

In His Sublime Name



Allameh Tabataba'i University

Faculty of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages

Department of English Language and Literature

**On the Relationship between Self- Regulated Learning Strategies Use and
Willingness to Communicate in the Context of Writing**

*MA Thesis Submitted to the English Language Department in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a
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Advisor:

Dr. Fahimeh Marefat

Reader:

Dr. Mohammad Khatib

By:

Elham Hashemi Shahraki

Tehran, Iran

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Allameh Tabataba'i University

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English Language and Literature

We hereby certify that this thesis by

Elham Hashemi shahraki

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Committee of evaluation:

.....

Advisor: Dr. Fahimeh Marefat

.....

Reader: Dr. Mohammad Khatib

.....

Examiner: Dr. Amir Zand-Moghdam

.....

Head of English Department: Dr. Mohammad Khatib

To beloved family.

Abstract

Within the communicate framework of language teaching, the skill of writing enjoys special status. However, literature suggests that learners perform differently when they write, depending on their level of willingness to communicate (WTC) (Baghaei et al., 2012; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Wang, 2004) and their self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS) use (Beach & Eaton, 1984; Boer et al., 2013; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Hillocks, 1986; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986). Willingness to communicate (WTC) and self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS) are two constructs that contribute to the better writing performance in one way or another. The former refers to the idea that language learners who are willing to communicate in the second language look for chances to communicate, and actually they do communicate, and the latter is related to the implementation of strategies that help learners control or direct the mental process involved in language learning. Considering the importance of the role of both WTC and SRLS on learners' writing performances, the present study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between L2 learners' WTC, SRLS use, writing performance and gender. The data were obtained from a sample of 109 Iranian EFL undergraduates and graduates. They were asked to fill out two questionnaires including Academic Self-Regulated Learning Scale (ASRLS), and L2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Questionnaire. And also the participants' mid-term writing scores were requested from their instructors. The collected data were analyzed using a variety of statistical techniques such as Pearson product moment correlation, step-wise multiple regression, and Independent sample t-tests. The results revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between learners' WTC, SRLS, and their writing performances. The results of Regression Analyses demonstrated that the *strategy of self-evaluation* was a good predictor of learners' writing achievements. Moreover, it was concluded that WTC and SRLS had a positive association and that from among the seven sub-scales of SRLS, *memory strategy*

was the best predictor of learners' WTC. Also, no significant difference between male and female participants in terms of both their WTC and SRLS was observed. A clear knowledge of the relationship between SRLS use and WTC in the context of writing may bring EFL teachers the chance of improving learners' writing performance.

Key words: willingness to communicate (WTC), self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS), writing performance

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Table of contents	Page
Abstract.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	III
List of Tables.....	VIII
List of Figures.....	X
List of Abbreviations.....	XI
List of Appendices.....	XII
Chapter 1: Introduction	
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.4 Purpose of the Study.....	8
1.5 Research Questions.....	9
1.6 Research Hypotheses.....	10
1.7 Definition of Key Terms.....	11
1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study.....	12

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Willingness to communicate (WTC).....	14
2.2.1 WTC in L1 and L2.....	16
2.2.2 Factors Affecting WTC.....	18
2.2.3 Models of WTC.....	22
2.2.3.1 The Pyramid Model of WTC.....	22
2.2.3.2 Clément's Social Context Model of WTC.....	25
2.2.3.3 Kang's Model of WTC.....	26
2.2.4 Previous Research Related to WTC in L2.....	28
2.2.5 A Cross-Cultural View of WTC.....	32
2.3 Self-Regulated Learning Strategies (SRLS).....	35
2.3.1 Characteristics of Self-Regulated Learners.....	37
2.3.2 Models of Self-Regulated Learning.....	39
2.3.2.1 Social Cognitive Model of Self-Regulated Learning.....	40
2.3.2.2 Cyclic Model of Self-Regulated Learning.....	41
2.3.2.3 Boekaerts' (1999) Model of SRL.....	43

2.3.3 Previous Research Related to SRLS in L2.....	46
2.3.4 Self-Regulation and other Individual Factors.....	49
2.3.4.1 Self-Regulation and Motivation.....	49
2.3.4.2 Self-Regulation and Self-Efficacy.....	50

Chapter3: Methodology

3.1 Overview.....	52
3.2 Participants.....	52
3.3 Instruments	53
3.3.1 The L2 Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire.....	53
3.3.2 Academic Self-Regulated Learning Scale (ASRLS).....	56
3.4 Procedure.....	57
3.5 Data Analysis.....	59

Chapter 4: Results and Discussions

4.1 Introduction.....	61
4.2 Normality of Distribution.....	62
4.3. Addressing the First Research Question.....	64
4.4. Addressing the Second Research Question.....	67
4.5. Addressing the Third Research Question.....	68

4.6. Addressing the Fourth Research Question.....	70
4.7. Discussion.....	72
4.7.1. Research Question One: SRLS and Writing Performance.....	72
4.7.2. Research Question Two: WTC and Writing Performance.....	75
4.7.3. Research Question Three: SRLS and WTC.....	77
4.7.4. Research Question Four: Gender, SRLS and WTC.....	78

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1 Overview.....	81
5.2 Summary of Main Findings and Conclusions.....	82
5.3 Pedagogical Implications.....	84
5.4 Suggestions for Further Research.....	86
References.....	88

List of Tables	Page
Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Scores.....	53
Table 3.2: Reliability Statistics for sub-components of self-regulated Learning strategies and Total self-regulated learning strategies.....	57
Table 4.1: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test Of normal distribution.....	63
Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics of willingness to communicate and self-regulated learning strategies.....	64
Table 4.3: Model Summary of R square for total self-regulated learning strategies that predict writing scores.....	65
Table 4.4: Summary of Coefficients for self-regulated learning strategies use.....	66
Table 4.5: The correlation between willingness to communicate, writing performance and Self-regulated learning strategies.....	67
Table 4.6: The correlation between self-regulated learning strategies and willingness to communicate.....	68
Table 4.7: Model Summary of R square for total self-regulated learning strategies that predict willingness to communicate.....	69
Table 4.8: Summary of Coefficients for Self-Regulated Learning Strategies.....	70
Table 4.9: Group Statistics for total self-regulated learning strategies	

and total willingness to communicate among males and females.....71

Table 4.10: Summary of T-test results.....72

List of Figures	Page
Figure 2.1: Heuristic Model of WTC adopted from MacIntyre, Clemént, Dörnyei, & Noels (1998, p. 547).....	25
Figure 2.2: Clément, Baker, and MacIntyre’s (2003, p. 198) proposed Model of L2 Communication.....	26
Figure 2.3: Kang’s (2005, p.281) model of WTC.....	27
Figure 2.4: Social cognitive model of self-regulated learning by Zimmerman (1989, p.189)	41
Figure 2.5: The three-layered model of self-regulated learning developed by Boekaerts (1999, p.451).....	45
Figure 4.1: Histogram showing self-regulation normal curve.....	62
Figure 4.2: Histogram showing willingness to communicate curve.....	62

List of Abbreviations

L1: First Language

L2: second Language

WTC: Willingness to Communicate

SRL: Self-Regulated Learning

SRLS: Self-Regulated Learning Strategies

List of Appendices	Page
Appendix A: The L2 willingness to communicate questionnaire	107
Appendix B: Academic Self-Regulated Learning Scale (ASRLS).....	111
Appendix C: Jacobs, Zinkgraft, Wormuth, Hartfield and Hushey's (1981) Profile.....	113

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Human beings are born with some basic needs, among the most important of which is the need to communicate verbally or nonverbally with other members of a community. MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, and Noels (1998) put that we communicate with our community members because we need either their service and cooperation or their help. Individual human beings show invariable tendencies in the amount of their first-language talk (Goldman-Eisler, 1951; as cited in McCroskey & Richmond, 1991) which represents humans' willingness to communicate. Therefore, personality is a determining factor in people's willingness towards communication (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, Shimizu, 2004). Hardly can one find two people who are the same in the way and the amount of their communication (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). Some people are generally shy, introvert and taciturn and are classified as poor communicators, while others are self-assertive, extrovert and more sociable and are regarded as good communicators.

Another important factor which affects quality of communication is culture (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). For example, Finns are poor communicators, especially in informal encounters. In contrast, Americans are known to be good communicators (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

The concept of willingness to communicate in second language learning situations refers to the second language learners' tendencies to converse and their actual communications in second language. The final aim of second language teaching is to prompt learners' willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al.

1998).Therefore, in the field of foreign language teaching, teachers should utilize some effective strategies in order to evoke learners' willing to communicate, to reduce learners' stress and to increase their sense of self-assertiveness. Seeking opportunities to communicate with others would greatly increase the chances for gaining comprehensible input and for L2 communication practice (Larsen-Freeman, 2007).

Over the past few decades, the issue of individual differences among language learners like differences among their learning styles, learning strategies, and strategy use in language learning contexts has received a great deal of attention. In previous decades, methodologists have been trying to find out the answer to the question of why learners perform differently in learning activities while they are presented the same material by the same instructor and teaching method.

In addition to differences in learning styles and strategies, language learners differ from each other in the degree to which they control, direct or regulate the mental processes involved in language learning process. In the past few years, self-regulated learning (SRL) has been one of the main constructs which has emerged in educational psychology. Zimmerman and Schunk (1989, p.59) defined self-regulated learning as "self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions which are systematically oriented toward the attainment of students' own goals". Zimmerman (2000, p. 66) puts that, "self-regulated learning involves learners' active participation in learning from the metacognitive, motivational and behavioral point of view". Considering the significance of this concept in language learning process, L2

teachers should help their students foster their self-regulation and search their repertoire of effective learning and problem solving strategies that will optimize their language learning process and products.

According to Boekaerts (1999), self-regulation is central to understand learning processes in the classroom, and for that reason, research into its dynamics and outcomes has potential implications for creating optimal learning environments.

On the other hand, increase of self-regulation depends on the usage of self-regulation strategies. Yet, full value and implications of self-regulated learning strategies (SRLS) are not as widely used as they should be.

When individuals start writing essays, they utilize some learning strategies such as planning, idea-generating, self-evaluating, self-monitoring, and reflecting (Magno, 2009a). When learners are required to write in L2, they get involved in the process of planning and organizing their thought. Thus, self-regulated learning strategies are utilized in the writing process.

Writing performance is also related to the concept of willingness to communicate. As cited in Hammann (2005) writing can be used as a tool to express meaning in all content area (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) and help learners to organize their thoughts in certain domains (Herrington, 1985). Speaking is not the only skill which determines the degree of individuals' WTC, but writing as another productive skill can deal with the concept of WTC. It is because, authentic usage of