

Kubra Aksak

Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir
Turkey
k.aksak@hotmail.com

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**Feryal Cubukcu**

Dokuz Eylul University, Izmir
Turkey
cubukcu.feryal@gmail.com

AN EXPLORATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS' UNWILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

1 INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate is one of the most important skills for human beings in social life, as people need to communicate to convey their ideas, feelings and needs (Bialystok 1990). People take part in many communicative events for interaction, information exchange, situation management and mental-state reading or influencing (Rickheit & Strohner 2008). Bashir and Ashiq (2011) explain communication as the process of “hearing or reading and responding to the spoken or written words” (36). Moreover, communication is defined as “the process by which people exchange information or express their thoughts and feelings” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1976). Therefore, communication can be regarded as a social tool used by people to maintain their everyday lives (Savignon 2005).

People need successful communication to achieve their goals and the ability to deal with everyday situations requires communicative competence which enables people to communicate effectively and appropriately (Saville-Troike 2003). The term ‘communicative competence’ was coined by Dell Hymes in the 1960s to explain the usage of language in line with sociolinguistic norms (Rickheit & Strohner 2008). According to Hymes, people who achieve communicative competence use the language in relation to:

1. whether something is formally possible,
2. whether something is feasible by virtue of the means of implementation available,
3. whether something is appropriate, adequate, pleasing, or successful in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated,
4. whether something is in fact actually performed, and what its doing entails (Richards & Rodgers 1986:70).

In short, communicative competence enables people to understand the underlying meanings of messages and interpret the non-verbal behaviours of their interlocutors, so people who acquire communicative competence can be said to be ideal speakers of speech situations (Rickheit & Strohner 2008).

Communicating effectively in a foreign language becomes a more important skill for people to meet the requirements of today's world, since as a result of globalisation cultural diversity has come into prominence by changing societies into multi-lingual settings, which increases the significance of students' ability to communicate interculturally (Byram 1997). In that vein, learning English as a foreign language becomes an important issue across the globe, in the same way, the main aim of learning a foreign language in educational contexts is to learn how to speak that language effectively (Saville-Troike 2003).

It is an undeniable fact that students learn to speak the target language through speaking (Savignon 2005). Therefore, students should have the motivation to speak in the classroom and having a desire to communicate becomes a crucial factor affecting students' success in language learning (Kang 2005). Students' active participation thus comes into play in the learning process, but not all students prefer to engage in communication actively during the lesson, so they vary from each other in terms of communication behaviour (Gałajda 2017). This variability in communication behaviour results from the personality characteristic called as 'willingness to communicate' (WTC) which can be explained as "an individual's volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation which can vary according to the interlocutor(s), topic and conversational context among other potential situational variables" (Kang 2005: 291).

Some students seek the ways to communicate in the L2 whenever possible, whereas others avoid communication because of their negative attitudes towards communication and speaking, which trigger an unwillingness to do so (MacIntyre et al. 1998). The concept of unwillingness to communicate (UWTC) proposed by Burgoon (1976) refers to a propensity representing "a chronic tendency to avoid and/or devalue oral communication" (60). Simply put, learners' choice to avoid interacting with others can be considered as unwillingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al. 1998). Since students' reluctance to communicate in English affects their success in language learning, the underlying reasons of why students are unwilling to speak English should be investigated.

2 FACTORS AFFECTING UNWILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

There are many factors that can negatively affect students' communication behaviour, and they can be classified into three categories, namely affective factors including anxiety, motivation and personality traits; environmental factors such as classroom atmosphere, class size, rapport between students and teacher; and factors in relation to the teacher, including topic familiarity, topic interest, teacher attitudes, teacher support and instructional methods, as shown in Figure 1 below (based on Yaseen 2018).

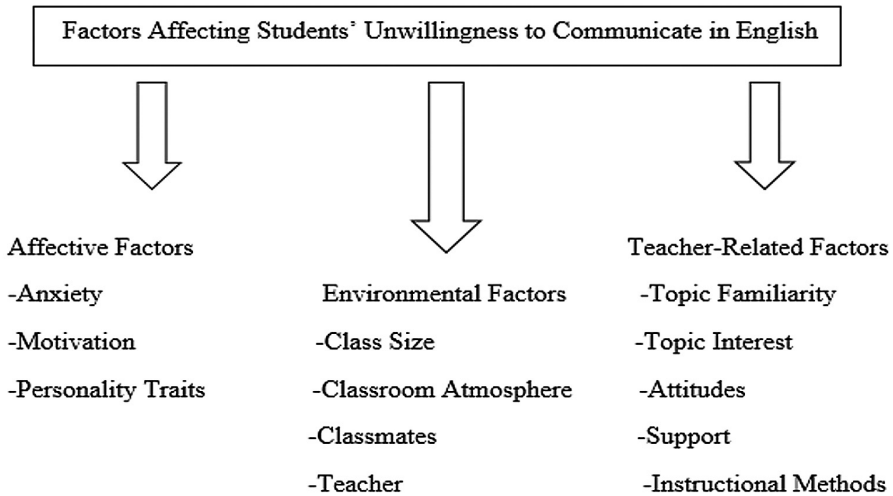


Figure 1. The classification of the factors contributing to the students' unwillingness to communicate (Yaseen 2018: 9).

Among the affective factors, anxiety is closely related to learners' performance in the learning process (MacIntyre & Gardner 1991). Spielberger (1983) regards anxiety as a "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of autonomic nervous system" (15). Students may react negatively while they are using L2 because of language anxiety, which in turn, results in the avoidance of communication (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Fukuto (2017) investigates the longitudinal changes of Japanese EFL learners' psychological attributes of unwillingness to communicate, and the results showed that anxiety as an affective factor increased this unwillingness among students. Similarly, motivation is "an important impetus in stimulating learners to persevere in both L2 learning and possibly L2 communication" (Peng 2007: 48). Peng (2007) examines the relationship between L2 WTC and motivation among college students, and suggests that motivation is a strong predictor of L2 willingness to communicate. Personality traits such as self-esteem, shyness and lack of self-confidence have a significant impact on students' communication behaviour (McCrockey & Richmond 1982). In her study of this issue, Sener (2014) finds that while students with high self-esteem are more likely to engage in classroom communication, shy students and those lacking in self-confidence are unwilling to communicate during the classroom activities.

The L2 classroom environment is multi-dimensional in that it includes many factors contributing to students' being willing or unwilling to communicate, such as rapport among classmates, class size, and classroom atmosphere (Basöz & Erten 2019). In this direction, Riasati (2012) studies EFL learners' perception of factors influencing the willingness to speak English in language classrooms, and shows that students feel more willing to speak in a stress-free environment where there is a friendly rapport among those in

the class. Additionally, Khazaei et al. (2012) investigate the relationship between class size and WTC, and finds that class size had a substantial impact on students' willingness to communicate, and students were more willing to do so in small classes because they had more time to express themselves, which enabled them to cope with their anxiety and feel comfortable to get involved in classroom communication.

Language teachers also have a significant impact on students' communication behaviour, so students' willingness to communicate can be affected positively or negatively depending on teacher-related factors such as attitudes, support, topic familiarity, topic interest, and instructional methods (Gałajda 2017). To begin with, the positive attitudes of the teacher towards students affect the latter's attitudes towards the language lesson in the same way (Gałajda 2017). On the other hand, the lack of teacher support and encouragement contribute to the students' unwillingness to communicate (Yaseen 2018). This is clear in the study of Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009), who stress that a negative evaluation instead of encouragement from the teacher in the face of speaking mistakes, makes learners hesitant to communicate during the lesson, and they feel more comfortable to speak when there is no teacher in the class. Additionally, the topic chosen by the teacher exerts an influence on learners' desire to communicate, and Riasati (2012) suggests that when learners have enough information about a topic, students really like to talk about it, however, they remain silent and become reluctant to speak when they have no idea about the topic of the lesson. Lastly, the materials and methods used by the teacher may have a negative influence on students' willingness to communicate (Gałajda 2017). Yaseen (2018) studies the factors affecting learners' desire to communicate negatively, and concludes that insufficient methods, like non-interactive ones, are one of the biggest factors which decreases students' enthusiasm for speaking. Consequently, the teacher is a significant determinant of learners' communication behaviour (Wright 1987).

Overall, it can be seen that students may be unwilling to communicate and that this can be a problem for both the students themselves and their teachers in a foreign language learning context (MacIntyre 1994). When students do not have the motivation to communicate, the process of language learning might become challenging and boring for them, and their teachers might have difficulties during the teaching process (Young 1991). In order to overcome the problem of students' unwillingness to communicate, the underlying factors of students' reluctance to speak English should be investigated, and some adjustments in both the learning and teaching process should be made according to these factors. Therefore, to provide a better insight into this area, the question of "What are the students' perceptions about the factors affecting their unwillingness to communicate in English?" will be examined in the present study.

3 METHOD

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study consist of 100 students who study at the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at a state university in Turkey. Students from the 2nd and 3rd grades were selected through a stratified sampling method. Since the students from the 1st grade take mostly skill-based courses and those from the 4th grade take very few courses, the students from the 2nd and 3rd grades who take pedagogy and methodology courses were found appropriate as the study group for the present research.

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

The data collection tool in the present study is the questionnaire developed by Yaseen (2008), which includes three dimensions and was used to investigate the factors contributing to the students' unwillingness to communicate in English. The first one is "affective factors impacting students' speaking skills", the second "factors related to teachers' role in teaching speaking skills", and the third "factors affecting students' speaking skills in relation to the instructional environment". Therefore, this questionnaire allows for a holistic investigation of the factors underlying students' reluctance to communicate in terms of the affective factors, the environmental factors and the factors in relation to students' personality traits.

The questionnaire was evaluated in terms of reliability and validity, and the results showed that the reliability coefficient of this scale is .89, which is very high. Moreover, the content validity of the questionnaire was examined by a panel of experts who were asked to determine whether the items in the questionnaire are suitable for the purpose of the study, with changes made based on their recommendations.

3.3 Procedure

The researcher gave consent forms to the university students in the study group. They were given information about the goals of the study and the role they would play as participants in the research process. After the volunteer participants signed the consent forms, the researcher started to collect data using the questionnaire. At the end, the data collected from students was analysed to determine the factors underlying their unwillingness to communicate.

3.4 Findings

The quantitative data collected from students via the questionnaire was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, with the means and standard deviations of the items in calculated to discover the perceptions of students about the factors leading to their reluctance to communicate in English, using descriptive statistics. To show the degree to which the questionnaire items correspond to the factors affecting students' unwillingness to communicate, the mean scores were divided into the three categories. The mean scores between 1.00–2.33 were labelled as low degree, those between 2.34–3.67 regarded as moderate degree, and the mean scores between 3.68–5.00 were accepted as high degree (Wimolmas 2013).

The findings showed that environmental factors are in the first rank, with a moderate mean of 2.93 and a standard deviation of 0.47; affective factors follow in the second rank with a moderate mean of 2.78 and a standard deviation of 0.41; teacher-related factors fall into the last rank with a moderate mean of 2.41 and a standard deviation of 0.41. Overall, these three factors point to a moderate degree with a total mean of 2.69, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The means and standard deviations of the factors contributing to the students' unwillingness to communicate

Factors Degree	Mean*	Std. Deviation	Rank	Degree
Factors affecting students unwillingness to communicate in relation to the instructional environment	2.93	0.47	1	Moderate
Affective factors impacting students' unwillingness to communicate	2.78	0.41	2	Moderate
Teacher-related factors contributing to the students' unwillingness to communicate	2.41	0.41	3	Moderate
Total	2.69	0.27		Moderate

Note. *1.00– 2.33: Low; 2.34–3.67: Moderate; 3.68–5.00: High

A detailed examination of each item falling into to the 'affective factors category' makes the means and standard deviations of the items clear, in the way that while the item stating "I find it difficult to build sentences, I know the grammar but I can't put it in a sentence" is in the first rank with a moderate mean of 3.65 and a standard deviation of 1.02, the item stating "I like watching TV shows and programs in English" is in the last rank with a low mean of 1.42 and standard deviation of 0.63 among the items in the affective factors category, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The means and standard deviations of the affective factors

Affective Factors Degree	Mean*	Std. Deviation	Rank	Degree
I find it difficult to build sentences, I know the grammar but I can't put it in a sentence.	3.65	1.02	1	Moderate
Speaking English makes me feel worried, and I feel pressured by the teacher and other students.	3.37	1.29	2	Moderate
I don't feel self-confident and I feel pressured by the teacher and other students.	3.33	1.29	3	Moderate
I use my mother tongue if I can't express myself in English.	3.17	1.03	4	Moderate
I struggle to find the right vocabulary; I want to speak English but I don't know the words needed for a certain topic.	3.13	1.16	5	Moderate
I fear criticism from others while speaking.	3.08	1.24	6	Moderate
I am shy, I don't feel confident while speaking English in class.	3.02	1.24	7	Moderate
I read about the topic, prepare for the speaking practice in advance and prepare ideas for it.	2.79	1.01	8	Moderate
I feel motivated and confident while speaking English in class.	2.62	1.01	9	Moderate
I enjoy discussing events and situations with my teacher and classmates in the English speaking lesson.	2.28	0.86	10	Low
My family encourages and supports me to speak English.	2.24	1.18	11	Low
I feel that my listening skills are good.	2.04	0.97	12	Low
I like watching TV shows and programs in English.	1.42	0.63	13	Low

Note. *1.00– 2.33: Low; 2.34–3.67: Moderate; 3.68–5.00: High.

When the items in the category of teacher-related factors were analysed in terms of means and standard deviations, it was found that the item “The teacher corrects my speaking mistakes all the time while I am speaking”, with a moderate mean of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 0.92, is in the first rank, followed by the item stating “The teacher allows me to use the mother tongue if I don't know the words in English”, with a moderate mean of 2.75. The item “The teacher speaks a mix of English and the mother tongue in class” falls into the third rank with a moderate mean of 2.66, while “The teacher speaks only English in class” with a moderate mean of 2.49 is in the fourth rank. The remaining six items have low mean scores, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: The means and standard deviations of the teacher-related factors

Teacher-Related Factors	Mean*	Std. Deviation	Rank	Degree
The teacher corrects my speaking mistakes all the time while I am speaking.	3.40	0.92	1	Moderate
The teacher allows me to use the mother tongue if I don't know the words in English.	2.75	0.91	2	Moderate
The teacher speaks a mix of English and the mother tongue in class.	2.66	1.04	3	Moderate
The teacher speaks only English in class.	2.49	0.92	4	Moderate
The teacher gives us enough time to prepare for the speaking activity.	2.33	0.96	5	Moderate
The teacher waits until I finish what I am saying then corrects it for me.	2.24	0.90	6	Low
The teacher introduces the idea of the lesson and gives us enough vocabulary to use for our speaking activity.	2.20	0.87	7	Low
There is no pressure from the teacher when I am doing the speaking activity.	2.15	0.92	8	Low
The teacher encourages me to speak English in class.	1.98	0.81	9	Low
The teacher lets us do role playing, group work, and presentations in English.	1.93	0.74	10	Low

Note. *1.00– 2.33: Low; 2.34–3.67: Moderate; 3.68–5.00: High.

Lastly, when it comes to the items in the environmental factors category, the item “We listen to a CD before we do the speaking activity” has the highest mean score (3.57) and falls into the first rank, however, the item “In the classroom, there is an interactive white board where we watch videos and play games related to our lessons” has the lowest mean score (2.13) and falls into the last rank, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: The means and standard deviations of the environmental factors

Environmental Factors	Mean*	Std. Deviation	Rank	Degree
We listen to a CD before we do the speaking activity.	3.57	0.95	1	Moderate
My classmates do not support me while I am speaking English.	3.52	0.06	2	Moderate
The class is too noisy.	3.36	1.03	3	Moderate
In my class, there are more than 30 students.	2.87	1.34	4	Moderate
We, as students, are given the chance to choose learning activities and games that motivate us.	2.63	1.04	5	Moderate
The class has a friendly atmosphere which enhances the learning procedure.	2.46	0.97	6	Moderate
In the classroom, there is an interactive white board where we watch videos and play games related to our lessons.	2.13	0.92	7	Low

Note. *1.00– 2.33: Low; 2.34–3.67: Moderate; 3.68–5.00: High.

4 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to reveal the factors which negatively affect students' communication behaviour and contribute to their unwillingness to communicate in English. To realise this aim, students were given a questionnaire designed to discover their perceptions about the reasons underlying their reluctance to speak English. The statistical analysis of their responses showed that among affective, environmental and teacher-related factors, the environmental ones have the biggest impact on students' unwillingness to communicate in English (2.93). Similarly, the findings of the research conducted by Khajavy et al. (2016) indicated that the classroom environment is the strongest predictor of students' communication behaviour.

In terms of environmental factors, classroom environment, rapport among students, noise, class size, materials and activities all contribute to students' unwillingness to communicate in English. First of all, a high number of students perceive that their classroom does not have a friendly environment because their classmates do not support them while they are speaking English, and hence the classroom atmosphere does not promote a good rapport among students (3.52) and this has a negative impact on their desire to communicate in English, as also found in earlier studies (Mohammad 2012; Peng 2014). Most of the students stated that their class is too noisy (3.36) and some held that there are more than 30 students in their class (2.87). In such an environment students are likely to have a low desire to get involved in communication, which corroborates earlier studies carried

out in a variety of contexts (Aydın 2017; Khazaei et al. 2012; Zarrinabadi 2014). Additionally, most of the students agreed with the statement that “We listen to a CD before we do the speaking activity” (3.57), whereas fewer said that “In the classroom, there is an interactive white board where we watch videos and play games related to our lessons” (2.13). In this regard, listening to a CD before starting to speak can be said to decrease students’ unwillingness to communicate in English by helping them to prepare for the topic they are required to talk about. Moreover, it can be concluded that the lack of such materials decreases students’ motivation to speak English. This supports the findings of studies carried out by Aydın (2017) and Juhana (2012), which imply that the types of materials and activities play a crucial role in students’ willingness to communicate.

A detailed examination of the affective factors showed that lack of vocabulary knowledge, poor listening skills, lack of motivation, lack of self-confidence, feeling of pressure, fear of making mistakes, anxiety, shyness, lack of family support, unfamiliar topics and the usage of mother tongue all have negative effects on students’ willingness to communicate in English. Most of the students consider their lack of vocabulary knowledge, (3.65) as one of the reasons why they are unwilling to speak English during the lessons, as pointed out in other studies (Basoz & Erten 2019; Sener 2014; Yaseen 2018). Similarly, students regard their poor listening skills (2.04) as another factor underlying their reluctance to speak English, which is in line with the findings of Syed (2016) and Yaseen (2018), who put emphasis on the relationship between listening skills and eagerness to speak. Some of the students perceive that their reluctance to communicate can be attributed to a lack of motivation (2.62), which is in line with other related studies (Altner 2018; Lin 2019; Syed 2016). According to the students, lack of self-confidence (3.33) is also a strong factor discouraging them from speaking English during the lesson, similar to the results reported in Haidara (2016) and Lin (2019), which highlighted the positive correlation between self-confidence and the willingness to communicate. It is important to note that when students feel pressured by their classmates (3.37) they may lose their self-confidence, which in turn makes them unwilling to initiate communication in English. This finding is in line with the studies (Altner 2018; Syed 2016) in which feelings of pressure are among the reasons why students are reluctant to speak English. Similarly, it can be deduced from the findings of the present study that students are afraid of making mistakes (3.08) while they are speaking, as there is a possibility of being judged or criticised by their classmates, similar to the results of some earlier studies (Altner 2018; Kang 2005). Another factor causing silence is anxiety (3.37), in that students are in feel anxious and worried while they are speaking English, as stated in the previous studies (Manipuspika 2018; Tsiplakides & Keramida 2009). Moreover, students regard their reluctance to communicate in English as in part derived from their shyness (3.02), which corroborates the findings of Fallah (2014) and Juhana (2012). Few students agreed that “My family encourages and supports me to speak English” (2.24), which points to another reason underlying their low desire to communicate in English. Similarly Aydın (2017)

reports that students can lose their motivation to speak English in class due to a lack of family support and family pressure. A majority of the students agreed that unfamiliarity with the topic (3.13) decreases their motivation to speak English, just as Kang (2005) reports that unfamiliar topics are the main factor with regard to students' silence in class. Lastly, most of the students acknowledged that they use their mother tongue when they cannot express themselves in English, which points to the fact that not being able to use the mother tongue in class (3.17) creates a barrier to their desire to communicate in English.

When the items in the teacher-related category of the questionnaire are analysed in detail, it is apparent that students attribute their reluctance to communicate to teacher attitudes, teacher pressure, lack of teacher support, lack of opportunity to speak English, usage of mother tongue and the target language. To begin with, students regard the attitudes their teachers adopt during speaking activities as a factor underlying their reluctance to speak English, as seen in their support for the statement. "The teacher corrects my speaking mistakes all the time while I am speaking" (3.40), whereas they show less support for "The teacher waits until I finish what I am saying then corrects it for me" (2.24). In other words, when every mistake is corrected this interrupts the students' speech and reduced their eagerness to start and maintain a conversation in English. These findings are in accordance with the results of previous research (Juhana 2012; Zarrinabadi 2013). Few students agree with the statements that "There is no pressure from the teacher when I am doing the speaking activity" (2.15) and "The teacher encourages me to speak English in the class" (1.98). Accordingly, the feeling of being pressured by teachers and the lack of encouragement from them are the strong predictors of students' negative communication behaviour, as also seen in other studies conducted in this field (Altuner 2018; Sener 2014). Based on the students' perceptions, their unwillingness to communicate in English derives from not having enough time and opportunity to practice speaking the language (1.93), which corresponds to the findings of some earlier studies (House 2004; Syed 2016). Lastly, some of the students agree that "The teacher speaks a mix of English and the mother tongue in class" (2.66) and "The teacher allows me to use the mother tongue if I don't know the words in English" (2.75), although other students think that "The teacher speaks only English in class" (2.49). On this point it can be said that students may feel comfortable in a classroom where both the mother tongue (Turkish) and the target language (English) are spoken interchangeably, as they can switch from English to Turkish in the face of communication breakdowns. On the other hand, students can benefit from being exposed to target language structures when their teachers speak only English during the lesson, which fosters language learning.

5 CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to probe the factors affecting students' unwillingness to communicate in English. The exploration of these factors was carried out through a questionnaire including three dimensions, namely affective factors, teacher-related factors and environmental factors. The findings extracted from students' responses to the questionnaire suggested that among these three factors the environmental ones are the most important with regard to students' unwillingness to communicate in English. Students blamed their reluctance to speak English on class size, noise, classroom atmosphere, materials, and lack of support from their teachers and rapport with their classmates. As such, teachers need to make a number of changes to alleviate the effects of these factors on students' communication behaviour.

First of all, class size or the number of students should be regulated to give more opportunities for students to engage in oral tasks, which enhances their willingness to communicate. In the same way, materials and activities should be prepared so that they increase students' participation in the lessons. It is also crucial to note that too much noise breaks the students' concentration during speaking activities and discourages them from paying attention to classroom tasks carried out orally, and thus has negative effects on their communication behaviour. Furthermore, social and psychological boundaries among students should be broken to make students feel at ease during the oral tasks or activities, since a comfortable and stress-free learning environment increases students' eagerness to speak English through the establishment of a good rapport between students and teachers.

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POVZETEK

PREUČITEV DEJAVNIKOV, KI VPLIVAJO NA NEPRIPRAVLJENOST ŠTUDENTOV ZA KOMUNIKACIJO

Nepripravljenost učencev za komunikacijo predstavlja enega največjih izzivov pri pouku jezika. Izraz »nepripravljenost za komunikacijo« (angl. *unwillingness to communicate* oz. *UWTC*) označuje nagnjenost učencev k nenehnemu izogibanju ustni komunikaciji ali zmanjševanju njenega pomena. Glavni cilj naše raziskave je bil preučiti dejavnike, ki vplivajo na nepripravljenost študentov za komunikacijo v angleščini. V raziskavo je bilo vključenih 100 študentov z Oddelka za poučevanje angleškega jezika, ki smo jih izbrali z metodo stratificiranega vzorčenja. Podatke smo zbrali s pomočjo vprašalnika, v katerem smo se osredotočili na tri vrste dejavnikov, ki negativno vplivajo na komunikacijsko vedenje študentov: afektivne dejavnike, dejavnike, izhajajoče iz predavatelja, in okoljske dejavnike. Rezultati raziskave so pokazali, da okoljski dejavniki, kot so odnos med študenti, velikost učne skupine, učna gradiva, hrup in vzdušje v učni skupini, najmočneje vplivajo na nepripravljenost študentov za komunikacijo v angleščini. Sledijo afektivni dejavniki, kot so tesnoba, sramežljivost, pomanjkanje motivacije, slabše poznavanje besedišča, pomanjkanje samozavesti, strah pred kritiko, slabše poznavanje teme pogovora, pritisk vrstnikov in strah pred napakami. Dejavniki, povezani s predavateljem, se glede na vpliv na nepripravljenost študentov za komunikacijo uvrščajo na tretje mesto. Podrobnejša analiza rezultatov v tej kategoriji je pokazala, da študenti svojo nepripravljenost za komunikacijo pripisujejo predavateljevemu odnosu in pritiskom, pomanjkanju predavateljeve podpore, pomanjkanju možnosti pogovora v angleščini ter možnosti rabe maternega in ciljnega jezika.

Ključne besede: učenje tujih jezikov, nepripravljenost za komunikacijo, učno okolje, hrup, vzdušje

ABSTRACT

One of the most challenging issues in language classes is the reluctance of learners to communicate. The term “unwillingness to communicate” (UWTC) is defined as a predisposition which represents

a chronic tendency to avoid or devalue oral communication. The main aim of this study is to investigate the factors contributing to university level students' unwillingness to communicate in English. The participants of this study were selected using the stratified sampling method and consist of 100 students from an English Language Teaching (ELT) Department. The data was collected through a questionnaire examining three dimensions, namely the affective factors, teacher-related factors and environmental factors underlying students' negative communication behaviour. The results indicated that environmental factors such as rapport among students, class size, materials, noise and classroom atmosphere have the biggest effects with regard to students' reluctance to communicate in English. On the other hand, affective factors including anxiety, shyness, lack of motivation, lack of vocabulary knowledge, lack of self-confidence, fear of being criticised, topic familiarity, peer pressure and fear of making mistakes have a second highest impact on students' negative communication behaviour. When the items in the teacher-related category of the questionnaire were analysed in detail the results showed they ranked third most important in this context, with students attributing their reluctance to communicate to teacher attitudes, teacher pressure, lack of teacher support, lack of opportunity to speak English, and the use of the mother tongue and target language.

Keywords: Foreign language learning, unwillingness to communicate, instructional environment, noise, atmosphere