



Undergraduate Students' Willingness to Communicate in English during Remote Learning Classes

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Abstract

Objectives: This study examines Jordanian undergraduate students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in English during remote learning.

Methods: The data were collected using a 61-item Likert scale questionnaire from 285 undergraduate students (118 males and 167 females) studying English at a public university. All the responses collected were analysed using descriptive analysis (e.g., mean, standard deviation) and Pearson's Correlation coefficient.

Results: The results of the descriptive analysis showed that students had an overall moderate level of online experiences ($M=2.98$, $SD=0.98$), and high levels of WTC ($M=3.61$, $SD=0.969$), self-perceived communicative competence ($M=3.62$, $SD=1.038$), *L2 communication anxiety* ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.156$) and virtual intercultural experience motivation ($M=3.5$, $SD=1.111$). On the other hand, the results of the 2-tailed correlation revealed that there was a statistically medium-positive correlation between students' online experiences and their WTC in online classes ($r=.359$, $p<.001$), a strong positive correlation between students' self-perceived communicative competence and their WTC in online classes ($r=.664$, $p<.001$), an insignificant low positive correlation between *L2 communication anxiety* and their WTC in online classes ($r=.031$, $p<.605$), a strong positive correlation between students' virtual intercultural experience motivation and their WTC in online classes ($r=.535$, $p<.001$).

Conclusions: The study shows that despite the lack of experience in e-learning, the students tend to have good self-perceived communicative competence. Pedagogical implications and suggestions for future studies are given based on the results of the study.

Keywords: The COVID-19 pandemic, *L2 communication anxiety*, remote learning, willingness to communicate (WTC).

رغبة الطلاب الجامعيين في التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية في أثناء فصول التعلم عن بعد

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ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف الدراسة إلى دراسة رغبة الطلاب الجامعيين الأردنيين في التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية في أثناء فصول التعلم عن بعد في جاتحة كورونا المنهجية: جُمعت البيانات بالاستبانة المكونة من 61 بنداً، وشارك 285 طالباً جامعياً بأقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات الحكومية (118 ذكرًا و 167 أنثى). جرى قياس مستوى الخبرات باستخدام المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية.

النتائج: أظهرت النتائج وجود مستويات متوسطة من الخبرات عبر الإنترنت (المتوسط الحسابي = 2.980، الانحراف المعياري = 0.980)، ومستويات عالية برغبتهم في التواصل (المتوسط الحسابي = 3.610، الانحراف المعياري = 0.969)، وفي كفاءة التواصلية الذاتية (المتوسط الحسابي = 3.620، الانحراف المعياري = 1.038)، وفي قلق التواصل باللغة الثانية (المتوسط الحسابي = 2.910، الانحراف المعياري = 1.156)، وفي الدافع الافتراضي للتجربة بين الثقافات (المتوسط الحسابي = 3.500، الانحراف المعياري = 1.111). وكشفت نتائج الارتباط ثنائي الطرف أن هناك ارتباطاً إيجابياً، متوسطاً إحصائياً بين تجارب الطلاب ورغبتهم في التواصل داخل الفصول عبر الإنترنت بقيمة $r = 0.359$ ، ($p < 0.001$). وبذلك هذا إلى وجود ارتباط إيجابي قوي بين الطلاب الفادرين على التواصل وبين رغبتهم بالتواصل في الفصول عبر الإنترنت ($r = 0.664$)، ($p < 0.001$). وبُنيت النتائج أيضاً وجود ارتباط إيجابي منخفض بين قلق التواصل باللغة الثانية ورغبتهم في التواصل في الفصول عبر الإنترنت بقيمة $r = 0.031$ ، ($p < 0.605$). وجدت الدراسة ارتباطاً إيجابياً قوياً بين الدافع الافتراضي للتجربة بين الثقافات واستعدادهم للتواصل في الفصول عبر الإنترنت بقيمة $r = 0.535$ ، ($p < 0.001$).

الخلاصة: يميل الطلاب إلى امتلاك كفاءة تواصل جيدة من حيث الإدراك الذاتي بالرغم من نقص الخبرة في التعلم الإلكتروني. الكلمات الدالة: جاتحة كورونا، قلق التواصل باللغة الثانية، التعلم عن بعد، رغبة التواصل.

Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak has forced schools and universities to shut down all physical in-person learning activities worldwide. As a result, many schools, tertiary institutions, and universities have shifted in-person instruction to remote tutoring with students learning from home (Said et al. 2021). However, transforming from traditional face-to-face teaching to remote or virtual online instruction is challenging as it requires instructors and students to adapt to the new pedagogical situations. Even though e-learning and the use of technologies are gaining momentum and acceptance in various universities in Jordan, most of the students' engagements were still in the form of blended learning before the Covid-19 pandemic, whereas language laboratories are used for face-to-face e-learning activities, like taking language quizzes, speaking and reading tests. Therefore, transforming to fully virtual remote learning in a time of emergency due to the contagious COVID-19 pandemic is new to most students and teachers who are not e-learning professionals (Slim 2021; Obeiah 2021).

The inspiration to conduct this study came out of experiences with remote tutoring to a group of students at Yarmouk University and virtually from interactions with instructors from other universities. Among the arising issues discussed is that many of those undergraduate learners of English showed unwillingness to communicate in English in the online classes, in addition to the fact that they can use various means, such as a microphone, chatroom or even video to interact with tutors or other peers. Moreover, in education and other related fields, students' participation in the classroom is an important concept widely discussed (Bernales 2016). And it is very important to investigate how interaction is constructed in online classes (Lee and Hsieh, 2019; Muzammil et al. 2020). Three kinds of interaction were identified in the digital context: student-teacher interaction, student-student interaction, and student-material interaction (Bervell et al. 2020).

Research on WTC in class, whether in-person or digital contexts, is of great importance in the field of second language (L2) learning (Basöz and Erten 2019). When individual learner differences are taken into account in instructional design, educators can better support L2 learning. Further, when learners produce the L2, they are able to improve confidence, fluency, and proficiency. Therefore, fostering an environment that supports learners and WTC is of utmost importance. This study will also help to understand the impacts of remote learning and affective factors on students' WTC in English in remote learning classes during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Literature Review

L2 WTC in English

The term 'WTC' was initially constructed in the field of first language (L1) (McCroskey and Young 1985), which was initially studied as a trait-like factor, referring to an individual's willingness to engage in L1 conversation (McCroskey and Richmond 1990). The framework of L1 WTC was later expanded as situational factors in L2 contexts by the key proponents (e.g., MacIntyre 1994; MacIntyre et al. 1998). In L2 contexts, WTC refers to "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons" (MacIntyre et al. 1998, 547). This WTC may differ depending on the type of audience, topic, and discussion situation (Lee, 2020). MacIntyre et al., (1998, 559) developed L2 WTC model, which they defined as "a situation-based variable representing an intention to communicate at a specific time to a specific person". WTC was found to be influenced by Learners' affiliation motives and desire to form a relationship with another individual (MacIntyre et al. 1998). In L2 contexts, WTC in class has a significant influence on how learners can achieve the main goal of speaking the target language (Bensalem, 2021), as previous studies confirmed the strong link between WTC and L2 learners' language proficiency (e.g. MacIntyre et al. 2003; Peng 2020).

Various recent studies in the field of applied linguistics centred on the notion of in-class WTC with an emphasis on various affective factors, such as students' motivation (Lee and Lee 2019; Peng 2020; Lee 2020; Bensalem 2021), perceived communicative competence, L2 anxiety (Akiko 2021; Alimorad and Farahmand 2021, Zabihi et al. 2021), personality and previous experiences (Freiermuth and Ito 2020; Alenezi 2020), classroom enjoyment (Lee 2020; Khajavy et al. 2021; Bensalem 2021), sociocultural context (Peng 2020; Al-Amrani 2021), and in a multilingual context (Yildiz and Piniel 2020; Henry et al. 2021).

Pasban and Narafshan's (2020) study shows a positive correlation between Iranian students' academic goal motive

(instrumental motivation) and their WTC in English classrooms. In a qualitative investigation, Alqurashi and Assulaimani (2021) identify four main factors affecting Saudi learners of English, which include the classroom duration, the effect of the class size, teachers' roles and classroom management, opportunities for oral communication in the classroom, and the topic relevancy. Fatima, Ismail, Pathan, and Memon's (2020) study confirm that both personality factors and classroom contexts significantly influenced L2 WTC. MacIntyre and Gregersen's (2022) study found a statically low positive correlation between WTC and speaking communication anxiety.

In this study, the researchers selected variables antecedent to individual WTC in online classes, which include students' online experiences, students' self-perceived communicative competence, L2 communication anxiety scale and virtual intercultural experience motivation.

Online teaching of English as L2/EFL during the COVID-19 pandemic

Various timely studies have been conducted to explore the current situation of teaching the English language and of course, other courses at the time of the sudden shift from in-person class instruction to online teaching, due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although several researchers, including Alkhawaldeh (2020), have praised the use of technology, in terms of promoting students' autonomy (e.g., Baru, Tenggara and Mataram 2020), students' engagement and satisfaction (e.g., Muzammil, Sutawijaya and Harsasi 2020), and increasing students' WTC (e.g., Mohammadi, et al. 2019; Said, et al., 2021). However, the findings of some studies (e.g., Rachmah 2020) do not hold that online teaching is as effective as the traditional method of teaching and learning, and thus, prefer traditional in-person mode. To this end, Slim (2021) found that Jordanian EFL teachers indicate their willingness to continue taking teacher professional development programs; however, they prefer taking in-person classes rather than online training. For the purpose of the current study, the researchers reviewed some of the recent related studies about students' perceptions of learning English through online methods.

Obeiah (2021) explores the usefulness of adopting "Darsak Platform" for online teaching in Jordan at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, from Jordanian EFL teachers' perspectives. A questionnaire with a 44-item Likert scale was sent to 213 Jordanian EFL teachers. The results of the study revealed that despite the successful implementation of "Darsak Platform" in Jordan, teachers lamented challenges including the lack of an Internet connection, low financial conditions among parents, and a lack of fundamental technical skills among teachers and students, and students' Lackadaisical attitudes. They also lamented about the lack of a proper learning atmosphere as a result of the lockdown that forced both teachers and learners to work from home.

Using a single group, a quasi-experimental study, Albashtawi and Al Bataineh (2020) explored the effectiveness of using 'Google Classroom' on learning reading and writing by 26 EFL Syrian diploma students enrolled at Luminus Technical University College, in Jordan. The findings revealed that 'Google Classroom' helped Syrian students to enhance their reading and writing skills and that most of the students were enthusiastic about 'Google Classroom' in terms of simplicity of use, usefulness, and accessibility.

In a similar study conducted using a qualitative approach, Mulyani, et al. (2021) explored the perceptions of 106 Indonesian EFL students about learning the English language online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the students lamented about challenges in online learning as a result of Internet connection, and high rate of data subscription fees. Besides, the findings showed that students were fond of e-learning implementation as a novel learning experience, which allows for flexibility of time and place.

Remote learning setting and Students' WTC

Few previous studies investigated the L2 WTC in English in a digital space (e.g., Lee and Lee 2019; Lee and Hsieh 2019; Mulyono and Saskia 2020; Lee 2020; Lee and Drajiati, 2020; Ardiansyah et al. 2020; Said, et al. 2021). Said et al., (2021) conducted a survey using a 16-item Likert scale questionnaire to investigate 71 EFL Indonesian undergraduate students' WTC in online classes at the time of emergency learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors found that

the students are less anxious to speak in English in online classes, and they are not feeling shy or ashamed of giving wrong answers; however, most of them prefer to listen rather than to speak in online classes. Their findings also revealed that the students had a high preference of online learning as the best way to be active in practising speaking English.

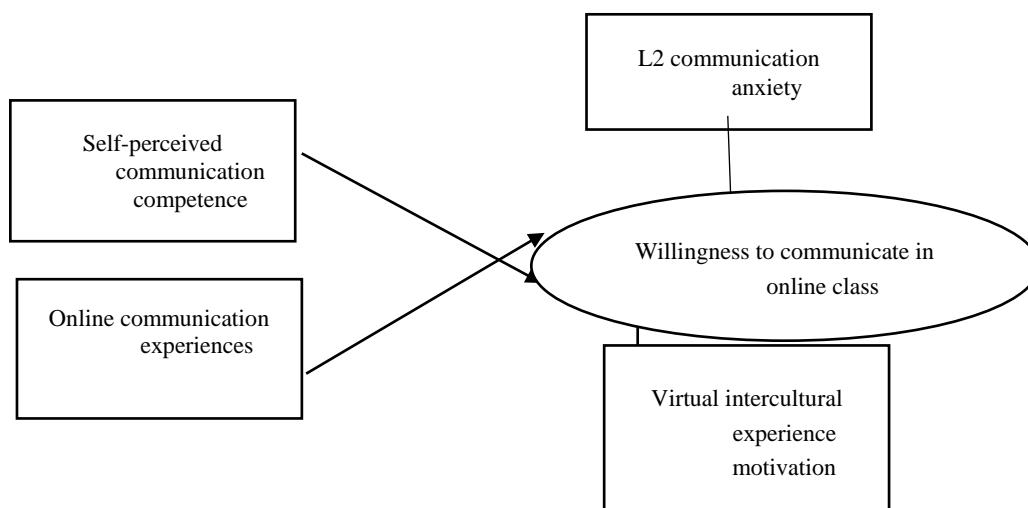
Lee and Hsieh (2019) explored the factors affecting Taiwanese EFL students' WTC in three contexts (in-class, out-of-class, and online contexts). Their findings showed that there were statistically positive strong correlations between L2 WTC and self-confidence and motivation, in all of the three contexts. However, there was a strong negative correlation between L2 anxiety and L2 WTC in an in-class context and moderately negative correlations in the other two contexts (out-of-class and online contexts).

According to Mabur et al. (2021), L2 students' WTC in online conversation should be considered while creating effective online learning experiences. These researchers conclude that despite the strong positive feedback regarding EFL students' WTC and enthusiasm for participating in online classes, however, many students are unsure whether or not they are ready to participate in such activities.

In particular, Lee and Draji (2020) proposed a new L2 WTC scale in 'digital and non-digital EFL contexts'. This scale consists of 3-dimensional factors ('L2 WTC inside the classroom', 'L2 WTC outside the classroom', and 'L2 WTC in the context of informal digital learning of English [IDLE]'). Similarly, Lee, and Lu (2021) investigate L2 motivational self-system and WTC in face-to-face and 'extramural digital' contexts. Their findings revealed that the ideal L2 self significantly predicted L2 WTC in both face-to-face and 'extramural digital' contexts. Ardiansyah et al. (2020) observed that the dynamic nature of L2 learners' WTC in English during an online discussion is constructed through psychological, conversational, and linguistic aspects. Their findings showed that online communication can influence one's WTC in English either negatively or positively depending on one's self-confidence.

L2 WTC in online class framework model

In the study, the researchers conceptualised students' WTC in online classes based on the WTC framework model adapted from studies of MacIntyre (1994), MacIntyre et al. (1998), Cao (2011), Lee (2019), and Lee and Draji (2020).



WTC model (adapted from MacIntyre (1994); MacIntyre et al., (1998), Cao (2011), and Lee (2019), Lee, and Draji (2020).

Research questions

This study purports to address the following five questions:

1. What are the levels of online experiences and WTC of Jordanian undergraduate students learning English in remote classes?
2. What is the impact of self-perceived communicative competence on Jordanian undergraduate students learning English in remote classes?
3. What are the levels of L2 communication anxiety among Jordanian undergraduate students learning English in remote classes?
4. What is the impact of virtual intercultural experience motivation on Jordanian undergraduate students learning English in remote classes?
5. Are there any significant relationships between students' WTC in remote classes and the study's four independent variables: self-perceived communicative competence, online communication experiences, L2 communication anxiety, and virtual intercultural experience motivation?

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive quantitative approach, with data collected using a survey questionnaire.

Participants

The participants of the study were 285 undergraduate students (118 males and 167 females), with ages ranging from 19 to 25. They were learners of English as a foreign language randomly selected from the Department of English Language and Literature of Yarmouk University, Jordan.

Data collection method

The data were collected using a 61-item Likert scale questionnaire about the students' WTC in English in remote learning classes, adapted from previous studies (e.g., MacIntyre 1994; Cao 2011; Lee 2019), which was designed based on the five variables. Twelve items about students' online experiences (SOE), 14 items about students' willingness to communicate in online classes (SWTCOC), 10 items about students' self-perceived communicative competence (SPCC), 18 items about L2 communication anxiety scale (L2CAS), and 7 items about virtual intercultural experience motivation (VIEM). The questionnaire was administered online using 'Google Forms', which was sent to the respondents during the second semester of the 2020/2021 academic year, in Jordan.

The items of the questionnaire were checked by other experts in linguistics at Yarmouk University for face and content validity. For the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 30 EFL students, and an average of 0.8 Cronbach's Alpha (α^*) reliability was obtained for each construct, which indicated a very acceptable value.

Data analysis procedure

The data collected from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Descriptive analysis was employed to find the Means (M), Percentage and Standard Deviation (SD) of each item of the five variables of the study. Meanwhile, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to find out the relationship between the variables of the study (Creswell 2014). The correlation was determined by the value of Cohen's (1988) effect size of coefficient (r), which can be statistically low, ranging (.1-.3), moderate (.3-.5), high (.5-1.0), positive (+ 1-5) or negative (- 1-5). The quantitative data analysis was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.

Results

Results of research question 1

What are the levels of online experiences and WTC of Jordanian undergraduate students learning English in remote classes?

To provide an answer to the first RQ, descriptive statistical data shows an overall moderate level of online experiences

(M 2.98, SD 0.98) and an overall high level of WTC (M= 3.61, SD= 0.969). Accordingly, with respect to students' online experiences, the participants had reported an above-average endorsement in ten out of the twelve items about students' online experiences. The results show that the students have the least virtual experiences in communication in the English language to friends on social media such as Facebook and Twitter (M=2.81, SD= 0.959), however, they are following English pages on social media with non-native (M=3.40, SD=1.088), and sometimes when interaction with Arab friends (M=2.88, SD=1.053), particularly writing a comment or post in English on friends' social media walls (M=2.95, SD=1.133). Some of the respondents' report that they sometimes share English content online (M= 3.21, SD=0.991), Chat with a friend (s) in English via popular messaging applications, such as WhatsApp or Imo (M=2.77, SD=0.916) or join a group (M=3.06, SD=0.919). In relation to viewing pages in English on social media, the students are not constant viewers of pages in English on social media (M=3.40, SD=1.088), they rarely read English national newspapers (M=2.23, SD=0.960), or international newspapers (M=2.30, SD=1.091). Sending emails is one of the students' popular means of interaction in English (M=3.50, SD=1.020). However, only a few students used to attend or join the online course(s) in English via ZOOM or other online platforms apart from their courses (M=3.25, SD=1.400).

Regarding the students' WTC in online classes, the results of the 14-item are elaborated. Most importantly, there is an above-average of endorsement by the respondents in all of the items under WTC in online classes. Item 26 has the highest mean (M= 3.92, SD=0.865), which shows that the students speak in English when they are interested in the topic. This suggests that topics must be interesting for students. Item 22 is the second item with the highest mean (M=3.89, SD=0.898). This will boost students' willingness to communicate, as indicated in Item 25 (M=3.81, SD=1.048), which reports that students speak in English when they are familiar with the topic. Item 16 (M=3.82, SD= 0.840) reports that the students actively ask the teacher questions during the online class session. This means that most of the students are not shy to ask questions during synchronous e-learning. This was confirmed by Item 21 (M=3.85, SD=0.836), which indicates that the majority of the respondents communicate with teachers in English to ask for explanations regarding their homework or classroom. However, respondents reported that they send questions and comments only for the instructor to see during online classes, Item 18 (M=3.20, SD=1.063). Similarly, Item 23 (M=3.45, SD= 0.976) shows that during asynchronous lessons the majority of the respondents reported that they used to ask the teacher after the online class session via email for more clarification or explanation about the tasks. The students' willingness to communicate in English during online classes is also reported to be moderately WTC in English during online classes, Item 13 (M=3.74, SD=0.999) shows that they are willingly asking the instructor questions, Item 14 (M=3.88, SD=0.924). On the other hand, Item 19 (M=3.33, SD=1.130) shows that the respondents are more WTC online English class when allowed to speak in Arabic, than in immersion online class mode, Item 20 (M=3.40, SD=0.951).

Another important finding is that about half of the respondents were not willing to communicate with the instructor in English during online classes via webcam, this was reported in Item 17 with the least mean (M=2.68, SD=1.236). They preferred to use audio and microphone, Item 15 (M=3.79, SD=0.968) or a comment section, item 24 (M=3.82, SD=0.840). This suggests that the students had more self-efficiency when they thought nobody was seeing them when speaking in English.

Results of research question 2

What is the impact of self-perceived communicative competence on Jordanian undergraduate students learning English in remote classes?

To provide an answer to the second RQ, descriptive statistical data shows an overall high level of self-perceived communicative competence (M=3.62, SD=1.038). Moreover, the results reveal that most of the students believe that they can understand most of what the teacher is saying during online English class sessions, Item 27 (M=3.73, SD=1.088). The students believed that they have confidence in asking and answering questions in English during online class, Item 29 (M=3.59, SD=1.080), and they are confident about their vocabulary to interact in an online class, Item 28 (M=3.75, SD=0.896). Item 30 (M=3.77, SD=0.923) shows that they can confidently talk about themselves in English. In addition,

Item 31 ($M=3.72$, $SD=0.941$) shows that respondents believed that they could say what they did last weekend in English during online classes. The students also show that they have confidence in giving an oral presentation in English Item 32 ($M=3.51$, $SD=1.030$), ordering a meal in English, Item 33 ($M=3.98$, $SD=0.940$), telling a story or giving directions in English when they were asked to do so during the online class session, Item 34 ($M=3.53$, $SD=1.060$). Item 35 ($M=3.61$, $SD=1.190$) shows that the respondents believed they do not feel shy to talk online; however, Item 36 ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.235$) shows that they do not want to talk in front of siblings or parents while attending online classes.

Results of research question 3

What is the level of L2 communication anxiety among Jordanian undergraduate students learning English in remote classes?

To provide an answer to the third second RQ, descriptive statistical data shows an overall high level of *L2 communication anxiety* ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.156$). Interestingly, almost most of the responses were neutral, which indicates that the students have moderate anxiety about their willingness to speak in English in online classes. Item 37 ($M=2.67$, $SD=1.013$) shows that students were sometimes worried about having been called by their instructor to speak during synchronous online class interaction. They sometimes do not speak in English in online classes unless called on by the instructor as indicated in Item 40 ($M=2.82$, $SD=1.128$). Item 38 ($M=2.74$, $SD=1.072$) shows that sometimes the students tend to delay their questions and wait to see if someone among their peers has a similar question to ask during online classes. This suggests that the students have some fears of asking questions. They were sometimes afraid of responding to a question asked by the instructor in an online class as shown in Item 43 ($M=2.61$, $SD=1.061$). Particularly, Item 39 ($M=2.81$, $SD=1.034$) indicates that about half of the respondents were sometimes afraid of speaking using webcams in online classes, because they feel that they do not have as much to say as most other students. They were also sometimes afraid of making errors in speaking English as shown in Item 41 ($M=2.95$, $SD=1.096$). Item 46 ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.124$) shows that sometimes the students feel disrupted when called upon by the instructor to speak in English during online discussions. They would sometimes be afraid that the instructor or the class may not understand what they are trying to say during the online discussion as shown in Item 48 ($M=2.87$, $SD=1.073$). They often hesitate to speak during online class discussions because they feel that many other students seem to be more fluent than them, as shown in Item 42 ($M=2.84$, $SD=1.097$). Item 44 ($M=3.17$, $SD=0.946$) shows that sometimes the respondents feel that they can convince others about what they are saying. Mostly, the respondents were neutral about avoiding speaking in online class discussions if possible as shown in Item 45 ($M=2.75$, $SD=1.200$). This is among the least endorsed items. About half of the respondents sometimes felt that they participate in online class discussions more often than most other students as shown in Item 47 ($M=2.92$, $SD=1.071$). Similarly, Item 49 ($M=3.27$, $SD=1.000$) shows that about half of the respondents reported that sometimes they would rather listen than participate in an online class discussion. Item 50 ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.019$) shows that sometimes students feel anxious to speak in English during online class discussion when they assume most of their classmates would not listen.

Item 51 ($M=2.99$, $SD=0.980$) shows that students hesitate about speaking in online classes unless the instructor specifically asks for questions from the class. Item 52 ($M=2.89$, $SD=1.012$), 'I am often afraid I will say something that is wrong during a discussion in an online class session.' Item 53 contains the highest mean under this construct ($M=3.21$, $SD=0.914$), which indicates that the students are not shy to speak during an online class. Item 54 ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.092$) they usually feel too tense or nervous to participate in online classes.

Results of research question 4

What is the impact of virtual intercultural experience motivation on Jordanian undergraduate students learning English in remote classes?

To provide an answer to the fourth RQ, descriptive statistical data shows an overall high level of virtual intercultural experience motivation ($M=3.5$, $SD=1.111$). Specifically, the result of item 55 ($M=3.96$, $SD=1.205$) indicates that the students have an instrumental purpose of learning English as an important subject in their country. In addition, Item 61

($M=3.80$, $SD=1.099$) indicates that students are willingly interested to speak English outside of school. Item 56 ($M=3.86$, $SD=0.987$) shows that students are struggling in their studying of English. Item 57 ($M=3.46$, $SD=1.118$) shows that they enjoy learning English in online spaces. Item 59 ($M=3.16$, $SD=1.038$) shows that the respondents feel motivated to partake in discussions in online classes. However, they feel that the process of learning in remote space is less interesting than in conventional face-to-face learning as shown in Item 58 ($M=2.96$, $SD=1.278$). With regard to satisfaction, most of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of knowledge acquired in online classes, as shown in Item 60 ($M=3.29$, $SD=1.053$).

Results of research question 5

Are there any significant relationships between students' WTC in remote classes and the study's four independent variables: self-perceived communicative competence, online communication experiences, L2 communication anxiety, and virtual intercultural experience motivation?

To answer RQ5, the researchers present the results of 2-tailed Pearson's correlation coefficient between students' WTC in online classes and the other four independent variables of the study, which are: students' online experiences (SOE), students' self-perceived communicative competence (SPCC), L2 communication anxiety scale (L2CAS) and virtual intercultural experience motivation (VIEM).

Table 1: The Relationship between students' online experiences (SOE) and students' willingness to communicate in online classes (SWTCOC).

	SOE	SWTCOC
SOE	1	.359**
		.001
SWTCOC		1

**, $P < 0.01$ level (2-tailed).

Table 1 illustrates the result of a 2-tailed Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis, which reveals that there is a medium positive correlation between students' online experiences and their WTC in online classes, and it is statistically significant ($r=.359$, $p < .001$). This result also shows that Jordanian undergraduate students have good virtual communication experiences prior to the emergence of COVID-19, however, an increase in such experiences will lead to more students' WTC in online classes.

Table 2: The Relationship between students' Perceived Communicative Competence (SPCC) and students' willingness to communicate in online classes (SWTCOC).

	SPCC	SWTCOC
SPCC	1	.664**
		.001
SWTCOC		1

**, $P < 0.01$ level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the result of 2-tailed Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis, which reveals that there is a strong positive correlation between students' self-perceived communicative competence and their WTC in online classes and is statistically significant ($r=.664$, $p < .001$). This result also indicates that an increase in self-perceived communicative competence will lead to more students' WTC in online classes.

Table 3: The Relationship between L2 communication anxiety scale (L2CAS) and students' willingness to communicate in online classes.

	SSCC	SWTCOC
SSCC	1	.031*
		.605
SWTCOC		1

*, $P < 0.01$ level (2-tailed)

Table 3 presents the result of a 2-tailed Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis, which indicates that there was a statistically, insignificant low positive correlation between the L2 communication anxiety scale and students' WTC in online classes ($r = .031$, $p < .605$). This result also shows that a decrease in L2 communication anxiety will lead to Jordanian students' WTC in online classes.

Table 4: The Relationship between virtual intercultural experience motivation (VIEM) and students' willingness to communicate in online classes

	VIEM	SWTCOC
VIEM	1	.535**
		.001
SWTCOC		1

**, $P < 0.01$ level (2-tailed).

Table 4 presents the result of a 2-tailed Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis, which shows that there was a statically, strong positive correlation between virtual intercultural experience motivation and students' WTC in online classes ($r = .535$, $p < .001$). This result also reveals that an increase in motivation will lead to Jordanian students' WTC in online classes.

Discussion

The present study examines Jordanian undergraduate students' WTC in English in the online setting of the classroom during the pandemic, which seems to be affected by various internal and external factors, such as learners' virtual experiences, L2 anxiety, and perceived communication competence as areas of concern in the present study. It is a common belief among many scholars (e.g., MacIntyre et al. 1998; Basöz and Erten, 2019; Mulyono and Saskia, 2020; Bensalem 2021) that learning setting is an essential factor that in this case, L2 WTC was viewed as a situational factor that influences "individual readiness to engage in communication" (MacIntyre et al. 1998, 547). Willingness to communicate (WTC) is important in L2 learning, and it has an impact on how learners attain their goals of speaking the target language (Bensalem 2021).

One important finding generated in our study is that the participants reported overall means ranging from moderate in the case of online experiences and high in regards to L2 WTC. This finding is comparable with Lee and Hsieh's (2019) study which found EFL learners have high L2 WTC in digital contexts ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.80$). The present study's finding clearly shows that the WTC for Jordanian undergraduate students has been greatly influenced by their prior experiences in speaking in online contexts. The present study's findings extend the view that learners' knowledge of online communication plays important roles in their WTC in foreign languages (Lee and Lee 2019; Ardiansyah et al. 2020; Said, et al. 2021). Therefore, EFL students' WTC in online setting need to be given consideration while creating effective online learning experiences as suggested by (Mabrur et al., 2021).

The finding of this study also indicates that students have reported an overall high level of self-perceived communication competence. The present study also shows that the students reported having good communicative competence in most instances, such as asking question during class interaction. It reveals that students enjoyed online classes. This was

supported by the results of the correlation. Our finding is slightly different from Lee and Hsieh's (2019) study, which reported a moderate level of L2 self-confidence to communicate in English ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.60$). This finding could be interpreted as one of the reasons they have good WTC. This finding is also supported by Baker and MacIntyre's (2002, p. 316) argument that "it is not individual's actual skills that count, rather, it is how they perceived their communication competence that will determine their WTC". These were consistent with the findings of Mohammadi et al. (2019), who found that EFL learners in Flipped Classroom Model have more WTC than their counterparts in traditional face-to-face classes.

Another key finding of the study is regarding how L2 anxiety is affecting students' WTC. Participants in the present study experienced moderate level of L2 anxiety, which is similar to the value reported by Bensalem (2021) ($M = 3.48$) on Saudi context, and slightly above the value reported by Lee and Hsieh's (2019) study on Taiwanese context ($M = 3.20$). According to this study's finding, online setting may lessen students L2 anxiety for EFL students. The study also shows that students' virtual intercultural experience motivation has a great influence on students' WTC in English. Motivation has generally been attested to paly substantial influence on students' communicative behavior and eventually improve their L2 communication abilities as evidence reported in previous studies (e.g., Lee and Lee 2019; Peng 2020; Lee 2020; Bensalem 2021).

Findings of correlational analyses present the relationships among the variables under investigation. Based on the results of the present study, the students perceived that the two affective factors, anxiety and virtual intercultural experience motivation, have a moderate effect on students' WTC in online classes. The findings were supported by Lee and Hsieh's (2019) study, which found statistically positive strong correlations between L2 WTC, self-confidence and motivation, in online contexts. This also correspondent with Pasban and Narafshan's (2020) study, which found a positive correlation between EFL students' instrumental motivation and their English classrooms. However, all the responses for the L2 communication anxiety scale were neutral, which indicates that the students have moderate anxiety of the willingness to speak in English in online classes. This was also confirmed by Pearson's correlation coefficient result, which indicates a low positive relationship. This was supported by MacIntyre and Gregersen (2022). However, most of the previous studies (e.g., Lee and Hsieh 2019; Mulyono and Saskia 2020) had revealed a negative correlation between L2 anxiety and WTC. This shows the dynamic features between the WTC and communication anxiety. However, they think that they do not feel shy to talk online. However, they still fear answering the questions. This is in line with the results of the study by Said et al. (2021). Thus, the study indicated that anxiety is still a major setback for students with L2 WTC in English in online classes, this correspondent with the findings of the studies (Lee and Hsieh 2019; Mulyono and Saskia 2020).

Conclusion and Implications

The results of the current study may offer crucial pedagogical insights for teaching and learning English as a Foreign language in Jordanian and other similar foreign language contexts. It is widely understood that when the objective of instruction is communicative competence, the learners' attention should be directed to their WTC, which is reported to be dynamic in relation to various factors, such as anxiety, enjoyment, fear, boredom, hope or grit. Given to the fact that WTC of this study was carried out during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the researchers only focused on learners' WTC in remote learning classroom. This study acknowledged that prior online experiences have significant impact on how students behave in communication. Hence, one of the key contributions of this study is examining the L2 WTC in online space, which is quite a new experience for many students.

Given the significance of speaking and essential roles WTC in L2 learning, the findings of the provided empirical evidence on Students' WTC in online classes that could be useful for Language teachers, and educational practitioners. It is obvious that many factors are important in determining learners' WTC. This makes it crucial for teachers to focus on factors affecting learners' WTC and to find ways to help in fostering enjoyable connections amongst students. The study implied that to increase the L2 students' WTC in English during remote learning classes, peer interaction should be encouraged and the students' L2 communication anxiety should be lessened. The researchers believed that the study could

be replicated to include larger samples, which could be used to apply the findings for pedagogical intervention. Like Lee and Drajeti (2020), Lee and Lu (2021). Another important implication is for EFL teaching and learning practice, teachers should be aware of the essential role of language competence in improving learners' WTC and academic achievement. EFL teachers and learners should also be mindful of the existence of language anxiety which can impair the functionality or performance of learners' language competence. Furthermore, teachers should be aware of the need to foster their students' WTC in English in online classes. They should be more selective and careful when choosing their online platforms, contents and activities in order to enhance, facilitate and improve students' speaking skills using the best practice of online teaching.

To conclude, the current research clearly indicated that the students' WTC in remote classes has been greatly influenced by several factors such as motivation, anxiety, and perceived communicative competence. Inspired by Positive Psychology Movement (Mercer, MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Talbot, 2018) positive or negative played important roles in EFL learners' WTC. Based on this view, the researchers suggested future research to include both positive emotions (e.g. Enjoyment and grit) and negative emotions (e.g. anxiety, and boredom) in order to depict a clear nature of language learners' WTC in this particular context and beyond. The researchers suggested that their framework can be adopted to investigate L2 WTC in online and extramural contexts.

Despite the significance of the findings, this study has some limitations. To begin with, the current study only involved students learning in remote classes during the covid-19 pandemic. The researchers suggested that future studies should consider data collection from both face-to-face and online settings for comparative analysis and a better understanding of the nature of EFL students' WTC. Second, only a survey questionnaire was employed to collect data in this study, which will eventually limit the knowledge of the subject matter. Therefore, Future research is recommended to include varieties of data collection methods such as mixed methods, and longitudinal experiments.

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