

The Effects of Online Learning on English L2 Learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

Douglas PARKIN

1. Abstract

This mixed methods study examined if online learning for English L2 learners affected Willingness to Communicate (WTC) levels differently than regular face-to-face learning. The English L2 learners in this study were 15 second year Elementary and English Secondary Education course students from Yamaguchi Gakugei University (YGU), and 86 first year Arts Expression and Day Care Education course students from Yamaguchi College of Arts (YCA).

An online WTC questionnaire was utilized for this study, which was created by modifying a similar instrument that will be discussed later in the reviewed literature. The instrument provided both quantitative and qualitative data, which yielded valuable insights into the YGU and YCA students' WTC levels. The quantitative results indicated that online WTC for interpersonal communication in each class was lower than acceptable levels, while communication with friends was lower than acceptable levels in two of the three classes. The reliability of the quantitative portion of the online WTC instrument was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, and it was found that some sections were very reliable while other sections appeared in need of modifications. The qualitative portion of the WTC questionnaire revealed many difficulties students faced with online lessons, such as anxiety, navigating software, submitting assignments, and with using English. Based on the results of the study, recommendations regarding online learning and the need for further WTC studies have been given.

2. Introduction

Several WTC studies for L2 learners of English have been conducted through the years, mainly based on communication in face-to-face contexts. The information from those studies, have provided valuable insights into students' reasons for choosing to communicate in classes, which is important in helping L2 educators, for most consider communication to be an essential element in developing language skills. Even though some researchers have conducted WTC online studies for over ten years now, it has not been until recently that such studies have become essential. 2020 will go down in history as the year of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The pandemic forced people to make many changes in their lives, and it also forced educators to utilize online alternatives to face-to-face learning. This study was based on the need for English classes to go online due to the extreme circumstances that occurred in 2020.

The three classes in this study, needed to be altered from having regular face-to-face lessons to online lessons, with two of them having lessons that started in May of 2020. Each of

the classes had different circumstances, with the Day Care course students having fully synchronous classes online from May 13th - August 27th. The Arts Expression course students had half of their classes synchronously online and the other half face-to-face at school, from July 1st - August 26th. Five of the Arts Expression course students chose to take a second course under the same blended learning circumstances, from September 23rd - December 23rd. The Elementary and English Secondary course students had fully synchronous online classes for only two weeks from May 12th - May 19th, while still having asynchronous elements given to them for the rest of their classes.

Three elements considered to be essential factors affecting English L2 communication will be discussed in the literature review section of this study, which are willingness to communicate (WTC), motivation as a key component of WTC, and anxiety. In the context of online learning, these elements are more essential than ever to understand. This study focused mainly on the instructional methods used in the Day Care course students' English classes, and how they were modified to conform to the needs of the online environment. Based on these instructional methods, WTC, motivation, and anxiety are seen quite differently in online contexts, when compared to face-to-face learning.

In May of 2020, many institutions were faced with choosing the best platform to instruct their students, with only some of the almost unlimited choices being Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Classroom, and Cisco Webex. YGU and YCA chose to use Microsoft Teams as the platform for online learning, and the methods section explains its implementation, in the context of this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine how changing to online lessons effects willingness to communicate levels for junior college and university students, studying English at Yamaguchi College of Arts (YCA) and Yamaguchi Gakugei University (YGU). It was hypothesized that YCA and YGU students studying English online will have lower levels of WTC compared to students who take regular face-to-face lessons.

3. Literature Review

3. 1 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

Willingness to communicate for students studying a second language, has been of great interest to educators in various countries and in several different languages, for many years. Why it is of importance to L2 educators lies in the fact that most would agree, it is through communication that we can truly measure if a language has been learned effectively by students. One of the main seminal researchers of willingness to communicate (WTC) who is most often credited with its creation is James McCroskey, who also created the WTC scale, which measures L2 learners' communication anxiety, talking frequency, and preferences to engage in communication (McCroskey, 1992). Another seminal researcher in the field of WTC is Peter Macintyre, who defined willingness to communicate as the probability to speak when an L2 learner is free to do so, and it is considered to be a volitional process (Macintyre, 2007). In comparison, McCroskey (1992) stated that the purpose of the WTC scale is to measure an L2 learner's tendency to approach or avoid a situation where they can initiate communication. McCroskey (1992) said literature supports that WTC is a volitional process based on language anxiety and motivation, which are relevant to only specific communication opportunities. Both

McCroskey (1992) and Macintyre (2007) agreed that anxiety is a key element to understanding WTC. Even though the WTC scale and its surrounding concepts have been questioned through the years and may be in need of modifications, many L2 researchers still value the concepts and use the scale in their research.

Online learning sometimes results in increases in L2 WTC, for some students are more willing to spontaneously communicate in English if they feel they are not noticed as much as in regular face-to-face contexts (Van Le et al., 2018). Text and audio chatting can be seen as less intimidating than video communications, again given that students feel they are not as noticeable (Van Le et al., 2018). Cunningham et al. (2010) also found that students were reluctant to use webcams, perhaps given their perceived anonymity online which results in disinhibition effects. Online learning has been found to help shy students by increasing their WTC, if they feel they can control their social presence (Van Le et al., 2018). Although some studies suggest that students perceive online learning as safer, where they feel less inhibited to express their thoughts, WTC may actually vary depending on online context and students' perceived social presence (Van Le et al., 2018). Online L2 WTC has been linked by researchers to improving L2 motivation and confidence, while it has also been found to decrease L2 speaking anxiety (Lee & Lee, 2020).

The study of WTC can in many ways be a complex process. However, sometimes L2 WTC can be affected by a simple lack of interest in a task (Williams et al., 2017). L2 WTC can also be influenced by several factors, such as the importance L2 learners place on an interaction, and experiences they may have had in similar situations (Williams et al., 2017).

3. 2 Motivation as a Key Factor of WTC

To better understand WTC, it is essential to look closer at motivation, which is one of its key components. Rod Ellis who is one of the seminal researchers in L2 learning, described motivation as a complex construct, for it concerns needs, effort, and the effects of evaluation on L2 learners (Ellis, 2019). He said that motivation research initially started by realizing that it was related to L2 learners' attitudes towards the target language and its community. He also said that little research has been conducted relating motivation to the process of L2 acquisition. The foundations of modern motivation research come from Gardner (1985), who created the Socio-educational Model, which looks at L2 acquisition in terms of situational anxiety, intelligence, motivation, and aptitudes for learning languages. He stated that the Socio-educational Model differs from other L2 models, in that empirical tests can be applied to it. In support of this, he created the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) to measure several variables both linguistic and non-linguistic. The original AMTB was designed for use with native English speakers studying French as an L2 language but was later modified to include English L2 learning.

When conducting L2 acquisition research, it is quite easy to find an abundance of literature devoted towards WTC and motivation. However, very few studies have been devoted towards linking the two seemingly distinct concepts together. One study by Hashimoto (2002) which can be considered seminal given that it was one of the first of its kind, linked the two concepts together by utilizing the socio-educational model by Robert Gardner and the WTC model by Peter Macintyre. The purpose of the study was to examine how affective factors influenced the

use of L2 language in Japanese ESL classrooms. To accomplish this, the study surveyed 56 Japanese undergrad and graduate students attending the University of Hawaii, by using several combined instruments, which included the WTC scale and a mini version of the AMTB (Hashimoto, 2002). The results of the surveys were analyzed by using an Amos structural equation model, which indicated that WTC and motivation affected frequency of L2 communication. Hashimoto (2002) stated that the link between WTC and motivation was found to be significant, indicating that willingness to communicate contains motivational properties.

Another perspective on motivation provided by Kikuchi (2015) concerns the term demotivation, which he described as being a prominent problem in Japanese high school English classes. Demotivation is defined as a force that pulls learners back from their learning goals, and also stops them from considering how behaviors and outcomes are related (Kikuchi, 2015). Demotivation research is important not as an opposing perspective to motivation, instead, it provides information concerning internal and external forces that diminish motivation and negatively affect L2 learning, with anxiety being one of the main demotivators (Kikuchi, 2015).

Ueki and Takeuchi (2013) provided an opposing perspective to Gardner's socio-educational model and its integrative concepts, where L2 learners are motivated to join target language communities. They said that modern online communication technology has helped merge English into a World construct, which has eliminated any specific target language community. Ueki and Takeuchi (2013) helped to inform researchers that traditional L2 learning concepts should always be considered in relation to learning contexts such as online learning environments.

3. 3 Anxiety

Anxiety is often found by researchers to be a variable that affects WTC and motivation, and in this section, it will be discussed in terms of foreign language anxiety (FLA). Horwitz et al. (1986) indicated that literature has yet to properly define what FLA is, and that their study sought to do it by identifying it as a distinct variable in the L2 learning process. FLA can be defined as a discomfort some learners experience when faced with having to interact in a foreign language, but are not able to do so authentically (Gkonou et al., 2017). The effects of FLA are varied and include forgetting, palpitations, sweating, missing classes, and speaking avoidance (Horwitz et al., 1986). FLA is usually associated with speaking, given that it is the L2 skill most publicly evaluated, with research supporting this by finding that speaking anxiety is the main component of FLA (Gkonou et al., 2017). As part of their seminal study, Horwitz et al. (1986) conducted group meetings with 30 foreign language learners from the University of Texas. During the meetings, students expressed that FLA caused them to freeze in class, go blank during tests, and made them scared to enter class. This information helped to create the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which enables students with such anxieties to be identified (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Online communication contexts have been found to actually help some people with anxiety. One study found that undergraduate university students suffering with social anxiety disorder reported feelings of greater comfort and self-disclosure when communicating online, than individuals not suffering with the disorder (Weidman et al., 2012).

4. Method

4. 1 Participants

The participants for this study were second year Elementary and English Secondary course students from Yamaguchi Gakugei University (YGU), and first year Arts Expression and Day Care course students from Yamaguchi College of Arts (YCA). The class being taken by the YGU students was the Applied English I course. The Arts Expression and Day Care course students from YCA took classes separately, but the name of the class was the same which was the English Communication I course. Each of the classes and the students taking them were very different, so a brief outline of the differences will now be provided.

4. 1. 1 Applied English I - YGU

The purpose of the course is to provide Elementary and English Secondary course students, the necessary skills to teach communicative English to their future students. Given that the course is mainly directed towards secondary course students, the level of English being used as the instructional language is quite high at about 95-99% of the time. The Applied English I course is mandatory for the English Secondary course students, but is an elective for the Elementary course students. WTC in English is usually quite high with most students, while motivation is usually intrinsic in nature given that students either chose English as their major or freely chose to take the Applied English I course. Of the 18 students enrolled in the class, 15 students chose to participate in this online WTC study.

4. 1. 2 English Communication I – YCA – Arts Expression

The purpose of the course is to help develop basic English skills for Arts Expression course students, so they can communicate in daily conversations and while travelling abroad. The level of English being used as the instructional language is about 88-95% of the time. The course is optional, so motivation is usually mixed between intrinsic and extrinsic, while WTC also seems to vary greatly depending on the students. Of the 28 students enrolled in the class, 3 students chose to participate in this online WTC study.

4. 1. 3 English Communication I – YCA – Day Care

The purpose of the course is to provide Day Care course students with the necessary skills to instruct English to their future students. The level of English being used as the instructional language is about 88-95% of the time. The course is mandatory for the students, so motivation is often more extrinsic in nature, and WTC varies greatly depending on the students. Of the 83 students enrolled in four separate classes, all students participated in this online WTC study. Given that the English Communication I – Day Care course classes were the only ones conducted completely synchronously online, the instructional methods that will be listed in this study will be mainly from this course.

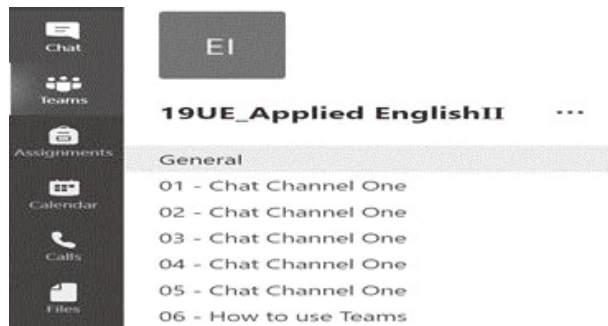
4. 2 Online Platform Used – Microsoft Teams

The online platform used for lessons in this study was Microsoft Teams. Given that the classes normally are conducted face-to-face, many modifications to instructional methods were necessary, as were special hardware and software requirements for the instructor and the

students. Before classes could commence, each member needed to have a device to communicate, be it a PC, a tablet, or a smartphone. In addition, internet connectivity was also required, preferably being unlimited Wi-Fi, for students to be able to fully engage in synchronous video enabled lessons. Once the hardware and software requirements were met, then everyone needed to register using a password for their classes as listed above. Each class was separated into Chat Channel groups, as shown in Figure 1 below, ranging in size from four to five students.

Figure 1

Microsoft Teams Screenshot of Chat Channels



Group discussions, group work, and mini lessons by students, were conducted using the Chat Channels. The General Channel was used for instructor lessons and presentations given to the class. The online platform provided many learning opportunities for the students, and at times WTC was increased compared to face-to-face lessons. However, several difficulties were also experienced, which will be discussed later in this paper.

4. 3 Instruction Methods Used

The instructional methods listed in this paper mainly pertain to those used in the English Communication I course lessons for the Day Care course students. The reason for this, is that it was the only course to be fully synchronously online for every lesson, and the students make up over 80% of the participants for this study.

4. 3. 1 Question Crazy Cards

The Question Crazy Card system was originally created by the author of this paper, to provide students with face-to-face communication opportunities to practise English, build confidence, and to develop needed skills in the language (Parkin, 2018). WTC for L2 students usually increases greatly as motivation to communicate improves while anxiety decreases. The Question Crazy Card system normally is conducted by students going to the course instructor or other faculty members to ask English questions face-to-face. It allows students to practise speaking while also obtaining points for their grades. Given the course was changed to online using Teams, the students were provided time at the end of each lesson to wait in the General Channel, where they would ask questions to the instructor. Although the process took time, students were able to gain valuable communication experiences, as they spoke with the

instructor and watched as their classmates did the same. Videos and Microphones were kept on for only the instructor and whoever the student was that was asking a question.

4. 3. 2 Self-Introduction Presentations

Normally, 1/3 of each class is devoted towards students using a language learning program in the computer lab, which helps them build communication skills. However, given the online format used in this study, students no longer had access to the computer lab. In substitution, students were instead required to prepare self-introduction PowerPoint presentations, to present in the General Channel to the rest of the class. Using a PC to create and give a presentation using Teams can be challenging, but having only a smartphone to do the same task makes it even more of a challenge. 93% of the 83 Day Care students had only a smartphone to use for the course. This created a great challenge for both the instructor and the students. Only some of the difficulties included creating PowerPoint presentations, sharing screens online, not having sound due to Teams' restrictions for smartphones, and the size limitations of the smaller devices. Several lessons were used to instruct students on how to use Teams to create and give presentations.

4. 3. 3 Course Instructor Demonstration Lessons

After self-introduction presentations were given, the second section of each class was devoted towards the instructor conducting demonstration lessons (Parkin, 2018), where students learned how to give English lessons online to day care students. The students were required to imagine themselves as day care students and to act accordingly. "The activities and methods used, allow students to work together, and to forget about their own language anxieties and inhibitions" (Parkin, 2020, p. 134). The goal of the demonstration lessons, was to provide content and methods that were similar to those used in face-to-face lessons. This goal proved to be a great challenge to both the instructor and the students, given the online environment used.

4. 3. 4 Mini Lessons Taught by Students

The final section of each lesson was devoted towards students conducting mini lessons (Parkin, 2018) to each other in their group's Chat Channel. Leaders in each group would help select which students would become the teachers and which would become the day care students. The student teachers were responsible for teaching a section of the lesson previously taught by the course instructor. Similar to regular face-to-face classes, anxiety levels in the first few weeks, proved to be high for the students (Parkin, 2020). However, much of the anxiety for the students was created by having to use the online platform of Teams, as they struggled with technical difficulties, timing issues with singing and dancing, and the inability to naturally connect as they would in a regular classroom setting.

4. 3. 5 Final Team-Teaching Exam

The final online challenge for the students involved working in pairs to team-teach the rest of the class in the General Channel. The final Team-Teaching Exam teaches the students that collaborative learning is essential for teachers and for students learning English (Parkin, 2018).

In preparation for the final test, the students were placed in pairs, given a topic for their lesson, and were to prepare a 15-minute lesson. While preparing for the test, WTC levels appeared to increase as did motivation, given the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators associated with their task (Parkin, 2020). Many challenges face students in the final test during regular face-to-face lessons, but teaching online provided several more difficulties they needed to face. Troubles with internet connections, timing issues when communicating, and not being able to see students, were only some of the challenges they dealt with.

4. 3. 6 Final Reflections

Reflections allow students to look at their experiences and to use the understanding they have gained to become stronger as a person and as a professional (Parkin, 2018). The students normally are given Final Reflection sheets, where they write down their answers to the questions given, and then submit their finished work to the instructor. However, Teams offered additional challenges, for the students needed to download a copy to their device, answer the questions, and then upload the completed form back to Teams. Many students required help from the instructor and their classmates to complete the tasks. The answers given by the students listed in Figure 5 of the results section, show how rewarding and challenging the course was for everyone. Figure 2 below is a copy of the online Final Reflections form given to the Day Care course students who took the English Communication I course. Final Reflections are considered as an instructional method, but also as a valuable data collection resource for this study.

Figure 2

Final Reflection Questions Given to Day Care Course Students Taking Fully Synchronous Online Lessons

Final Reflections

1. What did you learn in this course that you think will be useful for your future as a teacher?
 2. What will you remember most from taking this course?
 3. What were the most difficult things for you during this course?
 4. Has your confidence in using and perhaps teaching English changed after taking this course? Explain!
 5. What do you think about your own performance during this course? Could you have done anything differently?
 6. How would you change this course to help future Day Care Course students learn even more?
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4. 4 Data Collection - Online (Teams) WTC Scale - Questionnaire

A modified version of the WTC scale created by James McCroskey was used in this study. The original WTC scale was modified to include items specific to the courses in this study being taught using Microsoft Teams. Figure 3 is the copy given to the Applied English I

students, while a Japanese version was given to the YCA students, due to how much more difficult the questionnaire would be have been if written in English. Google Forms was the online device used for the students to complete the questionnaire.

The original WTC scale consists of 20 questions, and is divided into two main categories of context-type and receiver-type sub-scores (McCroskey, 1992). The two categories are broken down into seven subcategories titled meetings, interpersonal, public speaking, stranger, acquaintance, and friend (McCroskey, 1992). The modified version used in this study consisted of only 12 questions, but maintained the same two main categories, as well as the seven subcategories. The original questions were changed to apply to the Teams platform used in the classes in this study, but great care was taken to maintain the original contexts as much as possible. Figure 4 is the method used by McCroskey (1992) to calculate the WTC levels, based on the answers given to the questions. Although the numbering of the questions was modified in this study, the calculation methods used were identical to those recommended by McCroskey (1992). At the bottom of Figure 4, the acceptable values of WTC are listed for normal face-to-face lessons. These figures were used to analyse the WTC levels of the students in this study. In addition to the quantitative questions provided by the original WTC scale, qualitative questions were also added to the questionnaire used in this study. Table 4 in the results section displays the answers given to the qualitative questions.

Figure 3

Online (Teams) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale - Questionnaire

Online (Teams) WTC Scale

Hello and welcome to this online questionnaire. You of course do not have to do this questionnaire, but it is greatly appreciated if you do. These questions are part of research aimed at helping to improve English learning for students just like you. If you choose to answer the questions, then please be sure to answer all questions from 1-12. If you would like, you can also answer questions 13-16, but only if you want to.

Please understand the three levels of students in the questions.

Closest = “**Students who are your friends**” Kind of Close = “**Student (s) you know**” and Not Close = “**Student (s) you don’t know well**”

Please also remember the “**General Channel**” is the main channel where we all met, and the “**Chat Channels**” were the smaller locations for group meetings.

Please rate how much you are willing to communicate in **English** during the following situations while using Microsoft Office Teams online. Give your answers as a number from 0-100. 0 = never to 100 = Always.

- ____ 1. Give a presentation in a chat channel to a group of students you don’t know well.
- ____ 2. Talk with another student you know in a chat channel.
- ____ 3. Talk in a chat channel with a large meeting of students who are your friends.
- ____ 4. Talk in a chat channel with a small group of students you don’t know well.
- ____ 5. Talk with a student who is your friend while in a chat channel.
- ____ 6. Talk in the general channel with a large meeting of other students you know.

- ____7. Talk with a student you do not know well while in a chat channel.
- ____8. Give a presentation to a group of students who are your friends in a chat channel.
- ____9. Talk in a chat channel with a small group of students you know.
- ____10. Talk in a large meeting in the general channel with students you don't know well.
- ____11. Talk in a chat channel with a small group of students who are your friends.
- ____12. Give a presentation in a chat channel to students you know.

Please answer questions 13-16 only if you want to, but make sure you answer all questions from 1-12 if you can.

13. What were the most difficult things for you while using Teams?
14. Is it more difficult to communicate in English with other students and the instructor online or in a regular classroom? Why?
15. Is it more difficult to prepare for online or for regular face-to-face classes? Please explain.
16. Any other comments you might want to make.

Figure 4

Norms for WTC Scores

Scoring:

Context-type sub-scores--

Group Discussion: Add scores for items 8, 15, & 19; then divide by 3.

Meetings: Add scores for items 6, 11, 17; then divide by 3.

Interpersonal: Add scores for items 4, 9, 12; then divide by 3.

Public Speaking: Add scores for items 3, 14, 20; then divide by 3.

Receiver-type sub-scores--

Stranger: Add scores for items 3, 8, 12, 17; then divide by 4.

Acquaintance: Add scores for items 4, 11, 15, 20; then divide by 4.

Friend: Add scores for items 6, 9, 14, 19; then divide by 4.

To compute the total WTC score, add the sub scores for stranger, acquaintance, and friend. Then divide by 3.

Group discussion >89 High WTC, <57 Low WTC

Meetings >80 High WTC, <39 Low WTC

Interpersonal conversations >94 High WTC, <64 Low WTC

Public Speaking >78 High WTC, <33 Low WTC

Stranger >63 High WTC, <18 Low WTC

Acquaintance >92 High WTC, <57 Low WTC

Friend >99 High WTC, <71 Low WTC

Total WTC >82 High Overall WTC, <52 Low Overall WTC

Note: These figures represent the acceptability of WTC scores based on the original WTC scale. Adapted from "Willingness to Communicate (WTC)" by J. C. McCroskey, 2007, (<http://www.jamescmccroskey.com/measures/WTC.htm>). Copyright 1995 by James C. McCroskey.

5. Results and Discussion

5. 1 English Communication - Day Care - Final Reflections

Given that this was a mixed methods study, both qualitative and quantitative results will be presented based on the reflections submitted by the Day Care course students, and on the Online (Teams) WTC Scale questionnaire given to all three classes of participants.

Figure 5

Final Reflection Questions answered by Several Day Care Course Students

Final Reflections

1. What did you learn in this course that you think will be useful for your future as a teacher?

- The difficulty of presenting to everyone in the class and The difficulty of online classes.
- When I stood in front of the children, I learned that the teacher had to teach brightly. In addition, I was able to learn how to support when my child was having difficulty in pronouncing English, so I had to support then immediately. I thought that children would be able to enjoy English by having fun not only by speaking, but by playing games and dancing.

2. What will you remember most from taking this course?

- Made a self-introduction power point and announced it. It was my first time speaking English in public and I was nervous, but I'm glad I did it well.
- I remember the difficulty of online classes.
- ... talking about classes using Line's phone with a pair of friends for online classes. I was surprised that it was so hard and time-consuming to teach. But as much as I practiced, I was able to achieve good results and I felt a sense of accomplishment.

3. What were the most difficult things for you during this course?

- The most difficult things is the line is bad and the application ends many times. It was very inconvenient that I couldn't hear the important points or couldn't use PowerPoint in the presentation.
- Be the group leader and bring everyone in the group together. I'm not good at it, so it was difficult to give instructions to everyone in the chat.
- This is a mini lesson online. It was very difficult because I couldn't see everyone's faces at the right time.
- It is about realizing "confidence in yourself" and "believing in yourself" when making a presentation. Even though I was going to practice until I was satisfied, I gradually became more anxious as the actual performance approached, and I could not demonstrate the power of practice.
- ... I was very anxious because I couldn't see other people's expression online.
- Gathering stories with the pair during online classes online. I didn't have much time for the two of us to talk, so I valued the time. I had a hard time thinking about a lot of patterns.

4. Has your confidence in using and perhaps teaching English changed after taking this course? Explain!

- Was not good at English in the first place. However, I had more opportunities to use English

than before, which gave me confidence, and I was able to enjoy teaching English by playing the role of teacher in my last class

- Through this class, I thought it was important to be bright and smiling at the place of childcare. When you stand and speak in front of you, when the teacher is dark, so is the student. Therefore, by making the teachers cheerful, students can enjoy the lessons.
- I think I've gained a little confidence. Because I didn't understand English well at first, but as I listened to the teacher, I gradually got the hang of it, and when I made a presentation in the classroom, I could say that I could say English smoothly.
- I got a little confident. I was more confident than before because he showed me how to pronounce correctly and how to teach.
- I'm pretty confident. The reason is that I had many opportunities to speak, and I also experienced the role of a teacher.

5. What do you think about your own performance during this course? Could you have done anything differently?

- I think I was able to participate with a smile and energy more than anyone else. I think I had a lot of discussions with people from the same pair, such as PowerPoint and meetings. Because of that, I think it worked out well this time.
- Online classes and teachers' classes are very easy to participate, so I was able to participate actively.
- Originally, I was not very good at making public presentations, and so far, I rarely thought that I was doing well as practiced when making presentations. However, when I gave a presentation in this class, I was confident that "everyone listened to me", so it was more fun than the previous presentations.
- I think I took advantage of the unique features of online such as screen sharing and PowerPoint.
- I think that it is good. About the QC card, I started it without neglecting it.
- I was smiling, cheerful, and conscious of speaking loudly. I thought it was hard to communicate online, so I took care to speak clearly and loudly.

6. How would you change this course to help future Day Care Course students learn even more?

- Make a face-to-face lesson
- Online classes were still difficult, but because of Corona's influence, it was impossible to change them

Figure 5 represents the answers given by the first year YCA Day Care course students, in response to the final reflection questions given to them at the end of their English Communication I course. Only the reflection results of the Day Care course students have been provided, given they were the only students to be fully online using the Microsoft Teams platform, for their entire course. Some of the information provided by the reflection answers is similar to the information found from the qualitative portion of the Online (Teams) WTC Scale questionnaire. However, many of the reflection answers do not apply specifically to WTC, but they do provide very insightful information concerning pedagogical practices, as well as the

online realities of the students. There are a few answers using “...” to indicate that the beginning sections of their answers were not included.

One of the main points made by several of the students in the reflections, was that online classes were difficult. They stated that they were not able to see the faces of the other students, they had internet connection problems, and they had difficulties with the PowerPoint presentations. Anxiety is another point mentioned by several students, stating it was created by the online platform, and by having to do tasks like giving their self-introduction.

Surprisingly, many of the comments made were also very positive, mirroring comments made by students in the past, who were doing the same classes face-to-face. Some of the positive comments included learning that being bright and having a smiling face was essential, it is important to support and help students with difficulties such as pronunciation, and that confidence in using English comes from practice. These comments help us to see that in spite of the great difficulties presented by having to do classes online, many positive results can still occur.

5. 2 Online (Teams) WTC Scale - Questionnaire

The result of the Online (Teams) WTC Scale questionnaire have been provided quantitatively in Tables 1, 2, and 3, and qualitatively in Table 4.

Table 1

Applied English I –Results for Online (Teams) WTC Scale – (n = 15)

Context-Type Sub-Scores	Mean	Level	S.D.	α	Level
Group Discussion	57.0		16.1	0.255	Low
Meetings	49.7		18.0	0.441	Not Satisfactory
Interpersonal	52.3	Low	12.6	-0.268	Unacceptable
Public Speaking	56.3		18.5	0.520	Acceptable
Receiver-Type Sub-Scores					
Stranger	35.8		23.2	0.923	Strong
Acquaintance	57.8		20.9	0.874	Reliable
Friend	68.0	Low	23.6	0.941	Excellent
Total WTC Scores	53.8		15.33	0.843	Reliable

Table 2

English Communication I - Arts Expression – Results for Online (Teams) WTC Scale – (n = 3)

Context-Type Sub-Scores	Mean	Level	S.D.	α	Level
Group Discussion	48.8	Low	14.9	0.969	Excellent
Meetings	50.0		20.8	0.771	Fairly High
Interpersonal	62.3	Low	17.0	0.814	Robust
Public Speaking	51.8		23.8	0.980	Excellent
Receiver-Type Sub-Scores					
Stranger	34.1		16.5	0.973	Excellent
Acquaintance	55.3	Low	21.8	0.894	Reliable

Friend	70.3	Low	18.6	0.880	Excellent
Total WTC Scores	53.2		18.1	0.962	Excellent

Table 3

English Communication I - Day Care – Results for Online (Teams) WTC Scale – (n = 94)

Context-Type Sub-Scores	Mean	Level	S.D.	α	Level
Group Discussion	55.3	Low	18.5	0.548	Acceptable
Meetings	53.7		18.6	0.539	Acceptable
Interpersonal	57.1	Low	18.1	0.578	Acceptable
Public Speaking	47.2		22.3	0.714	Good
Receiver-Type Sub-Scores					
Stranger	25.0		21.1	0.878	Reliable
Acquaintance	60.5		20.8	0.740	High
Friend	74.4		20.7	0.831	Robust
Total WTC Scores	53.3		16.6	0.868	Reliable

Tables 1-3 are the results from the questionnaires given to each of the three classes, which were calculated using the scoring instructions listed in Figure 4. SPSS 26 was used to calculate the mean values, the standard deviation, and the Cronbach's values of each group and section listed in the tables. In each table, there is also a column next to the mean value, titled "Level". This column states if the mean value is low when it's compared to the WTC scores listed in Figure 4. It can be seen from this column that the English Communication I - Arts Expression class had four WTC scores lower than acceptable values, Applied English I had three, and surprisingly English Communication I - Day Care had only two. This is a surprise given that the students in Applied English I should have a higher WTC, for several are English majors, and many of the students elected to take the course. Although the other mean values are not listed as low, none of the classes had WTC values that would be considered high when compared to the acceptable values in Figure 4. Another result worth noting, is that WTC for communicating with friends was highest for Day Care students at 74.4, second highest at 70.3 for Arts Expression students, and lowest for Applied English I students at 68.

In checking for the reliability of the WTC instrument used in this study, the Cronbach's value was calculated in various ways. The overall reliability for the instrument was found to be reliable for the two of the classes, and excellent for one of the classes. However, when looking at the individual groups, the values at times are very questionable as to the reliability of the instrument used. The worst α value found was for Interpersonal WTC for the Applied English I class at -0.268, which is considered unacceptable, suggesting that the questions may need to be reworded. Group discussions and meetings were also found to be low and not satisfactory for the Applied English I class. In contrast, all α values for the Arts Expression students ranged from fairly high to excellent. However, the sample size for the Arts Expression class was very small at n=3, which questions the statistical relevance of the findings for the class. The greatest testament to the statistical relevance of the study and the reliability of the instrument used, comes from the Day Care students, with n=94 and α values ranging from acceptable to reliable. Despite some of the surprising results for the Applied English I course,

overall, their WTC score was the highest at 53.8. The Day Care course students' WTC score was second at 53.3, while the Arts Expression students were third with 53.2. Each of the three classes were just above the "Low" evaluation listed in Figure 4. This of course, puts into question why the online WTC scores for the students are quite low when compared to acceptable WTC scores.

Table 4

Day Care Course and Applied English Course – Qualitative Results for Online (Teams) WTC Scale – Questionnaire

13. What were the most difficult things for you while using Teams?	14. Is it more difficult to communicate in English with other students and the instructor online or in a regular classroom? Why?	15. Is it more difficult to prepare for online or for regular face-to-face classes? Please explain.	16. Any other comments you might want to make.
<i>Day Care</i>			<i>Course</i>
21 said internet connection - line problems - various "bugs"	85/105 said online is harder	75/105 said online outright!	Only 21 responded to this question
21 said operating smartphones - entering chat channels - submitting assignments - when to speak - Teams	4 said both	3 Said both	One said don't blame them for a bad internet connection
6 said English listening - translating - speaking			1 asked to "Please stop online classes"
9 said talking with others - can't see faces - when to talk			1 said they do not want to take online classes
2 said presentations		3 said it was fun	
Some said at times they couldn't enter classes			
<i>Applied English</i>			<i>Course</i>
Listening to the instructor	It is more difficult communicating online because only one person can talk at a time.	for regular face to face classes : difficult to communication	I hope I want to have face-to-face lessons forever.
To find new assignments	Online: It is nervous to speak online.	In online case, the most difficult to prepare PowerPoint.	Online learning was fun but was too difficult.
in case of smartphone, I think that it's all difficult. smartphone is too small. I can't use teams well.	I think online is more difficult to communicate in English. Because we cannot look at other people well. we should look each other.	It is more difficult to prepare for online classes because of the technology used.	

Communication	Online class. I think we may not be able to speak smoothly due to communication problems.	I do not think that online class is difficult for prepare. Because I can prepare in my house. Also, we can use the internet. I can take not a time my preparation.
How to operate during meetings		

Table 4 lists the qualitative portion of the results for the Online (Teams) WTC Scale questionnaire, for the Applied English I course and the English Communication I Day Care course. The Arts Expression students did not provide answer to the qualitative questions, so they have not been included. The results in some ways are similar to the reflections in Figure 5 by the Day Care students, but there are also some unique items not mentioned previously. Some of the main issues listed by students concerned internet connections, the limitations of using smartphones, navigating Chat Channels, communication problems using English, and not being able to see others. A vast majority of students said that online learning was more difficult than face-to-face learning. Some students said that preparing for online classes was fun and not difficult, but most students said it was more difficult than for face-to-face classes. In the general comments section, some students took the opportunity to ask for online lessons to be abolished, with one student saying “Please stop online classes”. Although the results of the qualitative portion of the Online (Teams) WTC Scale questionnaire were mainly negative towards having online classes, they provide valuable information to help make future courses better.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to see how online WTC levels for YGU and YCA students studying English compared to acceptable WTC levels under normal face-to-face circumstances. It was hypothesized that YCA and YGU students will have lower WTC levels online than students taking regular face-to-face lessons. The results of the study supported this hypothesis, for the WTC results were uniformly low in each class, compared to the acceptable scores listed in Figure 4. This puts into question if the survey instrument used may be a factor, or if online WTC is actually lower for the students than face-to-face WTC.

The results were also in many ways surprising, for the overall online WTC levels for the YGU students and the YCA students were almost identical, even though their motivation to study English was very different. In addition, the reliability of the Online (Teams) WTC Scale questionnaire for the YGU students, was quite questionable in two sections, and was unacceptable in one of the sections. In contrast, the reliability of the questionnaire used for the Day Care course students ranged from acceptable to reliable. One rationale behind these surprising results, is that the YGU students in Applied English I only had synchronous classes for two weeks, and already had a previous year together in face-to-face classes. The drastic shift to online classes, probably had a negative effect on the YGU students’ WTC levels.

Although some of the results listed for the Applied English I questionnaire were not reliable, the other two classes were much better, suggesting that the Online (Teams) WTC Scale questionnaire used in this study was reliable. However, one of the main issues suggesting the need for further studies to be conducted, is that an initial pretest WTC evaluation of the students was not conducted for face-to-face learning. The assumption made by this study, was that the values listed in Figure 4 regarding acceptable WTC scores, applied to the normal levels of WTC for YGU and YCA students. Without further investigation, it is impossible to

assess if this assumption is correct. Another issue that will need to be addressed in future studies, concerns duplication of submissions from students. Table 3 indicates n=94, but the actual number of students in the course were only 83. This issue will have to be corrected in future studies to ensure the quality of the data collected.

This study provided valuable quantitative and qualitative information regarding YGU and YGA students' online WTC, which hopefully can be used to help create future online courses that better support the needs and goals of L2 English learners.

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