

## **Willingness to Communicate from Indonesian Learners' Perspective: A Dynamic Complex System Theory**

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The present study is aimed at investigating factors as dynamic complex systems and sub-systems underlying students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in the classroom context. Due to the existence of students' reticence affected by miscellaneous factors during classroom discussion, it is conceived to be insufficient to see students' willingness to communicate from a single factor. Seen from a Dynamic Complex System Theory (DCST), the present study postulates the systems and sub-systems (e.g., factors and sub-factors) provoking students' willingness to communicate in L2 that are deemed to be dynamic and interconnected one to another. I conducted a naturalistic inquiry by investigating eight Indonesian university students encompassing low, low-moderate, moderate-high, and high English proficiency levels. A number of research instruments (face to face interview, online interview, and students' log) were used to collect the data pertaining to the students' participation in the classroom. The finding reveals that classroom systems such as *social and classroom context, linguistic competence, individual differences, and cultural context* affect participants' WTC in L2. Those systems encompass some sub-systems interacting and interconnecting one to another that affect classroom communication in second language.

*Keywords:* L2 WTC, dynamic complex perspective, classroom context

*Studi ini meneliti faktor-faktor yang termasuk sistem dan subsistem dinamika kompleks yang mendasari keinginan siswa untuk berkomunikasi (willingness to communicate - WTC) di dalam kelas. Karena ketidakeinginan siswa untuk berbicara dipengaruhi berbagai faktor, tidaklah cukup melihat keinginan siswa untuk berkomunikasi hanya dari satu faktor. Dilihat melalui Teori Dynamic Complex System Theory (DCST), studi ini menawarkan bahwa sistem dan subsistem (misalnya faktor-faktor dan subfaktor-subfaktor) yang memicu siswa berkomunikasi dalam bahasa ke-dua (L2) adalah dinamis dan saling terhubung satu sama lain. Saya melakukan 'naturalistic inquiry' dengan meneliti delapan mahasiswa Indonesia level rendah, menengah, menengah lanjutan, dan atas. Metode yang digunakan adalah wawancara dan log siswa. Studi ini menemukan bahwa sistem-sistem seperti konteks sosial dan kelas, kemampuan linguistik, perbedaan individu, dan konteks budaya mempengaruhi WTC. Sistem-sistem tersebut meliputi subsistem yang berinteraksi dan saling terikat satu sama lain dan mempengaruhi komunikasi di kelas.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The ample body of research in willingness to communicate (WTC) has provided the considerable evidences pertaining to the factors or variables underlying learners' WTC before entering communicative behavior (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998). Accordingly, WTC is conceptualized as "a readiness to speak in the L2 at a particular time with a specific person" (MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010, p. 162). It needs to also be noted that having deep linguistic competence is no longer sufficient for students; accordingly, they must also strive to engage in communicative competence in English in which WTC constitutes the direct factor provoking students to use their English communicatively (Aubrey, 2011).

With reference to English as a Second Language (ESL), the trend of WTC over the last two decades has mainly been focused on Western context. While, with regard to the English as a Foreign Language (EFL), some researchers have reported factors underlying EFL WTC such as in Japan (e.g., Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004), China (e.g., Cao, 2014; Peng, 2012), Iran (e.g., Zarrinabi, 2014; Zarrinabadi & Tanbakooei, 2016), and Indonesia (e.g., Prihartanti & Muamaroh, 2013; Wijaya and Rizkina, 2015). The aforementioned researchers have been illuminating a thick discussion of ESL/EFL WTC through three main methodological approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods (Zarrinabi & Tanbakooei, 2016).

Yashima, MacIntyre, and Ikeda (2016) criticize the overwhelming past reports of WTC that was heavily skewed in psychological variables i.e., trait like. More recent reports, however, has posited WTC as situational context that fluctuates during classroom interaction. (see e.g., Cao, 2014; Cao & Philip, 2006; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). Kang (2005), for instance, reveals that interaction of excitement, security, and responsibility constructed by topic, interlocutor and conversational context are factors influencing learners' WTC in the classroom context. In the similar vein, MacIntyre et al. (2011) investigating 100 Canadian students have pointed out that teachers and peers, error correction, perceived competence, family and friends and media usage provoke students' WTC. Additionally, some factors are also reported to provoke students' WTC in the classroom context such as error correction (Fadilah, 2016; Zarrinabadi, 2014) as well as wait-time to answer questions, topic choices, interlocutors (e.g., peers, teachers), and teacher-student rapport (Zarrinabadi & Tanbakooei, 2016; Zarrinabadi, 2014).

The shift from audio-lingual method (ALM) to communicative language teaching (CLT) has shaped a new insight to use language communicatively, rather to drill learners with grammatical rules as stipulated in ALM. Fadilah (2018) pinpoints that there are four factors which impede and need to be taken into account in the implementation of CLT specially in regard to Indonesian context that is societal classroom, socio-economic, cultural, and ideological constraints. Those factors are inseparable but interconnected one to another (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Teachers are viable to evoke their students to speak or communicate during classroom interaction i.e., discussion. It can be seen that some learners exhibit their enthusiasm, but the others remain silent. Some factors are reported as the factors of learners' silence during classroom interaction such as their lack of linguistic competence, self-confidence, shyness, to name just a few (Zarrinabadi & Tanbakooei, 2016). In other words, It signifies the complexities of factors underlying learners to willing or unwilling to communicate in L2 in the EFL classroom context.

However, the previous studies only view WTC as a construct derived from separable factors i.e., students' psychological or linguistic factors. Some other factors underlying WTC seem to be under-researched such as cultural, classroom-situational, socio-cognitive factors. Pawlak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2015) reported that the complex nature of WTC in L2 manifests itself in its diverse conceptualization, ranging from personality trait to a complex-related feature incorporating psychological, cultural, linguistic, socio-educational, and communicative dimensions. A dynamic character of WTC has been investigated that one's willingness to communicate may fluctuate during one communicative event. In addition, WTC decreases in the course of listening and grew or remained relatively stable when the participants were presenting his or her views. It would also seem that the speakers' WTC decreased when they experienced problems at the lexical and conceptual levels.

The present study, therefore, aims illuminate some factors underlying EFL students' WTC through their retrospective classroom interaction. The dynamic and complex variables underlying students' WTC in L2 become a main focus on the present study. Those variables are conceived to be inseparable but interconnecting and interacting one to another in provoking students' L2 WTC. The study poses two questions: (1) What classroom dynamic systems and sub-systems affect learners' willingness to communicate in L2? (2) How do those dynamic complex systems and sub-systems interact and interconnect to the learners' willingness to communicate in L2?

### **Dynamic Complex Theory in SLA**

Larsen-Freeman (1997) pointed out that complex theory in SLA was seen from several perspectives. First, it relates to the idea that language is a dynamic system that interrelates with one to another (De Bot, Lowie, & Vespoor, 2007). Second, it postulates the idea that SLA is a turmoil area of study in which there are many incommensurable theories competing each other (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). Third, it is connected to the instructed SLA where many unpredictable factors come at play at one to another dynamically (Kymes, 2007).

Systems are conceived as groups of entities or parts that function together where any system is inclusive of embedded sub-systems, all of which dynamically interrelate with one another (De Bot, Lowie, , & Vespoor, 2013). Dynamic systems are complex, adaptive systems in which variables affect each other overtime. They are complex because they develop overtime in non-linear fashion and the "emerge spontaneously from the interaction of a large number of agents and/or a large number of items" (Lee, Mikesell, Joaquin, Mates, & Schumann, 2009, p. 4). They are adaptive because the interacting components react to each other over times.

The dynamic system is a metaphor postulating a nonlinear system in which everything is interconnected (Alemi, Daftarifard, & Patrut, 2011). A large number of components or agents are connected to each other in one way. Therefore, a single effect on one part of this system can lead to a great change in whole system. The "butterfly effect" shows the importance of minor changes which lead to great changes at the end. Butterfly effect which was originally derived from meteorology indicated that a single and unimportant flapping of butterfly may lead to a hurricane in one part of the world; it occurs because of interconnectedness of the world into a dynamic system. Another metaphor in Dynamic complex theory refers to the story of a man putting a lot of loads on his camel, then his camel

stood up and started to walk. Later, he put a feather on his camel's back, the camel then collapsed. This story again indicated that any tiny change would result in great changes.

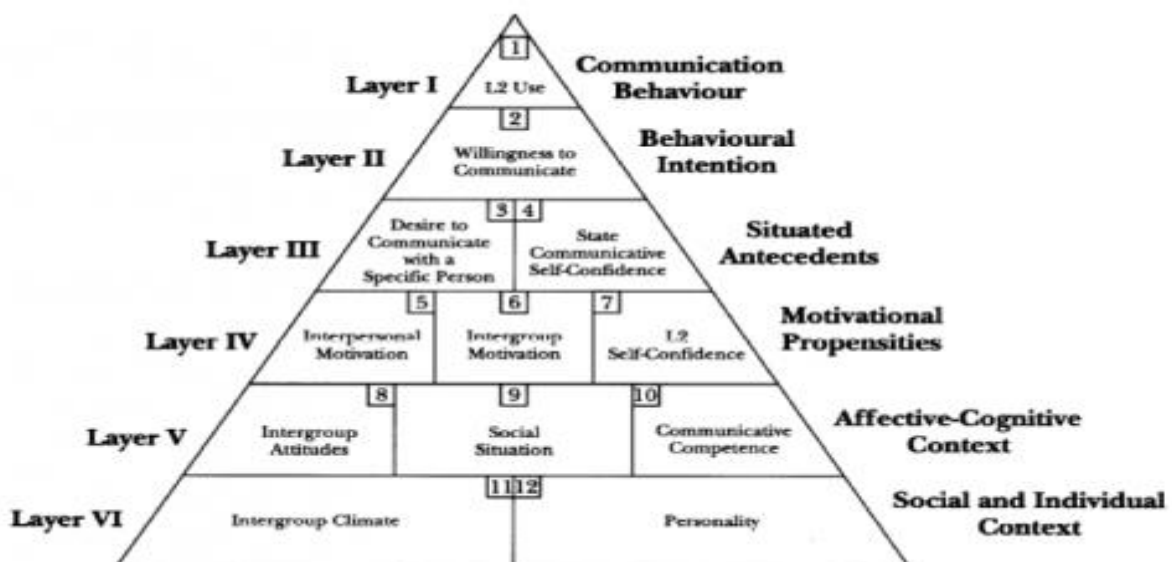
Larsen-Freeman (1997) put forward that SLA can be explained within Dynamic complex theory. In terms of WTC, there are many theories, sub theories, models and hypotheses that have been formulated to explain the nature of WTC in L2. From the perspective of dynamic complex system, the variables underlying WTC are systems and sub-systems that are interconnected to one another in which a single change of the variable (system) will affect all other parts of the systems.

Dornyei, de Bot, and Waninge (2014) theorized three core characteristics of system dynamic: change, stability, and context. The first is change. One of the central features of a dynamic system is its continuously changeable state. The word *state* refers to position of the system that is the object under study at a given moment such as a student's level of motivation or the number of words in a student's vocabulary. A system is dynamic when it has at least two or more key elements that are interlinked with each other but which also change overtime. The second is stability. Despite the emphasis on change and ongoing system dynamics, dynamic system theory also recognizes stable states in system behavior known as *self-organize* referring to *attractor states* during their development. The third is context. Contextual factors can play such a prominent role in pushing or pulling a system toward or away from a certain state that some of them cannot be meaningfully separated from the dynamics of the whole system and form an integral part of system.

## Studies on WTC

### Western Context

Figure 1. Heuristic model of WTC in L2 (cited in MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998, p.547)



MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed a pyramid-figure model of WTC in L2 incorporating six layers that showed complexity and interconnectedness among antecedent variables in L2 WTC. The first layer illustrates communication behavior that becomes the ultimate goal in L2 use. Authentic communication constitutes a concept in communication behavior such as speaking up in the classroom, reading L2 novels, watching L2 movies, or using L2 at work. The second layer is behavioral Intention. This layer denotes a direct variable on WTC as ‘a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2’ (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998, p.574). It is also confirmed that ‘WTC is the most intermediate determinant in L2’ (Clement *et al.*, 2003, p.191). The third layer signifies situated antecedents of L2 WTC comprising two variables: 1) desire to communicate with a specific person, and 2) state communicative self-confidence. Motivational propensities comprising Interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, and self-confidence are in the fourth layer. Dornyei (2005) pointed out that motivation is very important in SLA and provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. The fifth layer constitutes affective cognitive contexts encompassing intergroup attitudes, social situation, and communicative competence. Intergroup attitudes denote L2 students’ desire to communicate with L2 community, and the sense of satisfaction and fulfillment as one is learning a language. Social situation invokes variables such as the participants, setting, purpose, topic, channel of communication, and the interlocutor’s proficiency level. It also is argued that such variables affect one’s degree of self-confidence and WTC accordingly. Communicative competence refers to an individual’s level of proficiency, which can significantly influence one’s WTC (Zarrinabadi & Tanbakooei, 2016). The last layer subsumes two features: intergroup climate and personality. The former refers to one’s viewpoints toward L2 community, the value that the speaker attributes to it, and the desire that an individual has to adapt and minimize the social distance between the L1 and L2 communities. Whereas, the latter is conceptualized as having an indirect impact on WTC through affective variables such as attitude, motivation, and confidence (MacIntyre *et al.*, 1998).

### *East Asian Context*

Recent handful report of WTC has provided a thick description of WTC seen from qualitative study rather than quantitative one as proposed by Kang, Wen-Clements, and Chao-Philips. Different from heuristic model’s McIntyre *et al.*, (1998), Kang (2005) proposed multi-layer factors in conjunction with the emergence of situational WTC that dynamically emerge and fluctuate during conversational situations. They constitute situational variables affecting situational WTC, ranging from psychological antecedents to situational WTC and the emergence of situational WTC and ultimate WTC by using qualitative approach. In addition, a dynamic situational concept can change moment to moment, rather than trait predisposition. Kang investigated four Korean learners studying English as a second language in the United States. Interview, video taped conversation, and stimulated recall were analyzed after classroom interventions postulating that WTC in L2 classroom emerges and fluctuates dynamically among individual contexts such as excitement, responsibility, and security as well as situational variables such as topic, interlocutors, and conversational context.

Furthermore, Wen and Clement (2003) argued that heuristic model proposed by MacIntyre *et al.*, was a model that can be implemented in Western context, but not in China. In addition for the extension of this model, Wen and Clement conceptualized variables that might affect L2 WTC in China pertaining to Chinese philosophy and culture. The variables provoking Chinese' WTC are found and reported as societal context (group cohesiveness and teacher support), motivational orientation (affiliation and task orientation), personality factors (risk taking and tolerance of ambiguity) and affective perceptions (inhibited monitor and positive expectation of evaluation).

In the similar vein, Chao and Philip (2006) investigated eight ESL learners in New Zealand elucidating that some variables underlying WTC in L2 regarding contextual factors: familiarity with interlocutors, familiarity on topic, and self-confidence. Likewise, Cao (2014) reported that WTC in L2 was influenced by ecological context and interrelationship between multiple individual, classroom environmental and linguistic factors.

Zhong (2013) suggested that trait-like WTC proposed previously may not sufficient to capture L2 communication. Some learners may be competent and yet unwilling to communicate while others seek out every opportunity to communicate with their limited linguistic resources. In addition, L2 learners' WTC may fluctuate as situation change.

#### *Indonesian Context*

Muamaroh and Prihartini (2013) elucidated the variables affecting Indonesian students' willingness to communicate in L2. They investigated 426 *students' anxiety and willingness to communicate* by applying both quantitative and qualitative approach. The results reveal that there is a significant relationship between language anxiety and willingness to communicate in L2. Students' willingness to communicate was very low (51%) while students' anxiety influenced 68% of willingness to communicate in L2. Even though most students were in intermediate level for their English ability, their willingness voluntarily to speak up in the classroom was still low. Anxiety as a central cause of students' willingness to communicate became crucial consideration to pay attention. The lack of English proficiency was the main reasons for the students' anxiety. Lack of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation mastery greatly affected students' anxiety.

The other finding was unraveled in Rizkina and Wijaya's (2015) study. By investigating 136 undergraduate Indonesian students, they pointed out that students had low willingness to communicate (72.1%). There were four main factors affecting the finding that is *task-type, class-size, language anxiety, and teacher-students' rapport*. The finding also reveals that the importance to be able to communicate in English becomes a strong inquiry. The competitiveness in ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 became one of the motivations to improve and increase students' communication in English. However, the students' English proficiency became the main factor hindering their communication using English. In addition, the class size became the main problem. It is quite impossible to provoke students to speak with more than 40 students in the classroom.

## METHOD

### Context and Participants

This study used qualitative approach with in depth-analysis to investigate classroom complex variables and interaction among them in dynamic-complex situation affecting participants' willingness to communicate in L2. Zhong (2013) criticized the previous studies in WTC that heavily focused on learners' moderate to high levels at university (see e.g., Kang, 2005; Peng, 2012), while low level of L2 learners' WTC is under researched. In addition Zhong's study took five low proficiency L2 learners' situational in WTC in New Zealand ESL classroom. This present research assigned the participants based on their level of English proficiency. The total participants were 8 (eight) students comprising 2 (two) students with high average English proficiency, 2 (two) students with average score from moderate to high, 2 (two) students with average score from low to moderate, and 2 (two) students with low English proficiency (see Table 1).

The participants were in the fourth and sixth semester. All participants had learnt English for almost 11-12 years. In addition, some of them had got the some subjects in English (e.g., novel, poetry, linguistic, English skills). In categorizing the high and low English proficiency, I checked it out from the participants' recent GPA (e.g., grammar, listening, speaking, reading skills) and interviewed 2 lecturers to get more information pertaining to the participants' English proficiency. Based on the regulation of the university, the GPA encompasses interval scores ranging from 80-100 (high score), 68-79 (moderate score), and 56-67 (low score).

*Table 1. The profiles of participants based on their English level of proficiency*

Participants	Gender	Program	English proficiency	Semester
IZ	F	EFL	High	VI
NS	F	EFL	High	VI
DT	M	EFL	Moderate-High	VI
PI	F	EFL	Moderate-High	VI
AF	M	EFL	Low - Moderate	IV
CT	F	EFL	Low - Moderate	IV
GD	F	EFL	Low	IV
NP	F	EFL	Low	IV

### Data Collection

With reference to data triangulation, I collected the data derived from multiple sources of instruments: introspective journal, face to face and semi-structured interview, and online interview. Introspective journal is a subset of stimulated recall method aimed at investigating data as 'means of eliciting data about thought process in carrying out a task or activity' (Gass & Mackey, 2000, p.1). This method was used to "prompt" the participants to recall their past activities (e.g., during classroom interaction). I conducted consecutive introspection based on the students' journal followed by in-depth interview to investigate the students' utterances pertaining to their WTC during their past classroom interaction.

### **Introspective Journal/Writing**

Participants' reflection/journal writing was in the form of the situation when they were most willing to communicate and unwilling to communicate in L2. They were also asked to write the changes or dynamic condition of their situational context (confidence, perception, anxiety) regarding to the topic, classroom environment, interlocutor (e.g., dyad, small or large group discussion). Open and axial coding were applied to investigate students' information in conjunction with their both willingness and unwillingness to communicate as well as to see categories and concepts underlying their decision to communicate or not. Participants' journals were submitted by email a week before interview.

### **Semi-Structured Interview (Online and Face to Face)**

Generic interview was also conducted in both face to face and on-line by using blackberry messenger (BBM) seeking to participants' real comments on situation provoking them to be willing or unwilling to communicate in L2. To find out emergence variables appeared, I used tentative data to be analyzed and related based on the categories.

Additionally, I also applied *member-checking* to cross-check the data from students' writing in journal and to confirm the statements through interview (online and face to face). Furthermore, *negative case analyses* were applied to disconfirm participants' statements which contradicted between what they wrote in the introspective journal and what they said in the interview.

### **Data Analysis**

Recursive and dynamic analysis were conducted after data collection. First, the participants wrote about the classroom situation that makes them willing/unwilling to communicate in L2. From the journal writing, the process of *open coding* was conducted to find out tentative categories and tried to make relations among them. In this process, new concept and issues emerged and were taken for the next formulation to be confirmed and disconfirmed in the interview. *Member-checking and negative case analyses* were then applied in the interview to cross-check the previous written data. The data from interview were then transcribed and coded to find categories. I read every single word, short-phrase, complete sentence, and utterance from the transcribed data. Axial coding was then conducted to formulate all codes taken from participants' writing and interview transcription and was related to categories. Data reduction was conducted during this process, so the themes/concepts were formed based on those categories. That was the recursive analysis by reading the data repeatedly until saturation was reached: no new categories and themes were found, and salient categories and themes began to emerge (Zhong, 2013).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

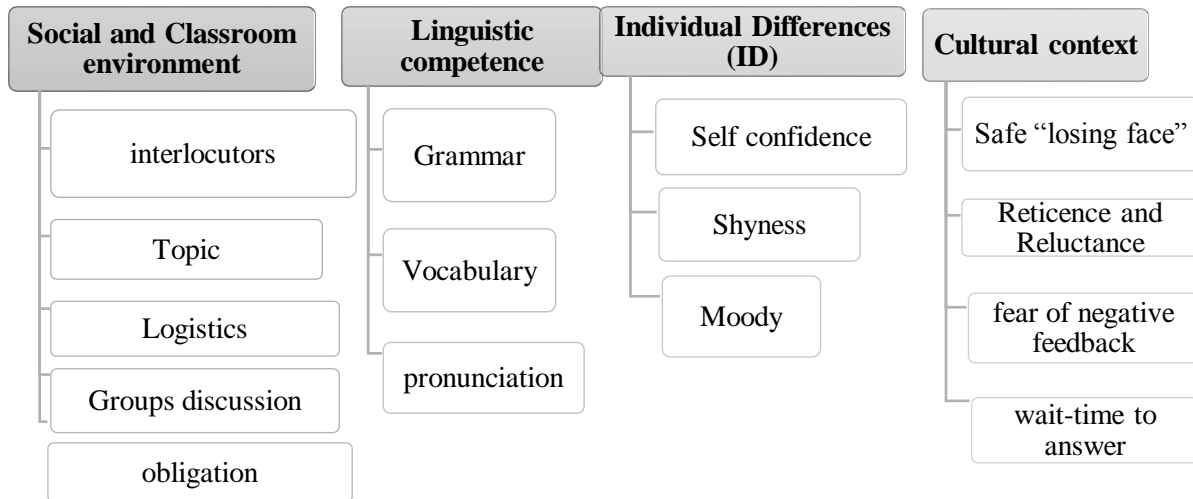
### **Findings**

Figure 2 illustrates constructs encompassing categories (e.g., interlocutors, grammar, self-confidence, losing-face) and variables (e.g., social and classroom environment, linguistic competence, individual differences, cultural context) which were derived from students' data.



Such constructs are conceived to provoke the students' WTC in L2 in the classroom context that are complex and dynamic, but interconnected one to another.

Figure 2 Classroom dynamic and complex system of WTC in L2



#### Social and Classroom Environment

The Participants' response with regard to their willingness to communicate in L2 in the classroom context was influenced by social and classroom environment. The factors underlying were *interlocutors, topic, obligation, classroom logistics, and group discussion*.

#### Interlocutors:

The persons that the participants communicated refer to the interlocutors (e.g., lecturer, peer). A lecturer who was considered as having competency, easy going, giving smile, caring and inspiring provoked the students in all levels to communicate voluntarily. One participant, for instance, reported the newbie lecturer taken from participant' journal writing:

*One of the biggest possibilities which makes me unwilling to speak or communicate in the class is when the lecturer is such a newbie. Here she/he may still do not know how to treat students well. He/she is so strict in teaching that he/she at first asking opinions from the students voluntarily. She/he says that there will be no judging in the answering section but she lies. In 1 hour passing, she/he suddenly states that the score will be taken from 20% class activity. She keep asking "your name?" after each student answering. It's pretty annoying that the class is just full of question and answer section, and the most annoying one is when she/he keep asking the definition of some words for almost 45 minutes per word. Not to mention, she/he asks what is system? What is sustainability? And so on by wasting lecturing duration. (IZ-high English proficiency).*

The same comment was derived from face to face interview in regard to lecturer' performance encouraging participant' willingness to communicate, as can be seen below. E is researcher while A is participant.

*E: what's about new lecturers? What kind of lecturers encouraging you to speak up?*

*A: lecturers make relax..ummmmm...comfortable.. and easy to communicate*

*E: what do you mean easy?*

*A: she is easy going, kind, talk slowly and easy to understand.*

*E: performance?*

*A: she is good..ummmmm...lot of smile (AF-low-moderate English proficiency)*

The influence of peers also became the factor of participants' willingness to communicate. The participants preferred to communicate freely and openly with their close friends. The peers had the similarity in terms of capability in English skill and understanding of participant's ability. The casual conversation was preferred by participants when conversing with peers, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

*E : Do you always speak English with your classmate?*

*G: Yaahhh ... Just make some jokes with close friend and the words are not polite..hahaha (GD-low English proficiency)*

On the other hand, the participants were reluctant to communicate using English with their classmates due to the fear of making mistake and misunderstanding. It was also found that the level of participants' proficiency influenced participant' communication:

*E: Do your friends always speak English with you?*

*N: No sir*

*E: Why?*

*N: Yahhh..I want it, but I am afraid of making mistake and sometimes was mocked.*

*E: Language is habit right?*

*N:Yahh..just afraid of especially when my friend speaks fluently, I feel down..afraid of communicating with them (NP – low English proficiency)*

Topic:

The familiarity of topic prompts the participants to voluntarily willing to communicate. Both high and low English proficiency participants are willing to communicate when they find the topic that becomes their interest and interesting. Negative comments come from the participant when finding a difficult subject and hard topic like in morphology class. .... *It is difficult topic, the teacher does not explain, just giving us assignment..it is confusing ....(NP-*

*Low English proficiency*). By contrast, interesting topic makes participants are more relax to communicate like .... *I like poetry class..it is interesting, I write a poem and discuss with my friends and lecturers.. (AF low-moderate English proficiency)*. The similar sound comes from another participant ....*I like entrepreneur class, it is interesting to discuss some interesting topic with my friends...(DT Moderate– high English proficiency)*.

#### Classroom logistic:

Classroom logistic refers to the lecturer's management of the classroom that might be in the form of *U-shaped, semi-circular, circular or traditional* seating. The participants had different criteria with reference to the classroom logistic. One low English proficiency participant preferred traditional classroom. Another commented 'no problem' with classroom logistic and the two others prefer circular. ...*I prefer circular seat in the classroom...* (AF low-moderate English proficiency), while another comment pointed out ...*in lecturing I prefer traditional, but in discussion I like circular....* (GD-low English proficiency). High English proficiency students preferred circular and semi-circular seating ....*I like semi-circular and semi-circular seat in discussion ....(PI moderate-high English proficiency)*. In addition, the classroom atmosphere becomes consideration such as air conditioning. ...*sometimes the air conditioning is not working well, it lost my concentration...*(NS – High English proficiency).

Method applied by lecturer contributed to the participants' willingness to communicate. A lecturer did not have good proficiency and skill, but he knew teaching pedagogy. One participant commented...*they (lecturers) master the material but they do not know how to deliver it ....* (IZ-high English proficiency).

#### Group Discussion:

Each level of participants' proficiency had different point of view in classroom group discussion. Classroom discussion refers to *dyad, small group and large group discussion*. One participant said ..... *I prefer large group, because I can listen to any one and get a lot of knowledge from others with circular seating and it has the same diameter and small distance ..no different levels seated....(IZ – high English proficiency)*. While one participant with high English proficiency preferred small group discussion...*I like small group discussion. It makes me comfortable to speak up ....( PI moderate- high English proficiency)*. The other commented that ...*I like dyad, I can talk more confidently with talking only with one friend...* (AF low-moderate English proficiency).

#### Obligation:

Participants' willingness to communicate also relied on the obligation such as a strict regulation to always speak in English in the classroom, assignment, and presentation. Lecturer should be aware of not only managing logistic but also providing situation to give opportunity to students to speak up. .... *I like when lecturer fully teaches using English, Indonesian is not allowed during discussion..( DT moderate- high English proficiency)*. By giving a chance to speak for all students, lecturers can assign students to make presentation. ...*I was the presenter in poetry class, my lecturer asked me some questions. It really makes me to speak...(GD-low English proficiency)*.

### *Linguistic Competence*

Linguistic competence refers to the mastery of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. All students with low English proficiency gave a similar comment about their linguistic competence. The lack of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation led them to get stuck when trying to start communicating in English. They thought that by mastering linguistic competence, it was easier for them to communicate with others. ....*it is difficult to speak, I have to arrange some sentences in good grammar, but I have less vocabulary.* (AF low-moderate English proficiency). One participants also said ....*My problem is grammar and pronunciation* (NP - low English proficiency). On the other hand, students with high English proficiency pointed out that linguistic competence was no problem with them. They said that the most important thing was self-confidence to speak in front of the classroom.

### *Individual Differences*

Participants' individual differences hindered their communication in the classroom context, especially low English proficiency participants. Consideration to be silent during classroom discussion led them to be anxious and reluctant to communicate. *Self-confidence, shyness, and mood* constituted the factors hindering them to participate in the classroom discussion. Less self-confidence and shyness affected participants to remain silent. Additionally, lack of linguistic competence also led to their reason for not participating in the classroom discussion. One participant commented ...*My big problem is confidence, like in pronunciation and vocabulary...* (NP - low English proficiency). Another participant also commented: *actually, my main problem is confidence, grammar, vocab, pronunciation that influence me to communicate in English..*(AF – low-moderate English proficiency). Furthermore, the participants' experiences in speaking constituted one of the factors contributing their willingness to speak. The more students practiced their speaking, the more confidence they had and the less shyness they encountered. However, high English proficiency participants tended to consider shyness as not a big problem. For them, mood became one of the problems, the state that made them sometimes happy or sad. The crowd of the classroom situation affected these participants to be less communicating.

### *Cultural Context*

Participants' culture became another factor hindering communication in L2. *Safe "lost-face", wait-time to answer, fear of negative feedback, and reticence & reluctance* underlay the participants' unwillingness/willingness to communicate. When a lecturer asked questions, they preferred to be silent. The fear of judgment made by classmates affected them to keep reticent. Both participants and lecturers discipline contributed to the willingness to communicate in the classroom interaction. The label that lecturers were always right became the evident. When a participant came late, the lecturer would give punishment by not allowing him/her join the lesson. However, it was not for lecturer. No punishment or apologize when a lecturer came late. Additionally, wait-time to answer question also affected students' participation in the classroom. Participants with low English proficiency that lacked

linguistic competence would be comfortable in answering the questions when they were given more time to answer instead of direct respond...*it is difficult for me to answer the question. I need to think for my grammar and vocabulary ....(AF low-moderate English proficiency).*

Another factor was fear of negative feedback. Both high and low English proficiency participants viewed the similar sound for feedback given. For instance, when they made a mistake in pronouncing a word, suddenly the lecturer just “blame” them to be not incompetent. One participant said about the feedback given by a lecturer...*how can you communicate, you cannot speak in English at all.. (NP - low English proficiency).* An interesting result was participants’ reticence and reluctance to communicate voluntarily in the classroom. The term reticence is attributed to the participants that have low English proficiency. Their lack competence in linguistics, less confidence, and shyness affected their willingness to voluntarily communicate in L2. However, participants with high English proficiency were attributed by reluctance. The silence of high English proficiency participants was different from the other one. While low English proficiency participants were encountered by their linguistic competence and self-confidence, high English proficiency participants were hindered by lecturers’ competence and classroom situation. One participant stated ...*today I feel unwilling to communicate in discussion.. I prefer silent because my friends are crowded... (PI moderate-high English proficiency).* Another comment was... *for the first time I am excited for newbie lecturer, but she/he breaks the first impression that she/he didn’t give any appreciation even if it’s just a smile. She even did not know how to teach us..(IZ -high English proficiency).*

## **Discussion**

The present study illustrates how dynamic and complex the variables underlying students’ unwillingness/willingness to communicate in the classroom context. The interaction among variables interconnects simultaneously to the students’ predisposition to get involved in communication. As some participants point out that they encounter multiple factors (e.g., linguistic competence, anxiety, topic familiarity, interlocutors) provoking them to initiate to communicate in English. Such factors come at play simultaneously and subsequently in the classroom interaction as dynamic and complex systems underlying their WTC. Likewise, the present finding favors previous studies unraveling the complexity and dynamicity of students’ WTC in the classroom context (see e.g., Cao, 2014; Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015; McIntyre & Legatto, 2011). The term *context* in a language classroom cannot be separated from the systems that are integrated one to another. When we focus on the behavior of individual learners, their performance will be affected by various layers of contextual influence such as “the behavior of friends and classmates, the constraints of the classroom space, or the leadership functions exercised by the teacher” (Dornyei, deBot, & Waning 2014, p. 706). Students’ linguistic competence such as lack of grammatical, vocabulary and pronunciation competence hinders students’ to participate in the classroom communication context. However, those are not the only variables leading to the students’ unwillingness to communicate, as stated by Kang (2005) that “the factors facilitating WTC as much as possible, instead of focusing on one factor at the expense of other facilitating factors’ illuminates more comprehensive factors in provoking students’ L2 WTC” (p. 291).

Interestingly, students' silence becomes a multidimensional fact found in the classroom affecting students' unwilling/willing to participate in classroom discussion. For low English proficiency participants, such lack participation in the classroom discussion and reticence are affected by interconnected variables that contribute simultaneously instead of one factor. The reasons encompass educational and cultural backgrounds, embarrassment, low confidence, low English proficiency, previous experiences with speaking in the class, personality traits, fear of losing face and task difficulty (Liu & Jackson, 2009).

In his study, Tatar (2005) reports that students' lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes and being laughed at lead them to be reticent to participate in the classroom discussion. However, high English proficiency participants propose different point of view pertaining to their silence during classroom discussion. It is caused by neither their lack of linguistic competence nor self-confidence, but the factors such as lecturer's way to teach, lecturer's competence and crowd in the classroom in which their *reticence* is caused by individuals' level of fear and anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons, while *their reluctance* is caused by resisting and unwilling to communicate (McCroskey, 1977). Additionally, Tatar (2005) put forward that students' silence in the classroom is by no means of not participating during interaction i.e., discussion, but rather it is conceived as "an alternative mode of participation in which a student internalizes knowledge in a low-anxiety environment" (p. 292). It is in line with Bernales' (2016) study reporting that students' choice to be silent indicates their 'thought process' in which the students listen to rather than speak with, but it is deemed as "a valid form of classroom participation, although their participation is not visible to those around them" (p. 368).

With the regard to interlocutor, a lecturer also contributes to the students' participation in the classroom discussion in the social and classroom environment context. Lecturer's professionalism, classroom managements, and personal and interpersonal competency interconnect and interplay one to another affecting students' involvement in the classroom activities (Peng, 2012). The students and their environment are not independent one to another but rather influence and change each other, leading to systemic variability in development (McIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Vespoor, Lowie & Van Dick, 2008). Besides, the students' preference to group discussion (e.g., dyad, small group) constitutes their changes of L2 WTC in conjunction with another interlocutor i.e., peer. It favors Cao and Philip's (2006) finding that reveals the dynamicity and changes of students' WTC across dyads, small group, and whole class discussion. In other words, the students across their level of English proficiency tend to have different perspective to involve in the three types of classroom group discussion; accordingly, such group discussion provokes the students' initiation to communicate or not communicate when provided by a topic to discuss.

Furthermore, it should be noted that treating low English proficiency students need to be differentiated from treating high English proficiency students. The low English proficiency students' reticence or silence is mainly caused by their lack proficiency in linguistic competence. Students' failure to respond to teacher's question is the result less from lack of knowledge but more on the insufficient English proficiency (Tsui, 1996). Giving a more wait-time condition for students to answer the questions will be beneficial instead of

directly inquiry for the answer (Zarrinabadi, 2014). The prevalence of Asian students' culture, notably, East Asian students appear to be 'slow' in providing an answer because they need a moment's reflection, and this 'slowness' in participation is cultural characteristic of them, not a sign of fear or passivity (Jones, 1999; Liu & Jackson, 2009; Zhong, 2013). Different treatment needs to be considered for high English proficiency students. Such students see that lecturers' professionalism is the main concern. Lecturers' competence in mastering the subjects and the way to deliver such subjects are incorporated to each other. Those two components lead to less participation in the classroom discussion due to the students' trust to the lecturers.

Social and classroom environment, linguistic competence, individual differences and cultural context are complex system that embody some *sub-systems* in the classroom interconnected one to another (see e.g., Cao & Philip, 2006; Cao, 2014; Peng, 2012). Those variables are conceived to be dynamic instead of static. The interaction among variables leads to students' willingness or unwillingness to communicate in the classroom context. Second/foreign language lecturers emphasize not only the linguistic competence or classroom environment but also the understanding of students' psychology and cultural context. Interaction in the classroom can be increased substantially by focusing on ways to facilitate student-student as opposed to the teacher-student interaction. Group cohesiveness, communication anxiety, topic relevancy, and acceptance of methods are all factors that can be easily manipulated by lecturers to increase students' WTC and student-student interaction (Aubrey, 2010; Zarrinabadi, 2014). Our challenge in researching the learner and the context of classroom systems and sub-systems is to consider simultaneously the ongoing multiple influences between environmental and learner factors in all their componential complexity, as well as the emerging changes in both the learner and the environment as the result of this development.

## CONCLUSION

The finding of the present study reveals the evidence that L2 WTC in the Indonesian classroom context invokes a dynamic and complex system. Such systems encompass social-classroom context, linguistic competence, individual differences, and cultural context which affect students' WTC in L2. These systems comprise into some *sub-systems* namely, interlocutors, topic, classroom logistic, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, self-confidence, shyness, moody, wait-time response, fear of negative feedback, reticence & reluctance, and safe losing face. Those sub-systems are interconnected one to another affecting students' L2 WTC in the English classroom interaction. The finding also favors the previous studies pertaining to the complex and dynamic system of variables underlying L2 WTC in the classroom context. Those variables cannot stand by themselves in provoking students' willingness to communicate in L2, but rather they interact and interconnect one to another as complex and dynamic variables affecting L2 WTC. Interestingly, the prevalent stereotype of Indonesian students' silence as dominated by Javanese cultures as "total obedience, unquestioning mind, and the belief that the old know all as well as teacher can do no wrong" (Marcellino, 2008, p.58) seems not to be totally true. The present finding reveals that students' silence is caused by some complex factors (e.g., linguistic perceived competence, classroom environment, teaching method, group discussion, feedback).

In sum, L2 WTC in the classroom context constitutes an important system of SLA and second language pedagogy. A large number and novel variables provoking the students' L2 WTC need to be explored for further research. Besides, the involvement of a large number of participants together with their individual differences e.g., motivational, anxious levels are needed to be discussed comprehensively to shed more light of the overarching variables provoking the students' L2 WTC in the classroom context.

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