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A Review of the Effects of Teacher-Student Interaction on Students' L2 Willingness to Communicate Orally

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Abstract. L2 Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC) is a core variable in the field of second language acquisition and communication, which directly affects the development of students' L2 oral proficiency. As a key contextual factor, classroom teacher-student interaction plays an important regulatory role in shaping students' L2 WTC. Based on the three-dimensional framework of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support proposed by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), this paper systematically synthesizes relevant domestic and foreign studies, explores the influence mechanism of each dimension of teacher-student interaction on students' L2 WTC, summarizes the effective classroom interaction strategies and their effects for improving L2 WTC, and analyzes the deficiencies of existing studies and future research directions. The results show that emotional support lays the psychological foundation for L2 expression, classroom organization constructs a suitable interactive environment, and instructional support provides necessary linguistic scaffolding, and the three work synergistically to enhance students' L2 WTC across diverse classroom contexts. Supportive emotional interaction, scaffolded instructional support, and optimized classroom organization are effective practical strategies. This review provides theoretical reference and practical guidance for the optimization of teacher-student interaction in L2 classrooms and the improvement of students' L2 WTC.

Keywords: Teacher-Student Interaction, L2 Willingness to Communicate Orally, Classroom Assessment Scoring System, Emotional Support, Instructional Support

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of globalized education, the core objective of second language acquisition has shifted from merely mastering linguistic structures to fostering comprehensive communicative competence. As Lantolf points out, L2 development is not manifested solely in the learner's ability to produce correct L2 forms, but also in the frequency and quality of assistance co-constructed by experts and novices [1].

As an internal motivation that drives learners to take the initiative to communicate in the second language, the willingness to communicate in the second language (L2 WTC) has become an important indicator to measure the development of learners ' second language communicative competence. With the deepening of second language teaching research, scholars have increasingly

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realized that willingness to communicate is not a fixed trait, but a complex and dynamic construct shaped by psychological, contextual and sociolinguistic factors. Among these factors, classroom teacher-student interaction, as the most direct and frequent contextual factor in the classroom, directly determines students' initiative and participation in second language oral expression.

Classroom teacher-student interaction is a multi-dimensional system including verbal communication, non-verbal interaction and emotional perception. Each component shapes learners ' emotional state, cognitive engagement and communicative readiness in L2 learning. High-quality teacher-student interaction can create a positive classroom atmosphere, effectively reduce students ' language anxiety to enhance their confidence in expression, and provide necessary support for stimulating L2 WTC. At present, domestic and foreign scholars have conducted wide research on the relationship between teacher-student interaction and L2 WTC. The three-dimensional framework of emotional support, classroom organization and teaching support proposed by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) provides a scientific analysis perspective for systematically examining the influence mechanism of teacher-student interaction.The existing research has preliminarily confirmed that the three dimensions of teacher-student interaction can affect students ' L2 WTC. However, there are still significant deficiencies in related research : most studies focus on the independent role of a single dimension, and lack sufficient exploration of the synergy mechanism between the three ; in addition, the limitations of research methods, especially the over-reliance on self-report questionnaires, further limit the depth and ecological validity of existing research results ; meanwhile, the research background is relatively limited, and there are few targeted studies on students from different educational environments and groups. SO the effectiveness of teacher-student interaction strategies still needs to be further improved and verified.

Through the above analysis, this paper systematically reviews the research results of teacher-student interaction and students ' L2 WTC at home and abroad. Based on the three-dimensional framework of CLASS, this paper analyzes the influence path of each dimension of teacher-student interaction on willingness to communicate in second language, summarizes and verifies effective classroom interaction strategies and their practical effects, clarifies the limitations of existing research, and puts forward future research directions.

This study enriches the research results in the field of second language acquisition and classroom interaction, and clarifies the internal mechanism of teacher-student interaction affecting second language willingness to communicate. In addition, it provides specific theoretical guidance and practical reference for second language teachers to optimize classroom interaction mode and improve teaching practice effect, so as to help enhance students ' L2 WTC and promote the overall development of their second language communicative competence.

2. Core variables

2.1. L2 Willingness to communicate orally

As the core variable of this study, willingness to communicate in a second language (L2 WTC) has become an important concept in second language acquisition and communication defined as a learner's desire to initiate communication when given the opportunity [2]. Scholars have further defined L2 WTC as a complex and dynamic structure that changes from a stable attribute to a complex and dynamic structure influenced by psychological, environmental and sociolinguistic factors [3]. Topouzi also found that teachers ' behavior is an important issue affecting students ' L2 WTC [2]. Specifically, the study found that teachers use a variety of interactive strategies to enhance students ' WTC, including recasts to provide corrective feedback without interrupting the

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communication process, eye contact to express concern and encouragement, various materials to maintain motivation, and humor to reduce anxiety and create a relaxed communication atmosphere [2].

2.2. Classroom teacher-student interaction

High-quality teacher-child interaction is widely recognized as the cornerstone of the quality of early childhood education. Early childhood education has a profound impact on children 's social, emotional and cognitive development [4]. The language classroom contains a multi-dimensional interaction system, covering oral communication, non-verbal interaction and emotional awareness [5]. In order to systematically analyze the quality of such interactions, scholars have created structured observation techniques in order to improve such interactions. Among them, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) has been widely used. The CLASS measures three domains of teacher–child interaction : emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support [6].

3. Teacher-student interaction factors that influence L2 WTC

3.1. The influence of emotional support on L2 WTC

Research shows that anxiety surrounding English learning may be lessened through teachers' emotional support and interactive communication [7]. This is associated with teachers' appreciation of students' languages and cultures (regional and/or social customs). Also related is the use of flexible assessment in tasks with low or no oral output. Rather than focusing only on pronunciation or grammatical mistakes, teachers who have more experience often pay more attention to learners' communication styles and motivation. Schonert-Reichl also noted that positive teacher-student relationships foster a more interactive classroom and higher engagement from the students (see Figure 1) [8]. He further noted students feel more encouraged to express themselves and build their communication confidence, and more significantly, their learning WTC in English is. With a proper learning environment, the anxiety of learners feeling judged for making mistakes is lessened, and they are encouraged to participate more in oral exercises.

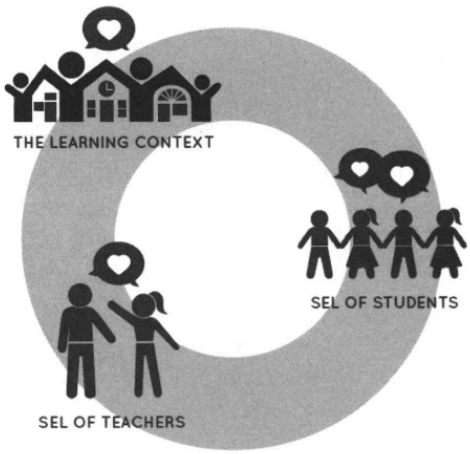

Figure 1. Three-component framework for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) [8]

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3.2. The influence of classroom organization on L2 WTC

Classroom organization largely comprises elements such as physical environment, rules and procedures, teaching tempo, interaction structure, and task design [9]. A cohesive and supportive classroom environment with a clear structure, conditions for collaborative learning and mutual respect between teachers and students can effectively reduce learners' communication anxiety and improve their willingness to express themselves in two languages. Classroom organisation can be divided into two types of classroom forms: single-dimensional and multi-dimensional, both of which will have a significant impact on learners' learning ability and social interaction [10].

In a highly homogenised classroom model, oral activities are often limited to mechanical repetitive processes such as reading and memorising. This kind of teaching form will make learners' performance completely public, facilitate horizontal comparison, and reduce language learning to a simple judgement of right and wrong. Over time, learners' anxiety continues to intensify, and learners with weak self-confidence will choose to retreat and avoid for fear of making mistakes in public. Under the condition that learners' independent choice is limited, it is difficult for students to independently choose communication topics and interaction objects, which not only suppresses self-expression, but also gives rise to the mentality of comparison among peers, thus solidifying the ability stereotype between groups. Fixed hierarchical group teaching will further aggravate this problem. Learners who are divided into low-level groups are prone to negative self-awareness, and classroom participation is more and more passive. On the contrary, flexible grouping forms and diversified learning tasks can effectively alleviate such pressure and create a more secure language communication environment. In addition, when evaluation relies too much on standardised standards, it often narrows the complex connotation of spoken language into a single dimension, forcing learners to pay excessive attention to language accuracy rather than meaningful interactive communication. In a word, classroom organisation plays a crucial role: it directly affects learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) by influencing peer comparison and social pressure [10].

3.3. The influence of instructional support on L2 WTC

With the advancement of educational globalisation, multilingual classrooms are no longer a minority, but have become the mainstream. A large number of second language learners must use a second language to complete high-intensity coursework [11, 12]. In the L2 acquisition environment, oral communication is not only a basic learning skill, but also a core way for learners to build their own academic identity. Even so, language barriers often limit learning performance, and lack of self-confidence makes many learners reluctant to take the initiative to express their views.

To address this issue, modern teaching adopts three major supportive methods: vocabulary training, reasonable L1 integration, and visual teaching resources [13]. Targeted vocabulary assistance can directly help learners overcome common obstacles in oral expression. In addition, the reasonable use of the mother tongue will not only not cause obstacles, but also help the acquisition of the second language. At the stage when the second language ability is still limited, the mother tongue, as a familiar cognitive tool, can help learners understand complex concepts and reduce psychological stress [14]. Moderate use of mother tongue is an effective learning support, helping learners gradually transition to pure target language independent learning. At the same time, visual teaching tools can further optimise the learning process and help learners understand and absorb the key and difficult course content more efficiently.

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3.4. Summary

Relying on the CLASS framework, the research results show that the willingness to communicate in the second language is not a stable personal characteristic, but a dynamic state affected by teachers' daily interactive behaviour. The three core dimensions of the CLASS framework are intertwined and inseparable. Adequate emotional support from teachers can help learners build a sense of security, thus encouraging them to try to express themselves in real-time communication. Teaching support can provide learners with the necessary language tools to help them participate in real classroom interaction. An orderly and standardised classroom management model can also alleviate learning anxiety and ensure equal interaction opportunities among peers. Collectively, the combination of the three elements contributes most to the evolution of students' WTC. In practical instruction, educators therefore ought to avoid seeing these crucial parts as independent and unrelated components.

4. Classroom interaction strategies to improve L2 WTC

4.1. Supportive emotional interaction strategies and effects

The motivation of the classroom and students' willingness to communicate (WTC) are heavily influenced by the teachers' warm and affectively supportive interactions - a component of the teachers' socio-affective professional competence. Far from being stand-alone skills, these behaviours can be viewed as an integrated system of interaction [8].In multi-cultural classrooms, a display of empathy and cultural understanding by teachers helps build a sense of trust. This in turn helps to create an inclusive classroom, where students' identities are recognised and they feel more comfortable sharing their ideas. This is especially vital in linguistically and culturally diverse L2 classrooms.

But rapport is not enough to maintain this relationship. Teachers' emotional regulation skills (such as cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression) are also important in creating a classroom environment [15]. Students feel safer to take risks in a supportive, non-threatening environment, and are therefore more likely to participate in the classroom. This may also be complemented by classroom management strategies that take into account not only error correction, but also feedback and participation.The Prosocial Classroom Model (see Figure 2) can be used to show how this works. The social-emotional competence of the teacher affects their relationships with students, which in turn affects the classroom environment and students' learning. In the context of second language learning, these factors can alleviate language anxiety and foster confidence in speaking. As students feel more supported to participate in communicative activities, they are more likely to participate and become more autonomous in their target language use.

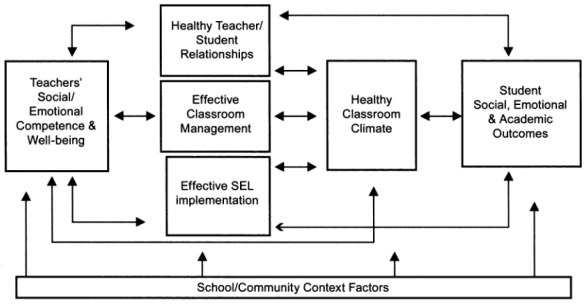

Figure 2. The prosocial classroom model

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4.2. Scaffolded instruction support strategies and effectiveness

A literature review highlights that effective pedagogical support plays a pivotal role in promoting students' social-emotional well-being and communicative skills - which are fundamental to instigating active oral communication. Conversely, a lack of such support often leads to frustration and a loss of confidence in learning, which results in muting students' voices in the classroom [13]. If not addressed, such negative experiences can crystallise into a diminished L2 willingness to communicate (WTC), and ultimately, stagnate long-term communicative development. Importantly, the effectiveness of support varies. Classrooms are diverse, with a range of linguistic skills and needs, so teaching must be equally diverse. This calls for a responsive mindset that sees individual differences not as barriers, but as the starting point for supporting self-expression.

To account for this multi-faceted dimension, Roschmann et al. created a thematic map from teachers' reports that outlines the relationship between pedagogic goals, systemic issues and implementation factors (see Figure 3) [13]. As the model shows, the goals established for English Learners (ELs) are both academic and social in nature, but there is a clear hierarchy of social needs as a foundation for cognitive development. This priority explains that social connection and trust are not "side effects, " but the foundation for linguistic development [16].

However, these goals are typically delayed by many challenges, including as social connection obstacles, academic competence gaps, insufficient teacher preparation, and unmet unfavourable views against ELs. Although well-designed support has the characteristics of situational responsiveness, language accessibility and emotional regulation, which can improve learning effect, social emotional wellbeing and communication ability, unresolved obstacles may lead to slow teaching rhythm, learners ' frustration and deterioration of trust between teachers and learners. The effectiveness of supports is also differential: visual and vocabulary aids, as well as the use of the first language (LI), can have both positive and negative affects depending on implementation. Therefore, targeted supports tailored to ELs' varied traits and needs are important to optimise the effects of instructional interventions.

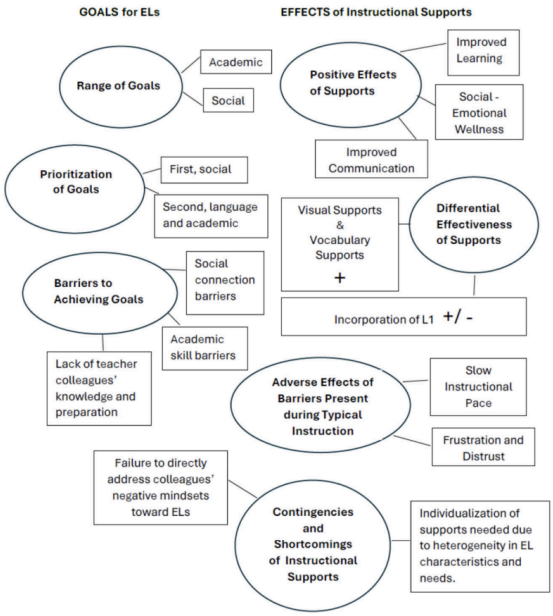

Figure 3. Thematic map of social significance of goals and importance of effects of instructional supports per teacher report

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4.3. Classroom organization optimization strategies and effects

In response to the issue of translating interaction concepts into consistent classroom practice, Shi and Liu built a systematic training mode for higher education classrooms to operationalize their five-dimensional method, giving a structured framework that connects theoretical design and pedagogical execution [17]. This training mode is constructed around five main pillars: training aim, the teaching method, curriculum provision, teaching staff, and evaluation system, each having clear operational indications to guide classroom organization and implementation (see Figure 4) [17]. Specifically, the goal of training is based on quality and ability standards; the teaching method is to improve classroom teaching; the curriculum is designed to improve class content and course structure; teaching staff are supported by faculty structures and professional development; and teaching achievements are the main evaluation indicator. Together, these interconnected parts together constitute a closed-loop classroom organization system, which ensures that the five-dimensional strategy can be effectively implemented in teaching practice and continuously improved through evaluation and feedback. This is especially important for keeping a communicatively supportive classroom environment where L2 WTC can consistently grow.

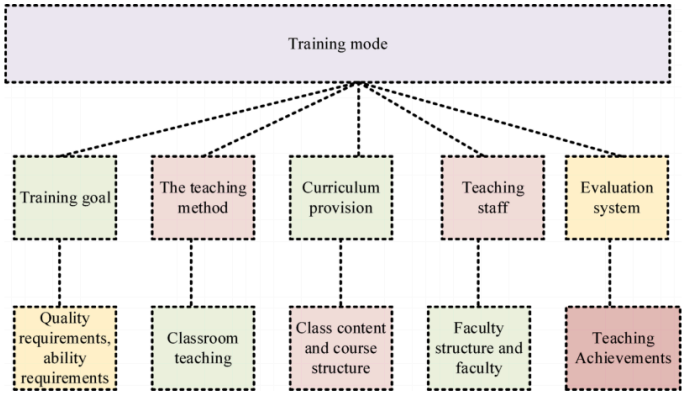

Figure 4. The training mode of adaptive learning-oriented higher education classroom teaching

4.4. Summary

This section studied three interconnected classroom interaction tactics and their impact on boosting second language learners' ef willingness to communicate (WTC). First, teachers' supportive emotional interactions, anchored in the Prosocial Classroom Model, were identified as crucial to developing a safe and inclusive learning environment, minimising language anxiety, and fostering students' confidence to engage in oral expression.

Secondly, it is found that the Scaffolding Instruction Support System can meet the academic and social emotional needs of different learners, especially providing tailored and situational support for overcoming obstacles such as skill gaps and negative attitudes towards language acquisition. Third, the five-dimensional training mode makes the classroom organization optimization strategy play a role. It provides a structured way to match educational goals, methods, curricula, teachers and assessments. This ensures that interactive strategies can be continuously used and improved in real life.In a nested model of emotional safety, instructional scaffolding, and interactive classroom design, these initiatives suggest that a supportive environment is needed for L2 WTC improvement and learners to achieve their potential and take ownership of their oral communication in L2.

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5. Discussion and suggestion

5.1. Overall conclusions

Using the CLASS framework [6], this review analyzes how teacher-student relationships impact a learner's WTC and investigates the emotional pillars and classroom/ instructional design frameworks. Emerging studies regard L2 WTC as a changeable construct in place of older studies which regarded it as a fixed personality trait. Within the ecology of the classroom, teacher-student interactions emerged as the most important and most consistent classroom context lever.

Support, respect, and fault-tolerant interactions lead to the reduction of language anxiety, contribute to raising learner self-confidence, and create a psychologically safe classroom atmosphere, which motivates learners to express themselves [7, 8]. The psychologically safe atmosphere created in this way is the emotional bedrock of the classroom. The design of the classroom has a large impact on the communication climate of the classroom. Multi-dimensional, flexible grouping, and low-stress classroom design decreases the desire to socially compare and the anxiety that comes with it, and as a result, it promotes active and oral classroom participation [9, 10]. Instructional support offers necessary cognitive scaffolding.Teaching support provides the necessary cognitive support. Targeted support, such as vocabulary aids, visual tools and appropriate use of mother tongue, can help learners overcome language barriers and improve their communicative competence [13, 14]. In addition, supportive affective interaction, scaffolding instruction support and optimized classroom organization are three practical strategies to improve L2 WTC [17]. These three dimensions are not independent, but synergistic. Emotional support ensures psychological safety, instructional support improves communicative competence, and classroom organization ensures stable and continuous implementation. They constitute a whole system to promote students ' willingness, confidence and ability to communicate in a second language.

5.2. Practical suggestions

Based on the above conclusions, this paper puts forward the following practical suggestions for L2 teaching. First, teachers should strengthen their social-emotional competence and give priority to supportive emotional interaction.They should adopt encouraging and constructive feedback, reduce overemphasis on language errors, respect students ' cultural and linguistic background, and build a trustful teacher-student relationship to reduce anxiety and enhance self-efficacy [7, 8]. Second, teachers should design personalized and differentiated teaching scaffolds. According to students ' language proficiency and learning needs, teachers can provide vocabulary support, visual aids and appropriate native language intermediaries as temporary scaffolding to help students complete challenging oral tasks and gradually develop independent communicative competence [13, 14]. Third, classroom organization should be optimized to reduce pressure and encourage inclusive participation.Teachers can adopt flexible grouping methods, diversified oral tasks and informal evaluation methods to avoid one-dimensional comparison and create a relaxed and supportive environment. Appropriate student autonomy can further enhance learners ' sense of security and initiative [9, 10]. Importantly, teachers need to continuously reflect on teaching and reasonably balance classroom control and students ' autonomous expression. The over-solidified classroom model will constrain students ' independent communication, and the lack of classroom order and norms will also lead to students ' inability to clarify the requirements of classroom participation.

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5.3. Limitations and future directions

Although existing studies have made meaningful findings, there are still some limitations. First, most research focuses on the separate role of the three CLASS dimensions, while the dynamic interaction and joint mechanisms among emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support remain underexplored. Second, most of the empirical evidence is cross-sectional, which can only capture a single moment in the learner 's development process. Few longitudinal studies have tracked the long-term development trajectory of L2 WTC under the continuous interaction strategy, leaving open questions about whether the effect of early intervention is sustained, weakened or compounded over time. Third, research contexts are relatively limited, and there is not enough attention to online or mixed classrooms, learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds [11, 12]. Even though digital technologies have profoundly shifted teaching practices, which has given rise to new interactional practices such as asynchronous messaging and online platforms for collaboration, L2 WTC theories remain curiously frozen. Developed before the rise of these mediated contexts, current models increasingly exclude the settings where real communication takes place today.

In tandem with this theoretical stagnation is the methodological limitation of an overemphasis on self-reported data. The body of research currently relies heavily on questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, but there is a clear need for triangulation through real-time classroom observation and task-based measures. This reliance on retrospection not only "limits" what people know, but it could mask the dynamic, fleeting changes in communicative willingness that characterise real L2 interactions. With the increasing use of hybrid learning and AI technologies, teacher-student interactions are changing rapidly. This has important implications for L2 willingness to communicate (WTC). Online learning with AI support may reduce learners' emotional anxiety and promote learning engagement, but it can also decrease their willingness to communicate and encourage passive second-language use.

While digital learning has grown significantly, WTC research continues to focus mostly on offline classrooms. This means people have little understanding of WTC in tech-based learning environments. Scholars need more research to understand these new spaces and untangle how online interaction affects learners' willingness to use and maintain L2 interactions.

6. Conclusion

This research utilizes the CLASS framework to comprehend the contribution of teacher-student interactions in the development of willingness to communicate in the target language. Emotional, instructional and organizational supports are present and influential in class systems, to encourage and build the climate to challenge learners to overcome the fear and communicate in the class.

However, they may work against student participation. It is important to note that willingness to communicate in the target language is highly malleable, and teachers modify their willingness to communicate in the language based on their daily interactions with the teacher. This proves that examining the continuum of the classroom teaching processes as a classroom system of adaptable elements leads to a clear analysis.

Another area that needs assessment and further research is the effect of AI on the classroom learning system, as it has been integrated in every classroom. AI and other digital learning systems focus a greater portion of classroom learning on communication and interaction in digital and online systems or mediated environments. L2 classroom L2's willingness to communicate is influenced to a considerable degree by the online systems and communication of students as they interact.

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