Conceptualizing Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situational Model of L2 Confidence and Affiliation

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Why do some students seek, while others avoid, second language (L2) communication? Many language teachers have encountered students high in linguistic competence who are unwilling to use their L2 for communication whereas other students, with only minimal linguistic knowledge, seem to communicate in the L2 whenever possible. Despite excellent communicative competence, spontaneous and sustained use of the L2 is not ensured. A colleague, who teaches a L2 and whose L2 competence is excellent, is well known to avoid "like the plague" L2 communication in social settings. A related observation is that many learners have noticed that their willingness to communicate (WTC) varies considerably over time and across situations. Our aim in this article is twofold. First we wish to provide an account of the linguistic, communicative, and social psychological variables that might affect one's "willingness to communicate." As demonstrated in the text below, and examination of WTC offers the opportunity to integrate psychological, linguistic, and communicative approaches to L2 research that typically have been independent of each other. We view the WTC model as having the potential to provide a useful interface between these disparate lines of inquiry. Our second goal is to suggest potential relations among these variables by outlining a comprehensive conceptual model that may be useful in describing, explaining, and predicting L2 communication. In an effort to move beyond linguistic or communicative competence as the primary goal of language instruction, this article represents an overt attempt to combine these disparate approaches in a common theme, that is, proposing WTC as the primary goal of language instruction.

WTC IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE

Willingness to communicate (WTC), originally conceptualized with reference to first or native language (L1) communication, was introduced

to the communication literature by McCroskey and Baer (1985), building on the earlier work of Burgoon (1976) and others. McCroskey and Baer conceptualized WTC as the probability of engaging in communication when free to choose to do so. WTC reflects the stable predisposition to talk in various situations and is seen essentially as a personality trait. McCroskey and associates have shown that WTC is related to such attributes as communication apprehension, perceived communication competence, introversion-extraversion, self-esteem, and so forth. Although it is certain that the situation would influence a person's level of WTC, the construct developed by McCroskey and associates has been conceptualized explicitly as a personality trait rather than as a situation-based variable. It is not necessary to limit WTC to a trait-like variable and in the present discussion, we treat it as a situational variable with both transient and enduring influences. Further, although McCroskey's work on WTC focuses on speaking, we propose to extend WTC to influence other modes of production, such as writing and comprehension of both spoken and written language.

MacIntyre (1994) proposed a model describing the interrelations among several individual difference variables as predictors of WTC in the L1. Results were consistent with a model in which WTC was seen to be most directly influenced by a combination of communication apprehension and perceived communication competence. In turn, these variables were seen to be caused by introversion and self-esteem, and to some extent, anomie. The study concluded that approximately 60% of the variance in WTC can be accounted for by this model. Further, MacIntyre suggested that the WTC model also may be applied when examining variability across situations.

There are many variables that have the potential to change an individual's WTC. The degree of acquaintance between communicators, the number of people present, the formality of the situation, the degree of evaluation of the speaker, the topic of discussion, and other factors can influence a person's WTC. However, perhaps the most dramatic variable one can change in the communication setting is the language of discourse. It is clear that changing the language of communication introduces a major change in the communication setting because it has the potential to affect many of the variables that contribute to WTC.

WTC IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE

It is highly unlikely that WTC in the second language (L2) is a simple manifestation of WTC in the L1. In fact, a recent study of beginning language students has found a negative correlation between WTC in L1 and L2 (Charos, 1994). The empirical data lends support to the anecdotal evidence presented at the beginning of this article. The differences between L1 and L2 WTC may be due to the uncertainty inherent in L2 use that interacts in a more complex manner with those variables that influence L1 WTC. For example, among most adults, a much greater range in communicative competence would be found in the L2, as compared to the L1. By definition, L1 speakers have achieved a great deal of competence with that language. However, L2 competence level can range from almost no L2 competence (0%) to full L2 competence (100%). In addition, L2 use carries a number of intergroup issues, with social and political implications, that are usually irrelevant to L1 use.

The heuristic model presented in Figure 1 shows the range of potential influences on WTC in the L2. The anticipated interrelations among the constructs are presented in a pyramid-shaped structure. The pyramid was chosen as a heuristic because it allows us to begin our discussion at the moment of communication. Reaching the point at which one is about to communicate in the L2 (top of pyramid) is influenced by both immediate situational factors as well as more enduring influences. The pyramid shape shows the immediacy of some factors and the relatively distal influence of others. We conceive of the broadest factors (e.g., personality) to be the basis or platform on which the rest of the influences operate; the foundation on which the pyramid is built. As we move from these basic influences, we focus more clearly on L2 communication and its most proximal causes.

The discussion to follow describes each of the elements of the model, the relevant research, and its hypothesized role in generating WTC in the L2. To facilitate discussion, a distinction is made between enduring influences and situational influences. The enduring influences (e.g., intergroup relations, learner personality, etc.) represent stable, long-term properties of the environment or person that would apply to almost any situation. The situational influences (e.g., desire to speak to a specific person, knowledge of the topic, etc.) are seen as more transient and dependent on the specific context in which a person functions at a given time.

FIGURE 1
Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC
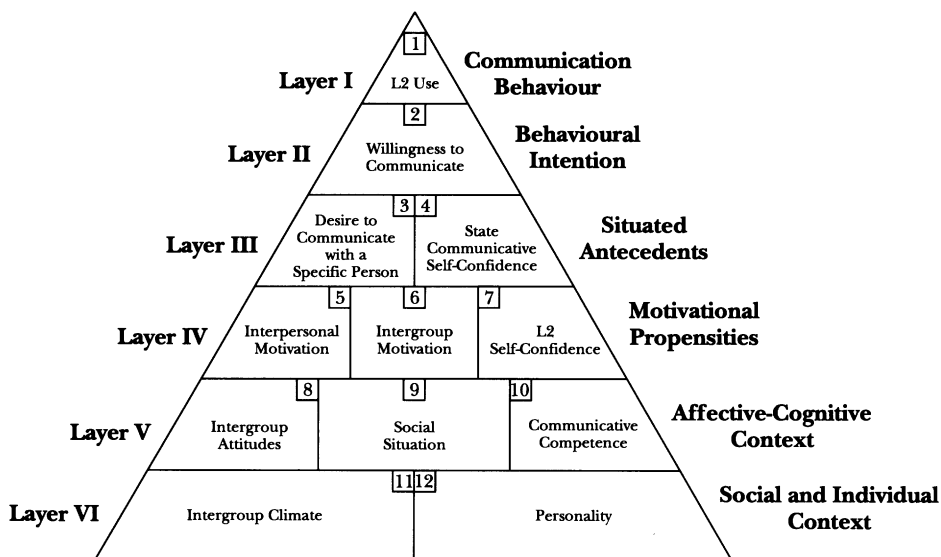
Examining Figure 1, there are six categories or variables that we will refer to as "layers" of the model. These six layers further represent the two more basic structures: (a) the first three layers (I, II, & III), which represent situation-specific influences on WTC at a given moment in time; and (b) the latter three layers (IV, V, & VI), which represent stable, enduring influences on the process. Moving from top to bottom, we begin our discussion with the most immediate, situation-based contexts and move toward a discussion of stable, enduring influences on L2 communication situations.

LAYER I: COMMUNICATION BEHAVIOUR

Authentic communication in a L2 can be seen as the result of a complex system of interrelated variables. We treat communication behaviour in a broad sense, which includes such activities as speaking up in class, reading L2 newspapers, watching L2 television, or utilizing a L2 on the job. Often, language teachers do not have the capacity to create this array of opportunities for L2 communication. We would argue that the ultimate goal of the learning process should be to engender in language students the willingness to seek out communication opportunities and the willingness actually to communicate in them. That is, a proper objective for L2 education is to create WTC. A program that fails to produce stu-

dents who are willing to use the language is simply a failed program.

LAYER II: WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

In the present discussion, we have extended the trait-like conceptualization of WTC offered by McCroskey and Baer (1985). To recognize more explicitly the situational variation in WTC and to focus on L2 communication, we define it as a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2. This definition provides that although the opportunity to communicate will likely present itself, it is not absolutely necessary in order to possess the WTC. For example, if a teacher poses a question to her or his students, several of them may feel confident enough to answer and have the desire to speak. Let us assume that students are asked to raise their hands before speaking. Even if only one student among many actually verbalizes the answer, all of the students who raise their hand express WTC in the L2. In fact, we should consider the hand-raising a nonverbal communicative event.

Students raising their hands to answer a teacher's question commit themselves to a course of action indicating that they are willing to attempt an answer if called upon, that is, if given the opportunity. The WTC model presented in Figure 1 at-

tempts to explain why those particular students are raising their hands in the first place. Most contiguous, it is because they feel self-confident in their answer and wish to say something to their teacher and classmates. Further, they must have developed sufficient self-confidence with the language in general to understand the question and formulate a response. They feel motivated by the interpersonal situation, likely a combination of affiliation and control motives (to both please the teacher and to get good grades). It is obvious that the students are taking the language course for a reason and, assuming that they were not co-erced into it, this reflects some sort of motivation for language learning, possibly an affiliation (in-tegrative) or control-based (instrumental) motive. Their prior language learning has led to devel-opment of self-confidence, which is based on a lack of anxiety combined with a sufficient level of communicative competence, arising from a se-ries of reasonably pleasant L2 experiences. If these conditions had not been met, the students would have been disinclined to volunteer answers in class, or likely would not be in the language class at all. Finally, the students' personalities may play a role in their approach to language learning (e.g., why a conversational course versus a literature course?). Social context may explain not only why the language is being taught (e.g., why teach Spanish and not French?), but also why the student chooses to learn one language in-stead of another. Theory and research related to each of these influences will be addressed below.

WTC strongly implies a behavioural intention such as: "I plan to speak up, given the opportu-nity." Behavioural intentions have been studied widely in the fields of psychology and communi-cation. Perhaps the best known theories are the Fishbien-Ajzen model called the Theory of Rea-soned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein, 1980) and Ajzen's (1988) Theory of Planned Be-havior, which adapts the Theory of Reasoned Ac-tion to situations where behaviour is not under complete volitional control. This is appropriate because communication usually involves the co-operation of at least two people.

The Theory of Planned Behavior holds that the most immediate cause of behaviour is the inten-tion to engage in a behaviour and the person's actual control over his or her actions. In this sense, intention must combine with opportunity to pro-duce behaviour. Intention, which is the heart of the model, is based on subjective norms, attitude toward the behaviour, and perceived behavioural control. Subjective norms are based on beliefs that significant others want us to engage in cer-tain behaviours and also takes into account our motivation to comply with their wishes. Attitudes arise from beliefs about the consequences of be-haviour and the desire to experience those con-sequences. Finally, perceived behavioural control is the belief that one can successfully perform an action that will bring about desirable conse-quences. Ajzen (1988) notes that the intention to perform a behaviour does not guarantee its oc-currence because circumstances may intervene between intention and action. Although some questions remain unanswered (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), the evidence in favour of predicting be-haviour from intention is fairly strong (Shep-pard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988).

We can apply this theory to our discussion of the determinants of WTC. Our present model is more extensive than Ajzen's (1988) model, but we share the conviction that behaviour is strongly predicted by intention or willingness to act. In a meta-ana-lytic review of 113 studies, Van den Putte (1991, cited in Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 176) reports a mean correlation of $r = .62$ between intention and behaviour. Considering the similarities between the two models, we would expect a similar level of correlation between WTC and communicative behaviour. Ajzen's theory and our model also share a concern with the structure of the situa-tion, a concern that we address at several levels of the model. Finally, at the center of our model and the Ajzen model, is an individual who has some control over his or her actions and is behaving in a reasoned manner to achieve his or her goals.

LAYER III: SITUATED ANTECEDENTS OF COMMUNICATION

The model shown in Figure 1 proposes two im-mediate precursors of WTC: (a) the desire to communicate with a specific person and (b) state self-confidence.

Box 3. Desire to Communicate with a Specific Person

This first tendency results from a combination of interindividual and intergroup motivations discussed in Layer IV below. In both cases, affili-ation and control motives are hypothesized to foster the desire to communicate (the reasons for our focus on affiliation and control will be dis-cussed below). It is expected, however, that these two motives will not be equally potent at all times.

Research in social psychology reveals that affil-iation often occurs with persons who are physi-cally nearby, persons who are encountered fre-quently, physically attractive persons, and those

who are similar to us in a variety of ways (Lippa, 1994). This research suggests that affiliation may be the most important motive in informal situations with an attractive, L2 speaking interlocutor. In this case, a strong tendency to converge linguistically by using the L2 would be expected. Furthermore, in cases where two persons with different L1s wish to converse, we would predict that the interlocutor with higher L2 self-confidence will determine the language of discourse by voluntarily choosing to use his or her L2. Because affiliation motives are prominent, a good deal of flexibility and possibly code switching might also be expected.

It is more difficult, however, to predict whether the L1 or L2 would be used in task-related situations promoting control. In this context, control takes on a very broad definition, referring to any task-related situation where interlocutors seek to influence each other's behaviour. Quite often we communicate with those around us for a specific purpose: because we require their assistance, their cooperation, or their services. Control is often established by using discourse characterized by a certain degree of sophistication, such as a varied speech from the point of view of vocabulary and sentence construction (Bradac & Wisegarver, 1984). For some (e.g., Ng, 1990; O'Barr, 1982), control is achieved via powerful speech: by delivering an explicit message, worded with precision and targeted to a particular recipient. Control as a motivation for interpersonal communication may thus result in L2 usage only if interlocutors are comfortable enough in that language to use it efficiently towards their goals. It is more likely, in these cases, that the language of the interlocutor with greater status will be used.

Box 4. State Communicative Self-Confidence

Self-confidence, as described by Clément (1980, 1986), includes two key constructs: (a) perceived competence and (b) a lack of anxiety. For Clément, these constructs represent relatively enduring personal characteristics. Moreover, little empirical work exists on variations in L2 self-confidence. However, it is likely that some situations will entail more confidence than others, primarily depending on characteristics of prior L2 contact (see Box 10) in these specific situations. For our purposes, we may draw a distinction between the trait-like self-confidence and a momentary feeling of confidence, which may be transient within a given situation and is called state self-confidence. We also make a similar distinction between its components, referring to them as state anxiety and state perceived competence.

Spielberger (1983) considers state anxiety to be the transient emotional reaction defined by feelings of tension and apprehension, accompanied by autonomic nervous system arousal. State anxiety varies in intensity and fluctuates over time, and anything that increases state anxiety will reduce one's self-confidence and, therefore, one's WTC. Anxiety may be increased by many factors such as unpleasant prior experiences, intergroup tension, increased fear of assimilation, an increased number of people listening, and so forth (some of these influences will be discussed below).

State perceived competence refers to the feeling that one has the capacity to communicate effectively at a particular moment. It would arise when one is in a situation that has been encountered previously, provided that one has developed language knowledge and skills (the complexities of which will be discussed in Box 9 below). To the extent that one has lower levels of these competencies, and one is unable to compensate in other ways, we would expect state competence to be reduced. For this reason, novel situations should be particularly detrimental to WTC because the speaker will be uncertain of his or her ability to meet the communicative demands present at that moment.

In summary, we see the desire to interact with a specific person and state self-confidence as the most immediate determinants of WTC. We predict that these two factors will show high correlation with WTC because these two variables represent the cumulative influence of the layers to be discussed below.

It should be made clear that our proposed model goes beyond current descriptions of many learner variables and attempts to show how they will apply to a specific communication context. However, patterns of communication, and the variables affecting those patterns, are likely to be consistent over time. In fact, McCroskey and Baer's (1985) original formulation of WTC defined a relatively enduring characteristic of a person's communication, which they describe as being "trait-like." Anecdotal experience, and a good deal of research, suggests that people do possess considerable cross-situational consistency in their communicative behaviour. We now turn to an examination of the relatively enduring influences on WTC.

LAYER IV: MOTIVATIONAL PROPENSITIES

The decision to initiate speech is a motivated action that may be governed by both situation-specific and enduring influences. Motivational propensities to communicate are, in many cases, stable individual differences that apply in several situations. Three clusters of variables appear to be important here: (a) interindividual motivation, (b) intergroup motivation, and (c) L2 confidence. Motivational propensities are based on the affective and cognitive contexts of intergroup interaction and ultimately lead to state self-confidence and a desire to interact with a particular person.

Box 5. Interpersonal Motivation

When studying interpersonal communication, it is possible to take a componential view whereby each and every channel (i.e., nonverbal, verbal, and paraverbal) is analyzed separately. Within the context of our analysis of motivation, it is more useful to adopt a functional perspective. Therefore, rather than tracing the motivational nature and antecedents of each communication act, we see them as contributing, in an integrated manner, to a particular interpersonal purpose. Two such purposes—control and affiliation—appear to explain the great majority of communication episodes (Patterson, 1990; Wieman & Giles, 1988) and have been pillars of motivational research in general since Murray's (1938) description of basic human needs/motives (Reeve, 1992).

Control. As a motivational orientation, control instigates communication behaviour that aims at limiting the cognitive, affective, and behavioural freedom of the communicators. This type of communication is often found in hierarchical, interpersonal, task-related situations and emanates from the more powerful party. For example, doctors communicate to control the behaviour of their patients, supervisors dictate the activities of their subordinates, and teachers exercise control over students. Communication for these purposes is typically initiated by the more powerful interlocutor, though this is not always the case. Patients initiate communication with their doctor and explain their malady, subordinates provide feedback to their supervisors, and students express their opinion in class and communicate to answer test questions. The flow of communication may be encouraged or discouraged, most notably via nonverbal cues and verbal

content, by either party. These examples involve enduring social roles and, therefore, are conceptualized as cross-situational influences on WTC. The defining characteristic of interpersonal motivation for control is that it is linked to personal aspects of either of the interlocutors.

Affiliation. This second aspect of interpersonal motivation finds its origin in the amount of interest in establishing a relationship with the interlocutor. It is prompted by personal characteristics of the interlocutor such as attractiveness (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972), similarity (Byrne, 1971), physical proximity (Newcomb, 1961), and repeated exposure (Zajonc, 1968). Affiliation motives may occur in conjunction with the motivation to control, but are manifested less readily in task-oriented situations. For example, friendships may be formed via communication in the language classroom, and personal topics may be discussed, but the conversation likely will be guided by the teacher during class time.

It should be noted here that some personality types show stronger affiliation tendencies than others. Murray (1938) described a "need for affiliation" that varies from person to person. Ehrman (1990) has described individual differences among language learners in the desire to affiliate and communicate with their classmates. Indeed, the personality trait of introversion or extraversion may be closely related to the degree to which a person would prefer solitude to the company of others (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). It is clear that there are both situational factors and individual differences that contribute to interpersonal affiliation.

Box 6. Intergroup Motivation

Although interpersonal motivation is related to individual characteristics of the communicators, intergroup motivation is derived directly from their belonging to a particular group, as opposed to playing a social role within a group (as in Box 6). It is expected that the intergroup climate and intergroup attitudes would have a direct impact on this particular aspect of motivation (see below). Furthermore, it would be expected that L2 orientations of the type described by Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) and Clément and Kruidenier (1983) would be related to the motivation to initiate speech. Specifically, learning L2 for friendship or pragmatic reasons would be expected to inspire L2 speech. As with interpersonal motivation, control and affiliation seem to be the basic components of these orientations.

Control. In the case of intergroup relations, motivation to control would result in the same types of communicative behaviours as the interpersonal situation discussed earlier. In this case, the basis for contact is the power relationship established between groups. Rooted in societal stratification, this motivational component is present whenever communication is initiated with an interlocutor as a means of maintaining and reinforcing social positions. As with interpersonal control, it originates from members of either dominant or subordinate groups, most often in task-oriented activities. Elements of motivation to control were demonstrated by Clément and Kruidenier (1983) in the case of a clearly dominant group learning a minority language. In its purest form, it probably corresponds to the machiavellian orientation described by Gardner and Lambert (1972).

Affiliation. This motive is present whenever communication is initiated by the desire to establish or maintain a rapport with a member of another group precisely because of different group memberships. Attitudes towards the other group and integrativeness (Gardner, 1985) are important precursors of this motive.

The integrative motive has inspired much of the prior research on language learning motivation, especially as it has been contrasted with an instrumental, practical-gain motive (see also Box 8 below) (e.g., Gardner, 1985). Recent work on language learning motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) is broadening the concept to include a host of other factors to demonstrate that affiliation combines with other reasons for language study. Based on a wealth of previous empirical study (Gardner, 1985), it seems a firm conclusion that the desire to affiliate with people who use another language, and to participate in another culture, has a powerful influence on language learning and communication behaviour.

Box 7. L2 Self-Confidence

Interpersonal and intergroup motivations constitute the affective and social aspects of the motivation to communicate. Combining with the more cognitive and experiential aspects discussed below, L2 confidence concerns the relationship between the individual and the L2. This confidence is somewhat different from the situation-specific, state-perceived competence discussed earlier; it corresponds to the overall belief in being able to communicate in the L2 in an adaptive and efficient manner. There are two

components to L2 confidence: The first component is cognitive and corresponds to the self-evaluation of L2 skills, a judgment made by the speaker about the degree of mastery achieved in the L2. The second component is affective and corresponds to language anxiety, specifically, the discomfort experienced when using a L2. L2 confidence has been the object of much research, mostly from the point of view of the classroom situation (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Generally, the concepts of anxiety and self-evaluation are closely linked and highly correlated in the L2 context (Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977, 1980; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997) and have been shown to contribute to L1 WTC (MacIntyre, 1994; McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). The results reported by Clément et al. (1994) support the relationship between language anxiety and self-evaluation and demonstrate the value of combining the two variables into a single, self-confidence construct. Self-confidence has been shown to be related to aspects of intergroup contact (Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; see Box 10), to actual competence in the L2 (Clément, 1986; see Box 9), as well as to ethnic identity (Clément & Noels, 1991) and intercultural adaptation (Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996).

In summary, interpersonal motivation is highly specific to the individual and describes his or her relationship to the people who speak the L2 as well as to the L2 itself. Control and affiliation motives are extremely important in determining the specific persons with whom one will speak. These motives appear to be closely related to attitudes and the structure of the relationship between persons as individuals and as representatives of language-related groups. Communicative competence and communication experience, along with the interlocutor's pattern of personality variables, help determine L2 self-confidence, which is primarily defined by judgments of proficiency and feelings of apprehension. We now examine these variables in terms of the affective and cognitive context.

LAYER V: THE AFFECTIVE AND COGNITIVE CONTEXT

Layer V addresses variables that are somewhat more remote from the specific language learning and communication context. Although the hypothesised connection to WTC is through the influence of these variables on the more specific variables discussed above, these influences must

be described if our model is to be complete. The variables discussed in this layer are individually based, representing accumulated prior history and broad-based attitudes and motives of an individual. These influences are less situation-specific and cover more types of events than the previous ones, communicative or otherwise. These variables have inspired considerable research efforts over the years. For the reasons listed, these results should be integrated into any model of L2 communication that seeks to be reasonably comprehensive.

Box 8. Intergroup Attitudes

Integrativeness. Integrativeness is a construct related to adaptation to different cultural groups and, in particular, intergroup motivation (see Clément, 1980; Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972). In their early formulation of the integrative orientation, Gardner and Lambert suggested that one important reason for learning a L2 is to identify and affiliate with members of the L2 community. In subsequent years, however, the term integrativeness has not been used consistently by researchers of L2 learning. For example, in later formulations of the socioeducational model, Gardner (1985) altered the meaning of integrativeness: Rather than referring to identification alone, Gardner defined integrativeness as being comprised of a positive attitude toward the L2 community and a desire to affiliate with members of the L2 community without the desire to be like members of the L2 community. Other models, such as Clément's (1980, 1984, 1986) sociocontextual model, have retained the connotation of identification with the target language group, thereby clearly implicating the self-concept in the language learning process (see assimilation motive).

The desire to be a part of the L2 community is indicative of increased involvement with that community. Research by Clément and his colleagues (Clément, 1984, 1986; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985) has shown that integrativeness is related to increased frequency and quality of contact with the L2 community. To the extent that frequency and quality of contact indicate less social distance between groups, integrativeness may be seen as a factor promoting relations between ethnic groups.

Fear of Assimilation. Although adaptation to the other ethnic community may provide several benefits, the advantages may not be accrued without some loss. A factor that has been shown to predict less contact with the L2 community is fear of assimilation, which is that fear that one will lose his or her feeling of identification and involvement with the L1 community by acquiring a L2. Research by Clément and his colleagues (e.g., Clément, 1984, 1986; Noels & Clément, 1994) has shown that with minority group members, the potential loss of membership in the native ethnolinguistic community is related to poorer quality and lower frequency of contact with the L2 community. This process has also been called subtractive bilingualism (Lambert, 1978), implying that acquiring the new language can result in a loss of the L1 and its culture.

Integrativeness and fear of assimilation may be seen as opposing forces within the individual. To the extent that one is more salient than the other, L2 communication may be either facilitated or disrupted. The nature of this conflict has been linked to the majority or minority status of the language groups involved. In brief, a minority group member risks assimilation into a majority group when he or she has acquired the language of the larger group and begins to communicate almost exclusively in the L2. In this situation, the individual may feel that his or her linguistic and cultural heritage are vulnerable and therefore may resist L2 communication. In addition, L2 learning and communication may be discouraged actively by other minority group members with similar fears. When a majority group member learns to use the language of a minority group, there is far less risk to native cultural identity and, therefore, less resistance.

Motivation to Learn the L2. In addition to the tension between integrativeness and fear of assimilation, attitudes towards the L2 itself may influence motivation to learn (cf. Gardner, 1985). Enjoyment and satisfaction in learning and using the L2 may encourage the individual to apply a more intense and thorough effort to the learning process. This attitude could develop as a result of positive experiences in the language classroom and in other contexts where there has been opportunity to learn and use the language (e.g., with friends). A student with a positive attitude might find the language enjoyable because the development of linguistic competence is perceived as inherently interesting and challenging (on intrinsic motivation, see Deci & Ryan, 1985). A positive attitude could also be developed and maintained through an association with positive stereotypes of the L2 community. For example, one might associate German with intellectual pursuits or French with good aesthetic taste. In

this instance, it is not unlikely that one's attitude toward the L2 is also associated with attitudes towards the L2 community and, consequently, intergroup relations.

The motivation for language learning may take the form of WTC, but not necessarily so. Some learners may express their motivation in silent study of a language and its literature. It can be seen, however, that intergroup attitudes may influence the frequency and quality of L2 communication by way of fear of assimilation, as well as influencing the motivation for language learning.

Box 9. Social Situation

To a large degree, L2 confidence is a function of the experience that one has with members of the L2 community (Clément, 1980). This experience may become part of a generalized attitude concerning the pleasantness of speaking in the L2, but we would suggest that there is also considerable variation according to the type of the communicative event. For example, a university professor may confidently lecture in the L2, yet become extremely shy when talking on the phone to a L2 speaker; another professor might find it easy to use the L2 with his or her peers in a casual conversation, but become blocked in a more formal context. Anecdotal evidence of this type abounds, and it is not surprising that there has been extensive research in sociolinguistics on the various language requirements and constraints associated with various social situations (for detailed discussions, see Bell, 1984; Biber, 1994; Brown & Fraser, 1979).

The social situation is a composite category describing a social encounter in a particular setting. These categories of events typically have a set of behavioural standards (including verbal behaviours) appropriate to them. As Ferguson (1994) summarizes, a basic assumption implicit in sociolinguistic study of language variation is that "a communication situation that recurs regularly in a society (in terms of participants, setting, communicative function, and so forth) will tend over time to develop identifying markers of language structure and language use, different from the language of other communication situations" (p. 20).

There are several classification schemes for the factors that influence situational variation. Three particularly detailed ones have been offered by Hymes (1972a), Brown and Fraser (1979), and Biber (1994). For our purpose, five factors, mentioned as central components in all the three frameworks above, appear to be particularly relevant: the participants, the setting, the purpose, the topic, and the channel of communication.

The most important participant variables involve the speakers' age, gender, and social class, as well as various aspects of the relationship between the participants: the power relationship between them, their level of intimacy, the extent of their shared knowledge, and the social distance between them. For L2 communication, another important aspect is the L2 proficiency level of the interlocutor relative to the speaker and, particularly, whether the interlocutor is a native speaker (NS) of the L2 or not. As Hatch (1992) argues, interactions between NSs and nonnative speakers (NNS) tend to show an asymmetrical pattern with the NNS performing in a relatively passive manner, avoiding, for example, topic initiations. A confounding variable with regard to an interlocutor with superior L2 proficiency is the extent to which he or she is ready to make allowances for the speaker's limited proficiency by simplifying his or her speech and being helpful in negotiating meaning.

The setting refers to the place and time of communication. As for the location, Biber (1994) distinguishes six primary domains: business/workplace, education/academic, government/legal, religious, art/entertainment, and domestic/personal. He further argues that within each of these domains there are private and public contexts, for example a meeting or a chat in the workplace. McCroskey and Richmond (1991) present a similar division when they argue that interpersonal communication occurs primarily within three general environments: school environments, organizational environments, and social environments. The particular relevance of domains to WTC lies in the fact that they are associated with "discourse domains" internal to the learner (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 178) and L2 behaviour shows significant domain-related variation. In addition, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) highlight the importance of L2 behaviour being congruent with the contextual and speaker role-related constraints, arguing that specific contexts are associated with a certain number of congruent speech acts.

Purpose is the third factor influencing situational variance and refers to the goals or intentions of discourse, which direct the communication activities of participants. Some situations can be characterized by only one featured purpose, but communication situations frequently involve multiple purposes. In an attempt to create a closed set of parameters, Biber (1994) identifies four main categories of purpose: persuade

(or sell), transfer information, entertain (or edify), and reveal self.

It is easy to recognize that the topic of the communication will significantly affect the ease of language use: Topical expertise and the familiarity with a certain register will boost one's linguistic self-confidence, whereas a lack of these may inhibit even a generally confident speaker. There is research evidence that superior content knowledge may result in being more verbally forthcoming and can override certain limitations the speaker may have in his or her overall oral proficiency (Zuengler, 1993).

Bell (1984) argues that speakers will use a style that they would normally use with persons they associate with the topic or setting. Based on Fishman (1972), Bell introduces "domains" as socially identifiable scenes that arrange extralinguistic variables in clusters. In a classification showing a remarkable similarity with Biber's (1994) six domains mentioned above, Fishman suggests five such broad domains that cover most interactions: employment, education, religion, family, and friendship.

Finally, the communication channel involves the medium chosen for the communication. The two main channels are speaking and writing, but within these broad categories there are further subtypes that might cause considerable variation. Within the oral/aural channel, telephone conversation is notoriously difficult for many L2 learners, partly because it lacks nonverbal support and partly because the telephone conversation is a distinctive genre of interaction (cf. Schegloff, 1994).

The variables listed above are interrelated in highly complex ways; an example of these interrelations is Zuengler's (1993) study mentioned earlier, in which levels of topic knowledge and the relative L2 competence of the participants interact to determine dominance in conversation. However, our focus in this paper is not so much on the analysis of their interrelationship or the correlation with dependent linguistic variables as it is on the fact that these variables constitute, in different combinations, markedly different communication situations. These situations become "cognitively real elements of social structure" (Preston, 1989, p.134) that are associated with distinct registral features, for example, special sets of vocabulary and formulaic routines, features of intonation, as well as characteristic bits of syntax and phonology (Ferguson, 1994). This *implies that* one's communicative experience in one situation may not be transferred automatically to another, which, in turn, increases the perceived variability in L2 communication events

and may generate different levels of WTC in various social situations. This assumed impact of the situational constraints on L2 WTC is, in fact, analogous to McCroskey and Richmond's (1991) claim that WTC in L1 is to a major degree situationally dependent.

Box 10. Communicative Competence

One's degree of L2 proficiency will have a significant effect on his or her WTC. In order to cover the complexities of knowledge and skill required for communication, L2 proficiency will be described in terms of "communicative competence," a term coined by the anthropological linguist Hymes (1972b) as a criticism of Chomsky's (1965) limited notion of context-free grammatical competence. During the last 20 years, the notion of communicative competence has received a lot of attention in applied linguistics and has undergone an increasing level of elaboration (cf. Bachman 1990; Bachman & Palmer, in press; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). In a recent attempt to recast the construct by extending Canale and Swain's model, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) have posited five main constituent competencies making up communicative language abilities.

The first of these competencies is linguistic competence. This includes knowledge of the basic elements of communication, including syntactic and morphological rules, lexical resources, and the phonological and orthographic systems needed to realize spoken or written communication. It is obvious that some development in linguistic competence is a precondition of WTC.

A second dimension of communicative competence is discourse competence. This refers to competence in selecting, sequencing, and arranging words, structures, sentences, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written text. The main subareas include cohesion, deixis, coherence, generic structure, and the conversational structure inherent to the turn-taking system in conversation. The willingness to engage in L2 communication may greatly depend on familiarity with these discourse areas because they govern the organization of both written and oral discourse and are indispensable, for example, to the actual act of communication.

Actional competence refers to matching communicative intent with linguistic form, based on the knowledge of an inventory of verbal schemata that carry illocutionary force. From a pragmatic perspective, this component can be conceived as "pragmalinguistic competence" (cf. Thomas, 1983). The key units are speech acts, which are

utterances that are used to carry out actions (e.g., giving a command or making a request), and language functions, as well as speech act sets, which are conventionalized patterns and sequences of speech acts. Development in this competence is required to be able to accomplish one's goal when engaging in communication.

Sociocultural competence involves knowledge of how to express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context, in accordance with the pragmatic factors related to variation in language use. It also might be conceived as a "sociopragmatic" counterpart of pragmalinguistic competence (cf. Thomas, 1983). Key areas involved include social contextual factors, stylistic appropriateness factors, cultural factors, and nonverbal communicative factors. This competence enables speakers to handle the situational variation of communication discussed above.

Finally, strategic competence refers to knowledge of communication strategies, which are considered to be verbal and nonverbal devices that allow a speaker to compensate for deficiencies in any of the other underlying competencies of communicative competence. Strategic competence can be used to cope with language-related problems of which the speaker is aware during the course of communication. In other words, strategic competence is a communication "first aid kit" that can be called into action when someone cannot remember a word, does not understand something, or when his or her mind goes temporarily blank. Although a certain level of all the other competencies is required for effective communication, a speaker can go a long way by relying primarily on strategic competence (e.g., speakers who seem to communicate fluently with only 100 words). Therefore, the development of strategic competence is assumed to have a particularly important role in contributing to one's linguistic self-confidence.

Although the conceptualizations of communicative competence have reached a considerable level of sophistication, we must note a primary concern mentioned by McCroskey and Richmond (1991), specifically, that WTC will be a function of how the individual perceives his or her competence rather than of its objective development. They argue that there are many incompetent communicators who believe they are competent and show a proportionately high level of WTC. At the other extreme are those speakers who underachieve because of an inappropriately low estimation of their competence. This implies that although communicative competence is an important antecedent of WTC, further research

is needed to analyze the cognitive links between actual competence and perceived competence.

LAYER VI: THE SOCIETAL AND INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT

The context of communication, defined in its broadest terms, involves the interaction of two factors: the society and the individual. Specifically, the societal context refers to the intergroup climate in which interlocutors evolve, whereas the individual context refers to stable personality characteristics found to be particularly relevant to communication.

Box 11. Intergroup Climate

Following Gardner and Clément (1990), intergroup climate may be defined along two complementary dimensions concerned with the structural characteristics of the community and their perceptual and affective correlates.

Structural characteristics. The intergroup climate of a community is conditioned by the groups' relative representation of the L1 and L2 communities in terms of ethnolinguistic vitality and personal communication networks. Ethnolinguistic vitalities, coined by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977), refers to the relative demographic representation of the two communities, that is, their relative socioeconomic power and the extent to which they are represented in social institutions, such as the government, legislation, and the church. It is expected that the language of a group with high ethnolinguistic vitality would retain greater prestige and attract more speakers and would, in general, be used more frequently in daily exchanges. Personal communication networks may moderate the effects of ethnolinguistic vitality. A communication network refers to the group with which we communicate on a regular basis. That group, called a network, can be characterized according to the relative importance of the L1 and L2 subnetworks (i.e., the extent to which they are closely knit and their redundancy). It could be expected that a minority ethnolinguistic situation could be adequately compensated for by an important L1 subnetwork acting as a enclave against the majority L2 pressure. Conversely, an important L2 network could promote its usage even among members of the majority group. Although they are not psychological characteristics, ethnolinguistic vitality and communication networks provide the opportunities and the conditions that either favour

or do not favour the use of the L2. It is within this particular context that the subjective aspects of intergroup climate develop.

Perceptual and Affective Correlates. Although perceptual and affective correlates have been the subject of much social-psychological theorising and research, the present discussion will focus on the role of attitudes and values regarding the L2 community and the motivation to adapt and reduce social distance between ethnic groups.

In general, it is assumed that a positive attitude toward an ethnic group will lead to positive interactions with that group, whereas a negative attitude will be associated with fewer and less positive interactions with that language group. On one hand, positive attitudes toward the L2 group have been widely implicated in L2 learning motivation and achievement (see Gardner, 1985, for review). A possible mediator of this relation is the extent of contact between members of the two ethnic groups (cf. Clément, 1980, 1984). On the other hand, concern about the implications of negative attitudes on intergroup relations has lead to a well developed body of research on prejudice and discrimination. This literature on attitude formation and maintenance emphasises the number of different factors that may cause two ethnic groups to dissociate. However, we will begin by discussing a process whereby individuals strive to become more similar to others in their surroundings: the process of adaptation.

Members of minority groups (e.g., immigrants, refugees, sojourners, etc.) in particular, when faced with an unfamiliar cultural environment, can readily adapt to the new context. In such circumstances, individuals may concede certain practices and characteristics of their original culture in exchange for participation in the host culture. The general assumption is that this concession will correspond with the acquisition of certain benefits, such as social acceptance, economic advancement, and psychological adjustment. Language may be viewed as one cultural characteristic that is open to change during the acculturation process (cf. Schumann, 1978).

For adaptation to an unfamiliar culture, L2 acquisition may indeed be essential. According to Kim (1988), communication enables us to relate to the environment and fulfil various human needs. Consequently, harmonious adaptation is likely to occur to the extent that we are capable of communicating with others in that social environment. In a situation of intercultural contact, then, it becomes necessary to acquire the linguistic and communicative skills and knowledge nec-essary to operate effectively and appropriately in that culture (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991; Tran, 1990a, 1990b). Indeed, variables such as a preference for, knowledge of, and self-confidence in L2 use have been shown to be linked to lower levels of stress (Chataway & Berry, 1989), to a greater sense of personal control, and higher levels of satisfaction with the self as well as with society in a variety of ethnic groups (Dion, Dion, & Pak, 1990, 1992; Krause, Bennett, & Tran, 1989; Pak, Dion, & Dion, 1985). Thus, to the extent that there is a need to adapt to the new culture, individuals may be inclined to learn the L2 and to feel more positive about engaging in relations with the L2 community.

It is unfortunate that intergroup relations are often less than harmonious and a state of intergroup tension will exert an influence on L2 learning and communication processes. Some of the most negative intergroup issues involve prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour. Prejudice refers to a negative attitude toward members of another group, grounded on information about the group that is either illogical or unjustifiable (Allport, 1965). Its behavioural counterpart, discrimination, refers to overt actions toward an individual that are determined on the basis of the target's group membership. As with other attitudes, prejudice can be cultivated through inherent thinking patterns, direct experience with the target group, learning from other members of the L1 community (e.g., parents, peers, media), and individual personality traits.

It has been suggested that prejudice is in part a result of innate processes by which we categorize social information (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, & Wetherell, 1987). Many studies have shown that the differentiation of individuals into two or more groups, even on the basis of a minimally important criterion (Tajfel, 1982), may be sufficient to begin the process by which individuals evaluate their own group relative to the other group. In general, it has been demonstrated that there is a tendency to favour one's own group relative to the other group, and where this is not the case, individuals may try to change their group membership to improve their own evaluative outcome. Changing membership is influenced by the perceived permeability of the boundaries between ethnic groups and the extent to which language group membership is a relatively important aspect of identity. Given multiple group membership, the linguistic self-categorization may be only a minor aspect of identity and may not lead to important changes

in behaviour. Thus social cognition may be an important factor in prejudiced attitudes towards other language groups and these attitudes may affect an individual's level of WTC.

Whereas categorization may be a universal phenomenon, the contents of these categories are affected by the family and the social environment. Parents may be the greatest influence on children's ethnic attitude development (Aboud, 1988; Phinney, 1990). Negative attitudes towards another ethnolinguistic group can be learned in many ways. Direct rewards for either discriminating or tolerant behaviour, the association of ethnicity with negative or positive stimuli, and the modelling of parental behaviour can all affect the development of ethnic attitudes. In his review of the role of parents in language learning, Gardner (1968, 1985) suggests that parents' attitudes towards the L2 community are more influential on their children's language-learning motivation than their instrumental attitudes towards students' language learning. Although parents may encourage their children's language learning, their attitude toward the language group may be better remembered by the child and thus have a more potent effect on the decision to learn the L2. Despite its importance for younger children, the influence of parents on attitude formation and maintenance eventually may be superseded by the influence of peers and the media.

Other factors may lead to prejudice and poor intergroup relations. Realistic conflict theory (Sherif, 1958) suggests that actual grounds for conflict between groups may cause prejudice and discrimination. When there are scarce resources that must be divided up, groups are likely to become hostile to each other. Other researchers suggest that actual conflict is not necessary; groups must simply perceive themselves to be deprived relative to other groups (Guimond & Tougas, 1994). Thus, actual conflict and perceived discrepancies between groups concerning the distribution of resources may contribute to the development of prejudice and discrimination, which in turn may affect L2 learning motivation and WTC.

Thus far, we have considered some of the most enduring social influences on L2 communication. It is clear, however, that not all members within a group react to members of another group in the same way. We will now turn our attention to processes that are based on individual differences within a group.

Box 12. Personality

In keeping with the discussion of prejudice and discrimination, certain personality patterns predict how an individual reacts to members of another group. According to Altemeyer (1981, 1988), the Authoritarian personality type is an individual who is highly conventional, submissive to authority, and aggressive toward those whom he or she believes are inferior or different. Such an individual would not be expected to engage in positive relations with ethnic groups that he or she considers inferior. A related construct is ethnocentrism, which is the belief that one's own ethnic group is not only preferable, but also superior to other ethnic groups. It is likely that an ethnocentric person would not be inclined to get involved in interactions with members of another ethnic community because he or she would not consider it a worthwhile endeavour. Thus, certain personality traits may reduce the likelihood of amicable relations between members of different ethnolinguistic groups.

Other personality patterns have been shown to facilitate language learning and intergroup communication. Ehrman (1990, 1994) has reported some interesting results using personality profiles based on Jung's theory of personality. The data show that many different types may be successful and that there are assets and liabilities associated with each type. For example, the "intuitive-feeling" types showed high levels of L2 learning achievement, presumably because they are adept at forming interpersonal bonds and inferring meaning from conversation. However, these types also possess the disadvantage of glossing over potentially important details and being highly sensitive to interpersonal disagreements. Ehrman (1990) cautions that the best learners are flexible enough to use their strengths while compensating for their weaknesses.

Recent developments in personality trait theory have centred on development of "the Big Five"—a taxonomy of the most basic, independent personality traits that includes extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to new experiences (Goldberg, 1993). Using path analysis, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) concluded that each of the Big Five traits contributes to developing motivation for language learning or L2 WTC, or both. Consistent with prior research by Lalonde and Gardner (1984), MacIntyre and Charos (1996) argue that the effect of personality seems to be channelled through more specific variables, such as intergroup attitudes and L2 confidence.

One must be cautious in looking for the personality profile of *the* good language learner (MacIntyre & Noels, 1994). Personality is not conceptualized as a direct influence on language learning communication, partially because of the flexibility introduced by variables shown in the rest of the model in Figure 1. It should also be noted that the role of individual differences in personality is played out within a broader social climate. Certain groups may be more homogeneous than others with respect to certain traits or profiles. As well, groups may show different average or baseline levels of a given trait. For example, the average American learner is likely to be more extraverted than the average Japanese learner (Aida, 1994).

The model proposed here shows that personality helps to set the context in which language learning occurs. The disposition to react positively or negatively to foreign people, in combination with the formation of positive or negative attitudes, in a context with or without intergroup conflict, is suggested to underpin the social distance or harmony between groups. For this reason, we regard the intergroup context and the personality of the learner as variables that set the stage for L2 communication, but that are less directly involved in determining a learner's WTC at a given time.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Conceptually, generating a WTC appears to be a crucial component of modern L2 pedagogy. In the past, emphasis on grammatical skill produced students with rather high linguistic competence but did not concentrate on the authentic use of the language. Current emphasis on communicative competence may pose a similar problem, producing students who are technically capable of communicating, particularly inside the classroom, but who may not be amenable to doing so outside the classroom. We suggest that a suitable goal of L2 learning is to increase WTC. By engendering a *willingness* to communicate, language instruction may achieve its social and political goal of bringing cultures into contact and nations together.

We have attempted to extend the WTC construct proposed by McCroskey and Baer (1985) in two ways. First, we adapted it to refer to the L2 and identified several additional influences in L2 communication. We were surprised to find over 30 variables that may have potential impact on L2 WTC, and it is encouraging that organizational principles could be proposed. We also sug-

gested that the concept be broadened to include explicitly oral and other modes of communication. This provides an enriched conceptualization of WTC and the implications of this model may extend to L1 models as well.

Second, the WTC construct was redefined to refer to a person's WTC at a specific time, and additional transient and situational variables were added. We believe that this type of conceptualization lends itself well to practical and pedagogical use. By considering why a person is willing to talk at one time and not another, we can appreciate the important factors influencing classroom communication and "real world" contact.

These extensions are offered in an attempt to explain why people show a great deal of variability in their propensity to communicate, including why some learners speak in spite of limited communicative competence whereas others are quite reluctant to talk even with high competence. The model employs enduring influences as well, and may also be useful in describing cases where people are consistent in their communication over time and across situations.

The model presented here has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, WTC is seen as more than simply perceived communication competence. Rather, it is based on a host of learner variables that have been well established as influences on L2 learning and communication. We have drawn together the research and theory from various domains in an attempt to integrate previous research in linguistics, communication, and language learning. Practically, our model looks at WTC as the final step in preparing the language learner for communication, because it represents the probability that a learner will *use* the language in authentic interaction with another individual, given the opportunity.

The model presented in this article is a first attempt at a comprehensive treatment of WTC in the L2. It is obvious that research is needed to confirm or disconfirm the relations hypothesized here. Studies are in progress to test some of the hypotheses proposed here (Gouthro, MacIntyre, & Clément, 1997; MacIntyre & Clément, 1996, 1997; MacIntyre, Gouthro, & Clément, 1997). Initial results from these studies, using both qualitative and quantitative methodology, confirm the key role played by self-confidence and the social context in WTC.

The literature discussed above provides encouragement that the model will be supported by future research. We have also attempted to summarize many of the relations reported in the existing literature and integrate them into a single

framework. We have emphasized here why one should not expect the simple transfer of WTC in L1 to L2. The correlation may show a complex developmental pattern as language experiences and competence mounts, as intergroup relations change, and as the desire to contact specific individuals rises and falls. Further research into the subprocesses proposed in this model might demonstrate new or alternative paths, or it might identify variables that might be missing.

We view the model proposed here as a work-in-progress, more of a starting point than a finished product. Its main function, we hope, will be to inspire future research into the constructs described and their interrelations. To that end, over the next few years, we plan to investigate the links between L1 and L2 WTC. McCroskey and Baer (1985) assert that L1 WTC is a trait-like construct, but we have conceptualized it here as a situation-based variable representing an intention to communicate at a specific time to a specific person. Can these differences be resolved? We have not discussed every construct that might create variations in WTC. There may be additional variables that need to be added to the model or more circumscribed relationships that should be removed. Differences between language learning in the classroom and language acquisition in informal social settings may engender differences in WTC, such as a greater willingness to use oral or written communication. If this model helps to encourage research into these and other questions, then it will have served its purpose.

In conclusion, the addition of WTC to the literature on language learning may help orient theory and research toward the ultimate goal of language learning: authentic communication between persons of different languages and cultural backgrounds.

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Liskin-Gasparro Becomes Associate Editor of Reviews

After 19 years as *MLJ* Associate Editor of Reviews, Diane Birckbichler is leaving her position to pursue other interests. Effective immediately, all new material for review should be sent directly to the incoming Associate Editor, who assumed the position in September 1998.

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The *MLJ* welcomes Judy with enthusiasm, and is sorry to bid Diane a fond farewell.