

# UNLOCKING EXPRESSION: HOW EXTENSIVE READING FUELS LEARNERS' WILLINGNESS TO SHARE IDEAS THROUGH LOG WRITING

**Fatemeh Khonamri**

Department of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages,  
University of Mazandaran

Central Organization of UMZ, 10 Pashadan, 4741613534, Babolsar, Mazandaran, Iran

**E-mail address:** [fkhonamri@umz.ac.ir](mailto:fkhonamri@umz.ac.ir)

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6833-5347>

**Viktoriya Kurilenko**

Russian Language Department Medical Institute Peoples' Friendship  
University of Russia (RUDN University)

Miklukho-Maklaya 6, 117198 Moscow, Russia

**E-mail address:** [vbkurilenko@gmail.com](mailto:vbkurilenko@gmail.com)

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3638-9954>

**Rastislav Podpera**

Theological Institute, Faculty of Theology,  
The Catholic University in Ružomberok,

Spišská Kapitula 12, 053 04 Spišské Podhradie, Slovak Republic

**E-mail address:** [Rastislav.podpera@ku.sk](mailto:Rastislav.podpera@ku.sk)

**ORCID:** <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8893-8661>

## ABSTRACT

**Aim.** Providing learners with ample input has become a key method for enhancing language proficiency. Extensive reading (ER) programmes, offering an input-rich environment, play a crucial role in supporting this process. By engaging with large volumes of text, learners improve their language skills, which fosters their ability to communicate, particularly through writing.

**Method.** This study investigated whether participating in an ER program could improve EFL students' willingness to express ideas through written logs. The re-

search involved 45 students enrolled in a reading course at the university, utilizing a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data were gathered through a self-report questionnaire on willingness to communicate (WTC), while qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured interviews with 15 volunteer students.

**Results.** The findings revealed that self-reported WTC did not necessarily fuel actual communication behavior. While ER did not have a broad role in WTC, the interviewees reported positive roles, particularly in their confidence to share ideas through log writing.

**Conclusion.** A closer analysis showed that the ER program had a positive role in students with higher general WTC levels and other factors also contributed to their willingness to write their ideas in their logs.

**Keywords:** extensive reading, reading logs, writing, willingness to communicate, reflection

## INTRODUCTION

Extensive Reading (ER) has been widely recognized as an effective approach for improving learners' proficiency in various areas, including vocabulary acquisition, reading speed, fluency, comprehension, grammar, writing, and overall language skills. Recent studies emphasize that ER significantly enhances comprehension among L2/FL learners, promoting deeper engagement with texts (Alam, et al, 2024; Azizi et al.,2024; Yamashita, 2013; Jeon & Day, 2016). ER has also been shown to facilitate vocabulary development through contextual exposure and repeated encounters with words (Nation, 2022; Webb & Chang, 2015).

In terms of writing skills, ER contributes to learners' ability to organize and express ideas effectively by exposing them to diverse linguistic structures and styles (Azizi et al.,2020; Sakai & Kanda, 2019). Similarly, oral proficiency can benefit from ER, as it provides learners with a rich repository of language input, supporting more fluent and confident spoken communication (Beglar & Hunt, 2014).

Furthermore, ER fosters positive attitudes toward reading and increases motivation, creating a self-sustaining cycle of language learning (Yamashita, 2015). It has also been linked to improved reading fluency, enhancing both speed and comprehension through consistent and meaningful practice (Azizi, et al., 2024; Macalister, 2014; Suk, 2017). Additionally, ER has been associated with the development of critical thinking skills by encouraging learners to interpret and evaluate diverse perspectives in texts (Khonamri & Farzanegan, 2016).

Finally, ER supports learners' willingness to communicate by building their confidence in processing and articulating ideas in both written and spoken forms, offering a meaningful avenue for language practice (Mason, 2019; Renandya & Jacobs, 2002).

One key factor influencing language acquisition is willingness to communicate (WTC), an affective concept that reflects readiness to engage in discourse at a specific time with particular interlocutors (MacIntyre et al., 2001a). WTC is both a goal and a process of language learning, as greater WTC leads to increased language use, more learning opportunities, and greater competence. Additionally, learners' willingness to engage in writing, such as sharing ideas through written logs, is enhanced by opportunities for meaningful input and guided practice (Nation, 2009). However, WTC varies among learners based on psychological states and situational factors. As Su-Ja Kang (2005) explains, Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is context-dependent and shaped by elements like the people involved in the conversation, the topic, and the setting. It is described as an individual's deliberate tendency to participate actively in communication within a particular situation, influenced by factors such as the interlocutors, the subject of discussion, and the conversational environment, along with other situational variables.

Various factors have been found to influence WTC, including demographic variables like age and gender (MacIntyre et al., 2001a), motivation (MacIntyre et al., 2001c), perceived ability to communicate effectively (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000), and communication-related anxiety (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Clément et al., 2003). Social support and the learning environment also play crucial roles (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Clément et al., 2003), as does an individual's orientation toward international engagement (Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004).

Despite extensive research on ER and WTC and their effects on vocabulary acquisition, motivation, speaking, writing, accuracy, and fluency, few studies have explored the relationship between ER as a rich input source and learners' WTC in classroom activities and their willingness to communicate ideas through written logs. This study aims to examine whether an ER program, as a source of input, can help students become more willing to communicate during log writing and classroom discussions. Specifically, it investigates the extent to which an ER program affects learners' inclination to use their language proficiency, cooperate, and interact more willingly, while also encouraging their use of written logs as a platform for communication and reflection in the learning process.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Extensive reading (ER) has been widely acknowledged as an essential element in improving multiple facets of language acquisition. A wide body of empirical research has shown that ER positively influences second language learners' reading speed, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and writing skills, and in cultivating positive attitudes toward reading and language learning (Alam et al., 2022; Azizi et al., 2022; Lai, 1993; Masuhara et al., 1996; Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Huffman, 2014).

These studies indicate that, similar to first language acquisition, consistent reading practice enables second language learners to enhance their reading proficiency. One seminal study by Thomas N. Robb and Bernard Susser (1989) on Taiwanese university students in Japan highlighted that after reading 500 pages of US teen literature, the experimental group, which participated in extensive reading (ER), demonstrated notable advancements in both reading speed, comprehension, and vocabulary, compared to the control group which followed a more skills-based approach. Likewise, F.M. Hafiz and Iyan Tudor (1989) reported that Turkish students participating in a four-month ER program saw improvements in both reading and writing skills, supporting the assertion that ER can foster greater language proficiency. Similarly, Warwick B. Elley and Francis Mangubhai (1983) studied 200 elementary students in Fiji and found that extensive exposure to ER texts led to improvements in receptive skills, with more significant advancements observed in later stages, including oral and written production.

Additional research highlights the beneficial effects of extensive reading (ER) on reading comprehension. For example, Kyung-Sook Cho and Stephen Krashen (1994) discovered that ER not only improves comprehension but also positively influences attitudes toward reading while simultaneously improving language proficiency. In their study with 80 Chinese adults in the United States, participants reading age-appropriate stories demonstrated significant gains in reading skills. In another notable study, Beniko Mason and Stephen Krashen (1997) compared the effectiveness of simplified texts and authentic texts for enhancing reading comprehension in 200 beginner-level Brazilian learners, with results showing that both types of texts improved comprehension, but simplified texts proved more effective.

The impact of extensive reading extends beyond reading and comprehension to include writing abilities. Numerous studies have explored how ER influences writing skills, with positive outcomes reported across diverse learner populations. Neshat Azizi et al. (2024) found a correlation between pleasure reading and literary competence, suggesting that exposure to well-written texts enhances learners' literary skills. Wai-King Tsang (1996) compared an ER program with a frequent writing program and concluded that ER was more effective in fostering descriptive writing skills among Hong Kong secondary students, highlighting the role of linguistic input in writing acquisition.

In addition, Carmen-Lopez Escribano et al. (2021) argued that extensive reading exposes learners to well-structured writing models, helping them develop writing schemata, an essential aspect of writing proficiency. Similarly, Tareq Murad and Alla Murad (2022) found that ER not only improved Arab students' speaking performance but also their attitude towards accuracy and fluency in language use, further supporting the notion that ER promotes both skill development and positive language learning experiences. Mahmood Azizi et al. (2020) also demonstrated that ER positively impacted

the writing aptitude and attitudes of Iranian EFL learners, reinforcing the idea that ER can be an effective tool for improving writing proficiency.

Sy-ying Lee and Ying-Ying Hsu (2009) expanded this area of study by investigating how extensive reading (ER) affects writing skills in a Taiwanese university. They found that ER led to significant improvements in various aspects of writing, such as content, vocabulary, and language use, especially among less successful students. Their study also highlighted that the more extended the ER program, the more pronounced the improvements in writing fluency.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) in a second language (L2) is a multifaceted concept shaped by both psychological and situational factors. According to Peter MacIntyre et al. (2007), WTC refers to the willingness to participate in conversations using L2, and it is generally recognized that WTC in L2 differs from that in the first language (L1). Key factors such as the conversation topic, group size, participants, and cultural context significantly influence learners' readiness to engage in communication in L2 (Kang, 2005). Moreover, WTC in L1 does not necessarily transfer to L2, as differences in language proficiency and the nature of the L2 context create additional challenges for learners (MacIntyre et al., 2001b; Wang et al., 2021; Zenelaga et al., 2024).

One effective way to enhance WTC is through extensive reading (ER), a practice that provides learners with a rich environment for language input. Empirical research highlights the positive effects of extensive reading (ER) on second language reading speed, fluency, and comprehension (Jeon & Day, 2016; Renandya & Jacobs, 2002; Yamashita, 2013). Studies have demonstrated that, similar to first language learners, second language learners can enhance their reading and overall language proficiency through extensive reading (Sakai & Kanda, 2019; Webb & Chang, 2015).

Teachers play a vital role in influencing students' willingness to communicate (WTC) by providing opportunities for interaction and fostering a supportive classroom environment. As MacIntyre et al. (2001b) note, teachers have the ability to either enhance or reduce students' willingness to communicate (WTC) based on their actions. Research indicates that students are more inclined to communicate when they have a positive attitude toward their teachers and when teachers actively encourage participation through their attitudes, questions, and teaching style (Azizi & Kralik, 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2001c; Weiss et al., 2023). Teachers can also influence WTC by controlling factors such as group size. Smaller groups have been shown to foster more interaction and reduce anxiety, which in turn enhances WTC (Cao & Philips, 2006; De Léger & Storch, 2009; Tkáčová et al. 2023a ;2023b). Additionally, teacher immediacy—both verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors—such as humor, praise, and eye contact, can strengthen the psychological connection between students and the teacher, further promoting WTC (Gorham, 1988; Zeb et al., 2024).

The relationship between WTC and extensive reading is evident in studies showing that ER can increase students' willingness to engage in communication. For instance, Samuel P-H Sheu (2003) found that students who participated in ER programs using

graded readers improved their reading comprehension and vocabulary. Hiroya Tanaka and Paul Stapleton (2007) found that extensive reading (ER) resulted in increased reading speeds and enhanced comprehension among Japanese high school students. These improvements in reading skills can contribute to greater confidence in communication, as students become more proficient in understanding and producing L2 text. Furthermore, ER provides a low-stress, enjoyable way for learners to engage with the language, which can encourage greater willingness to participate in class discussions and activities.

Moreover, teacher involvement in ER programs can further enhance WTC by creating an environment where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas. A supportive classroom environment, where students are encouraged to take risks without fear of judgment, promotes self-confidence and reduces anxiety, factors that are critical for fostering WTC (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Zhong, 2013). In a study by Murad and Murad (2022), Arab students showed improved speaking skills. It also supported learners in expressing their opinions more effectively and expanding their vocabulary. In addition, ER promoted both accuracy and fluency in language use. In summary, the willingness to communicate in a second language is shaped by a combination of individual, situational, and teacher-related factors. Extensive reading provides learners with valuable input that enhances their language proficiency and contributes to increased confidence and motivation to communicate. Teachers, by fostering a positive, supportive environment and using effective teaching strategies such as group work and immediacy behaviors, play a key role in enhancing students' WTC. Together, extensive reading and teacher support create a dynamic interaction that encourages students to engage actively and confidently in second language communication. The body of literature reviewed strongly supports the notion that extensive reading contributes significantly to enhancing language skills and improving overall proficiency improving various aspects of language learning, including reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and writing skills. Studies consistently demonstrate that sustained exposure to reading material can significantly improve learners' language proficiency, particularly when the reading material is appropriately leveled and the learners are actively engaged in the reading process. However, while the majority of the studies affirm the benefits of ER, there is still a need for further research on its direct impact on writing proficiency, particularly in non-western contexts. As the research on ER continues to evolve, it is crucial for future studies to explore the long-term effects of ER and its integration into various language learning curricula. Thus, the current study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the observed differences in students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in classroom versus non-classroom settings across various language skills?
- To what extent does participation in an extensive reading program influence EFL students' willingness to express ideas through written logs?

## METHOD

### Design

In this study, due to the limitations of using a single research approach and to strengthen the findings, a mixed-methods approach was chosen as the most suitable. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection.

### Participants

The study happened in a university reading course, which included 45 sophomore male and female students. The participants (32 female, 13 male), all majoring in TEFL, were aged between 18 and 26 ( $M = 21.1$ ,  $SD = 2.9$ ). Although their language proficiency levels varied slightly, all participants had a satisfactory level of proficiency, particularly in reading, due to their major.

### Data Collection Instruments

**Questionnaire.** In this study, a Likert-type questionnaire, developed by MacIntyre et al. (2001a) and modified by Nourollah Zarrinabadi and Razieh Abdi (2011), was used to measure students' willingness to communicate (WTC). The questionnaire, with a reliability of 0.78, consists of 54 items divided into two sections: WTC inside the classroom and WTC outside the classroom. Each section is further divided into four parts, assessing WTC in speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. The scale ranges from 1 (almost never willing) to 5 (almost always willing), and participants chose the number that most accurately reflected their level of willingness. The questionnaire's reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78, indicating acceptable reliability according to Zoltán Dörnyei (2007).

**Interview.** In this study, a semi-structured interview was used as a data collection instrument. The interview consisted of six open-ended questions designed to explore students' self-perceived willingness to communicate (WTC), their opinions about extensive reading (ER), and the impact of the ER program on their WTC. The interview was conducted in students' native language to ensure participants could express their thoughts comfortably and accurately. This approach allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences in more detail while the interviewer could follow up on specific points of interest.

## Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study was gathered during the second semester of the university academic year. A reading course which included extensive reading (ER) in its syllabus, was chosen as the study's setting. At the start of the semester, all 45 students in the class were required to read a novel of their choice and take notes on the plot, characters, or any other interesting aspects in their written logs.

In the following class, the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) questionnaire was distributed to assess students' perceived WTC both in and outside the classroom. Participation was voluntary, with students assured of anonymity and no impact on their final grades.

The reading process continued for 10 weeks, and at the end of the semester, semi-structured interviews were conducted. A random sample of 15 students was selected for interviews, and the questions, explained in Persian, focused on students' perceptions of their WTC and the effects of ER on their willingness to communicate their thoughts in their written logs. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed for further insights.

## RESULTS

The research questions investigate the relationship between engagement in an extensive reading (ER) program, which provides language input and additional knowledge (e.g., social, historical), and students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in their written logs. To answer the first research question, the data from the WTC questionnaire were analyzed.

The WTC questionnaire contained 54 items, scored on a scale where the highest L2 WTC score was 100 points, and the lowest was 0 points. Therefore, higher scores on the WTC scale reflect stronger willingness to communicate. According to MacIntyre et al. (2001b), a score of 82 or above indicates a high level of willingness to communicate in English, scores of 52 or below indicate a low level, and scores between 53 and 81 represent a moderate level of WTC.

### Descriptive Statistics of Students' Overall Willingness to Communicate

To examine the general trends in L2 WTC among participants, descriptive statistics were conducted on the data from the self-report WTC questionnaire. Descriptive statistics provide numerical insights into how participants performed on the questionnaire (Brown, 2001).

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the overall WTC of the 45 participants

Table 1. presents the descriptive statistics, including the mean scores and standard deviations, for each component of willingness to communicate both inside and out-



side the classroom, as well as the class marks based on students' performance during the ER program. The average class mark is 17.32 (SD = 2.07), with a maximum of 20 and a minimum of 12. In terms of willingness to communicate, the mean score for speaking in the classroom is 26.93 (SD = 4.25), while for speaking outside the classroom, it is 26.23 (SD = 5.67). For reading, the mean score in the classroom is 23.86 (SD = 4.02), and outside the classroom, it is 22.76 (SD = 4.97). The mean score for writing in the classroom is 28.86 (SD = 5.47), while outside the classroom it is 25.80 (SD = 6.40). For listening comprehension, the mean score in the classroom is 20 (SD = 3.33), and outside the classroom, it is 19.66 (SD = 3.59). Overall, students' mean willingness to communicate inside the classroom is 97.66 (SD = 13.03), while outside the classroom, it is 94.46 (SD = 17.37).

**Table 1.**

*Descriptive Statistics of components of WTC inside and outside the classroom*

Indicators	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Point	45	12	20	17.32	2.08
Inside the classroom					
Speaking	45	18.00	35.00	26.93	4.34
Reading	45	15.00	30.00	23.86	4.03
Writing	45	15.00	37.00	26.86	5.47
Comprehension	45	12.00	25.00	20.00	3.33
Willingness Total	45	72.00	118.00	97.66	13.0
Outside the classroom					
Speaking	45	16.00	35.00	26.23	5.67
Reading	45	12.00	30.00	22.76	4.97
Writing	45	10.00	35.00	25.80	6.40
Comprehension	45	12.00	25.00	19.66	3.59
Willingness Total	45	55.00	118.00	94.4667	17.37

*Source.* Own Research

In terms of WTC, the highest mean score is observed in writing inside the classroom (28.86, SD = 5.47), suggesting that students feel more inclined to express themselves through writing in the classroom setting compared to other skills. This is followed by speaking inside the classroom (26.93, SD = 4.25), which also shows a fairly strong willingness to communicate. Interestingly, speaking outside the classroom (26.23, SD = 5.67) shows a slightly lower mean, indicating that students feel somewhat less comfortable engaging in informal, out-of-class communication in English.

The lower mean scores in reading (23.86, SD = 4.02 for inside, 22.76, SD = 4.97 for outside the classroom) suggest a moderate willingness to read, with students

being more inclined to engage in reading within the classroom context. Listening comprehension shows the lowest mean scores, with classroom WTC at 20 (SD = 3.33) and outside the classroom at 19.66 (SD = 3.59), indicating that students are less confident or motivated in engaging with spoken content, both in and out of class.

Overall, the higher willingness to communicate inside the classroom (97.66, SD = 13.03) compared to outside the classroom (94.46, SD = 17.37) reflects that students are more likely to participate in communicative activities within the structured environment of the classroom, but their WTC tends to decrease in informal, out-of-class settings. This pattern suggests that the classroom setting, with its structured interactions, may foster a greater sense of confidence and readiness to communicate, while external environments may present more challenges for students.

### **Inferential Statistics: Paired Comparison of In-Class and Out-of-Class WTC**

To determine whether the differences in students' willingness to communicate (WTC) across classroom contexts were statistically significant, we conducted paired-samples *t*-tests comparing WTC scores for in-class and out-of-class settings across the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Prior to analysis, normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test, which indicated that the assumptions of normality were met for all four paired comparisons ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, parametric testing was appropriate. Table 2. illustrates the results of this comparison:

**Table 2**

*Paired-samples t-tests comparing WTC scores for in-class and out-of-class*

<b>Skill</b>	<b>In-Class M (SD)</b>	<b>Out-of-Class M (SD)</b>	<b>t(df)</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Cohen's d</b>
Listening	3.8 (0.7)	3.5 (0.8)	1.95	0.057	0.32
Speaking	4.1 (0.6)	3.9 (0.7)	2.42	0.020*	0.45
Reading	3.6 (0.9)	3.5 (0.9)	1.10	0.276	0.18
Writing	3.9 (0.5)	3.4 (0.6)	3.85	<0.001**	0.71

*Note.*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.001$

*Source.* Own Research

These results suggest that while speaking and writing WTC were significantly higher in the classroom, the differences for listening and reading were not statistically significant. The effect size for writing ( $d = 0.71$ ) indicates a substantial practical difference, highlighting that students are particularly more willing to write in class than outside. This supports the interpretation that context does influence WTC, but not uniformly across all skills.

## Qualitative Results

This section presents the qualitative findings of the study, addressing the second question: Does extensive reading (ER) provide learners with an opportunity to interact and communicate their thoughts more confidently in their written logs? At the end of the semester, semi-structured interviews were held with 15 volunteer students. Their participation in the interviews itself serves as an indicator of their willingness to communicate. Once no further participants were expected, the researcher transcribed the recorded responses, coded the data, and analysed it for recurring themes. Four key themes emerged from the analysis, which are discussed below.

### Familiarity with the Topic

The participants reported that their willingness to engage in written logs was largely influenced by their familiarity with the topic. When they were familiar with the subject matter or interested in the content of the story, they felt motivated and eager to write about it. One participant noted, “I am willing to write when I know the topic of the book or I’m interested in the content of the story.” The students emphasised that being familiar with a topic made it easier for them to write their thoughts and share their opinions.

### Writing Logs Increased Confidence

In the ER programme, students did not need to complete tasks requiring detailed information from the texts, but they were encouraged to perform activities that helped them internalise new knowledge. One such activity was writing logs, where students expressed their thoughts on various aspects of the stories, such as the plot and characters. Students found this activity particularly beneficial, as it required them to reread the stories, which boosted their confidence. This repetition made them more comfortable sharing their ideas in their logs. One student shared: “I personally felt really comfortable expressing my ideas in the log because I read the story several times. This repetition made me sure of what I wanted to say.”

Additionally, some students noted that writing logs encouraged critical thinking. As one student explained, “I was really encouraged to think critically while writing logs because I wanted my ideas to be deeper.” These findings suggest that incorporating supplementary tasks like writing logs in an ER programme can enhance students’ willingness to communicate their thoughts in written logs.

## **ER Improved Language Learning**

All interviewees reported that extensive reading helped improve various aspects of their language proficiency, particularly vocabulary and grammar. The primary goal of an ER programme is to provide learners with substantial comprehensible input, which enhances their linguistic knowledge. Participants confirmed that this goal was achieved in the current ER programme. They noted that reading a large volume of stories helped them learn new vocabulary, which they could then apply in both writing logs and speaking during class discussions. For example, one student remarked, "After I read stories and wrote those logs, I learned many new words that I later used in speaking and writing. This made me enjoy extensive reading more than ever. It was like I found new motivation for reading books." Another student added, "Reading those stories made me familiar with new words, collocations, and how they are used in sentences." This theme corroborates findings from previous studies that suggest extensive reading positively impacts language learning.

## **Reading Enhances Self-Confidence and WTC**

Another recurring theme was that reading, in general, can significantly boost self-confidence, thereby increasing willingness to communicate. Students believed that reading, whether books or other types of written material like newspapers, increases knowledge, making individuals more confident in conversations. One student explained, "People who read more are more confident in expressing themselves and sharing their ideas. Being armed with knowledge is the reason they are confident in conversations." Furthermore, students observed that those who engaged more with the ER materials were more eager to contribute during group work, feeling more knowledgeable. Another student added, "When people read a lot, their fluency improves. When they feel fluent, they are more willing to communicate. They feel confident and good about talking to others and sharing their ideas."

## **DISCUSSION**

The quantitative data from the questionnaire showed that students exhibited a satisfactory level of willingness to communicate (WTC) both in and outside the classroom, including their readiness to engage in language skills such as reading, speaking, writing, and comprehension. The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on willingness to communicate (WTC) by providing empirical insight into how physical learning contexts (indoor vs. outdoor classrooms) affect Iranian EFL learners' readiness to engage in language use across four communicative skills.

While descriptive data initially indicated slightly higher WTC scores in indoor settings, particularly for speaking and writing, the inferential statistical analysis provided more robust insights. Results from paired-sample t-tests showed that only speaking and writing yielded statistically significant differences between the two contexts, with writing showing the largest effect size. This suggests that the more structured and supportive atmosphere of the indoor classroom may particularly benefit productive skills, perhaps due to learners' perceptions of safety, formality, and reduced ambiguity.

The lack of significant difference in listening and reading WTC implies that these receptive skills may be less sensitive to contextual changes or perhaps more internalized and less socially dependent. These results align with prior research (Beglar & Hunt, 2014; Cao, 2014; MacIntyre, et al. 2001b; MacIntyre, 2007), which emphasizes that contextual variables interact differently with different language skills and learners' perceived communicative competence.

The qualitative findings, based on transcriptions of semi-structured interviews, are presented in the following sections. These interviews consisted of five open-ended questions that explored students' views on extensive reading (ER), its effect on their WTC, and other related factors.

## **Discrepancy Between Reported and Actual WTC**

While students reported high levels of willingness to communicate (WTC) in the questionnaires, a significant gap was observed between their self-reported WTC and actual behaviour. Of the 45 students who initially expressed interest in participating in interviews, only 15 followed through. This aligns with MacIntyre et al.'s (2001b) argument that self-report questionnaires may not accurately reflect actual WTC, as "thinking about communicating in the L2 is different from actually doing it" (p. 377). Similarly, W.P. Wen and Richard Clément's (2003) WTC model suggests that the "desire to communicate does not necessarily equate to the willingness to do so" (p. 25). These results emphasise the importance of using a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of WTC behavior (MacIntyre, 2007; Yashima, 2004).

## **Interview Findings**

**Relationship Between Perceived and Actual WTC.** Three students (1, 2, and 4) reported high WTC, while student 3 indicated that their WTC depended on topic familiarity and interest. This aligns with Kang's (2005) finding that familiar topics encourage participation. Comparing their questionnaire responses and class marks revealed a consistency between perceived and actual WTC. Ten out of 15 students

showed higher engagement and better reading performance during the course, with all showing high WTC indices (e.g., student 1 = 91.92). These results suggest that higher WTC positively influences classroom performance, supporting that WTC predicts classroom participation (Hamasaïd, et al., 2021).

**Perceived Benefits of Extensive Reading.** Students highlighted multiple benefits of ER:

- Enjoyment and Autonomy. Eight students appreciated the freedom to choose books and the opportunity to express their thoughts through related tasks. This resonates with Qiu Rong Ng et al., (2019) who found ER fosters enjoyment in and outside the classroom.
- Vocabulary Growth: Ten students noted vocabulary improvements, supported by research showing ER enhances vocabulary knowledge (Waring, & Takaki, 2003; Yamamoto, 2011).
- Grammar Knowledge: Three students reported improvements in grammar, consistent with Sheu's (2003) study on ER's positive effects on grammar among junior high EFL students.

**General Role of Reading in WTC.** All the interviewees believed ER increased their confidence in sharing ideas, speaking, and participating in class. This aligns with studies like Assia Benettayeb's (2010), which links vocabulary growth through ER to improved speaking abilities. Participants agreed that reading aids language learning (e.g., vocabulary and grammar), which in turn enhances speaking. William Grabe (1991) similarly states that linguistic proficiency acquired through reading supports speaking skills.

**Reading and Self-Confidence.** Students noted that reading boosted their self-confidence by enhancing both language and general knowledge. Research corroborates this, with studies (Guindon, 2010; Zarei & Afshar, 2014) demonstrating that reading comprehension improves self-confidence, motivation, and academic performance.

Qualitative data revealed that students perceived ER as beneficial for language learning and communication. This divergence suggests that ER may primarily benefit students already exhibiting acceptable WTC levels. These findings highlight the complexity of WTC and the need for integrated methodologies to capture its nuanced dynamics.

## CONCLUSION

Extensive reading (ER) is widely recognised as an effective pedagogical approach for teaching English as a second or foreign language due to its capacity to provide learners with abundant, varied linguistic input. Through ER, learners gain exposure to a wealth of language elements such as grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, as well as sociocultural knowledge, fostering a holistic understanding of the language. Notably, its benefits extend across educational levels, from primary to tertiary education. However, in EFL contexts like Iran, ER remains underutilised, often due to limited awareness among educators and institutions about its potential benefits and practical implementation.

The present study explored the role of ER on students' willingness to communicate their thoughts through written logs. The findings suggest that ER had the potential to enhance WTC for some of the students. While students who were already motivated and actively engaged in classroom activities before the ER programme demonstrated increased WTC and participation, others did not experience substantial improvement. This may be attributed to the relatively short duration of the programme, as research suggests that longer-term ER initiatives yield more pronounced outcomes (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Day, 2004).

The study highlights critical insights for educators and policymakers. First, designing ER programmes with sufficient duration and integration into curricula is essential to maximise their potential. Second, incorporating complementary activities such as group discussions, peer interactions, and oral presentations could bridge the gap between passive language input and active language use, thereby enhancing both WTC and communication skills. Finally, fostering teacher awareness and training in ER methodologies is crucial to encourage its broader adoption in EFL contexts.

In conclusion, while the study underscores the partial effectiveness of ER in promoting WTC, it also emphasises the need for a nuanced, sustained, and interactive approach to fully realise its benefits. Further research is encouraged to explore longitudinal ER programs, their integration with technology, and their effectiveness across diverse learner demographics. These investigations could significantly contribute to evolving classroom practices and improving language learning outcomes in EFL settings.

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