THE EFFECTS OF GENDER ON WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AMONG TURKISH EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract:
Effective communication in a foreign language is a captivating area of study for language learners, teachers, and researchers alike. Language learners hope to exemplify characteristics conducive to fruitful communication. Language teachers aim to develop beneficial practices and cultivate an atmosphere where students feel willing to share their ideas, knowledge, and opinions in a foreign language. Language researchers endeavor to describe the ideal conditions and learner characteristics for successful communication. The task of analyzing potential factors in successful communication appears endless, yet each new study helps to construct a more comprehensive understanding of the road map to efficacious second language and foreign language communication. This study explored gender's impact on Turkish university students' willingness to communicate in English. Gender's influence was also evaluated in learners' self-perceived communicative competence, communication apprehension, and personality. The research participants were taken from four universities in different cities of Turkey. The sample (N=282) was composed of Turkish students in English Language Teaching undergraduate programs. This research employed a hybrid design marrying quantitative data from participant questionnaires and qualitative data from participant interviews. The results of the present research concluded that willingness to communicate differs between male (n=119) and female (n=163) language learners, but not to a significant extent.

Keywords: communication factors, motivation, confidence, apprehension, personality

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1. Introduction

In our modern world, a good command of the English language is highly regarded in many facets of personal, academic, and professional life. There are many aspects of language that must be considered while progressing along the road to fluency, including the four general elements of speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Once we delve deeper into these four elements, we see a vast network of combinations of different behaviors, attitudes, and personality characteristics that play a role in any learner's success in communication.

One such combination can be viewed in terms of a learner's willingness to communicate (WTC). "*A readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2*" clearly defines the concept of WTC (McIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). WTC is comprised of various psychological, linguistic, and communicative variables that can lend themselves to a more accurate description, explanation, and prediction of second language (L2) communication (McIntyre et al., 1998).

High WTC has been linked to positive communication outcomes based on increased communication frequency and amount, whereas low WTC has been linked to negative communication outcomes based on decreased communication frequency and amount (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). So, a clear connection can be drawn between WTC and successful communication, but the factors that affect WTC are numerous. These factors have rightly been divided into enduring and situational influences by McIntyre et al. (1998). Enduring influences of an individual do not usually change based on time and place of communication. These influences relate to the social context in which a language learner is raised, the relationship between their native and target language groups, whether the learner is an extrovert or introvert, the learner's self-esteem, and even their motivation to learn. Situational influences, however, can vary based on circumstantial factors that affect communication. These influences relate to a language learner's desire to speak with a specific individual in the target language and their level of comfort in a given situation (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998). It is obvious that the unique mixtures of enduring and situational influences are as countless as the amount of English language learners. Because of this, the present article aims to focus on WTC in relation to gender.

Turkey has recently placed more importance on English in the public and private school systems from elementary to higher education levels. English is even a mandatory course for students in elementary, middle, and high school throughout Turkey. Since the government is applying more pressure on schools and institutions to integrate communicative language teaching methods, the necessity of WTC research within the Turkish EFL context seems apparent. Very little research and analysis has been carried out regarding WTC in the Turkish context, so this study will focus on the implications of gender as a factor which leads to a stimulus and initiates speech for Turkish speakers of English as a foreign language. There is a general consensus that Turkish students excel with grammar-based written exams, but lag behind with speaking skills because they are reticent learners who lack WTC (Cetinkaya, 2005). Turkish EFL learners and teachers can

hopefully become more successful in their respective endeavors if they become more aware of the factors that impact WTC and successful communication. The current research also has pedagogical implications which could aid educational policy makers in Turkey to create a language education climate more conducive to successful communication.

2. Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:
1) What perceptions do the Turkish EFL university students hold about their own WTC in English?
2) To what extent does gender affect their perceptions about their own WTC?
3) Is gender a significant indicator of perceived WTC among Turkish EFL university students?
4) Does gender have a significant relationship with self-perceived communication competence (SPCC), communication apprehension (CA), and personality extroversion?

3. Review of Related Literature

The prominence of WTC in second and foreign language research has been increasing in the applied linguistics field. Research has been conducted pertaining to WTC with respect to its influence on L2 communication and its abstract mechanisms. Due to the multifariousness of WTC, numerous factors ranging in discipline have been examined. Affective (attitude, motivation, anxiety), personality (self-confidence, introversion, extraversion), social/psychological, and communicative (Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Wen & Clément, 2003; Yashima, 2002) variables have been subjected to inquiry. The majority of research submits that WTC consistently foretells classroom participation in L1 (Chan & McCroskey, 1987) along with communication initiation in L1 (MacIntyre et al., 1999) and L2 (MacIntyre & Carre, 2000). WTC has accordingly been viewed as the speaker's ultimate resolve to begin a communication.

  The concept of WTC can be traced back to Phillips' (1965, 1968) research on reticence, in which psychological and sociological factors affecting speech were scrutinized. Following this, McCroskey (1970) developed work in CA with the aim of creating measurement tools for communication-bound anxiety. Burgoon (1976) then examined unwillingness to communicate as a universal inclination to avoid communication due to several internal and external causes. McCroskey and Baer (1985) later adapted and retitled the concept, with a definition of the probability of an individual deciding to talk as a means of communication when free to do so. As this concept gained recognition, WTC became known as a pivotal personality construct affecting individuals' success in social, educational, and organizational realms (Richmond & Roach, 1992). With

this deep investigation into WTC as a metric for psychology and sociology, it is no wonder it went on to have significant application in L1 and L2 research and development. Certain individual difference variables were examined by MacIntyre (1994) in the L1 context. These variables included alienation, anomie, communication apprehension, introversion, perceived communication competence, and self-esteem. These variables were determined to be correlated with WTC through the use of causal modeling, where the strongest influence on WTC was by CA and perceived communication competence. The origins of CA and perceived communication competence were proposed to be found in introversion and self-esteem.

An examination of university students in Canada was conducted to scrutinize the antecedents of L1 WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1999). The study displayed that SPCC more accurately predicted the amount of ideas and the speaking time for easy speaking tasks, whereas CA more accurately predicted the amount of ideas and the speaking time for difficult speaking tasks. The authors cited that trait-level WTC better prepares individuals for communication emerging from general tendencies to find and welcome communicative situations. Situation-level WTC then can predict the likelihood of making the final decision to commence communication. Once the communication has started, other situational variables such as apprehension and perceived competence can more greatly affect communication behavior. Due to this progression of factors aligning, these variables likely become antecedents which impact the individual's WTC when a new communication occasion presents itself.

Extensive research has proven that numerous internal and external factors play a role in an individual's WTC in an intricate way with regard to L1. According to McCroskey (1997), different levels of SPCC and CA act as indicators of an either higher or lower WTC. Then, WTC can be used to foretell actual communicative strategies and approach/avoidance behavior. Once research had been conducted in the L1 field, it naturally led to the curiosity of proving similar interrelations and implications in the L2 context.

Methodological, learner, and learning related variables complicate WTC in the L2 context. These individual difference factors, which can be cultivated in a pedagogical system that places more or less emphasis on communication, can vary greatly. Non-linguistic outcomes of the language learning process can also vary due to pedagogical settings of learners (MacIntyre, 2007). Even though the communication skills which are often established during the learner's first language lifetime are interrelated to habits, inclinations, and behaviors while using an L2, L2 WTC cannot be explained as "*a simple manifestation of WTC in the L1*" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 546). Research has supported WTC as both a trait-level and situation-level variable in a learner's ultimate decision to initiate conversation.

McCroskey and Richmond (1990) detailed that individuals display their unique behavioral tendencies to communicate relatively uniformly across different communication situations, positing that WTC is essentially a "*personality-based, trait-like predisposition which is relatively consistent across a variety of communication contexts and types of receivers*" (p. 73). This stance has been elaborated on with research which claims there

is a situational component to WTC that cannot be ignored. McCroskey and Richmond (1990) also argue for the encompassment of situational constraints in a communicative encounter. These situational variables can include how an individual is feeling, what prior communication an individual has had recently, who the other interlocutor is, what the interlocutor's appearance is, what inherent value is in the conversation, and even possible time restraints. When observing such a lengthy list of possible trait-level and situation-level variables affecting WTC, the analysis seems dauntingly endless. But this has certainly been alleviated by each study which has been conducted.

A study by Cao and Philp (2006) supported the notion that learners' WTC behavior in different L2 classroom contexts was attributed to both trait-level and situation-level factors. It was found that trait-level WTC gauged by the self-reported survey could foretell a propensity to communicate, while situation-level WTC gauged by classroom observation and interviews better predicted actual behavior and decisions to initiate communication.

Kang (2005) embraced a qualitative approach in the examination of how situational WTC fluidly emerges and fluctuates in conversations between non-native speaking learners and native speaking tutors. This longitudinal study of Korean students at an American university submitted that psychological conditions of excitement, responsibility, and security affected their L2 situational WTC. These conditions were proposed to have occurred as a result of interlocutor, topic, and conversational context variability. Kang suggested that WTC be viewed as a transient situational concept rather than a static one.

A different study conducted by Tannenbaum and Tahar (2008) examined attitude dimensions and WTC of 6th grade students in Israel. The students were comprised of two groups. The first group was Arab children as L2 Hebrew students and the second group was Jewish children as L2 Arabic students. The analysis of variance designated the Arab children as having a generally more positive attitude and higher WTC in Hebrew than the Jewish children in Arabic. This conclusion resulted from the school context, attitudes, and familial and peer influence.

These studies elucidate the importance of a comprehensive understanding of WTC with both trait-level and situation-level variables constantly affecting an individual's ultimate decision to speak in an L2 context. A wonderful breadth of research has been done throughout the world in many unique contexts. Thus, the current research attempts to apply the previous WTC knowledge to the Turkish context. An account of previous WTC studies in the Turkish EFL context will lend to further framing of the current study. Kaya (1995) conducted research with Turkish university students enrolled in an English preparatory course to examine the relationship of affective variables. The participants described a moderate anxiety level when communicating in English. Additionally, a high negative correlation (r=-.83) between anxiety and self-confidence was reported. The study concluded that anxiety, extroversion/introversion, motivation, and self-confidence are connected to student participation in lessons.

A similar study was executed by Kiziltepe (2000) with Turkish high school students from four schools. The results showed that the majority of participants (n=308)

did not display classroom anxiety, which was contrary to the researcher's hypothesis. "*They seem to be quite at ease and sure of themselves. They are not confused or nervous or self-conscious*" (Kiziltepe, 2000, p. 157). The conclusions displayed students having high motivation, generally positive attitudes towards the American and British community and culture, and low anxiety. These results naturally varied between the schools, but are noteworthy findings nonetheless. A continuation of this research with the same sample incorporating WTC would certainly be valuable.

Cetinkaya (2005) studied Turkish college students' desire to communicate if given an opportunity. This research surveyed the participants' (n=356) personality, motivation, communication anxiety, attitude towards the international community, perceived communication competence, and perceived WTC in English as a foreign language. Students were found to be more willing to communicate with friends or acquaintances than with strangers. They also favored small groups to larger groups. Students were also noted to have a positive attitude toward learning English and to be somewhat motivated to learn English. Communication anxiety was generally only slightly experienced, with the exception of moderate anxiety with strangers in large meetings or presentations. Perceived communication competence mirrored anxiety, where participants felt more competent talking to a friend, an acquaintance, and a small group of friends or acquaintances.

The connection between WTC and personality was explored by Öz (2014) in a study of 168 university students specializing in English. Of the participants, 20% had a high WTC, 66% had a moderate WTC, and 14% had a low WTC. In addition, a positive correlation was found to exist between academic achievement and the WTC of participants. Lastly, the three personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion displayed a positive correlation with WTC.

Öz et al. (2015) used questionnaires on affective, communication, and WTC factors. Of the learners (n=134), 21.6% displayed a high WTC, 13.4% showed a high communicative competence, and 18.7% received high scores in CA. Through the use of structural equation modeling (SEM), it was determined that CA and communication competence were reliable indicators of WTC. Motivational variables were shown to have an indirect influence on WTC. With reference to gender, male participants had low CA scores and higher mean scores in attitudes towards learning situations (ATLS), instrumental orientation, integrativeness, SPCC, and WTC. The female participants had higher mean scores in motivation and their ideal L2 self.

Results of a study by Şener (2014) reported that Turkish ELT students (n=274) showed an overall moderate to high WTC and a high motivational intensity inside and outside the classroom. WTC was significantly correlated with motivation, outlook on international communities, and self-confidence. In-class WTC was best predicted by self-confidence.

In direct relation to the present research, some recent studies have been conducted looking specifically at the connection between WTC and gender. A study of 140 intermediate level EFL students in Iran found no significant difference in WTC between female and male participants (Valadi et al., 2015). Another study of 55 English

department university students in Iran revealed no significant difference between female and male participants in CA, perceived competence, and WTC (Afghari & Sadeghi, 2012). A third study of 100 English literature, English translation, and TEFL university students in Iran established a positive correlation between WTC and emotional intelligence, with female participants demonstrating higher WTC and emotional intelligence (Gholami, 2015). Lastly, a sizable study of 711 university preparatory school students in Turkey participated in a study of EFL learners' WTC. The research determined that female students have a higher WTC in the classroom than their male counterparts (Altıner, 2018).

These studies show that different results are being reached and further research is required when considering gender as an impactful variable in L2 WTC and English language learning. Like all studies of WTC, individual contexts and research parameters lead to unique results. But as the body of research amasses, a more generalized understanding of WTC and its intricacies can be understood. Better learning, teaching, and curriculum can be developed with this deeper knowledge of the field.

4. Methods

This study was conducted with a mixed method design, relying more heavily on the quantitative research than the qualitative. The qualitative aspect of the study, semi-structured interviews, was included as a way to deepen the insight of the quantitative data. Data was compiled from participants at four universities situated in different parts of Turkey. The participants were fourth-year English Language Teaching (ELT) undergraduate students.

Convenience random sampling was employed to select participants. The study obtained questionnaires from 370 students; however 88 questionnaires were rejected due to incompletion or improper completion. Of the 282 properly completed questionnaires, 119 were from male students and 163 were from female students. As for the qualitative analysis, 7 males and 8 females were randomly selected from those consenting to an interview.

The questionnaire gathered data on participants' background information, willingness to communicate (WTC) in English, self-perceived communication competence (SPCC) of English, communication apprehension (CA) with English, motivation, attitude, and personality extroversion. This article limits itself to the scope of relatedness between the above-mentioned data categories and gender. Background information included age, gender, English language learning duration, and any travel experiences to English-speaking countries. The WTC elements of the questionnaire were borrowed from McCroskey (1992) as a twelve-item investigation of WTC in connection with context and receiver types. Contexts include interpersonal conversations, group discussions, talking in meetings, and public speaking. Receiver types include friends, acquaintances, and strangers. Participants responded to questionnaire items with percentage values of WTC ranging from 0 (completely unwilling) to 100 (completely willing). The first three questions are provided as examples:

1. Present a talk in English to a group (around 40 people) of strangers.
Never (0%) ____ 10 ____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____
Always (100%)____

2. Talk in English with an acquaintance while standing in line.
Never (0%) ____ 10 ____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____
Always (100%)____

3. Talk in English in a large meeting (around 20 people) of friends.
Never (0%) ____ 10 ____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____
Always (100%)____

Once quantitative data from the questionnaires was collected from participants, it was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0. A probability level of $p=.05$ was implemented as a criterion for acceptance or rejection of the null hypotheses and to determine any significant differences between the groups. Results can be seen in the descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests.

The qualitative data from the interviews was collected to expound on perceptions from participants. The interviews were held in Turkish by a fellow researcher and were recorded for further analysis. The interview outcomes were finally organized into themes that naturally surfaced during the interview process. Main themes included the background of language learning, WTC according to context and receiver type, anxiety, and personality. Unfortunately, the interview data specifically related to gender is limited.

5. Results

5.1 WTC General Results
Participants of this study showed a rather low WTC in English (Mean=49.41, SD=31.55) when compared to the norms of native English speakers put forth by McCroskey (1992). It was noted that participants favor English communication with friends and acquaintances rather than strangers. It was also concluded that participants are partial to dyadic settings rather than larger contexts when communicating in English.

Table 1: Participants' Willingness to Communicate in English

Item Description	Mean	SD
5. Talk in English with a friend	71.49	31.36
2. Talk in English with an acquaintance	65.91	31.34
11. Talk in English with a small group of friends	53.57	32.12
3. Talk in English in a large meeting of friends	52.25	31.66
6. Talk in English in a large meeting of acquaintances	50.91	31.78
9. Talk in English with a small group of acquaintances	49.76	30.86
7. Talk in English with a stranger	49.06	31.16
8. Present a talk in English to a group of friends	46.88	33.01
12. Present a talk in English to a group of acquaintances	44.19	31.08

4. Talk in English with a small group of strangers	41.09	31.46
1. Present a talk in English to a group of strangers	35.42	30.99
10. Talk in English in a large meeting of strangers	31.81	31.06
Total	49.41	31.55

5.2 WTC by Gender Results

The WTC subscales were analyzed alongside gender. The analysis revealed that male participants (n=119) were generally more willing to communicate than female participants (n=163).

Table 2: WTC in Terms of Gender Differences

WTC Subscale	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	t	p	Significant Difference
Public	44.53 (34.18)	38.22 (31.97)	1.03	0.42	~
Meeting	48.93 (25.43)	49.14 (26.89)	0.37	0.65	~
Group	47.34 (28.11)	45.76 (28.83)	0.55	0.63	~
Dyad	62.23 (24.57)	64.29 (26.06)	0.37	0.73	~
Stranger	43.34 (26.11)	39.74 (27.83)	0.76	0.63	~
Acquaintance	50.26 (28.57)	48.29 (25.96)	0.32	0.83	~
Friend	53.63 (26.82)	51.45 (26.87)	0.16	0.56	~
Total	50.03 (26.49)	48.12 (26.35)	0.47	0.64	~

*p < .05

There was no statistical significance in WTC based on gender differences (t=.47, p=.64). Therefore, it is concluded that male and female Turkish students have the same WTC in English.

5.3 Self-perceived Communication Competence by Gender Results

The overall differences between male and female participants' SPCC were not statistically significant (t=0.72, p=0.48). The only significant difference was seen in public speaking (t=1.83, p=0.04). This result corroborates the finding of Jung (2011).

Table 3: Self-perceived Communication Competence in Terms of Gender

WTC Subscale	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	t	p	Significant Difference
Public	41.13 (30.18)	33.12 (25.07)	1.83	0.04	Male > Female*
Meeting	38.94 (12.23)	43.14 (22.29)	1.37	0.17	~
Group	44.14 (28.21)	39.76 (28.51)	1.55	0.32	~
Dyad	52.23 (26.51)	57.29 (25.06)	1.37	0.15	~
Stranger	39.34 (27.13)	32.72 (24.83)	1.56	0.13	~
Acquaintance	42.26 (27.49)	38.29 (26.86)	1.42	0.12	~
Friend	49.63 (24.81)	44.45 (22.77)	1.26	0.21	~
Total	43.95 (27.12)	41.25 (24.11)	0.72	0.48	~

*p < .05

5.4 Communication Apprehension by Gender Results

No overall statistical significance in CA based on gender was revealed. But female participants scored numerically higher on CA than the male participants. The only significant difference in all the subscales was in public speaking scores (t=2.42, p=0.01).

Table 4: Communication Apprehension in Terms of Gender

WTC Subscale	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	t	p	Significant Difference
Public	20.53 (4.55)	23.11 (4.37)	2.42	0.01	Female > Male*
Meeting	20.93 (5.13)	20.64 (5.25)	0.86	0.41	~
Group	21.14 (5.21)	22.36 (4.83)	1.73	0.06	~
Dyad	20.12 (4.57)	21.29 (5.06)	1.81	0.09	~
Total	20.68 (4.53)	21.85 (4.11)	1.96	0.09	~

*p < .05

5.5 Personality by Gender Results

Female participants reported a higher mean than males with regard to extraversion. However, these results concluded no significant difference in personality based on gender (t=.15, p=.89).

Table 5: Personality Extraversion in Terms of Gender

Personality	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	t	p	Significant Difference
Total	39.78 (7.75)	40.23 (8.65)	0.15	0.89	~

*p < .05

5.5 Qualitative Results

Most interview participants attributed their positive and negative experiences of learning English to their test scores in school. A large number of students criticized the manner in which English was presented to students, with an emphasis on the Turkish educational system's inability to effectively teach and encourage speaking competence. These problems are seemingly being addressed, but whether or not measures are proving effective remains to be seen. Some interview participants related their WTC to having varying levels of a fear of making mistakes or a perfectionist mindset. Others cited their WTC as a product of personality or a certain level of curiosity toward foreign culture.

The qualitative analysis derived from this study further confirmed the significant difference results found between males and females in the subscales of SPCC (i.e. male public SPCC is higher) and CA (i.e. female public CA is higher) in the quantitative results. An informal consensus of males being more willing to communicate seemed to form during the course of the interviews. Some of the male interview participants noted an easygoing feeling and attitude about conducting public presentations granted they had sufficient preparation time. A male participant, for example, said "Boys feel free in our society and there are less taboos ascribed to boys compared with the girls. Boys feel less fearful of looking stupid among others." Contrarily, most female interview participants cited nervousness while presenting to a group of people or classmates. One female student, for example, expressed high CA during public speaking despite her self-

assessment as having an intermediate level of communication competence. She mentioned "When I am in front of the classroom to give an English presentation, I feel so anxious that my knees start shaking." Another female student stated "When I am giving presentations I never feel confident. I think the main reason is my insufficient English ability, which causes me to be scared of making mistakes." Among the main causes of low SPCC and high CA, one of the most influential is concern for the perceptions of others while speaking in English. Pappamihiel (2002) determined that students' anxiety was primarily caused by fear that other students will laugh when a student speaks English in the classroom. According to the qualitative results, this anxiety seems more pronounced in female students in the Turkish context of this study.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The low WTC in English results found in this study (Mean=49.41, SD=31.55) show that both male and female Turkish university students struggle to act in communicative opportunities. This reticence is voiced in conversations among English language learners and teachers throughout Turkey. There are certainly exceptions to this rule and classrooms can be heard bursting with English, but the results do show a trend that cannot be ignored. This implicates the learners, teachers, and the pedagogical structures in the Turkish education system. But a large amount of the findings in the current research and previous research appear to reaffirm long-standing beliefs about human nature that can be universally observed through trait-level and situation-level variability. These generalizations, although having exceptions, require to be explicated. Learners are more willing to speak with fewer dialogists. Learners prefer to converse with more familiar interlocutors. Learners have various levels and types of motivation. Learners will grow in confidence and lessen in apprehension with more knowledge and practice with English.

This study concluded that male participants (n=119) described a higher overall WTC and a higher WTC in a majority of the seven subscales when compared to the female participants (n=163), but no significant differences between gender were observed among all of the subscales of willingness to communicate. As mentioned before, other studies shared similar results where no significant differences in WTC were found (Valadi et al., 2015; Afghari & Sadeghi, 2012). This research also found contrary results to previous studies. MacIntyre et al. (2002) also found no significant effect of gender among 9th grade students, but females displayed a higher L2 WTC than males. In another divergent investigation, Smith (1997) determined a significant difference of WTC between female and male subjects, citing that girls more frequently engage in conversations than boys. Li (2004) noted that female students exhibit a higher WTC outside of the classroom.

When utilizing gender as a potential indicator of WTC, with willingness being affected by SPCC, CA, and personality, numerous studies have arrived at varying conclusions. Some research (Berger et al., 1983; Jaasma, 1997; McCroskey et al., 1982) concluded that females are higher in apprehension. Other research (Allen et al., 1984; Booth-Butterfield & Thomas, 1995) found no difference related to gender. Li (2004)

claimed that Korean female students are more anxious than male students while communicating. Other studies discovered that females perceive themselves as less competent than males (Eccles et al., 1993; Licht & Dweck, 1984; Meece & Courtney, 1992). This study also concluded that overall SPCC differences between male and female participants were not statistically significant. Although males scored numerically higher in SPCC, the only significant difference resided in the public speaking context. Similarly, no statistically significant difference between genders was uncovered through scrutiny of overall CA. But it is noteworthy that female students reported numerically higher CA, with one significant difference residing again in the public speaking context. Male participants exhibiting higher public SPCC and female participants exhibiting higher public CA appear to be reaffirming results, so further investigation into the relationship between these two factors may be required. Lastly, female participants described numerically higher extraversion personality characteristics, but the results again displayed no statistical significance.

Utilizing L2 English by male and female speakers might also differ due to societal effects in the use of their L1. Conversational differences may be found in the variance of male and female manners of conversation. Oxford and Nyikos (1989) assert that men and women employ distinct speech strategies to affect people and events. The influence of men was noted to be more often in the public sphere and the influence of women more often observed in the private. This model can be used to describe tactics for native language use, but this can also be extended to men and women in their unconscious discourse strategies when speaking an L2. These observations may be outdated in an ever-changing world of social and geographical mobility.

More recently, women have been noted as having a global attitude towards L2 learning and practicing (Fabrigar et al., 2005). Women have shown stronger interaction and higher cultural interest with L2 speakers (Dörnyei & Clément, 2001).Women have also demonstrated a greater interest in cultures and people who speak the target language (Mori & Gobel, 2006). Gender variables can have a substantial effect on research groups around the world. Men have been recorded as more motivated (Soimeng Pang & Liu, 2006) and women have been documented receiving considerably higher marks in foreign language courses (Corbin & Chiachiere, 1997).

Although the present results show negligible differences between genders with relation to WTC, SPCC, CA, and personality extraversion, this line of inquiry requires more investigation. The conclusions found in the present research and related research greatly vary. This can be due to a multitude of factors, including research methods, participant characteristics, cultural contexts, etc. In order to gain a more concrete understanding of the role of gender in English language learners' WTC, further research should be conducted with sensitivity to the aforementioned factors.

The present research shows little variance due to gender, but it also shows the relatively low WTC felt throughout the classroom. This indicates that students may have to find creative means of nudging themselves into a more communicative mindset. It also points to a need for teachers to integrate discourse strategies and a larger scope of communicative activities into lessons. Lastly, it endorses the need for an increase in

communicative approach support and training at a university and governmental level. If teachers, teacher trainers, and institutions become advocates for improving WTC in English classrooms throughout Turkey, students will undoubtedly advance their communication willingness and competence.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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