The Crucial Role of Teacher Support in Enhancing Willingness to Communicate, Professional, Communicative and Lexical Competences

Aybolgan Borasheva

Nukus State Pedagogical Institute Karakalpakstan

Abstract: *Effective communication skills are essential in education as they significantly enhance student learning experiences and outcomes. This article explores the role of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and communicative competence in language learning, emphasizing the importance of teacher support in fostering these competencies. Key factors influencing WTC, such as self-communicative competence, communication apprehension, and individual psychological traits, are discussed. The article highlights the pivotal role of teacher involvement, immediacy, and autonomy support in promoting student engagement, self-efficacy, and language proficiency. Furthermore, the development of lexical competence and the use of innovative teaching approaches, such as flipped classrooms and collaborative learning activities, are examined as effective strategies for improving communication skills. The article underscores the importance of creating supportive classroom environments that reduce communication anxiety and promote active participation. Ultimately, the integration of robust teacher support practices and ongoing professional development is critical for enhancing communicative competence and ensuring long-term academic and professional success for students.*

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate (WTC), Communicative Competence, Teacher Support, Lexical Competence, Flipped Classroom, Professional Development

Introduction

Effective communication skills are crucial in education as they significantly enhance student learning experiences and outcomes. Teachers must be adept in professional problem-solving, subject knowledge, and pedagogical techniques to adapt to diverse teaching scenarios (Zuljan & Vogrinc, 2010). Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is a key factor in language learning, influenced by self-communicative competence, communication apprehension, and individual psychological traits such as introversion and self-esteem, which directly impact students' confidence and participation levels (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Shamsudin et al., 2017). Developing communicative competence—which includes linguistic, discourse, sociocultural, and strategic competencies—is essential for boosting learners' confidence and effectiveness in communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Methodology

Teacher support plays a pivotal role in nurturing these competencies. Research highlights the importance of teacher involvement, immediacy, and autonomy support in fostering positive student attitudes, engagement, and language proficiency (Wen & Clement, 2003; Amalia et al., 2023). Autonomy support from teachers fosters a growth-oriented mindset and increases students' WTC, particularly in language classrooms (Nuratdinova, 2024; Amalia et al., 2023). Teacher support is also linked to enhanced self-efficacy, a sense of school belonging, and improved reading comprehension (Chang & Bangsri, 2020). By providing a supportive environment, teachers empower students to take ownership of their learning, promoting self-reliance and active participation (Welde, 2016).

WTC is a dynamic psychological state that fluctuates based on perceived communicative competence, anxiety levels, and the social or linguistic environment. It has evolved to become a crucial aspect of L2 learning, influenced by a combination of psychological, linguistic, and social factors (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Bursali & Oz, 2017). Research suggests that individual differences, error correction, and social interactions are critical in shaping students' WTC, particularly in immersion programs (MacIntyre et al., 2011). Professional competence in teaching includes linguistic competence, self-communicative competence, and problem-solving abilities, all of which are essential for adapting to the needs of diverse learners (Adbullayeva, 2023). Linguistic competence involves using appropriate language in context (Turjoman, 2016), while self-communicative competence is developed through practice and engagement in speaking activities (Shamsudin et al., 2017). Teachers play a crucial role in supporting these competencies by providing challenging activities and constructive feedback to enhance students' academic capabilities and self-efficacy (Oraif, 2018). Communicative competence includes linguistic, discourse, actional, sociocultural, and strategic competencies. Linguistic competence involves knowledge of language elements, while discourse competence focuses on organizing spoken or written text. Actional competence aligns intent with linguistic forms, and sociocultural competence ensures appropriateness in social contexts. Strategic competence aids in compensating for communication deficiencies (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Reyes et al., 2022).

Developing self-perceived communicative competence significantly affects students' WTC and language use frequency (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Kamdideh & Barjesteh, 2019). Teacher support is also vital for promoting communicative competence. Teachers who express care and understanding create a conducive environment that enhances students' self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and overall communication abilities (Chang & Bangsri, 2020). This is especially important for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as teacher support can significantly boost their WTC and reduce communication anxiety. To promote communicative competence, teachers can use strategies such as role-playing activities (Tadjimova, 2024), which build confidence and increase WTC by allowing students to practice language skills in realistic scenarios (Ayers-Glassey & MacIntyre, 2019; Shamsudin et al., 2017). Lexical competence, or the knowledge of vocabulary, including word meanings, usage, and collocations, is another critical aspect of language proficiency

(Turjoman, 2016; Ali & Saberg, 2018, Alimbetova, 2024). It enhances fluency and accuracy and contributes to overall communicative competence. Teachers can facilitate vocabulary development through collaborative learning activities within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where peer collaboration enhances learning outcomes (Suo & Hou, 2017). Innovative teaching approaches, such as the flipped classroom, allow students to engage in autonomous and creative learning activities, which have been particularly beneficial for enhancing speaking skills and linguistic knowledge (Aburezeq, 2019).

Teacher-student interactions also play a pivotal role in boosting students' self-efficacy and preference for interactive learning environments, such as flipped classrooms (Li & Yang, 2021). Teacher support indirectly improves students' reading abilities and overall academic engagement by fostering a sense of belonging and reducing anxiety (Chang & Bangsri, 2020). Creating a supportive classroom environment for effective communication involves prioritizing teacher involvement and immediacy, which are critical for promoting student engagement and positive learning outcomes (Wen & Clement, 2003). Implementing innovative teaching methods, like flipped classrooms, with adequate teacher support, further enhances students' learning experiences and encourages active participation (Iwasaki, 2017). Additionally, addressing student anxiety, particularly related to oral communication, is essential in creating a conducive environment for effective communication (Amengual-Pizzaro, 2018). By fostering strong teacher-student relationships and providing support for innovative instructional approaches, educators can create a classroom atmosphere that facilitates effective communication and enhances overall academic success.

Result

Various case studies demonstrate the successful implementation of teacher support in enhancing communication competencies. For example, teachers who adopt autonomy-supportive pedagogy significantly boost students' motivation to engage in English communication by fostering a growth-oriented mindset (Amalia et al., 2023). The quality of teacher-student interactions, characterized by care and understanding, is also linked to improved self-efficacy and a sense of belonging, which are crucial for enhancing reading abilities and overall communication skills (Chang & Bangsri, 2020). Individualized communication from teachers has been shown to build strong relationships and maintain motivation among both high-achieving students and underachievers (Suo & Huo, 2017).

Teacher support interventions have a significant impact on students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in a second language. For instance, strategies such as choosing student-initiated topics and fostering positive group dynamics can enhance WTC (Lee et al., 2019). In hierarchical educational settings like China, teacher involvement and immediacy are critical in increasing student engagement and fostering positive affect (Wen & Clement, 2003). These interventions underscore the importance of teacher-student relationships in promoting effective communication in the classroom. Moreover, perceived teacher support has been linked to improvements in self-efficacy and school belonging, which indirectly enhance academic abilities such as reading proficiency (Chang & Bangsri, 2020).

In terms of professional competence, teacher involvement characterized by affection, care, and understanding fosters emotional security and enthusiasm, which are essential for students' professional growth. Teacher immediacy—demonstrated through verbal and non-verbal behaviors that promote closeness and warmth—has been found to positively correlate with students' affective learning and motivation, thereby enhancing their professional competence. Similarly, teacher support plays a crucial role in developing communicative competence. Personalized interactions and engaging learning resources, such as those provided through social media platforms, further enhance students' intrinsic motivation and confidence, improving their communicative competence (Wang & Qi, 2018). Teacher support, including involvement and immediacy, also boosts students' self-perceived communicative competence, which is vital for improving WTC in the L2 classroom (Kamdideh & Barjesteh, 2019).

Effective teacher support practices across various educational settings, including flipped classrooms, highlight the importance of teacher involvement, immediacy, and autonomy support in fostering student engagement, motivation, and academic success. For example, the use of Teaching Assistants (TAs) in flipped classrooms enhances student learning experiences, with TA support being essential for successful implementation (Iwasaki, 2017). These examples illustrate how teacher support not only impacts students' academic and social achievements but also plays a significant role in promoting communication competencies and overall educational outcomes.

Best Practices and Strategies for Teacher Support

Effective teacher support practices are fundamental to fostering a positive learning environment and enhancing student outcomes. Research underscores several key strategies that contribute to effective teacher support, including peer collaboration, inclusive practices, and positive behavior interventions.

One of the most impactful strategies is peer collaboration among teachers. Utilizing reflective circles, for instance, promotes mutual support and awareness of diverse perspectives, which in turn enhances teachers' confidence and their capacity for change (Gardner et al., 2022). This model of collaboration encourages critical reflection, allowing teachers to navigate complex classroom challenges together. In doing so, they not only improve their teaching practices but also contribute to a more cohesive and supportive educational community. In inclusive practices, flexibility is crucial for addressing the diverse needs of students. Effective teaching in inclusive settings emphasizes collaboration between teachers and students, adapting instructional methods to cater to different learning styles and challenges. Research has shown that varied instructional approaches, such as one-on-one support and small group interactions, significantly improve learning outcomes for students with special needs (Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprathaban, 2016). These practices ensure that every student receives the support necessary to succeed, thereby promoting equity in education.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is another essential strategy for fostering a supportive classroom environment. Implementing PBS strategies helps in the development of students' social skills and encourages positive decision-making (Sargeant, 2017). By

acknowledging the diverse backgrounds of students and addressing potential value conflicts between students and teachers, PBS strengthens the student-teacher relationship, which is vital for creating a conducive learning environment. However, while these practices are effective, challenges remain in ensuring that all teachers have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement them effectively, particularly in diverse and inclusive classrooms.

Integrating teacher support into everyday teaching is critical for enhancing educational outcomes and addressing the needs of diverse learners. Effective strategies include the utilization of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSMs), fostering collaboration among educators, and implementing differentiated instruction. Teachers are encouraged to integrate LTSMs into their teaching practices to mediate learning effectively. For instance, the South African National Policy Guidelines advocate for teachers to act as mediators, ensuring quality education through the strategic use of LTSMs (Nqabeni & Cishe, 2023). Moreover, professional development in this area is essential for equipping teachers with the skills needed to utilize these materials effectively. Collaborative support among educators is also vital. Research by Davidson (2017) illustrates that long-term engagement in collaborative activities among teachers leads to improved instructional practices and better outcomes for diverse learners. By working together, teachers can address challenges more effectively and refine their pedagogical strategies, ultimately benefiting their students.

Differentiated instruction is particularly important for supporting learners with specific learning difficulties. Mavuso (2014) highlights that strategies such as differentiation, peer support, and re-teaching are crucial for ensuring that all students receive the tailored support they need. However, challenges such as limited resources and varying levels of teacher engagement can hinder the implementation of these strategies. Addressing these barriers is crucial for maximizing the potential of teacher support in everyday teaching.

Finally, professional development (PD) opportunities are essential for enhancing teachers' support skills and overall effectiveness in the classroom. Ongoing, needs-based PD programs have been shown to significantly improve teaching competence and student learning outcomes. Types of PD activities that are particularly effective include collaborative learning programs, like the Cluster-based Mentoring Programme, which fosters peer support and enhances pedagogical skills (Meher, 2012). Additionally, curriculum adaptation training has been demonstrated to improve teachers' ability to systematically and effectively adapt their teaching to meet diverse student needs (Nalbantoglu & Bümen, 2024).

Discussion

Teacher support is undeniably a cornerstone in the development of students' communication competencies. Effective communication skills are vital in education, as they significantly enhance student learning experiences and outcomes. Teachers who are proficient in professional problem-solving, subject knowledge, and pedagogical techniques are better equipped to adapt to diverse teaching scenarios, thereby fostering an environment

where students can thrive. The concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) plays a crucial role in this context, as it directly impacts students' confidence and participation levels. Through the nurturing of communicative competence—which includes linguistic, discourse, sociocultural, and strategic competencies—teachers can significantly boost learners' confidence and overall effectiveness in communication. Teacher support, characterized by involvement, immediacy, and autonomy support, is essential in fostering these competencies, ultimately leading to improved student engagement, self-efficacy, and academic success.

Given the profound impact of teacher support on student outcomes, it is imperative that educational institutions prioritize and invest in comprehensive teacher support programs. These programs should focus not only on enhancing teachers' professional and communicative competencies but also on equipping them with the skills needed to create inclusive and supportive learning environments. Institutions should also emphasize the importance of ongoing professional development opportunities, ensuring that teachers have access to the latest pedagogical strategies and resources. By investing in teacher support, schools can cultivate a more effective and engaged teaching workforce, which in turn leads to better student outcomes. Educational leaders must recognize that the success of their institutions hinges on the quality of teacher support and should, therefore, make it a top priority in their strategic planning and resource allocation.

The long-term impact of enhanced communication competencies cannot be overstated. Students who develop strong communication skills are better equipped to navigate academic challenges, engage in meaningful interactions, and succeed in a variety of professional settings. These competencies are not only crucial for academic success but also for lifelong learning and personal growth. Teacher support plays a pivotal role in this process, as it helps to reduce communication apprehension, build self-confidence, and foster a sense of belonging among students. As students become more adept at communicating, they are likely to experience improved academic performance, greater participation in classroom activities, and stronger social connections. Ultimately, by enhancing communication competencies through targeted teacher support, educational institutions can positively influence the trajectory of their students' lives, leading to better educational outcomes and more successful futures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of robust teacher support practices into everyday teaching, coupled with ongoing professional development, is essential for fostering communication competencies that will benefit students long after they leave the classroom. Educational institutions have a responsibility to invest in these practices, ensuring that both teachers and students are well-equipped to meet the challenges of the modern educational landscape.

References

Aburezeq, I. M. (2019). The Impact of Flipped Classroom on Developing Arabic Speaking Skills. Asia-Pacific Education Researcher. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-019-00483-z

Ali, Y., & Säberg, M. (2016). The Effects of 'Flipping' a Classroom with the Focus on Teaching English as a Second Language. Linköping University.

Aliakbari, M., Kamangar, M., & Khany, R. (2016). Willingness to Communicate in English among Iranian EFL Students. English Language Teaching, 9(5). https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n5p33

Alimbetova, M. M. (2024). Enhancing lexical competence through authentic texts. *Science and Innovation International Scientific Journal*, *3*(7), 26. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13122677

Abdullayeva, D. (2024). Mental enlightenment scientific – methodological journal: One of the main factors in the modernization of education is improving future teachers' competencies in foreign languages. *Mental Enlightenment Scientific – Methodological Journal*, *4*(5), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.37547/mesmj-V4-I5-01

Amalia, S. N., Nurisma, R. A., Widiati, U., & Prihandoko, L. A. (2023). Learners' Agency, Beliefs, Mindsets and Teacher Autonomy as Predictors of Willingness to Communicate in Online Learning. The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language, 27(3). https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.27107a3

Amengual-Pizarro, M. (2018). Foreign language classroom anxiety among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) students. International Journal of English Studies, 18(2), 145–159. https://doi.org/10.6018/ijes/2018/2/323311

Ayers-Glassey, S., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2019). Measuring Willingness to Communicate in First and Additional Languages: An Annotated Bibliography.

Bursalı, N., & Öz, H. (2017). The Relationship between Ideal L2 Self and Willingness to Communicate Inside the Classroom. International Journal of Higher Education, 6(4), 229

Buli-Holmberg, J., & Jeyaprathaban, S. (2016). Effective practice in inclusive and special needs education. International Journal of Special Education, 31(1), 119.

Çetin Köroğlu, Z., & Çakır, A. (2017). Implementation of flipped instruction in language classrooms: An alternative way to develop speaking skills of pre-service English language teachers. International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT), 13(2), 42-55.

Chang, Y.-C., & Bangsri, A. (2020). Thai students' perceived teacher support on their reading

Davidson, A., O. (2017). (3) Transforming Everyday Teaching: Pedagogy and Collaboration Supporting Equity, Inclusion and Effective Instruction.
ability: Mediating effects of self-efficacy and sense of school belonging. International Journal of Educational Methodology, 6(2), 435-445.

Gardner, F., Southall, A. E., & Baxter, L. (2022). Effectively supporting teachers: a peer supervision model using reflective circles. Teachers and Teaching, 28(3), 369–383. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2022.2062727

Iwasaki, C. (2017). Faculty Support for Effective Flipped Classrooms in Higher Education.

In Proceedings of the 2017 International Symposium on Educational Technology.

Kamdideh, Z., & Barhesteh, H. (2019). The Effect of Extended Wait-Time on Promoting Iranian EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate. International Journal of Instruction, 12(3), 183-200. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12312a

Lagunes-Reyes, N. L., Cruz-Ramos, M. M., & Sandoval-Sánchez, M. A. (2022). Perceptions on the use of the flipped classroom in the EFL class. HOW, 29(2), 33-55. https://doi.org/10.19183/how.29.2.690

Lee, J. S., Lee, K., & Hsieh, J. C. (2019). Understanding willingness to communicate in L2 between Korean and Taiwanese students. Language Teaching Research, 23(1-22). DOI: 10.1177/1362168819890825.

Li, L., & Yang, S. (2021). Exploring the Influence of Teacher-Student Interaction on University Students' Self-Efficacy in the Flipped Classroom. Journal of Education and Learning, 10(2), 84. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v10n2p84

MacIntyre, P. D., Dornyei, Z., Clement, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. The Modern Language Journal, 82(iv), 545-562. https://doi.org/0026-7902/98/545-562

Mavuso, M. F. (2014). Strategies for facilitating learning support processes: What can teachers do to support learners with specific learning difficulties? Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5(2), 455.

Nuratdinova J.S. (2024). Developing professional communication skills in English of agricultural education students. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13119030

Oraif, I. M. (2018). An Investigation into the Impact of the Flipped Classroom on Intrinsic Motivation (IM) and Learning Outcomes on an EFL Writing Course at a University in Saudi Arabia Based on Self-determination Theory (SDT) (Doctoral dissertation). University of Leicester, School of Education.

Nqabeni, P., & Cishe, E. N. (2023). Integrating Life Skills Learning and Teaching Support Materials into Teachers' Teaching Strategies. E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS), 4(6), 744-753. https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2023464

Punyaporn, P., & Soontornwipast, K. (2022). An Exploration of Students' Willingness to Communicate in Thai EFL Online Classroom. Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on CALL, 8(5), 70-87. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/call8.5

Meher, R. (2012). Strengthening the Professional Development for Teachers at UC-TRC Level – a hub for teachers professional development. In Search of Relevance and Sustainability of Educational Change : An International Conference at Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, November 1-3, 2012, 98-103.

Santhanasamy, C., & Yunus, M. M. (2022). A systematic review of flipped learning approach in improving speaking skills. European Journal of Educational Research, 11(1), 127-139. https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.11.1.127

Sargeant, J. (2017). Tier 1: Universal interventions that support PBS and classroom practice. In Developing Positive Classroom Environments (1st ed., pp. 18). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4321/9781003115335

Shamsudin, M., Othman, M., Jahedi, M., & Aralas, D. (2017). Enhancing English Learners' Willingness to Communicate through Debate and Philosophy Inquiry Discussion. English Language Teaching, 10(8), 145.

Suo, J., & Hou, X. (2017). A Study on the Motivational Strategies in College English Flipped Classroom. English Language Teaching, 10(5), 62. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n5p62

Turjoman A. M. O. A. (2016). Willingness to Communicate in English among Saudi Female University Students. International Education Studies, 9(7), 170. https://doi.org/doi:10.5539/ies.v9n7p170

Valenčič Zuljan, M., & Vogrinc, J. (Eds.). (2010). Facilitating Effective Student Learning Through Teacher Research and Innovation. Ljubljana: Faculty of Education. ISBN 978-961-253-051-8

W. P. Wen & Richard Clement (2003) A Chinese Conceptualisation of Willingness to Communicate in ESL, Language, Culture and Curriculum, 16:1, 18-38

Wang, Y., & Qi, G. Y. (2018). Mastery-based language learning outside class: Learning support in flipped classrooms. Language Learning & Technology, 22(2), 50–74. https://doi.org/10125/44641

Welde, J. M. (2016). The implementation of a flipped classroom to increase student achievement and engagement in high school chemistry students (Master's thesis). Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana.

Таджимова, Ш. (2024). Способы формирования лингвистической компетенции студентов. Преимущества и проблемы использования достижений отечественной и мировой науки и технологии в сфере иноязычного образования, 1(1), 271–273.

(Tadjimova, Sh. (2024). Methods of Forming Students' Linguistic Competence. Advantages and Problems of Using Achievements of Domestic and World Science and Technology in the Field of Foreign Language Education, 1(1), 271–273)