

Degree Thesis 2

Master's Level

Exploring upper-secondary EFL students' willingness to communicate in a Swedish context

An empirical study on Swedish students' reported attitudes on oral communication in the English classroom

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Abstract:

Oral communication is a central aspect of language learning in EFL-classrooms all over the world. Therefore, problems arise when students are passive, or unwilling to communicate and participate. The aim of this study is to investigate what factors impact Swedish upper secondary students' willingness to communicate using self-reported data. The data in the study is gathered from a questionnaire with 203 participants currently studying in Swedish upper secondary school. The data analysis comprised inferential statistics to investigate causal relationships between the concepts of foreign language anxiety (FLA), self-perceived communicative competence (SPCC), extramural English (EE), and willingness to communicate (WTC). The results of the study suggest a causal relationship between the concepts, thus contributing to previous studies on factors that impact and describe willingness to communicate. Also, the results indicate that students' extramural English habits impact their behavior in oral communication. In conclusion, motivating the utility of the English language for real-world purposes, in combination with a positive classroom environment, and the improvement of students' oral communication confidence are imperative tools for the stimulation of willingness to communicate in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: EFL- ESL- English as a second language, Willingness to Communicate (WTC), Student attitudes, Extramural English (EE), Oral Interaction, L2 Communication

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1. Introduction

Over the years, teachers and researchers all over the world have been in search of the best ways of teaching English as a second language (ESL) and foreign language (EFL). Approaches to teaching vary depending on which of the four skills are the current focus of study. However, for oral communication, a majority consensus exists, which has always claimed that oral communication is best learned and acquired through direct practice. That is, students need to start talking in order to become competent and proficient L2-speakers. Nonetheless, foreign language speaking anxiety and communication apprehension result in an unwillingness to communicate. Therefore, unwillingness to communicate poses problems for teachers and learners if factors that limit communication prevail in the classroom and hinder opportunities for learning. As a result, mapping out the reasons for willingness to communicate (WTC) is paramount to produce a learning environment where students are positively set towards oral communication.

MacIntyre, Dornyei, Clement & Noels (1998) have set the foundation for WTC in the EFL context. MacIntyre et al. (1998) show that foreign language WTC is impacted by several factors. Factors such as personality traits, classroom situations, foreign language speaking anxiety, enjoyment, motivation, and self-perceived communicative competence (SPCC), to mention a few, all impact the behavior of the speaker to various extents in different contexts (Lin, 2018; Khajavy, Ghonsooly, Hosseini Fatemi & Choi, 2016; Khajavy, MacIntyre & Barabadi, 2018; Tavakoli & Zarrinabadi, 2018; Ockert, 2018; Al-Murthada, 2019). As a result, the study of WTC is complex. Nevertheless, through the use of advanced statistical analyses such as multi-level structural equation modeling (ML-SEM), researchers can better understand WTC in certain contexts and test structural theories (Khajavy et al., 2016). In short, knowledge of governing factors for language learners' communicative behavior is widely studied in order to create future possibilities for changes in pedagogical practice. However, language learning is in some ways culturally and contextually dependent. As a result, reproductions of such studies in various contexts are a viable course of action. The study of WTC is mainly carried out with the use of surveys and questionnaires in large scale quantitative research and interventions. However, research on foreign language WTC in a Swedish context has been scarce.

A replication of previous research that is applied to a new Swedish context could further indicate how foreign language WTC is promoted in various contexts. Sweden is a country whose population is, in general terms, highly proficient in English due to influence from popular culture originating in English-speaking countries which permeates modern society. In fact, Sweden is ranked second in English proficiency globally by Education First (2019). In combination with the Swedish curriculum which stresses the importance of proficiency in "oral [...] production and interaction of various kinds" (Skolverket, 2011), a lot of Swedes perceive English as a second language. However, English is not recognized as an official second language but a foreign language in Sweden, and Swedish educational policy allows for interpretations by the teachers to meet the local needs and interests of students (Hult, 2017). In total, this forms the base for the hypothesis that extramural English (EE) in Sweden could have an indirect effect on WTC through increased proficiency (Hannibal Jensen, 2007, p. 3) and self-perceived proficiency, notwithstanding the effect of the stressed importance of oral interaction in the Swedish educational program. To conclude, Sweden is an interesting and important test case. Consequently, this study will investigate WTC in a Swedish context in a small-scale semi-replication of previous studies with the incorporation of extramural English as a factor.

1.1. Aim and research questions

The aim of the current study is to investigate Swedish EFL learners' reported attitudes on their willingness to communicate in the classroom. The study aims to investigate this using a questionnaire as a method. By incorporating various background variables, the study aims to reveal certain characteristics of students' willingness to communicate in Sweden. In order to frame the study, the following research question is used.

- In terms of oral communication limited to the context of the EFL classroom, what factors affect the willingness to communicate for students in upper secondary schools in Sweden?

1.2. Definitions of terms

1.2.1. Communication

For the purposes of this study, communication follows a definition used in Galajda (2017). That is, communication only refers to oral communication “from the perspective of interpersonal and small-group communication as well as public speaking” (p.1) but limited exclusively to a foreign language context.

1.2.2. Abbreviations

Due to the high number of abbreviations and acronyms, resulting from numerous concepts relating to willingness to communicate that need to be used see Appendix C for a list of all abbreviations used.

2. Background

2.1. Steering Documents in English

In the Swedish education system, English as a subject is ascribed a vital role in general as it is one of three core subjects alongside Swedish and mathematics which are mandatory in all upper-secondary school programs. Therefore, even though the upper-secondary school in Sweden is not mandatory, English as a subject is mandatory once students enter a program. As a result, the motivation to learn English cannot be taken for granted.

The Swedish steering documents for English show that oral communication and oral production are vital parts of the core content for upper secondary school, because not only does the aim of the subject state that students should acquire “the ability to express oneself and communicate in English in speech” (Skolverket, 2011), but the core content state that the teaching should contain:

”oral [...] production and interaction of various kinds, also in more formal settings, where students instruct, narrate, summarise, explain, comment, assess, give reasons for their opinions, discuss and argue. [s]trategies for contributing to and actively participating in discussions related to societal and working life.” (Skolverket 2011)

Here, the focus should lie on the phrase “actively participating” since this is directly related to WTC. That is, the students need to participate and communicate in class in order to achieve a passing grade. As a result, WTC is related to the steering documents because it is arguably beneficial for the students' learning and grades.

2.2. Extramural English

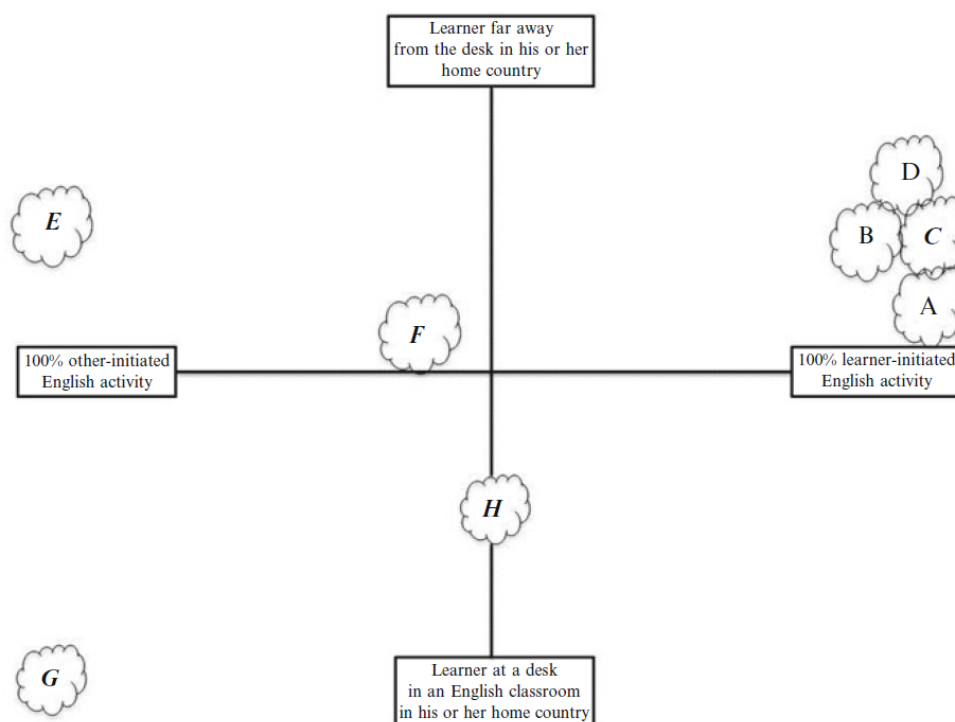
Extramural English (EE) is an umbrella term for all English that is learned outside of schools (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). However, the definition means that involvement with English has to be initiated by the learners themselves and not by teachers or similar people from educational settings. In this way, the involvement is mainly viewed as voluntary but not necessarily deliberately intended to acquire or learn English (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, p. 6). Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016) list the following activities as typical for Extramural English:

“watching films, TV series, music videos, video blogs, or listening to music, or reading blogs, books, magazines, newspapers, or surfing English websites on the Internet, or following people, news organizations, and so on, on Twitter or Instagram (or other online community), reading/writing/speaking/listening/interacting in real life or online, and playing video/digital games (online or offline, on one’s own or with others)” (p.7)

In summary, opportunities for EE are best described as endless, especially in the internet age. In addition, communicative EE involves not only input but output and interaction as well. In general, this means that the prerequisites for foreign language learning are present. Nevertheless, participants in extramural English activities are to be regarded as language users, not language learners (Hannibal Jensen, 2007).

Over the years, attempts have been made to theorize models for explaining and predicting to underpin research in the field. Benson (2011, cited in Reinders & Benson, 2017) uses the term language learning and teaching beyond the classroom (LBC) in a way that is interchangeable with EE. LBC is categorized into four dimensions: location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control. Location dictates when and where learning takes place; formality is the degree to which learning is related to educational practices or institutions; pedagogy is the degree to which teaching is involved; and locus of control is whether the learner or someone else dictates the learning (Reinders & Benson, 2017, p. 562). Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016, p. 10) expand on Benson’s (2011) model to create their own model (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Sundqvist & Sylvén's model of L2 learning in relation to EE



This model diagram shows types of learning on a continuum illustrating the position of EE in relation to traditional EFL learning overall. The letters A-D are learner-initiated English activities, that is the extramural English, and E-G are teacher-initiated English activities, H represents learner-and-teacher-initiated English activities (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, pp. 9-13). Figure 1 illustrates that extramural English activities are distinctly separated from other forms of traditional English language-learning activities.

Previous studies have indicated that certain people are, more or less, inclined to engage in extramural English. Avello et al. (2019) explain that students who are aware of the utility of a good command of English in their lives are more likely to use extramural English in various activities. Hannibal Jensen (2007) explains that more time spent on watching subtitled English television and gaming indicates higher conversational proficiency for young learners of English. The proficiency tests undergone in these studies indicated that boys outscored girls in the conversational- and vocabulary- tests based on spending more time on gaming; in fact, boys spend five times more time on gaming than girls do (Hannibal Jensen, 2007, pp. 3-5). Hannibal Jensen's (2007) results further indicated that there was a difference in reported types of EE based on gender for young English language learners. This means that, in order of preference, favorite activities for girls were listening to music, watching television and gaming, and boys' favorites were gaming, watching television, and listening to music. Similar to findings by Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016), this suggests that boys prefer gaming more than girls. To contrast activities, Sylvén suggests that popular extramural English activities are different in terms of effort. Reading, using a computer, or gaming are activities that require some effort to engage with, whereas watching television or film, and listening to music are considered low effort activities (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, pp. 139-142). In fact, Hannibal Jensen (2007) suggests that boys would fall even further behind girls, who tend to outscore boys in most school-subjects, if they did not engage extensively in these high effort activities, i.e. gaming. In total, this suggests that there is a gender difference in terms of approach to extramural English. Furthermore, Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016) explain that time spent on EE increases during adolescence; 10-

year-olds average 7 hours/week and 15-year-olds average 18 hours/week (p.32), which seems to be fairly consistent for central and northern Europe. In addition, boys spend more hours on extramural English than girls (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, pp. 140-142). However, for countries with limited access to English material outside of school these numbers are certainly varied and presumably different.

As for extramural English in Sweden, Sundqvist and Olin-Scheller (2013) explain that Swedish EFL teachers experience difficulties in bridging the gap between the English that students use outside of school and the English that is used in school. That is, students experience an authenticity gap between the English used in school and their extramural English. As a result, they become discouraged and demotivated (Sundqvist & Olin-Scheller, 2013, p. 329).

2.3. Oral communication in EFL

Oral communication in a foreign language is not necessarily similar to oral communication in a native language. In addition, English is a special language in this context due to its widespread use worldwide. Namely, students' proficiency in English is not necessarily equivalent to their language skills in a native language. Therefore, it is vital to elaborate on a few of the characteristics of common contemporary classroom practices and exercises, and consider how foreign language anxiety and communication apprehension affect oral communication.

2.3.1. Communicative language teaching (CLT)

One common contemporary practice of teaching oral communication in the EFL classroom is communicative language teaching (CLT). Furthermore, CLT is compatible and/or similar to other curricular program types, for example, content-based language teaching, academic/professional purposes language teaching, task-based language teaching, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) (Duff, 2014). In fact, CLT is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes learning a language for the purpose of communicating with others (Duff, 2014). Duff (2014) explains that although this may seem like a self-evident goal for language teaching, this has not always been the case. Notwithstanding that the communicative approach to language teaching emerged in the 1960s as a move away from the behaviorist theoretical framework to a modern constructivist theoretical framework (Garcia, 2009, p. 314), this shift has been slow in less developed parts of the world. Indeed, the shift is still undergoing in several parts of the world where teachers possibly face contextual resistance during the shift towards CLT in the form of missing authentic material, trained teachers, and technological aids (Diallo, 2014; Kawser, 2016). In contrast, a Swedish educational context that is permeated by new educational tools, as a result of the technological revolution in schools over the past decade, constantly requires new problem-solving skills and communicative competencies that are appropriately met with a CLT approach. Nevertheless, the underlying principle for CLT is also an emphasis on meaning-based activities over form-based activities.

Meaning-based activities entail that the focus of the activity is for the student to learn how to convey a message to a recipient in a coherent manner. In contrast, form-based activities entail that the aim of the activity is a focus on the specific language use, i.e. grammar (Lazaraton, 2014). In short, this type of approach to language teaching is more concerned with actual language use than theoretical language use. As a result, activities, such as discussions and group work, presentations, role-plays, and dialogues all, to various extents, reflect this approach (Lazaraton, 2014). However, not all students are necessarily comfortable in such situations.

2.3.2. Language anxiety

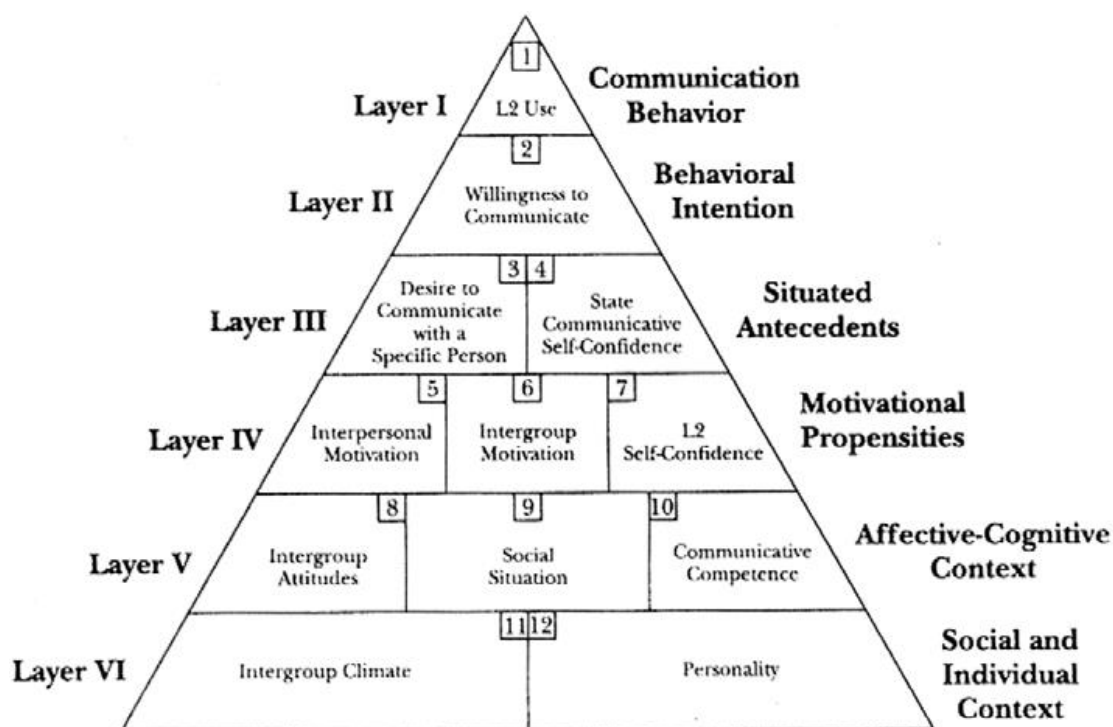
Speaking in a foreign language can induce anxiety for students that are not necessarily shy when using their native language. Indeed, foreign language anxiety is an experience shared by roughly 30-40% of foreign language students (Horwitz, 2016, p. 934). In fact, Bielak (2017) explains that language anxiety is one factor out of several that affects second language communication. Other factors related to, but independent of, language anxiety are test anxiety, communication apprehension, trait anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Bielak, 2017, pp. 228-229). Certainly, foreign language anxiety has a negative effect on the learning process (Galajda, 2017). However, these factors operate in seemingly different ways. For example, foreign language anxiety is mainly situation-specific and dependent on the specific learning context (Galajda, 2017, p. 48). In contrast, communication apprehension means that a person may be unwilling to communicate altogether as it refers to “anxiety syndrome associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (McCroskey, 1976, p. 39: cited in Galajda, 2017, p. 51). As a result, communication apprehension is divided into state communication apprehension and trait communication apprehension. That is, state communication apprehension could mean that people avoid communication altogether in certain contexts, e.g. formal presentations, meetings, large and small groups, etc. But trait communication apprehension could be stable across languages, meaning that a person avoids communication altogether regardless of first or second language (Galajda, 2017, pp. 50-54). In summary, foreign language anxiety is separate from other forms of anxiety commonly occurring in the shared context.

There is also research providing a better understanding of how people with anxiety can be identified in the classroom. Dewaele et al. (2017) found that the relationship between foreign language enjoyment and foreign language anxiety is often, but not always, negative. In short, high levels of foreign language enjoyment are often linked to low levels of anxiety, notwithstanding the possibility of high levels on both scales (Dewaele et al. 2017, p. 690). In addition, studies have concluded that having knowledge of several languages could reduce the anxiety induced by communicative problems arising when learning a new language (White, 2018, p. 26). Moreover, Mercer and Gkonou (2017) argue that high levels of social and emotional intelligence are core competences for language teachers in order to dampen students’ foreign language anxiety. Namely, teachers serve as role models for their students, and students with high levels of social and emotional intelligence exhibit significantly less foreign language anxiety (Mercer & Gkonou, 2017, p. 109). Therefore, language anxiety is both affected by the situational context and personal traits, but can be affected by a teacher’s ability to influence the classroom and develop strong speaking skills (Galajda, 2017, p. 49). Finally, Horwitz (2010) considers the work by MacIntyre et al. (1998) on willingness to communicate as inextricably linked to the understanding of foreign language anxiety.

2.4. Willingness to communicate

The origin of research in the field of the willingness to communicate stems from investigations originally intended for native speakers (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). McCroskey and Baer (1985) treated *willingness to communicate* as a “personality-based, trait-like disposition” towards communication. Nevertheless, researchers soon found that the same claims could not be applied to a second language context or the language of a foreign language learner. In fact, L2WTC is more affected by various factors in the situational context. MacIntyre et al. (1998) proposed a heuristic model (see Figure 2) to conceptualize how different factors ultimately affect the behavioral intention to communicate in a second language. Their definition of WTC is “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2” (MacIntyre et al, 1998, p. 547).

Figure 2 Heuristic model of WTC



The heuristic model's six layers could effectively be divided into two parts according to the manner in which they affect WTC. Layers 1-3 represent the influence from a specific situation, and layers 4-6 represent more stable, enduring influence (MacIntyre et al. 1998). That is, there are specific situations that create states where almost everyone is willing to communicate and situations where most people avoid communication. Indeed, this points to the *state* and *trait* concept of WTC: some people enter a state of WTC as a result of the situation, and some people exhibit a trait-like WTC due to differences in their enduring influences. Namely, they remain closer to a state of WTC due to their personal psychological driving and restraining forces, such as motivation and anxiety (MacIntyre, 2007). Therefore, MacIntyre (2007) claimed that WTC needs to be understood as a construction of volition. That is, learners are affected by driving and restraining forces, but perhaps still unaware of them (MacIntyre, 2007).

Over the past twenty years, several studies have investigated partial fits of the heuristic model proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998). That is, several studies have indicated an affirmation of the model's applicability to various contexts (Khajavy et al., 2016; Khajavy et al., 2018; Lin, 2018). In fact, research has revealed that classroom environment, motivation, foreign language anxiety, and self-perceived communicative competence all impact willingness to communicate in either a direct or indirect way (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2019). Moreover, Elahi Shirvan et al. (2019) examined the evidence for three high evidence correlates of L2 WTC, namely self-perceived communicative competence (SPCC), anxiety, and motivation in a meta-analysis. Results indicated a correlation for all variables, with SPCC standing out as the highest predictor for initiating communication. Nevertheless, the authors also stress the importance of other under-investigated variables not included in the meta-analysis that could have an influence on L2WTC. These are: "attitude towards L2, attitude towards learning, proficiency level, future self, ideal L2 self, ought to self, age, gender, and language learning context" (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2019, pp. 1264-1265). In summary, there are both micro- and macro- perspectives on the understanding of how L2WTC operates.

2.4.1. Previous research on stimulating WTC for learners of English

With the background that there are both state and trait levels of L2WTC, it is also possible to affect WTC through interventions. Research has shown that there are several factors that stimulate WTC either in a direct or indirect manner. As aforementioned, SPCC is highly correlated with WTC (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2019), and research by van Batenburg et al. (2019) indicated that the implementation of information gap tasks combined with strategies-directed interaction stimulated L2 confidence. However, the intervention in van Batenburg et al.'s (2019) study was arguably not long enough to show results on WTC, hence the indirect connection. Similarly, Lin (2018) and Al-Murtadha (2019) showed that both envisioning participation in future L2 communities, and visualization of future L2-self combined with goal-setting activities could increase motivation and facilitate WTC regardless of age or level of education. In contrast, research by Khajavy et al. (2016) and Khajavy et al. (2018) suggested that the creation of an enjoyable and positive classroom environment has a direct impact on WTC. Likewise, Tavakoli and Zarrinabadi (2016) concluded that explicit and corrective feedback on oral interaction increased WTC directly. In a similar manner, Ockert's (2014) study found video interventions and students viewing themselves in recordings stimulated WTC. In short, interventions of this sort suggest that language learning has a positive effect on state WTC from a short-term perspective.

3. Theoretical perspectives

Here, the theoretical perspectives on learning are presented. These theoretical perspectives are deemed as suitable for the analysis of the questionnaire, and to explain the development of state WTC.

3.1. Interaction Hypothesis

The interaction hypothesis claims that the process of interaction can facilitate language acquisition rather than the view that interaction is a simple manifestation of the learner's current language proficiency (Ellis, 1999). This theory focuses entirely on social interpersonal interaction and specifically on how learners and interlocutors make interactional modifications in speech to accommodate potential or actual problems of understanding, i.e. the negotiation of meaning (Ellis, 1999, pp. 3-4). According to Gass (2003), the negotiation of meaning facilitates acquisition because it focuses the learner's attention on a discrepancy between current language knowledge and target language knowledge in a productive way. Still, Long (1996) points out that this is not a complete theory because the source of the learner's hypotheses is impossible to trace. Most importantly, the interaction hypothesis is primarily concerned with incidental acquisition taking place when the learner's objective is communication (Ellis, 1999). In other words, interaction can incidentally focus the learner's attention on the linguistic knowledge that is slightly beyond their current capacity.

The early version of the interaction hypothesis is closely related to the input hypothesis proposed by Krashen in 1985 (Ellis, 1999, p. 5), namely, that the negotiation of meaning led to comprehensible input for the learner. In contrast, later versions of the interaction hypothesis claimed that interactionally modified input works for acquisition because it helps learners notice linguistic forms in the input and these forms are within the learner's cognitive range. Consequently, the interpersonal interaction stimulates noticing and the intrapersonal activity in terms of processing the language leads to acquisition when the student forms hypotheses about correct language use (Ellis, 1999, p. 8). As such, the interaction hypothesis is relevant for this study since it serves as an explanation for both how interaction facilitates language acquisition, and to a certain extent indicates why extramural English is hypothetically beneficial for foreign

language proficiency and by extension possibly WTC too. By comparison, language learning originating in interaction is similarly described in sociocultural theory.

3.2 Sociocultural theory

In contrast to learning based on the interaction hypothesis, not all interaction with language is interpersonal. Ellis (1999) explains that it is important to consider interaction that is intrapersonal, i.e. the interaction occurring in our minds. Sociocultural theory is a theory of the mind and the human psyche (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2015). That is, the theory pertains to explanations of how learning is formed in the relationship between the physical context and the transformation of the individual's cognitive or mental functions (Swain et al., 2015, p. xiv). In comparison, the interaction hypothesis focuses on social interaction alone; sociocultural theory views interaction as both social and private. Nevertheless, sociocultural theory views interaction as "a social practice that shapes and constructs learning" (Ellis, 1999, p.21).

Interaction in sociocultural theory is viewed as either unmediated or mediated. When the interaction is mediated, a material or symbolic tool is used to support or benefit the interaction. For example, a material tool could be the pencil that is used to convey/mediate a message, and the message is the symbolic tool that mediates the interaction. The sociocultural theory considers all man-made objects to be artifacts. Also, these tools represent the particular cultural and historical conditions in which they have been developed (Ellis, 1999, p. 18). Nonetheless, not all artifacts are capable of mediation. Only when an artifact is used as a tool for interaction does it have mediational means. In addition, Swain et al. (2015, p. 2) explain the importance of considering the where, why, when, and how of the use of the particular mediating tool. For example, a t-shirt could be a tool for a political symbol to mediate a symbolic message in a particular context, i.e. to show allegiance to a particular political party. But if this t-shirt is rolled up and tied together with other t-shirts it could form the tool of a rope. That is, the context of the tool is important for understanding the mediating means.

One such tool is arguably the teacher. In the context of a classroom, a teacher is appointed the role of an expert in mediating the chosen knowledge to the students. However, the expert does not necessarily need to be a teacher; it could very well be a fellow student or a cultural artifact (Swain et al., 2015). Moreover, knowledge is not seen as strictly transactional between teacher-student or student-student. Knowledge is mediated through scaffolding between participants. Scaffolding is linked to the concept Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD hereafter). ZPD is often explained as the difference between what a student/child can do with help and without help. Scaffolding is the help that the student receives to access ZPD and subsequently learn or appropriate the desirable knowledge. Therefore, scaffolding is the interpersonal collaborative interaction that could trigger intrapersonal learning, notwithstanding that ZPD can be accessed without scaffolding through other forms of mediation, e.g. texts that could mediate the interaction. As a result, ZPD is arguably more explicit in contrast to the interaction described as incidental learning in the interaction hypothesis. Furthermore, Swain et al. (2015) claim that ZPD is often described as similar or equal to Krashen's $i + 1$, but the concepts are distinct from each other.

For ZPD the context and the relationships among participants are considered crucial for the development of learning. Hence, the focus lies on the social and cultural aspects of learning. Moreover, Swain et al. (2015) explain that once learning is triggered by the teacher-student, or student-student relationship, the learning may continue because the student remains psychologically in the ZPD (p.25). Therefore, the learning may continue in different contexts, e.g. by

watching films or doing homework. Consequently, this is crucial to the understanding of the effect of extramural English.

4. Method

The following is a presentation of the method with the aim of being as transparent as possible.

4.1. Chosen Method

The current study employs questionnaires as a data collection method. Due to the 2020 COVID19 pandemic, all planned interviews were canceled, notwithstanding that a qualitative aim could reveal information in more depth than the questionnaire. According to McKay (2006), a survey (written questionnaire) is an appropriate method when the research is interested in attitudinal information and/or behavioral information. Also, with a quantitative focus, the researcher is able to obtain information from a larger sample of participants.

The study was piloted by three participants in order to make sure that the instrument for measurement was reliable, namely, to ensure that the questionnaire and interview guide have relevant questions, use an understandable language, and to monitor the collection of data. The participants in the pilot study were two upper-secondary school students and one university student from the teacher program. The pilot study revealed that one of the participants, with a high level of communication anxiety, had difficulties separating the questions regarding Willingness to Communicate and communication confidence. As a result, the questionnaire was modified a bit with an introductory segment to the questions regarding communication confidence (see appendix B). Also, some of the questions contained minor issues with phrasing and issues with explicitness which was addressed after the pilot.

4.2. Selection and sample of participants

The participants for this study are all current students in upper-secondary schools in Sweden. The participants for the questionnaires were mainly chosen based on availability to the researcher, i.e. the schools located in the vicinity of the researcher. Therefore, this is a non-probability sample because the wider population of Sweden was excluded from participation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 214). However, the sample could be considered to be random because it exhibits characteristics of a cluster sampling method which is often used for small-scale research projects (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 216). It is random in the sense that a total of ten upper secondary schools were contacted in the middle of Sweden and the researcher has no information about the students that chose to participate in the study. Nevertheless, the results are arguably generalizable for students living in the middle of Sweden.

The questionnaire had a total of 203 participants (see Table 1). Out of the 203 participants, 9 declined participation after reading the information letter (see appendix A). Therefore, the results are based on the 194 participants that agreed to participate in the questionnaire. The participants were 106 females and 86 males and 2 who refused to respond to the question. The participants were spread out among year 1-3 with 99 students in year 1, 81 in year 2, and just 14 in year 3. A majority of the participants answered that Swedish is their native language. As a result, the sample size for this questionnaire is suitable for correlational research and relatively suitable for causal-comparative research because each major subgroup contains approximately 100 cases (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 204). However, the results for minor subgroups, i.e. what year the student attends and native language, are unsuitable for correlational research, since there were only 14 participants for year three and 12 students with a different native language than Swedish.

Table 1 Sample of Participants

Total Participants	Used in the study	Gender	Year in school	Native Language	Age:
203	194	Female: 106 Male: 86 Refuse to answer: 2 Other: 0	Year 1: 99 Year 2: 81 Year 3: 14 Other: 0	Swedish: 182 English: 0 Other 12	15: 0 16: 61 17: 96 18: 35 19 or older: 2

4.3. Distribution and collection of data

The questionnaire was intended to be distributed in both digital form and paper form. However, due to the 2020 COVID19 pandemic, only the digital form of the questionnaire was used. The digital form was deemed as corresponding to the paper form by the pilots of the study. The digital form of the questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms and collected during a period of two weeks. The digital form of the questionnaire was distributed to 10 upper secondary schools where some of the teachers chose to distribute the questionnaire to their students. As a result, the researcher remains unaware of the participants' identities.

4.4. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was roughly adopted and adapted from previous studies investigating similar topics as the current study (Weaver, 2005; Peng & Woodrow, 2010). Weaver (2005) designed a questionnaire intended to measure WTC for both written and oral L2 communication. Peng and Woodrow (2010) applied several of these questions to a different context than Weaver (2005) with reliable results. Moreover, questions concerning the measurement of foreign language anxiety in Peng and Woodrow (2010) were partially adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986) foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS). Furthermore, FLCAS has exhibited reliable measurements for different foreign languages in different contexts (Aida, 1994). As a result, these questions were deemed appropriate for application to a Swedish context. Other reliable options for measurements were considered, but since they were originally intended for applications inside and outside the L1 classroom and subsequently adapted for an L2-context they were dismissed (Peng, 2007, p. 41). That is, students' willingness to participate in communication outside the classroom was deemed irrelevant for the current study because this study focusses on the effect of EE instead, and communication outside the EFL classroom is irrelevant in relation to Swedish steering documents.

The questionnaire adopted 19 questions from Peng and Woodrow (2010) that were translated to Swedish by the researcher. Consequently, the entire questionnaire is in Swedish since this is the assumed first language for most of the participants (see Appendix B). Furthermore, nine of the questions were focused on the measurement of WTC, both in meaning-focused activities and form-focused activities. Five questions were aimed at measuring the students' reported level of communication anxiety, and five were intended to measure the students' reported level of self-perceived communication confidence (see appendix B).

In the questionnaire where the participants were asked to describe their habits concerning Extramural English (see appendix B), an option to report whether students read aloud was included. This was deliberately included as a result of Baran-Lucarz's (2014) study which revealed the effect of pronunciation anxiety on willingness to communicate. That is, reading aloud can improve pronunciation proficiency due to extensive practice and therefore can reduce anxiety.

Once the results of the questionnaire were gathered, the respective parts of the questionnaire, apart from extramural English, were tested for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha formula (see Figure 3). Although usually applied to a pilot study, this was not possible due to the few numbers of participants (Cohen, 2018, p. 497). The results revealed that the questions concerning the different concepts exhibited high levels of internal consistency (see Table 2). Subsequently, this indicates that the questionnaire presumably represents a reliable measurement for the concepts.

Table 2 Cronbach's α for independent concepts in the questionnaire

Independent concepts	Cronbach's Alpha – α
WTC- concept	.925
FLA- concept	.927
SPCC-concept	.893

Figure 3 Cronbach's alpha formula

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K - 1} * \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=0}^K S_i^2}{S_t^2} \right)$$

4.5. Data analysis

The data from the questionnaires are analyzed with statistical tools to look for connections, correlations, and possible significance in terms of the effect of SPCC, EE, and FLA on WTC. In addition, the background variables enable the population of participants to be divided according to their reported EE behavior. That is, the questionnaire can show whether FLA and SPCC affect WTC and what effect EE has on these aforementioned independent variables. Such results are gathered by performing a multiple regression analysis, a correlation test, and a Mann-Whitney U-test. In short, the questionnaire is suitable for testing statistical hypotheses (Denscombe, 2014).

The individual concepts —SPCC, EE, and FLA— are tested for correlation to see whether they could explain the reasons for movements between these measured variables. If these concepts could single-handedly explain the variations for WTC, the results would be closer to 1 or -1 if there was a perfect correlation between concepts. For example: if person X had an average score of 6 in WTC, combined with an average score of 1 in FLA and finally an average score of 6 in SPCC, the results conclude a perfect relationship between the concepts. The multiple regression analysis is done using SPCC and FLA as independent variables and WTC assumes the dependent variable in an attempt to use inferential statistics to investigate probability. Similarly, T-tests are suitable for normal distributions but are useless for these types of ordinal data because they lack a central tendency (de Winter, Dodou, 2010). Instead, the independent variables are based on ordinal scales and are non-parametric, therefore suitably tested with the Mann-Whitney U-test (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 794), i.e. Likert type scales produce ordinal data. The Mann-Whitney U-test is favorable to compare ranked scale ordinal data from separate populations regardless of population size, i.e. to compare differences between the subgroups: high/low levels of EE to search for a statistically significant effect on WTC. That is, these populations are divided through the division of sample populations on their answers to an above-or below-average score on EE, SPCC, and FLA.

In the discussion section, these results are compared with the theoretical perspectives to possibly explain the effect on, and from, learning, and the effect of EE as a factor on WTC. That is, the theoretical perspectives chosen for this thesis are arguably suitable for the provision of a comprehensive explanation of the results.

4.6. Ethical considerations

The researcher applied a self-assessment form to consider whether the study needs a further ethical audit or not. Firstly, the study does not contain participants under the age of 15; hence, they do not need written consent from a legal guardian in order to participate. Secondly, the study does not include any direct or indirect personal information about the participants. Direct personal information is something that can trace collected information back to the participant in the form of a name, e-mail address, or a social security number. Indirect personal information is data in the form of IP-addresses, location history on a mobile device, or coded personal information (Högskolan Dalarna, 2017, p. 2). As a result, the study did not need to go through further ethical examination (Denscombe, 2014, p. 424).

Before participants started the questionnaire, they were asked to read an information letter about the current study (see Appendix A). The participants could then choose between two buttons in the digital form: “I have read the information letter and I wish to participate in the study”, or “I have read the information letter and do NOT want to participate in the study”. If any participants felt that they did not want to participate when they had read the information letter, the questionnaire would end. As a result, the researcher was able to obtain written consent with a substitute online signature (Denscombe, 2014, pp. 430-442).

The information letter contains information about the participants’ anonymity; what happens with the collected data after the thesis has received a passing grade; that participants can withdraw from the study at any point without being asked why; that the age requirement is 15; an estimation of time needed; and that the results of the study will be published online. Moreover, the information letter contains information about the researcher and contact information to both the researcher and the supervisor. As a result, the study fulfills the requirements for several crucial principles of educational research: informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity, identification and non-traceability, non-maleficence (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 111; Denscombe, 2014). In addition, because the researcher did not include any of his own students, any principles concerning abuse of power and position remain unambiguous. The information letter was written in Swedish because this was the assumed first language for most of the participants. Nevertheless, the study revealed that 12 participants had a different native language than Swedish, but not English. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain if an English information letter would have proved helpful for these participants.

To conclude, the researcher has strived to the best of his abilities to ensure that the data analysis is valid and reliable by adopting a reflexive approach. This is ensured by transparency in data presentation and data analysis techniques—and the attempt to use appropriate data analysis techniques—and consider rival interpretations of the findings (Cohen, 2018, pp. 137-138).

5. Results

The results of the questionnaire are divided into two parts; the first part serving as a background to the subsequent part. In the first part, the results of the questionnaire are presented to illustrate self-reported behavior concerning extramural English and students’ self-reported attitudes towards oral communication. Secondly, these results are analyzed statistically for correlation and

causal relationships between variables, and subsequently in a content analysis where the theoretical perspectives are emphasized. Finally, the qualitative aspects of the questionnaire are presented.

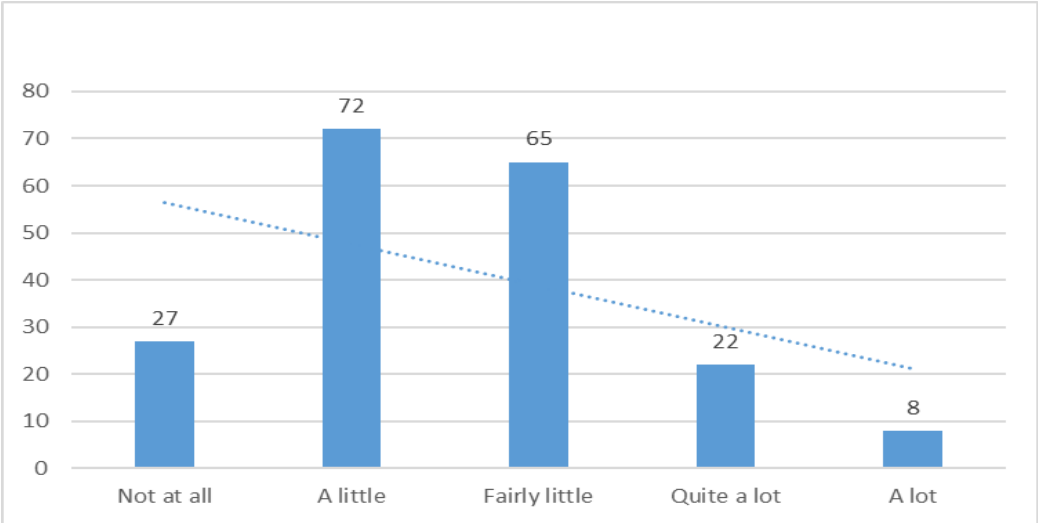
5.1. Overview of reported behavior and attitudes

In this section, the aim is to present an overview of the results of the questionnaire.

5.1.1. Extramural English

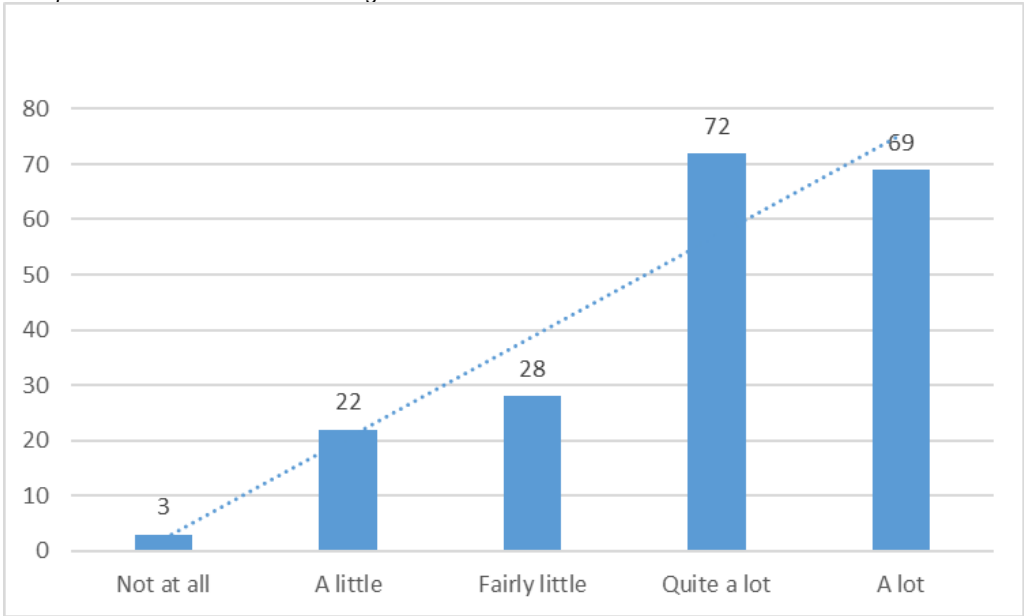
The results of the questionnaire indicated that a majority of the participants use English outside of school (see definition of EE in Appendix B) although they do not frequently speak English with friends, family, or others (compare Figures 4 and 5). This indicates that a majority of the participants engage and interact with extramural English in a receptive way rather than a productive way. Nevertheless, a vast majority of the participants reported that they talk some English outside of school and almost all students use English outside of school in varying ways.

Figure 4 Self-reported behavior on spoken English outside of school with family/relatives, friends, or others



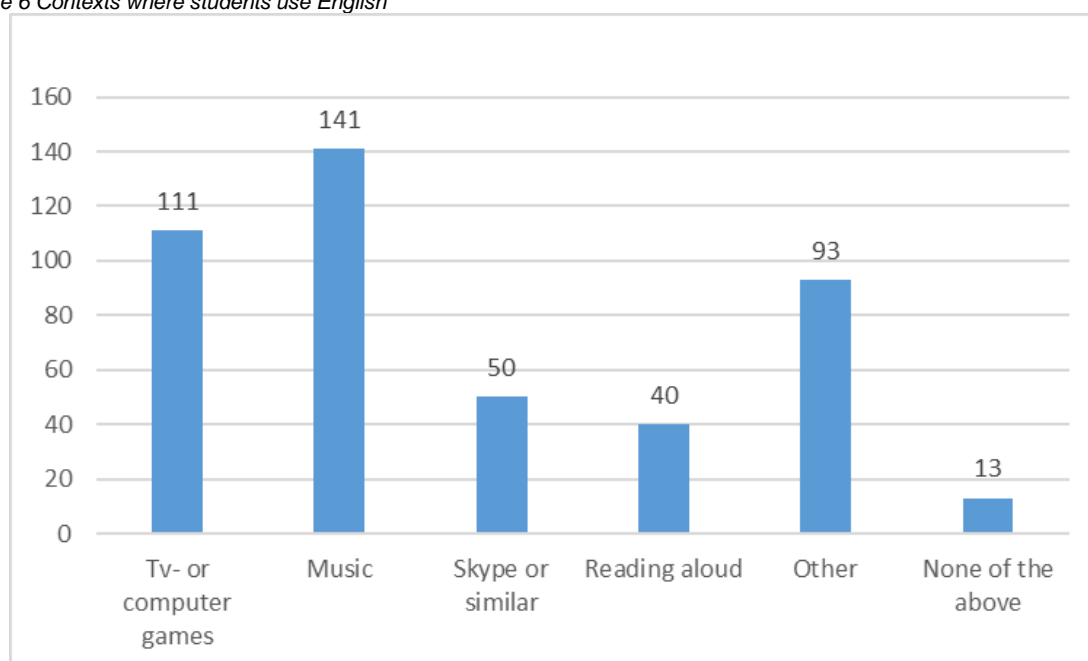
Even though these questions are based on a 5-point Likert scale, the trendlines still indicate a clear discrepancy in self-reported behavior for extramural English.

Figure 5 Self-reported behavior on the use of English outside of school



Furthermore, the students reported that they use English outside of school in several different ways and quite a lot. The presupposed categories indicated how English is used outside of school. Here students reported the frequent use of music and gaming as extramural activities (see Figure 6). Furthermore, the results indicated that roughly 84% of the male participants reported that they are users of tv- or computer games in contrast to females with 57%. But qualitative answers in the questionnaire also indicate that English is spoken outside of school in several other ways than aforementioned, although not necessarily shared by the collective of participants (the number in brackets indicate how many reported the following contexts): at work (11), social media [e.g. Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, online chat rooms] (15), on the phone (7), while traveling to other countries (2), during sports activities (6), fun with friends and translanguaging in slang (3), speaking with members of the family for practice (2) talking with myself for practice (1). Some students also listed various ways that they interact in English outside of school but not necessarily speaking the language: movies, books, and audiobooks, podcasts, writing fanfiction, and thinking in English when talking to oneself.

Figure 6 Contexts where students use English



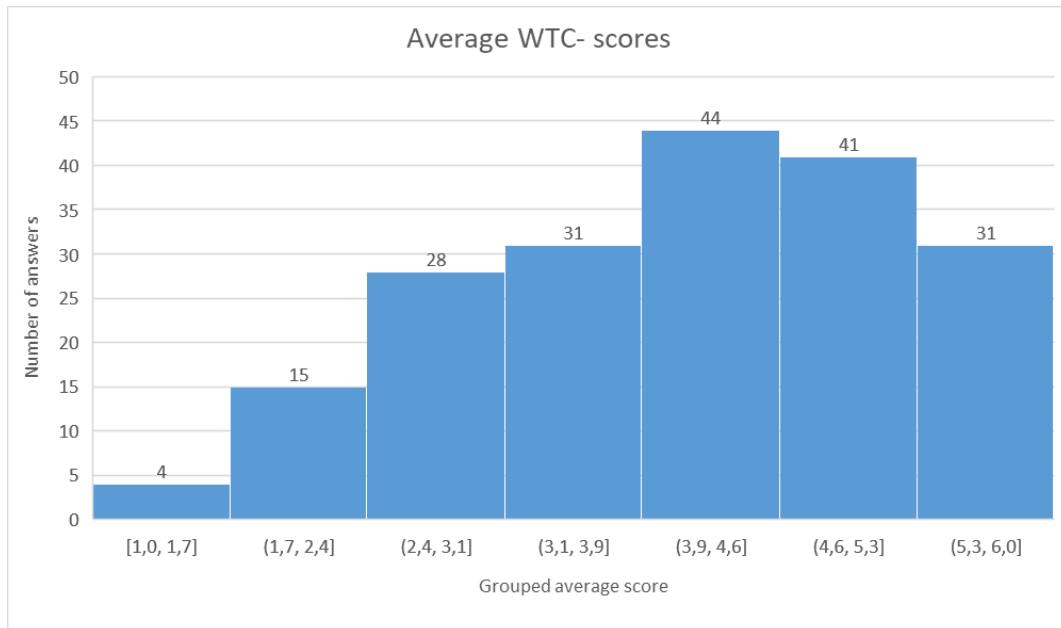
In summary, these results indicate that extramural English is prevalent in the lives of a majority of the students. It also illustrates a wide range of usage among the participants. However, for the following statistical analysis the above and below average answers will be grouped, i.e. 'Quite a lot' is grouped with 'A lot' etc., to provide comparable variables and those who answered 'Not at all' are excluded.

5.1.2. Reported willingness to communicate

The results of the questionnaire suggest a fairly spread result of WTC. Namely, not all students reported that they are people that are always willing to communicate or the opposite. In contrast, the result suggests that some people report a higher degree of WTC compared to others. Since the Cronbach's alpha test revealed a high internal consistency it is possible to average the scores for each participant to produce a number corresponding to average WTC presented in a histogram (see Figure 7). Histograms are rarely used for nominal data (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 754),

but it was deemed appropriate here because it provided a better overview than a table and is very similar to a bar chart.

Figure 7 Average WTC scores

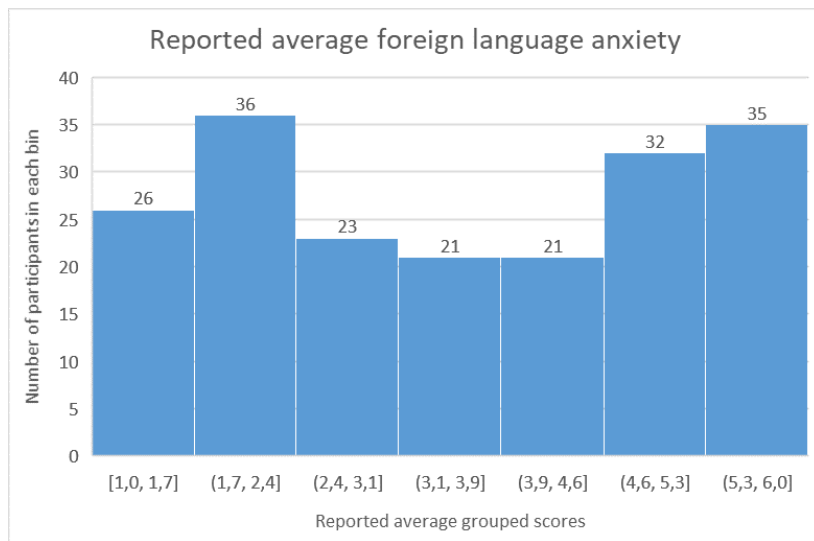


This seven-bin histogram shows that 31 averaged a score in the range of 3.1 and 3.9, thus leaning towards more willingness to communicate depending on the situation. But 47 participants reported an average score between 1-3,1 and therefore reporting less willingness to communicate. In contrast, 126 participants reported higher levels of WTC because their results were on the opposite scale. This suggests that on average a majority of the participants reported an above-average willingness to communicate in English. In terms of gender, the male participants reported a mean score of 4.26 and the female participants averaged slightly lower, at 4.09.

5.1.3. Reported foreign language anxiety

In contrast to the results concerning WTC, there is a larger spread in reported foreign language anxiety. As the histogram shows this is clearly a polarizing question since 88 participants reported an above-average FLA while 85 participants a below-average FLA (see figure 8). The results also suggest a gender difference here; the male participants reported a mean value of 2.9 and the female participants reported a mean value of 3.48.

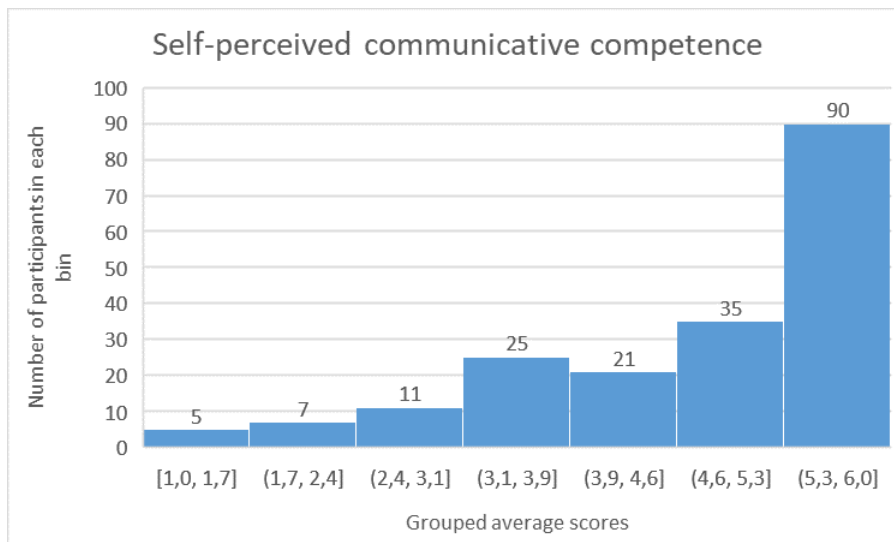
Figure 8 Reported average foreign language anxiety



5.1.4. Self-perceived communicative proficiency

The results for this concept revealed that a clear majority of the participants rated their communicative competence with high scores (see Figure 9). In fact, 51 participants rated their communicative competence with top scores for all questions. Only 23 participants rated their communicative ability below average, and only one participant rated SPCC with the lowest scores on all questions. In short, a clear majority reported high levels of communicative confidence. The female participants scored a mean value of 4.81 and the male participants scored a mean value of 4.95 thus indicating a slight difference.

Figure 9 Reported self-perceived communicative competence



5.2. Statistical analyses

Here, the major and minor subgroups are compared to the average scores of the total population of participants to look for answers to research questions and a better understanding of factors that impact or predict WTC in a Swedish context.

5.2.1. Correlation

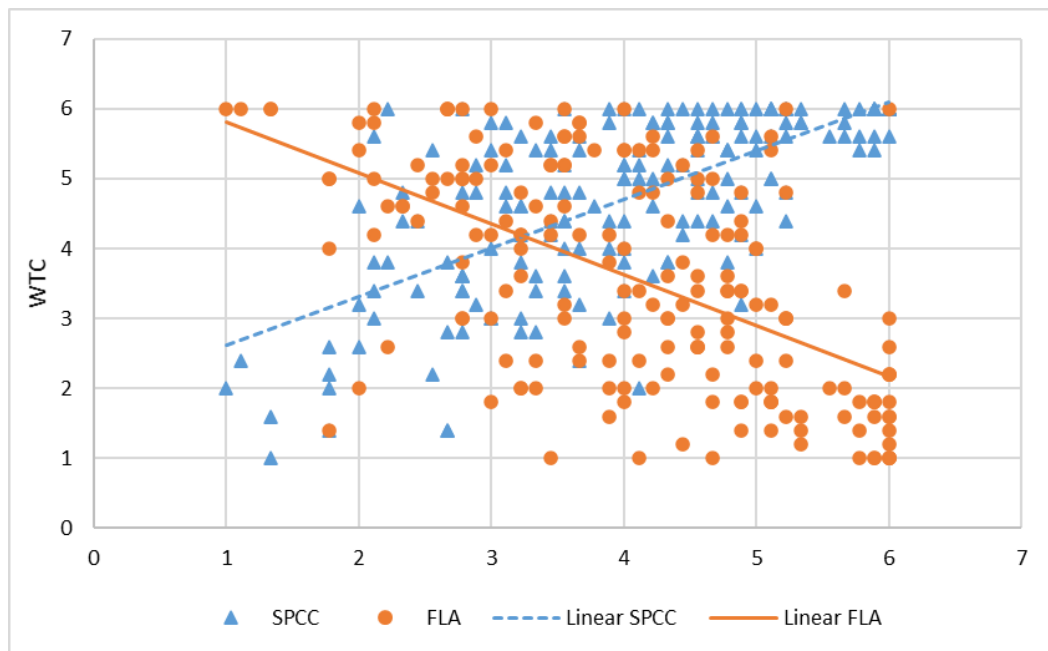
Table 3 Correlation between concepts

Concepts	Population Standard deviation	Population mean
WTC	σ 1.218	μ 4.083
FLA	σ 1.565	μ 3.560
SPCC	σ 1.226	μ 4.760
Concepts	Correlation	T-test (unreliable for this data)
WTC-FLA-correlation	$r = -0.565$	$p < 0.003$
WTC-SPCC-correlation	$r = 0.692$	$p < 0.0000000000000000006$
SPCC-FLA-correlation	$r = -0.481$	$p < 0.00000000006$

The results for the total population of participants had a variation from 48% at the lowest level to 69% at the highest (see Table 3). In short, the results indicate a feasible relationship far from zero between these concepts. According to Denscombe (2014), a correlation close to 0.7 indicates a relatively strong relationship (p. 367). However, a correlation analysis is not able to state anything about the cause because neither variable assumes a dependent role, this requires a regression analysis. Table 3 also indicates why a t-test is avoided due to the skewed results when applied to ordinal data.

5.2.2. Multiple regression analysis

Figure 10 Multiple regression analysis of model fitness



The multiple regression analysis yielded a result for the fitness of the model with an adjusted r-square value of 54.55%. Also, the f-statistic significance value shows that the model is statistically significant above the value of $p < 0.001$. Furthermore, the model also indicated that FLA and SPCC were statistically significant predictors of WTC above the value of $p < 0.001$. Also, the trendlines help visualize the effect of the model (see Figure 9). In short, the result suggests that an increase in SPCC leads to an increase in WTC. In contrast, an increase in FLA leads to a decrease in WTC.

5.2.3. Mann-Whitney U-test

The Mann-Whitney U-test (see Figure 11) was applied to the high vs. low levels of reported extramural English in two cases, first on the reported overall use of English outside of school, and secondly on the amount that participants reported spoken English outside of school. In short, these are not necessarily the same groups (compare Figures 3 and 4). In short, the test is designed to test whether the act of speaking vs not speaking extramural English proved a higher difference on WTC compared to simply using or interacting with extramural English.

Figure 11 Mann- Whitney U-test formula.

$$U_1 = R_1 - \frac{n_1(n_1 + 1)}{2}$$

or

$$U_2 = R_2 - \frac{n_2(n_2 + 1)}{2}$$

The results of the Mann-Whitney U-test indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in reported WTC between the populations that reported a high-level use of Extramural English compared to the group who reported a low-level use (see Table 4). However, the results could not conclude a difference in WTC between spoken extramural English and the overall use of extramural English. Namely, the results are inconclusive in terms of whether spoken extramural English or overall use of extramural English has more impact on reported WTC.

Table 4 Results of Mann-Whitney U-tests

Test	Result
Low vs. high levels of spoken EE affecting WTC	p<0.002753*
Low vs. high levels of overall EE affecting WTC	p<0.000001576*
Low vs. high levels of overall EE affecting SPCC	p<0.0000008*
Low vs. high levels of overall EE affecting FLA	p<0.00004186*

*Significance above the p<0.01 level

In addition, the results indicate a significant difference between groups that report a high or low use of extramural English on the effect on both SPCC and FLA. Namely, frequent use of extramural English seems to reduce reported foreign language anxiety and increase communicative confidence.

5.3. Qualitative data from the questionnaire

Multiple participants (28) added information concerning their willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communicative competence. Namely, they provided in-depth explanations for the reasons for their answers. Several of the participants listed reasons for their foreign language anxiety that is related to communication apprehension. For example: “it’s not speaking English that is problematic, but speaking in front of a group in general regardless of language”, “it’s not speaking English that is problematic, but the content of the presentation that is anxiety-inducing”, “my nervousness exists in all social contexts”. However, several participants mentioned issues related to the group- or norm pressure. For example: “I am unwilling to speak in English in front of the class because it is against the norm. I am afraid of becoming the teacher’s pet”, “I am very nervous about what my classmates will think of me when I speak English”. In addition, the social context was emphasized: “I am more or less willing to communicate in English with the peer sitting next to me depending on who the peer sitting next to me is”, “I rate my communicative capability high based on what I know I can do

in small groups”. Moreover, two participants raised concerns that they felt that the questions could not be related to their experience of oral communication in the English classroom. That is, the participants could not relate to the questions based on their opinion that such circumstances never occur. Hence, they felt that it was problematic to answer questions about the different concepts. Nevertheless, they raised important points concerning these concepts in the context.

Several participants mentioned that although rating their self-perceived communicative competence with high scores and the foreign language anxiety with low scores, they were still unwilling to communicate in the classroom based on the fact the questions for WTC seemed to be boring. Arguably, this is related to foreign language enjoyment.

6. Discussion

Here follows a discussion of the most important results of the study and the method and limitations of the study.

6.1. Factors that impact willingness to communicate in a Swedish context

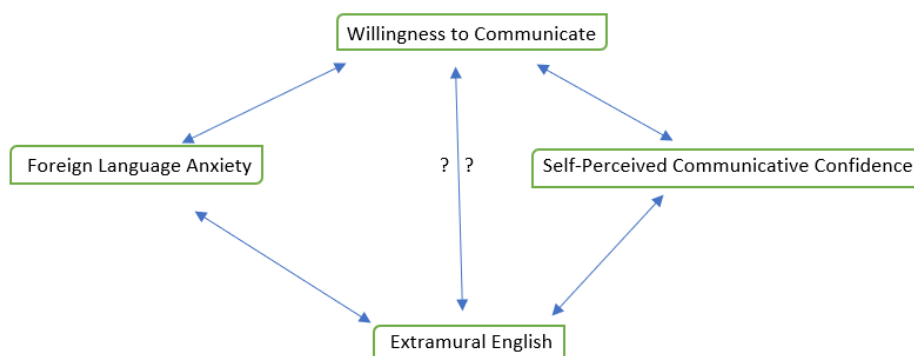
The quantitative statistically-based results of the study indicate that foreign language communication anxiety and self-perceived communication confidence were statistically significant factors impacting willingness to communicate in the Swedish context. Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U-test showed a statistically significant difference in reported willingness to communicate between the participants who reported high use of extramural English and those who reported a low-level use of English. Here again, the same results are found between groups that use spoken English outside of school frequently and not frequently. At the same time, the results indicate that the high use of Extramural English is beneficial for reducing foreign language anxiety and increasing self-perceived communicative confidence. In short, this suggests an answer to what factors impact willingness to communicate in a Swedish context.

There are certainly more factors unnoticeable from these results. That is, even though FLA and SPCC are the main factors affecting WTC, other factors, for example, classroom environment, motivation, L2 attitudes, attitudes, proficiency level, age, etcetera, were all beyond the scope of this study (compare Elahi Shirvan et al, 2019). Also, the results are unable to discern whether these factors are a result of state or enduring psychological influences (MacIntyre, 2007). Namely, the results fail to indicate if a student is always willing to communicate or whether it depends entirely on the situation. For this reason, this poses the question of whether a prolonged development of state WTC could develop into an enduring influence, that is more trait-like, over time. Still, these results incorporate insight into extramural English, which is not frequently done in this field.

6.2. The impact of extramural English

Extramural English is often linked to improved language proficiency and vocabulary scores (Hannibal Jensen, 2007). Nevertheless, this result also suggests that participants who reported using English frequently outside of school in various contexts also reported a higher willingness to communicate. This could be related to the fact that the known predictors of willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety, and self-perceived communicative competence, too seem to be affected by extramural English. However, because there are significant relationships between FLA and EE, and between SPCC and EE, the results are inconclusive as to whether Extramural English has a direct or indirect impact on willingness to communicate. Still, there is sufficient data to suggest a model of relationships between concepts (see Figure 12).

Figure 12 Suggested model of the relationships between concepts



Consequently, this suggests that high levels of interaction with the English language outside of school facilitate oral participation in the English classroom. Arguably, students are able to interact with the English language in a stress-free environment, due to reduced peer pressure and the fear of negative evaluation on a social level, and process correct language use due to an extension of time spent in relation to ZPD. Considering that few of the participants reported explicitly practicing English outside of school suggests that whatever they learn or acquire during the extramural activities is linked to incidental learning.

The results also provide an insight into how students engage with extramural English. The fact that most of the participants reported that they use English in contexts of music indicates that music is probably a low-stress environment for most students. They can notice certain uses of language through the interaction of music and investigate this further with an interpersonal or intrapersonal negotiation of meaning. This also illustrates the widespread function of the influence of Anglo-American popular culture. In addition, YouTube videos are plausibly an excellent source for modified input because some social media influencers are eloquent speakers using a one-way communication channel. Therefore, they are most likely to avoid ambiguous language and sources for misunderstanding. Arguably, the person talking in the social media context is then prescribed the role of an expert which is why this particular tool could produce a mediating effect. Nevertheless, these activities require little to no effort on behalf of the user which could indicate a low impact on language acquisition (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016).

Some students reported high levels of SPCC combined with low levels of FLA but, surprisingly, reported low levels of WTC. This could be related to what Sundqvist and Olin-Scheller (2013) describe as an authenticity gap between the English used inside and outside of school. However, this could also be related to the discrepancy between learner-initiated activities and teacher-initiated activities (compare Figure 1). That is, the students might not enjoy the activities that are frequent in a school environment despite experiencing them as easy and not anxiety-inducing. In summary, this further strengthens the idea that foreign language enjoyment could be related to willingness to communicate.

Most students reported that they use English while playing TV- or computer games thus pointing to the use of English as a lingua franca in such contexts. Gaming is a known predictor for communicative proficiency and vocabulary knowledge (Hannibal Jensen, 2007). Building on previous studies on the use of extramural English, these results, too, indicated that a larger percentage of the male group used TV- or computer games compared to the female participants.

6.3. Gender differences

Even though gender was not a factor believed to produce a visible difference in WTC, a comment on gender is necessary. The results indicated only a slight difference for gender on the mean value for WTC. Moreover, results indicated a slight difference in mean scores for the concepts FLA and SPCC. Nevertheless, the results indicate that females reported slightly higher FLA, lower SPCC, and WTC. Notwithstanding these small differences, the results imply a gender difference for WTC. However, a gender perspective was beyond the scope of the study for the concept of extramural English. Indeed, further measurements with a specific aim of investigating gender differences could indicate interesting results in relation to willingness to communicate. Still, the results, in total, suggest that females have more foreign language anxiety and less self-perceived communicative confidence thus producing a lower willingness to communicate. This could be related to the social aspects of the classroom environment or other societal circumstances. Certainly, gender aspects in relation to social and classroom environment on willingness to communicate is an intriguing topic.

6.4. The impact of communication anxiety

Most results point to the impact of social aspects on language use. The qualitative results indicate that the social environment in the classroom dictates the students' willingness to communicate. Consequently, the results suggest that communication is easier in small groups and with close/positive social relationships. Unfortunately, the results also suggested that the classroom norm could be hampering oral communication because frequent use of oral communication in English in the classroom could label that individual as the "teacher's pet". This type of negative classroom climate could send two types of messages to students, firstly that English is not an important subject, and secondly that a good command of English in oral communication is not of any real-world use (compare Avello et al., 2019). In total, this is related to communication apprehension and/or foreign language anxiety.

According to sociocultural theory, the social and cultural context is crucial for the development of learning (Swain et al., 2015). Therefore, if students experience high levels of foreign language anxiety, they are unable to access these contexts in a beneficial fashion. Participation in class is arguably hampered if students are unable to connect with peers and teachers alike. That is, they are unable to use teachers as cultural mediating tools to improve scaffolding, and subsequently not their peers either. As a result, students would spend less time in the zone of proximal development psychologically. Indeed, language learning without scaffolding from a teacher could prove problematic. Certainly, students could use other cultural artifacts as a way of scaffolding learning; but if these cultural artifacts require a learning curve or are difficult to use, the students miss the role of the expert in the classroom. By extension, foreign language learning could significantly hamper language acquisition and learning. However, the results suggest that strong positive social relationships remedy the issue significantly.

Due to the fact that previous studies have suggested that there exists a negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and foreign language enjoyment (Dewaele, 2017), and these results indicate a negative relationship between foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate, this could form the hypothesis that foreign language enjoyment and willingness to communicate would exhibit a strong relationship.

6.5. The impact of communicative confidence

The fact that a lot of the participants rated their SPCC with top scores does not come as a surprise, considering Sweden's students' rank in proficiency globally (Education First, 2019). However, this could either point to the fact that the questionnaire asked questions for situations

that were deemed as too easy for the participants, or that the participants exhibit high levels of confidence in their ability to communicate orally in English. Nevertheless, the total results point to the fact that self-perceived communicative confidence is not a sole predictor for WTC, but perhaps the strongest one (see Table 3) in the English classroom (compare Elahi Shirvan et al., 2019). Indeed, the results suggested that the sample population's mean score for both concepts, SPCC and WTC, was high.

High communicative confidence is arguably better for language learning. Since people with a high rated SPCC are most likely more ready to enter into discourse, in comparison with their counterparts, they presumably engage more frequently in foreign language interaction. Although foreign language interaction does not automatically lead to language acquisition, it certainly increases the chances of successful acquisition incidentally in low effort extramural English activities, e.g. music, subtitled movies, browsing social media, etc. Indeed, this measurement of WTC only encompassed classroom situations; therefore, it does not yield insights into student's WTC in extramural English, notwithstanding that reported frequent use of spoken extramural English was low overall (see Figure 4). On the other hand, a high frequency of interpersonal classroom interaction could be beneficial for language learning due to an extended time spent in the zone of proximal development and producing increased chances for negotiation of meaning. Similar to foreign language anxiety, increased confidence arguably increases the chances of using various artifacts that could stimulate language learning directly or indirectly. In summary, high levels of self-perceived communicative competence increase the chances of successful language acquisition due to higher levels of participation in school activities.

6.6. Discussion of the method and limitations of the study

As previously mentioned, the method and data collection suffered due to the 2020 COVID19 pandemic in that the study could not gather qualitative data through interviews in schools. A qualitative perspective could have yielded better depth to the empirical data and consequently better answered some of the research questions. However, the results gathered in the questionnaire offer considerable data on WTC in a Swedish context.

Certainly, the time limitations of the study meant that the piloting of the study would naturally be limited. Consequently, there are some issues pertaining to the design of the questionnaire that limited the analysis. Firstly, the questions in the questionnaire concerning the results of Extramural English are based on a 5-point Likert-scale instead of a 6-point Likert-scale. However, the question was intended to be interpreted as a 4-point Likert scale since the 'Not at all' option was found to be unlikely. In addition, the 3-point-/neutral option is biased towards a negating interpretation of the question. Furthermore, the amount of reported extramural English is arbitrary since it is not related to a measurable number. As a hypothetical example, person A answered that they use extramural English 'A lot', corresponding to 7 hours/week, and person B answered that they use Extramural English 'A little' corresponding to 12 hours/week (compare Hannibal Jensen, 2007). Consequently, the measurement is possibly unreliable. Nevertheless, the results between the two questions yielded considerably different results, thus strengthening the validity of the results. Still, this hampered statistical analysis based on the results. Moreover, two participants raised concerns that they felt that the questions were not related to their experience of oral communication in the English classroom.

7. Conclusion

Firstly, the results of the study indicated that foreign language anxiety and self-perceived communicative competence were statistically significant predictors of willingness to communicate

for Swedish students in upper secondary schools. However, in contrast to previous studies concerning WTC, the results from this study suggest a statistically significant effect of extramural English on reported WTC. However, the jury is still out on whether the higher levels of reported EE had an indirect effect which resulted in a reduced FLA, or increased SPCC and thus affecting WTC. Namely, the ultimate cause of the noticed increase in WTC is difficult to pinpoint. Also, the study contributed to the idea that the classroom environment and social relationships probably affect WTC. In conclusion, this limited study has contributed to the knowledge of WTC in several ways.

7.1. Pedagogical Implications for the Swedish EFL classroom

The results of the study indicate that there are certain implications for how various factors impact students' willingness to communicate in a Swedish context. With regards to the generalizability of the effect of extramural English, countries with similar access as Sweden to extramural English material, and with similar habits on extramural English use (Sundqvist and Sylvén, 2016) are possibly witnessing the similar effect of extramural English on willingness to communicate. However, other socioeconomic factors or cultural contexts are arguably affecting students' access to English material outside of school. Still, EFL teachers should be aware that their students' extramural foreign language habits possibly influence their participation in oral communication in school. Indirectly or directly, higher use of EE suggests improved participation in the EFL classroom. In addition, it could be useful for EFL- teachers to emulate some of the enjoyable pervasive activities in an attempt to bridge the gap between school- and extramural contexts (Sundqvist & Olin-Scheller, 2013; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016).

Other implications concern the creation of a classroom environment which decreases foreign language anxiety while increasing self-perceived communicative competence. This study suggests that participation in oral communication is enhanced if students are confident and comfortable in the classroom environment. The qualitative data suggest that close personal relationships with peers, and communication pertaining to small-group activities, alleviates pressure, and anxiety. In total, this points to the importance of psychological aspects of language learning related to the social and cultural contexts which are created and formed in a school environment.

7.2. Suggestions and recommendations for future research

For a more comprehensive understanding of the results in this study, it would be interesting to cross-reference the results of willingness to communicate with a weekly number of hours spent on extramural English to see if there exists a relationship then. In addition, observations could provide a deeper understanding of the actual willingness to communicate in various contexts. That is, to see if the people that report a high level of willingness to communicate correspond to people that frequently communicate. However, this would go against the current working definition of willingness to communicate, because willingness to communicate only encompasses a readiness to enter communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). Consequently, such a measurement would have to be very sophisticated to ensure reliability. Furthermore, other forms of qualitative data would be useful for a deeper understanding of willingness to communicate in a Swedish context. This could answer other questions concerned with why, for example, some people experience foreign language anxiety. As aforementioned, a gender aspect with this aim would be beneficial. Nevertheless, it could also provide a deeper understanding of how motivation influences students' willingness to communicate, with the background that some students reported high levels of SPCC combined with low levels of FLA but were still unwilling to communicate. This could also answer the question of whether foreign language enjoyment is related to willingness to communicate or not.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Information letter:



HÖGSKOLAN
DALARNA

Information om undersökningen ”Gymnasieelevers vilja att kommunicera muntligt i engelskundervisningen”

Hej!

Du tillfrågas härmed om deltagande i denna undersökning. Syftet med studien är att undersöka hur svenska gymnasieelevers vilja att kommunicera muntligt i Engelskundervisningen ser ut. Att undersöka elevers attityder rörande muntlig kommunikation i Engelskundervisningen är viktigt för att synliggöra ett svenskt perspektiv kring faktorer som påverkar den muntliga kommunikationen i klassrummet.

Detta är en viktig studie eftersom muntlig kommunikation är ett centralt innehåll i den svenska läroplanen och idag finns det väldigt lite forskning kring svenska elevers attityder till muntlig kommunikation i Engelskundervisningen.

Materialet i denna undersökning samlas genom att ta reda på elevers attityder till vad som påverkar viljan att kommunicera med hjälp av elevenkäter och intervjuer med elever som metod. Du ombeds svara på frågor kring dina attityder till muntlig kommunikation i klassrummet i Engelskundervisningen, en begränsad mängd bakgrundsuppgifter samt andra frågor kring din språkanvändning.

Du som gymnasieelev ombeds härmed svara på denna korta enkät (max 10 minuter) och eventuellt delta i en intervju. Allt deltagande är helt frivilligt och du kan när som helst dra dig ur undersökningen utan att förklara varför. Alla uppgifter du lämnar är konfidentiella och anonyma. Det är endast forskaren och handledaren som har tillgång till det insamlade materialet. Allt material som samlas in under undersökningen kommer att förstöras när examensarbetet har fått ett resultat. Resultatet från undersökningen kommer att publiceras online i form av en uppsats vid Högskolan Dalarna. Undersökningen kommer ej att behandla personuppgifter, men för att delta måste du ha fyllt 15 år.

Ytterligare upplysningar lämnas av nedanstående ansvariga.

XXXXXXXX/ 2020-02-04

Student: Elias Bengtsson

Handledare: Jonathan White

XXXXXXXXXXXX

E-post :XXXXXXXXXX

jwh@du.se

Underskrifter:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Appendix B

Questionnaire



HÖGSKOLAN
DALARNA

Svenska Gymnasieelevers attityder till muntlig kommunikation i Engelskundervisningen

Var vänlig fylla i alla uppgifter så noga som möjligt och bara ange ett svar per fråga. Är du osäker på någon av frågorna så ställ gärna en fråga. Är det någon fråga du känner dig obehaglig på att svara på så kan du hoppa över att svara. Kom ihåg att alla svar är anonyma och konfidentiella.

Var vänlig kryssa denna ruta för att visa att du tagit del av informationsbrevet rörande studien:

(A) Bakgrundsuppgifter:

(A1) Kön: Man/Pojke Kvinna/Tjej Annat/Vill inte svara

(A2) Ålder: 15år 16år 17år 18år 19 eller äldre

(A3) Årskurs: 1 2 3 Annat

(A4) Jag läser just nu: Engelska 5 Engelska 6 Engelska 7 Annat

(A5) Språk:

Svenska är mitt förstaspråk/ modersmål

Engelska är mitt förstaspråk/ modersmål

Jag har ett annat modersmål än Svenska/ Engelska

(B) Engelska utanför skolan:

(B1) Jag **talat** Engelska med min släkt/familj eller vänner eller andra **utanför skolan**:

(Välj ett alternativ)

Mycket Ganska mycket Lite Ganska lite Inte alls

(B2) Jag **använder** Engelska **utanför skolan** genom till exempel: *i textchattar med vänner, på skype eller liknande, läser på Engelska i bloggar, böcker, tidningar, eller andra textkällor, tittar på serier och film med Engelskt tal t.ex YouTube, lyssnar på musik med Engelska, spelar tv/dator-spel och använder Engelska då, följer engelsktalande personer online (exempelvis twitter, instagram, facebook, podcast) eller andra exempel på aktiviteter med Engelska. (Välj ETT alternativ)*

Mycket Ganska mycket Lite Ganska lite Inte alls

(B3) Jag **talat** Engelska **utanför skolan** i dessa sammanhang:
(Välj de alternativ som stämmer för dig, flera alternativ tillåtna.)

Tv/ Dataspel online Musik Skype/liknande Läser högt Annat

Inget av ovanstående/ annat - beskriv gärna:

(C) Viljan att kommunicera:

(Ringa in den siffra som stämmer bäst överens)

(C1) Jag är villig att göra ett rollspel på engelska framför klassen (t.ex. beställa mat på en restaurang)

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(C2) Jag är villig att ge en kort presentation om mig själv utan anteckningar på engelska framför klassen.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(C3) Jag är villig att ge ett kort tal på engelska till klassen om staden där jag bor med anteckningar.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(C4) Jag är villig att översätta ett muntligt uttalande från svenska till engelska i en grupp.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(C5) Jag är villig att på engelska be läraren att upprepa vad hen sa eftersom jag inte förstod.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(C6) Jag är villig att göra ett rollspel på engelska med min bänkgranne (t.ex. beställa mat på en restaurang)

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(C7) Jag är villig att fråga min bänkgranne på engelska vad ett engelskt ord betyder som jag inte förstår.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(C8) Jag är villig att fråga inför en mindre grupp i klassen på engelska vad ett ord på engelska betyder.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(C9) Jag är villig att fråga inför en mindre grupp i klassen på engelska hur man uttalar ett ord på engelska.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(D) Ångest vid användande av Engelska

(Med ångest menas här en känsla av oro eller nervositet vid användande av engelska muntligt i klassrummet)

(D1) Jag får ångest när jag ger en presentation på engelska inför resten av klassen.

Stämmer inte alls Stämmer bra

1 2 3 4 5 6

(D2) Jag får ångest när jag deltar i ett rollspel eller en dialog inför hela klassen på engelska.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(D3) Jag får ångest när läraren ställer en fråga till mig på engelska.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(D4) Jag får ångest när jag måste tala utan förberedelse inför klassen på engelska.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(D5) Jag får ångest när jag talar vanligt på engelska med min lärare under aktiviteter i klassrummet.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(E) Självförtroende och förmåga att använda engelska

(Avser hur du bedömer din förmåga att använda engelska vid muntlig kommunikation i klassrummet)

(E1) Jag kan ge min bänkgänne vägbeskrivningar till min favoritrestaurang på engelska.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(E2) Jag kan göra ett rollspel på engelska vid mitt skrivbord med en klasskamrat (t.ex. beställa mat på en restaurang).

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(E3) Jag kan översätta ett muntligt uttalande från svenska till engelska i ett grupparbete.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(E4) Jag kan berätta på engelska för mina klasskamrater om handlingen i en tv-program jag sett.

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

(E5) Jag kan göra en kort presentation om mig själv på engelska utan anteckningar inför klassen)

Stämmer inte alls 1 2 3 4 5 6 Stämmer bra

Stort tack för ditt deltagande!

Appendix C

- WTC- Willingness to communicate
- EE- Extramural English
- EFL- English as a Foreign Language
- CLT- Communicative Language Teaching
- FLA- Foreign language anxiety
- FLE- Foreign language enjoyment
- CA- Communication Apprehension
- FLCAS- Foreign language classroom anxiety scale
- SPCC- Self-perceived communicative competence
- LBC- language learning and teaching beyond the classroom