Japanese university students’ willingness to communicate in English: The serendipitous effect of oral presentations

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This study examines the ways in which college students in Japan overcame sensitivity to external evaluation and increased their willingness to communicate in English. It is not uncommon for university students in Japan, who are otherwise proficient speakers of English and motivated to learn, fail to exhibit English competency in real communication situations. In interviews with students and teachers we discovered that sociocultural factors impede spontaneous communication, resulting in a reduced level of willingness to communicate in the students’ L2, English. The social norms of the language classroom at a Japanese university create a milieu where individual students are sensitized to the social appropriateness of their communication acts. Since these norms are related to both the speech community of college students as well as larger societal expectations, including the concept of ‘seiken’ (public eye), we suggest that language educators need to consider carefully the social context of the Japanese student language community when facilitating individuals’ development of English language competence. Serendipitously we discovered that communication apprehension decreased when socially appropriate acts of communication were encouraged. The participants for this study read books (graded readers) of their own selection individually as a part of reading classes and gave in-class presentations, an idea self-initiated by the students themselves. Without any explicit attempt at boosting their levels of willingness to communicate, the participants of this study reported that they gained higher self-perceived communicative competence and felt more comfortable in speaking.

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1 Introduction: Serendipity

“OED states that ‘serendipity’ is ‘a word coined by Horace Walpole who says that he had formed it upon the title of the fairy-tale “The Three Princess of Serendipity…”’ At present, ‘serendipity’ usually means ‘the knack of spotting and exploiting good things encountered accidentally’” (Goodman, 1961, p454). Leo Goodman (1961) also adds that ‘serendipity’ is exemplified by research directed toward the test of one hypothesis yielding a fortuitous by-product, and unexpected observation which bears upon theories not in question when the research was begun.

This study started from a suggestion by one student who was himself engaged in extensive reading as part of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class. In response to a questionnaire administered in 2011, he suggested that students should give a presentation on the book they read. Taking up his suggestion, the reading classes in 2012 included in-class presentations in Japanese. Though they were encouraged to use English, only two students did so. In this first year most students made their presentation in Japanese. In 2013, however, this in-class presentation was conducted in English. The participants were allowed to use Japanese with some handicap in scoring; consequently, all the students except two conducted their presentations in English. The original aim of this classwork was to encourage them to read the readers and share the book, not necessarily to foster an increase in their willingness to communicate in English. However, results of this activity showed an unexpected positive effect of lessening their communication apprehension, a fortuitous by-product or ‘serendipity.’

In Japan, quite a few college students, who are otherwise sufficiently proficient and highly-motivated in learning and speaking English, seem to struggle in exhibiting their English competency in real communication situations. In the process of investigating the underlying factors impeding their spontaneous communication, by interviewing students and teachers it was discovered that social norms of the language classroom at a Japanese university create a milieu where individual students are sensitized to the social appropriateness of their communication acts. This social context reduces their levels of willingness to communicate in English, as pointed out in the previous studies (e.g., Matsuoka, 2009; Yashima, 2002).

On the other hand, the extensive reading approach, endorsed by the input-hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), is a prevailing method of language instruction at the English educational sites in Japan. Reading books that the students themselves have selected with guidance from teachers, fits well with
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the accepted social norms of a university language classroom, including the long-held practice of silent, autonomous learning through grammar-translation (yakudoku) (Matsuoka & Evans, 2010; also Terauchi, 2001). The lead author has applied this approach of extensive reading and oral presentation for several years with positive feedback from motivated university students, and in this study we investigate how this method may result in reducing communication apprehension and sensitivity to external evaluation, while raising their levels of willingness to communicate.

According to Educational Testing Service, producers of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Japan has recently been ranked as second lowest out of 30 Asian counties in terms of proficiency scores, and this ranking is often cited as an indicator that Japan as a nation is failing in the task of foreign language education (Hongo, 2014). Observers have mentioned time and again since the Restoration that “the time has come” to create a more globalized workforce and to do so the Japanese Ministry of Education and educators across the nation need to take more significant steps toward boosting citizens’ communication competence in English (e.g., Jenkins, 2007).

Unfortunately, English proficiency does not guarantee communication skills in English. Indeed, work on the history of English education in Japan has described a “modernization” project that, since the emergence of the nation-state in the Meiji period (1868-1912), has included as a fundamental policy a focus on foreign language study (e.g., Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006; Seargent, 2009). However, the perception persists that Japanese citizens are not communicatively competent in English (Poole, 2005). One article from the Japan Times (Gattig, 2012), for example, harshly criticizes the teaching and learning practices in language classrooms at a lower profile Japanese college.

On the other hand, prior studies suggest that English proficiency is not correlated to English communication skills among Japanese college students, and that learners both proficient and motivated in English communication have failed to convey this competency in communication situations (e.g., Poole, 2005; Matsuoka, 2009). This research reveals even proficient learners have had difficulty in communicating in English. Evidence observed by the authors based on the students’ actual voices has suggested that hardworking students are overly conscious of errors and less willing to communicate in English in order to avoid socially inappropriate communication acts in the “public eye” (seken), an awkward embarrassment which may be avoided by keeping silent. Students also express the belief that making grammatical mistakes should be avoided, an understanding that is reinforced by their English teachers. This belief may be rooted in cultural practices that pervade educational themes in teaching and learning in Japan generally (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996). This implies that socio-cultural features of the university classroom seemingly impede Japanese students from being more
communicative in English, and these social norms of the “small culture” (Holliday, 1999) of the language classroom might be derived from the larger Japanese educational milieu. Many teachers have observed over the years that the same children who are very willing to communicate in English in a pre-school classroom lose this willingness by the time they are secondary school students.

1.1 Theoretical background

1.1.1 Willingness to communicate (WTC)

According to McCroskey (1997), WTC refers to the probability of engaging in communication when the opportunity is given. In the first language (L1), WTC is regarded as the stable predisposition to talk that is affected by personal traits, such as the degree of introversion or extroversion. Whether one decides to communicate is a volitional choice that involves cognition, and cognition about human communication is heavily influenced by the personality of the individual, though many situational variables, such as cultural conventions, how the person feels on a given day, what communication the person has had with others recently, who the other person is, what that person looks like, what might be gained or lost through communicating, and other demands on the person’s time, can strongly influence communicative behavior (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990b).

1.1.2 The WTC construct

According to McCroskey and Richmond (1990a), WTC is negatively correlated with introversion and communication apprehension and positively correlated with self-perceived communication competence and these correlations are present in a variety of sociocultural contexts. WTC has been found to correlate with introversion from -.19 to -.43, with communication apprehension from -.44 to -.52, and with self-perceived communication competence from .44 to .80 based on the data that McCroskey and his associates gathered. The two principal antecedents of the WTC scale are communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence. Introversion was excluded because it was considered to be an individual’s natural disposition.

1.1.2.1 Communication apprehension

Communication apprehension is defined as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78). McCroskey (1984, 1997) categorized the original two types of communication apprehension, trait-like
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communication apprehension and situational communication apprehension. Trait-like communication apprehension is viewed as a relatively enduring and personality-type orientation that is stable in various contexts. Situational communication apprehension represents the reactions to the situational constraints generated by a given person or group in a given context.

McCroskey (1984, 1997) also proposed causes for two types of communication apprehension. The etiology of trait-like communication apprehension was given two explanations: hereditary and environmental. Trait-like communication apprehension is considered the character that a person has gained through both a natural factor (i.e., heredity) and an acquired factor (i.e., the environment). Situational communication apprehension was hypothesized to be caused by two elements: degree of evaluation and the individual’s perception of their prior history, if any (McCroskey, 1997).

Communication apprehension has been identified as one of the strongest factors in reducing the level of willingness to communicate among Japanese college students (Matsuoka, 2006, 2009). Communication apprehension, identified as a psychological phenomenon called social anxiety, is experienced by people speaking before others, as Young (1991) observed. Accordingly, communication apprehension is likely to be a primary reason for the avoidance or disruption of communication.

In cross-cultural communication apprehension research (Klopf, 1986), Japanese were reported to be significantly more apprehensive than all other groups: Americans, Australians, Koreans, Micronesians, Chinese and Filipinos. In the Japanese university context specifically, McCroskey, Gudykunst, and Nishida (1985) found that students had a high degree of communication apprehension in both Japanese and English.

Similarly, Berger and McCroskey (2004) reported that a great number of pharmacy students have high communication apprehension and the program developed for reducing their high communication apprehension turned out to be effective. Their study implies that there might be differences among the Japanese students depending on their majors and that there exists a possibility of effective intervention for reducing communication apprehension.

1.1.2.2 Self-perceived communication competence

Communication competence is primarily dependent on cognition, communication skill depends on motor activity to a large degree, and communication affect concerns the emotional side of communication. Communication competence, the individual’s ability to properly process information both productively and receptively (Sellers & Stacks, 1991), can be developed with low communication apprehension, because low communication apprehension, which is not a behavioral but a cognitive
construct (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990a), should not block an individual’s ability to become adept at processing information. However, when communication apprehension is high, learners may be unable to acquire an appropriate degree of communication skill because learners with high communication apprehension may become too nervous to fully concentrate on the acquisition of those skills. Positive communication affect is fostered via low communication apprehension, and high communication apprehension can reduce the level of positive affect toward communication behaviors. Therefore, as McCroskey (1984, 1997) pointed out, in individuals with high communication apprehension, the communication learning process may be disturbed. McCroskey (1984, 1997) concluded that high communication apprehension is strongly associated with ineffective communication.

On the other hand, McCroskey (1997) reported that Phillips’ (1968) early study of reticence, which is the earliest origin of WTC, showed that a lack of communication skills is one of the causes of reticence; however, actual communication competence failed to materialize as a strong determinant of WTC in previous work on reticence (e.g., Kelly, 1984). However, self-perceived communication competence, which indicates the level of communication competence or skills that individuals perceive themselves to possess, has been found to correlate positively with WTC. McCroskey (1997) predicted a substantial positive correlation between the self-perception of communication competence and WTC scores, and this prediction was confirmed across cultures with positive correlations between self-perceived communication competence and WTC in Sweden (McCroskey, Burroughs, Daun, & Richmond, 1990) and in Micronesia (Burroughs & Marie, 1990). McCroskey (1997) also postulated that WTC, communication apprehension, and self-perceived communication competence, which are distinct constructs, are related in predictable ways. He proposed that WTC is the best predictor of actual communication approach/avoidance behavior, while communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence may measure the factors that make the major contributions to the prediction of a person’s WTC.

1.1.3 Other-directedness

Other-directedness refers to mental sensitivity towards the outside world, or “others,” and is the other important concept and construct in the present study since it may generate communication apprehension and affect communication behaviors.

The concept of other-directedness is derived from two sources; Kuwayama (1994) mentions that the Japanese sense of self is embedded in the reference “other” orientation, because it is relational, interactional, interdependent, situational, contextual, relative, collective, group-oriented, and socio-centered. Lebra (2004) postulates that Japanese people sense their
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self as ‘subject I’ – the unique individual self – and as ‘object me’ – the social self, which is affected by others. She quoted Athens’ ‘soliloquy’ as the self, from George Mead who asserts that self emerges only through the internalization of others’ perspectives and expectations, by linking two sides of self: self as subject I and self as object me, or the unique, individual self and the social self, susceptible to others.

Japanese society seems to value individuals who project an attitude of “other-directedness.” Although this “other-directedness” may function to increase individual motivation to communicate in English, it is more likely that in social settings sensitivity towards “the other” might increase communication apprehension and concomitantly decrease the level of willingness to communicate. As social animals, all humans probably maintain a certain level of communication apprehension. However, prior sociological and anthropological studies have pointed out a special propensity in Japan for “other-directedness” (e.g., Kuwayama, 1992, 2003; Maynard, 1997). The following concepts descript the features related to “other-directedness”.

1.1.3.1 Embarrassment: Face

Goffman (1956) explicates how “embarrassment” occurs when the expressive facts at hand threaten or discredit “face” or one’s expected social role or identity. In a study of “embarrassment” related to communication apprehension (Withers & Vernon, 2006), embarrassment predicted communication apprehension. Their study of embarrassment will be useful for the research on communication apprehension though their participants are not Japanese but Americans. Embarrassment and shame are different in nature; however, in the Japanese context, the notions of ‘embarrassment’ and ‘shame’ may overlap each other or ‘embarrassment’ may easily become ‘shame’ by losing ‘face’. In actuality, some Japanese hardworking students confessed that they have avoided and/or minimized the occasions of speaking English for fear of losing ‘face’ as they would like to appear intelligent.

1.1.3.2 Seiken and the construction of social identity

Abe (2001) established the notion of seken as a concept of the life-world similar to that postulated by Husserl (Didier, 2014). He argued that the notion of the individual or self in Japan is clearly different from that in Western contexts (see also Rosenberger, 1994), because individuals in Japan need to be viewed within the framework of seken. Abe defines seken as relationships outside those of family members. Each individual has a different seken social structure, a web of relationships that Abe claims is pre-existing, though certainly a strong argument could be made for social actors constructing these relationships daily. In any event, these extra-familial relationships, seken,
may actually strengthen a pre-disposition towards “other-directedness” Japanese speech communities.

Lebra (2004) clarified how the Japanese construct their sense of self, using opposition logic and contingency logic. Following opposition logic, in the process of constructing a Western sense of self, subject and object are sharply differentiated based on the principle of the subject-object dichotomy. Citing the Geertz definition of the Western self, she explicates that the Western self is externally bounded in opposition to the other or non-self world, and is internally integrated into a whole with one’s own center. In contrast to opposition logic, Lebra proposes contingency logic, where the subject and object share the same space. In contingency logic, the way of looking at the subject and object, or the self and other, there is no self without the other, an operation that Lebra (2004) named “binding”. In this process, seken plays an important role as well. If in Japanese society individuals construct their social identity in this way, sensitivity towards “others” would make sense.

1.2 The purpose

The present study aims to examine the ways in which different WTC factors interplay in bringing this serendipitous result in a higher degree of WTC for a better communication through experiencing the oral presentations in class.

2 Methodology

2.1 Participants

One hundred three college students majoring in nursing from two first-year classes and two second-year classes participated in this study. There are 49 females and 4 males in the first-year classes and 47 females and 3 males in the second-year classes. The average age was 19.85 years old, ranging from 18 to 31. Regarding the English proficiency gauged by Newton e-learning diagnostic tests, the average scores of reading and listening of the 1st years were 67.8 and 68.0 and those of the 2nd years were 75.4 and 76.8 respectfully. The grand average scores were 72.5 for reading and 72.2 for listening (See Table 1). Therefore, based on the developer of these tests (Newton, 2010), their proficiency levels are upper-intermediate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>1st years</th>
<th>2nd years</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>135.8</td>
<td>152.2</td>
<td>144.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both reading and listening tests are out of 100 scores.
2.2 Instrument: Questionnaire (see Appendix A)

The questionnaire consists of the following items; a) the number of books they read during the term; b) the details of the books; five 5-likert scaled items on 1) representative item of intrinsic motivation [I really want to be good at English] 2) representative item of extrinsic motivation [English is very important for my life] 3) self-evaluation on extensive reading 4) self-evaluation on making a speech 5) impression of listening to their classmates’ speeches, and d) feedback comments on making a speech.

2.3 Procedure

The participants were required to read a book they selected from a small library composing of some two hundred various graded readers (Cambridge, Oxford, & Macmillan) for the reading class in the autumn term starting from October, 2013 to February, 2014. They read the book they chose, using 5 to 10 minutes at the beginning of each class and were expected to continue to read their chosen books outside of class. Then two to three students during each class time gave a presentation on that book they finished. Other students were given a small evaluation sheet where they wrote their feedback comments in addition to an assessment based on a 100-point grading rubric.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Number of books (see Table 2)

Regarding the number of books they read, the first years read an average of 2.05, the 2nd years 2.40, and the mean was 2.24. These figures suggest that the 2nd years read more books than the 1st years though they may not exhibit the precise amount of their readings as the page number of each book varies. After one year of college English education, the 2nd years are better in English proficiency (see Table 1) and it is safely surmised that they may feel more comfortable in reading a graded reader.

3.2 Attitudes (see Table 2)

For the 5-likert scaled items (see Appendix A), the item representative for intrinsic motivation [1. I really want to be good at English] generated 4.06 for the 1st years, 3.92 for the 2nd years, and the mean score was 3.99. This result indicates the 1st years have higher intrinsic motivation. The item of extrinsic motivation [2.English is very important for my life] generated 3.83 for the 1st years, 3.68 for the 2nd years and the mean score was 3.76. This result also shows that the 1st years have higher extrinsic motivation. These results
suggest that the 1<sup>st</sup> years have higher motivation levels both intrinsically and extrinsically. The differences, however, are not statistically significant.

The item of evaluation on extensive reading [3. I really enjoyed extensive reading] produced 3.34 for the 1<sup>st</sup> years, 3.30 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> years, and the mean score was 3.32. This part exhibits the 1<sup>st</sup> years and the 2<sup>nd</sup> years evaluate the extensive reading in almost the same manner. The item of evaluation on giving presentation [4. I really enjoyed presenting the book in class] produced 2.81 for the 1<sup>st</sup> years, 3.28 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> years, and the mean score was 3.04. Although the difference in this item is not statistically significant, the 2<sup>nd</sup> years have more positive attitudes toward in-class presentation. After having some chances in speaking English in class when they were in the 1<sup>st</sup> year, the 2<sup>nd</sup> years seem to be less resistant in speaking it.

As discussed above, in many social contexts including the university classroom, Japanese may be more apprehensive in their communication than individuals in other Asian societies and cultural settings. However, the participants in this study have exhibited a reduction in communication apprehension. The item of evaluation on listening to their classmates’ presentations [5. I really enjoyed listening to the presentations by my classmates] produced 3.66 for the 1<sup>st</sup> years, 3.50 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> years, and the mean score was 3.58. These figures may imply that the 1<sup>st</sup> years are more introverted and prefer to be passive and enjoy listening while 2<sup>nd</sup> years are more extroverted. The average numbers suggest that the participants as a whole prefer to be passive or feel more enjoyable in listening rather than making their own speeches. Since the presentations were conducted in class where the participants knew each other, the class dynamism may affect the ways in which they perceived the presentations.

### Table 2. Attitudes towards Extensive Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question item</th>
<th>1st years</th>
<th>2nd years</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of books</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive Reading</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting Presentation</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Presentations</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These numbers are out of 5-likert scale.

### 3.3 Feedback comments

#### 3.3.1 Analysis of tokens

Regarding the part of feedback comments on conducting a presentation on the book they read, the most frequently appearing token was ‘wish’, the
intrinsic motivation towards communication in English. There were 13 tokens in the 1st years and 19 in the 2nd years. This implies that the 2nd years have higher degrees of willingness to communicate. Some comments clearly indicate that they really want to speak English and to make a speech in English.

Another frequent token was ‘confidence’ which appeared in both 1st years and 2nd years. There are 13 tokens in the 1st years and 11 in the 2nd years. This implies that the 1st years become more confident in speaking English. Some 1st years confessed that they had no experiences in speaking in front of the class while all the second years had already used English in class though not in the form of presentation. Since the 1st years may not have had any prior experience of speaking in front of the class, they might have had more impact and as a result, they may have more confidence than the 2nd years some. On the other hand, two tokens in the 1st years and one token in the 2nd years were negative. Those tokens were from advanced hardworking students with high scores in both reading and listening diagnostic tests. This result reveals socio-cultural features which might impede hardworking learners from being communicative competence. Being highly aware of others in the language community, i.e., other-directedness (e.g., Kuwayama, 1992) seems to generate a higher degree of communicative apprehension and high expectations and self-criticism (hansei) might lead to students’ disappointment in their communicative performance.

The token of ‘happy’ also appears in some participants; 8 tokens in the 1st years and 14 tokens in the 2nd years. This result indicates that the 2nd years are happier than the 1st years judging from only the number of tokens. It seems that the 2nd years look more relaxed than the 1st years in class. One of the students confessed that she can be relaxed in speaking English now as the professors persuaded her not to worry about small mistakes. Even a small portion of pedagogical intervention may facilitate students to be communicative.

As a whole, observing from only the token numbers, except the aforementioned three participants who felt less confident and seemed to have less degree of self-efficacy, participants for this study felt more confident in communicating in English and their motivation for gaining better communicative competence increased. The majority said they were happy and glad to do so and wanted to make a speech again.

3.3.2 Content analysis

In order to examine the in-depth features of the feedback comments, they were also analyzed by dividing the clauses or phrases with one meaning or coding in order to have a precise picture of the students’ voices. The comments from 103 participants generated 244 clauses/phrases or coded items (Appendix B). Then, they were categorized into five concepts:
communication apprehension, meta-awareness (noticing), satisfaction, positive self-perceived competence, and motivational intensity.

As McCroskey (e.g., 1990a, 1990b) postulates, communication apprehension and self-perceived competence are the main constructs of WTC. Therefore, the category of communication apprehension will be discussed first regardless of the quantity of coded items. The next concept will be meta-awareness or noticing as this concept seems to be related to communication apprehension. The third one is satisfaction, which might be related to meta-awareness or positive self-perceived competence. The fourth concept will be positive-perceived competence that is the construct of WTC. The last concept discussed is motivational intensity or desire, which will lead to WTC, an actual behavior of communication.

3.3.2.1 Communication apprehension (Appendix B)

Twenty-two coded items out of 256 were generated and two items are followed by positive comments. Therefore, there were twenty actual items representing communication apprehension. Some say that they felt uneasy if their classmates understood what they said, others say that making speech made them nervous or they feel embarrassed and/or shameful. As found in some previous literature on Japanese anthropology (e.g., Lebra, 2004, Abe, 2001), members of Japanese social groups seem to construct a sense of self that is objectively contextualized in relation to the other (Rosenberger, 1994). Indeed both embarrassment (Goffman, 1956) and shamefulness exist in most societies; however, the Japanese students, who have regarded themselves as so-called ‘good’ learners, seem to suffer from being ‘overly conscious’ about how they are perceived by others. Some participants confessed that they were not able to do well because they felt embarrassed or shameful about making mistakes. Some learners openly confessed they hate making mistakes. Another said they would much rather not make a presentation. As McCroskey et al. (1985) also discovered, in this study one participant said that she felt fearful in making a speech in English because she feels tense in Japanese as well.

Communication apprehension, as a main construct of WTC, also seems to be affected by one’s personality, or natural disposition. Therefore, it is feasible to surmise that some participants for this study may have an innate tendency of reticence and a high degree of resistance in speaking in class.

3.3.2.2 Meta awareness/Noticing (Appendix B)

This category consists of 45 items; some are negative and others are neutral. In case of positive meta-awareness or evaluation, the items are categorized into ‘satisfaction’. The participants noticed their weaknesses based on their own evaluation as well as feedback comments from their classmates. One
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example shows that a student noticed how challenging it is to make herself understood in English. Some say that their lack of vocabulary hinders them from communication. Another says she felt frustrated when she was unable to express herself in time when she was asked. These comments are also reflections of the students seeing their performances from the outside, a perspective that may require the person to be ‘other directed’. Although noticing one’s weakness may enhance their communication competence, they may have higher degree of communication apprehension as a result. Whether this results in more effort or is demotivating may depend on pedagogical intervention as well as individual attitudes. As Yashima (2002) and Matsuoka (2009) have suggested, English proficiency and WTC are not positively correlated. English proficiency fails to predict the degree of WTC. When students are self-critical and notice their own communicative competence shortcomings, the optimal pedagogical intervention is useful advice rather than further criticism.

3.3.2.3 Satisfaction/Positive meta-awareness

Eighty-six items, which was the most, were selected from 256 coded items. This result suggests that the in-class book presentation satisfied many participants. The following are the typical comments showing the different degrees of satisfaction; to feel satisfied and really happy, to feel content with their efforts, it was fun to see the different perspectives of their classmates, making presentation is a good incentive to learn English, and it was a really good experience. Others say that they felt less tense and less resistant in speaking English. Regarding the feedback comments from their classmate, they were happy to get feedback comments from their classmates and felt encouraged by them.

These positive effects from the participants are a serendipity, which was originally not planned. Even overly-conscious students may overcome their high degree communication apprehension and can become more communicatively competent.

3.3.2.4 Positive self-perceived communicative competence

Seventy items were categorized in this concept. In a prior study on Japanese learners (e.g., Matsuoka, 2009), Japanese college students were found to be less confident and their degrees of self-perceived competence was low. This concept, a part of the WTC construct, will determine the degree of WTC. In other words, the rise of self-perceived communication competence will lead to a higher degree of WTC. The items selected for this category include: to gain confidence in speaking, feel more comfortable in English, even be surprised to find them able to do better, notice they can do better. Some interesting items are; speaking in English is even better than in Japanese, and
to make mistakes did not affect the speech at all. Having good experience and feeling comfortable and confident, the participants seemed to be successful in gaining positive self-perceived communication competence though many of them did not have such feelings.

In the same manner of the previous section, these results are a serendipity.

3.3.2.5 Motivational intensity/desire

This category has thirty-three coded items, which indicates a strong desire of enhancing their English as an example. Some items indicate their intention of learning English more seriously; others show their immediate desire of speaking. These desires may directly lead to their higher degree of WTC. Indeed the prior investigation shows that the desire of speaking English is considerably high (nine out of 10 scale, Matsuoka & Evans, 2010); however, the quality or the meanings of their motivational intensity in the present study is sufficiently detailed and it is hoped that the students will continue to try their best in order to achieve their desire or goal of speaking English.

3.4 Conceptual schema

The following figure shows the schema of the ways in which the participants of this study might gain a higher degree of WTC through in-class oral presentations, based on the content analysis.

First, the top concept of ‘other-directedness’ may generate higher degree of communication apprehension with the possibility of producing an incentive of making efforts in order to look smart. Then after giving an in-class presentation, satisfaction or positive meta-awareness may be generated. Thirdly satisfaction can lead to better or higher self-perceived communication competence and consequently, the degree of WTC will increase, accompanied by the rise of motivational intensity.
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4 Concluding Remarks

Psychological anthropologists (e.g., Lutz, 1988) explicate the flexible nature of human emotions depending on contexts, an argument that Markus and Kitayama (1991) also make about learned cultural factors being instrumental in the formation of self and in the projection of emotions in social situations. These psychological anthropologists suggest that pedagogical intervention should modify the learners’ affective behaviors including communication apprehension.

The present study examined how different WTC factors—other-directedness, communication apprehension, and self-perceived competence brought higher WTC for a better communication, and evidenced the possibility of enhancing the participants’ affective and cognitive attitudes.
towards communication behaviors in English. Sociocultural factors or norms represented as other-directedness seem to have embedded deep in the participants. Some participants revealed the apprehensive attitudes, fostered by this other-directedness, for their precision in using English. Although not all the participants succeeded in overcoming these dispositions, majority of the participants seem to have modified themselves to be more willing to communicate in English, assisted by the combined effects of friendly, autonomous environment and less imposing, non-formative way of learning.

Therefore, it should be concluded that the effective pedagogical strategies foster “good” English learners with both a proficiency and motivation to become a real communicative competent individual required in this globalized society. This study—serendipity—seems to be a good example of an optimal pedagogical intervention.

References

Kim, S. (2001). Exploring willingness to communicate in English among Korean EFL language students in Korea: WTC as a predictor of
Japanese university students’ willingness to communicate in English: The serendipitous effect of oral presentations


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Japanese university students’ willingness to communicate in English: The serendipitous effect of oral presentations

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Appendix A
Questionnaire

Extensive Reading Questionnaire (January/2014)

Class ( ) ID # ( )
Date of Birth ( )
Name ( )

English Proficiency: STEP ( ) TOEIC ( ) TOEFL ( )
Newton e-learning diagnostic tests
Listening ( ) Reading ( ) Total ( )

How many books did you read during this term? ( ) books

What are the titles of the books you read? Please explain them briefly.
1. ( )
2. ( )
3. ( )

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. I really want to be good at English.
   1) Strongly Disagree   2) Disagree     3) Uncertain   4) Agree     5) Strongly Agree
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. English is very important for my life.
   1) Strongly Disagree   2) Disagree     3) Uncertain   4) Agree     5) Strongly Agree
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. I really enjoyed extensive reading.
   1) Strongly Disagree   2) Disagree     3) Uncertain   4) Agree     5) Strongly Agree
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. I really enjoyed introducing (presenting) the book in class.
   1) Strongly Disagree   2) Disagree     3) Uncertain   4) Agree     5) Strongly Agree
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. I really enjoyed listening to the presentations by my classmates.
   1) Strongly Disagree   2) Disagree     3) Uncertain   4) Agree     5) Strongly Agree
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Please answer the following questions briefly.

1. Are there any changes/differences after giving a speech on the book?
Good ones? Bad ones? Please explain about them.

Good ones:

Bad ones:

2. Do you feel more comfortable or confident in speaking after giving a speech?

Feeling more comfortable:

Feeling more confident:

Thank you☆

Appendix B
Content Analysis of Feedback Comments

*English translation is added for comments written in Japanese.

Communication apprehension:
1 I felt tense in presentation. 発表は緊張した。
2 I felt uneasy about grammar. 文法があったが不安。
3 Even now I felt traumatic about my failure in presentation. 講演が伝えられず今でもトラウマ。
4 I felt worried that I might use strange English. おかしな英語を使用してしまったと不安だった。
5 Realizing my English is poor, it became hard to speak it and I lost my confidence. 自分の英語力のなさを実感し、話すことがきつくなり、自信をなくした。
6 It made me so nervous.
7 I felt tense but 緊張したけど
8 I worried if my classmates understood my speech. みんなが分かるように説明できたか不安でした。
9 I felt tense in speaking in front but みんなの前で話すのは緊張したけど
10 Writing draft for presentation made me worried if I make a mistake and it is difficult 人前で発表するために文章を書くのが間違えていないか不安だし、難しい。
11 Though I felt relieved when done I do not change any feeling towards speaking 終わって安心したが、特にスピーチに対する気持ちを変えない。
12 I feel embarrassed in speaking in public. 人前で話すのは恥ずかしい。
13 I was unable to do it well as I felt shameful. 恥ずかしくてあまり上手くできなかった。
14 Presentation made it more difficult for me to speak in public. 人前で英語を話すのがより苦手に。
15 I feel tense in presentation in Japanese and presentation in English was fearful for me. 日本語でも緊張するのに英語のスピーチは怖かった。
16 I feel a little nervous if my English is wrong when speaking in public. 人前で発表するとときに自分の英語が間違っているか少し不安になる。
17 I still feel resistant in doing presentation in English. 英語で発表することに対してまだ抵抗感がある。
18 As I was unable to use good English, I feel more fearful in presentation in English, I need to improve a lot. なかなか上手く伝えられる英語を使えなかったのでプレゼンするのがより怖いようになった。自分はまだまだまだと思います。
19 I do not think I did my presentation well. It was hard. 英語でプレゼンするのは厳しくて思えない。自分はまだ十分と言えなかった。
20 No matter how many times I may make a speech, I feel tense. スピーチは何度やっても緊張する。
21 I still feel tense in presentation. 発表するのはやっぱり緊張する。
22 I really felt nervous but..

Meta-awareness
1 I realized it is important to write a draft for myself. 自分で文章を考えるのは大切だと実感した。
2 I think I need to get more attention from classmates. もっとクラスの関心を向けたい。
3 I learned new words, but realized I forgot a lot. 単語は新しく覚えたけど、かなり忘れていることもあるんだと感じた。
4 It was hard to translate what I am thinking into English. 自分の考えていることを英語にするのが難しかった。

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5 I realized I am not good at being in public. 人前に出ることが苦手だと思って思った。
6 I realized it is important to use English a lot. もっとたくさん使うことが大切だと思いました。
7 I was disappointed to find my English poorer than when in high school (laugh).

高校のときより英語が下手になっていて自分に少しあきらかしかった（笑）
8 I realized my vocabulary size is small. 自分の語彙力のささが分かった。
9 I realized I am poor in speaking English. 英語は下手なので気付けたとわかった。
10 I thought book’s presentation was very difficult.

It was hard to listen to and understand the presentations. 聞きづらくて理解するのは大変だった。
11 I was unable to understand classmates’ presentations. みんなのスピーチはよくわからなかった。
12 It was hard to write a draft because of lack in my vocabulary. 頭電力をないので文章を作るのが大変だった。
14 I am not good at speaking in front of people but I thought I should have made a speech in English as all except me used English.

I was disappointed to find my English poorer than when in high school (laugh). All the classmates did good presentations and I found it hard to communicate in English effectively.
18 It is hard to understand the presentations. 聞きづらくて難しい。
19 It is easy to say my ideas in English but I found it really difficult to make myself understand perfectly in English. 英語で自分の考えたことをはっきり相手に完全に理解してもらうのは本当に難しいと思った。
20 I think it can activate the class if we know who will ask the questions ahead of time. 聞き手を予め決めておいたらもっと活発になると思った。
21 I was disappointed at myself who cannot speak English without draft.

I was disappointed to find my English poorer than when in high school (laugh). I was impressed by a nice presentation though the contents were difficult.
31 I became interested in English books though I am still not good at speaking.
32 I wanted to give a presentation more smoothly. もっとスムーズに発表できればよかった。
33 I learned the difficulty in communicating in English, thinking of how to present myself.

言い表した内容について質問がなされてきとき自分の言葉で説明できていないということが分かりました。
34 I translated what I wanted to say in English, and I made a speech without reading the draft, but I thought it would have been better without any draft. 査読をいれずに発表できましたが、日本語からの訳しかなくて、英語でそのまま発表できたらいいなと思うことが出来ました。
35 At any rate, I thought I am poor but... もっぱら苦手だと思っていましたが、
36 I tried to listen to classmates’ speeches.

試聴したとき興味に言葉がでてこなくて失申しました。
37 I felt vexed when I was unable to answer the question smoothly.
38 I noticed I lost lots of grammar and vocabulary because I had not studied English comparing with when I used to. 以前にくらべて英語に気をつかんでいないので文法や単語など大分とんでもない。
39 I realized it is important to use English a lot.

It is hard to understand the presentations. 聞きづらくて難しい。
40 I was impressed by a nice presentation though the contents are difficult.
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Satisfaction
1 I was happy that I was able to read a book in English for myself.
2 English was new to me, but it was enjoyable.
3 I came to enjoy talking in English with friends.
4 I was able to expose myself to many English books. English was tough at times, but it was enjoyable.
5 Classmate comments made me happy.
6 I felt satisfied when I finished reading a book as I had not read it a lot.
7 It was a great opportunity to read an English book. I felt closer to English than before.
8 It was hard to translate what I wanted to say in English, but I felt satisfied.
9 I was glad to know the details of the book.
10 I felt closer to English than before. I gained words and knowledge about grammar or remembered them.
11 I was satisfied with speaking in public.
12 I originally liked speaking, and I have liked it even more.
13 I was good at speaking in public. My resistance of speaking English in public reduced.
14 I was satisfied with speaking English in public. I understand English better.
15 I was satisfied with speaking in public. I have taken active steps to improve my speaking skills.
16 I trust that it was good for me.
17 It was a good opportunity of speaking English. I am now more confident.
18 I expanded my vocabulary. English is easier to learn.
19 I find it interesting to read a book in English. I am more interested in English.
20 I was able to feel tense after a long time. It was a great experience.
21 I was able to think of challenging to read a novel next time.
22 It was great to understand the book well. It was a good experience to think of the construction of a novel.
23 It was a good experience to read a book in English. I was able to understand the book.
24 It was a good experience to think of the construction of a novel.
25 It was a good experience to think of the construction of a novel.
26 Reading book is interesting.
27 My resistance of reading an English book disappeared. I am more interested in English.
28 In the spring term speaking English was only a fear, but now I feel much better in doing so.
29 My resistance of speaking English in public reduced. I am now more interested in English.
30 I was able to try my best in checking the words. My resistance of speaking English in public reduced.
31 Though I am not good at speaking in public, I thought it was over quickly. I am now more interested in English.
32 I found it interesting to read a book in English.
33 It was great to get comments from my classmates.
34 It was a good chance to check the words that I did not know or forgot.
35 I understand English better. I am now more interested in English.
36 I became motivated. I want to improve my English.
37 I was satisfied with speaking in public. I am now more interested in English.
38 I was able to use speaking English in public. I am now more interested in English.
39 I practiced English composition.
40 I gained words and knowledge about grammar or remembered them.
41 Reading English books was more interesting than I had thought. English is more interesting.
42 I enjoyed learning English independently after a little while. I am now more interested in English.
43 I was happy to know my classmates listened to me and gave me comments.
44 I was happy that my classmates asked me some questions about my speech.

スピーチの原稿

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42 I enjoyed learning English independently after a little while. I am now more interested in English.
43 I was happy to know my classmates listened to me and gave me comments.
44 I was happy that my classmates asked me some questions about my speech.
I was happy that I gave a presentation without reading a draft. I was happy to read my classmates' presentations. It was great to discover new phases of my friends. This experience helped me to understand the presenter's feelings. This happened because the presenter had a lot of experience in speaking in public. A very good experience as I had not read long English sentences. I found it worthwhile trying to speak in English. It was a great experience to read an English book and introduce it to the class. I found foreign books are interesting. I felt a bit less nervous in speaking in public than before. It was hard to talk about the book, but it was fun to do so in English. It was a lot of fun to understand classmates' speeches and I learned a lot from them as I feel tense in speaking in public. It was not difficult to talk about the book, but it was fun to do so in English. It was a great experience to read a book in English. I gained a sense of fulfillment in finishing reading a book in English. I found that I did not dislike making a speech that much. I enjoyed both speaking and listening. I enjoyed presentation. It was great to share speeches and I learned a lot from them. I found that I did not dislike making a speech that much. I gained a sense of fulfillment in finishing reading a book in English. I gained a sense of fulfillment in finishing reading a book in English.
I was happy to introduce the book of the film to my classmates as I like that film.  
so I felt confident in having it done.

I do not feel scared to making a speech in English.

I was glad to know more words in the process of reading a book in English, understanding it, and explaining it. 我的本を理解し説明するうえで単語を学んだりして知らないことを知ることができた。

I improved my imagination about the contents in listening to classmates’ presentations. 交流の機会で想像力をつけていった。

I feel less nervous in speaking in public. 少し緊張が減ったように思います。

I am happy to feel less resistant in speaking English in public. 人前で英語を話すことに少し抵抗感がなくなったように思います。

I am glad I learned English by composing sentences. 文を作ることで少し英語の勉強ができていた。

Self-perceived competence

1. I felt confident in having it done. 終わったことに！！ 自信がついた。
2. I can pay attention to better words instead of just quoting words from a dictionary or a book. 評価や他の引用ではなくみなにわかりやすい言葉を使えるように心がけられたようになった。
3. I can manage to make a speech. スピーチはどのようになかなりの気がしてきた。
4. Now I can read English noticing the contents. 文庫を意識して文章を読めるようになった。
5. I was able to learn words. 少し単語を使えるようになった。
6. I feel more confident in composing English better than I thought. 思ったより文章を作れるらどんな少し自信があった。
7. I made a speech better than I thought. 実験はスピーチできた！
8. I feel I can do such a thing from now on. これからこういうことがあっても大丈夫な気がした。
9. I feel I can speak English better. 英語で話すことがそんなに苦に感じなくなった気がする。
10. I feel more confident as I got (good) comments. コメントをもらったので少し自信がついた。
11. I am sure I can make myself understood in English. 原稿を意識して文章を読めるようになった。
12. I knew I can manage to speak English using words I know even if it is not correct. 正しい英語でなくても読んでいる単語や使える文さんがつかえることもあるんだと思いました。
13. I can summarize in English the things I read in English. 英語で読んだものを英語でまとめることができるようになった。
14. I gained confidence as I was able to make a speech in English in public. 多くの人前で実験のスピーチができて自信がついた。
15. I found I can read English. 読めるのが早くなくなったかもしれない。
16. I am alright in speaking English in the class of this size. この種のクラスで話すのは、意外と大丈夫でした。
17. I was able to speak without being nervous. 紧張せずに話すことが出来た。
18. Now I can read English more quickly. 読むのが早くなくなったかもしれない。
19. I am alright in speaking English in the class of this size. この種のクラスで話すのは、意外と大丈夫でした。
20. I gained confidence in finishing a book in English. 読んだことがあることが自信になった。
21. I did not think I was able to explain the book in English, but I found I can do so. 英文で本を読むことができるなあって思いないかったが、できることがあるに気づいた！
22. I felt more confident after giving a presentation. プレゼンの後のほうが自信もまた。
23. I gained confidence in understanding the book in English so as to introduce it to the class. 紹介できるくらいに英語の本を読んで理解できたことに自信を持てた。
24. I think I can make a speech if I prepare the draft. 原稿を用意すればスピーチできると思った。
25. I gained the ability of listening to my classmates’ speeches. みんなのスピーチを聞く力がついた。
26. I gained confidence by doing so. 自信がつかった。
27. I gained ability of making a speech. スピーチを作る力がついた。
28. It was hard but great as I gained confidence. 大家だったけど自信になってよかった。
29. I think I can read the book more quickly. 読むのが早くなくなったかもしれない。
30. I was resistant in composing English, but I was able to do so unexpectedly. 英文を作文するのが抵抗があったけど、意外とつくれた。
31. I can do better than I thought. 意外とすらすら読めた。
32. I was able to understand the book clearly. 木がキチンと理解できた。
33. I could speak English in public. これで人前でもいったい話せる。できることと思いました。
34. I thought I can do better than I thought. 意外とできるな、と思った。
I really want to be better in English. I want to improve my English, listening to my classmates’ presentations. The serendipitous effect of oral presentations

Motivational Intensity
1 I want to improve my English, listening to my classmates’ presentations. I really want to be better in English. I want to improve my English, listening to my classmates’ presentations. I feel vexed when I was unable to express myself in English easily.
I need to be able to speak English better.

I felt I need to improve my English though I am weak.

I want to express myself in English better.

I feel I need to improve my English though I am weak.

I want to speak English fluently.

I want to speak English more.

I want to speak English more.

I want to give a speech about the thing in a different category.

I would like to feel confident next time.

I want to read the same book more deeply.

I want to spend more time for a future presentation.

I want to understand my classmates' presentations better.

I want to make a speech without reading a draft.

I want to read more books.

I want to improve my pronunciation.

I want to speak English fluently and even to ask some questions.

I want to make a better speech.

I want to practice speaking in English more and to be able to speak out my opinions.

I want to be better in English.

I want to learn more expressions in English.

I want to read a book in English more.

I want to do presentation more!