

On the Relationship between Willingness to Communicate and Deculturation

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Abstract—Language learning issues coupled with cultural concerns have been the focus of language researchers within the last decades. This study makes an innovative attempt to scrutinize a new concept in cultural issues, i.e. deculturation. Hence, the relationship between willingness to communicate (WTC), one of the most controversial issues in language learning circles, and deculturation was the matter of research in this study. As far as the sample of current study was concerned, 50 upper- intermediate female English students were selected from among 80 participants from Radmehr English Language Centre in Shariar, Iran. The data was collected by means of two kinds of questionnaires, a Home Culture Attachment Scale (HCAS) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that there were meaningful relationships between the underlying constructs of the deculturation questionnaire (consisting constructs such as Religious, Iranian, Cultural, Artistic and Western Attachments) and WTC. One of the correlations demonstrated that Deculturation applied mostly for those who were willing to communicate inside the classroom. The implications of this study will best suit language practitioners and language policy makers.

Index Terms—language learning, willingness to communicate, deculturation, language practitioners

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, communicative approach in English language is highly emphasized in oral and written tasks. Pishghadam (2012) stated that due to the globalization of English language, as an international language, proficiency in English language is considered as an important priority for progress. Globalization and proficiency in English language have a close connection to the target norms of English culture. According to Monkman and Stromquist (2000), globalization and English learning have a propensity for homogeneity of cultural norms and values of English. This phenomenon is specific for those countries in which English is regarded as a foreign language. Similarly, Giddens (2000) claimed that westernization is equal to the term globalization, and especially Americanization. Pishghadam (2010) stated that Americanization and deculturation in EFL context like Iran have brought about some problems. He also believes that deculturation may put the cultural identities of Iranian learners of English in Jeopardy.

A large number of studies have been carried out to find out the factors affecting deculturation in this area (See for example, Alatas, 1977; Pennycook, 1994; Philipson, 1986). Philipson (1992) examined the economic linguistic and cultural motives of the ELT profession. Porter (1994) also investigated how learners' thought affect deculturation. Samuelowicz (2008) proved that Asian learners find English language and English culture superior to their own culture in an EFL context; as a consequence, they have willingness to communicate in English.

According to Long (1996) and Swain (2000) theories of second language acquisition can develop learners' competence in L2. Therefore, using L2 actively in the class triggers the emergence of Willingness to communicate (WTC). Xie (2011) believes that WTC leads to authentic communication in L2. WTC refers to a learner's stable personalities or enduring influences that represent no fluctuations across different contexts (Baer & McCroskey, 1985). The fact is that Learner's WTC influences how frequently they actively engage in communicating in L2 (Baker, Cle ment, & MacIntyre, 2003). As Xie (2011) clearly stated that WTC enables language learners to start their communicative task in a specific context. The mentioned studies indicated that willingness to communicate in one way or another is linked to deculturation.

The primary reason for language learning is to be able to use language to communicate. McIntyre and Charos (1996) argued that communication is a key factor in language learning for internal and external purposes. According to what was mentioned about the importance of communication, a limited number of studies has been conducted on the

relationship between deculturation and willingness to communicate. This paper aims to investigate the relationship between different types of willingness to communicate and deculturation.

The following research questions are reformulated for the purpose of this study:

1. Is there any relationships between WTC and Deculturation?

The following null hypothesis was formulated on the basis of the research questions:

H0: there is no significant relationship between willingness to communicate and deculturation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As Pishghadam (2013) claimed, deculturation is a new concept in language learning and teaching. Deculturation takes place when some elements of learners' own culture are missed during the learning process. As Berry (2002) states deculturation is the product of a group of people in a non-dominant culture, who are not accustomed to dominant culture. Risager (2006) believes that due to imperialistic dominance of English and strong desire of EFL learners toward English culture, threats may happen during the learning process. Deculturation that relates to the behavior and thought (identification) of learners, is mostly observable in learners' speech and communication. It can be concluded that communication in target language is one of the most important objectives of teachers and learners.

One of the objectives of each language instruction is communication. Being fluent in a second language is the final goal of L2 learners. So, they can achieve their goal by being willing to communicate. Kuhl (1994) has a theory of action control, which is a conceptual framework for the study of willingness to communicate. There are three key concepts of preoccupation, volatility, and hesitation, from which WTC in the second language is built (Kuhl, 1994). Lack of WTC inside and outside language classroom is related to tendencies for disruption in action control (McIntyre, 2009). McCroskey and Richmond (1985) claimed that factors like introversion, self-esteem, communicative competence, communication apprehension, and cultural diversity directly or indirectly influence L2 WTC. WTC is one of the most affective factors which can influence the genuine communication in L2 and it seems that it can be a good predictor of frequency of communication (Yashima, 2002). WTC, in fact, is interpreted as a learner's readiness to inter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2 (Clement, Do ʔnyei, McIntyre, and Noels, 1998).

WTC is perceived as a stable individual characteristic and according to McCroskey, (1992) WCT is a predisposition to initiate or avoid communication with others when given a choice. (p.17)

Do ʔnyei (2003) asserts that many L2 learners prefer to keep away from second language communication. Based on this idea Kang (2005) claims that many L2 learners may not utilize the chances of learning language through authentic communication. MacIntyre et al. (1998) conclude that producing WTC is a paramount component of modern language instruction. They believe that the common view about communicative competence may just produce learners to communicate inside the classroom, but these learners may not be tractable to do so outside the classroom.

According to Barbarian (2014), 'the majority of the cultural studies have, to date, concentrated on western cultures' (p.543); therefore, few studies are accessible about deculturation.

According to Hornberger and McKay (1996), now days there is a need to do research in culture, acculturation and deculturation and their importance in foreign language, but unfortunately, few research have been done in these field especially in Iran.

In the study by Abdi and Firoozjahantigh (2015) the impact of Home Culture Alienation (Deculturation) on proficiency level in English as a foreign language in Iran was investigated.

The result of this study which was entitled "proficiency level in English and self-identity alienation (deculturation): the case of Iranian EFL learners" showed that there is a positive correlation between the proficiency level of Iranian learner as EFL and cultural dependency (deculturation).

The study also showed that deculturation can be a fair estimator of Iranian EFL learners' proficiency level.

The other study was carried out by Pishghadam and Zahibi (2012), which focused on linguistic imperialism and deculturation during the process of learning language for learners in Islamic countries especially in Iran. The authors argue that in Iran the more learners try to achieve the mastery of English, the more they get far away from their own culture. They also mention that in Iran learners still consider English standard as prestige and superior to other varieties of English. In another study by Kamyabi and Pishghadam (2009) the relationship between and native accent and deculturation among Iranian EFL learners has been investigated. The study revealed that the more learners approach the native accent the more deculturation happens. Other studies by Porter (1990) Penny cook (1994) revealed that because the people of Asian countries that English is their foreign countries consider themselves as narrow minded, usually prefer to communicate in English to avoid from their culture, and this is the result of deculturation in these studies. From all these studies it can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between the proficiency level of learners of EFL countries and deculturation. In the other word the more they get proficient in English the more deculturation happens.

Group interaction has an important role in being successful in second language communication. Prior research has shown that a shared common group identity plays a critical positive role in interpersonal and intergroup relations (Eller & Abrams, 2004; Gaertner et al., 1994; Nier et al., 2001).

Previous studies have examined the motivation (see Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 2001) and language anxiety (see Young's 1999 volume) for language learning. These studies show that in second language acquisition as motivation and willingness to communicate increase, the language anxiety decrease.

In the study by Macintyre (2007) factors that affect willingness to communicate was examined. The researcher identified that individual factors like anxiety, motivation, attitudes, interpersonal as well as social contextual factors like ethno linguistic vitality, language contact, etc., affect WTC.

In the other study by Eller and Abrams (2004) it's found that in a Mexican-American context, individuals who shared a group identity with their contact counterparts demonstrated lower levels of anxiety with these counterparts.

This study and the other ones like Nier et al.'s (2001) demonstrated that friendship and common group identity (CIM) has an importance role in enhancing intergroup relations. And this intergroup interaction leads to social attractiveness and. Social attractiveness further relates to willingness to communicate in a way that those who perceive similarity and liking toward each other are more likely to willingly engage in communication (Kim, 1991; Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970).

As it is mentioned, CIM leads to the learners willing to communicate and according to Dovidio, et al (2001) in recent years; scholars have paid great attention to the integration of the acculturation theory and CIM as the guiding theoretical frameworks in research on host-home cultural relations

As Berry, (1997); Wang & Mallinckrodt, (2006); Ward & Kennedy, (1999) stated acculturation is the processes of psychological adjustment (e.g., sense of well-being and self-esteem) and sociocultural adaptation (e.g., communication competence and social networks) in the new environment.

As it is mentioned studies like Porter (1990) Penny cook (1994) showed that the process of language learning in EFL countries is accompanied by deculturation happens and the people in these countries believe that English norms and English culture are superior to their own culture, and they usually give up their culture as they become more proficient in English. On the other hand studies like Doucette and Macintyre (2010) showed that communication is the ultimate goal of L2 learners.

The studies conducted by Yashima (2002), Yashima et al. (2004) and Peng (2014) examined WTC in English in the Asian context which, contacts with native speakers are rare.

Yashima et al. (2004) and Yashima (2009) established that high levels of IP (international posture) like (interest in international affairs, willingness to work or study abroad and readiness to interact with people from other countries) lead to increased WTC.

As Lu & Hsu (2008) states most of the research on willingness to communicate focus on exploring the adjusting individuals' acculturation strategies and willing to communicate.

The present will investigate on the relationship between willingness to communicate and deculturation. More specifically this paper will survey the relationship of different types of willingness to communicate (outside, inside, orientation) and their relationship with deculturation.

III. METHODOLOGY

Participant:

The participants for this study were 50 Iranian students as an English Foreign language (EFL) learners in private English language center of Shahriar, Iran. All the selected participants were female. Students were in upper-intermediate language proficiency based on TOEFL placement test. Their course book assigned by the institute was American English File, level 3. Their ages were between 18 to 25 (M= 21.25).

Instrument

TOEFL Test

In order to make sure that all the selected students had the same level, first of all, the second version of TOEFL placement test was administered. The test is divided into two parts. All the students can answer questions 1 to 40, without supervisors' help. The second part is questions 41 to 60 that they should answer them with supervisors' help. It has assessed learners' grammar, vocabulary and reading skills. It takes 30 minutes to answer all the questions.

Home Culture Attachment Scale

Home Culture Attachment scale (HCAS) was adopted from Pishghadam et al. (2013). According to these researchers, HCAS questionnaire is validated by Rasch measurement. It consists of 36 items and its reliability was 0.85. This questionnaire consists of Religion, Iranian, cultural, artistic and western attachments.

TABLE 1
FIVE FACTORS OF SCALE RELIABILITY OF EACH FACTOR

Area	Statements	N of Items	Percentage
Religion	7,14,18,21,28,31,35	7	20
Iranian	5,8,13,19,29,32	6	16
Cultural	3,6,9,11,16,34,36	7	20
Artistic	2,10,15,17,24	5	14
Western	1,4,12,20,22,23,25,26,27,30,33	11	30
	Total	36	100

Willingness to communicate

MacIntyre et al. (2001) modified a Likert-type questionnaire to measure students' willingness to communicate inside/outside the classroom and their orientation for language learning. The first two parts contained 27 items, and the third part contained 20 items, which were Likert-scale ranging from 1 to 5 for the first two types, and 1 to 6 in the third part.

Procedure

To begin with the permission of Shahriar institute authority the TOEFL placement test was taken. After that, the WTC and HCAS questionnaires were distributed among students during the class time. The instructor assisted students so that they could answer the questions properly.

The first questionnaire was Willingness to Communicate (WTC) which contains three parts: Willingness to communicate inside the classroom, Willingness to communicate outside the classroom, and Orientation for language learning. The second questionnaire was Home Culture Attachment Scale (HCAS). It was borrowed from Pishghadam and Kamyabi (2013, p. 5). They classified the HCAS questions into five categories based on their elements as shown in figure 1. Also they numerated the options from one to four. For some questions, totally disagree was valued as 1 and totally agree as 4, and for some other the reverse procedure was applied.

Data analysis

To analyze the data, first descriptive statistics was used. To find out the relationship between deculturation and WTC a Pearson product-moment correlation was taken to find out which type of willingness to communicate has effect on deculturation.

IV. RESULT

To analyze the data in this study, the statistical package for a social sciences (SPSS), version 22, was used. The significance level that was set was 0.05. The descriptive statistics of the two instrument- HCAS and WTC questionnaires are shown in table 2.

TABLE 2
WTC AND DECULTURATION FREQUENCY

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Deculturation	60	35.00	150.00	94.6453	23.28312
WTC Inside	60	14.00	92.00	50.56	67.00
WTC outside	60	13.00	91.00	51.3897	18.33294
WTC orientation	60	19.00	82.00	45.3662	12.11482

To obtain the correlation between deculturation and WTC Pearson product moment correlation was used. The result showed that there was a strong positive correlation between WTC inside the class and deculturation ($r=.557$, $p<.05$) and also a moderate positive relationship between deculturation and orientation toward willingness to communicate ($r=.247$, $p<.05$). The result also showed that there is a negative correlation between deculturation and willingness to communicate outside the class Outside($r=-.483$, $p<.05$). (See table 3).

TABLE 3
THE RESULTS OF CORRELATION BETWEEN DECULTURATION AND WTC

Sig		Deculturation
.000	WTC Inside	.542*
.026	WTC Outside	-.483*
.000	WTC Orientation	.247*

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To investigate which type of willingness to communicate (inside, outside, orientation) has more effect on deculturation regression analysis was run. The next table is the ANOVA table of regression. The quantities of F and p-value ($p<0.05$) showed that the considered models were significant. (See table 4)

TABLE 4
THE ANOVA TABLE OF REGRESSION

Model		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	20213.362	1	20213.362	46.893	.000a
	Residual	44321.143	58	432.502		
	Total	64972.924	59			
2	Regression	21193.463	2	10132.743	26.302	.000b
	Residual	41744.309	57			
	Total	56324.253	59			
3	Regression	23458.392	3	8256.423	19160	.000c
	Residual	39590.453	56	476.491		
	Total	64983.093	59			

a.predictors: (constant) orientation toward learning

b.predictors: (constant) orientation toward learning, inside the class

c.predictors: (constant) orientation toward learning, inside the class, outside the class

As table 5 showed willingness to communicate inside the class and orientation toward learning have positive effect on deculturation while willingness to communicate outside the class had negative effect on deculturation.

TABLE 5
FACTORS IN WTC

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
1.constant	56.398	4.176		8.276	.000
orientation	.598	.99	.493	4.602	.000
2.constant	50.398	5.945		6.926	.000
orientation	.386	.102	.348	3.264	.101
inside	.398	.198	.259	2.518	.619
3.consonant	59.376	6.823		7.173	.000
orientation	.203	.129	.280	2.068	.167
inside	.709	.210	.518	3.011	.023
outside	-.532	.201	-.293	-2.176	.056

V. DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

The present study sought to find out the relation between WTC and Deculturation among upper-intermediate learners. The result revealed that there were strong positive relationship between deculturation and WTC inside the class, and negative relationship between Deculturation and WTC outside the class, and the moderate positive relation between deculturation and orientation toward communication.

The results of this study indicate that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. The analysis indicated that learners who have tendency to communicate outside the class, want to learn English for their needs, like talking to a friend while waiting in line, reading different materials e.g. novel, article and etc. However, as the statistics show willing to communicate inside the class is just for demonstrating the prestige among their classmates. The implication of this study for ELT teachers is that, they should not just focus on communication in the class. It is better to prepare learners to communicate in authentic situations, this can also avoid deculturation.

Previous studies have been done about different variables and WTC. One of these studies is McIntyre (1994), which a casual analysis has been done, investigated the relation among self-esteem, communication apprehension, introversion and their contribution to WTC has been tested.

As it is found out, no assessment has been conducted regarding the relationship of WTC and deculturation.

And from this research and other studies, it is appeared that deculturation has a direct relationship with willingness to communicate.

The reason of this deculturation maybe is that, the atmosphere of English/ foreign classroom of these countries is quite different with other learning courses like physics, Mathematics, history, etc. It is common among outer circle countries to learn English native-like which causes learners to be alienated from their own culture and identity, especially among younger learners who wants to be distinguished from other learners in their same age. Learning English in a class, a learner fosters a new identity approximate to the culture of that new language and give up his own culture.

Regarding Wray's study (1999, 2000, 2002, 2004) learners in the initial stages of second language acquisition, mostly use prefabs and expressions to show high prestige, but as the fluency increase and learners become more proficient and will to use their knowledge of English for their needs outside the class, they tend to use too much language, which is created afresh.

Nevertheless, the present study suffers from a number of limitations. The current study was likely the first attempt to investigate the relationship between WTC and deculturation. Due to the lack of instrument measuring deculturation the present research employed HCAS questionnaire, which relies on participants' honesty to answer the questions. Further studies can use interview to obtain their level of deculturation. It should also mention that this study was just among female learners. A similar study can be conducted on male learners as well, to find out the gender differences on WTC and deculturation.

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