening of the audio recorded excerpt of each student's task performance, the following questions were asked:

1. How much did you like this activity?
2. Did you enjoy this activity? Why? Why not?
3. How well do you think you performed during this activity?
4. Do you think this task was useful? Why? Why not?
5. Did you feel happy working with the other students? What did you feel happy/not happy about?

However, to encourage students to elaborate on their answers and explain their feelings at the time of the activity, several follow-up questions were asked that deviated from the script. If students appeared like they wanted to say something, but gave only short responses, questions were asked to facilitate their thought processes. If needed, the recordings were played again. The following were the most common follow-up questions:

*What specifically did you enjoy about this activity?*

*I see you are laughing. What happened that made you laugh?*

*Why were you embarrassed?*

*You said you learned a lot. What did you learn from this activity?*

*Can you remember any other feelings?*

If responses were still short or if the student answered with "I don't remember", their comments were accepted and the next question was asked; the follow-up questions were used only to facilitate students' thoughts, not to *fish* for explanations.

In the second part of the interview, the student responded to questions asked about methodology and class cohesiveness. The following questions were asked, not necessarily in the order given:

6. What was the best part of this class? Why?

## Chapter 2. Method

7. What was the worst part of this class? Why?
8. What was your favourite activity?
9. What was your least favourite (the worst) activity?
10. Did you feel the other students helped you?
11. How comfortable were you with the other students?
12. Did you ever feel nervous during class? When? Why?
13. Did you feel other students speak English better than you did?

Again, follow-up questions and rephrasing of questions were necessary in order to prompt certain recollections. The most common of which were:

*What part of the role-play didn't you like?*

*You said you liked all of the activities in the class. Is one activity more memorable?*

*Why were you comfortable talking to that student?*

*I noticed you do a lot of shadowing in class. Why do you think this helps you?*

*Why does the teacher make you feel nervous?*

The last part of the interview elicited general information about anxiety, perceived competence, and motivation. The following questions were asked:

14. Why are you learning English?
15. How good are you at learning English?
16. What do you think of your speaking skills in English?
17. How would you describe your personality?
18. Do you like to speak English during class?
19. How seriously do you take studying English?

Common rewording and facilitating follow-up questions were:

*Do you think you learn fast/quickly/slowly? Why?*

*Do you think your listening and writing skills are better than your speaking skills? Why?*

*You didn't speak very much this activity. Why not?*

*Why don't you speak English at all outside of class? Do you think this is not important?*

#### **2.3.4. Methodology observation scheme**

The degree to which language activities were communicative was also measured using a classroom observation scheme. The categories are based on Littlewood's (2007) methodological continuum which includes activities ranging from those with a focus on discrete forms with no attention to meaning, through those activities in which the focus is clearly on the communication of meanings. After the observations, Littlewood's categories were altered to include all possible activities done during these classes. The final categories are outlined in Table 3.

Activity type	Definition	Example activities
1. Non-communicative learning	Activities that are strictly form focussed or teacher-centered.	Teacher explanations/instructions Pronunciation drills; extended corrections
2. Pre-communicative language practice	Activities that are still focussed on language but are oriented towards meaning.	Question and answer practice; making sentences with vocabulary words
3. Communicative language practice	Activities that make use of taught structures but are used to convey information.	Information exchange and class surveys; using grammatical structures to describe a picture
4. Structured communication	Activities that are primarily meaning-focussed, but the situation is controlled by the teacher	Summaries; reading of authentic material; structured role plays; listening to authentic conversations
5. Authentic communication	Activities that are have a strong focus on communicating messages and the corresponding language is unpredictable	Discussion; problem-solving; content-based tasks, unconstrained role-plays

**Table 3. Categories for describing classroom language activities**

The amount of time each class spent on each activity type (1 through 5) was tabulated and represented as a percentage of total class time.

## Chapter 3. Analysis

The initial analysis was done with the first research question in mind:

*How does state-level WTC differ across three different sized classes?*

To assess differences between class types, talk-time and turns of talk from 6 students in each class type were combined and averaged to give three separate pairs of values which represented state WTC for “one-on-one” classes, “small group” classes, and “large group” classes. The mean and standard deviation for talk-time and turns of talk were calculated for each class size. Ideally, a Friedman test would be used to assess the difference between the three groups of data. A Friedman test is a non-parametric equivalent of ANOVA used to detect differences in treatments across multiple test attempts. However, the same participants are not being observed in the three different class groups; therefore, statistical tests such as the Friedman test could not be performed.

The next part of the analysis addressed the second research question:

*What are the differences in language activities between three different sized classes?*

The amount of time each class spent on each activity type (1 through 5) was tabulated and represented as a percentage of total class time. The type of activities performed as a percentage of total class time were averaged for the 6 observed classes in each of the three class types. The three sets of ratios were used for comparative purposes. This will address the activity differences on an inter-group level.

Finally, the last part of this study addressed the final research question:

*What factors contribute to state-level WTC in three different sized classrooms?*

To address this question, analysis was done less on the level of class type and more on the individual level; that is, quantitative and qualitative data between individuals were used to highlight individual learner differences within each class type.

The variables *acceptance of CLT* and IP were primarily investigated as two possible factors which influenced students' WTC. In addition to showing the communicative elements of each class type, questions 8 and 9 of the post-class interview asked: “What was your favourite activity?” and “What was your least favourite activity?” This provided insight into

what each student found was the most acceptable and least acceptable activities in the lesson, and indicated the degree of *acceptance of CLT*. Student choices were matched with the level of communicative activity as described by in Table 3. On an inter-group level, the mean, mode, and standard deviation of the most and least favoured activity type indicate the degree of *acceptance of CLT* for each of the 3 class types. The researcher understood that this may not have provided sufficient data to make statistical claims, so to increase validity, questions 6 and 7 were asked: “What was the best part of this class?” and “What was the worst part of this class?” Questions 8 and 9 and questions 6 and 7 were asked at quite different times in the interview, and the researcher noted whether the same answers were given. Only twice in the interviews did students give different answers to the two pairs of equivalent questions, and in those cases, the interviewees were engaged in a dialogue about which activity they preferred and why. However, it should be noted that *acceptance of CLT* was judged purely on interview data.

To measure IP for each student, answers to the questionnaire were indicated on the 7-point Likert scale and were converted to a percentage based on the maximum possible value (either 1 or 7). The average of all 19 items resulted in the IP value for a each student – 100% being the maximum value for IP; 0% being the lowest possible value.

In order to focus on the relationship between *acceptance of CLT*, IP, and WTC on the individual level, a correlation matrix was calculated between talk-time/talk-turns, IP, and *acceptance of CLT* using Spearman’s rank order correlation in order to give quantitative relationships. The resulting Spearman’s correlation coefficients for each variable pairing show a nonparametric relationship, with 1 being a perfect positive monotone relationship and -1 being a perfect negative monotone relationship. This was done using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Qualitative data from each of the learners’ interviews were used to illustrate reasons for *acceptance of CLT* and IP results.

In addition to *acceptance of CLT* and IP, other factors which influenced WTC became evident during the interviews. To facilitate the analysis of the interview data, each student interview was transcribed; then, the data were reduced to sections where themes were salient and could easily be coded. Table 4 illustrates each code, the themes which correspond with each code, and an example sentence from the interview transcription which clearly aligns itself with the code. Each code represents a common factor influencing WTC as mentioned by participants during the interview.

Code	Themes	Example from interviews
Topic relevancy	Student shows an interest/disinterest in the topic or the topic is relevant to his/her life	<i>...is not interesting....I don't use English for HR.</i>
Anxiety	Student expresses anxiety while recalling an activity	<i>He want me to perfect, I feel , so I am nervous</i>
Group cohesiveness	Student expresses dislike/like towards working with other students	<i>...everybody knows a little and we can share, like a real discussion</i>
Level of activity difficulty	Student expresses a lack of ability to do something because the activity or language associated with the activity was too difficult	<i>It is very difficult to me. I don't understand many things</i>
Students' perception of teacher participation	Student explains how he/she feels towards teacher-talk	<i>Sometimes the teacher helps me say sentences correctly</i>
Preparedness for activity	Student tells how preparedness or lack thereof affected performance	<i>I prepared for homework so I think I can say about it</i>
Immediate need for English	Student discusses issues outside of the classroom which create a need for English	<i>I have many projects with customers in America</i>
Methodology	Student discusses his/her preference for a style of teaching during the class	<i>I learned something new every time in role-plays.</i>

Table 4. Coding of interview data

## Chapter 4. Results

The results of the three objectives of this study are outlined below. For the complete individual data, see Appendix 4.

### 4.1. Inter-group comparisons of WTC

Class observations revealed that as class size increased, state-level WTC decreased; this was true for both talk-time and turns of talk. The results, which include the mean and standard deviation of all 6 students in each class type for each part of WTC, are shown in Table 5.

Class Type	Talk-time (minutes) - mean	Talk-time (minutes) - standard deviation	Turns of talk (minutes) - mean	Turns of talk (minutes) - standard deviation
One-one-one	22.22	6.26	202	37
Small group	13.73	3.49	123	39
Large group	8.90	3.17	74	23

**Table 5. WTC – Talk-time and turns of talk**

As can be seen from the table, talk-time decreases by 38% from one-on-one classes to small group classes, and decreases by another 35% from small group classes to large group classes. Similarly, turns of talk decreases by 39% from one-on-one classes to small group classes, and decreases by another 40% from small group classes to large group classes. These results are understandable as a student in a larger class would have less opportunity to speak than students in a smaller class. Interestingly, the standard deviation of talk-time for one-on-one classes is nearly double that of the other two class types. This follows the expectation that participation is more variable in the completely separate classes consisting of a single student, whereas all students in group classes are more likely to exhibit similar participation levels.

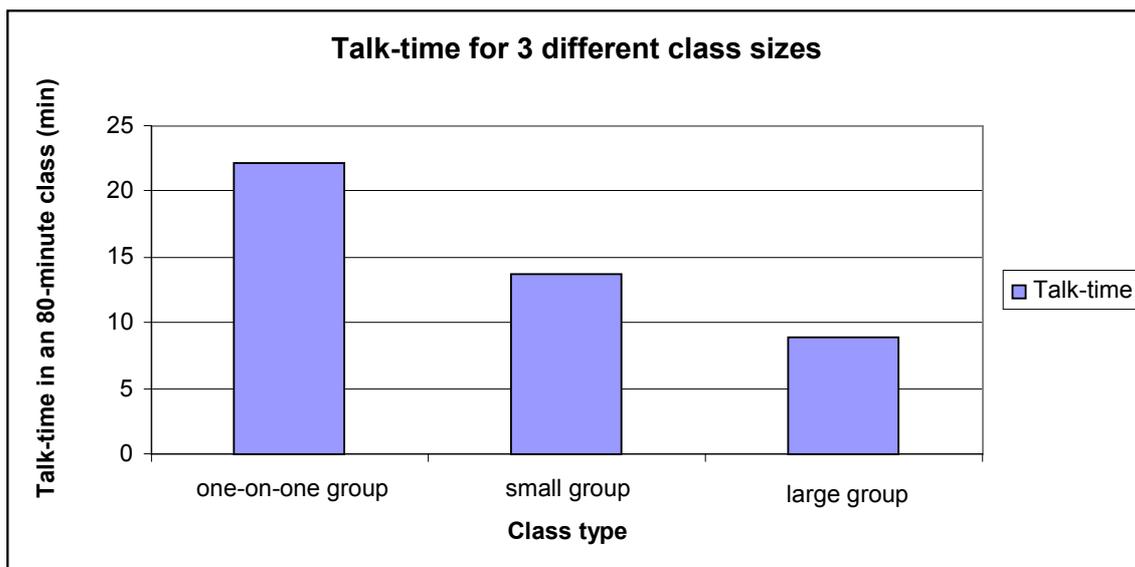


Figure 1. Comparison of talk-time for 3 classes of different size.

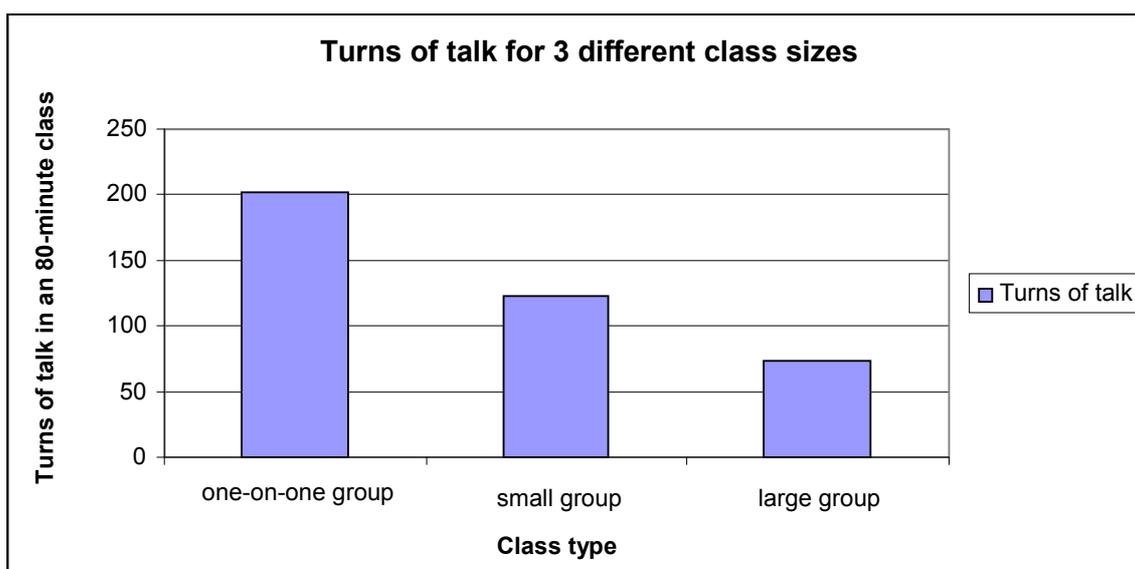


Figure 2. Comparison of turns of talk for 3 different class sizes

Talk-time and turns of talk are presented graphically in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively. As seen above, talk-time and turns of talk decrease as classes get larger. A further quantitative analysis of this data reveals the average talk-time per turn of talk in each context: 6.6 seconds for one-on-one classes, 10.1 seconds for small group classes, and 7.2 seconds for large group classes. The low value of 6.6 seconds can be attributed to the larger number of one word or short phrase utterances from students, either to confirm what the teacher has said

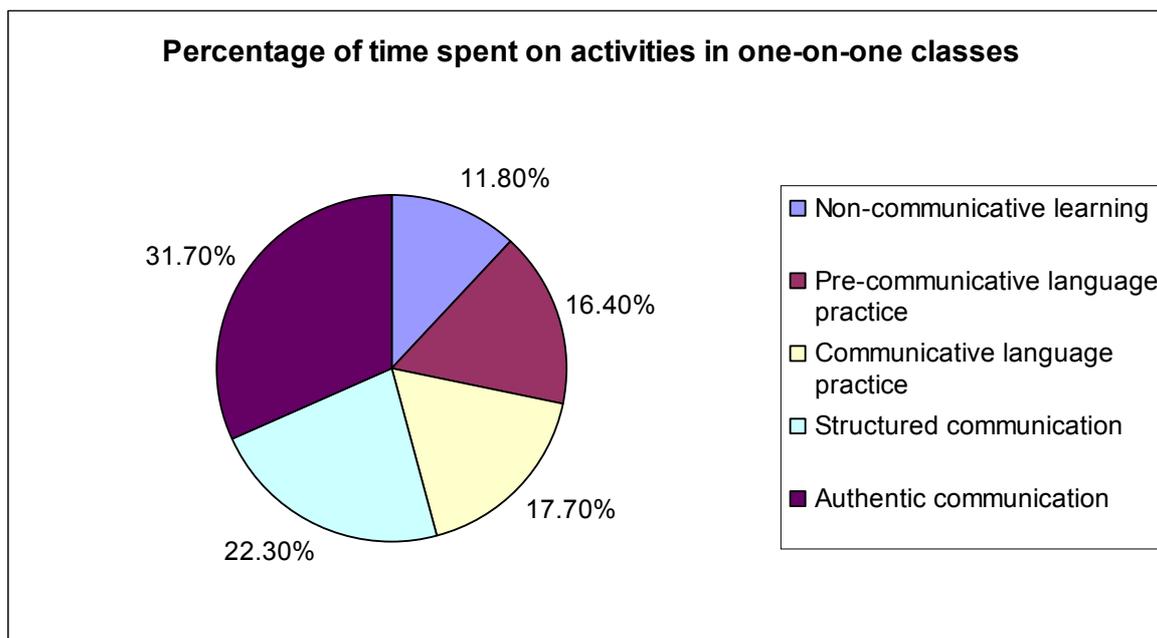
or simply an unexpanded upon response. In contrast, when in the presence of other classmates, students in group classes may be motivated to make full use of their limited participation time by planning more elaborate utterances, hence producing longer turns of talk.

## **4.2. Inter-group communicative differences**

The second research question called for an investigation into the differences in language activities performed in each class type. Based on the classroom observation scheme of communicative activity types outlined in Table 3, there seemed to be a clear trend: as class size increased, there were both more authentic communicative activities and more non-communicative activities performed, but less language practice and structured communicative activities performed.

### **4.2.1. One-on-one classes**

The percentage of time spent on each activity type for one-on-one classes is shown graphically in Figure 3. As can be seen, there is a relatively steady increase in the amount of time spent on types of activities from non-communicative learning through to authentic communication. It was observed that one-on-one classes followed a methodology of instruction whereby the teacher spends the smallest amount of time explaining or lecturing, increasing the amount of time spent on more communicative practice, and ending with the most amount of time spent on communicative activities. This sequence of performance was how the teacher prepared students for authentic communication.



**Figure 3. Language activities in a one-on-one class**

#### 4.2.2. Small group classes

Figure 4 shows the amount of time small group classes spent on communicative activities during total class time. Comparing this to Figure 3, we can see significant differences: an increase in the amount of time spent on authentic communication (over 50%), and double the amount of time spent on teacher-centered, non-communicative learning. Much of class time was spent on either discussions and open-ended role-plays, or explanations, corrections, and instructions. Only 11.3% of total class time was spent on activities that focussed on practicing language. It was evident that less language practice was done when preparing students for authentic communication.

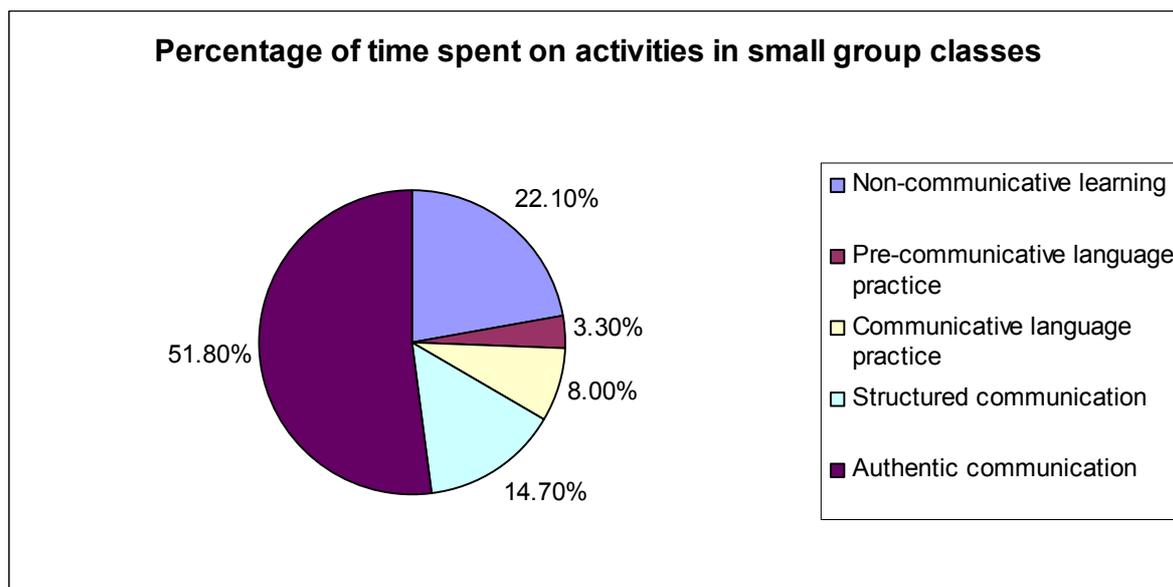
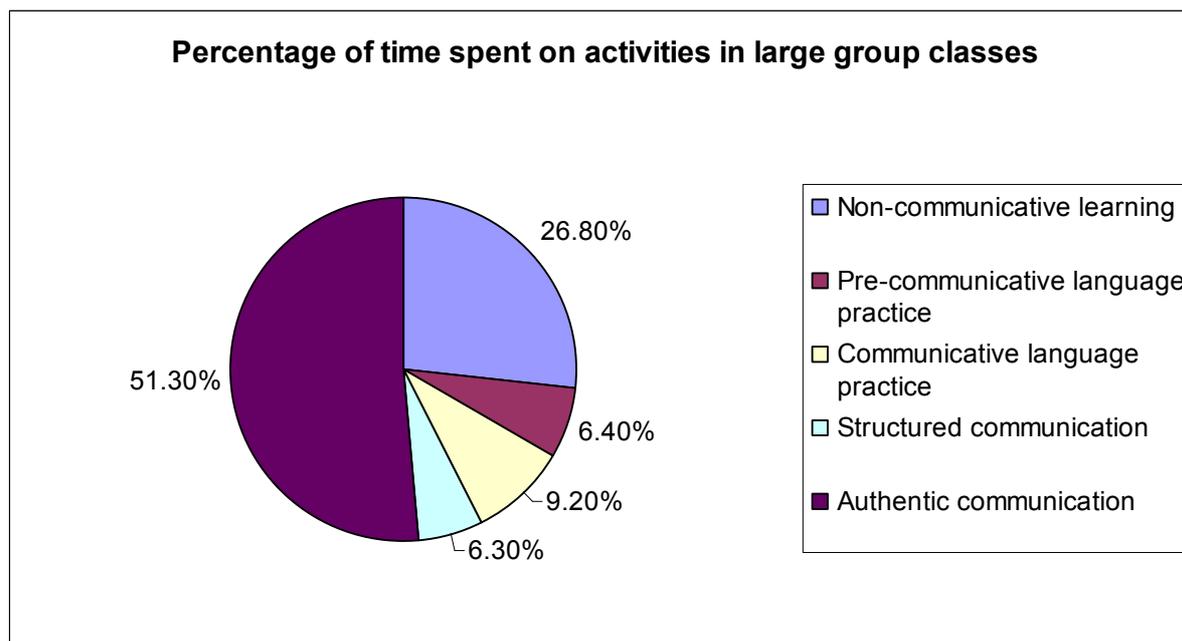


Figure 4. Language activities in small classes

#### 4.2.3. The large group

Figure 5 depicts the classroom situation for a large group. Again, like in the small group context, more than half of class time was spent on authentic communication, and a small amount of time was spent on language practice (15.6%). Of particular significance is the considerable further decrease in time spent on structured communication, such as restricted role-plays or listening activities, and the increase in teacher-centered, non-communicative learning. It was observed that the teacher in the large group frequently led discussions, which often shifted from class discussion to teacher-led lectures and explanations and back to class discussions again.



**Figure 5. Language activities in the large group class**

### 4.3. Factors which predict WTC

The third research question investigates what factors affect WTC behaviour of students in three different sized classes. In addition to quantitative measures, qualitative data from post-class interviews were used to explain factors that influence WTC behaviour in the classroom.

To more acutely focus on how individual learner differences account for state WTC, interview excerpts from students with extremely high or low WTC behaviour are contrasted.

Students who recorded the highest and lowest talk-time in the one-on-one classes were student 6 (29.9 minutes) and student 2 (14.2) respectively; student 12 (19.2 minutes) and student 11 (9.8 minutes) for the small group classes; and student 15 (13.3 minutes) and student 13 (3.8 minutes) for the large group.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was calculated between talk-time, turns of talk, *acceptance of CLT*, and IP for individual students in each of the 3 class types. A correlation matrix for each class group is shown in Table's 6, 9, and 12. This shows the quantitative relationship between these factors. The interview categories of "immediate need for English" and "topic relevancy" are helpful in qualitatively explaining some of the IP correlation values. In addition, the category of "methodology" illustrates individual differences in the

*acceptance of CLT* correlation values. Other situational factors apparent in interviews will be used to explain how IP and *acceptance of CLT* relate to WTC in each class size.

#### 4.3.1. One-on-one classes

As can be seen from Table 6, Spearman rank-order correlation indicated a statistically significant correlation between IP and talk-time ( $r = 0.812$ ) – as the IP of a student increases, so does the amount of time that the student is likely to talk. Although there was a trend towards significance for a correlation between *acceptance of CLT* and talk-time ( $r = 0.621$ ), no correlation was found between turns of talk and IP or between turns of talk and *acceptance of CLT*.

	Variable	Statistical Item	WTC (Talk-time)	WTC (Turns of talk)	Acceptance of CLT	IP
Spearman's correlation matrix	WTC (Talk-time)	Correlation Coefficient, r	1.000	-.086	.621	<b>.812*</b>
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.872	.188	.050
		N	6	6	6	6
	WTC (Turns of talk)	Correlation Coefficient	-.086	1.000	-.414	-.058
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.872		.414	.913
		N	6	6	6	6
	Acceptance of CLT	Correlation Coefficient	.621	-.414	1.000	.315
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.188	.414		.543
		N	6	6	6	6
	IP	Correlation Coefficient	<b>.812*</b>	-.058	.315	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.913	.543	
		N	6	6	6	6
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

**Table 6. Spearman's correlation matrix for one-on-one classes**

#### 4.3.1.1. Acceptance of CLT

During post-class interviews, students were asked to explain what their favourite and least favourite activities in the lesson were. Their favoured and least favoured activities were matched to a value from 1 to 5 using the categories from Table 3. The mean, mode, and standard deviation of each class type's favoured and least favoured activity are shown in Table 7. Most students in one-on-one classes tended to favour certain communicative activities, but they also disliked other activities that fell under the umbrella of authentic or structured communication. This ambiguous result, coupled with the fact that *acceptance of CLT* was not a significant factor on WTC, indicates that observed WTC in one-on-one classes cannot be explained through classroom methodology. Nevertheless, students' comments shed some light on differences in CLT acceptance.

	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
Favoured activity	4.3	4	0.52
Least favoured activity	4.0	4	1.10

**Table 7. Most and least favoured type of activity for one-on-one classes**

Student 6 favoured authentic communication (5), preferring situations where he could communicate his "ideas": "I like summarize because I can try to speaking...speak the ideas. It is good if teacher doesn't explain too much my wrong point." Apparent here is the notion of learning English for communication purposes with less attention to accuracy. In contrast, student 2 preferred more structured communication (4) because she wanted more guidance and correction: "I don't like free-talking. I want the teacher to teach me to talking." However, she also favoured role-plays, recognizing that, at least through structured role-plays, language can be "learned" through communication: "I can practice in real conversation...this my weak point. Also...I learned something new every time in role-plays." Student 6 also enjoyed communicative activities because she was put in practical situations: "Sometimes I can't use [language] in situation. Teacher gave me very good situation to use...driving in a car, and I make request and give advice to driver...it's so good." One can conclude that student 6's

much higher WTC could be partially attributed to his higher acceptance of CLT, but this is unclear.

#### 4.3.1.2. International posture

The significant correlation between IP and state-level WTC (talk-time) in one-on-one classes gives a clearer description of causes of participation. Student 6, who scored highest on the IP questionnaire of all students in one-on-one classes, mentioned he had an immediate need to learn English, which was related to international business and communication with clients: “I must send the email using English to the America everyday... and maybe I will go to China, so I need English.” However, student 2, lacked contact with people from different culture groups: “I don’t know people to speak this English at work, so I think I will forget.” These examples point to the impact IP may have on learners’ motivation to use English in class, which may to partially account for WTC levels.

#### 4.3.1.3. Situational factors

In addition to *acceptance of CLT* and IP, Table 8 shows the most commonly mentioned influences on state-like WTC behaviour for all students in one-on-one classes. Topic relevancy, level of activity difficulty, and anxiety were the most mentioned factors during interviews.

Factors	Number of students who mentioned the factor	Number of times the factor was mentioned
Topic relevancy	6	10
Anxiety	6	17
Group cohesiveness	4	5
Level of activity difficulty	5	10
Perception of teacher participation	4	9
Preparedness for activities	2	3

Table 8. Factors from interviews which affect WTC for one-on-one classes

All students in one-on-one classes mentioned topic relevancy as a contributor to WTC. Student 2 participated in a role-play which required her to interview the teacher for a university teaching position; she explains her poor performance in this way: “I don’t know anything for university teaching. He ask about benefits of job, and I don’t know what the benefits of university is. The teacher look like he is surprised to my answer.” If topics are interesting or relevant, students tend to talk more. Student 2 seemed particularly sensitive to this variable.

Furthermore, student 2 was among the students who complained that the difficulty of the activity and language associated with the activity was too high; this seemed to be a significant cause of anxiety for her: “I learn speak words only. I am too bad so can’t do role-play.” If learners find language associated with an activity too difficult and therefore do not speak, this is technically not a volitional process, as learners are not reluctant to produce language, but do not have the *ability* to produce language. However, this factor is included because it can damage students’ self-esteem – a factor known to affect anxiety (Donato and McCormic, 1994; Young, 1990). Student 6 was the only student in this class type who did not mention the difficulty of activity.

For one-on-one classes, teacher-induced anxiety seemed to be the strongest factor. In a one-on-one class, the intimate teacher-student interaction seems to elevate levels of anxiety. Student 2 mentions: “If I waiting for an answer, I gotten more nervous. And I see the teacher, and he waiting for me, so it’s hard.” All students mentioned this type of fear of exposure to the teacher as a problem; even student 6 stated: “the teacher want me to do perfectly...I can’t, so I think he disappointed. He want me to perfect, I feel ... so I am nervous”. This shows the pressure some students have when interacting with the teacher.

#### **4.3.2. Small group classes**

For the small group context, Table 9 shows that there is a significant correlation between turns of talk and talk-time ( $r = 0.829$ ), turns of talk and *acceptance of CLT* ( $r = 0.926$ ), turns of talk and IP ( $r = 0.829$ ). Furthermore, the relationship between talk-time and *acceptance of CLT* ( $r = 0.772$ ) and between talk-time and IP ( $r = 0.6$ ) are both approaching significance.

	Variable	Statistical item	WTC (Talk-time)	WTC (Turns of talk)	Acceptance of CLT	IP	
Spearman's correlation matrix	WTC (Talk-time)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	<b>.829<sup>*</sup></b>	.772	.600	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.042	.072	.208	
		N	6	6	6	6	
	WTC (Turns of talk)	Correlation Coefficient	<b>.829<sup>*</sup></b>	1.000	<b>.926<sup>**</sup></b>	.829 <sup>*</sup>	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.042		.008	.042	
		N	6	6	6	6	
	Acceptance of CLT	Correlation Coefficient	.772	<b>.926<sup>**</sup></b>	1.000	.617	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	.008		.192	
		N	6	6	6	6	
	IP	Correlation Coefficient	.600	<b>.829<sup>*</sup></b>	.617	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.208	.042	.192		
		N	6	6	6	6	
	*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						
	**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Table 9. Spearman's correlation matrix for small group classes

#### 4.3.2.1. Acceptance of CLT

As can be seen in Table 10, most participants from small group classes chose authentic communication (5) as their favoured activity (including student 12), two students preferred structured communication (4), one student favoured communicative language practice (3),

and only student 11 favoured pre-communicative language practice (2). The mean for small groups' least favoured activities were lower at 3.67, compared to 4.0 for favoured activities. However, the modes are the same indicating that authentic communication can produce both very high and very low participation.

	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
Favoured activity	4.2	5	1.17
Least favoured activity	3.67	5	2.07

**Table 10. Most and least favoured type of activity for the small group**

Interview data support the significant correlation between *acceptance of CLT* and WTC. Student 12 seemed to understand that communicative activities are inherently valuable when learning English, and therefore chose to speak more: “In Japan I have to speak to improve.” In response to whether or a not student 12 liked speaking in class: “Of course...speaking is more important than grammar lesson.” However, student 11 illustrates an attitude towards learning that may have been partially responsible for producing quite low WTC behaviour. Regarding activity preference, he states: “[I like] practicing small grammar sentences. Practicing small... simple sentence for grammar is good. I need to make myself more confidence.” Similarly, in response to why communicative activities are not favoured, student 11 stated: “I don’t speak [because] I need to prepare before doing. We must use difficult language. Need to practice before doing that.” When student 11 did indicate a willingness to communicate during a discussion, he downplayed the value of authentic communication: “I was only talking, so not really important activity I think ...maybe I didn’t learn anything because just talking.” Other than student 11, students generally had a distain for grammar focussed activities. Student 12 stated: “If we talk about grammar, I get boring. Today lesson I can be funny and imagine...use my imagine...imagination...so we can smile and say anything”. This contrast illustrates an important difference in attitudes towards CLT: student 12 views the creativity he is afforded during authentication as a learning opportunity, and therefore uses the opportunity during these activities to speak more; student 11 believes these activities are of no learning value, and therefore speaks less.

#### 4.3.2.2. International posture

The highest IP score of all students across all groups belonged to student 12 of a small group class, which could partially account for her high WTC. Her example also serves to highlight the significant relationship between IP and WTC (turns of talk). Student 12 expressed her desire to live in other countries and to expand her circle of international friends: “[I learn English] for fun. I speak to my friends and travelling. I maybe move to Thailand soon or Australia...so I want to make [international] friends.” Most students in this group acknowledged that their company and jobs had overseas connections; however, student 11 did not state this as an immediate need to learn. Student 11, mentioned “TOEIC” as a reason for studying English. Also notable is student 11’s acknowledgement that speaking is not assessed in the TOEIC test, which may have adversely affected his motivation to speak in class. Student 12 seems to be driven by an integrative motivation of wanting to interact with other L2 language communities, while student 11’s motivation is more instrumental.

#### 4.3.2.3. Situational factors

Table 11 shows the most commonly mentioned influences on state-like WTC behaviour for small group classes. Topic relevancy, group cohesiveness, anxiety, and perception of teacher participation seemed to be most influential in this context.

Factors	Number of students who mentioned the factor	Number of times the factor was mentioned
Topic relevancy	5	11
Anxiety	6	8
Group cohesiveness	6	24
Level of activity difficulty	4	6
Perception of teacher participation	4	7
Preparedness for activities	2	5

**Table 11. Factors from interviews which affect WTC for small groups**

In small group classes, group cohesiveness was mentioned significantly more than any other factor. This seems to have been the deciding factor of whether or not students preferred an authentic communication activity in class. Student 11 suggested that there may be problems when the whole class participates in one activity together: “I don’t like discussion for a whole class. I like more role-play in 2 groups...because I have to speak loud and I can’t speak slow.” This indicates that student 11 perceives group cohesiveness in the class to be low, which prevents him from speaking in a loud, clear, well-paced voice. His WTC is stunted because he feels threatened or exposed when participating in a group. However, most comments reflected a high cohesiveness within the groups. Student 12, who happened to be in the same class as student 11, commented on the how the dynamic of the whole class spurred participation: “I have many idea and experience about that, and everybody knows a little and we can share, like a real discussion...it’s interesting” These opposing points of view indicate that group cohesiveness is somewhat relative to the participant. The following comment is revealing about student 11’s attitude towards working in a group: “They are good people...I like to listen to them...but they are not my teacher. Only my teacher helps me.” It seems that creating group cohesiveness requires students to believe that student-student collaboration is beneficial.

Topic relevancy is almost as indicative of WTC for the small group classes as it was for one-on-one classes. Student 12 expressed his need for lessons to be related to his work: “[The role play] is not interesting. [student 10] work for HR department....but I work at sales, so I don’t use English for HR.” Similarly, student 11 directly states the relationship between class topic and his participation: “If I not very interested, I don’t want to learn...I am quiet and falling sleep.” All students in this context felt that irrelevant classroom topics were a barrier to WTC.

Less time spent directly interacting with the teacher could explain the drop in anxiety comments when compared to the one-on-one context. However, as indicated by student 11’s above comments, anxiety can be brought about by exposure to the class. Student 11, regarding a controlled role-play in front of the class, noted: “So there are...many ...pauses...if it pauses for a long time, I get nervous.” Students in a group context suffer from the compound anxiety of performing in front of other students as well as the teacher.

### 4.3.3. The large group

Table 12 shows there is a significant relationship between *acceptance of CLT* and all three other variables. Furthermore, turns of talk and talk-time has a very strong correlation ( $r = 0.943$ ). Although not significant, Spearman rank-order correlation shows that the relationship between IP and talk-time and between IP and turns of talk are approaching significance ( $r = 0.754$  for both).

Variable	Statistical item	WTC (Talk-time)	WTC (Turns of talk)	Acceptance of CLT	IP	
Spearman's correlation matrix	WTC (Talk-time)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	<b>.943**</b>	<b>.828*</b>	.754
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.005	.042	.084
		N	6	6	6	6
	WTC (Turns of talk)	Correlation Coefficient	<b>.943**</b>	1.000	<b>.828*</b>	.754
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005		.042	.084
		N	6	6	6	6
	Acceptance of CLT	Correlation Coefficient	<b>.828*</b>	<b>.828*</b>	1.000	<b>.840*</b>
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.042		.036
		N	6	6	6	6
	IP	Correlation Coefficient	.754	.754	<b>.840*</b>	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	.084	.036	
		N	6	6	6	6
	**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
	*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

**Table 12. Spearman's correlation matrix for large group classes**

#### 4.3.3.1. Acceptance of CLT

No students in the large group classes favoured structured communicative activities; this is not a surprising result since only 6.3% of the class was spent doing this activity type. Table 13 shows that more clearly than in the other two contexts, students in the large group class (including student 15, but excluding student 13) heavily favoured activities that focussed on authentic communication with a more striking dislike for non-communicative activities, indicating a high *acceptance of CLT*. It is interesting to note that there were more non-communicative activities but just as much authentic communication in the large group than in the small group context, so students' choices for favoured and least favoured activities provide a clearer indication of preference between the two extreme activities.

	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
Favoured activity	4.2	5	1.03
Least favoured activity	2.3	1	2.07

**Table 13. Most and least favoured type of activity for the large group**

Interview data shows that student 15, who had recorded the highest WTC in the large class, also had strong positive feelings towards CLT; on the other hand, student 13, who recorded the lowest WTC, had negative feelings towards CLT – this is very much in line with significant correlation between *acceptance of CLT* and WTC (talk-time and turns of talk). Student 15 enjoyed the discussion style classes because he had the freedom to talk about what they wanted: “I maybe know a lot of news for computer systems so I am very interested in the talking...discussion.” Furthermore, student 15 implies that the explicit teaching of grammar is redundant: “I learn all grammar [in] high school and elementary school. I sometimes need small freshening on my grammar but it is in my mind [already]” However, student 13's tendency to not speak during discussions can be linked to his negative attitude towards CLT: “Maybe my grammar and everything was not correct. I want to use better English to say my idea, and [so] I didn't [say anything].” His preference to focus on language practice activities clearly did not fit in well with this class.

#### 4.3.3.2. International posture

Both student 15 and student 13 work for the same company, and as a result, were connected to international business in various ways; however, student 15 showed a significantly higher interest in foreign affairs than student 13, as indicated by their IP scores – student 15 registered the highest score, and student 13 registered the second lowest. Because most of class time with this group focussed on authentic communication, topic of discussion was an important factor that contributed to WTC. Foreign affairs issues such as trade with China and the Iraq war were discussed. In the interview, student 15 mentioned reading an American newspaper as a way to prepare for class: “I read Huffington post newspaper for homework so I had many ideas.” Unsurprisingly, discussing current events was his favourite activity during class. He also had an intimate connection with foreigners at work: “I have many projects with customers in America. System upgrade counselling last month with client was all in English.” In contrast, student 13 did not mention an immediate need for learning English and participated rarely in discussion topics.

#### 4.3.3.3. Other WTC factors

Of the factors listed in Table 14, topic relevancy, group cohesiveness, and preparedness for activities were the most commonly mentioned influences on WTC behaviour.

Factors	Number of students who mentioned the factor	Number of times the factor was mentioned
Topic relevancy	5	10
Anxiety	4	7
Group cohesiveness	6	21
Level of language difficulty	3	5
Perception of teacher participation	4	9
Preparedness for activities	5	12

**Table 14. Factors from interviews which affect WTC for the large group**

In contrast to the other 2 class types, anxiety seemed to be less of an influence on students' WTC behaviour. Student 15 comments: "Like for discussion it is free, so I can make mistake and it doesn't matter." These "free" activities may have served to alleviate anxiety, but whether or not these activities were successful in achieving high levels of participation depended much more group cohesiveness.

Because of the larger number of students in the large group class, group cohesiveness was mentioned more than in the other two contexts, indicating that it is a significant contributor to WTC. Student 13, along with two other students, preferred the dynamic of paired role-plays and discussions as opposed to whole class activities: "If all class are talking...big group...same time... I am only talking and no one talks to me, so it is better for pairing discussion." Student 15, however, felt at ease during whole class activities. The concept of "sharing knowledge" was explicitly mentioned during his interview: "We both have a lot of knowledge ...and we share it in class about network news...Google applications and so on." However, student 13 did not feel at ease nearly as much: "Everybody watching. This big class discussion is maybe time for learning from teacher. Teacher [should] explain and give advice for us." Again, it seems that group cohesiveness hinges on the positive attitude of working together.

Interestingly, the idea of lack of preparedness for activities was mentioned in the large class significantly more than in other class types. This was most likely because there was very little language practice or controlled communicative activities done. Student 13 commented on the lack of activities that effectively prepared him for the very communicative activities: "I need practice before I speak well in role-plays." There was, however, one positive feedback regarding preparedness: Student 15 mentioned that reading an American newspaper adequately prepared him for discussions: "I prepared for homework so I think I can say about it." Including more communicative practice in the large classes, it seems, could surely boost students' WTC.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion and pedagogical implications**

The results from this study indicate that class size is a significant influence on an individual's WTC in a second language classroom. On the surface, this result is expected, and supports Wells and Chang-Well's (1992) assertion that smaller classes are more conducive for producing higher participation. However, the more interesting question this paper raises is: What *makes* students less willing to communicate as class-size increases? *Acceptance of CLT* and IP were two important factors that were investigated and warrant further discussion.

### **5.1. Can CLT be used to overcome disadvantages in larger classes?**

Coleman (1989) suggested the negative effects that larger classes have on participation could be overcome by employing activities in the classroom which encourage interaction; namely, methodologies that support CLT. Student 12 and student 15 from the group classes in this study exemplify how this could be true; both students showed WTC behaviour that were at levels with most students in one-on-one classes, and both favoured activities involving authentic communication. In fact, overall, authentic communication was the most favoured activity type for small and large group classes. Furthermore, *acceptance of CLT* was highest for the large group. This result gives hope to the effectiveness of CLT in Japanese EFL language classrooms and contradicts the argument of those who state that CLT goes against the educational culture of East Asian students, and is therefore resisted (Rao, 2001; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Takanashi, 2004). This study's findings are more in line with the idea that "Asian students do not, in fact, wish to be spoonfed with facts from an all-knowing 'fountain of knowledge'" (Littlewood, 2000).

However, this study also reveals that a positive attitude towards CLT is essential for producing this ideal classroom situation. Student 11 and student 13 encapsulate the traditional Japanese view that second language learning is a process of knowledge formation which can only be transmitted from teacher to student; both students exhibited very low WTC behaviour when CLT methodologies were implemented, and both had a negative attitude towards very communicative activities. An attitude shift towards learning English as a means of communication is, therefore, in order. One way a teacher can help students do this is to explicitly inform students of the benefits of CLT, particularly the strong form of CLT; in other words, teachers can facilitate an attitude change towards a more positive acceptance of

CLT by making clear that participation is a proven path to language learning success, and this is most easily achieved through communicative activities that involve other students.

In addition, this study also indicates that in order to effectively implement CLT, teachers need to consider four important factors. First, group cohesiveness needs to be established. Convincing students that working together in groups is linguistically beneficial, is an important attitudinal change and, as Wen and Clement (2003) claim, an important social consideration for East Asian students in enhancing group solidarity. However, group cohesiveness can weaken if students are required to engage in speaking activities that expose their inadequacies. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) report that this causes feelings of “fear, or even panic” (p. 128). Putting students into smaller groups or pairings can aid in easing of some of this fear. Secondly, because authentic communication is more cognitively demanding than structured communication practice and requires the added pressure of online processing, sufficient preparation may be needed for some students. Before initiating discussions or role-plays, activating background knowledge, eliciting key vocabulary, practicing relevant language forms, or repeating the activity multiple times may serve to alleviate harmful anxiety associated with deep-end performances. Thirdly, teacher participation that doesn’t facilitate classroom interaction decreases WTC. Too much non-communicative learning encourages students to be passive learners and takes away opportunities for students to communicate meanings. Lastly, classroom topics that are relevant to the group’s interests and immediate needs tend to lead to more student involvement. For this particular study, it was observed that topics covering international business and current events served a dual purpose: they tended to ignite participation as this topic was in line with students’ careers, and they also served to highlight a main purpose of using English – to communicate across cultures.

## **5.2. Why is international posture important?**

MacIntyre (2007) states that “the major motivation to learn another language is to develop a communicative relationship with people from another cultural group.” The results of this study clearly support both this statement and past research efforts in this field (Yashima et al. 2002, 2004). Yashima et al. (2004) argue that students who are “internationally oriented” or have a “greater interest in international affairs, occupations, and activities” are more willing to communicate in the L2 (pp. 141–142). Student 12, student 15, and student 6 from this study provide perfect evidence to support this claim; these students exhibited both the highest

WTC behaviour and the highest IP for their class type. All four elements that make up the attitudinal construct of IP – 1) international friendship orientation, 2) intergroup approach-avoidance tendency, 3) interest in international vocations, and 4) interest in foreign affairs – are very relevant to participants in this study and have a significant influence on their WTC.

All participants are mid-career professionals who work for large Japanese companies, where IP is beneficial for success in the workplace. L'estrangue points out there is an imminent fear within Japan that they will be “under represented in the international community” if its leaders are not able to speak English “directly with their counterparts” (as cited in Phan, 2005, p. 11); as a result, many companies are requiring employees to strengthen international relationships. Students in this study mentioned China, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and the United States as countries that they were intimately connected to through their work. Furthermore, students revealed that their ability to engage in communication with overseas branches and customers on topics such as technology and politics enhanced their ability to do their jobs. Some students talked about their experiences of being sent overseas for extended periods of time and how this has changed their global cultural perspective. Two students noted that through being exposed to different cultures in their work setting, they have developed an interest in making “international friends” and have considered permanently moving overseas. Among all 24 participants, there was a significant amount of interest in international friendship, vocations, affairs, and communication. However, this was not a homogenous group of people, and there were students – in particular, students 2, 11, and 13 – who simply linked English to the instrumental goals of “TOEIC” and “promotion.”

The strong relationship between *acceptance of CLT* and IP in the large class is also noteworthy. Not only did students recognize that using English for communication was their ultimate goal of language learning, but that using English for international/intercultural communication was paramount. Maynard (2005) states that “Part of learning a foreign language is discovering different feelings in our hearts” (p. 12). If CLT goes against traditional Japanese “feelings” of language education, those with high IP are more “internationally orientated” and thus more capable of “discovering” and taking on the non-Japanese educational values associated with CLT. Conversely, those students who resisted CLT, may have found it difficult to stray from traditional Japanese educational values, and as a result, exhibited more passive, reticent behaviour, and ultimately lower WTC.

## Chapter 5. Discussion and pedagogical implications

Therefore, explicitly incorporating elements of culture in the classroom has three important benefits: 1) it serves to increase IP; 2) it helps orient students towards a more positive attitude toward CLT; and 3) it creates a mutual and relevant interest in the classroom topic. All three benefits directly lead to an overall increase in students' WTC in the L2.

## **Chapter 6. Limitations of the study**

There are four significant limitations to this study that warrant mention. Most importantly is the fact that different students were used in each of the three class types, which renders inter-group comparisons of WTC difficult. Ideally, the same six students would be observed in each of the three class contexts. The assumption is made that students are similar enough in ability and trait WTC attributes that differences in state WTC are mostly due to class size. Class material, TOEIC score range, age, and occupation were kept as similar as possible to minimize the effects of this limitation. Secondly, the IP questionnaire was given out and administered by the researcher who is visibly a “foreigner.” This may have caused an orientation towards a more “acceptable” answer; thus, introducing a bias and causing scores to be higher than if a Japanese had administered the questionnaire. However, there was a Japanese present to assist with questions while students were filling out the questionnaire. Thirdly, the largest class type had only 8 students. This is not a “large” class by any standard, and as a result, this study’s overall conclusions may be somewhat less complex than classes with many more members. Finally, *acceptance of CLT*, was based on interview data only; researchers in the future could more systematically tackle this variable by designing questionnaires to more accurately pinpoint students learning attitudes.

## **Chapter 7. Conclusion**

This study by no means draws any clear-cut conclusions. Rather, it tentatively points to a few interesting areas which should be explored more systematically in future research. Results from this study demonstrate how strongly class size can affect participation. One-on-one classes showed significantly higher levels of WTC behaviour despite the fact that the group classes in this study implemented more communicative activities. However, on the individual level, this study provides a more optimistic picture of how some adult Japanese students perceive CLT as well as how they perceive the international community. Overall, students were quite accepting of the CLT approach – a welcoming result in the face of research that makes claims to the contrary (Rao, 2001; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996; Takanashi, 2004). Similarly, international posture was found to be a very significant factor affecting WTC; students who had an interest in international affairs and intercultural communication tended to participate more in class. For teachers who want more student-student interaction in their classroom, an attitude shift must take place on the part of students towards a more positive view of CLT and a more “internationally oriented” approach to learning English.

Topic relevancy and anxiety were also mentioned by students as factors affecting WTC and are in line with previous research results (Kang, 2005; Cao and Philp, 2006). Effectively managing task difficulty and creating group cohesiveness were also found to facilitate WTC. The frequent mention of group cohesiveness by students tentatively confirms Wen and Clement’s (2003) claim that a sense of “belongingness” needs to be fostered, particularly in East Asian L2 classrooms. However, as Kang (2005, p. 291) points out, teachers should “provide the factors facilitating WTC as much as possible, instead of focusing on one factor at the expense of other facilitating factors”; in other words, teachers should not focus on one factor in isolation but should be cognitive of the fact that these factors are mutually inclusive and fluctuate based on class size, so they can plan their lessons effectively.

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## Appendix 1. International posture questionnaire

DIRECTIONS: Please fill-out the following questionnaire. To answer part 1, part 2, part 3, and part 4 of this questionnaire, write a number (from 1 to 7) in the space to the right of the statement that shows to what extent you agree. Use the scale below to help you.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

*Do you agree?:*      **No, not at all**                      **somewhat**                      **Yes, a great deal**

### Part 1

As a reason to study English:

1. It will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people. \_\_\_\_\_
2. It will allow me to get to know various cultures and peoples. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I will be able to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I'd like to make friends with foreigners. \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 2

5. I want to make friends with international students or employees in Japan. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I try to avoid talking with foreigners if I can. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I would talk to a non-Japanese employee if there is one at my workplace. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I wouldn't mind sharing an office with a non-Japanese employee. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I want to participate in a volunteer activity to help foreigners living in the neighbouring community. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I would feel somewhat uncomfortable if a foreigner moved in next door. \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 1. International posture questionnaire

11. I would help a foreigner who is in trouble communicating in a restaurant or at a station.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Part 3**

12. I would rather stay in my hometown. \_\_\_\_\_

13. I want to live in a foreign country. \_\_\_\_\_

14. I want to be transferred to an overseas position within my company if there is a possibility. \_\_\_\_\_

15. I'm interested in volunteer activities in developing countries such as participating in Youth International Development Assistance. \_\_\_\_\_

16. I don't think what's happening overseas has much to do with my daily life. \_\_\_\_\_

17. I'd rather avoid the kind of work that sends me overseas frequently. \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 4**

18. I often read and watch news about foreign countries. \_\_\_\_\_

19. I often talk about situations and events in foreign countries with my family and/or friends.

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 2. Interview questions**

The first part of the interview is the stimulated recall. The student will be asked to listen to a specific activity that s/he took part in. At anytime the student or researcher can pause the recording and the student can comment on their performance. During the stimulated recall, the following questions were asked in no particular order.

- 1. How much did you like this activity?*
- 2. Did you enjoy this activity? Why? Why not?*
- 3. How well do you think you performed during this activity?*
- 4. Do you think this task was useful? Why? Why not?*
- 5. Did you feel happy working the other students? What did you feel happy/not happy about?*

In the second part of the interview, the student will respond to questions asked about methodology and class cohesiveness of the previous class. Questions such as the following will be asked:

- 6. What was the best part of this class? Why?*
- 7. What was the worst part of this class? Why?*
- 8. What was your favourite activity?*
- 9. What was the worst activity?*
- 10. Did you feel the other students helped you?*
- 11. How comfortable were you with the other students?*
- 12. Did you ever feel nervous during class? When? Why?*
- 13. Did you feel other students speak English better than you did?*

The last part of the interview will elicit general information about anxiety, perceived competence, and motivation. The following questions will be asked:

- 14. Why are you learning English?*

Appendix 2. Interview questions

*15. How good are you at learning English?*

*16. What do you think of your speaking skills in English?*

*17. How would you describe your personality?*

*18. Do you like to speak English during class?*

*19. How seriously do you take studying English?*

### Appendix 3. Classroom observation scheme

The degree to which language activities were communicative was also measured using a classroom observation scheme.

Activity type	Definition	Example activities
1. Non-communicative learning	Activities that are strictly form focussed or teacher-centered.	Teacher explanations/instructions Pronunciation drills; extended corrections
2. Pre-communicative language practice	Activities that are still focussed on language but are oriented towards meaning.	Question and answer practice; making sentences with vocabulary words
3. Communicative language practice	Activities that make use of taught structures but are used to convey information.	Information exchange and class surveys; using grammatical structures to describe a picture
4. Structured communication	Activities that are primarily meaning-focussed, but the situation is controlled by the teacher	Summaries; reading of authentic material; structured role plays; listening to authentic conversations
5. Authentic communication	Activities that are have a strong focus on communicating messages and the corresponding language is unpredictable	Discussion; problem-solving; content-based tasks, unconstrained role-plays

**Table. Classroom observation scheme**

### Appendix 4. Results table

Below are the individual results for WTC (turns of talk), WTC (talk-time), international posture, favoured activity type, and least favoured activity type for each student.

	WTC – talk-time (minutes)	WTC – turns of talk	Favoured activity type	Least favoured activity type	International Posture (%)
Student 1	23.55	156	5	5	58.6
Student 2	14.50	176	4	4	58.6
Student 3	15.73	262	4	5	43.6
Student 4	21.65	220	4	2	61.7
Student 5	27.95	189	4	4	68.4
Student 6	29.91	210	5	4	73.9
Student 7	16.00	126	5	5	63.2
Student 8	10.96	92	4	5	66.2
Student 9	12.20	130	5	1	78.9
Student 10	14.20	110	4	1	73.7
Student 11	9.81	86	2	5	59.4
Student 12	19.23	195	5	5	88.7
Student 13	3.78	35	3	5	64.7
Student 14	8.67	83	5	1	70.7
Student 15	13.30	96	5	1	73.7
Student 16	7.81	60	3	1	57.9
Student 17	9.06	78	5	5	70.7
Student 18	10.75	91	5	1	66.2

**Table. Results of WTC, IP, favoured and least favoured activity type for each student**

