A Study of WTC and Motivational Self System in Korean English Learners' English Speaking Skills

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Abstract

The present study explores the relationships among willingness to communicate (WTC), motivational self system and English learners' speaking skills. 65 Korean college students participated in the study. They are asked to answer the questionnaires related to WTC and motivational self system, and their English speaking abilities are assessed by TOEIC speaking test. For the analyses, cronbach's alpha is calculated to check the internal consistency of questionnaire items, and descriptive statistics are calculated to examine the overall patterns of participants' WTC and motivational components. In addition, correlation and regression analyses are conducted to investigate the relationships among participants' WTC, motivational self system, and English speaking skills. The results of the analyses and suggestions for fostering English learners' speaking skills are given in the study.

Keywords
Willingness to communicate (WTC), L2 motivational self system, English speaking skills

1.Introduction
T the present study was designed to explore the relationships of L2 WTC and motivation in Korean EFL learners' communicative competence by incorporating Gardener & Lambert's instrumental/integrative dichotomy of motivation and Dorneyi's L2 motivational self system, and to shed insights and implications for improving Korean EFL leaners' oral communicative competence.

2.Research Questions

With the background of WTC and motivation research, the present study aimed to address the following questions:
1. What characteristics do Korean EFL learners display about WTC in English?
2. What are correlations among WTC, motivational components (i.e., integrativeness, instrumentality, ideal self, ought-to self, L2 learning experiences), and Korean EFL learners' speaking skills?
3. To what extent do WTC and motivational components explain Korean English learners' speaking skills?

3.Methodology

3.1 Participants

A total of 65 Korean college students participated in the present study. Their majors included different disciplines such as mechanic engineering, architectural engineering, business administration, accounting, English, Korean, mathematics and so on. They had different levels of English proficiency ranging from 200 to 875 on the TOEIC, with an average TOEIC score of 489.

3.2 Instruments

Two questionnaires were formed by referring to previous studies (Kim, 2012a; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; Yashima, 2009): WTC Questionnaire and English Learning Motivation Questionnaire. The TOEIC speaking test was used to test the participants' oral communicative competence. They took the tests before and after the summer classes. The speaking test consisted of several types of speaking tasks: reading aloud, describing pictures, answering questions (after listening and reading), giving solutions and opinions.

4.Results

4.1 Overall Characteristics of WTC and Motivation

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Motivational Components and WTC

	M	SD
Instrumentality	4.25	.85
Integrativeness	3.48	.99
Ideal Self	3.84	1.00
Ought-to Self	3.25	.80
LLE	3.87	.89
WTC	2.81	.88

4.2 Relations among WTC, Motivational Components and Speaking Skills

The Pearson correlation was performed among WTC, other motivational components, TOEIC scores and English oral communicative competence. WTC, instrumentality, ideal self and TOEIC scores were closely linked with English speaking skills (p<.01), while ought-to self, integrativeness and LLE did not have statistically significant correlations with English speaking skills. In particular, TOEIC scores were found to correlate highly with communicative competence, which clearly shows that linguistic competence is one of the important components of oral communicative competence. TOEIC excluded, ideal self and WTC had high correlations with oral communicative competence, .516 and .503 respectively.

4.3 WTC, Motivational Components and English Speaking Skills

To investigate what factors explain Korean EFL learners' oral communication, multiple regression analysis was performed. It was revealed that TOEIC score and WTC had strong power for predicting Korean college students' oral performance(t=5.462 p=.000; t=2.425, p=.019 respectively). Ought-to self and instrumentality also were statistically significant predictors for the Korean English learners' oral performance. However, it was shown that ought-to self had a negative influence on oral performance (t=-2.368, p=.022), which can indicate that ought-to self formed by external obligations or social demands was not internalized into the L2 learners and negatively

recognized by the Korean EFL learners. As a result, it can be said that the ought-to self remains just a motive of which learners do not fully realize the meaning in their learning contexts. Other motivational components such as ideal self and integrativeness did not reach any statistical significance .05 or .01.

5.Conclusions

The results of the present study found that Korean EFL learners had relatively lower WTC, compared with other motivational components. In addition, Korean learners' English speaking skills was found to have closer correlations with their WTC and ideal self than other motivational components. WTC was more closely related to integrativeness and ideal self than to others, and ideal self had a strong correlation with instrumental orientation and language learning experiences. On the other hand, WTC, instrumental orientation and ought-to self were powerful affective variables for explaining Korean English learners' speaking skills.

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