



## A comparison of the Turkish and Romanian students' willingness to communicate and its affecting factors in English

Mehmet Asmalı<sup>a \*</sup>, Ufuk Bilki<sup>b</sup>, Carina Adriana Duban<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Balıkesir University, School of Foreign Languages, Balıkesir 10660, Turkey

<sup>b</sup> Celal Bayar University, School of Foreign Languages, Manisa 45020, Turkey

<sup>c</sup> "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia, 510009, Romania

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### Abstract

The present study attempts to offer a small-scale investigation of the willingness to communicate and its key antecedents, namely the self-perceived communication competence and the communication apprehension in Turkish and Romanian contexts. A total of 130 participants took part in this quantitative approach based study. The data suggested significant differences between the Romanian and Turkish participants, in that the former are more willing to communicate and more competent in using the English language compared to the Turkish participants. However, both groups had almost equal levels of communication apprehension. In terms of the relationships among the constructs, while strong positive correlations were found between the willingness to communicate and the self-perceived communication competence, negative relationships were found between the communication apprehension and willingness to communicate for both groups.

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## 1. Introduction

Although the leading trend in second language teaching has changed drastically in time, currently the dominant approach in all around the world is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Yu, 2009). The essence of the communicative language teaching is the language learners' engagement in communication that allows them to develop their communication competence (Savignon, 2005). Although the main aim of the communicative language teaching is to develop the learners' communicative competence, a high level of communicative competence is not sufficient for an efficient communication.

From this point forth, Dörnyei (2005, p. 207) states that: "it is not uncommon to find people who tend to avoid entering L2 communication situations even if they possess a high level of communicative competence". Taking this fact into account, one can deduce that there are some other psychological, linguistic, and contextual constructs affecting the initiation and success of communication. Following this view, a construct called willingness to communicate (WTC; e.g. McCroskey & Baer, 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1987, 1991) appeared in the first language

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +90-507-946-4360  
E-mail address: [asmalimehmet@gmail.com](mailto:asmalimehmet@gmail.com)

studies and - soon after - it was adapted in the second language studies as well (MacIntyre et al., 2001).

Globally known as “readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547), the willingness to communicate is a part of becoming fluent in a second or foreign language (Jung, 2011). However, in contrast to the view according to which students need to practice speaking in order to learn (MacIntyre et al., 2003), learners generally prefer to be silent when they are given the chance to speak.

As far as English language learning is concerned, lots of factors may be effective for the learners’ language learning success and communicative competence: the social conditions, classroom atmosphere, individual differences, etc. The willingness to communicate takes the role of both the individual difference variable affecting the second language acquisition, and the goal of the second language instruction (MacIntyre et al., 1998). However, the issue of the possible effect of the language learners’ individual differences appears to be ignored (Jung, 2011). Thus, teachers should understand the willingness to communicate and its affecting factors in order to tailor their classes to the learners’ needs.

The researchers have tried to understand why some learners are more willing to communicate while others are not in many studies. Considering this objective, they have tried to find the possible factors affecting the learners’ willingness to communicate. Some of these factors are general, such as the learners’ interest in the foreign culture or people (Yashima, 2002), and some of them are more situation-specific, such as the learners’ self-perceived communication competence, or the number and types of people engaged in communication (Baker and MacIntyre, 2000).

According to many researchers (Gardner, 1985, 1988; MacIntyre, 1994; Samimy et al., 1994; Onwuebuozie et al., 2000), the affective factors which are also individual differences need to be investigated so that the learners’ diverse needs and interests can be better understood and addressed. However, it is not possible to relate the findings of one individual variable to the willingness to communicate or the language learning success due to their complex natures. Their effects are generally interrelated. Moreover, compared to the research conducted on other individual variables such as motivation, aptitude, learning strategy, working memory, and personality, the understanding and the scholarship that have been built up on the WTC concept are still comparatively limited (Yu, 2009). The present study aims to contribute to the findings in this field by examining an individual difference variable recently developed: the willingness to communicate.

It has already been mentioned that the WTC is a complex construct, influenced by a number of other individual difference factors such as ‘the perceived behavioral control’, ‘the perceived communication competence’, and ‘the communication anxiety’ (Ellis, 2008). Ellis (2008, p. 697) also states that “it is very likely, however, that the precise pattern of factors influencing WTC is not fixed but situation-dependent”. Thus, it is possible to observe different variables affect the willingness to communicate in different settings. Therefore, more studies are required to make the WTC and its affecting factors clear. This fact generates another reason to conduct the present study.

### *1.1. Aims and Focus*

The main aim of this study is to find out the differences and similarities between the Turkish and Romanian students by comparing them in terms of their levels of willingness to communicate (WTC), communication apprehension (CA) and self-perceived communication competence (SPCC) in English. Another major aim of the study is to find out the possible relationships between the willingness to

communicate, the communication apprehension and the self-perceived communication competence in English for both groups, separately.

The reason for choosing the communication apprehension and the self-perceived communication competence as possible predictor variables of the willingness to communicate is that according to the research conducted on the relevant antecedents of the WTC in L2, “communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence have consistently demonstrated a substantial influence on the WTC” (Yu, 2009, p. 8).

“Despite the substantial research studies conducted to investigate the factors that might moderate on the L2 WTC, there still exists a huge empirical research gap in English language teaching” (Öz et al., 2015, p. 271). The present study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the two important antecedents of L2 WTC in Turkish and Romanian educational contexts.

Additionally, a unique perspective is adopted in this research by comparing the students’ perceived L2 WTC, communication apprehension and communication competence. These students do not just come from different cultural and educational backgrounds but also use different first languages. By comparing the less commonly spoken first language speakers’ perspectives in terms of their willingness to communicate in the global language English, this study provides a distinctive point of view for the researches on L2 WTC.

## 1.2. Research Questions

The present study attempts to provide answers to the following research questions:

- 1) What are the Turkish students' perceptions of their “willingness to communicate”, “communication apprehension”, and “self-perceived communication competence” in English?
- 2) What are the Romanian students’ perceptions of their “willingness to communicate”, “communication apprehension”, and “self-perceived communication competence” in English?
- 3) Is there a difference between the Turkish or Romanian students’ perceptions of their “willingness to communicate”, “communication apprehension”, and “self-perceived communication competence” in English?
- 4) What are the relationships among the “communication apprehension”, “self-perceived communication competence”, and “willingness to communicate” for both Turkish and Romanian students in English?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The Willingness to Communicate

Various research works contributed to the emergence of the term “willingness to communicate” on the language learning scene, such as the work of Phillips (1965, 1968) on reticence, McCroskey (1970) on communication apprehension, Burgoon (1976) on unwillingness to communicate, Mortensen, Arntson and Lustig (1977) on predispositions toward verbal behavior, and McCroskey and Richmond (1982) on shyness (cited in McCroskey and Richmond, 1990). It was named as willingness to communicate by McCroskey and Baer (1985) and defined as the probability that an individual would choose to communicate, specifically to talk, when free to do so. Afterward, this important construct was defined in similar ways by different researchers. For instance, an important figure on the development of this construct, MacIntyre et al. (2002, p. 538) defined it as: “an underlying continuum representing the predisposition toward or away from communicating, given the choice”.

The appearance of the WTC started within first language communication which was thought to represent a personality trait (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). However, the case was not the same with the second language learning due to its more uncertain and complex nature. In second language context, the WTC was conceptualized to display dual characteristics at both trait and state levels (MacIntyre et al., 1998). While the trait L2 WTC reflected a stable predisposition toward communication, state L2 WTC was situated in specific contexts (Peng and Woodrow, 2010). Following this view, second language WTC was defined as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). It should also be mentioned in terms of the difference between the first and second language WTC that the L2 WTC was not regarded as a simple manifestation of the L1 WTC, which was more a personality trait, since a much greater range of communicative competence was evident in an L2 than in an L1, and the L2 communication carried “a number of intergroup issues, social and political implications” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 546) that were usually not as salient in the L1 use.

An interesting fact was claimed by MacIntyre et al., (2003), i.e. that the WTC could be conceptualized as a goal of the second language instruction, a variable that facilitated the language learning itself, and an internal psychological event with socially meaningful consequences. Having more than a simple role in the language learning, the willingness to communicate can be claimed as the main cause of the second language use, if we take into consideration the fact that communication in the second language depends greatly on a psychological readiness to use the language (Yu et al., 2011).

The literature review of the L2 willingness to communicate indicated that this construct may be related to several different factors. Many studies looking at the L2 WTC from different perspectives followed a quantitative approach. In their studies, McCroskey and McCroskey (1986a, 1986b, 1986c) found out that communication apprehension was significantly related to a person’s willingness to communicate and the communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence were powerful predictors of the willingness to communicate. The results showed that a person’s willingness to communicate was negatively correlated to the communication apprehension. The self-perceived communication comprehension was positively correlated with the willingness to communicate. At the same time, a negative and highest correlation was found between the two predictor variables of the willingness to communicate.

In another study, Baker and MacIntyre (2000) investigated the immersion and non-immersion students in terms of their level of L2 WTC. The study was designed to see the difference that the language learning environment would create (Second language and foreign language learning environments). According to the results, the immersion students displayed a higher WTC and more frequent actual communication in the second language than their non-immersion counterparts.

A methodologically different approach was adopted by Kang (2005). In a qualitative approach, she investigated four male Korean students from an American university for eight months. Kang discovered that the degree of the participants’ L2 WTC was determined by the interaction of the psychological conditions of excitement, responsibility and security, as well as the situational variables such as the topic, the interlocutors and the conversational context of communication.

Another study conducted by Barraclough et al. (1988) in Australia involved 195 college students and aimed to determine the relationships among the self-perceived communication, communication apprehension and the willingness to communicate. It revealed a negative correlation between the communication apprehension (CA) and the L2 WTC, a positive correlation between the WTC and the

self-perceived communicative competence (SPCC), and a negative correlation between the communication apprehension and the self-perceived communicative competence.

In some investigations, researchers used the path analysis. The first application of the WTC model to the L2 was done by MacIntyre and Charos (1996). Their model included three factors (integrativeness, attitudes and motivation) which were adapted from Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model. According to the results, the affective variables including attitudes, motivation, perceived L2 competence, and L2 anxiety were interrelated and had an impact on both L2 WTC and the actual use of the L2. Their final model showed that personality traits, i.e. Intellect, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, and Conscientiousness were related to motivation and the L2 WTC through attitude, integrativeness, L2 anxiety and perceived competence, while the context directly influenced the L2 communication frequency. In their model, no relationship was found between the motivation and the L2 WTC.

Following the study of MacIntyre and Charos (1996), MacIntyre et al. (1998) designed a heuristic model of the second language WTC made up of variables in a six-layered pyramid in order to provide a conceptual model explaining the linguistic, communicative and socio-psychological variables that might affect a person's WTC. The pyramid is shown below:

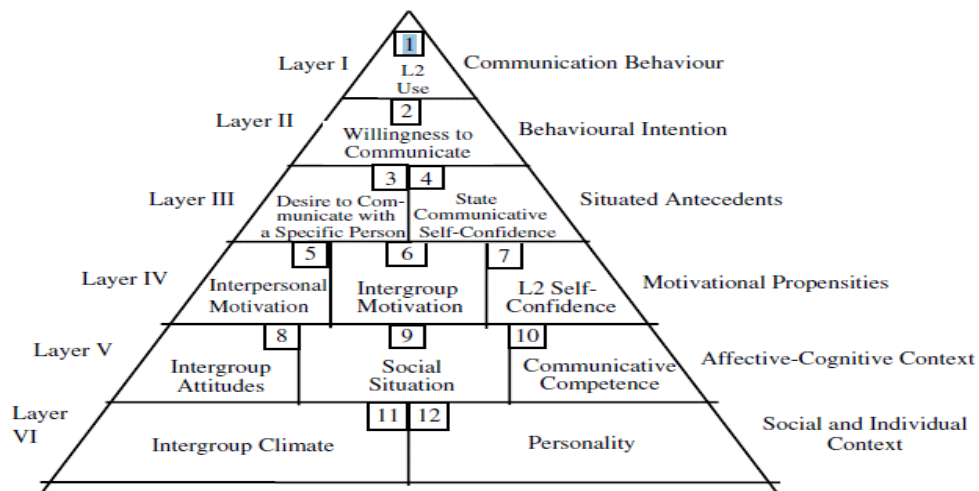


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the WTC construct as proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998).

Another claim of MacIntyre et al. (1998) was that this was no guarantee that the learners would actually use the language in the classroom even if they were communicatively competent students. Consequently, they suggested that a fundamental goal of the second language instruction should be to produce students who are willing to use the language for authentic communication as well.

In more recent studies, L2 WTC was investigated from different perspectives. Öz (2014) researched the relationship between personality traits and willingness to communicate of 168 university students. According to the results, 20% of participants had high; 66% moderate; and 14% low L2 WTC. An interesting finding of the study was that 44% of the participants perceived themselves as having a high level of L2 WTC when communicating with strangers. In contrast, only 8% of the participants had high L2 WTC when talking to an acquaintance. Communication with friends did not yield high L2 WTC according to the findings either.

Another recent study was conducted by Şener (2014) in Turkish context. The objective of the study was to find out the relationships among students' L2 WTC, linguistic self-confidence, motivation, attitudes towards international community and personality. Students' L2 WTC was found to be

between moderate and high. In this study, the most significant predictor of students' in-class WTC was self-confidence.

In another study, Öz et al. (2015) investigated L2 WTC and its affective factors. They reported that 21.6% of the participants had high WTC, 13.4% had high communicative competence and 18.7% had high scores in communication apprehension. The structural equation modeling results also showed that communicative competence and communication apprehension were the strong predictors of L2 WTC. Motivational factors indirectly influenced L2 WTC in their proposed model.

## 2.2. *Self-Perceived Communication Competence*

Communicative competence was defined as the “adequate ability to pass along or give information; the ability to make known by talking or writing” (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988, p. 109). The term self-perceived communication competence referred to how an individual believed that his/her communication competence was, based on self-awareness rather than on the actual communication competence (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987).

The person's self-evaluation of his/her communication ability (McCroskey, 1982) is a strong predictor of the willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, et al., 1999). Having the communicative ability and how a person perceives himself/herself are two different notions. A very capable communicator might perceive himself/herself as lacking communication abilities due to many reasons, such as the low self-esteem or many other factors. It can be concluded that the person's self-evaluation may influence his/her willingness to communicate. Supporting the strong relationship between the willingness to communicate and the self-perceived communication competence, McCroskey and Richmond (1990) state that people who perceive themselves as poor communicators are apt to be less willing to communicate.

## 2.3. *Communication Apprehension*

Communication apprehension was defined as “an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (McCroskey, 1997, p. 192). Beatty (1998c) claimed that communication apprehension referred to the predisposition to avoid communication if possible, or to suffer a variety of anxiety-type feelings when forced to communicate.

It can be deduced from the definition of the communication apprehension that it is a trait-like predisposition. This deduction was supported by Weaver, Sargent, and Kiewitz (1997) who discovered a link between personality and communication apprehension. Beatty et al. (1998) also claimed that communication apprehension represented the individuals' expression of inborn biological functioning independent of the social learning processes.

Yu et al. (2011) considered the communication apprehension as one of the negative communication outcomes resulting from an unsuccessful communication experience. Some other causes of communication apprehension were stated by Buss (1980) as novelty or formality of the situation, subordinate status, unfamiliarity and dissimilarity with the communication situation, and feelings of conspicuousness and excessive attention. According to the studies, people having a high level of communication apprehension tended to experience negative personal and social adjustment, felt more anxiety and loneliness and had a fewer intimate and honest relationships (Blood, Blood, Tellis, & Gabel, 2001; Buhr & Pryor, 1988; Stacks & Stone, 1983).

The link between the willingness to communicate and communication apprehension was put forward by McCroskey and Richmond (1987) who stated that communication apprehension was probably the best predictor of the willingness to communicate. The willingness to communicate relies

on an individual's level of communication apprehension to a certain extent. Roach (1999) pointed out that communication apprehension was one of the major reasons an individual might be unwilling to communicate. The person with a high-level of communication apprehension worries much about the communication situation, the feedback from the audience, and it is certainly not possible for him/her to communicate with others. It can also be concluded that the communication apprehension level of the people changes according to personalities, situational issues and time. However, no matter to what extent the communication apprehension is intense, it will reduce the willingness to communicate (Yu et al., 2011).

### 3. Methodology

Employing a quantitative approach, the present study is a descriptive research that questions and compares the Turkish and Romanian students in terms of three constructs, their willingness to communicate, self-perceived communication competence and communication apprehension. In this sense, another major aim of the study is to find out any possible relationships existing among these constructs for each group.

#### 3.1. Participants

The data for this study were collected from the Turkish and Romanian students currently studying at state universities in their respective countries. The participants were equal in number for both countries (N = 65 for each country; N = 130 total). The students were all chosen from the field of the English Language and Literature so that they could understand the instruments and relate to the questions. A majority of the students were females as both schools had more female students enrolled than male students (N = 130; female: 90; male: 40). Both Turkish and Romanian groups had an equal number of male and female students at 20/45. The age range of the participants was between 17 and 24 with an average of 20.4. All of the instruments were completed anonymously and voluntarily. The tools were administered in English to ensure that no data and/or meaning was lost during translation.

#### 3.2. Instruments

##### 3.2.1. *Willingness to Communicate (WTC)*:

The WTC scale by McCroskey & Richmond (1985; 1987) was used to measure the students' willingness to communicate. The scale was designed to relate to four communication contexts (pairs, small groups, large meetings, and public speaking) and three types of receivers (strangers, acquaintances, and friends) on top of the general willingness. The scale consisted of 12 items (variations for communication contexts and receiver types) in total. Internal (alpha) reliability estimates were at .88 for the Turkish and .93 for the Romanian group.

##### 3.2.2. *Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA)*:

The PRCA-24 by McCroskey (1982) was used to measure the participants' perceived communication apprehension level. This scale consisted of 24 questions measuring the communication apprehension. The questions on the scale had five different answers ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". Half of the questions were reversed to check the participant reliability. The internal reliability estimates for this instrument were at .90 for the Turkish, and .95 for the Romanian group.

##### 3.2.3. *Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC)*:

The SPCC scale (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986) measured the subjects' perceptions of their own communication competence. This instrument consisted of 12 items and, like the WTC Scale, was

designed to relate to four communication contexts (pairs, small groups, large meetings, and public speaking) and three types of receivers (strangers, acquaintances, and friends) on top of general competence. Estimates of internal (alpha) reliability for this instrument were at .92 for the Turkish and .94 for the Romanian group.

### 3.3. Analysis

Descriptive statistics including mean scores and standard deviations were employed for the analysis of the first two research questions which aimed to find out the perceptions of the Turkish and Romanian students related to their "willingness to communicate", "communication apprehension", and "self-perceived communication competence" in English. For the third research question which was about the difference between the Turkish and Romanian groups in terms of the above-mentioned constructs, the Mann-Whitney U test and independent samples t-test were used. Almost all of the data were tested to be non-parametric with the exception of the "friend willingness". Thus, except for the "friend willingness", non-parametric tests were used. For the last research question, Pearson correlations were used to assess the relationships among the three constructs (WTC, PRCA, and SPCC) for each group.

## 4. Findings

The findings of the present study were revealed under each research question.

*R.Q. 1. What are the Turkish students' perceptions of their "willingness to communicate", "communication apprehension", and "self-perceived communication competence" in English?*

Descriptive results revealed that the total willingness mean score for the Turkish participants was 3.55 out of 10 which was considerably low. The Willingness to communicate results in terms of the context also showed that while the most popular willingness context was the group willingness, the lowest mean score belonged to the context of meeting willingness with a mean score of 2.85. As far as the types of receivers were concerned, while the Turkish participants seemed to be most willing to communicate with friends with a mean score of 3.62, though slightly different, they were least willing to communicate with their acquaintances with a mean score of 3.46 (see Table 1).

The descriptive results regarding Turkish participants' self-perceived communication competence revealed that the total perceived competence mean score was 4.24 out of 10 which could be considered fairly low. The SPCC results in terms of the context also showed that the highest and the lowest context for the SPCC were pair competence (4.79) and meeting competence (3.72) respectively. The Turkish participants felt themselves most competent while communicating with their friends (4.64), and least competent while communicating with strangers (3.90).

As an answer to the final part of this research question, the Turkish participants' communication apprehension was quite low with a mean score of 2.06. Even though Turkish participants' willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competencies were low, they did not seem to be troubled by the thought of interaction through the use of English Language.

*R.Q. 2. What are the Romanian students' perceptions of their "willingness to communicate", "communication apprehension", and "self-perceived communication competence" in English?*

The total willingness mean score for the Romanian participants was 6.52 which can be considered moderately high. The comparison in terms of the context of willingness showed that the Romanian participants were most willing to communicate when they communicated with their pairs with a mean score of 7.15, and they were least willing when communicating with a group with a mean score of 5.53.



The SPCC results also revealed that the Romanian participants' total level competence mean score was 7.24 which was relatively high. More detailed results related to the SPCC in terms of context showed that the meeting competence had the highest mean score (7.27) and the public competence had the lowest mean score (6.44). The SPCC results in terms of the type of receiver indicated that the Romanian participants felt themselves more capable communicators while communicating with their peers (6.86), and less capable while communicating with the strangers (6.27).

The Romanian participants' communication apprehension mean score was 2.27 which can be considered low. Unlike the Turkish participants' apprehension, such a low score in the Romanian participants' apprehension data was predictable as they had high willingness and perceived competence scores as well (see Table 1).

**Table 1. The Descriptive Statistics of the Turkish and Romanian Participants' WTC, PRCA, and SPCC**

Construct	TURKISH*				ROMANIAN*		
	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Mean
Public Willingness	.33	6.33	3.7897	1.75947	1.67	9.67	6.4513
Meeting Willingness	.33	5.67	2.8513	1.63727	1.67	9.67	6.4513
Group Willingness	.33	7.00	4.3077	1.52560	.67	9.33	5.5333
Pair Willingness	.00	5.00	3.2615	1.35207	1.67	10.00	7.1590
Stranger Willingness	.25	6.75	3.5692	1.82833	.00	10.00	6.6205
Acquaintance Willingness	.25	5.75	3.4654	1.35560	2.25	10.00	7.0192
Friend Willingness	1.00	6.00	3.6231	1.30213	.75	9.25	5.7769
Total Willingness	.83	5.42	3.5526	1.34133	2.00	10.00	6.5269
Public Competence	.33	8.00	4.3128	1.66237	1.83	9.67	6.4410
Meeting Competence	.67	6.33	3.7231	1.34186	2.00	10.00	7.2718
Group Competence	1.00	6.67	4.1641	1.60741	1.67	10.00	6.9333
Pair Competence	1.33	8.00	4.7949	1.79669	.33	10.00	6.8615
Stranger Competence	.50	6.50	3.9000	1.87750	1.67	9.67	6.2718
Acquaintance Competence	.75	6.50	4.2038	1.45967	1.75	10.00	6.7577
Friend Competence	1.25	7.25	4.6423	1.46640	1.75	9.75	6.5000
Total Competence	.83	6.33	4.2487	1.43436	2.25	10.00	7.2462
Total Apprehension	1.17	2.88	2.0628	.50384	.92	3.96	2.2718

N=65

*R.Q. 3. Is there a difference between the Turkish or Romanian students' perceptions of their "willingness to communicate", "communication apprehension", and "self-perceived communication competence" in English?*

The Turkish students' general willingness to communicate (Mdn = 3.5, IQR = 2.21, MR = 40.71) was found to be significantly lower than that of the Romanian students (Mdn = 6.4, IQR = 3.63, MR = 90.29,  $U = 501$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed) < .001). There was a large effect size ( $r = .66$ ). The results of the independent samples t-test conducted on the "friend willingness" showed a significant difference between the Turkish and the Romanian students as friend willingness was concerned ( $p < .001$ ).

Similar to the results provided by the willingness to communicate, the total communication competency of the Turkish students (Mdn = 4.0, IQR = 2.33, MR = 42.22) was lower than that of the Romanian students (Mdn = 6.9, IQR = 2.96, MR = 88.78,  $U = 599$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed) < .001) at a significant level. The effect size was very large ( $r = .87$ ).

Unlike willingness to communicate and communication competence, results showed that there was no significant difference between the Turkish or Romanian students' perceptions of communication apprehension. The perceived communication apprehension levels of Turkish students (Mdn = 2.0, IQR = 0.94, MR = 59.36) was somewhat lower than that of Romanian students (Mdn = 2.2, IQR = 1.0, MR = 71.64,  $U = 1713$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed) = .063) at a marginally-significant level. There was a small effect size ( $r = .16$ ).

*R.Q. 4. What are the relationships among the "communication apprehension", "self-perceived communication competence", and "willingness to communicate" for both Turkish and Romanian students in English?*

In order to find out the possible relationships among the variables, the Pearson correlations were found for each group separately. The correlations among the groups on variables (see Table 2) for the Turkish sample were very similar to those obtained for the Romanian sample. The correlations between the PRCA and the WTC scores were, respectively, -.53 and -.40. Those for the PRCA and the SPCC were, -.69 and -.46, and those for the WTC and the SPCC were, .83 and .91.

Colton and Covert (2007, p. 72) stated that: "the closer the number is to 1.00 the stronger the relationship". Taking this fact into account, it can be deduced that the strongest and weakest relationships for the Turkish and Romanian groups were between the WTC and the SPCC on the one hand, and the PRCA and the WTC scores, on the other hand (negative relationship).

**Table -2 Correlations between the constructs**

Nationality		Competence	Apprehension	Willingness
<b>Turkish</b>	Competence	1	-,690**	,838**
	Apprehension	-,690**	1	-,533**
	Willingness	,838**	-,533**	1
<b>Romanian</b>	Competence	1	-,461**	,915**
	Apprehension	-,461**	1	-,399**
	Willingness	,915**	-,399**	1

\* N=65

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

## 5. Discussion

The findings in this study indicated a high level of L2 willingness to communicate for the Romanian participants and a quite low level of L2 WTC for the Turkish group. In terms of the context and the receiver, Turkish participants felt most comfortable when communicating within a group and with friends. These findings were not in accordance with those of Öz's study (2014) which was also conducted in Turkish context with the participants studying in an ELT department. In his study, only 8.5% of the participants provided a high level of L2 WTC when communicating with friends. Although the contexts in both studies were quite similar, the difference may be due to the group atmosphere of the students in their classes or the personality of them.

The results of the present study related to the Turkish participants' L2 WTC were similar to those of Çetinkaya (2005) and Şener (2014) in terms of the type of receivers. Both studies were conducted in Turkish context and the participants were more willing to communicate in English with their friends. However, concerning the overall L2 WTC, participants were more willing to communicate in both Çetinkaya's (2005) and Şener's (2014) studies compared to the participants of the current study. This showed the fact that there were further factors affecting students' willingness to communicate in a foreign language other than culture.

Considering the two cultures on the other hand, the absence of difference between the average communication apprehension scores among them provided a different picture. The relationships among the apprehension, competence, and willingness measures previously observed in the literature were replicated in this data, even though the mean scores on competence and willingness were different. In both samples, a greater willingness to communicate was associated with a lower apprehension and a higher self-perceived competence. These results seemed to be parallel with what McCroskey and McCroskey (1986a, 1986b, 1986c), Barraclough et al. (1988) found out, and they may be employed to indicate the associations among these variables under observation.

It was of note that even though the Romanian students perceived themselves more competent and they were more willing to communicate than the Turkish students, their levels of communication apprehension seemed to be higher than (albeit at a marginally significant level) or at least equal to the levels of apprehension registered in case of the Turkish students. With several researchers (Weaver et al. 1997; Beatty et al., 1998) claiming that communication apprehension is a trait-like, personal way of acting that is independent of learning, and with yet several others (McCroskey et al. 2001) relating it to introversion, it may be argued that the apprehension scores found in this research were more related to the specific participants than their self-perceived communication competence. Just as Buss (1980) and Yu et al. (2011) pointed out, the communication apprehension of our participant students might have stemmed from a plethora of reasons such as previous unsuccessful experiences or cultural effects. To sum up, what was proposed by Yu et al. (2011, p. 257), i.e. the "communication apprehension and perceived communication competence are the two key antecedents of willingness to communicate" was valid for the present study as well.

## 6. Conclusions

The findings of the present study basically based on the comparison of the participants from two different cultures, namely Turkish and Romanian, in terms of their willingness to communicate, perceived communication competence and communication apprehension in English provided some interesting results. Firstly, the participants from the two cultures were compared in terms of the construct of willingness to communicate in different contexts and receivers. The possible reason why Turkish participants' willingness to communicate was considerably low could be related to several

different reasons such as their introvert personality, their previous experiences with foreign people or inadequate capability of speaking English. Though in all contexts and with all receivers Turkish participants were unwilling to communicate in English, they preferred communicating in group with friends to other contexts such as communicating in a meeting most probably due to the fact that they felt secure in a group. Compared to the Turkish participants, the Romanian participants considered themselves quite willing to communicate in English. The only similarity between the groups appeared in the case of the context. Both groups favored to communicate in the group context.

Secondly, the participants were also compared in terms of their self-perceived communication competence. The Romanian participants' perceptions of their communication competence surpassed those of the Turkish participants. It was interesting to note that while the Romanian participants considered themselves most competent to communicate in a meeting context, this was the least preferred context for the Turkish participants. It could be therefore deduced that the Romanian participants had higher self-esteem compared to the Turkish ones. Participants in the Romanian group felt themselves competent enough to communicate in English in a meeting context which might be frightening for most of the people. However, there was a similarity between the groups in the case of the receivers in communication. Both groups considered themselves most competent communicators when they communicated with their peers, and least competent with strangers. This finding may be considered an expected result due to the fact that people generally feel less anxious with peers and most anxious with strangers.

The findings related to the communication apprehension were quite interesting. Although the Turkish participants registered low levels of L2 WTC and self-perceived communication competence, they had a very low level of communication apprehension. The situation was the same for the Romanian participants having high levels of L2 WTC and self-perceived communication competence but quite low communication apprehension.

The results of this investigation revealed that the Turkish people, on the overall, were less willing to communicate in English than the Romanian people. Major differences were found in mean scores for self-perceived communication competence and L2 WTC between Turkish and Romanian college students suggesting differences in the culture and in the way they perceived the idea of speaking in English. The reason why Romanian participants had higher level of L2 WTC and self-perceived communication competence compared to Turkish participants may be directly related to several factors such as their age of onset of studying English, their parents' knowledge of English or more mobility opportunities provided for them. Romanian participants started learning English when they were 1<sup>st</sup> grade students while Turkish students started at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade which may directly affect the self-esteem of students in speaking English and as a result willingness to communicate of those. Another possibility is the difference of level in actual English proficiency between the two groups as both groups were taken from a separate university and one of those universities might have some advantages over the other in regards to student selection.

In the light of these findings, exactly how far the results can be generalized, of course, cannot be determined from this limited investigation. Similar studies in different cultures will be needed to provide a database offering the appropriate limits of generalizability. Even though the number of the participants is not very low, a higher number of participants or a selection of participants from various schools from their respective countries would certainly improve any result this research achieved.

The implications of this research for English language teaching are twofold. First, this research showed that even though the students felt confident about their skills in communication and they might be willing to communicate, they still might feel a little bit nervous and might be intimidated by

the possibility of having to interact in the target language instead of their native language. Second, it was clear from the results that the students were most willing to communicate and practice their oral skills within groups of friends. This implicated that the use of group-work in communicative language teaching activities should take a higher priority over pair-work and whole class work.

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## Türk ve Romanyalı Öğrencilerin İngilizce İletişim Kurmaya İsteklilikleri ve Bunu Etkileyen Faktörler

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### Öz

Bu çalışma, Türk ve Romanya bağlamlarında, İngilizce iletişim kurmaya olan istekliliği ve bunun öncülleri olan algılanan iletişim yeteneği ve iletişim kaygısını inceleyen küçük ölçekli bir araştırma sunmaktadır. Bu nicel yaklaşım temelli araştırmada toplam 130 katılımcı yer almıştır. Veriler Türk ve Romanyalı katılımcılar arasında anlamlı farklılıklar ortaya koymuştur, buna göre Romanyalılar Türklere göre iletişim kurmaya daha istekliler ve İngilizceyi kullanmada daha yeteneklidirler. Ancak, her iki grup da hemen hemen aynı seviye iletişim kaygısına sahiptir. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler anlamında, iletişim kurmaya isteklilik ve algılanan iletişim yeteneği arasında pozitif ilişki bulunurken; iletişim kaygısı ve iletişim kurmaya isteklilik arasında her iki grup için de negatif ilişki bulunmuştur.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** İletişim kurmaya isteklilik; İletişim yeteneği; İletişim kaygısı; Türk öğrenenler; Romanyalı Öğrenenler

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### AUTHORS' BIODATA

**Mehmet ASMALI** is a lecturer at Balıkesir University, School of Foreign Languages, Balıkesir, Turkey. He holds a BA in English Language Teaching (Akdeniz University) and a Med. (Masters of Education) in English Language Teaching (Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University). Mehmet Asmalı is particularly interested in English language teaching, cross-cultural pragmatics, teacher education and individual differences in language learning.

**Ufuk Bilki** is a lecturer at Celal Bayar University, School of Foreign Languages, Manisa, Turkey. He holds a BA in English Language Teaching (Anadolu University, Eskişehir, Turkey) and a MA. (Master of Arts) in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey). Bilki is interested in English language teaching, assessment and evaluation, and language acquisition.

**Adriana Carina Duban** received her BSc. in Law, BA in Romanian and English Language and Literature, MA in Language and Communication, and PhD in Philology at “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia. Adriana Carina Duban attended numerous national and international conferences and published numerous articles and translations. She is interested in linguistic and intercultural education, interdisciplinary in foreign language teaching methodology.