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Emotioncy, Extraversion, and Anxiety in Willingness to Communicate in English

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ABSTRACT

A myriad of factors may be involved in learning a second language, one of which is individuals' Willingness to Communicate (WTC). Research has shown that, all things being equal, those who are more willing to engage in conversation with others, are more effective language learners. WTC may be in turn influenced by a variety of proximal (e.g., anxiety) and distal (e.g., extraversion) factors. *Emotioncy* as a newly-developed concept, which refers to the emotions evoked by the senses, is also hypothesized to affect WTC. Emotioncy ranging from Avolvement (Null) to Exvolvement (Auditory, Visual, and Kinesthetic emotioncies) and Involvement (Inner and Arch emotioncies), focuses on measuring the sense-emotion relationship quantitatively. To test the hypothesis: the higher the level of emotioncy, the higher the level of WTC, forty one advanced English language learners were asked to participate in a discussion class. Immediately after discussing a couple of topics, the learners were asked to take the emotioncy, extraversion, state anxiety, and WTC scales. The results showed that extraversion and emotioncy are positively related to WTC, while anxiety negatively influences it. Concerning emotioncy, it was found that the involved individuals are more willing to talk than the exvolved ones. In fact, when there exists an *emotioncy gap* for a topic in the native language of the learners, second language performance may be affected. In sum, the outcomes of the study provide empirical support for the significance of emotioncy in WTC, suggesting it as a new concept to be investigated more deeply by language educators and researchers.

Keywords: Emotioncy, Avolvement, Involvement, Exvolvement, WTC, Extraversion, Anxiety, Language Learning, Emotioncy Gap, Sensory Motivation

Introduction

Willingness to communicate (WTC), as a significant factor in first language studies (L1), is considered to account for learning a second language (L2). It means that, those who are more willing to communicate with others are more prone to success in learning a second language (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Although some studies (e.g., Charos, 1994) have shown that L2 WTC may not be a simple manifestation of L1 WTC, mounting research suggests that a number of factors including personality or anxiety may affect L2 WTC (e.g., MacIntyre, Babin, & Clement, 1999). In fact, due to the emphasis placed on communication in second language pedagogy, researchers have attempted to determine the factors contributing to the enhancement of L2 WTC. These factors have mostly fixed (extraversion) or fleeting (state anxiety) natures. However, it seems that *emotioncy* as another factor with neither fixed nor fleeting nature shows a more flexible disposition.

In 2013, Pishghadam, Tabatabaeyan, and Navari introduced *emotioncy* as a new concept in language education. It was inspired by Greenspan's (1992) ideas on Developmental,

Individual differences, Relationship-based (DIR) model of first language acquisition (Pishghadam, Adamson, & Shayesteh, 2013). Pishghadam (2015) defines emotioncy as the emotions that arise from sensory inputs, which can relativize cognition. Emotioncy is of six types: Null, Auditory, Visual, Kinaesthetic, Inner, and Arch. Table 1 provides the definition to each type of emotioncy.

Table 1

Emotioncy Types

(Adapted from “Conceptualizing Sensory Relativism in Light of Emotioncy: A Movement beyond Linguistic Relativism”, By R. Pishghadam, H. Jajarmi, and S. Shayesteh, in press, *International Journal of Society, Culture, and Language*. Copyright 2015 by IJSCL).

Type	Experience
Null emotioncy	When an individual has not heard about, seen, or experienced an object or a concept.
Auditory emotioncy	When an individual has merely heard about a word/concept.
Visual emotioncy	When an individual has both heard about and seen the item.
Kinesthetic emotioncy	When an individual has touched, worked, or played with the real object.
Inner emotioncy	When an individual has directly experienced the word/concept.
Arch emotioncy	When an individual has done research to get additional information.

As Figure 1 shows, emotioncy can range from Avolvement (Null emotioncy), to Exvolvement (Auditory, Visual, and Kinaesthetic emotioncies), and Involvement (Inner and Arch emotioncies). This hierarchical model shows that based on the senses through which individuals receive information, a special type of emotion can be generated. Exvolved emotioncies generate distal (more exaggerated) and the involved ones proximal (less exaggerated) emotions (Pishghadam, Jajarmi, & Shayesteh, in press). Given the significance of L2 WTC in language learning, this study intends to examine the roles fixed (extraversion), fleeting (state anxiety), and flexible (emotioncy) factors play in L2 WTC.

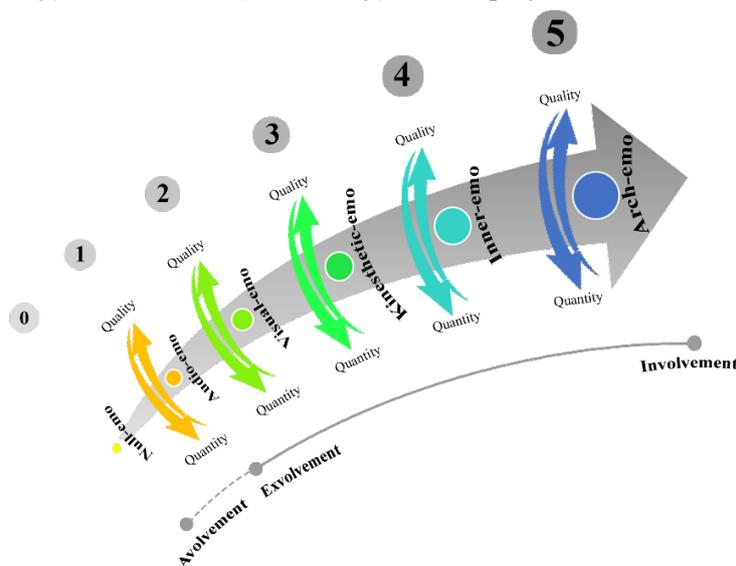


Figure 1: Emotioncy Levels

(Adapted from “*Emotioncy in Language Education: From Exvolvment to Involvement*”, By R. Pishghadam, 2015, October, Paper presented at the 2nd Conference of Interdisciplinary Approaches to Language Teaching, Literature, and Translation Studies. Iran, Mashhad).

Method

The total population participated in this study included 41 advanced Female English language learners. Their age ranged from 18 to 36. They studied English as a foreign language in a private language institute in Mashhad, a city in Iran. These learners enrolled in a discussion class to improve their speaking ability. The learners were asked to discuss two topics. Immediately after the class discussion, they were asked to take four scales: emotioncy, extraversion, anxiety, and WTC. To measure extraversion, NEO Five Factor Inventory (McCrae & Costa, 1999) was used. State-Trait Anxiety Scale (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983) was used to measure the state anxiety of the learners. To measure the learners’ WTC, a new scale was designed in the study. And to measure the learners’ emotioncy, the following metric was used (see Figure 2).

The metric comprises two parts: Sense and Emotion. The sense aspect (ranging from a little to a lot) measures the amount of exposure to a specific type of sense (Auditory and Visual), doing something (Kinaesthetic and Inner), or conducting research (Arch). The emotion aspect measures the valence of emotions ranging from negative to neutral, and positive. The emotioncy score ranges from 0 to 50. Finally, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to analyze the data.

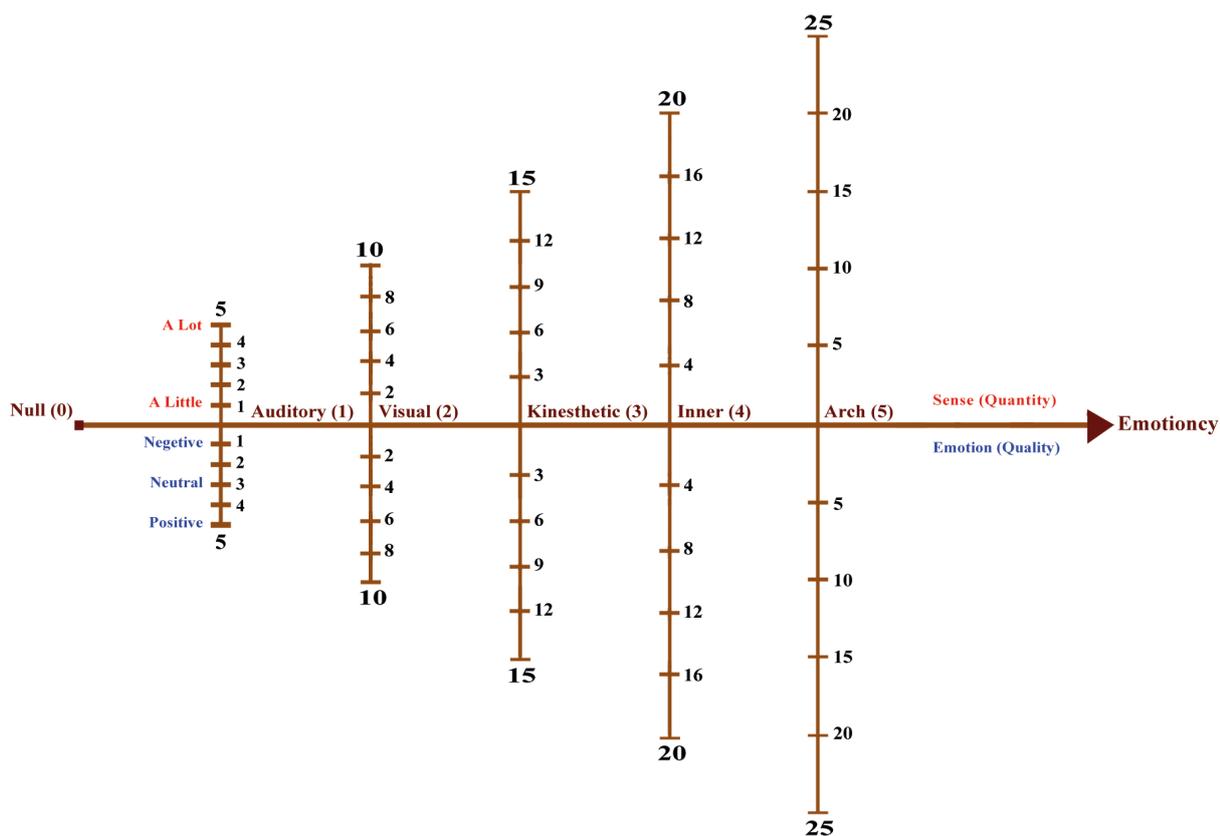


Figure 2: A Metric for Measuring Emotioncy

Results

Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between emotioncy, extraversion, anxiety, and WTC.

Table 2

Correlation between Emotioncy, Extraversion, Anxiety, and WTC

Variables	Emotioncy	Extraversion	Anxiety
WTC (first topic)	.45**	.43**	-.35**
WTC (second topic)	.48**	.49**	-.55**

**P-level<.01

As Table 2 shows, there are significant positive relationships between emotioncy ($r = .45$ and $r = .48$, $p < .05$), extraversion ($r = .43$ and $r = .49$, $p < .05$), and WTC. The relationship between anxiety and WTC was found to be negatively significant ($r = -.35$, $r = -.55$). This finding shows that emotioncy and extraversion almost equally can contribute to L2 WTC.

Conclusion

As already mentioned, this study intended to verify the association between emotioncy (flexible), extraversion (fixed), state anxiety (fleeting), and WTC. As the outcomes of the study demonstrated, there are moderate relationships between emotioncy, extraversion, anxiety, and WTC. Our major objective was to show that emotioncy has the potential to change the speakers' L2 WTC. Concerning extraversion and state anxiety, our findings are in line with those of previous studies (e.g., MacIntyre, Babin, & Clement, 1999), and with respect to emotioncy the findings demonstrate that the higher the level of emotioncy, the more probable the learner is willing to communicate in a second language.

The outcomes of the study reveal the fact that individuals become motivated to communicate when their right senses are tapped. The relationship between emotioncy and L2 WTC shows that senses can influence motivation. In this study, we call it *sensory motivation*, emphasizing that individuals may become more motivated when the senses from which they have already received inputs are given more attention in class discussions. In fact, unlike Dörnyei's (1994) focus on psychological factors and Norton's (2000) emphasis on sociological issues in delineating motivation, this study introduces the sense-related emotion as a potential source of motivation.

The implication of this study is that emotioncy as a potential source of learning can influence L2 WTC. Unlike personality traits, emotioncy has a dynamic nature that can change over time. It means that, an avolved individual can move towards exvovement or involvement over a short period. Even if there is an *emotioncy gap* due to individuals' social or cultural capital, a teacher can bridge the gap by moving individuals to the higher levels of emotioncy (Pishghadam, Baghaei, Seyed Nozadi, in press; Pishghadam & Shayesteh, in press). Moreover, to increase students' L2 WTC and to give them an equal chance of class discussions, teachers should be required to nominate the topics that students have high emotioncies for them.

Since in this study a small number of learners participated, another study with a large sample can use statistics that can be more powerful and increase the likelihood of generalization. Moreover, this study confined itself merely to two topics. Another study can be done to investigate a great number of topics ranging from Avovement to Involvement.

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