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In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form and Deposit Licence.
The Dynamics of Willingness to Communicate: A Study of Chinese High School Students’ English Language Learning during Communicative Task Performance

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the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
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Abstract

Informed by Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), the present study investigated the changes in willingness to communicate (WTC) in English among Chinese high school students after performing and repeating communicative tasks. Conceptualising WTC in a second/foreign language (L2 WTC) as a dynamic system that can vary from moment-to-moment, situation-to-situation and over time, this mixed-methods research aimed for a fuller understanding of the complex dynamic nature of learners’ L2 WTC by gathering and interpreting the data on three timescales: Per-second, task to task and over time.

The current study involved two parts. Part one was a quasi-experimental research intervention focusing on the changes in Chinese high school students’ (n=32) WTC in an English language classroom after engaging in and repeating communicative tasks. Designed with an experimental group and a control group, this part of the study investigated whether different L2 tasks and task procedures (i.e., task repetition) affect L2 WTC over six weeks and whether any changes in the level of L2 WTC occurred among different tasks. Data were collected through pre- and post-classroom L2 WTC questionnaires and task L2 WTC scales. Part two was a multiple-case study which explored how the learners’ (n = 6) L2 WTC fluctuated within L2 communicative tasks on a moment-to-moment basis and recorded the underlying factors behind variations in L2 WTC. It adopted an idiodynamic method, an innovative approach developed by MacIntyre and Legatto (2011), to study rapid fluctuations in the dynamic L2 WTC system using a per-second timescale that has not typically been investigated by previous research. Triangulated data were collected during six communicative tasks, including: 1) The participants’ self-reported idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC; 2) transcripts of stimulated recall interviews; 3) transcripts of learners’ journals.

The results showed both consistency and variation in L2 WTC among Chinese high school students when different timescales were considered. The students’ classroom L2 WTC remained stable over six weeks after performing and repeating L2 communicative tasks; their L2 WTC across the tasks showed no significant differences. Marked changes over 5-15 minutes were recorded when they engaged
in the tasks in the second part of the research. Most notably, the moment-to-moment fluctuations in L2 WTC appeared to be a result of the complex, dynamic and non-linear interactions between contextual, psychological, linguistic and physiological variables.
Dedication

To my husband

Eric Lei Ai
Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude goes first to my main supervisor, Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang, for his inspiring and encouraging guidance, intellectual and emotional support and critical feedback on the development of my thesis. I particularly appreciate him for giving me space to grow academically during my doctoral study.

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<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>communicative anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDST</td>
<td>complex dynamic systems theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>communicative language teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English-as-a-foreign-language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English-as-a-second-language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>individual difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>first or native language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>second or foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>map-task 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’</td>
<td>different version of map-task 1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>map-task 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>spot-the-differences-task 1</td>
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<td>different version of map-task 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>spot-the-differences-task 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBLT</td>
<td>task-based language teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>physical education</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>perceived communicative competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>structural equation modelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>second language acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>willingness to communicate</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets the scene for the current research. Initially it introduces the research in willingness to communicate (WTC) in language pedagogy and explains how I generated the interest in this field, it then highlights the gaps in related literature and presents the research questions for this study. After the significance of the study posited, I provide an outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

The current research explores the dynamic nature of the relatively new individual difference (ID) variable in L2 acquisition, willingness to communicate in English, to understand why some language learners choose to approach, or avoid, a second or foreign language (L2) communication habitually or only occasionally. My interest in this topic was inspired, largely, by my experience as an English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teacher. I struggled to get students to talk in the language classroom and, as a language learner, I tend to be quiet or sometimes can barely speak a word in English even though I am confident in L2 communicative competence. However, as Dörnyei (2005) argued, “it is not uncommon to find people who tend to avoid entering L2 communication situations even if they possess a high level of communicative competence” (p. 207). Research on L2 WTC, defined by MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément and Noels (1998) as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a specific time with a specific person or persons, using an L2” (p. 547), may have outcomes that may not be obtained when attention is focused only on linguistic or communicative competence (Denise et al., 2015; Dörnyei, 2003; Kang, 2005).

L2 WTC has been proposed as the ultimate goal of language instruction (MacIntyre et al., 1998) and a prerequisite for successful language learning (Peng, 2007). Learners with a higher level of L2 WTC, considered as the most immediate determinant of language use (MacIntyre et al., 1998), have exhibited more frequent L2 communicative behaviours (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre & Doucette, 2010; Munezane, 2015; Yashima et al., 2004), thereby facilitating L2
acquisition. The principle being that the more one communicates, the more practice one has in talking and the more deeply one learns in the language (Skehan, 1989; Swain, 2000). L2 WTC, thus, is a key non-linguistic factor that facilitates language development. Furthermore, MacIntyre and associates (2003) suggested that language programmes should be evaluated on non-linguistic outcomes (such as WTC, motivation, language anxiety, aptitude and language learning strategies) as well as linguistic performance. Reaching high levels of linguistic competence does not always translate into successful communication (Yashima, 2002). MacIntyre et al. (1998) argued that if a language learner wants to be an active speaker, he/she needs to not only be able to communicate but also willing to communicate in L2 (i.e., to seek out communication opportunities and to engage voluntarily in meaningful L2 communication). A higher willingness to communicate in a foreign language, it is assumed, leads to more frequent use of L2, thus making a better L2 speaker.

One way to promote WTC in an L2 classroom is to employ tasks by creating a communicative context (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 1989). The benefits of using pedagogical tasks to promote interaction in language learning have been highlighted (Ellis, 2003, 2012 for a review) with many Asian countries adopting a task-based approach to language teaching to provide learners with opportunities to use their L2 and develop further their language competence (Long & Crooks, 1992; Nunan, 1989; Weaver, 2007). The research on the relationship between L2 WTC and tasks is relatively scant and not proportional to the increasing emphasis on task-based instruction in language classrooms, especially in EFL contexts. Furthermore, the degree to which students’ L2 WTC varies across different types of speaking tasks and as the result of task procedures, such as task repetition, on the variability of language learners’ L2 WTC is not known.

It is of particular importance to investigate L2 WTC in the Chinese context, because Chinese EFL students lack direct exposure to English native speakers and have limited opportunities to engage in authentic communication in their daily life. Although the modern language pedagogical approach highlights communicative practice and introduces communicative language teaching (CLT) in language classrooms, Chinese students are often stereotyped to be passive learners or resistant to communication due to language anxiety, limited competency and
Chinese cultural heritage (Hu, 2005; Wen & Clément, 2003). The reticence among Chinese EFL learners is a disadvantage with the growing need for competent language users at a time of globalisation. It is therefore urgent to research students’ L2 WTC in this context to understand the fluctuations, and the variables influencing Chinese L2 learners’ decision to choose, or avoid, L2 communication, at different timescales. This may also shed light on similar EFL settings, such as Japan and Korea.

1.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

The current research adopts a complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) perspective, investigating the complex nature of L2 WTC as well as the interactions of the underlying variables. Informed by CDST, L2 WTC is a construct that is complex, dynamic and non-linear (MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011; Syed, 2016; Yashima et al., 2016). It is a complex phenomenon, the result of not a single but multiple underlying psychological, linguistic and contextual variables (MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Weaver, 2010; Yashima et al., 2016). A complex network existed between L2 WTC and its antecedent variables. Moreover, the antecedent variables interact with each other to exert a combined influence on L2 WTC. That is, the construct is a dynamic system featuring constant changes due to dynamic interactions and variations of all its influencing factors (Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011). L2 WTC is capable of fluctuating at different timescales and is always in a state of flux, since its underlying components are so interconnected that a minor change in one may affect other related factors (Yashima et al., 2018).

Furthermore, as Dörnyei (2009) stated that “change in one element does not always produce a proportional change in other elements” (p. 105), L2 WTC possesses non-linear characteristics given the fact that language learning is not a process with fixed cause and effect (MacIntyre & Serrous, 2015; Syed, 2016; Wood, 2016). For example, sometimes a slight change in the mood or anxiety may make a reticent L2 learner initiate communication, while at other times even higher motivation and perceived communicative competence cannot arouse an individual’s willingness to speak in another language. Therefore, L2 WTC is treated as a complex construct, dynamically changing and fluctuating due to a
non-linear interaction of multiple influencing variables, such as psychological, contextual and linguistic.

Previous research, however, failed to fully understand L2 WTC as it missed these characteristics of the construct. Initially, antecedents of L2 WTC in the psychological, linguistic and contextual dimensions were investigated separately; there was a particular emphasis on psychological trait-level factors, such as language anxiety, motivation and perceived communicative competence. The complex interactions and interrelationships between the different variables underlying L2 WTC remain to be explored. Despite acknowledging that change in L2 WTC occurs at different timescales, few studies have examined moment-to-moment fluctuations of L2 WTC in the here-and-now (MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011). Moreover, while mainstream research has focused on generalising L2 WTC from a macro-perspective (Pawlak et al., 2016), few attempts have been made to examine the concept from a micro-perspective, on a per-second basis. A linear cause-of-effect approach, examining the one-dimensional interrelationship between L2 WTC and its related factors, also prevails (Kim, 2004; MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre et al., 2001; Yashima, 2002), ignoring the non-linear reciprocal interactions between variables. These studies, which favoured a structural equation modelling (SEM) approach, have offered valuable but limited insights into the complex and dynamic nature of L2 WTC.

1.3 Research Questions

This study, therefore, contributes to the existing literature, by examining L2 WTC from a dynamic systems perspective, thus providing an additional lens. It helps to form a comprehensive and holistic view of this concept during L2 communicative task performance when different timescales are considered.

Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the focus of this study is both inter-individual and intra-individuals. It aims to: 1) Depict a general picture of Chinese high students’ L2 WTC at different timescales in the language classroom and typical patterns in fluctuations during task performance; 2) examine whether any variability appears in their L2 WTC level after performing and repeating tasks; and 3) explore how the participants decide whether to initiate communication
while performing communicative tasks.

The research questions are as follows:

1) What are the general L2 WTC profiles of Chinese high school students in the language classroom? (Part One: Quasi-Experimental study)

2) Does students’ L2 WTC change after performing L2 communicative tasks? Are there any differences in the outcomes from three conditions, namely: a) Repetition of the same task, b) repetition of different tasks but the same type, and c) repetition of different tasks and a different type? (Part One: Quasi-Experimental study)

3) Are there any typical patterns in moment-to-moment fluctuations of their L2 WTC while performing and repeating six L2 communicative tasks? (Part Two: Case study)

4) How does Chinese high school students’ L2 WTC in English fluctuate when performing L2 communicative tasks? (Part Two: Case study)

1.4 Significance of the Research

The study is significant for its theoretical, contextual, methodological and pedagogical contributions in the SLA field.

Theoretically, the study adopts the CDST approach to investigate the complex and dynamic nature of L2 WTC, thus making it possible to integrate psychological, contextual, linguistic and other potential variables and their reciprocal non-linear interplay to explain the changes in participants’ L2 WTC at different timescales. It is expected to add a new understanding to the L2 communication process and non-linguistic outcomes of SLA in general, and L2 WTC in particular.

Contextually, the current research is anticipated to deepen our understanding by filling the gap of insufficient L2 WTC research in China and other similar EFL settings. Empirical research on L2 WTC in China, especially with Chinese high school students, is still in its infancy compared to that in other Asian countries such as Japan and Korea. Replication of WTC studies in China, which has the
largest population of EFL learners in the world, is of particular significance to determine the generalisability of current L2 WTC theory.

Methodologically, this study is expected to contribute to L2 WTC by employing a mixed-methods approach to investigate the complex construct at different timescales: The experimental study focuses on the changes in participants’ L2 WTC over six weeks and from task-to-task, while the innovative idiodynamic method aims to capture moment-to-moment changes of L2 WTC on a per-second timescale. By combining these two methods, it is anticipated that a more comprehensive understanding of L2 WTC based on various sources of data will be provided.

Pedagogically, the study offers implications for communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT) in China and elsewhere as it examined the effects of L2 communicative tasks and task procedures on L2 WTC in a language classroom. The outcomes of the current study could enhance EFL teachers’ understanding of students’ L2 communication behaviour and underlying reasons behind the fluctuations of L2 WTC in the language classroom. Observations of L2 WTC during task performance and on second-by-second moments may provide insights to help teachers produce more active L2 speakers. This study is expected, also, to arouse students’ awareness of their L2 learning processes and encourage them to seek out more opportunities to initiate L2 communication.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

The current thesis consists of nine chapters.

Chapter One provides an overview of the research regarding the importance of L2 WTC, theoretical underpinnings, research gaps and questions as well as the significance of the research.

Chapter Two critically reviews the literature on L2 WTC, communicative tasks and task repetition, with particular emphasis on the idiodynamic method. Key terms such as timescales in SLA research and currents and waves of L2 WTC are explained.
Chapter Three introduces CDST as the theoretical framework, describes and explains the key properties of CDST and L2 WTC as a dynamic system, aiming to understand the complex nature of L2 WTC and provides the rationale of the current study.

Chapter Four presents and justifies the methodology and research design. It explains why this research employed a mixed-methods approach. A detailed explanation of the design of the experimental study, the use of the idiodynamic method, the procedures adopted for data collection and analysis in each part, as well as the ethical considerations are provided.

Chapter Five and Chapter Six present the findings and discussions of the experimental study while Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight present the findings and discussions of the multiple-case study respectively.

The last chapter, Chapter Nine, summarises the findings as a whole and includes a brief conclusion while pointing out the contribution, pedagogical implications, and limitations of the current study, and also makes suggestions for future study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of research on L2 WTC, L2 communicative tasks and task repetition to explain the purpose of understanding the nature of L2 WTC by providing and repeating L2 communicative tasks at different timescales. It also presents a rationale for conducting the research in a Chinese EFL context and introduces the process and purpose of the idiodynamic method employed in this study.

2.1 Willingness to Communicate in L2

2.1.1 Understanding the Nature of L2 WTC

The definition of WTC, similar to other ID variables such as language learning motivation and language anxiety, varies markedly depending on the particular perspective of the researcher or educator. To understand better the nature of WTC, it is crucial to consider different timeframes and make a distinction among three levels of conceptualisation: Trait, situation-specific and state (MacIntyre, 2007). At the trait level, WTC is viewed as an enduring predisposition remaining stable across situations and over a long period. A concern in studies focusing on this level is to find the typical or long-term patterns of an individual’s regular intention to initiate communication. From this perspective, an individual will carry with them a predisposition towards communication from one situation to the next (MacIntyre, 2012). At the situation-specific level, WTC is studied over time within a specific situation (such as L2 classroom, EFL and ESL contexts). Here, the focus is still on capturing typical patterns of an individual’s general tendencies in starting L2 communication. However, more situational variables (such as cultural orientation, classroom atmosphere, and immersion context) exerting stable influence on L2 WTC are taken into account. At the state level, unlike the above two levels of conceptualisation which concern a relatively long period of time, the sense of time is coming to focus on the here and now, and the concern is for the momentary volitional process of an L2 learner to choose to speak at the decision point (MacIntyre, 2007). At this level, a degree of WTC may rise and fall rapidly.
on a per-second basis and is unpredictable due to dynamic changes of various antecedents simultaneously.

All three levels of conceptualisation exist in the current literature, and each plays a distinct role in understanding the concept of WTC. The first two levels of conceptualisation investigate the trait-like WTC, influenced by enduring variables (both learner-internal and learner-external) over a period of time, while the third level concentrates on the dynamic situational WTC that fluctuates from moment-to-moment. The current study focuses on 1) exploring typical patterns of participants’ L2 WTC in an EFL context over six weeks and within an L2 communicative task performance (trait-like WTC); and 2) capturing second-by-second fluctuations of L2 WTC at a specific moment in time, which is the decision point to initiate L2 communication (dynamic situational WTC).

2.1.1.1 WTC as a Trait-like Predisposition

The construct of WTC was described initially as a trait-like predisposition, which implies that an individual’s willingness to communicate is relatively consistent across various contexts and receivers. From this trait-like perspective, “if person A is more willing to communicate than person B in one context, it is assumed that Person A will be more willing to communicate than Person B in other contexts” (McCrosky & Baer, 1985, p. 5). For example, Denise et al.’s (2015) large-scale study (n = 1117) argued for the predictable nature of WTC, as the results showed that those who were willing to participate in L2 classroom conversation would be more likely to be willing to communicate in L2 outside the classroom context. It is believed that there are long-term patterns of an individual’s general tendency to initiate communication, and so WTC is viewed as “a stable attribute and resistant to change” (Munezane, 2015, p. 176), which is “already shaped before entering the communication situation” (Kang, 2005, p. 290).

WTC was initially conceptualised in relation to first or native language (L1) communication, which explains why it was first treated as a stable predisposition. Based on Burgoon’s (1976) work on “unwillingness to communicate”, McCrosky and associates (McCroskey & Baer, 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990) developed the term “willingness to communicate” to explain individual differences
in engaging in L1 communication. Inspired by the phenomenon that individuals always demonstrated similar tendencies in initiating communication in various situations with their first language (McCroskey, 1992), they conceptualised WTC as a trait-like predisposition, which is relatively stable over time and across situations. In this sense, WTC was defined as the tendency of an individual to initiate communication when free to do so (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

From this perspective, MacIntyre (1994) developed an initial WTC model to identify predictor variables of this construct using path analysis (see Figure 2.1). In this model, he tested six individual variables as determinants of the WTC construct, including general personality dispositions (i.e., anomie, alienation, self-esteem, and introversion) and specific predispositions (i.e., perceived communicative competence (PC) and communication anxiety (CA)). He suggested that only the latter two individual characteristics, PC and CA, were key predictors of L1 WTC exerting a direct and consistent impact on this construct.

Figure 2.1 MacIntyre’s (1994) Willingness to Communicate Model (p. 137)

Soon, the case of communication situation in an L2 context was taken into account as a variable affecting WTC, based on the assumption that L2 WTC was highly unlikely a pure manifestation of L1 WTC as there are greater variations in language competence and more inter-group issues inherent in L2 acquisition process (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998). MacIntyre and
Charos (1996) made the first attempt to adapt the construct of WTC to the SLA and L2 communicative context. Replicating relationships described in Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model concerning SLA, and MacIntyre’s (1994) path model of L1 WTC, they proposed the first L2 WTC model. When investigating its antecedents and consequences they found that a few changes affected this construct when applied to the L2 context, especially in relation to the role of personality. Unlike MacIntyre’s (1994) model, this study suggested personality, in addition to PC and CA, also functions as an enduring predictor of this construct (see Figure 2.2). However, L2 WTC was still considered as a trait-like construct in the model, which remained relatively stable over time.

Later, a few studies focused on the trait-like feature to explain differences among individuals in L2 communicative behaviours and to investigate stable and persistent factors in “reticent speakers” or “active speakers” (Cetinkaya, 2005; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Wen & Clément, 2003; Yashima, 2002). Based on the belief that people do possess apparent cross-situational consistency in their communicative behaviours, researchers have concentrated on examining the stable influence of learner-internal variables on L2 WTC, with particular emphasis on PC, CA and motivation. For example, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) examined the role of trait-like variables in WTC among 92 Anglophone students in a Canadian immersion context. Employing the questionnaire method, they found that CA and PC had a direct influence on L2 WTC, while motivation had no significant influence on this construct. Partially replicating MacIntyre and Charos’ (1996) study, Hashimoto (2002) discovered that all the three affective variables, CA, PC and motivation, were predictors of L2 WTC among 56 Japanese students in an ESL context, while Cetinkaya (2005) concluded that CA was not related to students’ WTC, but motivation significantly associated with their L2 WTC in a Turkish EFL context (n = 356). Other ID variables, such as international posture (Kim, 2004; Peng, 2014a; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004), sex and age (MacIntyre et al., 2002) and personality (Cameron, 2013; Cetinkaya, 2005) have also been found to relate to L2 WTC.
Figure 2.2 MacIntyre and Charos’ (1996) Willingness to Communicate Model (p. 18)

Note: Theory-driven path  →  Data-driven path
These studies all adopted quantitative methods using self-report questionnaires to measure trait-like WTC, and its relationship with relatively stable learner-internal factors.

Later, learner-external factors that also exerted relatively stable and persistent influence on L2 WTC were taken into account (Liu & Jackson, 2009; Pattapong, 2010; Wen & Clément 2003). Although having situation-specific characteristics, these learner-external factors, such as immersion context and culture orientation are, “…located externally, as something pre-existing, a stable independent background variable, outside the individual” (Ushioda, 2009, p. 218). For example, Wen and Clément (2003) stated that Chinese culture functioned as an enduring restraint on Chinese L2 speakers who were described as “reticent learners”. They argued that Chinese students’ apparent unwillingness to communicate was deeply rooted in Chinese philosophy and culture, i.e., the other-directed self and submissive way of learning. Other factors were found to exert strong and stable influence on participants’ L2 WTC: For example past educational experiences (Liu & Jackson, 2009) and immersion context (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2001; MacIntyre et al., 2002; MacIntyre et al., 2003). These factors thus form a typical pattern of L2 learners’ intention to enter into L2 communication within a specific situation.

In summary, if we assume trait-like WTC exists, it means that an individual’s willingness to communicate in a specific context is predictable based on his/her willingness in another context; this construct is helpful mainly in identifying differences among individuals in initiating communication. From this perspective, we may:

1) Generalise typical patterns of L2 WTC in a particular context (for example, EFL or ESL context; immersion or non-immersion context; classroom context) among individuals;

2) Identify stable and persistent variables underlying L2 WTC within an individual over time, with an aim to explore predicting nature of this construct.
2.1.1.2 WTC as a Dynamic Situational Construct

Narrowing the timescale from long-term to a particular moment, MacIntyre and associates (1998) made the first attempt to redefine L2 WTC as a situational construct, a readiness occurring in the present moment. They proposed an influential heuristic model of L2 WTC (see Figure 2.3) in which a simple trait-like predisposition towards communication was extended to a more situational variable, with a social psychological influence converging at the moment of decision. In this model, L2 WTC, considered as the final psychological step before entering L2 communication, is vulnerable to change due to both enduring and transient variables at a specific moment. Instead of treating it as an individual’s general tendency to initiate communication, they redefined L2 WTC as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). In this definition, it is emphasised that the variables underlying L2 WTC should be considered at a particular time (a decision point when one chooses to initiate or avoid L2 communication) and the influence of interlocutor(s) should be found.

Specifically, the six-layered pyramid model postulated the situation-specific and context-sensitive nature of L2 WTC in two ways. First, the situational factors (including desire to communicate with a specific person and state self-confidence), which depend more on the specific context, were emphasised and placed at the third layer. They were the immediate and transient influences on L2 WTC that lay in the second layer as the final step in initiating a communicative behaviour. Trait-like and enduring variables (including personality, intergroup attitudes and climate, communicative competence, social situation and motivation) were put at the bottom three layers exerting distal and stable influence on this construct.

Second, this model initially considered the issue of time and emphasised the moments of volitional decision when one has to choose to initiate L2 communication or not. From this perspective, L2 WTC is a state of readiness occurring in the present moment. In other words, the initiation of communication is a matter of choice, a decision to be made at a particular point in time. The model allows a shift of attention from long-term patterns to the moment of communication. L2 WTC represents the point at which a person is about to communicate, suggesting that one should examine variables within specific
communication events and during a specific moment in time.

Figure 2.3 MacIntyre et al.’s (1998) Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC (p. 547)

This model laid a solid foundation for further research on L2 WTC as both a trait-like and situational variable. Subsequent investigations tested this model in their empirical studies and further specified the situated nature of L2 WTC, focusing on the dynamic emergence of students’ willingness to communicate at a particular moment. It suggests that the level of an individual’s L2 WTC can be subject to social contextual variables and fluctuate from moment to moment (Cao, 2009, 2011, 2014; Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005). That is, when in a particular situation, the emergence of a language learner’s L2 WTC, is the joint effect of both enduring and temporary variables, it may fluctuate (increase or decrease) and is vulnerable to change on a moment-to-moment basis.
House (2004) was one of the researchers who began to explore the changes of L2 WTC over time and the interrelationships among its influencing variables in an ESL context in New Zealand. It was an interpretive qualitative approach based on data collected from six participants over five weeks. By using semi-inductive interviews, dialogue journals and classroom observations, the study concluded that such concepts as motivation, WTC and communication are interlinked over time, and that WTC might change due to the learner’s mood as well as his/her interlocutor’s mood on any one day. It proposed the effect of time on changes in L2 WTC and that this effect varies across individuals. As time passes, the factors that influence L2 WTC interconnected differently, thus leading to increased or decreased L2 WTC. This study pointed out that it was premature to suggest that state WTC may not exist, as WTC is not only influenced by stable trait-like variables but is also under the influence of state variables (i.e., mood) and is capable of changing rapidly.

Kang’s (2005) influential research explored the dynamic nature of L2 WTC as situated in a conversational context. Based on her longitudinal study with data collected from videotaped conversations, interviews and stimulated recalls over eight weeks, the author examined the emergence and fluctuations of four Korea students’ L2 WTC at a specific moment. The study made a great contribution to the development of L2 WTC research by proposing a new model and a new definition of this construct stated as:

[L2 WTC is] an individual’s volitional inclination towards actively engaging in the act of communication in a specific situation, which can vary according to interlocutor(s), topic and conversational context, among other potential situational variables. (p. 291)

Figure 2.4 illustrates the model of situational WTC developed by Kang (2005). In contrast to previous studies, this model conceptualises L2 WTC as a situational construct emerging at a specific moment due to mutual interaction of situational and psychological variables. Situational variables, including topic, interlocutors, conversational context (during conversation) and other potential situational variables, exert a combined influence on psychological antecedents to situational WTC (i.e., excitement, responsibility and security), resulting in an individual’s
ultimate WTC together with his/her trait-like WTC.
Figure 2.4 Kang’s (2005) Situational Willingness to Communicate Model (p. 288)

Situational Variables Affecting Situational WTC

- Topic
  - interest
  - (relative) knowledge
  - personal experiences
  - sensitivity pertaining to speaker’s culture and country
  - prior experience discussing

- Interlocutors
  - first language (native vs. nonnative speakers; same as or different from speaker’s)
  - knowledge about speaker’s language proficiency
  - (relative) familiarity
  - number
  - interest/attitudes/responses
  - (relative) language proficiency between speaker and other nonnative speakers

- Conversational Context (During Conversation)
  - stage in a conversation
  - when asked for additional information
  - when misunderstood
  - after making mistakes

Psychological Antecedents to Situational WTC

- Security
- Excitement
- Responsibility

Emergence of Situational WTC

- Situational WTC

Ultimate WTC

Other Potential Situational Variables
Figure 2.4 highlights the interdependent nature of the variables determining situational L2 WTC. In Kang’s (2005) model, situational variables (i.e., interlocutor(s), topic and conversational context) and psychological variables (i.e., security, excitement and responsibility) are combined to explain the emergence and moment-to-moment fluctuations of L2 WTC. She stated that an individual’s ultimate L2 WTC, at a specific moment, is a combination of situational L2 WTC and trait-like L2 WTC which preexists before an individual enters a specific situation. Variations in situational influence may result in WTC fluctuations, even in a single dialogue with the same communication partner. The idea of changes in L2 WTC was first emphasised in this model.

Cao and Philp (2006), who deepened the understanding of the dynamic nature of L2 WTC in an ESL classroom in New Zealand (n = 8), also made a notable contribution to an understanding of L2 WTC. To explore the dual characteristics of this construct, they adopted a multiple data collection procedure, which included a questionnaire, classroom observation, audio recording and interviews over a period of one month. By triangulating these data, they examined both stable tendency and dynamic shifts in participants’ L2 WTC within the language classroom. The results showed that L2 WTC was influenced by the convergence of contextual variables such as group size, familiarity with interlocutors and topic, and personal factors such as self-confidence, and that the construct was vulnerable to change as the conversational contexts changes.

Later, Cao made further efforts to identify the dynamic nature of L2 WTC as situated in the language classroom using a multiple-case approach (Cao, 2009; 2011, 2013, 2014). These longitudinal studies, based on a socio-cognitive perspective, emphasised the notion of interdependence. They suggested that the classroom WTC construct was described best as a dynamic situational variable rather than a trait disposition. They argued that its emergence in the language classroom was a result of the interplay of environmental factors (including topic, task type, interlocutor, teacher and class interactional pattern), individual factors (including perceived opportunity to communicate, personality, self-confidence and emotion) and linguistic factors (including language proficiency and reliance on L1). The three dimensions of factors, they claimed, exert interdependent effects,
either facilitative or inhibitive of participants’ L2 WTC at any point in time, which leads to ebbs and flows in L2 WTC. An outstanding contribution made by these studies is that they pointed out the idea of “the degree of learners’ sensitivity to the environment”, which implies that the combination of factors differs between individuals. Some participants are likely to be influenced by what is happening in the classroom environment, while others are less easily affected. As she stated, “not every participant equally changes in the same way to the same degree at the same time because one’s experience is different from the others” (Cao, 2009, p. 153). This statement explains why participants differ in their L2 WTC fluctuations in the same language classroom environment.

Alongside the significant development of L2 WTC research in ESL contexts, Peng’s (2014b) study contributed to an understanding of EFL learners’ dynamic L2 WTC. Taking an ecological perspective, she tracked the trajectories of L2 WTC fluctuations over seven months to explore the dynamic and situational nature of L2 WTC in EFL learners in China. The participants’ L2 WTC fluctuations were assessed on a lesson-to-lesson basis by asking students to indicate their willingness to communicate in English soon after the class. Data collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant classroom observations and learning journals were triangulated. Based on the detailed portraits of the four participants’ fluctuating L2 WTC, they concluded that L2 WTC fluctuated greatly across classroom situations and that different patterns of fluctuations existed among the participants. Peng proposed a new definition of L2 WTC specific to Chinese EFL learners inside the classroom:

WTC in English inside the Chinese EFL university classroom is proposed to be situationally defined as a readiness to speak English in various classroom situations, which is the last step before volitionally taking or creating opportunities for purposes of English learning or communication. Its fullest play subsumes cognitive, linguistic, affective, motivational and cultural readiness within the immediate classroom context. (p. 155)

In this study, Peng also proposed an ecological model of WTC in the Chinese EFL setting suggesting that L2 WTC inside the language classroom emerges and fluctuates as a function of the joint effects of multiple factors internal and external
to students, and inside and beyond the classroom walls. Furthermore, she emphasised the interrelated and synergistic relations between five aspects of readiness before students enter into actual communication in class, that is, cognitive, linguistic, affective, motivational and cultural readiness.

Informed by the dynamic systems theory, several recent studies on L2 WTC focused on the dynamic interplay between context and the language learner (King, 2016; Syed, 2016; Yashima et al., 2016; Yue, 2014). For example, Yue (2014) examined a Chinese EFL learner’s complex interplay of self-related constructs, L2 WTC and the sociocultural context. A ground theory approach was adopted with data collected from a life story interview, 10 two-hour ethnographic classroom observations and 10 stimulated recall interviews over 14 weeks. Interpreting the findings within a CDST framework, Yue concluded, “L2 WTC is complex and dynamic, which works at a system level, within which every component is interconnected and interacts with each other in directing the development of L2 WTC” (p. 264). The author also emphasised the unpredictable nature of the emergence and fluctuations due to the complexity of L2 WTC.

Yashima et al. (2016) conducted an interventional study (n = 21) in a Japanese EFL setting focusing on both learners and the learning community as mutually interacting dynamic systems. The authors examined complex and dynamic nature of L2 WTC in continuously changing contexts that consisted of the changing tasks, interventions by the instructor, group membership change and atmosphere or ambience within the classroom. From the CDST perspective, both the EFL classroom and the learners in this community are regarded as dynamic systems that interact. Data collected from discussion sessions, classroom observations, self-rated scales, reflection sheets and questionnaire, suggested that the pattern of a student’s willingness to communicate in the language classroom was influenced by combined individual factors such as goals, challenges, individual characteristics and contextual and community-level factors such as class attendance, class atmosphere, teacher’s encouragement and topic.

Similar to Yashima et al.’s (2016) study that focused on Japanese students’ silence in the language classroom, King (2016), conducted a mixed-methods study adopting a series of stimulated recall interviews to explore classroom silence and
the dynamic interplay between context and the language learner within naturalistic L2 classroom settings in Japan. Based on a thorough description of five Japanese students’ reticence in certain situations in a language classroom, the author pointed out the underlying complex nature of language learner silence, concluding that multiple and interconnected concurrent variables combine to influence communicative behaviours on a moment-by-moment basis.

The studies mentioned above acknowledge the role of psychological, contextual and linguistic factors in the emergence of L2 WTC, and their interaction in complex, dynamic and non-linear ways. Moment-by-moment dynamic changes in L2 WTC in particular communicative contexts suggested by the pyramid model, however, were not investigated in these studies. That is, these studies, although they acknowledge the complex and dynamic nature of L2 WTC, did not measure the moment-to-moment fluctuations of L2 WTC methodologically. Consequently, MacIntyre and associates (MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre, 2012; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011) began to pay attention to the moments when the language learner makes the decision to speak voluntarily. According to MacIntyre (2007), “the initiation of communication is a matter of choice, a decision to be made at a particular moment” (p. 569). At the specific moment when one decides to communicate or not there are always moments of “ambivalence” influenced by both driving and restraining forces to initiate communication. To understand better the dynamics of L2 WTC and this moment-to-moment, state-level process, MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) developed the idiodynamic method to explore fluctuations in L2 WTC during learners’ task performance. The method involves video recording a sample of communication from a research participant who provides self-reported ratings on one or more variables (such as WTC, perceived communicative competence, or communication anxiety) using specially designed software. The ratings, taken at a rate of approximately one per-second, are able to provide a continuous graph of changes in the L2 WTC (MacIntyre, 2012). It allows for an examination of the interplay among various dynamic systems on the individual in real time, focusing on the variables determining participants’ decisions to initiate or avoid communication on a moment-to-moment basis. Based on data collected from six young adults, female L2 speakers, this study suggested L2 WTC is a dynamic system and changes from moment to moment.
Subsequent research further explored the dynamic nature of L2 WTC by adopting and adapting the idiodynamic method (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2014; Pawlak et al., 2016; Shimoyama, 2013; Wood, 2016). For example, Shimoyama (2013) adapted the idiodynamic method by asking six participants to repeatedly rate their own WTC with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very weak) to 5 (very strong) within a communicative task performance. On a minute-to-minute timescale, it examined patterns of fluctuations in learners’ WTC, fluency, accuracy and complexity across five speaking tasks. The findings showed that, as a result of the joint effect of a range of variables (such as speech performance, anxiety, impatience, lack of confidence in using English, learners’ recognition of task difficulty, task familiarity and communication experiences and vocabulary and grammatical knowledge), L2 WTC experienced dramatic fluctuations per minute within specific tasks. Pawlak et al. (2016) also adapted the idiodynamic method to capture rises and falls in learners’ willingness to speak at regular intervals by asking four different groups of students (n = 60) to self-rate their level of WTC on a scale from -10 to +10 and report their affective feelings during the task performance immediately. The results revealed that a range of contextual and individual factors influenced the extent to which WTC fluctuated. Wood (2016), another empirical study using the idiodynamic method, investigated the relationship between L2 WTC and language speech fluency. Four participants were asked to perform a communicative task, immediately view the recording and rate their WTC level (from -5 to +5) on a Windows-based specialised software designed by MacIntyre and Legatto (2011). Combining the interview data, the author concluded that WTC fluctuated constantly over a course of a speech situation, like waves in the ocean.

In summary, if we treat L2 WTC as a dynamic situational variable, the emergence of an individual’s willingness to communicate at a specific moment appears to be dependent on the combination of a long list of psychological, linguistic, pedagogical, situational, socio-political and other factors (MacIntyre, 2012). This means the construct is unpredictable due to the dynamic changes in its potentially relevant influences and their interrelationships. From this perspective, we may:

1) Explore the moment-to-moment fluctuations that occur within an individual at a particular time;
2) Better understand the combinations of multiple driving and restraining forces at the decision point when a choice to initiate L2 communication or not is made.

### 2.1.2 Variables Influencing L2 WTC

L2 WTC research has witnessed a shift of attention from a linear cause-and-effect relationship to a non-linear reciprocal interaction between variables underlying this construct. Quantitative research has examined interrelationship between this construct and its underlying variables from a linear cause-and-effect perspective to identify variables exerting stable and consistent influences on L2 WTC (Cetinkaya, 2005; Denies et al., 2015; Fallah, 2014; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Kim, 2004; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002). In these studies, antecedents of L2 WTC in psychological, linguistic and contextual dimensions were investigated separately, focusing on psychological trait-level factors, such as PC, CA and motivation. Path analysis and structural equation modelling were prevalent in this stream of research, which mainly focused on examining static relationships between WTC and variables that influence it. The contribution of these studies is that, from a macro-level perspective, they helped to establish a general, long-term pattern of L2 WTC within a specific situation across individuals.

Research recently has tried to capture the dynamic, complex and non-linear interactions of variables underlying L2 WTC at the moment of decision, when a speaker has to choose whether to initiate communication. From this perspective, L2 WTC is created by the non-linear mutual interaction of psychological, contextual and linguistic variables. Qualitative and mixed-methods research on L2 WTC, including the newly developed idiodynamic approach, has made a notable contribution to the understanding of the forces (both driving and restraining) at a specific moment within an individual (Kang, 2005; Cao, 2011, 2014; Cao & Philp 2006; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011).

Based on the previous literature, the influencing factors of L2 WTC can be classified generally into three dimensions: Psychological, linguistic and contextual. Psychological factors, also referred to as individual factors, include such affective attributes as PC, CA, self-confidence (a combination of CA and PC), motivation,
personality, international posture and perceived opportunity. Linguistic factors involve a learner’s language proficiency and reliance on L1 (Cao, 2014). The contextual dimension, or the environmental dimension, concerns factors external to learner that occur within the context of the individual, such as classroom atmosphere, topic, interlocutor, teacher, interactional patterns and tasks. Table 2.1 below presents these influencing variables in the categories as identified in the literature.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Variables</th>
<th>Communication Anxiety (CA)</th>
<th>Perceived Communicative Competence (PC)</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Personality</th>
<th>International Posture</th>
<th>Perceived Opportunity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baker &amp; MacIntyre, 2000;</td>
<td>Clément et al., 2003; Hashimoto, 2002;</td>
<td>Cetinkaya, 2005; Kim, 2004; Liu &amp; Littlewood, 1997; MacIntyre &amp; Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 2002; MacIntyre et al., 2003; Yashima et al., 2004; Yu, 2009</td>
<td>Cetinkaya, 2005; Hashimoto, 2002; Peng, 2007; Peng &amp; Woodrow, 2010; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2015; Shimoyama, 2013; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004</td>
<td>Cao, 2009; Cetinkaya, 2005; Elwood, 2011; MacIntyre &amp; Charos, 1996</td>
<td>Peng, 2014a; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al. 2004</td>
<td>Cao, 2009; MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre &amp; Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998</td>
<td>Baker &amp; MacIntyre, 2002; Hua, 2013; MacIntyre et al., 2002; Weaver, 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contextual Variables</td>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>MacIntyre et al., 2001</td>
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<td>Ethnolinguistic vitality</td>
<td>Clement et al., 2003</td>
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</table>

### Interlocutor
- Cao, 2009; de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre et al., 1998; MacIntyre et al., 2003; MacIntyre et al., 2011; Wen & Clément; Zarrinabadi, 2014

### Teacher
- Cao, 2009; Cao & Philip, 2006; Fallah, 2014; Pattapong, 2010; Peng, 2012; 2014; Sato, 2017; Yu, 2009; Wen & Clément, 2003; Zarrinabadi, 2014
- Cao, 2009; Kang, 2005; Peng, 2014

### Interactional Context
- Cao, 2011; Cao & Philip, 2006; Kang, 2005; Liu, 2005; Yashima et al., 2016

### Topic
- Bernales, 2016; Cao, 2009; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Pattapong, 2010; Peng, 2014

### Task Type
- Bernales, 2016; Cao, 2009; Liu & Jackson, 2009; MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011; MacIntyre et al., 2011

### Classroom Atmosphere
- Bernales, 2016; Peng, 2014

### Linguistic Variables
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2 Proficiency</th>
<th>Cao, 2009; Liu &amp; Jackson, 2009; MacIntyre &amp; Legatto, 2011; MacIntyre et al., 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reliance on L1</td>
<td>Cao, 2009; Peng, 2014</td>
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#### 2.1.3 Important Ideas Related to L2 WTC

This section explains some of the essential ideas for understanding the construct of
L2 WTC and the rationale for this research.

2.1.3.1 Cross the Rubicon

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) (also see Dörnyei, 2005) use the metaphorical expression, “crossing the Rubicon”, to indicate a boundary separating two distinct processes (i.e., the intention-formation process and the implementation process) to describe a process model of L2 communication. As shown in Figure 2.5, by “crossing the Rubicon” of action, the intention to engage an action becomes real action, thus bringing one from preactional phase to actional phase.
Figure 2.5 Portion of Dörnyei and Ottó’s (1998) Process Model of L2 Motivation (p. 48)

PREACTIONAL

Action Plan

Goal (Assigned Task)

Commitment (Compliance)

Intention Formation

Intention

Means & Resources

Start Condition

Initiation of Intention Enactment

INSTIGATION FORCE

Crossing the “Rubicon” of Action

ACTIONAL

Subtask Generation & Implementation

Appraisal

Action Control

Action

ACTIONAL

Appraisal

Action Control

Actional Outcome

ACTIONAL

Appraisal

Action Control

Actional Outcome

ACTIONAL

Appraisal

Action Control

Actional Outcome

ACTIONAL

Appraisal

Action Control

Actional Outcome

ACTIONAL

Appraisal

Action Control

Actional Outcome
It was the MacIntyre et al.’s (1998) pyramid model that first began to examine the relationship between intention (L2 WTC) and action (L2 communicative behaviours). In the pyramid model (see Figure 2.6), the line dividing L2 WTC (Layer I) and L2 use (Layer II) can be viewed as a language learner’s “Rubicon”, the point of no return (Yashima et al., 2018). L2 WTC is conceptualised as a state of readiness occurring in the present moment that is the final psychological step in preparation for L2 communication. The issue of time was taken into account, here, and researchers began to focus on the time when the individual has to take action.

MacIntyre (2007) explicitly linked this notion to the L2 learners’ irrevocable decision to initiate communication and claimed that a language learner reaches a decision point at which he or she commits to taking action (L2 communication). By introducing this idea, the author aimed to explain the following elements in the nature of L2 WTC:

First, language learners regularly have conflicted moments before L2 communicative behaviour. For example, in the language classroom, there will be moments when L2 learners are stimulated, simultaneously, by high motivation but restrained by high anxiety. At these moments, to decide whether to raise hand (action) to answer a question is not easy.

Second, only the combination of learner-internal and learner-external factors can propel the individual to “cross the Rubicon”. At a specific moment in time, the initiation of L2 communication is not a function of a single variable, but the result of combining the influence of multiple variables. Thus, it is essential to examine how various factors, personal and situational, jointly lead to L2 learners’ choice about whether to cross his or her “Rubicon” at that moment. In addition, the converging influences can be classified into two opposing processes, i.e., driving forces (energy that is in the direction of the intended goal) and restraining forces (energy that impedes the achievement of a goal by working) (Lewin, 1951), with the former pushing individuals towards action and the latter holding them back (Cao & Philip, 2006; MacIntyre, 2007).

Third, similar to motivation, L2 WTC and its related communicative behaviours should be studied at the moment it occurs, that is when there is a threshold in the
flow of conversation, and learners decide to cross such a Rubicon. Considering the timeframe is crucial for understanding the process of L2 communication, especially for the dynamic nature of L2 WTC.

Figure 2.6 “Cross the Rubicon” Represented in MacIntyre et al.’s (1998) Model
2.1.3.2 Timescales in SLA Research

Language development is a continuous and complex process that takes place at many different interacting timescales ranging from the life span to the milliseconds (de Bot, 2015). Some researchers argue that focusing on only one timescale to examine language-related variables (such as motivation, anxiety and WTC) may lead to spurious result (de Bot, 2015; MacIntyre, 2012; MacIntyre & Serroul, 2015). As Dörnyei (2003) pointed out, many of the controversies and disagreements in (L2 motivation) research should not exclude one another as they may differ because they are related to different phases of the process:

I have now come to believe that many of the controversies and disagreements in L2 motivation research go back to an insufficient temporal awareness... that different or even contradictory theories do not exclude one another, but may simply be related to different phases of the motivated behavioural process (p. 13).

While this statement refers to L2 motivation, it also applies to the research in L2 WTC, which, similarly, has different levels of conceptualisation, namely, trait-like WTC, situational WTC, and state WTC. Much of the research on L2 WTC has focused either on a long-term timescale (MacIntyre & Chaors, 1996; Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima, 2002) or on rapidly changing moments (MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011; Wood, 2016). The inconsistent results achieved from these studies may due to different timescales adopted, as “the timescale chosen will have an impact on the selection and interpretation of the data” (de Bot, 2015, p. 32). It is suggested, therefore, that, to get a fuller picture of L2 WTC, data should be gathered and combined from different timescales, echoing Dörnyei’s (2007) suggestion that “… the effects of time and temporal fluctuation cannot be overlooked” (p. 210). MacIntyrean and Leggato’s (2011) similarly argued that “time series analyses could be used to tease out the stable individual differences from the moment-to-moment fluctuation” (p. 168).

2.1.3.3 A Metaphor of Ocean “Currents and Waves”

The metaphor of ocean “currents and waves” was first used by MacIntyre (2012) to examine two particular aspects of L2 WTC on different timescales. MacIntyre
posits that L2 communication is a process that sometimes flows as a current and other times fluctuates like a wave. Whereas currents represent the long-term patterns of an individual’s predictable trend to initiate L2 communication influenced by stable factors such as personality and culture, waves represent short-term processes of an individual’s readiness to engage in, or restrain from, L2 communication at a particular moment in time and entails the complex convergence and interaction of many variables simultaneously. Therefore, we need to understand L2 learner’s communicative behaviours in both reliable currents and less predictable waves. Special attention needs to be paid to the latter as “waves will have more of an impact on the person’s action in the communicative water than will the currents” (MacIntyre, 2012, p. 17).

Wood’s (2016) study further explains the metaphor of “currents and waves” in L2 WTC research. Consistent with MacIntyre’s (2012) statement, Wood described a current of WTC as a basic aspect of an individual’s patterns and trends with a specific type of communication situation, while a wave of WTC reflects surface fluctuations and can change from moment-to-moment. To investigate the fluid relationship between WTC and L2 fluency, the author focused on the waves of WTC in a speech task adopting an idiodynamic approach by dividing each speech sample into segments as “waves” of high and low WTC. After analysing 14 segments of waves of L2 WTC, Wood concluded that L2 communication is a fluid and dynamic process.

2.1.4 Summary of the Nature of L2 WTC

Given its importance in promoting L2 learners’ language learning, research on L2 WTC has prevailed over the last two decades. There has been a heated debate, however, on whether it features a trait-like, situational or dynamic characteristic.

Based on the literature reviewed in this concept, it can be concluded that L2 WTC can be considered as both a trait-like predisposition and a dynamic situational construct, functioning at different levels of conceptualisation. To understand the nature of L2 WTC better, however, we should take the issue of time into account. For example, if we examine WTC over a relatively long time span (e.g., a number of years; one semester) by questionnaire measures, only the trait-like features and
long-term patterns of WTC can be identified. If we narrow the time span into “minutes” or “seconds”, however, we may capture the dynamic fluctuations in the levels of L2 WTC. The metaphor of ocean “currents and waves” is a vivid metaphor for the two aspects of L2 WTC, with currents indicating consistent, stable and long term patterns and waves reflecting unpredictable moment-to-moment changes within this construct.

It appears that research on the complex nature of L2 WTC on multiple timescales is urgently needed. For example, typical individual patterns of L2 WTC in a particular context (for example, the Chinese EFL learning context) need to be established; and the stable and persistent variables underlying L2 WTC within an individual over a relatively long time should be identified. Moment-to-moment fluctuations that occur within an individual need to be examined to understand better the combinations of the multiple driving and restraining forces at a particular moment in time.

2.2 Communicative Task, Task Repetition and L2 WTC

Ellis’ (2003) definition of a task is widely accepted in the L2 research field, that is, a task has a primary focus on message, with some kind of “gap” and a clearly defined communicative outcome. In completing a task, the language learner chooses linguistic resources (such as vocabulary and grammar), and non-linguistic resources (such as motivation, willingness to communicate and learning strategies) needed. These four elements identify a “task” from an “activity” or an “exercise”. Tasks contribute to improving L2 communication in two important ways. First, a task requires the learners to perform primarily as “language users” with a primary focus on meaning. In this case, a task stimulates communicative language use, as learners must “employ the same kinds of communicative process as those involved in real-world activities” (Ellis, 2003, p. 3). Second, to close the gap in a task, learners will be motivated to use the language. The real purpose of a task is to achieve a communicative outcome by using the language and by choosing the linguistic or non-linguistic resources. Thus, laying emphasis on “using the language”, Ellis (2003) argues that tasks provide participants with many opportunities to be involved in L2 communication.
The benefits of using pedagogical tasks to promote interaction in language learning have been advocated in SLA research for some time (Ellis, 2003, 2012 for a review). Educational authorities in many Asian countries have suggested a task-based approach to language teaching, which provides learners with opportunities to use L2 to develop their language competence (Long & Crooks, 1992; Nunan, 1989; Weaver, 2007), through involving learners in real communication and improving their L2 achievement.

Several studies have examined the extent to which tasks influence learners’ L2 WTC (Cao & Philp, 2006; Eddy-U, 2015; King, 2016; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2014; Shimoyama, 2013; Pawlak et al., 2016; Wang & Erlam, 2011; Yashima et al., 2016). MacIntyre and Legatto (2011), for example, investigated six young adult female speakers who performed eight oral tasks. The results revealed obvious differences among the tasks in terms of their effects on L2 WTC, as well as consistencies in the patterns associated with tasks and individuals. Wang and Erlam (2011), investigating the L2 WTC of four learners who learned Japanese as an L2 in New Zealand, showed that task-based language teaching could facilitate the WTC in the language classroom. Shimoyama (2013), an intervention study to explore the relationship between task performance and changes in WTC of six Japanese EFL learners in a university, reported that learners’ recognition of task difficulty was another significant predictor of their L2 WTC.

The research on the relationship between L2 WTC and tasks is relatively scant, however, and out of proportion with the increasing emphasis on task-based instruction in language classrooms, especially in EFL contexts. The degree to which students’ WTC varies across different types of speaking tasks within a language classroom (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011) and the effect of task procedures, such as task repetition, on the variability of language learners’ WTC, is yet to be established.

Task repetition, defined as the use of the same or slightly altered tasks, appears to be effective in enhancing learners’ performance of a task (Bygate, 2001; Lynch & Maclean, 2000; Nation, 1989; Shintani, 2012; Pinter, 2007; Van den Branden, 1997). For example, Nation (1989) made an early contribution to the examination
of the effect of repeating the same unrehearsed talk on improving six advanced adult learners’ language performance. The result showed that the learners performed at a level above their normal level of performance as improvements in fluency, grammatical accuracy, and control of the content were observed after they performed the 4/3/2 activity with a different interlocutor each time. Pinter (2007) investigated 10-year-old Hungarian EFL learners who repeated a “Spot-the-Difference” task three times with three or four day intervals. The results suggested that peer-peer interactions within this age group, with very low levels of competence, offer various benefits. Shintani (2012) repeated communicative listening tasks with 15 young Japanese children nine times, over five weeks, and found that task repetition resulted in an improvement in learners’ listening comprehension. These studies focused only on the effects of task repetition on the linguistic outcomes, mainly on three dimensions of L2 oral performance: Accuracy, complexity and fluency (Ahmadian et al., 2010; Bygate, 1996). Whether repeating tasks in a language classroom will contribute to an increase in non-linguistic outcomes, such as language learners’ WTC, remains a major, yet unexplored, issue for language teaching.

2.3 L2 WTC Research in China

Enhancing language learners’ willingness to communicate in English in the Chinese EFL context is of importance for two reasons. First, as China has the largest number of English language learners in the world, investigating L2 WTC in China, where English is learned primarily as a curriculum subject, may inform L2 WTC research to a large extent especially for other similar contexts, such as Japan, Korea and Turkey (Peng, 2012). Second, against the background of globalisation, there is an increasing need for competent language speakers, with high levels of L2 WTC, to become competent language users. Chinese EFL learners, however, experience contextual constraints (Peng, 2014b) because few opportunities for L2 communicative practice exist in their daily life and they have limited opportunities to communicate with native English speakers or use English in natural communication situations outside the school context. To become competent language users, learners need to seek out, and take advantage of, opportunities to use the language both inside and outside the L2 classroom. Thus, the encouragement of Chinese students’ L2 WTC in an instructional setting is of
paramount importance to their language learning and L2 communicative behaviours.

Empirical research of L2 WTC in Chinese students, particularly in an EFL setting, is infancy under developed with most studies conducted in a university context, with little research regarding Chinese high school student’s L2 WTC. In these studies, Chinese students, influenced by the Chinese Confucian heritage, were often stereotyped as reticent or passive L2 learners (for example, Asker, 1998; Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Hua, 2013; Liu, 2002; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Wen & Clément, 2003).

Peng (2007) made a notable contribution through examining the relationship between L2 WTC and motivation among 174 EFL university students in China. She concluded that in an EFL classroom context, motivation is an essential in stimulating learners to persevere in L2 learning and possibly L2 communication. Peng and Woodrow (2010) developed a model to integrate L2 WTC, communicative confidence, motivation, learner beliefs and classroom environment, using structural equation modelling to evaluate the outcomes. The model enables individual and contextual variables to explain classroom L2 communication. A study with 579 college students showed that L2 WTC, the most significant predictor of which is confidence, was directly influenced by the classroom environment and indirectly affected by motivation. Peng (2012) designed a qualitative multiple-case study (n = 4) to investigate factors affecting Chinese EFL learners’ WTC in a university classroom through semi-structured interviews, students’ learning journals and classroom observations over seven months. The empirical evidence, explaining the influence of the interaction of individual and environmental factors on students’ WTC, contributed to an ecological understanding of Chinese EFL students’ WTC in their language classrooms. Peng (2014a) was the first show how the L2 motivational self-system can account for university students’ L2 WTC from the perspective of an imagined global community. In her large-scale survey (n = 1013) she found that there were two distinct factors in L2 WTC: WTC inside and outside the classroom. The former was predicted by L2 anxiety, learning experience, and international posture, whereas the latter had international posture as its only direct predictor. In the same year, Peng (2014b) published a book, which presents a comprehensive and
contextualised understanding of L2 WTC in Chinese EFL classrooms, integrating a large-scale survey and a multiple-case study. She proposed a situated conceptualisation of L2 WTC specific to Chinese EFL university classrooms from an ecological perspective. She suggested that EFL learners’ L2 WTC should be investigated as “dynamically co-constructed by the totality of students, the immediate learning environment and the larger sociocultural context” (p. 159).

Other researchers have explored university students’ L2 WTC. Asker (1998), for example, investigated 454 Hong Kong university students’ L2 WTC using the WTC questionnaire (McCroskey & Baer, 1985). The results indicated that Hong Kong students exhibit a lower level of L2 WTC compared to their western counterparts, leading to a conclusion that the comparatively low WTC scores attained by Asian students were a reflection of cultural influences (i.e., Confucian heritage). Yu (2009), employing quantitative self-report questionnaires with 235 Chinese university students, investigated relationships among L2 WTC, communicative anxiety, self-perceived communicative competence, motivation and teacher immediacy; WTC in English appeared to be indirectly dependent on teacher immediacy through the mediation of communicative competence and perceived communication. Hua (2013), using a survey (n = 593) to investigate Chinese undergraduates’ L2 WTC in an instructional context, reported that the participants generally had relatively modest levels of L2 WTC, and that the levels differed among the individuals.

Yue’s (2014) research is notable because it adopted the CDST perspective to explore the complex and dynamic interplay between the L2 WTC and the Chinese sociocultural context. Based on multiple and triangulated data collected from one Chinese student, it highlighted the complex, dynamic and unpredictable nature of L2 WTC, which was constantly under the joint influence of social and affective variables. It also emphasised the impact of Chinese culture on constructing Chinese EFL learners’ L2 self-concept and L2 possible selves, thus affecting L2 WTC and communicative behaviours in specific L2 situations. This study provided a new perspective on L2 WTC research in Chinese EFL context through focusing on the dynamic and complex processes in the emergence and fluctuation of this construct.
Xie (2011) investigated L2 WTC among secondary school students (aged 16-19) in rural China (n = 124), one of the few studies in a high school context. The study, using a questionnaire, classroom observations and interviews, investigated whether these Chinese students’ self-reported WTC corresponds to their actual WTC behaviour, as well as factors that influence their WTC in an EFL context. The findings showed that the rural Chinese students’ self-reported WTC did not consistently predict their actual WTC behaviour, confirming the dual characteristics of WTC (i.e., a trait-like predisposition and a dynamic situational feature) and lending support to the findings in Cao and Philp (2006).

A comprehensive picture of the general patterns of L2 WTC among Chinese EFL learners, especially those in the high schools, is needed to understand its dynamic fluctuations, and the variables influencing Chinese L2 learners’ decision to choose, or avoid, L2 communication.

2.4 An Idiodynamic Approach to IDs and L2 WTC Research

MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) developed an idiodynamic method, a novel mixed-methods approach to capture moment-by-moment dynamic fluctuations in L2 learners’ WTC during specific communicative task performance. This approach overcomes the limitations of prior research, which focused only on long-term patterns of L2 communication. From a dynamic systems perspective, the idiodynamic method enables learners’ rapidly changing WTC to be examined on a per-second basis, and contributes to an understanding of the dynamic nature of affective variables in SLA, such as CA, PC, motivation and L2 WTC. It allows for examination of the effect of complex interplay among various dynamic systems on the individual in real time through focusing on the variables determining participants’ decisions to initiate or avoid communication on a moment-to-moment basis.

Specifically, this methodology has four parts (taking research on L2 WTC as an example):

1) The participant is asked to perform a communication task which is video recorded for immediate playback;
2) Using a Windows-based software specially designed for collecting idiodynamic ratings. The participant watches the video and retrospectively rates their L2 WTC moment-by-moment as they progress with the task by clicking the computer mouse to raise and lower the level of L2 WTC in a range from -5 to +5. If there is no response from the participant, the software returns the level of L2 WTC to zero on a per-second basis. When completed, a graph showing fluctuations in WTC is produced;

3) The participant is asked to review the graphs and reports their experience, and attributions for fluctuations in WTC, that is, to explain the peaks and valleys in the graph. This process is guided by the protocol of stimulated recall interviews (Gass & Mackey, 2000);

4) Each participant’s interview is videotaped and transcribed for coding.

In summary, this method produces at least three data streams (MacIntyre, 2012; MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011), including:

1) Transcripts of video recordings of participants’ task performance, i.e., the text of the verbal output, which shows the linguistic quality of the students’ speech;

2) Self-reported ratings of WTC, including a bitmap graph of the dynamic WTC ratings and an Excel-compatible spreadsheet with WTC and time data;

3) Transcripts of stimulated-recall interviews, which may provide the participants’ unique understanding of the communication process and their attributions of ups and downs in WTC dynamics.

MacIntyre and Leggato (2011) conducted the first study, with L2 WTC as its focus, to develop the methodology to capture rapidly changing effects. Six participants were asked to perform eight L2 tasks. Following the idiodynamic research processes, the authors concluded that WTC fluctuated significantly over the few minutes during their task performance, and that “these fluctuations are lost when considering only a single summary score, such as the WTC-trait scores” (p. 164). The study made a significant contribution in introducing the Windows-based software, which is available online and free of charge; it is designed especially to
measure the dynamic changes of L2 WTC on a per second basis. Based on this study, Wood (2016) conducted an idiodynamic investigation to explore the relationship between L2 WTC and L2 speech fluency. This study focused on MacIntyre (2012) term “waves” of L2 WTC, that is, on the dynamic changes in L2 WTC, from a CDST perspective. Four intermediate-level Japanese EFL learners were asked each to have a conversation with the same non-Japanese interlocutor who remained silent during the conversation and only provided nonverbal reactions to the participant. By using the idiodynamic approach, this study demonstrated differing patterns of relationships between WTC and L2 speech fluency and concluded that L2 WTC is complex and shifting.

Some researchers have introduced this method to explore other affective variables, such as foreign language anxiety (Gregersen et al., 2014) and motivation (MacIntyre & Serroul, 2015). Based on the belief that language learning involves a dynamic process affected by a combination of ever-changing variables, Gregersen et al. (2014) used the idiodynamic method to explore moment-to-moment fluctuations in learners’ foreign language anxiety and their relation to heart rate. Three high and three low L2 anxiety learners were asked to give a presentation while wearing heart monitors. Following the idiodynamic process that enabled observation of moment-by-moment changes in anxiety, the study identified multi-layered dynamic changes in emotion during L2 communication. Similarly, MacIntyre and Serroul (2015) used an idiodynamic method to examine the degree of fluctuation in motivation during L2 task performance on a per-second timescale. Focusing on the approach and avoidance tendency in motivation, the authors asked 12 undergraduates to perform eight specific L2 communication tasks, the same tasks as in MacIntyre and Leggato’s (2011) study. The results indicated a degree of variability in motivation among and within individuals.

As stated above, this method, which is complementary to other approaches widely used in communication research, provides a tool to examine affective dimensions of communication as they unfold in real time. However, it is still undeveloped, and only a small proportion of researchers adopted this promising method in their SLA studies.
2.5 Summary

This chapter presented a rationale for conducting mixed-methods research to examine the complex nature of L2 WTC among Chinese high school students during L2 communicative task performance.

The first section provided a detailed picture of the complex nature of L2 WTC, describing the multiple levels of conceptualisation when different timescales are considered. After a thorough literature review on trait-like and dynamic situational L2 WTC, an explanation of two ways to identify relationships among variables influencing this construct was presented. It showed that, whereas most previous quantitative L2 WTC studies focused on a linear cause-and-effect relationship, recent studies have shifted attention to a non-linear reciprocal interaction between variables underlying this construct. Three important ideas, related to the L2 WTC research were introduced to understand better the rationale of the current research. These included the metaphor of crossing the Rubicon, timescales in SLA field, and a metaphor of ocean “currents and waves”. It was argued that L2 WTC can be considered both as a trait-like predisposition (currents) and a dynamic situational construct (waves). Consequently, L2 WTC, should be explored within multiple timescales, with a particular focus on the decision points, that is a “Rubicon” integrating all the influencing factors (both driving and restraining forces) underlying L2 WTC to initiate L2 communication at a particular moment in time.

The second section explained the benefits of introducing L2 communicative tasks and repeating these tasks to understand the complex nature of L2 WTC. The review of the literature suggested that the degree to which students’ WTC varies across different types of speaking tasks, and the effect of task procedures such as task repetition, on the variability of language learners’ WTC is yet to be established.

The third section illustrated further the need to record the general patterns of L2 WTC among Chinese EFL learners within a language classroom as well as the particular moments when these learners decide to initiate L2 communication under converging influences (facilitating or inhibiting) underlying L2 WTC.

This chapter ended by introducing the process and importance of the recently
developed idiodynamic method used in the current research.
CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides a theoretical rationale for the research design through elaborating the complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) and establishing L2 WTC as a dynamic system. It begins by describing how CDST developed, some of its main characteristics and how it was applied to the SLA field. This is followed by a demonstration of how L2 WTC can be understood from a CDST perspective.

3.1 A CDST Approach

The current study adopts CDST as an overarching conceptual framework. L2 WTC, as a complex dynamic system, is defined as “a holistic approach that took into account the combined and interactive operation of a number of different elements/conditions relevant to specific situations instead of following the more traditional practice of examining the linear relationships between pre-determined variables” (Dörnyei et al., 2015, p. 1). This definition captures the complexity and dynamics of variables underlying this construct, and enables a comprehensive understanding of L2 learners’ willingness to initiate or avoid L2 communication on different timescales (Yashima et al., 2018), e.g., “the ontogenetic timescale” (to explore trait-like WTC) and “the microgenetic timescale” (to explore situational and dynamic WTC) (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008a, p. 169).

CDST is used as an umbrella term for a series of overlapping approaches that advocate a complex, dynamic and nonlinear perspective on L2 learning, such as chaos and complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), complex and adaptive systems theory (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2009), dynamic systems theory (de Bot et al., 2007) and emergentism (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006). A definition of a “complex dynamic system” is fairly straightforward in that it consists of three key parts. The term “system” refers to an organic whole which comprise a set of variables instead of separate parts. While systems are made up of subsystems, they are themselves part of a larger system (de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2011). The term “complex” implies that the systems comprise a large number of components and that the behaviour of
such complex systems depends on the complex interactions of its components (Larsen-Freeman, 1997). The term “dynamic” refers to changes or variability of a system. Whereas sometimes the system changes due to internal forces, at other times the change due to energy from outside; moreover, sometimes the system changes continuously while at other times the changes are discontinuous and chaotic (de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2011). The following section gives a detailed explanation of the essential characteristics of CDST while introducing the development and application of this new perspective in the field of SLA.

Despite the brief time that CDST has been applied to the field of L2 learning, this new approach has attracted much interests and yielded a range of influential publications in recent years (e.g., de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2011; de Bot et al., 2007; Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 1997; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008a; 2008b).

Larsen-Freeman (1997) first introduced the new approach, already established in natural sciences to SLA, by comparing the similarities among complex nonlinear systems occurring in nature and language development. In this initial attempt to link CDST to applied linguistics, she proposed chaos and complexity theory as a “dynamic turn” in SLA (see Dörnyei et al., 2015) and as an alternative approach to the traditional static, linear and cause-and-effect explanation of L2 learning. In this paper, eleven characteristics of complex and nonlinear systems were discussed. The discussion, which laid the foundation for further discussion on the characteristics of CDST, included concepts such as dynamic, complex, nonlinear, chaotic, unpredictable, sensitive to initial conditions, open, self-organising, feedback sensitive, adaptive and strange attractor (see Table 3.1).
Table 3.1 Features of Complex Nonlinear Systems based on Larsen-Freeman (1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dynamic</td>
<td>Systems change with time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complex</td>
<td>Systems comprise a large number of components or agents; the behaviour of complex systems emerges from the interactions of its components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nonlinear</td>
<td>The effect is disproportionate to the cause; a simple trigger might be enough on any given occasion to bring about a great convulsion in the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chaotic</td>
<td>Complex nonlinear systems may enter into the period of complete randomness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Unpredictable</td>
<td>The onset of the randomness of complex nonlinear systems is unpredictable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sensitive Dependence on Initial Conditions</td>
<td>A slight change in initial conditions can have vast implications for future behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Open</td>
<td>Systems are open to the continuous flow of new matters and energy infusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Self-organising</td>
<td>Systems tend to organise themselves into a better one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Feedback sensitive</td>
<td>Systems are sensitive to feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Adaptive</td>
<td>Systems actively try to turn whatever happens to their advantage; they are capable of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Strange attractors</td>
<td>A dynamic system is attracted to a certain pattern or path; no cycle in the system follows the exact same path or overlap s any other circle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following this pioneering work, which advocated the new approach to understand L2 learning as a dynamic, complex and nonlinear process, there was a growing body of literature on complex dynamic systems within SLA field (de Bot et al., 2007; Ellis, 2007; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008a; 2008b; Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei et al., 2015).

de Bot et al. (2007), for example, made significant contribution to the application of CDST in SLA by proposing dynamic systems theory should provide an overall theory of language development. In this paper, based on the belief that language itself can be seen as a dynamic system in which a number of variables interact over time, they explained the fundamental aspects of this new theory establishing a better understanding of the complex and dynamic phenomenon within the language learning process (see Table 3.2).
Table 3.2 *Basic Aspects of Dynamic Systems Theory based on de Bot et al. (2007)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic aspects</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Change over time</td>
<td>Each state is a transformation of a previous state. Variables affecting the system change over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete Interconnectedness</td>
<td>All variables are interrelated each other; changes in one variable will have an impact on all other variables that are part of the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Attractor states</td>
<td>The system tends to self-organise into preferred states (attractor states) and states that are not preferred (repeller states).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nonlinearity</td>
<td>Small changes in one part of the system may have large effects in the overall system, or large disturbances may produce only small effects in the overall system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Later, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008a) made a further attempt to prove CDST was a fascinating new tool for language researchers to understand better the complex phenomenon in L2 learning. They highlighted four properties of complex systems (see Table 3.3).
Table 3.3 *Key Features of Complex Systems based on Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008a)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Complex</td>
<td>Complex systems are composed of elements or agents that are of many different types and that interact in different ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dynamic</td>
<td>The elements and agents change over time; as do the ways in which they influence each other and the relations among them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Open</td>
<td>In complex systems, energy and matter can come into the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nonlinear</td>
<td>The effect is disproportionate to the cause.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on previous studies, de Bot and Larsen-Freeman (2011) discussed nine basic characteristics of CDST and the overlapping role they play in SLA (see Table 3.4). For example, “change through internal reorganisation and interaction with the environment”, “dependence on internal and external resources” and “change caused by interaction with the environment and internal organisation” all refer to the two forces behind the changes and development in dynamic systems.
Table 3.4 Basic Characteristics of CDST based on de Bot and Larsen-Freeman (2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sensitive dependence on initial conditions</td>
<td>Minimum differences in beginning conditions of systems can have massive effects later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete interconnectedness</td>
<td>In a dynamic system, all parts are connected to all other parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nonlinearity in development</td>
<td>For dynamic systems the relations between cause and effect is often nonlinear, i.e., there is no proportional effect for a given cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Change through internal reorganisation and interaction with the environment</td>
<td>Two forces are at work constantly to make a change in a dynamic system: interaction with the environment and internal self-organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dependence on internal and external resources</td>
<td>A dynamic system needs a constant flow of resources for development that can be distinguished as resources internal to the system and resources that are external.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Constant change, with chaotic variation sometimes, in which the systems only temporarily settle into “attractor states”</td>
<td>Internal and external forces are constantly working, and the seemingly stable system is actually dynamically changing all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Iteration, which means that the present level of development depends critically on the previous level of development</td>
<td>In the present state of the system, its complete history is represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Change caused by interaction with the environment and internal organisation</td>
<td>Systems will change due to interaction with their environment and due to internal reorganisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Emergent properties</td>
<td>Higher level properties are regarded as emergent – i.e., one that arises from the interaction of low-level components.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The literature referred to above, explained the fundamental properties of CDST, in different ways. However, many of the properties overlap and are repeated. In conclusion, there are three key properties:

First, a dynamic system, although consisting of various elements or agents, should be treated as an organic whole instead of separate parts. CDST researchers advise adopting a system-level perspective to explore changes in behaviour in a dynamic system (de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2011); that is, we should focus on the interaction of all the parts, not the contribution of each independently.
Second, a dynamic system is too complex to be predicted wholly. Given complete interconnectedness of the subsystems or parts, the system features sensitive dependence on initial conditions and possesses nonlinear relations between cause and effect. To predict the development of a dynamic system, an extraordinary amount of information about those initial conditions, the complex interactions among its constituent variables and any changes of these variables at different timescales is needed. The complex process makes the prospect of predicting the behaviours of dynamic systems limited or impossible. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008a) stated, “the behaviour of a complex system is not completely random, but neither is it wholly predictable” (p. 75), and the argument put forward by Dörnyei (2014) that the behaviours of such systems are non-researchable is valid given the limited predictability nature of change and development in complex dynamic systems.

Third, change and variability is at the heart of a complex dynamic system. From a CDST perspective there is only change rather than a goal or direction in the system (de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Moreover, there are two main characteristics concerning changes in a complex dynamic system which are described in the next paragraph.

A dynamic system is open to the outside world with a constant flow of energy, a result of internal and external forces that are constantly working. These two streams of forces are at work constantly: Internally through self-organisation; externally through interaction with the environment. Thus, a dynamic system is dependent on both internal and external resources, which work together to make a change happen. The nature and role of context in complex dynamic systems is entirely different from the traditional approach. From a CDST perspective, context is a part of the ecology of the dynamic system (Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008a), instead of being a stable factor existing independently and outside of an individual learner. The context in a dynamic system includes not only the external resources that are outside the individual but also the intrinsic dynamics within the individual, that is, “what individuals bring to an activity” (de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2011, p. 18). Consequently, CDST-informed research cannot be undertaken independently from context.
However, while a dynamic system changes constantly, it temporarily stays in a stable mode called “attractor state”. In other words, a dynamic system will show degrees of variability around stability (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008b; Dörnyei, 2014), or involve stable and predictable phases. While variation is integral to a dynamic system (de Bot et al., 2007), the system also has attractor states that remain stable until the convergent forces of internal and external energy break the equilibrium and lead to a change into another new form. This corresponds to the idea that sometimes a dynamic system changes continuously while sometimes discontinuously and chaotically (de Bot & Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Nevertheless, it must be noted that any perceived stability is the result of the dynamics of the system with continuous change and adaption both in the world, and the phenomena that comprise it (Larsen-Freeman, 2007).

3.2 L2 WTC as a Complex Dynamic System

At the time when dynamic systems theory was gaining momentum as a promising theoretical perspective in the SLA field (Yashima, 2012), MacIntyre and Leggato (2011) were pioneering a timely application of the CDST framework to L2 WTC research. They emphasised examining L2 WTC from a dynamic systems perspective by focusing on changes within a communication event. They argued that, given that L2 learners inevitably use underdeveloped L2 skills to communicate when acquiring the language, they are always engaged in a complex situation where various issues may affect their L2 WTC. They concluded that, based on data collected through the idiodynamic method, L2 WTC shows the properties of a dynamic system:

We see that there are changes over time wherein each state is partially dependent on the previous state. We also see the interconnectedness of the linguistic, social, cognitive and emotional systems that produce WTC. When the systems function together to facilitate communication, we see WTC as an attractor state. When the systems interfere with each other…we see a repeller state where communication is abandoned. The sudden loss of WTC early in a communication event can produce dramatic effects. (p. 169)
To sum up, L2 WTC, if treated as a complex dynamic system, possesses four key properties that had been identified by de Bot et al. (2007):

First, since L2 communication is a process, change in L2 WTC in a particular moment is the result of a previous state in a chain, no matter how quickly the situation changes.

Second, the factors that influence changes in L2 WTC are completely interconnected, as they are linked together and influence each other.

Third, L2 WTC features the characteristics of both stability and variability. Though constantly changing, it also tends to self-organise into attractor states, repeller states or in transition states within a particular phase.

Fourth, L2 WTC possesses non-linearity. That is, small changes in one of its constituent parts may have large effects in L2 WTC, whereas marked variability in one part may result in only a small fluctuation in L2 WTC.

Following MacIntyre and Leggato’s (2011) research, Yashima (2012) strongly advocated that future study should take a CDST perspective because “it allows the analysis of WTC as a dynamic system that changes in response to changes of all the other variables that might affect WTC within that system” (p. 130). Later, Syed (2016) adopted the theoretical framework in examining the dynamic nature of L2 WTC. The data from a multiple-case study showed that participants’ L2 WTC emerged as a result of the complex, dynamic and non-linear interaction between contextual, psychological, linguistic and physiological factors. Yashima and associates (2018) also employed CDST to explore L2 WTC as a complex dynamic system. They suggested that L2 WTC should be treated as a dynamically changing phenomenon that can be conceptualised on different timescales. The conclusion supported their belief that L2 WTC, as situated in the L2 classroom, is “the result of interactions between trait-like learner characteristics develop throughout their learning history…and contextual contingent factors emerging in the classroom” (p. 5). Yue (2014) used the CDST framework to illustrate the complex interplay of self-related constructs, L2 WTC and the sociocultural context. The author suggested that L2 WTC should be considered as a complex and dynamic construct,
in which co-dependent interacting variables constantly evolve leading to the unpredictable emergence and fluctuations of L2 WTC.

Approaching L2 WTC as a complex dynamic system focuses on its emergent properties (MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011; Yashima et al., 2018). This suggests that researchers should examine the dynamic nature of L2 WTC at specific moments, given that various enduring and situated factors exert a convergent effect on the emergence of L2 communication behaviour at a particular time, and with specific interlocutors (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Yashima et al., 2018).

In summary, treating L2 WTC as a dynamic situational variable means willingness to communicate at a specific moment is the combination of a long list of psychological, linguistic, pedagogical, situational, socio-political and other salient factors (MacIntyre, 2012). L2 WTC thus is unpredictable due to the dynamic changes, and the interrelationship among its potentially relevant influences.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter first presents an overview of the research design, the participants involved in the two phases of the research and the rationale for the selection of the methods. It then provides a detailed description of the research design, including a task-performing intervention, and the design of the case study. The final section identifies and discusses the ethical considerations.

4.1 Overview of the Research Design

4.1.1. Rationale of Research Design

The current research is a quasi-experimental study coupled with a multiple-case study to examine the complex dynamic nature of L2 WTC during L2 communicative task performance by Chinese high school students. Specifically, this research focuses on changes in participants’ L2 WTC levels after performing and repeating communicative tasks; it explored how they decide whether to initiate communication at a specific moment. From a CDST perspective, L2 WTC is regarded as “a phenomenon that can be conceptualised on different timescales” (Yashima, 2018, p. 119). In other words, L2 WTC is a dynamic system that can vary from moment-to-moment, situation-to-situation and over time. Thus, this mixed-methods research was designed to provide a fuller understanding of the dynamic nature of learners’ L2 WTC by gathering and interpreting the data on three timescales: within a task, task to task and over six weeks (see Figure 4.1). It focused on the moment-to-moment events through which to understand the dynamic fluctuations as a result of the convergent influence of learner-internal and learner-external variables which are driving or restraining forces on learners’ initiation of L2 communication.

The current study consisted of two parts. Part One was a quasi-experimental study focusing on changes in Chinese high school students’ (n = 32) L2 WTC in an English language classroom after performing and repeating L2 communicative tasks. Designed with an experimental group and a control group, this part of the study investigated whether different L2 tasks and task procedures (i.e., task
repetition) affected L2 WTC over six weeks and whether there were any changes in the level of L2 WTC occurred among different tasks. Data were collected through pre- and post-classroom L2 WTC questionnaires and task-based L2 WTC scales. The main set of analyses featured both horizontal and vertical perspectives, to answer Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, which ask: “What are the general WTC profiles of Chinese high school students in the language classroom?”; and “Does Chinese high school students’ L2 WTC change as a result of engaging in communicative tasks?”. 
Figure 4.1 *Changes of L2 WTC at Different Timescales*

**Changes 1 (over six weeks)**

- Pre-test
- Task 1
- Task 2
- Task 3
- Task 4
- Task 5
- Task 6
- Fluctuation
- Fluctuation
- Fluctuation
- Fluctuation
- Fluctuation
- Fluctuation

**Changes 2 (task to task)**

- Post-test

**Changes 3 (within a task)**

**Timescales**

- over a relatively long period
- situation to situation
- moment to moment
Part Two was a multiple-case study to determine how the learners’ (n = 6) L2 WTC fluctuated within L2 communicative tasks on a moment-to-moment basis and the underlying factors behind the fluctuations in L2 WTC. It adopted an idiodynamic method, an innovative approach developed by MacIntyre and Legatto (2011), to capture the rapid fluctuations in the dynamic L2 WTC system using a per-second timescale. Similar to Part One, this part of the research analyses both inter-individual and intra-individual similarities and differences to answer Research Question 3 and Research Question 4, which ask: “Are there any typical patterns in fluctuations of their WTC over performing and repeating communicative tasks?”; and “How does Chinese high school students’ WTC in English fluctuate when performing communicative tasks?”.

4.1.1. Research Context

The research was conducted in an international college preparatory high school located in Beijing, China, one of the international high schools gaining increasing popularity in big cities in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. The school prepared students by providing them with the tools needed for success in post-secondary opportunities at American universities and colleges. The number of students attending at the time was approximately 400 from over 20 countries. The composition of the students was 40% Chinese, 40% Korean and 20% from other countries, who were enrolled at any grade from Grade 8 to 12. The participants were all Chinese speakers who were learning English as a foreign language and had studied English for at least nine years, although they exhibited considerable variability in their English proficiency. The school employed about 40 teachers, who were all native speakers of English, except five Intensive English teachers whose L2 was Chinese. The language of instruction was English.

4.1.2. Participants

A convenience sampling strategy was used as it is quick to administer, although some scholars argue that it risks not representing the population (Dörnyei, 2010). This potential weakness may have been ameliorated in this study; however, as Chinese high school students usually share similar educational backgrounds and ages. The data were expected to provide authentic, first-hand information about
current EFL classes in China, and Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English. Thus, it meets the criterion advocated by some researchers that the paramount consideration in sampling should be to ensure that the sample enables information, necessary to answer research questions, to be gathered (Cohen et al., 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2008).

A total of 38 Chinese learners from an international college preparatory high school in China, who were all planning to study abroad in English-speaking high schools one year or two years later, participated in this study. In the quasi-experimental study, 32 native Chinese speakers from two intact English classes participated voluntarily. They were all learning English as a foreign language and were taught by the same teacher. They had similar English language proficiency as they had been placed in the same Intensive English course according to a school-designed English proficiency test taken at the beginning of the semester. One class was assigned as the experimental group (n = 16) and the other as the comparison group (n = 16). In the experimental group, five were males, and 11 were females with ages ranging from 13 to 16, and a mean age of 14.86 years (SD = 0.78). In the comparison group, six were males, and 10 were females with ages ranging from 13 to 17, and a mean age of 14.88 (SD = .96). All had received at least nine years of formal English instruction, with the average of previous English instruction being 9.13 years (SD = 2.80) for the experimental group and 10.22 years (SD = 2.20) for the comparison group (see Table 4.1).
Table 4.1 Information on Participants in the Quasi-experimental Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Previous English instruction (year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.80</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.88</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six students volunteered to participate in pairs in the case study. Each pair was from the same Intensive English class, classified according to the students’ English scores measured by a school-designed English proficiency test. Their ages ranged from 14 to 17 years and had been studying English for at least nine years (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Information on Participants in the Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Previous English instruction (year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xu</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants agreed to perform the tasks in their free time between classes. “Free time” here refers to the period, during which the participants had the option to decide what to do by themselves. According to their course schedule, most of the participants chose to participate in the study after their afternoon activity classes. During that time, they had just finished a dancing class or a physical education (PE) class, and were allowed to have a rest, do homework or take a shower normally.

4.1.3. Instruments

This section provides an overview of the treatment materials and self-reported questionnaires used to measure students’ classroom L2 WTC and task-based L2 WTC. It also provides a detailed explanation of the idiodynamic method used in the case study.
4.1.4.1 Treatment Materials

Two types of specific interactive tasks were chosen: A one-way information-gap task (map task) and a two-way information-gap task (spot-the-differences task). Both were gap tasks that provided many opportunities for the participants to communicate. Speaker A and B had to communicate with each other to complete the task without looking at each other’s pictures, and so were required to express their ideas clearly and listen to their partner carefully to achieve a successful completion. All the tasks were carried out in pairs, with learners’ keeping the same partner for all tasks.

Map tasks

The map tasks were closed, one-way information gap tasks. In such tasks, the two speakers sat opposite each other, and each had a map that the others cannot see. One speaker (designated the Instruction Giver) had a route marked on his or her map, while the other speaker (designated the Instruction Follower) had no route. The speakers were told that their goal was to reproduce the Instruction Giver's route on the Instruction Follower's map.

Each speaker was asked to serve as both Instruction Giver and Instructor Follower in each task to ensure equal opportunities to communicate. Therefore, two versions of the same task were designed, with each speaker given a picture with a route and a picture without a route.

Map-task 1 (M1), adapted from Pinter (2007), had a scene of a forest with people and animals doing various things; only one speaker’s map had a route on it. The speakers were told that someone put a spell on the forest and that there was only one safe route from the start sign at the bottom of the page to go up to the monster’s den at the top of the page. The speaker with the route drawn on his or her map had to give directions to the partner with the same map but without the route.

Map-task 2 (M2) was a task, modified from the Map Task Corpus of the Human Resource Communication Centre, University of Edinburgh in which the map had landmarks portrayed as line drawings and labelled with their intended name. The
map route began with a starting point, marked on both maps, and ended with a finishing point marked only on the Instruction Giver's map. The English names of the landmarks were replaced with Chinese ones to investigate whether vocabulary familiarity was a factor influencing L2 WTC as found by some researchers (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Peng, 2012; Shimoyama, 2013).

**Spot-the-differences tasks**

The spot-the-differences tasks were closed, two-way information gap tasks. In a spot-the-differences task, speakers A and B, sitting opposite each other, were given different pictures and had to communicate with each other to find out the differences without looking at each other’s pictures. The pictures given to speaker A and speaker B included the following types of differences: 1) A particular item was present in picture A, but it was missing in picture B; 2) the number of a particular item in picture A was different from B; or 3) a particular item in picture A was replaced by something else in picture B, or the same person was doing something different in each picture (Pinter, 2007).

In spot-the-differences-task 1 (S1), designed for the current study, each picture represented a scene of a streetscape with people, animals and buildings.

Spot-the-differences-task 2 (S2) was adapted from Pinter (2007) who used the task to explore peer-peer interactions in an EFL context. In the task, a house with three floors was drawn in each picture. The house consisted of four rooms (one bathroom, one kitchen and two other rooms) with various objects, animals and people represented in each room. Similar to S1, picture A and picture B had three types of differences.

**4.1.4.2 Testing Materials**

**Questionnaire**

A questionnaire consisting of 48 items and a demographic information section was used to measure students’ perceptions of their WTC in English and affective factors mediating their L2 WTC inside a language classroom. It was administered as pre- and post- tests to examine the changes in the participants’ L2 classroom WTC after being treated with repeated tasks and to identify any affective factors
accounting for these changes.

The questionnaire included the following categories:

1) *Willingness to communicate in English inside the classroom (classroom L2 WTC)*: This included fifteen 4-point items assessing students’ perceptions of their WTC in English in a language classroom. Fourteen items were selected, and adapted, from Weaver’s (2005) scale to include common speaking tasks and situations in EFL classrooms. The scale items were modified by explicitly specifying interlocutors in each situation. For example, for the original item “ask someone in English to repeat what they have just said in English”, “someone” is replaced with “your classmates” or “your partner” because the focus of the study is on the L2 WTC among peers. Two original items focusing on the social needs of the interlocutors, “Greet someone in English” and “Say ‘thank you’ when someone lends you a pen” as well as the original item “sing an English song” were excluded from the questionnaire. The item “ask for instruction or clarification when you are confused about a task you must complete” was adopted from MacIntyre et al.’s (2001) scale. The points of the Likert scale were labelled as follows: 1. Definitely not willing; 2. Probably not willing; 3. Probably willing; and 4. Definitely willing.

2) *Self-perceived communication competence in English (PC)*: Following common practice in L2 WTC research (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Weaver, 2010; Yashima, 2002), the fifteen items on the WTC scale were used as the template measuring self-perceived communication competence in English. Students indicated their self-assessed competency in each situation/task using the 11-points scale ranging from 0%, 10%, and so on up to 100% following Peng and Woodrow (2010).

3) *Communication anxiety in English (CA)*: Students indicated their level of anxiety in the 15 situations/tasks on a 4-point Likert scale. The points of the scale were labelled as follows: 1. Not at all anxious; 2. Slightly anxious; 3. Very anxious; and 4. Extremely anxious.

4) *Motivation to learn English*: Three single-item measures with three components: Desire to learn English; motivational intensity (effort); and attitude towards the learning situation as widely used in L2 WTC studies were included (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 2002, 2003; Öz et
al., 2015; Yu, 2009). The single-item indicator to measure each variable, also known as the “Guilford” style instrument, has been found to have acceptable convergent and predictive validity (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

5) **Demographic information:** To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the participants’ English learning experiences, a background questionnaire was designed. Participants were asked to fill in their name, gender, age, English learning experience, reasons for studying English and self-rated English proficiency.

**Task L2 WTC scale**

The 0-100 point scale was used to measure the level of participants’ willingness to communicate in English in doing the task given to them. The students were asked to self-rate their willingness immediately after they completed the task. For each participant, there were six self-rated WTC scores, marked as WTC 1, WTC 2, WTC 3, WTC 4, WTC 5, and WTC 6, respectively.

**Self-rating window-based software**

The specially designed software to measure participants’ moment-to-moment changes in L2 WTC was adopted from MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) who used it to investigate the dynamic nature of L2 WTC. This software is easy to use and can be installed on a Microsoft Windows-based computer. It is available on the website provided by MacIntyre and his associate (see [http://petermacintyre.weebly.com/idiodynamic-software.html#](http://petermacintyre.weebly.com/idiodynamic-software.html#)). It included:

1) **Task performance:** Participants completed a communicative task in pairs, and their performances were videotaped using a mini-DV camera. The video was captured in the “.wmv” format and viewed using Microsoft Windows Media Player software.

2) **Self-rating of L2 WTC:** Following the completion of the tasks, the participants rated their L2 WTC while watching a video recording of their performance using the software. The software played the participants’ videotaped interviews in one window and recorded ratings of L2 WTC in another. As the participants watched their video, they clicked a computer mouse to raise or lower the level of L2 WTC.
shown on the screen (ranging from -5 to +5). If no response from the user was
given, the software would move the rating one step towards zero every second.
This design was to require active responses from the participants (unless their L2
WTC is equal to zero). The output from the software included both a bitmap graph
of the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC and an Excel-compatible spreadsheet with
L2 WTC and time data.

3) *Stimulated recall interview:* A graph of idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC was
printed for each participant immediately after the ratings were completed and all
the participants were invited to attend an interview in the room where they
performed the tasks. The researcher played back the video of the tasks a second
time, stopping it at each point where the graph showed a noticeable change in
dynamic L2 WTC. The participants were asked to describe why the change
occurred in their native language. The process was guided by Gass & Mackey’s
(2000) recommendations for stimulated recall. These discussions were videotaped,
transcribed and translated by the researcher.

Table 4.3 provides an overview of the research design, including research
objectives, participants and instruments.
Table 4.3 An Overview of the Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research objectives</th>
<th>Part One: Quasi-Experimental study</th>
<th>Part Two: Case study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter-individual</td>
<td>To capture the general L2 WTC profiles of Chinese high school students in the language classroom</td>
<td>To capture typical patterns in fluctuations of participants’ L2 WTC over performing and repeating communicative tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra-individual</td>
<td>To examine the changes of L2 WTC after performing and repeating communicative tasks over six weeks and task-to-task changes within an individual</td>
<td>To examine how participants’ L2 WTC fluctuate when performing communicative tasks at a particular moment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Participants | N=32  
1. Experimental group (n=16)  
2. Control group (n=16) | N=6 (3 pairs) |

| Instruments | 1. Pre- and post- classroom L2 WTC questionnaires  
2. Task L2 WTC scales | 1. Idiodynamic method  
● A window-based specially designed software, in which participants self-rate their dynamic L2 WTC on a per-second basis  
● Stimulated recall interviews  
2. Journals  
3. Pre-and post- classroom L2 WTC, PC, CA questionnaires used as background information |
4.2 Part One: Quasi-experimental Study

This part of the research examines changes of L2 WTC in two timescales: over six weeks and from task to task.

There are two research questions:

The first one is from a horizontal perspective, to capture the general L2 WTC profiles of Chinese high school students in the language classroom among individuals.

The second one is from a vertical perspective, focusing on each participant to examine the changes of L2 WTC within an individual after performing and repeating communicative tasks over six weeks. Task-to-task changes are explored as well. The specific research questions are as follows:

1) Does students’ L2 WTC in English change after performing communicative tasks? (Change 1: over six weeks)

2) Are there any differences in the outcomes from three conditions, namely: a) repetition of the same task, b) repetition of different tasks but the same type, and c) repetition of different tasks and a different type? (Change 2: task to task)

4.2.1. Procedures

Figure 4.2 summarises the research procedures of Part One. This part of the study featured a pretest/posttest quasi-experimental design. It was conducted from October 2015 to November 2015, lasting six weeks in total with a one-week midterm break. In Week 1, 32 participants were chosen from two intact Intensive English classes, one of which was assigned as the experimental group (n = 16) and the other as the comparison group (n = 16) in which the communicative tasks were not introduced. In the experimental group, the learners were divided into Group A and Group B to counter-balance the order of the tasks. Each group had eight participants (i.e., four pairs). All the participants were asked to complete the WTC questionnaire about their classroom WTC in English as a pre-test. From Week 2 to Week 6, the participants in the experimental group were asked to perform and repeat two types of communicative tasks in pairs. First, they were asked to
complete a map-task; four days later, they repeated the same map-task with a
different version. In Week 3, they were asked to complete another map-task (i.e.,
different task but of the same type); four days later, they completed a
spot-the-difference-task (different task and of a different type). In Week 5, one
week later after the mid-term break, they repeated the same
spot-the-difference-task with a different version. Finally, four days later, they were
asked to complete another spot-the-difference-task. Thus, they completed two of
the same tasks, two different tasks but of the same type, and two different tasks
and of a different type. Group A completed the M1 task and S1 task first, and
Group B was asked to conduct the M2 task and S2 task first. Each task required
10-15 minutes to finish. In Week 6, the participants in both the experimental and
control group were given the same questionnaire as in Week 1 to identify changes,
if any, in students’ classroom WTC in English inside the classroom and affective
factors mediating their WTC.

Every time the participants completed a task, they were asked to self-rate their
level of willingness to communicate in English while doing the task by circling a
0-100 scale.
There were three types of task repetition, namely, a) repetition of the same task, b) repetition of different tasks but the same type, and c) repetition of different tasks and a different type (See Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Three Types of Task Repetition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repetition of the same task</th>
<th>Experimental Group A</th>
<th>Experimental Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map Task 1 / Map Task 1’</td>
<td>Map Task 2 / Map Task 2’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD Task 1 / SD task 1’</td>
<td>SD Task 2 / SD Task 2’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Repetition of different tasks but the same type | Map Task 1’/ Map Task 2 | Map Task 2’ / Map Task 1 |
| Repetition of different tasks and a different type | Map Task 2 / SD Task 1 | Map Task 1 / SD Task 2 |
4.2.2. Data Analysis

Data collected from the classroom L2 WTC questionnaires and task L2 WTC scales were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0.

The descriptive statistics for the classroom L2 WTC scores were calculated first to examine the profiles of the participants’ WTC in English in a language classroom. After confirming the normality and homogeneity of the scores, paired $t$-tests were conducted to test whether participants differed on the scores between pretest and posttest for both experimental group and comparison group respectively. Then, an independent $t$-test was employed to compare the changes in WTC scores between the two groups to investigate if there was a significant difference. The alpha for achieving statistical significance was set at .05.

The descriptive statistics for the task L2 WTC scores were prepared to examine the general level of participants’ willingness to communicate in English over performing six communicative tasks. Then Friedman test, the non-parametric alternative to repeated ANOVA, was conducted to examine whether participants’ task L2 WTC scores differed significantly over the six tasks. In addition, a series of paired samples $t$-tests and within-group effect sizes were calculated for the experimental group to measure the effect of each type of task repetition on learners’ willingness to communicate in English. The alpha for achieving statistical significance was set at .05.
4.3 Part Two: Multiple-Case Study

This part of the research examined changes of L2 WTC on a per-second timescale.

There were two overarching research questions:

The first, from a horizontal perspective, was to capture typical patterns in moment-to-moment fluctuations of participants’ L2 WTC while performing and repeating communicative tasks.

The second, from a vertical perspective, focused on a particular moment when an individual experiences dynamic fluctuations in L2 WTC during L2 task performance.

4.3.1. Procedures

Figure 4.3 summarises the research procedures for Part Two. Methodological triangulation was employed to give a fuller picture of the dynamic fluctuations in the participant’s L2 WTC at a particular moment with the focus on the idiodynamic method. In Week 1, six participants volunteered to participate in pairs. They completed a questionnaire about their trait-like WTC in English and the affective factors mediating their L2 WTC in a classroom setting. In Week 2, Week 3 and Week 5, they repeatedly performed two types of communicative tasks in a small, quiet classroom after school six times. Each time they were asked to perform a task and self-rate their idiodynamic L2 WTC in the software while watching their own recorded task performance. They also participated in a stimulated recall interview and wrote a journal entry about their attitudes towards the task generally. The stimulated recall interviews were conducted in participants’ L1 (Chinese) to increase the accuracy of mutual understanding. To get a comprehensive picture of the participants’ English language learning and their individual characteristics, the researcher also interviewed their Intensive English teachers and made notes during their task performance.

In this process, data triangulation was achieved through the integration of multiple sources of data. It included quantitative data (questionnaires and self-ratings of L2 WTC) and qualitative data (journal entries, stimulated recall interview transcripts, teacher interview transcripts, task performance transcripts and field notes).
Triangulation is essential to enhance the trustworthiness of a case study (Sturman, 1999) and overcome potential bias arising from the use of a single data source (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995).

Figure 4.3 Research Design of Part Two

4.3.2. Data Analysis

A qualitative content analysis was employed to analyse data collected in this part of the study. Data analysis and interpretation were based on the CDST framework and research questions. There were two integrated processes of analysis: inter-individual and intra-individual. The former refers to the presentation of typical patterns across individuals, which involves a comparative analysis of participants. The latter refers to a narrative description of the changes within an individual to explore how the language learners’ L2 WTC fluctuates when performing communicative tasks in pairs, and the factors that contribute to his or her dynamic changes in L2 WTC.
This part of the study focused on the fluctuations in L2 WTC, not on a statistical analysis of the ratings. Thus the questionnaires, coupled with the graphs that were analysed individually, were used to provide background information for each participant. The level of trait-like L2 WTC and its related affective factors for an individual, as well as his or her graph of self-rated WTC, were used to present a comprehensive picture for understanding fluctuations in L2 WTC.

As the transcription process was essential for further data analysis and interpretation (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 209), the video-recordings of learner stimulated recall interviews and task performance were transcribed by the researcher solely. The participants were invited to check and make any amendments on a copy of the transcript subsequently. The interview transcripts were translated from Chinese into English to report the findings.

Data collected from stimulated recall interviews and task performance transcripts were coded using content analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), which involved reading, coding and revising the codes. To obtain a holistic and comprehensive picture of the participants’ fluctuations in L2 WTC, and their interpretation of changes, the researcher analysed the data by moving constantly between the data, the theoretical framework and the research questions, recursively and dynamically as recommended by Merriam (1988).

The segments of “wave” of dynamic L2 WTC (see above a fuller description of the concept “wave”, p. 32) were identified first for each participant to understand better the changes in dynamic L2 WTC on a per-second basis. There was a focus especially on those moments when there was a change in the upward or downward trend in the graph of participants’ idiodynamic L2 WTC ratings. In each wave, the participant also made comments on his/her high or low L2 WTC to explain the variability in the level of L2 WTC. Following Wood’s (2016) research, there are five types of data presented for each wave: 1) a graph of the wave; 2) a transcript of the speech contained in the wave; 3) the L2 WTC bitmap of the wave produced by the participant; 4) the participant’s explanation about the fluctuations (rose or fell) within the wave; and 5) the researcher’s comment on the participant’s behaviour within the wave. The researcher also inductively listed participants’ perceived influencing factors mentioned in the journal entries that were related to
the dynamic fluctuations in L2 WTC.

An independent coder, a researcher in the SLA field, double-coded a sample of the questionnaires and transcripts to ensure acceptable inter-rater reliability.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

This study was carried out after gaining approval from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (Reference Number: 015055). During the process, it strictly followed the ethical principles.

4.4.1. Recruitment

A total of 38 participants were recruited. Prior to the fieldwork, the Participant Information Sheets (see Appendix A-F), introducing the purpose and procedure of the research were delivered to the principle of the school, Intensive English teachers, parents of those under 16 years old and students. They were also asked to sign a Consent Form (see Appendix A-F) if agreed to volunteer to participate in this study. For the quasi-experimental study, 32 participants in two Intensive English classes were recruited. The principal of the school was contacted first, and a list of teachers of Intensive English courses was provided. These teachers were contacted by email and asked for their cooperation in contacting their students to take part in my research. They all agreed to cooperate whenever it was needed. Finally, on a voluntary basis, 16 participants (the whole class) in one of the four Intensive English courses were chosen as the Experimental Group while 16 participants in another class (the whole class) were chosen as the Comparison Group. As the communicative tasks to be performed were following the course objectives, the principal of the school agreed to do the research as part of the course during the class time.

In the case study, three pairs were invited through a recruiting flyer (see Appendix G) displayed on the School Bulletin Board with the permission of the principle of the school. The students were advised they would take part in the research with one of his/her classmates in the same Intensive English class. They were informed, also, that they might not be chosen because of limited numbers in the study, and that those interested should get Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form
from the school secretary, and submit them to the same place. The recruiting lasted three days, and only those who had submitted by the time stated on the Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form were selected. Those who volunteered to attend the research, but were not chosen, were given a $10 notebook as compensation for their loss of this opportunity. Those who were chosen as participants received a $10 notebook each time they performed the task. All the participants were informed that neither participation nor non-participation would influence their grades and relationships with the teacher and school. The research activities were conducted after school.

4.4.2. Right to Withdraw

In the experimental study, the participants were guaranteed that they had the right to withdraw from the study in the first three weeks of data collection. If he/she decided not to participate in this project anymore, he/she would be put, temporarily, in another class where he/she could receive regular lessons from the same teacher.

In the case study, the participant was informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study in the first three weeks of data collection. If his/her partner withdrew from the research, they would have the following options: 1) to make a new pair with someone newly recruited by the researcher, or 2) to withdraw from the research.

The principle of the school guaranteed that neither their participation nor withdrawal would bring any consequences to him/her or to anyone who might be related, nor would it affect his/her grades, or relationship with the school in any way.

During the interview, participants had the right to refuse to answer any specific questions and to have the video and audio recorders turned off at any stage.

4.4.3. Anonymity/Confidentiality/Privacy

A pseudonym, such as an English name or a number they preferred, was used to identify that pre- and post- questionnaires being filled by the same participant. No participant’s name will be used in the research report to ensure that he/she will not be identifiable.
In the stimulated recall interview, participants’ anonymity could not be guaranteed completely as it was conducted with another participant in a pair. However, each participant was asked to respect the other participant’s privacy, and to agree that the interview would be kept confidential to the people involved.

The interview transcripts were offered to the participant and his/her partner. If they did not agree to the transcript being used for the analysis, he/she could request not to use the part that related to his/her task performance.

If the participants wished to receive feedback on the results of this research, they could tick the relevant item on the Consent Form and the questionnaires. They would receive a copy of the report on the research when it was completed.

All the data was available to the researcher and her supervisors. Nobody else would have access to the questionnaires, self-rating WTC graphs and interview data.

4.4.4. Data storage/ Retention/ Destruction/ Future use

In the case study, the task performances of the participants were videotaped by a mini-DV camera. The videos were captured in the “.wmv” format to be viewed using Microsoft Windows Media Player software. The stimulated recall interviews were audio-taped by digital voice recorder.

The participants who attended the case study were offered the opportunity to review the tapes in order to self-rate their L2 WTC and discuss noticeable changes in L2 WTC. The interview transcripts were not offered to the participants; however, a copy of the task-performance video was offered on an optional basis.

After completing this study, the researcher will store all the related data in a locked cabinet for a period of six years. The collected data will be only for the doctoral dissertation, conference presentation and related publication purposes. The data might be used for related language learning research within the six-year period, and the researcher will destroy all the information by deleting the files and shredding the hard copies.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS OF PART ONE

This chapter provides the results of the communicative task-based intervention, which are presented in two parts: One is a horizontal examination of common patterns among individuals and the other is a vertical perspective focusing on the changes of L2 WTC within an individual. The profiles of participants’ L2 WTC in the language classroom are reported first. The succeeding sections present results of changes in participants’ L2 WTC after an intervention in which they engaged in L2 communicative tasks over six weeks, and task-to-task changes as a result of repeating three types of tasks.

5.1 Horizontal Analyses: L2 WTC Profiles of Participants

To capture the general L2 WTC profiles of the participants in the language classroom, the descriptive statistics for the L2 WTC scores of the participants including minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation and range are presented first (see Table 5.1). The interpretation of the classroom L2 WTC profiles in this study followed Liu and Jackson (2008) and Peng (2014b) by measuring the ratio of the mean L2 WTC score to the full score. The questionnaire applied in the study used a 4-point scale comprising 15 items with 60 the full score on this scale. The level of L2 WTC was interpreted as: High (a total score of L2 WTC is more than 80% of the full score, i.e., from 48 to 60); moderate (a total score of L2 WTC is more than 60% of the full score, i.e., from 36 to 48); and low (a total score of L2 WTC is less than 80% of the full score, i.e., from 0 to 36) (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Peng, 2014b).

In the experimental group (n = 16), the mean L2 WTC scores for both pretest L2 WTC (M = 50.63) and posttest L2 WTC (M = 49.86) were more than 80% of the full score, which suggested the selected participants had a high willingness to communicate in English in the language classroom. In the comparison group, the mean L2 WTC scores were slightly lower for both the pretest L2 WTC (M = 45.38) and for the posttest L2 WTC (M = 46.44) than that of the experimental group, which suggested a moderate level of classroom L2 WTC, although it was a high
moderate and close to the level of high L2 WTC. The effect size $d$ scores for the experimental and comparison group were .69 and .46 in the pretest and posttest respectively.

Table 5.1 *Descriptive Statistics for Summated Scores in both Pretest Classroom L2 WTC and Posttest Classroom L2 WTC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>$Min$</th>
<th>$Max$</th>
<th>$Mean$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Classroom L2 WTC</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50.62</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Classroom L2 WTC</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>49.88</td>
<td>7.52</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Classroom L2 WTC</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>45.38</td>
<td>6.99</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Classroom L2 WTC</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46.44</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participant’s frequent responses to the L2 WTC scale items were then investigated, following Peng’s (2014b) research, to explore further the L2 WTC at item levels. Table 5.2 shows the frequency of students’ responses to the items. The number of participants who responded to the four options on the WTC scale items was counted. Both the experimental and comparison group rated Item 8, “to do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (e.g., ordering food)”, as the situation in which they were least willing to communicate. For the experimental group, Item 6, “to interview your classmates in English asking questions from the textbook”, and Item 13, “to ask your classmates how to pronounce a word in English” were ranked as the situations in which they were most willing to communicate in both pretest and posttest. For the comparison group, there was no change between the pretest and posttest; in both pre- and posttest they rated Item 11, “to ask your classmates in English to repeat what they have just said in English”, as the situation in which they were most willing to communicate.

In the L2 WTC scale, which includes 15 situations that frequently happen in an EFL classroom, Items WTC 5, WTC 6, WTC 7, WTC 8, WTC 9 and WTC 10 capture the influence of different pedagogical techniques have upon learners’ level of L2 WTC (see Table 5.3). For example, Item WTC 5 and Item WTC 6 investigate the influence of the origin of questions (whether asking participants’ own questions or asking questions from the textbook). The results showed that students were slightly more willing to communicate when asking questions from
the textbook than of their own production. Item WTC 7 and Item WTC 8 were to determine the extent to which physical location in the classroom influences students’ level of L2 WTC. It was found that the participants were less willing to communicate in front of the class than at their desk, with the former being the situation in which the students would be least willing to communicate. Responses to Item WTC 9 and Item 10, which ask about the impact of having access to written notes, revealed that the learners were more willing to communicate with notes than without notes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items (I am willing …)</th>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Unwilling</th>
<th>Willing</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R1</td>
<td>R2</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>R4</td>
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<td>WTC1</td>
<td>To give directions to your favourite restaurant in English.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.89</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>.70</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3.25</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC2</td>
<td>To tell your classmates in English about the story of a TV show you saw.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>.78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Posttest</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTC3</td>
<td>To read about a two-way dialogue in English from the textbook.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.66</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTC4</td>
<td>To translate a spoken utterance from Chinese into English.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.78</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>.72</td>
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<td>2.94</td>
<td>.77</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTC5</td>
<td>To interview your classmates in English asking your own original questions.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.73</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Posttest</td>
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<td>.73</td>
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<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.68</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>To interview your classmates in English asking questions from the textbook.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
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<td>.48</td>
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<td>WTC7</td>
<td>To do a role-play in English at your desk (e.g., ordering food in a restaurant).</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
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<td>.73</td>
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<td>To do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (e.g., ordering food).</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
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<td>1.06</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>.97</td>
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<td>WTC9</td>
<td>To give a short speech in English about your hometown with notes.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.98</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC10</td>
<td>To give a short self-introduction without notes in English.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC11</td>
<td>To ask your classmates in English to repeat what they have just said in English.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC12</td>
<td>To ask the meaning of the word you do not know in English.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC13</td>
<td>To ask your classmates how to pronounce a word in English.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC14</td>
<td>To ask your classmates in English how to say a phrase you know how to say in Chinese but not in English.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC15</td>
<td>Ask for instruction or clarification when you are confused about a task you must complete.</td>
<td>Experimental Pretest</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.3 *Influences of Pedagogical Techniques on Participants’ L2 WTC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogical Techniques</th>
<th>Experimental (N=16)</th>
<th>Comparison (N=16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest M (SD)</td>
<td>Posttest M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference 1</td>
<td>With textbook</td>
<td>3.50 (.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without textbook</td>
<td>3.69 (.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference 2</td>
<td>At one’s own desk</td>
<td>3.44 (.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In front of the class</td>
<td>2.94 (1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference 3</td>
<td>With notes</td>
<td>3.31 (.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without notes</td>
<td>3.19 (.98)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Vertical Analyses: Changes in L2 WTC

### 5.2.1. Changes in Classroom L2 WTC

After checking the normal distribution of the data, paired sample *t*-tests were used to compare the pretest and posttest L2 WTC scores in the two groups to see whether engaging in communicative tasks changed participants’ classroom L2 WTC (see Table 5.4). The result revealed that there was no statistical significance between pretest and posttest WTC scores both for the experimental group [*t* (15) = .328, *p* > 0.05] and the comparison group [*t* (15) = -.695, *p* > 0.05].

Table 5.4 *Descriptive Statistics for Summed Scores in both Pretest Classroom L2 WTC and Posttest Classroom L2 WTC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental group (Pre-posttest L2 WTC)</strong></td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>9.154</td>
<td>2.289</td>
<td>-4.128</td>
<td>5.628</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparison group (Pre-posttest L2 WTC)</strong></td>
<td>-1.063</td>
<td>6.115</td>
<td>1.529</td>
<td>-4.321</td>
<td>2.196</td>
<td>-.695</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of the independent sample *t*-test also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the
comparison group both in the pretest ($t (30) = 1.896, p > 0.05$) and posttest ($t (30) = 1.250, p > 0.05$).

To capture individual differences in the changes of classroom L2 WTC between pretest and posttest, the rising or falling trend of classroom L2 WTC for participants in both the experimental and comparison group was investigated. In the experimental group (see Figure 5.1), six participants (S1, S2, S6, S8, S12, S14) experienced a rising trend in level, while for nine participants (S3, S4, S5, S7, S9, S11, S13, S15) there was a falling trend, in the level of classroom L2 WTC from pretest to posttest. One participant’s (S10) classroom L2 WTC was the same pre- and posttest. In the comparison group (see Figure 5.2), 10 participants (S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S11, S14, S15, S16) experienced a rising trend, while only three participants (S5, S9, S13) saw a falling trend of their level of classroom L2 WTC from pretest to posttest. Two participants’ (S8, S10) level of classroom L2 WTC was the same at pre- and posttest.

Figure 5.1 Pre-test L2 WTC and Post-test L2 WTC of the Participants in the Experimental Group
5.2.2. Changes in Task L2 WTC

As we can see from Table 5.5 and Figure 5.3, there were slight fluctuations in scores among participants’ task L2 WTC performance over six communicative tasks; mean scores ranged from the lowest L2 WTC (79.39; SD = 21.75), for the second task, to the highest WTC (86.25; SD = 16.28) for the sixth task. The mean value on the 100-point WTC scales was 80.63 (SD = 19.72) for the Map tasks and 83.54 (SD = 17.50) for the SD tasks, indicating participants’ high willingness to communicate while performing the two types of tasks. An independent t-test performed on the data revealed that the difference was not statistically significant (p > .05), with a small effect size score (d = .16).

Table 5.5 Descriptive Statistics for WTC Scores across the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WTC in doing Map tasks</th>
<th>Task L2 WTC 1</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>82.50</td>
<td>20.17</td>
<td>-1.505</td>
<td>1.985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task L2 WTC 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>79.38</td>
<td>21.75</td>
<td>-.976</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task L2 WTC 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>18.26</td>
<td>-.676</td>
<td>-.786</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WTC in doing SD tasks</th>
<th>Task L2 WTC 4</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80.63</td>
<td>18.43</td>
<td>-.616</td>
<td>-.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task L2 WTC 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83.75</td>
<td>17.46</td>
<td>-.748</td>
<td>-.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task L2 WTC 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>86.25</td>
<td>16.28</td>
<td>-.997</td>
<td>-.027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To examine whether participants’ task L2 WTC scores differed significantly over the six tasks, a Friedman test, the non-parametric alternative to repeated ANOVA, was conducted because the data did not meet the assumptions of parametric tests. The result showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the
six task L2 WTC scores ($x^2 = 8.19, p = .15$).

Figure 5.3 *Participants’ Mean L2 WTC over Performing the Six Communicative Tasks*

In this study, there are three types of task repetition, namely, a) repetition of the same task, b) repetition of different tasks but the same type and c) repetition of different tasks and different types. A series of paired samples $t$-tests and within-group effect sizes were calculated for two experimental groups to measure the effect of each type of task repetition on learners’ willingness to communicate in English (see Table 5.6). No paired comparisons reached statistical significance ($p > .05$), and the effect size $d$ scores indicated only a small or negligible level of effect for task repetition.
As we can see from Table 5.6, there were different types of changes in students’ L2 WTC while performing the six tasks. Four students (S1, S3, S5, S15) experienced a rising trend while one student’s (S6) L2 WTC dropped from task 1 to task 6. The L2 WTC of six learners (S2, S4, S8, S9, S10, S12) remained the same while the L2 WTC of five learners (S6, S7, S11, S13, S16) fluctuated.

Table 5.6 Descriptive Statistics for L2 WTC in Three Types of Task Repetition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of task repetition</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>Time 1 - Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of the same task</td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>77.50 (23.15)</td>
<td>71.25 (24.17)</td>
<td>.420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77.50 (19.09)</td>
<td>80.00 (18.52)</td>
<td>.451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of one SD Task</td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>87.50 (16.69)</td>
<td>87.50 (16.69)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83.75 (18.47)</td>
<td>87.50 (16.69)</td>
<td>.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of different tasks but the same type</td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>71.25 (24.17)</td>
<td>75.00 (20.00)</td>
<td>.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80.00 (18.52)</td>
<td>85.00 (15.12)</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of SD Tasks</td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>87.50 (16.69)</td>
<td>85.00 (16.04)</td>
<td>.351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87.50 (16.69)</td>
<td>87.50 (18.32)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of different tasks and a different type</td>
<td>Repetition of Map Tasks</td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>75.00 (20.00)</td>
<td>77.50 (19.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>85.00 (16.04)</td>
<td>83.75 (18.47)</td>
<td>.685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.7 Participants’ L2 WTCs over Performing the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WTC1</th>
<th>WTC2</th>
<th>WTC3</th>
<th>WTC4</th>
<th>WTC5</th>
<th>WTC6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>S2</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
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<td>S6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>S12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>S13</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S14</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S15</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSIONS OF PART ONE

This part of the thesis reports on a quasi-experimental intervention, which provides information on changes of L2 WTC that cannot be elicited from single questionnaire surveys widely used in previous studies. The quasi-experimental intervention investigated further the features of Chinese high school students’ L2 WTC and the effectiveness of communicative tasks and task repetition on L2 WTC.

It aims to answer two research questions:

1) What are the general L2 WTC profiles of Chinese high school students in the language classroom?

2) Does students’ L2 WTC change after performing communicative tasks? Specifically, are there any differences in the outcomes from three conditions, namely: a) repetition of the same task, b) repetition of different tasks but the same type, and c) repetition of different tasks and a different type?

The following sections reviews the result of the interventions, reported in Chapter Five, in comparison with earlier literature on L2 WTC discussed in Chapter Two.

6.1 General L2 WTC Profiles of Chinese High School Students

While the 16 Chinese high school students in the experimental group demonstrated high L2 WTC in the language classroom, the other 16 students in the comparison group also reached a similar, high moderate, level of L2 WTC, both in the pretest and posttest.

A number of studies (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Liu & Littlewood, 1997; Peng, 2014b) similarly found that most of the Chinese EFL learners in their studies were willing to participate in L2 interpersonal conversations. For example, Liu and Littlewood (1997), based on data from their large-scale study (n = 437), reported strong evidence that L2 learners in Hong Kong preferred an active speech role, and claimed that the idea of the passive Asian student was largely a myth. Liu and
Jackson (2008) also concluded that most of Chinese EFL learners \((n = 547)\) were willing to participate in L2 communication, while Peng (2014b), another large-scale survey into Chinese EFL learners’ L2 WTC \((n = 579)\), also suggested that the participants in her study were moderately willing to communicate in English in the language classroom.

This finding is in contrast to the stereotype of Chinese L2 learners as passive and reticent language users, who remain silent during L2 communication (Asker, 1998; Hsu, 2015; Jackson, 2003; Xie, 2011). It has been reported that the Chinese students, influenced by Confucian Heritage culture that includes elements such as the other-directed self, face protection and a submissive way of learning, avoid English communication when an opportunity arises (Wen & Clément, 2003). Asker (1998), for example, investigated 452 Hong Kong university students’ L2 WTC and reported that they exhibited a lower level of L2 WTC compared to their counterparts in Western countries. Similarly, Jackson’s (2003) investigation of 589 university students in Hong Kong found that most of the participants tended to remain silent when required to use English to participate in classroom discussions. In a study of 354 Taiwanese university students, Hsu (2015), likewise, found that the participants did not like to be involved in the L2 communication inside the classroom. Most research has been with Chinese university students’ L2 WTC, Xie (2011), however, investigated 124 rural Chinese secondary students’ willingness to communicate in an EFL classroom and found that they, also, displayed low levels of L2 WTC.

The language context in which the participants in this study were involved may partly explain their high level of L2 WTC. The research site in this study is an international college preparatory high school where daily communication with native English speakers is possible and required. The school is internationally oriented to prepare students for post-secondary opportunities at American universities and colleges. It provides an English immersion environment for the Chinese students. The makeup of the students is 40 % Chinese, 40% Korean and 20% of other countries. With the exception of five Intensive English teachers who are Chinese, all the other 40 teachers are native speakers of English. The results imply that the Chinese high school students in an immersion environment are likely to have higher WTC than those who lack direct exposure to native target
speakers (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; MacIntyre et al., 2003).

Students in the experiment group scored higher classroom L2 WTC than those in the comparison group, suggesting that WTC has a trait-like nature that differs one language learner from the other. This is similar to the conclusion of MacIntyre et al. (1999) who argued that trait-like WTC prepares an individual to enter into a specific situation where L2 communication is likely to happen.

The data in this study also revealed participants’ typical responses to situations that frequently happen in a language classroom, for example, that participants were less willing to communicate in situations in which there were high risks of making mistakes or it was perceived they would look foolish. Such situations include less-controlled activities (e.g. to do role-play in front of the class) and linguistically demanding situations (e.g. to speak without notes or textbook).

### 6.2 Effects of L2 Communicative Tasks and Task Repetition

This section discusses the L2 WTC in a specific situation, that is an EFL classroom, and on a task-related basis. Neither the experimental group nor the comparison group showed any significant differences in their level of classroom L2 WTC and task-based L2 WTC.

There is little research, which examines the effect of a pedagogical intervention on L2 WTC by repeated measurements focusing on the changes of L2 WTC over time by comparing the results from pre- and post-questionnaire (Kang, 2014; Munezane, 2014, 2015; Shimoyama, 2013). Popular scale-based surveys on L2 WTC and its related variables usually have only one measurement that investigates the cause-and-effect relationship between L2 WTC and its antecedents or consequences. After systematically reviewing and analysing 35 studies on L2 WTC, Zhang et al. (2018) suggested that future study on the flexibility of L2 WTC, and whether L2 WTC can be enhanced through pedagogical instruction, with specifically designed strategies, to develop L2 WTC inside and outside language classrooms.

This study is one of a few that have examined the effects of a pedagogical instruction, with L2 communicative tasks and task repetition, on students’ L2
WTC. It was concluded that the participants’ classroom L2 WTC, measured by a self-reported questionnaire including speaking tasks and situations common in EFL classrooms, did not show any improvement over a period of six weeks. Furthermore, their task L2 WTC, measured soon after performing or repeating a task with a 0-100 scale indicating the level of participants’ L2 WTC, a specific task, also remained stable on a task-to-task basis. It appeared that there were no effects of L2 communicative tasks and task repetition on learners’ L2 WTC on two timescales: a timescale over a period of six weeks and a timescale from task to task.

Other EFL researchers have also reported that the language instruction they employed in their study failed to enhance learners’ L2 WTC. For example, after a year of team-taught instruction with a native teacher playing the major role and involved in a number of communicative activities, there was no significant change in 248 Japanese high school students’ WTC (Sick, 2001; cited in Munezane, 2014). Similarly, Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) found no significant gain in L2 WTC for students who had spent two and a half year studying abroad.

The developmental nature of WTC should not be dismissed based on the small amount of L2 WTC research. Some researchers have demonstrated the possibility of enhancing L2 WTC through pedagogical instruction. For example, Munezane (2014, 2015) claimed positive effects of visualisation and goal setting on participants’ L2 WTC. Yashima (2012) also suggested enhancing L2 WTC through pedagogy, and cited the success of online chatting in increasing L2 WTC reported in Freiremuth (2006) study. Kang (2014) examined the effects of study-abroad ps on EFL learner’s WTC among 60 Korean university students, and in contrast to Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008), claimed that their L2 WTC was significantly developed as a result of study-abroad experience in L1 English-speaking countries.

One way to understand better the “developmental” nature of WTC is to take “the issue of time” into account. MacIntyre (2007) stated that “the manner in which motivation affects language learning changes as the time frame under study changes” (p. 567). Dörnyei (2003), also, pointed out that many of the controversies and disagreements in (L2 motivation) research should not exclude one another as they may simply be related to different phases of the process. These arguments are
applicable to the research in L2 WTC.

This part of the study reflects the trait-like nature of L2 WTC that remains relatively stable over time. Although, WTC showed some stability in individual differences in the potential for L2 communication, the nature of WTC can be perceived as trait-like, situational or dynamic depending on the timescale considered. For example, if we examine L2 WTC over a relatively long period (e.g., a number of years; one semester) measured by questionnaires, it is possible to capture only the trait-like features and long-term patterns of WTC. This part of the research measured classroom L2 WTC and task L2 WTC over six weeks indicating that L2 WTC remained stable during this period. By narrowing the time span into “minutes” or “seconds”, however, the developmental nature of WTC may appear. Based on this belief, MacIntyre and Leggato (2011) developed an idiodynamic method to capture rapid changes in L2 learners’ WTC and provided a continuous curve describing WTC. He argued that “time series analyses could be used to tease out the stable individual differences from the moment-to-moment fluctuation” (p. 168).

The following chapter focuses on “shorter” time span, to capture changes in L2 WTC within an individual on a moment-by-moment basis.
CHAPTER SEVEN

RESULTS OF PART TWO

This part of the thesis reports the findings of a multiple-case study, which, by employing the idiodynamic method, provides information on changes in L2 WTC that occurred on a per-second timescale to capture the complex dynamic nature of this construct.

The presentation of the results, following MacIntyre and Legatto’s (2011), includes two parts: One is a horizontal examination of common patterns among individuals and the other is a vertical perspective focusing on the patterns of fluctuations in L2 WTC within an individual. The participants’ explanations about the moment-to-moment changes in L2 WTC are emphasised.

7.1 Horizontal Analyses: Variations across Individuals

This section focuses on the variations across the participants. It investigates whether the participants have a general attitude (positive or negative) towards the tasks and whether there is much variability in the idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC across the six tasks and individuals.

In this part, the data from questionnaires were used only to provide background information for each participant. Affective variables, including classroom L2 WTC, PC and CA, remained stable during the intervention, as measured by pre- and post-questionnaires (see Table 7.1).
Table 7.1 Scores on Pre- and Post-Classroom L2 WTC, PC and CA for the Six Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Classroom L2 WTC (range 15-60)</th>
<th>PC (range 0-1500)</th>
<th>CA (range 15-60)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pair 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lan</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pair 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pair 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xu</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2 shows the mean idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC for each of the six tasks and the students’ overall readiness to interact in a particular task. There was a slight difference among the six tasks, with the mean level of the participants’ L2 WTC ranging from 0.71 (the M1 task) to 1.55 (the S1 task). The only case of unwillingness to communicate in English was recorded in Xu (the M2 task, M = -0.24). Generally, the six cases showed a positive L2 WTC towards the six tasks.

Table 7.2 Mean Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC for the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair 1</th>
<th>Pair 2</th>
<th>Pair 3</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lau</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xu</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1’</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marked differences emerged when focusing on changes in L2 WTC across the participants. Following the two influential studies using the idiodynamic method to explore L2 motivation (MacIntyre & Serroul, 2015) and L2 anxiety (Gregersen et al., 2014) respectively, the current study chose two ways to reflect variability in the idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC. One is the standard deviation (SD) of the self-ratings, and the other is the number of spikes and dips (i.e., an interrupted increase or decrease (respectively) of five or more points) in the ratings.

The six participants were different in the degrees of variability in the idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC, which was evident in the value of SD of the idiodynamic data.
and the number of spikes and dips (see Table 7.3). For example, Lan showed a great deal of variability (SD = 2.14) in her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC, with 25 spikes and 22 dips in total. Su, in contrary, displayed steadiness in her idiodynamic ratings (SD = 0.76), with only one spike and two dips.

Table 7.3 Variability in the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Dynamic Mean</th>
<th>Dynamic SD</th>
<th># of Spikes</th>
<th># of Dips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lan</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xu</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were three patterns of fluctuations in idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC (see Figure 7.1-7.3), as shown in the graphs produced by the idiodynamic software. The first pattern featured frequent and dramatic swings between willingness and unwillingness during the tasks, just like a roller coaster (For example, see Case Lan, the M2 Task). The second pattern, in contrary, had little variability, with the ratings being relatively flat (see Case Su, the M1 Task). The third pattern showed a generally positive trend, which implies a participant’s overall willingness to communicate in English (See Case Li, the S1 Task). The mostly negative pattern introduced in MacInnytre and Serroul’s (2015) research did not appear in the current study, which was another evidence that the participants demonstrated a generally positive attitude towards speaking in the six tasks.
Figure 7.1 A Roller Coaster Pattern (Case Hu, S1 Task)

Figure 7.2 A Flat Pattern (Case Su, M1 Task)

Figure 7.3 Generally Positive Pattern (Case Lan, S1 Task)
Regarding the degree of learners’ vulnerability and sensitivity to the environment, a continuum of dynamic fluctuations in L2 WTC was formed after comparing the different patterns of changes in idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC. It follows Cao (2009) who stated that “not every participant equally changes in the same ways to the same degree at the same time because one’s experience is different from the others” (p. 153). As shown in Figure 7.4, the left end of the continuum was strong assertiveness, and the right end was vulnerability to the environment. Lan was extremely vulnerable to the environment, but her partner Su was extremely assertive. Hu was put towards the more submissive end and her partner Xu was in the more assertive end. Li and Chen went in the middle of the continuum, being relatively assertive or relatively submissive.

Figure 7.4: Continuum of Dynamic Fluctuations in WTC

The following section presents a thorough description of the six cases individually, focusing on their explanations about fluctuations in the ratings, particularly on their account for spikes and dips in the graphs.
7.2 Vertical Analyses: Individual Case Descriptions

This section presents the results individually to describe, understand and explain the complex, dynamic and nonlinear nature of L2 WTC at a particular moment. It is based on the six participants’ moment-to-moment changes in L2 WTC during their performance in the six communicative tasks.

As a within-in case analysis, it involves a narrative description of individual cases. Data triangulation was achieved through the integration of multiple sources of data. It included quantitative data (questionnaires and self-ratings of L2 WTC) and qualitative data (journal entries, stimulated recall interview transcripts, teacher interview transcripts, task performance transcripts and field notes).

7.2.1. Pair One

Lan and Su volunteered to take part in the case study as a pair. The two female students, in the same Intensive English class, were familiar with each other. Both of them had a relatively low PC (see Table 7.1) when compared to the other four participants. Regarding the level of variability in their idiodynamic ratings, there was a marked difference between them. Lan’s L2 WTC was vulnerable to change and fluctuated dramatically during the task performance. Su, however, remained steady in her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC. To explain the two different attitudes towards the same task contributes to the understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of L2 WTC.

7.2.1.1 Case I: Lan- Sensitive to Environment

Lan’s L2 WTC fluctuated dramatically during task performance, especially in doing the Map tasks. Her L2 WTC was most “vulnerable to the environment” as shown in the continuum of dynamic fluctuations in L2 WTC (see Figure 7.4). Her teacher Emma was positive about her and described her as a “genuinely creative” student. As an extrovert girl, Lan was willing to do presentations in front of the class and make friends with those from other countries. She expressed that her general willingness to communicate in English had increased after she came to this international middle school, where she had more opportunities to use English as a daily communication tool.
She had been to the United States several times, for travelling or studying. In the first interview, she introduced her overseas experience:

There was a time when I stayed in the United States for more than two months. At that time, I was only a primary student and knew very little English. However, I could always find ways to make foreigners understand. It was amazing! (Case Lan, M1 task Interview)

A brief profile for Lan is provided in Figure 7.5:

Figure 7.5 Profile for Case Lan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Former English learning:</strong> 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overseas experience:</strong> travel and study, stayed for one or two months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside school:</strong> focused on enlarging vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons for learning English:</strong> for a future career; to study in English-speaking countries (to understand their culture better); to travel overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Her perceptions of English proficiency:</strong> relatively low English proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Her main concerns about English learning:</strong> a limited vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Emma’s view of her:</strong> creative, extremely extrovert, one of the top students in the class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lan had the lowest PC among the six cases. She was one of the top students in the class, with a Grade Point Average of nearly 4.0. However, she perceived herself as having relatively low English proficiency, which resulted in her low L2 WTC at times:

I am not very willing to talk to strangers in English. My English is not very good. If I make some mistakes, strangers may become impatient and feel disappointed at me. If my English were better, I would be more willing to talk. I do not need to worry about making mistakes at that time. (Case Lan, M1’ Task Interview)
I think I should improve my English proficiency first. Otherwise, I will feel nervous and unwilling to speak with someone that I am not familiar with. (Case Lan, M2 Task Interview)

The following sections present the main features and patterns of Lan’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC and her explanations about the changes on a task-to-task basis.

Trajectory of Lan’s L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

Figure 7.6 presents the trajectory of Lan’s L2 WTC over six tasks. The vertical axis represents the idiodynamic scale of -5 (least willing) to +5 (most willing), while the horizontal axis indicates the speaking time measured on a per-second basis. The length of task performance ranges from 261 seconds (the S1 task) to 441 seconds (the M1 task). Four tasks showed a roller coaster pattern (M1, M1’, M2, S1’), and the other two tasks (S1, S2) demonstrated a generally positive pattern. Table 7.4 describes Lan’s variability in the idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC over six tasks. Her L2 WTC fluctuated most dramatically in the M2 task (SD = 3.41), with five spikes and seven dips shown in the graph.

Table 7.4 Case Lan’s Variability in the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th># of Spikes</th>
<th># of Dips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1’</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.6 Case Lan’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks
The M1 task is a closed, one-way information gap task. In this task, there was a scene of a forest with people and animals doing various things; only one speaker’s map had a route on it. Lan and her partner Su were told that someone put a spell on the forest and that there was only one safe route from the start sign at the bottom of the page to go up the monster’s den at the top of the page. The Instruction Giver, whose map had a route, had to give directions to the Instruction Follower who had the same map but without the route on it.

Lan performed two versions of the same task, first being the Instruction Follower without a route on her map and then being the Instruction Giver with a route on her map. As an Instruction Follower, Lan was required to reproduce the Instruction Giver’s (Su) route on her map; as an Instruction Giver, she needed to give instructions to her interlocutor Su and help her reproduce a route on the map.

In the M1 task, Lan’s mean idiodynamic rating was only 0.26, lower than the overall mean level of 0.71 in this task. It fluctuated dramatically (SD = 1.99), with seven spikes and six dips as shown in the graph. Specifically, the variability of Lan’s idiodynamic ratings is as follows (also see Figure 7.6):

1) It was until Second 139 that Lan started to respond with negative ratings from -1 to -5. This low L2 WTC lasted 30 seconds. During this time, Lan and her partner were doing the first version of the M1 task. They were confused about the line between a boy and the finishing point.

2) At the point of Second 171 when her partner announced the end of the first version, Lan’s L2 WTC, suddenly, surged to a positive rating +3.

3) Between Seconds 171-252, her L2 WTC remained in the positive zone, with fluctuations between +1 and +5.

4) Her L2 WTC dropped to -3 at Second 255. Stayed in this low area for only 8 seconds, the figure increased to be positive and varied slightly between +1 and +2 for the next 30 seconds.
5) With temporal low L2 WTC between Seconds 294-305, Lan’s L2 WTC kept in the positive zone with ups and downs for 70 seconds, and then it ended in the lowest level.

Lan explained the fluctuations of L2 WTC in the journal and stimulated recall interview. In her journal entries, she reported that, although she perceived the task as easy, her willingness in doing this task was only 50/100. She felt bored when doing the task. She commented:

I was a little disappointed when I saw this task. It was boring. I do not think it helps improve my English. I prefer to go outside and communicate with native English-speaking foreigners in daily life. (Case Lan, M1 Task Interview)

She was not satisfied with her performance in this task. She realised that, after watching the recorded video of task performance, she was not cooperative and gave minimal response to her interlocutor. She felt this response was “not good”. She was positive about her partner’s frequent and prompt responses during the task performance:

When I watched the video, I saw that my partner always responded to me when she was an Instruction Follower. It encouraged me a lot and increased my willingness to express myself. However, I always kept in silence in the same situation and did not say any words. I knew it was not good. (Case Lan, M1 Task Interview)

To understand better the changes in L2 WTC on a per-second basis, especially on the moments when there is a change in the upward or downward trend, segments that represent different speaking events, corresponding to what MacIntyre (2012) terms “waves” of L2 WTC, are chosen and presented with participant’s explanations about variability in the idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC. Following Wood’s (2016) research, there are five types of data presented in each wave:

1) A graph of the wave;

2) A transcript of the speech contained in the wave (see Appendix L: Transcript Convention);
3) The L2 WTC bitmap of the wave produced by the participant;

4) The participant’s explanation about the fluctuations (rise or fall) within the wave;

5) The researcher’s comments on the participant’s behaviour within the wave.

In the M1 task, two waves of L2 WTC were selected: One wave was with negative ratings in 31 seconds and the other had a great surge and a sudden decline within only 26 seconds.

Wave 1 Seconds 139 – 170 (Case Lan, M1 Task)

Excerpt 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Su:</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is the boy. You just draw the line from the square to the reading book, the boy who is reading book. And then you can cross the boy which is draw picture, painting, the painting boy. And line is, not above the camping, camp.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follower-Lan:</th>
<th>Above?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Su:</th>
<th>-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not above. Under. And the finish is a tree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follower-Lan:</th>
<th>Which?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Su:</th>
<th>The tree between the two tree.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Lan had a negative attitude towards speaking within this wave. As an Instruction Follower, she spoke only two words to respond to her partner and express her
confusion about the route. Most of the time, she remained silent and avoided eye contact with her partner. She hung her head and only focused on drawing the route. She explained her low L2 WTC as follows:

What she (her partner Su) described was different from what I understood. Following her instruction, I could not find the boy. I was not sure who was right. She spoke for a long time, and it was boring, so I did not want to continue this conversation. (Case Lan, M1 Task Interview)

Among the negative ratings, there was an upward trend (a spike) from -5 to 0 within six seconds, which demonstrated Lan’s increased L2 WTC within this short period. At that time, her partner said “a drawing boy”, a much more specific description. Lan thought she had found the route and wanted to ask her partner whether it was right or not. Her L2 WTC, however, fell to the low level again when she received a negative response from her partner.

Wave 2 Seconds 247-273 (Case Lan, M1 Task)

Excerpt 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follower-Su:</th>
<th>Giver-Lan:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the girl’s left.</td>
<td>Left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go, go up.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see, there is another tree, is above the sleeping boy?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And go, go, go, its left, and between the tree and the river, but not 2 the river.

Near to the river. There is a very... a thick...

Lan experienced a fluctuation in L2 WTC in this wave, with a sharp dip (from +2 to -5) and a huge spike (from -5 to +2). At first, she looked tired and impatient, with her head leant on her hand. She was not interested in this topic and not willing to speak. However, Her L2 WTC increased soon when she realised suddenly that it was her “responsibility” to give instructions to her partner because she was the Instruction Giver at that time. To finish the task, she had to keep talking to give information to her partner and make her understand.

**M1’ Task**

Lan and her partner were asked to repeat the same M1 task with different versions, which is called the M1’ task. In performing this task, Lan’ mean idiodynamic rating was 0.73, still well below the overall mean level of 1.18. Lan’s L2 WTC had a great variability (SD = 2.81) within this task, with five spikes and four dips, which was evident in the graph (see M1’, Figure 7.6):

1) Lan began the task with a positive rating of L2 WTC;

2) It quickly dropped to the bottom (-5) at Second 88 and stayed in the low level for the next 22 seconds;

3) With a temporal rise to +1 at Second 115, Lan’s L2 WTC ratings fell to the lowest level again and then fluctuated between the ratings of -4 and -5.

4) It was until Second 163 that the rating surged to +4. Since then, it kept mostly in the positive zone with several slight ups and downs.

5) After Second 227, it plunged to the bottom again and fluctuated within the negative zone until the end of the task.

In the journal, Lan stated that her willingness in doing this task was 60/100, a slight higher than that in the M1 task. She commented that, in comparison with the
previous task, there was no difference between the two tasks. She did not like this task either. She was not happy to repeat the task because it was boring to follow the same procedure and do the same task again. When she found that she had to do the same task (a different version) for the second time, she was disappointed and impatient. However, she was confident in her ability in performing this type of task and wanted to finish it as soon as possible. Generally, she was satisfied with her performance this time.

In the M1’ task, one wave with several moments of silence was selected. In this wave, Lan’s L2 WTC was mostly negative and stayed at the bottom.

Wave 3 Seconds 216-285 (Case Lan, M1’ Task)

Excerpt 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Su:</th>
<th>0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 2 2 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And keep going along the river, to the big tree. And then draw a circle to the boy’s football, from the big tree.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follower-Lan:</th>
<th>-1 0 0 0 -1 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Su:</th>
<th>0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 2 2 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And then, and then the line is above the, above the tree which is next the, the sheep. And above the tree, and above the sheep, and above the girl.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follower-Lan:</th>
<th>0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 2 2 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Su:</th>
<th>0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 2 2 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And finish is, under the sleeping boy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follower-Lan:</th>
<th>-3 -2 -1 0 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Su:</th>
<th>0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 2 2 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finish is under the sleeping boy. The line is above the girl, above the sheep and finish is under the sleeping boy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Follower-Lan: Em (2)
Giver-Su: Do you know?
Follower-Lan: A football boy?
Giver-Su: No, not the football boy. It’s the sleeping boy.
Follower-Lan: So (4)

There were four segments of “silence” during the chosen episodes (see squares in the graph). Lan was not in a mood to continue the task and wanted to finish it as soon as possible. As the Instruction Follower, she was confused about the route told by her interlocutor and did not know how to draw the right route. She remained quiet after her partner’s description of the route. She was lost somewhere and did not want to be in this “uncertain situation” longer:

What Su expressed was different from what I understood. For example, Su told me three points in drawing the route. However, I was not sure whether I had found the right place. At this point, I just wanted to have a look at the right route in her map and was not willing to continue the task because it made me feel frustrated. (Case Lan, M1’ Task Interview)

Regarding the repeated task, Lan described it as “boring” and “meaningless”. First, repeating the task that she did not like made her feel bored, and she could hardly wait to finish it. Second, she stated that it was of no use to repeat this task, because “describing the route on the map would not help improve English proficiency” (Case Lan, M1’ Task Interview).
**M2 Task**

The M2 task was another map task that consisted of landmarks portrayed as line drawings and labelled with Chinese names. The map route began with a starting point and ended with a finishing point, which were only marked on the Instruction Giver’s map. To finish this task, the Instruction Follower needed to draw the route and find the finishing point by following the Instruction Giver’s descriptions. The landmarks were labelled in Chinese (L1) to investigate whether vocabulary familiarity was a factor influencing L2 WTC. Lan performed two versions of the same task, first being the Instruction Giver without a route on her map and then being the Instruction Follower with a route on her map.

In the M2 task, Lan’ mean idiodynamic rating was 0.55, which was still lower than the overall mean level of 0.95. Remarkably, it fluctuated most significantly among all her idiodynamic ratings in the six tasks, with an SD value high up to 3.41, much higher than the average SD value of 1.67. It had five spikes and seven dips in the graph, varying dramatically during the task performance.

Lan’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC in M2 task can be divided into two parts (see M2, Figure 7.6) when Lan performed as the Instruction Giver and the Instruction Follower respectively:

1) In the first half when Lan was the Instruction Giver, the ratings mostly stayed in the negative area with two big spikes: One was from -5 to +3 (at Second 47) and the other was from -5 to +5 (at Second 180).

2) In the second half when Lan was the Instruction Follower, the ratings surged to the top (+5) after a sharp dip from Second 196 to Second 217. Since then, it remained as positive until the end.

Lan’s general willingness to do the task was only 40/100, which was reported in the journal. It indicated that she was relatively unwilling to do the task. She did not like the task either and described it as “useless”, saying that “map tasks are useless and they do not help improve the ability that we need in real L2 communication” (Case Lan, M2 Task Interview). She was not confident in performing the task. She had a low perceived ability in doing the task, only at a level of 30/100. In the
interview, Lan stated that the M2 task was much more difficult than the M1 and M1’ tasks because it required a broader vocabulary. Specifically, she had to translate the Chinese words into their English counterparts, two of which were particularly difficult. This process of translation made her feel depressed at times, especially when she could not find the words to continue the task. When she saw the Chinese words under the landmarks, her prompt reaction was to speak Chinese. She suggested that it would be much easier if the Chinese words were changed to English.

Regarding the vocabulary, there was an interesting comment made by Lan. In her interview, she stated that “understandable” was more important than “accurate” about the meaning of words for L2 communication. It happens that L2 speakers can exchange ideas even without speaking the words.

Interlocutor familiarity was an important factor influencing her L2 WTC. She stated that, “communicating with someone that I am familiar with would make it easier to understand each other” (Case Lan, M2 Task Interview). When performing this task, both she and her partner did not know how to translate the Chinese word “po wu” (a run-down house) into English. At first, Lan described it with a wrong English word “irrupdated”. To her surprise, her partner understood it immediately. Then, they used the word “house” to describe this object in the picture. Lan stated that interlocutor familiarity increased her L2 WTC, because they knew each other well and understood some kinds of mistakes that they usually made in their daily life.

Lan, generally, was unwilling to initiate L2 communication with strangers because of her low perceived L2 communicative competence. It was evident in her statement that, “I was more willing to communicate with someone whose English proficiency was lower than mine, because it made me feel much more confident and helped overcome the fear of losing face” (Case Lan, M2 Task Interview). If she had to talk to English-as-native-language speakers, she preferred interlocutors who were kind and easy-going to those who were serious and impatient.

The previous experience in doing the tasks, she agreed, did not guarantee a better performance in repeating the same kind of tasks. According to her, “there was no
relation between the previous map tasks and the task we did today” (Case Lan, M2 Task Interview).

The following wave was chosen to describe Lan’s low L2 WTC within 20 seconds and its short-term fluctuation after that.

Wave 4 Seconds 0-63 (Case Lan, M2 Task)

There were 20 seconds, as we can see from the graph, that Lan rated her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC as the lowest (-5). At that time, she was trying to describe the location of the starting point and the first line. It appeared that she did not know the English counterparts of the Chinese names under the landmarks and focused her attention in translation. Her L2 WTC rose to +3 soon after she solved the problem. However, it fell to be negative again as she was challenged by
another difficulty.

Task difficulty appeared to be the major factor influencing her L2 WTC during performing this task, as she commented in the interview:

I think this task is much more difficult than the previous two tasks. There are fewer objects in the picture, so it is not easy to describe the route. I have to translate the Chinese names of the landmarks into English. Some of the names are really difficult for me. (Case Lan, M2 Task Interview)

S1 Task

After completing and repeating the map tasks (M1, M1’ and M2), Lan began to do the spot-the-differences tasks. They are closed and two-way information gap tasks. In this task, Lan and her partner were given different pictures and had to communicate with each other to find out the differences without looking at each other’s picture. A scene of a streetscape with people, animals and buildings was depicted. There were three types of differences they had to find out: 1) A particular item was present in picture A but it was missing in picture B; 2) the number of a particular item in picture A was different from B; or 3) a particular item in picture A was replaced by something else in picture B, or the same person was doing something different in each picture.

Lan’ mean idiodynamic rating in the S1 task reached 2.80, which was much higher than the overall mean level of 1.55. The idiodynamic ratings were all above zero, which indicated her high L2 WTC while performing this task.

In her journal, Lan rated her task L2 WTC at the highest score (100/100). She stated that she was willing to communicate throughout the task and satisfied with her performance. She liked this new type of task, which was considered to be funny, interesting and easier than the Map tasks.

“A sense of achievement”, the feeling aroused by the successful completion of the task, increased her L2 WTC during this period. She was excited when they found the differences one by one, which boosted her confidence in finishing the task. This positive feeling led to Lan’s continued high L2 WTC of Lan when communicating with her partner. In the interview, she remarked her excitement in
doing the task:

When I saw this task, I was so excited because I was tired of doing the map tasks. To do a new type of task was more interesting. I liked the pictures. It was colourful. The objects presented in the picture were much clearer. (Case Lan, S1 Task Interview)

The following wave was chosen to present two driving forces (i.e., the emotion of excitement and the sense of achievement) in promoting Lan’s L2 WTC at a specific moment.

Wave 5 Second 26-52 (Case Lan, S1 Task)

Excerpt 5

Lan: 0 0 0 There is a light.
Su: 0 Yes.
Lan: 0 And heart is at the light.
Su: 0 What?
Lan: 0 A heart.
Su: 0 A heart?
Lan: 1 1 4 2 You don’t have a heart? Yes, at the light.
Su: 2 2 4 2 No…And there is a girl. Next to the shop. Under the shop’s left.
Lan: 2 Em.
Su: 1 Do you see it?
Lan: Yes.
Lan and her partner were excited and enthusiastically engaged in the conversation. She expressed her strong preference for this task. As a new type of task, Lan considered it as funny, interesting and easier than the previous tasks.

Lan attributed her increased L2 WTC to “a sense of achievement”. It took them only 25 seconds to find the first difference. She was surprised and excited at that moment, and kept her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC in the positive zone for 11 seconds. Then, she rated her L2 WTC to the top because of a feeling of happiness emerged suddenly. At that time, she laughed happily at her expression of “I am a dog” (she should have said: “In my picture, there is a dog.”). This positive emotion encouraged her to speak. She described her feelings at that moment:

I made such a mistake…but it was interesting. Performing this task brought me a cheerful mood. I was happy to talk. (Case Lan, S1 Task Interview)

Lan’s L2 WTC ratings kept in the top for the next 10 seconds. At that time, she had a strong desire to check information with her partner, who was describing the heart in the picture. She believed that there might be another difference.

S1 ‘Task

The S1’ task was a repetition of the S1 task. A different version of the pictures was given to Lan and her partner, who were asked to find out different differences from those in the S1 task.

In this task, Lan’s mean idiodynamic rating fell back to the low level (M = 0.21), which was well below the overall mean of 1.27. The ratings were divided into two
parts: In the first half, the ratings were mostly positive; in the second half, however, it fell to the negative zone with two big surges to the top. Regarding its variability, it had four spikes and three dips, with an SD value of 1.43, a little higher than the mean SD of 1.03.

Lan’s task L2 WTC in the S1’ task was only 50/100, a bit lower than that in the S1 task. However, she repeatedly mentioned her preference for the spot-the-differences tasks, because they were interesting, appealing and easy in comparison with the map tasks. She agreed, also, that the S1’ task was easier than the S1 task because she had experience in finding the differences. In the interview, She explained why her L2 WTC ratings were mostly positive in the first half:

Because we did the same version of the task before, we knew where the differences would appear. So we checked the same locations where differences appeared in the S1 task. Not surprisingly, we found the differences one by one. It was easy! We were so exited to find the differences. The feeling of happiness encouraged me to keep speaking with my partner. We were eager to find more differences. (Case Lan, S1’ Task Interview)

Her L2 WTC decreased, however, during the ongoing negotiation process in the second half of the task. She was frustrated by their failure to find the differences after a lengthy description. Her L2 WTC ratings remained mostly negative. She reported her negative feelings during this period:

It took us a long time to check whether there were differences in colour. We described the objects from left to right but failed to find any differences. The process was frustrating. Though I did not want to give it up, I became very upset and disappointed at our performance. (Case Lan, S1’ Task Interview)

The selected wave below was to explain the rapid changes of L2 WTC within a short period.
Wave 6 Second 312-342 (Case Lan, S1’ Task)

Excerpt 6

|   | -1 | 0 | 0 |
---|----|---|---|
Su: | There are some blue.. |
| Lan: | Yes, I have six. |
|   | 2 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
Su: | Yes, I also have six. Em… and… |
| Lan: | Em… is the… count the house from left? The second one, do you have |
|   | 0 | -2 |
|   | a.. small m.. on the house? |
|   | 0 |
Su: | What? |
|   | -1 | 0 |
Lan: | The.. thing.. that smoke. |
|   | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 0 |
Su: | No, no… A.. oh I have.. but there is no smoke in.. |
|   | -1 |
Lan: | Yes. |

There was a noticeable spike (from -1 to +5) in this excerpt. At that time, Lan was trying to retrieve the vocabulary to describe the “chimney” in the picture. Eager to make her partner understand, she rated her L2 WTC to the top. After a few seconds when she failed to find an appropriate vocabulary, she was only able to describe the chimney as “the thing that smoke”. Not confident in this description, she was worried that it might not be understood. So her L2 WTC dropped.

S2 Task

After completing and repeating different versions of the S1 task, Lan and her partner Su were asked to do the S2 task. In this task, they needed to find differences in two pictures where a house with three floors and four rooms was drawn. Various objects, animals and people were in these rooms (one bathroom,
one kitchen and two other rooms). Similarly, they had to find three types of differences.

In this task, Lan’s mean idiodynamic rating rose to 2.54, which was much higher than the overall mean rating of 1.23. Her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC remained mostly in the positive area. The ratings fluctuated slightly (SD = 1.57), with only one spike and one dip in the graph. The detail of the variability in Lan’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC was shown as follows (also see Figure 7.6):

1) It was until Second 137 that Lan began to respond to the software. The ratings remained at the top for 35 seconds and then dropped to zero. After a short stay in the low area, it rose to a high level again.

2) Within Seconds 177-215, there was a sharp surge in L2 WTC ratings, which was followed by a slow decline. However, it still stayed in the positive zone.

3) After a slight fluctuation in ratings (from 0 to +4) for nearly 30 seconds, the ratings were ended as negative.

In the interview, Lan stated her preference for the S1 and S1’ tasks in comparison with the S2 task, because “the pictures in the first type of spot-the-differences task were more appealing as they were painted in bright colours” (Case Lan, S2 Task Interview). She had a low perceived communicative competence in performing this task (40/100), as was stated in the journal. Due to the negative feelings about this new task, she did not respond to the software for the first two minutes. Then, her L2 WTC rose to the top when she began to describe the radio in the picture, because at that time she had a strong desire to make her partner understand. The ratings decreased, however, when she found it difficult to follow her partner, whose accent in spoken English was considered to be strange and not easy to understand. She became impatient and bored at that time. However, this feeling did not last long. When they found the differences one by one, the sense of achievement drove her willingness to the top and remaining in the positive zone for a long time. In the last 20 seconds, her L2 WTC dropped to be negative again because her partner failed to understand the meaning of “towel”. She commented that she was impatient to repeat the description.
Lan’s task L2 WTC, which was reported in the journal, was only 50/100. This was not consistent with the high mean idiodynamic rating of L2 WTC in this task (M = 2.54). The discrepancy between task L2 WTC and dynamic L2 WTC measured on a second-to-second basis may partly because of the different timescales that were chosen to identify L2 WTC. Generally, Lan did not like this task and she preferred the previous two spot-the-differences tasks. That explains why her task L2 WTC was low. However, as the task unfolded itself, she experienced fluctuations in her L2 WTC at moments, especially when she was under the influence of various factors which exerted a combined influence on her L2 WTC. These rapid fluctuations cannot be found if attention is mainly on a long time span.

In this task, two waves were selected for further description. The first wave consisted of two spikes and one dip, with most of the ratings remaining at the top. It was selected to explain Lan’s sustained high willingness to communicate, as well as a sudden fall and a sudden rise in the ratings. The second wave showed a flat pattern of Lan’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC, without any spikes and dips in the graph. However, Lan interacted with her partner frequently during the L2 communicative task performance at that time. Confused about some of the words, she was eager to check information with her partner. This wave was selected to demonstrate that L2 WTC, when examined on a second basis, was not always consistent with L2 communicative behaviours.

Wave 7 Seconds 131-191 (Case Lan, S2 Task)
Su: Do you see the radio.. on the floor?

Lan: Oh, radio.

Su: Yes.

Lan: And there are one, two, three, four.. four.

Su: Four?

Lan: That.. music sign.

Su: Music sign? What?

Lan: Sign of music, like you play the piano..

Su: Oh, yes, yes.

Lan: And there is a...

Su: Sleeping woman.

Lan: Yes, and there are five.. the.. sleeping...

Su: Em, yes. And.

Lan: And there is also.. I don't know what animal is this on the.. on the

dancing woman’s left.

Su: And dancing woman.. Doesn’t wear the shoes.

Lan: Yes.

Su: And then the first floor. Em, there is a bird ((sounds like board)) on the window.

Lan: W., Where?

Su: Bird.

Lan: Bird.

Su: On the window.

Lan: And there is a butterfly.

Su: Em.. Yes.

Lan: And.. em… There is a fish, in the woman..

Su: Two fish.

Lan: I have one.
This wave started with a surge in the idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC when Lan was going to describe the musical notes beside the radio. When her partner said there was a radio on the second floor, she repeated the word “radio” indicating that there was no difference. Then, her L2 WTC rose to the top suddenly when she began to describe the sign of the musical notes by counting the numbers. At that time, she was not confident in the vocabulary, and her partner was confused about what she was talking about. Her partner’s response stimulated her L2 WTC because she was eager to make her partner understand. The high level of L2 WTC sustained for 37 seconds when this pair was describing the objects on the second floor one by one. In the interview, Lan expressed her feelings during this period:

I guess there should be a difference in the details, such as the number of the sign of the musical notes, or the number of the sign of the snoring beside the sleeping women. So I counted them. However, it seemed that my partner did not understand me at first. So I was eager to explain it further. (Case Lan, S2 Task Interview)

Lan’s L2 WTC was stimulated and sustained for two reasons: a strong motivation to finish the task and a strong desire to make her partner understand. These driving forces exerted a combined and continued influences on her L2 WTC, making her stay at a high level of L2 WTC during these moments.

Her L2 WTC dropped, however, when they failed to find a difference after they finished describing the second floor, which was beyond her expectation. In the interview, she expressed her disappointment at this moment:

When my partner said, “then the first floor”, I felt disappointed. We did not find a difference in the second floor. I became frustrated and tired of doing this task. When she said “bird”, which sounded like “board”, I was not in a mood to check more details. (Case Lan, S2 Task Interview)

Lan’s L2 WTC experienced a sudden dip after staying at the highest level for 37 seconds. The negative feelings, such as frustration and fatigue, and her partner’s strange accent in spoken English inhibited her L2 WTC. However, it surged to the top soon when they finally found a difference there. The successful experience in performing the task brought her a sense of achievement, which enhanced her L2
WTC at that moment.

Wave 8 Seconds 270-317 (Case Lan, S2 Task)

Excerpt 8

Lan: 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 1 0
   Do you... how many.. shelves, do you have? Is next to the... em...
   1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
   fridge.. next to the fridge.. I have four. Oh, I have two, like that
   0 0 0 0 0
   ((pointing at a box nearby)). Do you have? I have four.
   0

Su: 0 4 what?
   0 2 2 1 2

Lan: 0 4 like that ((pointing at a box nearby)).
   2 2 0 2 0 0 0 1

Su: 0 Haha.. Four! Yes, four! And do you have the refrigerator?
   2

Lan: 0 Em?
   1

Su: 0 Refrigerator.
   0 0

Lan: 0 Refrigerate...
   0 1 0 0 0 0

Su: 0 Em.. Like you put the food in it and to keep it..
   0

Lan: 0 Fridge.
   0

Su: 0 Em.. refridge..
   0 0

Lan: 0 Yes, I have two.
   3 2 3

Su: 0 Two? Top one? Bottom one?
   1

Lan: 0 Yes.

Lan’s L2 WTC, in this wave, experienced only a slight fluctuation. Most of the time, she did not respond to the software, with most of the ratings being zero. She was not interested in this task because “the pictures presented were not very clear
and difficult to identify the objects” (Case Lan, S2 Task Interview). However, she thought that it was useful to do such a task as “it provided many opportunities to use English in the spot-the-differences tasks” (Case Lan, S2 Task Interview). Influenced by both driving and restraining forces, Lan did not respond to the software frequently, which indicated her neither willing nor unwilling to communicate at those moments. After she realised that her partner did not know the word “refrigerator”, her willingness to speak increased slightly because she wanted to make her partner understand. She was not worried about losing face in front of her partner when making a mistake. In the interview, she commented:

We are good friends. We know each other well. So I am not afraid of making mistakes in front of her. However, if it were someone else, I might not be willing to continue the conversation any more. (Case Lan, S2 Task Interview)

There was an interesting phenomenon about the misunderstanding of the vocabulary between the two speakers. It was about a word and its abbreviation. When Lan spoke the word “fridge”, her partner Su did not understand it. Then Lan turned to body language by pointing at a box nearby. Su looked at the box and thought she understood what Lan was talking about, so she replied that she had four (boxes). Then, Su asked Lan whether there was a “refrigerator” in her picture. At that moment, Lan became confused and repeated the word “refrigerator”. Realising that Lan did not know the word “refrigerator”, Su explained it further. Finally, Lan understood that the word “refrigerator” was of the same meaning with the word “fridge”. Unexpectedly, the frequent interaction only resulted in a slight fluctuation in Lan’s L2 WTC.

Summary

Table 7.5 summarises Lan’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC and her explanations about the features and changes of these figures. She was sensitive to the environment. Her L2 WTC was closely related to interlocutor-related factors, such as interlocutor familiarity, interlocutor’s L2 performance and responses. For example, her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC sometimes decreased due to her interlocutor’s negative responses and at others increased because of her
interlocutor’s frequent and prompt responses. There were also many occasions that her ratings surged because she was willing to make her partner understand. In the interviews, she mentioned her different attitude towards speaking when meeting different interlocutors:

When speaking with someone that I am not familiar with, I am always worried that he/she may not understand what I am talking about. At that time, I will feel awkward and does not want to speak any more. However, when Su becomes my partner, I am willing to talk even when I make a mistake.

(Case Lan, M1’ Task Interview)

In the interviews, Lan mentioned her general attitudes concerning her response to the effects of task repetition on her L2 WTC. It is concluded:

1) Repetition of the same task. In this type of task repetition, Lan stated that her L2 WTC depends on the task. If she liked the task, she would be more willing to repeat the task (such as the S1’ task, a repetition of the S1 task), because it was easier and familiar to her. However, if she did not like the task, she would feel bored when she had to do it for the second time (such as the M1’ task, a repetition of the M1 task). This negative feeling led to her unwillingness to do the task.

2) Repetition of a different task but of the same type or repetition of different tasks and different types: Concerning the two types of repetitions, Lan said that there were no apparent relations between them. The previous experience in doing the same or different type of tasks (map tasks and spot-the-differences tasks) did not guarantee a better performance in the future.
Table 7.5 Summary of Case Lan’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Attitudes towards the task</th>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Explanations about Idiodynamic Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1 Task</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: easy but useless;</td>
<td>Wave 1 (Seconds 139-170, Case Lan, M1 Task)</td>
<td>1. Low L2 WTC: a feeling of boredom and uncertainty;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. bored;</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Increased L2 WTC: desire to ask for clarification after her partner’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. disappointed;</td>
<td></td>
<td>specific description;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. not satisfied with her performance;</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Low L2 WTC: a negative response from the interlocutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. did not like this task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’ Task</td>
<td>1. not happy to repeat the task;</td>
<td>Wave 2 (Seconds 247-273, Case Lan, M1 Task)</td>
<td>1. Decreased L2 WTC: feeling tired and impatient about the topic;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. did not like this task</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Increased L2 WTC: a sense of responsibility to communicate; triggered by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. satisfied with her performance;</td>
<td></td>
<td>her interlocutor’s response; desire to make her interlocutor understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. bored;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. disappointed;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. confident in her ability in performing the task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Low L2 WTC: mostly in silence: not in a mood to talk; a feeling of confusion and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>uncertainty; dislike repeating the task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M2 Task
(M=0.55; SD=1.67; General Task L2 WTC: 40/100)

1. perceptions of the task: difficult, useless;
2. did not like this task;
3. not confident in her ability in performing the task

Wave 4
(Seconds 0-63, Case Lan, M2 Task)

1. Low L2 WTC: difficult vocabulary; low perceived communicative competence; a difficult task;
2. Increased L2 WTC: a sense of achievement after overcoming the difficulties

S1 Task
(M=2.80; SD=1.72; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easier than map tasks, funny and interesting;
2. liked this task;
3. satisfied with her performance;
4. confident in her ability in performing this task

Wave 5
(Second 13-52, Case Lan, S1 Task)

1. Positive L2 WTC: a sense of achievement;
2. Increased L2 WTC: the emotion of happiness; desire to check information
S1’ Task
(M=0.21; SD=1.43; General Task L2 WTC: 50/100)

1. perception of the task: easy;
2. liked this task;
3. satisfied with her performance;
4. happy with repetition of the S1 task

Wave 6
Second 312-342 (Case Lan, S1’ Task)

1. Increased L2 WTC: desire to make her partner understand; desire to express herself;
2. Decreased L2 WTC: failed to find the vocabulary; frustrated; disappointed

S2 Task
(M=2.54; SD=1.57; General Task L2 WTC: 50/100)

1. perception of the task: easy;
2. did not like this task because some of the objects in the picture cannot tell;
3. satisfied with her performance in the task

Wave 7
(Second 131-191, Case Lan, S2 Task)

1. Increased L2 WTC: Retrieving the vocabulary;
2. Sustained high L2 WTC: a strong motivation to finish the task; a strong desire to make her interlocutor understood; her interlocutor’s responses;
3. Decreased L2 WTC: disappointed, tired and frustrated; fail to find a difference;
4. Increased L2 WTC: a sense of achievement; find a difference

Wave 8
(Seconds 270-317, Case Lan, S2 Task)

1. Slight fluctuation in L2 WTC: influenced by both driving force (perceived the task to be useful) and restraining force (not interested in this task)
7.2.1.2 Case II: Su- An introvert student

Su’s case was markedly different from the case of Lan. Her idioyodynamic ratings of L2 WTC remained stable over the tasks. Regarding her dynamic fluctuations in L2 WTC, she was put at the end of “assertive” along the continuum (see Figure 7.4). She was an introverted student, which impressed her Intensive English teacher and the researcher most. She did not like to communicate with people from other countries. She was a hard-working student, who devoted most of her spare time studying. As to the overseas experience, she had stayed in the United States for two weeks as an exchange student in a primary school.

Her Grade Point Average was high up to 4.0. However, she perceived her English proficiency low and was not confident in her spoken English because of her strong accent. Her low PC resulted in her unwillingness to communicate in English with someone that she was not familiar with. She was not confident in speaking to a foreigner. She said:

I am not confident in talking to a foreigner. I am afraid of making mistakes. Sometimes maybe I do not realise the mistake, but the interlocutor knows that. It is embarrassing. (Case Su, M1’ Task interview)

She considered it as a better way to improve her English, however, when communicating with a foreigner rather than a Chinese interlocutor. She said it was strange to speak English between two Chinese people and commented that there would be little progress in her spoken English when practising L2 speaking with those with the same L1.

Su did not express herself much in the stimulated recall interview and, generally, agreed with her partner’s opinion. She reported that she was not willing to volunteer to do presentations in front of the class and was not satisfied with her performance in the classroom activities. If the teacher promised to give her some extra points, however, she might be willing to do tasks in the classroom voluntarily.
Figure 7.7 Profile for Case Su

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Su</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former English learning: 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas experience: as an exchange student in a primary school in the United States, only stayed for two weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside school: focused on enlarging vocabulary and improving listening skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for learning English: multiple reasons, for example, for a future career; to study in English-speaking countries; to travel; to please parents; other reasons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her perceptions of English proficiency: relatively low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her main concerns about English learning: accent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Emma’s view of her: a hard-working English learner, introvert, easygoing, hardworking, shy, one of the top students in the class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trajectory of Su’s L2 WTC over six tasks

The trajectory of Su’s L2 WTC over the six tasks was shown in Figure 7.8. Notably, all the six graphs showed a flat pattern. This stable trend towards communication in L2 was echoed in Table 7.6, which described Su’s slight variability in the idiodynamic ratings over the six tasks. As shown in the table, there was only one spike and two dips, with an SD value ranging from 0.57 to 1.13.

Table 7.6 Case Su’s Variability in the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th># of Spikes</th>
<th># of Dips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1’</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.8 Case Su’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks
**M1 Task**

In the M1 task, Su first performed as an Instruction Giver and then as an Instruction Follower to finish two versions of the first type of the map task. Her mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 0.72, very close to the overall mean level of 0.71. Most notably, it remained stable, with slight fluctuations around zero. The ratings reached +3 (Second 418) and -2 (Second 87) only once. Most of the ratings varied between -1 and +1.

In her journal, Su rated her task L2 WTC as 90/100, which was much higher than that of her interlocutor who reported only 50/100 in the same task. She stated that she liked this task and was satisfied with her performance. Confident in her ability in performing the task, Su commented that the task was interesting and easier than she expected.

Su demonstrated positive feelings about this task, which was different from her partner’s negative attitude towards the same task. Fully engaged in this task, she kept talking when she was the Instruction Giver. While as the Instruction Follower, she was responsive to her interlocutor, by saying “Yes”, “OK” or a Chinese word “En” to indicate that she had understood what her partner was describing.

**M1’ Task**

Two days later, Su and her partner Lan began to repeat the same M1 task. Two different versions of the same M1 task were provided to the pair. Similar to her performance in the previous task, Su demonstrated a stable tendency towards L2 communication over the task, with an SD value reaching 0.60. However, her mean idiodynamic rating, though still stayed as 0.87, was much lower than the overall mean level of 1.18 in this task.

In the journal, she rated her L2 WTC in doing the M1’ task only at 70/100, lower than that in the previous task. Although she commented that the task was as easy as the one she did before, she was tired of doing it again. That explained why she did not respond to the software frequently in the first half of the task. Her L2 WTC fluctuated greater in the second half, especially after Second 221 when they were discussing the route to the finishing point. At that time, the highest rating reached
+3 and the lowest went to -2 (see Wave 9).

Wave 9 Seconds 216-285 (Case Su, M1’ Task)

Excerpt 9

Giver-Su: And keep going along the river, to the big tree. And then draw a circle to the boy’s football, from the big tree.

Follower-Lan: 0 1 1 0 1 1

Giver-Su: And then, and then the line is above the, above the tree which is next the, the sheep. And above the tree, and above the sheep, and above the girl.

Follower-Lan: Yes.

Giver-Su: And finish is, under the sleeping boy.

Follower-Lan: 0 1 0 0

Giver-Su: Finish is under the sleeping boy. The line is above the girl, above the sheep and finish is under the sleeping boy.

Follower-Lan: Em(2)

Giver-Su: Do you know?

Follower-Lan: A football boy?

Giver-Su: No, not the football boy. It’s the sleeping boy.

This excerpt was the same as that in the Wave 3. It was chosen to examine the differences of the fluctuations of L2 WTC between the two participants who were
in a pair. At first, Su’s L2 WTC increased because she desired to make her partner understand. The ratings soon dropped, however, after she failed to deliver the information on the picture. She tried several times, and did not know how to explain it further.

In comparison with her partner who showed a dramatic fluctuation in L2 WTC, Su’s idiodynamic ratings remained stable in this period. Additionally, Su was less likely to be affected by her partner’s communicative behaviours during the conversation, which can be seen in her interview:

Lan’s silences did not affect my willingness. I was focusing on how to describe the right route and did not even notice that she was in silence for a few seconds. It was until I saw the recorded video that I realised maybe she did not want to talk any more at that moment. However, I did not think it was because of me. I guess she was just tired of doing the task. (Case Su, M1’ Task Interview)

**M2 Task**

After performing and repeating the M1 task, Su and her partner Lan were asked to perform the M2 task. In this task, the Instruction Giver needs to help the Instruction Follower draw a line in the picture, which had several landmarks labelled in Chinese. Su did two versions of the same task, first being the Instruction Follower without a route on her map and then being the Instruction Giver with a route on her map.

In the M2 task, Su’s mean idiodynamic rating was only 0.72, still lower than the overall mean level of 0.95. Similar to her performance in the previous tasks, her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC remained in a flat pattern, with only one spike from -3 (Second 321) to +2 (Second 330). The second half of the task witnessed greater variability in her idiodynamic ratings.

In the journal, Su rated her task L2 WTC as 70/100. However, she perceived her ability in doing the task was only 50/100, and reported that she was worried about the task. She explained it in the interview:
I found this task was difficult and I did not like it. Because the objects in the picture were marked in Chinese, I did not know how to translate it into English. When I failed to retrieve the vocabulary, I was upset. (Case Su, M2 Task Interview)

Her L2 WTC remained stable in the first half of the task, only fluctuating within 0 and +2. At first, su did not realise how difficult the task was because she was an Instruction Follower. It was easy for her to draw the line following her partner’s instruction, although her partner did not describe the objects clearly. Then, when it was her turn to describe the picture, she realised how difficult it was to translate the Chinese words, so her L2 WTC fluctuated. She commented that the repetition of different tasks but the same type did not guarantee a better performance.

The wave demonstrated below was to explore the reasons behind the only spike of Su’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC in the M2 task.

Wave 10 Seconds 317-358 (Case Su, M2 Task)

Excerpt 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Su:</th>
<th>It’s above the cellphone store. Above. ((Look at her partner who were in silence)) Do you draw the line above it? And then the line is under the temple.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Lan:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Su:</td>
<td>And then, under the temple. And under the… plants (2) and(3) and go up(2) above the…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Su was the only speaker who kept describing the line in her picture over a period lasting 41 seconds. Su’s partner Lan, who seemed tired of doing this task, did not
respond to Su and kept her eyes focusing on the picture. Influenced by her partner’s communicative behaviour, Su became upset and began to doubt her description. Then she stopped and looked at her partner for a few seconds. At that moment, she commented that she did not know how to continue the task, so her L2 WTC dropped. Soon, her L2 WTC increased because she retrieved the word “temple” suddenly and was eager to make her partner understand.

Regarding the vocabulary for L2 communication, there was an interesting phenomenon. Sometimes they do not need to speak the accurate word to deliver the information. For example, when Su used the word “plants” to describe “maitian” (wheat fields), her partner understood the meaning immediately. Su commented, though she did not know how to translate the Chinese word, she was sure that her partner would understand what she was talking about. It was consistent with her partner Lan’s statement, “‘understandable’ was more important than ‘accurate’ regarding the meaning of words for L2 communication” (Case Lan, M2 Task Interview).

\textit{S1 Task}

After finishing the repetition of the same task (i.e., repetition of one Map task) and the repetition of different tasks but the same type (i.e., repetition of two Map tasks), Su and her partner were asked to repeat two information-gap tasks, that is, to do the spot-the-difference tasks: a closed and two-way information gap task. In the S1 task, the two participants were provided with a colourful picture. There was a scene of a streetscape with people, animals and building in the picture. They needed to communicate with each other to find out the differences without looking at each other’s picture.

In this task, Su’s mean idiodynamic rating rose to 1.12. However, it was still below the overall mean level of 1.55. Her L2 WTC remained stable over this task, without any spikes and dips in the idiodynamic ratings.

Su reported her positive feelings in performing this task. In the journal, she stated that she liked this task and was not anxious anymore. She rated her perceived ability in doing the task at 70/100. When asked when she was most willing to communicate in this task, she replied “almost all the time”. In the interview, she
repeatedly mentioned that this task was interesting and funny. She described the picture as “colourful” “interesting” and “easy to describe”. She was excited to find differences one after another.

Su mentioned a list of driving forces behind her L2 WTC in this task, such as a feeling of excitement, an easy and interesting task and a familiar interlocutor. Her L2 WTC, however, stayed around zero in the first 100 seconds, with only a few seconds reaching +3 and +2. These figures indicated her low level of L2 WTC, which remained stable over the task. Su did not give much comment on this situation. She did not even realise that her L2 WTC was not high. She stated:

I was focusing on describing the picture when performing the task. When I found one difference, I was eager to find the next difference. I just want to keep talking to finish the task as soon as possible. When I saw the recorded video, I rated my L2 WTC following my feelings at that moment. I did not realise that it was low…I think the low level was because no stimulus influenced my L2 WTC. (Case Su, S1 Task Interview)

**S1’ Task**

Su’s mean idiodynamic rating in the S1’ task (a different version of the S1 task) was 1.19, which was close to the overall mean level of 1.27. In this task, Su and her partner Lan were asked to repeat the same S1 task. Different from the repetition of the same M1 task, which she commented as boring and useless, she took a positive attitude towards this repetition. In her interview, she said:

I felt that I had a stronger desire to communicate this time. We were familiar with the task and knew how to find the differences. In the first 30 seconds, we found three differences, which were located in the same place as in the S1 task. We were happy and encouraged. (Case Su, S1’ Task Interview)

However, her L2 WTC remained stable over the task, without any spikes and dips in the dynamic L2 WTC graph. Most of the ratings were positive. It was until the last few seconds that the ratings fell to the negative zone.

The following wave describes a slight fluctuation of Su’s L2 WTC at the end of the task.
Wave 11 Seconds 328-370 (Case Su, S1 Task)

Excerpt 11

Lan: 2 1 1 0 1
The second one, do you have a small.. on the house…?

Su: 0
What?

Lan: 2 0
The.. thing.. that smoke.

Su: 0 0 2 0 1 0
No, no. A.. I have.. but there is no smoke in…

Lan: 0
Yes.

Su: 1 1 2 0 0 0 0 0
Yes. And green one between the blue and other green one. Do you see it? There are two..

Lan: 1 1
Which one?

Su: 0 1 1
Em.. is under the green one which on the blue one.. blue building’s left. Do you see it?

Lan: 0
Yes.

Su: -2 0 0 0 0
And there are two.. like.. it can smoke..

Lan: -1 0
No, I have one.

Su: 0
OK.

This episode describes a situation when they had difficulty in retrieving the vocabulary. At first, Su and her partner were trying to describe the chimneys of the houses in the picture. They did not know the vocabulary and hesitated when they were thinking about the appropriate words. Instead of remaining silent, however, they kept talking and tried to make each other understood, even when they failed to retrieve the appropriate vocabulary. Su described her feelings in the interview:
I did not know how to say “chimney”. My partner did not know either. However, when she said “the thing that smoke”, I understood it immediately. Then I wanted to describe the objects in another house. I thought there might be a difference there. I was trying to describe them, but I failed. I did not know how to make them clearer. (Case Su, S1’ Task Interview)

Failure in retrieving the vocabulary, though not significant, appeared to be a factor resulting in her low L2 WTC during a short period.

**S2 Task**

Su expressed her preference for the S2 task in comparison with the S1 and S1’ tasks, which was similar to her partner’s attitude towards the tasks. However, She commented that the S2 task, though easier than the S1 and S1’ tasks, was difficult to describe because some of the objects in the picture were not easy to identify. It brought her a feeling of uncertainty. She cited an example in the interview:

> In the third floor, there was an animal. I did not know whether it was a dog or a cat. So when my partner said there was a cat in her picture, I did not know whether there was a difference or not. (Case Su, S2 Task Interview)

Her mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 0.73, much lower than the overall mean level of 1.23. However, in the case of Su, it fluctuated greater than the other five tasks, with an SD value up to 1.1 and two dips in this graph of the idiodynamic ratings. The following waves present Su’s decreased L2 WTC over a short period.

**Wave 12 Second 319 - 359 (Case Su, S2 Task)**

![Graph showing idiodynamic ratings](image)
A lengthy discussion on the same topic and failure to find the differences appeared to be the factors resulting in Su’s decreased and low L2 WTC during this period. In this wave, there was a dip in the graph. The idiodynamic ratings decreased from +2 to -3 and then remained in the negative zone for 8 seconds. At that time, Su and her partner were describing a man on the third floor. They had spent much time in looking for the last difference. Then, Su was trying to change the topic. It appeared that she failed to find the next object to describe. So she remained silent for 9 seconds. Her L2 WTC decreased because she was impatient in her partner’s lengthy and trivial description of the man in the picture. Su mentioned her negative feelings at that moment:

I began to doubt whether there was another difference here. Because we had checked almost all the details, and no difference was found. At this moment, I became a little impatient and upset. (Case Su, S2 Task Interview)
Wave 13 Seconds 388 - 429 (Case Su, S2 Task)

Excerpt 13

Su: 2 2 1 1 2 1 1 2
And… Em(5)

Lan: And look at the radio.. There are three bottoms.

Su: Yes, and tape.

Lan: Yes. And two.. like..

Su: Yes, And(4)

Lan: Em. Look at the first floor. The woman is wear a towel. Towel.

Su: What?

Lan: Towel.

Su: Towel?

Lan: Towel. Towel. ((Look at Su and pronounce the word clearly))

Su: ((Look at Lan and shake her head, indicating that she doesn’t understand))

Lan: Is like you take, after a shower, you take..

Su: Haha, oh, yes.

The decreased L2 WTC in this wave appeared to be closely related to Su’s negative feelings, such as tired, impatient and frustrated. Su’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC experienced a dip, from +3 to -2, over this period. At that time, they were looking for the next differences. Both of them were tired. Su kept her head down, looked absent-minded, hesitated and did not say any words at some occasions, which were observed in the recorded video of their task performance.

Su’s L2 WTC was positive, and rose to the rating of +3 when they had just
finished describing the dancing woman and began to describe the radio. Failed to retrieve the vocabulary to continue the task, however, Su remained silent for a few seconds. Then, her partner began to describe a woman with a towel. It was evident that Su did not understand the word “towel”. Her partner repeated it, but she was still confused. At this moment, she rated her L2 WTC as -2 because she felt tired and frustrated. She looked at her partner and shook her head. Her partner, realising that Su did not know the word “towel”, began to describe the towel in another way. Finally, her idiodynamic ratings went back to be positive again when she understood the meaning of towel.

Summary

Table 7.7 summarises Su’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC and her explanations about the features and changes of these figures. Unlike her partner Lan who was sensitive to the environment, Su maintained “assertive” to the outside world. Her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC remained stable within a task and among the tasks. Topic and vocabulary were the most frequently mentioned factors that influenced her L2 WTC. Su agreed with Lan’s comments on the effects of task repetition on her willingness to communicate in L2.
Table 7.7 Summary of Case Su’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>General attitude towards the task</th>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Explanations about Idiodynamic Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1 Task</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the the task: easy; 2. liked this task; 3. satisfied with her performance</td>
<td>No wave selected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’ Task</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the the task: easy; 2. not happy to repeat the task</td>
<td>Wave 9</td>
<td>1. Increased L2 WTC: desire to make her partner understand; 2. Decreased L2 WTC: failed to explain further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2 Task</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the the task: difficult; 2. did not like it</td>
<td>Wave 10</td>
<td>1. Low L2 WTC: No response from her partner; did not know how to describe it; difficult vocabulary; 2. Increased L2 WTC: retrieve the vocabulary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### S1 Task
(M=1.12; SD=0.81; General Task L2 WTC: 70/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy, funny, interesting;
2. liked this task;
3. satisfied with her performance

### S1' Task
(M=1.19; SD=0.78; General Task L2 WTC: 70/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy;
2. liked this task;
3. happy to repeat the task;
4. satisfied with her performance

### Wave 11
(Seconds 328-370; Case Su, S1 Task)

1. Negative L2 WTC: fail to retrieve the vocabulary

No wave selected
S2 Task
(M=0.73; SD=1.13; General Task L2 WTC: 70/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy, but difficult to describe
2. did not like this task

Wave 12
(Seconds 319 -359; Case Su, S2 Task)

1. Decreased L2 WTC: lengthy discussion in the same topic and failure in finding the difference

Wave 13
(Seconds 388 - 429; Case Su, S2 Task)

1. Decreased L2 WTC: felt tired and impatient; did not know how to continue
7.2.2. Pair Two

Li and Chen, two male students who were in the same Intensive English class, volunteered to take part in my study as a pair. They were placed in the middle of the continuum reflecting the degree of learners’ variability and sensitivity to the environment (see Figure 7.4). It indicated that they were relatively assertive or relatively submissive to the environment. In comparison with Pair One, this pair was positive about the effects of task repetition on their L2 WTC on a moment-to-moment basis. Their increased L2 WTC, as they reported in the interview, was beneficial from the experience in doing the same task or the same type of tasks.

7.2.2.1 Case III: Li – A Motivated but Not Confident Learner

A strong desire to learn English and a lack of confidence, generally, were two major factors that influenced Li’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC in performing the six tasks. Li was a motivated student. He decided to study overseas, especially in English-speaking countries such as the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia, after graduation from his school. He was always willing to grasp the opportunity to talk to foreigners in English. For example, he practised his spoken English when playing basketball with his classmates who were from other countries. His L2 WTC, however, was also easily inhibited by a lack of confidence emerged suddenly at a particular moment. He mentioned it repeatedly in the interview.

He was positive about the effects of task repetition on increasing his L2 WTC. The experience of doing the task, as he commented in the interview, boosted his confidence in L2 speaking.

Li perceived himself as “sociable” and “cooperative”. He enjoyed making friends and being around with them. His Intensive English teacher Karen described him as a “gentle” boy who was ready to help his teacher and classmates constantly. Figure 7.9 summarises his profile:
Figure 7.9 Profile for Case Li

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Li</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Former English learning: 10 years
- Overseas experience: never
- Outside school: focused on improving listening, reading and writing skills
- Reason for learning English: to study in English-speaking countries
- His perceptions of English proficiency: average
- His main concerns about English learning: vocabulary
- Teacher Karen’s view of him: gentle, be ready to help others, hard-working

Trajectory of Li’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

Figure 7.10 shows the trajectory of Li’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC over the six tasks. The length of speaking time in each task (see the horizontal axis) varies significantly, ranging from 281 seconds (the S2 task) to 881 seconds (the M1 task). Remarkably, all of the six tasks showed a generally positive pattern, with only a few seconds being negative in each task. Regarding the variability, it was not as flat as that in the case of Su, nor as volatile as that in the case of Lan. The idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC fluctuated slightly, which was indicated in the SD value and the number of spikes and dips (see Table 7.8).

Table 7.8 Case Li’s Variability in the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th># of Spikes</th>
<th># of Dips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1’</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.10 *Case Li’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks*

- **M1 (M=1.00, SD=1.28)**
- **M1’ (M=1.98, SD=1.22)**
- **M2 (M=1.25, SD=1.24)**
- **S1 M=1.63, SD=1.13)**
- **S1’ (M=1.67, SD=1.45)**
- **S2 (M=1.21, SD=1.40)**
**M1 Task**

Li and his partner Chen spent more than 14 minutes performing the first map task. In this task, they were asked to draw a line, the only safe route to escape from the forest. At first, Li performed as the Instruction Follower who had to reproduce the Instruction Giver’s route on his map. Then he performed as the Instruction Giver on the second version of the same pictures and was asked to help his partner reproduce a route on the picture.

Li’s mean idiodynamic rating was 1.00, which was higher than the overall mean level of 0.71. Li’s idiodynamic ratings in the M1 task can be divided into two parts (see M1, Figure 7.10). In the first half of the task when Li was the Instruction Follower, there were only a few seconds when Li rated his L2 WTC as +1. Most of the time, Li did not respond to the software. At that time, the ratings went back to zero. In the second half when Li was the Instruction Giver, he responded to the software frequently and reported positive L2 WTC. The detail of the variability in the idiodynamic ratings is as follows:

1) It was until Second 287 that Li started to respond to the software, rating his L2 WTC as +1. During the next two minutes, Li continued with minimal response to the software, with only seven ratings of +1.

2) There were two rapid fluctuations: From Second 415 to Second 429, Li’s L2 WTC first dropped from +1 to the bottom (-5) and then surged to +1; from Second 532 to Second 542, the level of idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC rose from zero to the top (+5) but then, suddenly, fell back to zero.

In the journal, Li commented that it was a difficult task because they had no experience in performing this type of tasks. However, he rated his general willingness to do the task as 100/100, because:

> I think this task is useful. Because we need to keep talking in order to finish the task, I believe that it provides an excellent opportunity to use English. I am willing to take every opportunity to practise my oral English. (Case Li, M1 Task Interview)
It was evident that Li was highly motivated by his strong desire to improve his English proficiency. His family background, told by his teacher Karen, may help understand better the reasons behind his L2 WTC:

Li’s parents are both teachers whose income is not high enough to cover the tuition fee here, which is much higher than that in government-sponsored schools. However, they insist on sending Li to this international high school, where they believe that Li will have more opportunity to speak to foreigners and will be prepared better for a future overseas study. (Teacher Karen, Interview)

Li is the only child in his family. He understood what his parents had done for him. His strong motivation to learn English may partly contribute to his high L2 WTC even in a difficult task.

Li explained why he did not respond to the software until Second 287. In the stimulated recall interview, He said:

It was my first time to do the task. At first, I did not have any ideas about willingness or unwillingness (to communicate in English). As I was the Instruction Follower at that time, I thought the major thing that I needed to do was listening and following my partner’s instruction to draw the line. (Case Li, M1 Task Interview)

Li commented that he was in a stable state to continue the task during this period. Not influenced by any stimulus, he thought there was no need for him to rate his L2 WTC, because he was neither willing nor unwilling to communicate in English at this stage. He described it as a “smooth ongoing process”.

Li and his partner Chen seldom had eye contact during the task performance. While his partner was describing the route, Li was focusing his eyes on his picture without giving any responses to his partner. It could not tell whether they understood each other or not.

The wave presented below explained a fluctuation in Li’s L2 WTC within a short period.
In this episode, Li was following his partner’s instruction to draw a line between a tree and a boy. At first, Li was confused when his partner repeatedly said “right”. He focused on looking at his picture and trying to figure out the exact location described by his partner. It seemed that his partner did not know how to describe it clearly, though he kept talking enthusiastically. Then Li stopped him by asking
several confirming questions. During this period, Li did not respond to the software, with his ratings of L2 WTC remaining at zero. It was different from the statement that an individual’s L2 WTC would increase when he/she doubted something, because there was a need of information exchange at that moment. Li explained his responses in his interview:

We were not familiar with the task. It was our first time to do it, so my partner and I did not know how to make each other understood. It took us a long time to figure out the right route. My partner kept talking. He did not realise that I was confused about what he was describing. During this time, I did not have any special feelings about talking. It was the time to ask, but I was not “much willing” to ask. (Case Li, M1 Task Interview)

Li mentioned that he needed to ask questions to finish the task because he was confused about the location at that time. However, his willingness to commutate did not change. He remarked that it was too complicated to explain why:

As to why I did not respond to the software...I did not think too much at that time. It was too complicated to explain why. (Case Li, M1 Task Interview)

However, his L2 WTC dropped suddenly to -5 at Second 423 when Chen repeatedly said “middle of the tree and the boy”. As observed from the recorded video, Li frowned at Chen at this moment and looked confused about his partner’s description. He stated that he suddenly lost confidence in performing the task at that time:

Chen had described it several times. He was confident in what he was talking about. At first, I doubted his description and asked him several questions. I thought I knew what he was pointing at. However, I could not follow him after his repeated descriptions. Then I began to doubt my English proficiency. (Case Li, M1 Task Interview)

The low L2 WTC, however, only lasted a few seconds. It rose to +1 again at Second 429 when Li soon found the right route. He was happy to end this part because it took them such a long time. After that, his L2 WTC remained stable again.
Li and his partner then began to repeat the M1 task by doing a different version of the same task. Taking a shorter time (521 seconds) to finish the task, both of them had a positive attitude towards this repetition. Li made a detailed comment on his feelings:

I was not worried about the task this time. Because we were familiar with the task and we cooperated better in finishing the task. Last time, we did not know what to do and how to do. This time, we had experience in finishing the same task. It was much easier, and I was much more confident in finishing it. (Case Li, M1’ Task Interview)

He reported the effects of task repetition on improving his English proficiency, and said:

I believe that my English will improve by doing the same task several times. I performed better today because I did not need to worry about the vocabulary. When I did the task for the first time, I was worried when I failed to speak the appropriate words to describe the picture. This time, I learned to use another word to describe it. This experience taught me a useful way to communicate with people in English. (Case Li, M1’ Task Interview)

Li’s mean idiodynamic rating was 1.98, higher than the overall mean level of 1.18. In the journal, he also rated his willingness to do the task as 100/100 and was satisfied with his performance in this task.

Similar to his performance in the M1 Task, Li did not respond to the software until Second 128. He made a different comment on this behaviour:

This time, I started the task as the Instruction Giver. As I had done the same task before, I felt it was not difficult. I just kept describing. During this process, my partner did not give me much response. I believed that he understood what I was describing. My willingness remained stable because what I need to do was describing the route. (Case Li, M1’ Task Interview)
Li’s L2 WTC fluctuated greater during the second half of the task. All the ratings were positive, with three spikes and one dip. The following waves describe these fluctuations.

Wave 15 Seconds 255-317 (Case Li, M1’ Task)

Excerpt 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Chen:</th>
<th>( \begin{array}{cccc} 1 &amp; 1 &amp; 2 &amp; 2 \ 1 &amp; 1 \end{array} )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
<td><strong>Start in a…</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
<td>( \begin{array}{cccc} 0 &amp; 0 &amp; 1 &amp; 1 \ 0 &amp; 0 &amp; 0 \end{array} ) mouse. And then. acr… go across.. em,. go to.. across the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
<td>( \begin{array}{cccc} 3 &amp; 3 &amp; 3 &amp; 3 \ 3 &amp; 3 &amp; 3 &amp; 3 \end{array} ) ball.. em… this football and this boy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
<td><strong>Cross?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
<td>( \begin{array}{cccc} 3 &amp; 3 &amp; 3 &amp; 3 \ 3 &amp; 3 &amp; 3 &amp; 3 \end{array} ) turn.. turn left.. turn left.. across the small tree and girl. And…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
<td><strong>Wait… Wait(2) (Drawing the line in his picture)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
<td>( \begin{array}{cccc} 4 &amp; 4 &amp; 5 &amp; 5 \ 4 &amp; 4 &amp; 5 &amp; 5 \end{array} ) you… em.. on the left way.. On the left side..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this wave, Li spoke only six words. However, he had a high level of L2 WTC, experiencing a spike from -1 to +5. Li made a different comment concerning his role as the Instruction Follower. In the previous task, being the Instruction Follower, he did not respond to the software much because he thought his primary job was to follow his partner’s instruction to finish the task. However, also being the Instruction Follower in the current task, he remarked that his willingness to
communicate was much higher, as he always doubted his partner’s description and wanted to ask questions:

My willingness to communicate in English was much higher when my partner was the Instruction Giver. As I had done the task before, I was much more confident when there was a misunderstanding between us. I was willing to ask my partner questions. (Case Li, M1’ Task Interview)

Li was confused about the word “across”. His partner repeatedly used this word to indicate the location. Li did not know how to draw a route to indicate “across”. His L2 WTC, triggered by a strong desire to confirm information, reached its peak at this moment when he asked his partner to stop describing and wait for him to draw the route. Li experienced a fluctuation of L2 WTC then, as he reported in the interview. At first, a route came out in his mind, but he was not sure whether it was right or not. So his L2 WTC increased because he was ready to ask questions. Then, after drawing the route, when he believed that he was right, his L2 WTC dropped back because he thought there was no need to speak more.

Wave 16 Seconds 427-463 (Case Li, M1’ Task)

Excerpt 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follower-Li:</th>
<th>Across it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
<td>Yes. And that’s all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follower-Li:</th>
<th>Across it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
<td>Em... you should turn left and em.. go across the tree and flower.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 16
In this excerpt, Li’s L2 WTC experienced an apparent fluctuation. At that time, his partner was about to end this task. Li, still not sure about the route, stopped him by checking more information. In the interview, he explained his L2 WTC fluctuations during this period:

I was confused when Chen repeatedly said “right” and “left”. I was not sure about the route that he described. I was shocked when he said, “that’s all”, because I had not finished drawing my route yet. At that moment, I was eager to ask questions. That was why I rated my L2 WTC to the peak. When I finished asking the question, my job was done. All I need to do was to check the direction. So my L2 WTC dropped. (Case Li, M1’ Task Interview)

**M2 Task**

This time, Li and his partner were asked to repeat a different task of the same type, which was called the M2 task. The M1, M1’ and M2 tasks are all map tasks in which the Instruction Follower should reproduce a route in his/her picture. The major difference between the M1/M1’ task and the M2 task is that the latter has some landmarks in Chinese. Li did two versions of the same M2 task, first being the Instruction Follower and then being the Instruction Giver.

Li and his partner were both delighted with repeating the same type of tasks. In the journal, Li rated his willingness in doing the task was 100/100 and was satisfied with his performance in this task. In the interview, he repeatedly mentioned the benefits brought about by repeating a different task of the same type. He agreed that this task was the easiest one among the three tasks. He commented:

I think the task we performed today was easier than the previous tasks. When I first saw this picture, I knew it was easier. Because there were fewer things in the picture and it was easier for us to describe it clearly. (Case Li, M2 Task Interview)

Li took the word “across” as an example to demonstrate the benefits of task repetition on their L2 performance. He said:

I still remembered when my partner said “across” for the first time in the M1 task. I did not know how to draw a line to indicate “across”. However, I
understood it immediately this time. We had a better cooperation. (Case Li, M2 Task Interview)

Regarding the vocabulary, Li stated that it was more difficult because they had to translate it from Chinese into English. However, he perceived his ability in performing the task as high as 80/100. The experience in doing the map task enabled him to perform confidently, even in a difficult task. In the interview, he explained:

We had done the map task twice. Although this task was different, I learned that I did not need to describe the picture with its accurate name. Sometimes, we could make each other understood even without speaking the name of the landmark. So I was not worried about the vocabulary, even not knowing most of the English counterparts of the Chinese characters under the landmarks. (Case Li, M2 Task Interview)

Li’s mean idiodynamic rating of L2 WTC in the M2 task was 1.25, higher than the overall mean level of 0.95. Most of the ratings were above zero, indicating his positive attitude towards this task. There was a dramatic fluctuation, however, during Seconds 311-368, with a dip from +3 to +4 and then a spike from -4 to +1. The following wave describes this fluctuation.

Wave 17 Seconds 311-363 (Case Li, M2 Task)
This excerpt was the end of Part One in the M2 Task. At this part, Li performed as the Instruction Follower. He only spoke four words within 52 seconds. However, his L2 WTC experienced sharp changes. At first, it dropped to zero when his partner was describing a route between two landmarks. Due to a limited vocabulary, his partner failed to describe the landmarks clearly. Influenced by his partner’s task performance, Li become confused and impatient. His partner, who only focused on describing the route, did not realise the negative feelings appeared in Li and continued to give directions. Li’s L2 WTC experienced a further drop. In the interview, he described his feelings at that moment:

I was tired at that moment. It took up a long time to finish the first part. When I said “OK” after my partner’s description of two houses, I thought it was the end. But he did not stop and continued with the words “turn left” and “across”. It seemed endless. I was tired and unwilling to continue this task. So I just followed him. When he said, “that is all” which indicated the end of the task, I thought, oh, finally, it was my turn. (Case Li, M2 Task Interview)

S1 Task

Li and his partner were asked to perform and repeat spot-the-differences tasks, the two-way information gap tasks. The exchange of ideas was emphasised in this type
of task. To finish the task, they had to communicate with each other to find out three types of differences in the different pictures given to them. In the S1 task, there was a scene of a streetscape with people, animals and buildings.

Li described this new task as “interesting” and “more like real communication”. He commented:

In the map tasks, only the Instruction Giver had the useful information to finish the task. When I performed as the Instruction Follower, I had to follow my partner’s instruction. Most of the time I was asking confirming questions. In the task we did today, both of us played an equal role in communication. He described his picture and then I described my picture. It was much more like a talk we did every day. (Case Li, S1 Task Interview)

In the journal, he rated his task L2 WTC as 100/100 and perceived his ability in the task as high as 80/100. Regarding the task difficulty, however, he perceived the S1 task more difficult than the map tasks, because he had no experience in performing this type of task. He commented:

We were given different pictures this time. We did not know where we could find the differences. For example, when we saw a house, we wanted to describe all the details in order to find the differences. It took us a lot of time. In the previous map tasks, however, all the information was in the Instruction Giver’s picture. We were familiar with the route after repeating it twice. (Case Li, S1 Task Interview)

Li expressed his preference for this task, though. His mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 1.63, a bit higher than the overall mean level of 1.55. The graph showed a general positive pattern, with only six seconds indicating negative ratings. There were three spikes and two dips in the graph.

The following wave, within a short period, demonstrated a spike (from zero to +5) followed by a dip (from +5 to -1) in Li’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC.
Wave 18 Seconds 143-176 (Case Li, S1 Task)

Excerpt 18

Li:  Do you see, the top of the light... have a.. white... ((Look at his partner))
1 1
Chen:  White? Like cloud?
0 1
Li:  Yeah.
1 1
Chen:  Yeah.
0 1
Li:  Not yeah?
0 1 1 1
Chen:  Yeah, yes. Then turn left there is a big...
4
Li:  House?
4 5 3 3 0
Chen:  Big house and... Black line, yeah?
-1 0
Li:  Yeah. Two, two windows?
0 1 0
Chen:  Two windows.
1 1 0
Li:  And a small...
0 1 1 0
Chen:  Small... like... ((Pointing upward))
0 0
Li:  Ha! Yeah!

At first, Li’s L2 WTC remained stable. He forgot the word “cloud”, and just said “white”. Then he looked at his partner and waited for his response. His partner, to his surprise, understood it immediately and asked whether it was “cloud”. It was interesting to see how they spot the differences (see the square in the excerpt). “Not yeah” was a Chinese-English expression, with the same meaning as the sentence “were you agree with me?”. Sharing the same L1, they understood each other immediately.
Then, Li’s L2 WTC surged to the top when his partner began to describe the next part of the picture. The change of topic influenced his L2 WTC. After a few seconds, however, it soon dropped to be negative. In the interview, Li reported his feelings about the fluctuation:

When my partner said “turn left”, I saw a house. I was eager to find the next differences, so I spoke out the word “house” when he only said, “there is a big...”. My willingness increased because I thought we needed to check more information here. However, my partner just repeated and hesitated, and then he started with “black line” which was in my surprise. It was really hard to check all the trivial details. I did not like it. (Case Li, S1 Task Interview)

From these remarks, it was evident that Li’s L2 WTC increased because he was prepared to speak. However, something happened unexpectedly inhibited his L2 WTC. A negative feeling dominated him at that moment.

At the end of the excerpt, there was an example of “guessing of meaning” during the L2 communication. At that time, his partner just said “small...like” and pointed upward with his fingers. Surprisingly, Li understood it immediately. Li commented that, after performing the tasks with his partner several times, they were familiar with each other and had a better cooperation.

Wave 19 Seconds 468-510 (Case Li, S1 Task)

Excerpt 19

Chen: 0 0 1

Blue house and four...and is four...

Li: 0

Windows?
Chen: Windows, yeah.

Li: One door?

Chen: One door, and is the tallest of this house.

Li: Do you have... do... do you see a.. sign? Beside.. beside blue house?

Chen: On the right of the blue house?

Li: Yeah, right of the blue house.

Chen: Yeah. We can understand it. And then turn left is. .

Li: Green?

Chen: Green House.

Li: One window, one door?

Chen: One window, one door. Yeah.

Li: Have a sign?

Chen: Yeah.

Li: OK. Left of green house is... a...

Chen: Blue and green house.

In this excerpt, there was a dip (from +3 to -2) followed by a big surge (from -2 to +5). In this period, Li and his partner were checking the details in their pictures to find the differences. In the interview, Li commented on the negative feelings at that moment:

It was our first time to do the task. It took us a long time to find the first difference. We did not know what kinds of differences would appear and had to check all the details, such as how many windows, how many doors, and what colour of the house. This process made me feel bored. (Case Li, S1 Task Interview)

The emotion of boredom, caused by a lengthy description of details, resulted in a drop in Li’s L2 WTC. Only staying in the negative zone for five seconds, however, the ratings soon surged back to the top (+5) when they started to describe a “sign” in the picture. A new topic increased Li’s L2 WTC at that moment. Li stated:
I was tired of describing the houses. So when it came to describing the “sign”, I became more interested in the topic. (Case Li, S1 Task Interview)

S1’ Task

After performing the first spot-the-differences task, Li and his partner were asked to repeat it by doing a different version (with different differences in the picture). It took them only half the time to repeat it. Li stated in the interview that it was easier to do the task for the second time. The experience in doing the same task enabled them to find the differences efficiently. They had already known what the pictures would like and where the differences would appear. As a result, Li was much more confident in performing the task this time. He was more active and played a dominant role when performing this task. In the previous tasks, it was always his partner that leading the communication.

In the journal, Li rated his task L2 WTC as 100/100 and perceived his ability in doing the task as high as 90/100. He showed a positive attitude towards the repetition and was satisfied with his performance.

Li’s mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 1.67, higher than the overall mean level of 1.27. The graph showed a general positive pattern, with only seven ratings of -1. His L2 WTC remained stable most of the time. He remarked in the interview that he felt relaxed in performing the task, because he had done the task before. At the end of the task, however, it fluctuated dramatically.
Excerpt 20

Li: …have two heart?
Chen: Yeah.
Li: Em.
Chen: I think this is right. The girl had. the girl has a. em… red (7)
      The man that in the left of the picture is… is the blue shirts. oh,
      blue clothes.
Li: And the red one is green. green clothes.
Chen: Green clothes?
Li: The girl.
Chen: Yeah, green clothes.
Li: Em(3).

In this excerpt, Li’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC remained at the top for several seconds, indicating a high level of L2 WTC at this moment. However, they were not actively engaged in this task, which was observed from the recorded video. They looked tired and depressed, remaining silent for a few seconds. They were not in a mood to communicate at that time. In the interview, Li attributed his high L2 WTC to a sense of “responsibility”:

My partner looked tired and seemed not himself today. He spoke a lot during the previous tasks, but this time it seemed that he was tired and not much willing to communicate. At that moment, I felt I needed to do something
because we were in a pair. If I did not do something, the conversation would end. (Case Li, S1’ Task Interview)

Though Li rated his L2 WTC high during this period, he did not speak frequently. He was pre-occupied with thoughts to describe it, as he commented in the interview, but did not know how to find the difference efficiently. They had spent much time in checking the information and his partner was impatient at that time. When they failed to find the difference, Li’s L2 WTC dropped quickly. He commented that he was frustrated when they failed to find a difference again.

S2 Task

Then Li and his partner were asked to perform the next spot-the-difference task, the S2 task. Each of them was given a picture. In the picture, there was a house with three floors and four rooms. They needed to find three types of differences among various objects, animals and people in these rooms.

Li stated that he liked this task very much and benefited a lot from the repetition. Regarding his preference in these two tasks of the same type, he commented that he was more willing to do the S2 task because of its interesting style, although he remarked that it was easier to do the S1 task with colourful pictures. He commented the effects of repetition on performing the same type of tasks:

When I saw the fish in the picture, my first response was to check the number of them with my partner. We had met the same situations in the previous tasks. I guessed the difference might be there. And I was right. The experience in doing the tasks enabled me to finish the task quickly and efficiently. (Case Li, S2 Task Interview)

However, Li’s mean idiodynamic rating in this task was only 1.21. Though very close, it was below the overall mean level of 1.23. He still rated his willingness to do the task as 100/100 in the journal, however, and perceived his ability in performing the task as high as 90/100. By triangulating the data from his journals, stimulated-recall interviews and observed behaviours from the recorded video, it was found that his mood became the major factor influencing his L2 WTC in this task. He commented:
I just finished playing basketball before I came here. I was really tired, so I did not speak much today. I just followed my partner’s description and tried to find the differences between the two pictures. (Case Li, S2 Task Interview)

Li’s idiodynamic ratings in this task remained stable, with only one dip in the graph.

Wave 21 Seconds 216-248 (Case Li, S2 Task)

Excerpt 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chen:</th>
<th>Li:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On… on the middle of the… of the.. this two man… there is a… like monkey or . .</td>
<td>M.. m.. m.. moneky?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like duck?</td>
<td>I think it’s cat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So… this is cat?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And… there is… there is… em.. em.. god.. on the… the desk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah.</td>
<td>Yeah. I think… Let’s talk about the first floor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The selected wave was the only sharp fluctuation in Li’ idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC within the task. During this period, this pair was describing an animal in the picture. Li was surprised when his partner told him that there was a monkey in his picture. He thought it was a cat. At this moment, Li’s L2 WTC rose to the top.
suddenly. In the interview, he expressed his feelings at that moment:

   It was funny when he said there was a monkey in his picture. I could not believe that there would be such an interesting difference and I doubted maybe it was just because my partner could not tell what it was, because the picture was not very clear. So I was eager to check the information with him.

   (Case Li, S2 Task Interview)

Li attributed his high L2 WTC, which emerged suddenly, to an interesting topic and a need for “clarification”. The ratings soon fell back to zero after they finished this topic.

Summary

Table 7.9 summarises Li’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC and his explanations about the features and changes of these figures. As a motivated student, Li rated his general L2 WTC in performing each of the tasks high up to 100/100. He believed that these information gap tasks were useful in improving his English proficiency, so he was willing to be engaged in the tasks. He emphasised the benefits brought about by the task repetition to his L2 WTC, which was most affected by his increased confidence in doing the task for the second time.
Table 7.9 **Summary of Case Li’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>General attitude towards the task</th>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Explanations about Idiodynamic Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1 Task</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: difficult; 2. liked this task; 3. not satisfied with his performance in the task</td>
<td>Wave 14</td>
<td>1. Decreased L2 WTC: a feeling of confusion; a lack of confidence; 2. Increased L2 WTC: found the right route; a feeling of happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M=1.00; SD=1.28; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)</td>
<td>(Seconds 377-433, Case Li, M1 Task)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’ Task</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: easier than the first task; 2. liked this task; 3. not worried about the task; 4. happy to repeat the task; 5. satisfied with his performance in the task</td>
<td>Wave 15</td>
<td>1. Increased L2 WTC: ready to ask; his ipartner questions; familiar with the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M=1.98; SD=1.22; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)</td>
<td>(Seconds 255-317, Case Li, M1’ Task)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wave 16</td>
<td>1. Increased L2 WTC: eager to ask for more information; a feeling of confusion; 2. Decreased L2 WTC: no motivation to speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Seconds 427-463, Case Li, M1’ Task)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M2 Task
(M=1.25; SD=1.24; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy;
2. happy to repeat a different task but of the same type;
3. satisfied with his performance in this task;
4. confident in his ability in finishing the task;
5. not worried about the vocabulary

Wave 17
(Seconds 311-363, Case Li, M2 Task)

1. Decreased L2 WTC: interlocutor’s performance; a feeling of confusion and impatience; tired

S1 Task
(M=1.63; SD=1.13 ; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

1. perceptions of the task: difficult; interesting; “more like a real communication”;
2. liked this task;
3. satisfied with his performance in this task

Wave 18
(Seconds 143-176, Case Li, S1 Task)

1. Increased L2 WTC: motivated to find the difference; ready to speak; eager to check information with his interlocutor;
2. Decreased L2 WTC: unexpected topic; did not like the topic

Wave 19
(Seconds 468-510, Case Li, S1 Task)

1. Decreased L2 WTC: felt bored; lengthy discussion;
2. Increased L2 WTC: new topic
1. perceptions of the task: easier than the S1 task;
2. confident in performing the task;
3. willing to be actively engaged in the task
4. satisfied with his performance

S1' Task
(M=1.67; SD=1.45; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

Wave 20
(Seconds 271-312, Case Li, S1' Task)
1. Increased and sustained high L2 WTC: Interlocutor’s performance; a sense of responsibility;
2. Decreased L2 WTC: failure in finding the difference, a feeling of frustration

S2 Task
(M=1.21; SD=1.40; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

Wave 21
(Seconds 216-248, Case Li, S2 Task)
1. Increased L2 WTC: a feeling of happiness; ask for clarification;
2. Decreased L2 WTC: the completion of a topic

1. perceptions of the task: easy; interesting;
2. liked this task;

1. perceptions of the task: easier than the S1 task;
7.2.2.2 Case V: Chen-An Active Speaker

Chen was an active and energetic learner. He was engaged in the tasks enthusiastically. His body language, as observed from the recorded videos, showed that he was active during the task performance. For example, he always kept talking and performed as the main speaker in the pair and responded to his partner actively by nodding, laughing and shaking head. He also took a positive attitude towards task repetition, which he considered as an efficient way to improve his spoken English. With nine years of English learning background, he perceived his English proficiency as in an average level to his peers. The data from the questionnaire showed that he perceived himself as an extremely hard-working learner who also had a favourable attitude towards English learning.

He had only two weeks’ overseas experience. This international middle school, as he commented in the interview, was the main arena that he had the opportunity to communicate with native-English speakers. In the interviews, he expressed that he was unwilling to communicate with those whose English proficiency was much higher than his, especially with those whose native language was English. In the interview, he maintained the following:

I do not like talking with those classmates who come from English-speaking countries, and those from Russian and Indian who can speak better English. Because their English proficiency is much higher than mine, I am not confident in communicating with them. I am worried about making mistakes in front of them. I do not want to lose face. (Case Chen, M1 Task Interview)

He was much more willing to communicate with Chinese students, who had a similar level of English proficiency. He perceived himself as having greater proficiency in L2 communication than his partner. This perception boosted his confidence and led to his active engagement in the task. His teacher Karen, however, held a different view regarding their English proficiency. The teacher commented that Chen had a limited vocabulary and poor grammar. His partner performed better than him in the English classes. It was evident that Chen’s perceived English proficiency was higher than his actual English proficiency. The level of L2 WTC was related to his perceived communicative competence, not his
actual English proficiency.

Chen identified interlocutor and perceived communicative ability as the main attributes affecting his L2 WTC. Figure 7.11 summarises his profile:

Figure 7.11 Profile for Case Chen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Former English learning:</strong> 9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overseas experience:</strong> two weeks, travelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside school:</strong> focused on improving listening skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons for learning English:</strong> to study in English-speaking countries, preparation for a future career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Her perceptions of English proficiency:</strong> average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Her main concerns about English learning:</strong> listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive English Teacher Karen’s view of him:</strong> outgoing, talkative, confident, overestimated his English proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trajectory of Chen’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

As shown in Figure 7.12, which presents the trajectory of Chen’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC over the six tasks, Chen demonstrated a generally high willingness to communicate in English during the task performance. All the six graphs, reflecting the fluctuations of his L2 WTC, showed a generally positive pattern (see Table 7.10). The ratings fluctuated dramatically in the M1’ task (SD = 2.00, with 6 spikes and 11 dips) and the M2 task (SD = 1.81, with 6 spikes and 3 dips). In the other four tasks, his L2 WTC remained stable.

Table 7.10 Case Chen’s Variability in the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th># of Spikes</th>
<th># of Dips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1’</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.12 Case Chen’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

M1 (M=1.64, SD=0.82)  
M1’ (M=2.10, SD=2.00)  
M2 (M=2.44, SD=1.81)  
S1 (M=1.95, SD=1.00)  
S1’ (M=1.88, SD=0.95)  
S2 (M=1.74, SD=1.18)
In this task, Chen and his partner were asked to draw a line to produce a map indicating the safe escaping route from the forest. The positive pattern in the graph (see M1, Figure 7.12) indicated Chen’s high level of idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC within the task. The mean idiodynamic rating was 1.64, much higher than the overall mean level of 0.72 of this task. The high idiodynamic ratings were echoed in his task L2 WTC. In the journal, he rated his general willingness in performing the task as high as 100/100. He expressed that he was willing to communicate all the time and commented that he was confident in performing the task. The high L2 WTC was also related to his familiarity with the partner. He commented:

I think my English is better than my partner because he did not speak much during the task. I guess it was because he had a limited vocabulary. When communicating with him, I felt very relaxed and confident. We are good friends and know each other well, so I did not need to worry about making mistakes. (Case Chen, M1 Task Interview)

The first map task, however, was perceived to be more difficult than he thought. Chen commented that it was challenging for them to describe the route among so many small objects. They do not have any experience in performing this type of task together. Since it was their first time to do the map task, he did not know how to indicate the location properly. For instance, he liked to use the word “across”, but his partner did not understand how to draw a line to indicate “across”. It led to confusion between them. He described a moment when he felt the task was rather difficult:

We did not realise the route was wrong. At that time, I was performing as the Instruction Follower and drawing the route following my partner’s instruction. However, my partner made a mistake somewhere and described the route by keeping telling me “turn right” or “turn left”. I was totally lost and did not know how to continue the task. (Case Chen, M1 Task Interview)

He commented in the interview that he was not in a mood to speak at first because
the task was not as easy as he expected. It explained why he responded to the
software until Second 200. However, the idiodynamic ratings did not go negative,
though he felt confused at that time. With experience gained from the task
performance, he responded more frequently and rated his L2 WTC higher.

*M1’ Task*

Chen expressed his preference to the task repetition. He stated that he was more
willing to communicate in the M1’ task, a different version of the M1 task. He
commented in the interview:

> During this task, I felt that I was ready to speak all the time. I think it was
> because I had learned how to give instructions to my partner, and could not
> wait to tell him how to draw the line. As we had done the same task before, I
> found it was not difficult anymore. My partner could understand me better.
> (Case Chen, M1’ Task Interview)

Chen also listed several benefits gained from the repetition. He believed that by
doing the task again would improve his English proficiency, especially spoken
English. Additionally, he felt that his L2 communication skills developed due to
the repetition. He explained it with an example in the interview:

> Whenever I failed to retrieve an English word or phrase to express myself, I
> would be unwilling to talk to my foreign teachers or classmates. However,
> by doing the map task for the second time, I realised suddenly that I did not
> have to speak the accurate word to make my partner understand. During the
> task performance today, there were several occasions that my partner
> understood my ideas even before I said any words. (Case Chen, M1’ Task
> Interview)

This statement is in consistent with the remarks made by the previous three
participants, who also emphasised the enhancement of L2 communication skill
through task repetition. They became more confident in communicating with other
people when they had better perceived performance in L2 communication, which
may lead to an increased L2 WTC.

In the journal, Chen rated his willingness in doing the task as 100/100 and was
satisfied with his performance. His mean idiodynamic rating in this task was the highest among the six participants. It reached 2.10, much higher than the overall mean level of 1.18. Remarkably, the idiodynamic ratings fluctuated dramatically, with an SD value of 2.00 and as much as six spikes and 11 dips in the graph (see M1’, Figure 7.12). It remained mostly in the positive zone, with only a few ratings being negative. The selected waves give accounts on the reasons behind the sharp fluctuations in his L2 WTC.

Wave 22 Seconds 192-228 (Case Chen, M1’ Task)

The graph in this selected wave showed a noticeable increase from -2 to +5 and a
rapid dip from +5 to 0. During this period, Chen was the Instruction Follower, who was drawing a map line following his partner’s instruction. It was the end of Part One in the M1’ task. Before this, they just realised that they had different understanding of the location of “right” and “left”, which resulted in a wrong map route drawn in Chen’s picture. After correcting this error, they began to find the finishing point. There were two seconds when Chen rated his L2 WTC as -2 and -1, indicating he was relatively unwilling to communicate at that particular moment. In the interview, he explained:

My partner kept describing the route. I became impatient, especially when I realised that we got “right” and “left” wrong. So I was eager to finish the task and to check the answer. (Case Chen, M1’ Task Interview)

After five seconds in silence when Chen did not respond to the software, he asked his partner whether it was the end of the task. His partner did not give him an explicit answer at first but mentioned the route again. At that time, Chen’s L2 WTC rose to the top but soon fell back to zero again. When asked the reasons behind this rapid fluctuation, Chen commented:

Em…In the video, I saw that I was asking him, “that is all?” At that moment, I thought it was the end of the task, so I rated my willingness to the top because a sense of achievement came to me at that moment. However, soon, I realised that my partner was repeating the route, so my willingness decreased quickly. (Case Chen, M1’ Task Interview)

From this comment, it was evident that the behaviour of rating the L2 WTC by watching the recorded video may also be a factor influencing an individual’s idiodynamic ratings. Since it was not possible for an individual to perform a task and rate his/her L2 WTC at the same time, the ratings made after the performance, though only after a few minutes, may not indicate his/her L2 WTC at that moment completely. However, it was also an evidence of the dynamic nature of L2 WTC as it changed so rapidly and may be different from second to second. Sometimes it was too complex to be explained.
Wave 23 Seconds 454-526 (Case Chen, M1’ Task)

Excerpt 23

Giver - Chen:

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 1 0

Em... you should turn left and em... go across the tree and flower.

Follower - Li:

Then?

Giver - Chen:

Then go along this way, you can find... you.. when you find...

em... a smallest tree on the left, then turn right.

Follower - Li:

From flower to big tree? Top of the big tree, right?

Giver - Chen:

No, when you find... first.. across the flower and tree, yeah?

Follower - Li:

Em.

Giver - Chen:

And then... across the girl... next.. girl... next to the sleeping

boy and tree. Go across the...

Left tree or right tree.

Giver - Chen:

Left tree. A... across the.. across the girl and left tree.

Follower - Li:

Then I go bridge?

Giver - Chen:

Then you... go to the big tree. Biggest tree.

Follower - Li:

Then I across the river.

Giver - Chen:

Near... near.. near the river.

Follower - Li:

OK.

The selected excerpt was the end of Part Two in the M1’ task. As we can see from
the graph in the wave, there was a surge in Chen’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC
when he was describing the route to his partner. Before it, there were 20 seconds
when Chen did not respond to the software. In the stimulated recall interview,
Chen explained why he rated his L2 WTC from zero to the top at this moment:

At first, it seemed that my partner did not get my ideas, because he continued to ask questions when I said “that is all” to end the task. It aroused my willingness to describe more information to him. I was eager to say more. (Case Chen, M1’ Task Interview)

His L2 WTC decreased to zero after he finished telling his partner the next location, followed by 15 seconds when he did not respond to the software. Then, the ratings remained in the negative zone for 16 seconds, with the lowest reaching -4. Chen attributed it to the emotion of boredom and impatience:

I felt impatient when Li asked me whether it was the right tree or the left tree. He was always confused about “right” and “left”. I have explained it several times. It was boring to repeat it. (Case Chen, M1’ Task Interview)

However, this low L2 WTC did not last long. When it changed to the next topic (to describe the next location), Chen rated his L2 WTC to the top again, because he was willing to describe the finishing point to end the task.

*M2 Task*

In doing the M2 task, the other map task, Chen repeatedly mentioned the benefits gained from “experience”. He commented that the task was easier because he had learned how to do a map task from the previous two map tasks. He gave an interesting example:

There was an occasion when I forgot the English name of “si miao” (temple) and “po wu” (a run-down house). I had done the task several times, so I knew I did not need to speak the accurate words to make my partner understand. I used “old house 1” and “old house 2” to describe them, and my partner understood them immediately, just as I expected. (Case Chen, M2 Task Interview)

Concerning the beneficial effects of task repetition on L2 communication skills. Chen commented:
I was more willing to talk in this task. Performing a repeated task made it easier for us to finish the task. I did not need to worry about how to describe it. (Case Chen, M2 Task Interview)

His high L2 WTC was also reflected in his journal where he rated his willingness in doing the task as 100/100. The mean idiodynamic rating in the M2 task reached 2.44, much higher than the overall mean level of 0.95. The ratings fluctuated dramatically, with six spikes and three dips in the graph. It showed a general positive pattern, with only a few seconds being negative.

Wave 24 Seconds 292-344 (Case Chen, M2 Task)

Excerpt 24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Chen:</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giver-Chen:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Li:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 24

Giver-Chen: And then go across it. And.. em... go across the...
Follower-Li: Film and..
Giver-Chen: Film and..
Follower-Li: Wood? ((Laughing))
Giver-Chen: Wood. ((Laughing)). You know what I mean. And then.. go...
em.. go... acro.. across the.. em... house that is broken
and the...
Follower-Li: Ice burg?
Giver-Chen: Em, em. No, no, no. Go across the two broken house.
Follower-Li: OK.
In this wave, Chen experienced a dramatic fluctuation in his L2 WTC, with two spikes (from 0 to +5 and from -4 to +3 respectively) and one obvious dip (from +5 to -3). During this time, Chen performed as the Instruction Giver. It seemed that he had difficulty in retrieving the vocabulary. He failed to express himself fluently, with many stops and hesitations while speaking. However, he showed a high L2 WTC when he was thinking about the words:

I was focusing on describing the route. Lake, film (photo studio), and then... I did not know the English name of the next object. At this time, I was eager to express myself, though I did not speak the word. When I was still thinking about the vocabulary, my partner said the word “wood” (fence). We both laughed. Yes, it was the word that we could make each other understood. (Case Chen, M2 Task Interview)

His L2 WTC soon fell to be negative when he began to describe the next route. A lack of confidence and a limited vocabulary resulted in his low L2 WTC:

I did not realise how difficult the vocabulary was until I saw the Chinese words “fei jiu de si miao” (an abandoned temple) and “po wu” (a run-down house) in the picture. It was really difficult for me. I was not confident in describing them. My partner did not get my ideas because he replied with a wrong answer. (Case Chen, M2 Task Interview)

This low L2 WTC just remained for a few seconds. Then it increased again after Chen successfully made his partner understand by using the phrase “two broken house” to describe the two landmarks. It proves again how quickly one’s L2 WTC changes.

S1 Task

After finishing the map tasks, Chen and his partner Li began to do the next type of information gap tasks: the spot-the-differences tasks. It took them 741 seconds to
perform the S1 task for the first time. However, Chen mentioned in the journal that he was satisfied with his performance and rated his willingness in doing the task as 100/100. Similar to his partner Li, Chen expressed his preference to this two-way information gap tasks:

I liked this new task and was more willing to communicate because it was more like real communication. In this task, both of us have equal status in communication. In the map tasks, however, only the Instruction Giver has the useful information to finish the task. The Instruction Follower knows nothing. (Case Chen, S1 Task Interview)

This comment points out the effect of task type (i.e., one-way information gap task and two-way information gap task) on L2 WTC. Both Chen and his partner emphasised the importance of exchange of ideas in L2 communication.

Nevertheless, Chen reported that the S1 task was more difficult than the previous three tasks because they were not familiar with the task and did not know how to finish it efficiently.

Chen’s mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 1.95, still higher than the overall mean level of 1.55. There was no significant fluctuation among the ratings, without any spikes and dips in the graph. It showed a generally positive pattern with only one second rated as -1. Chen did not respond to the software as much as in the previous tasks (see S1, Figure 7.12). In the interview, he stated:

As to the reasons for not rating my willingness for such a long time… I was willing to talk from the beginning, but during the process, I was focusing on thinking about how to describe it. It was our first time to do the task, it seemed a little difficult to describe it efficiently. However, I was willing to communicate…I guess, I did not press the button because I was “not that willing” to communicate in the middle of the task, but “not unwilling” to talk. (Case Chen, S1 Task Interview)

This comment, on the use of the idiodynamic software, provides an additional perspective in understanding the L2 WTC fluctuations produced in the software. First, we should not simply connect the ratings of zero to the meaning of “neither
willing nor unwilling to communicate”. Sometimes one may just forget to rate his L2 WTC when watching the recorded video, and at others he/she did not press the button because no change occurred and he/she was in a stable and continuous state to communicate. In this case, those ratings of zero should be understood in combination with his/her previous ratings. Also, it happens that the cases failed to explain his ratings of L2 WTC in the stimulated recall interview. Though it was performed immediately after their ratings, the L2 WTC changes so quickly that the participants cannot explain the complex reasons behind his ratings even in a few minutes. More discussions on the limitation of the software are put in the Chapter Nine.

*S1’ Task*

Chen commented that it was easier to do the S1 task for the second time, because he had already known where to find the differences. He rated his general task L2 WTC as 100/100, which was echoed in his positive idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC (see S1’, Figure 7.12). His mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 1.88, still higher than the overall mean level of 1.27. It did not fluctuate much, with only spike and one dip in total. Also, there were many seconds that he did not respond to the software. A lack of stimulus was reported as the main reason for his stable L2 WTC during the task performance. He commented:

It was our second time to do the spot-the-differences task. It was easy for us to find the differences using the same way as we did last time. We do not need to change communication skills. So I just kept describing. No strong stimulus appeared to influence my L2 WTC. (Case Chen, S1’ Task Interview)

Chen compared the difference between the two task repetitions: the repetition of maps tasks and the repetition of the spot-the-differences tasks:
This repetition (repetition of the S1 task) was different from the repetition of the map tasks. In a map task, different map routes require different ways to describe it, thus resulting in many uncertainties in the process. In a spot-the-differences task, we can use the same way to find the differences. It was much easier. (Case Chen, S1’ Task Interview)

This comment explained the different levels of fluctuations emerged in Chen’s idiodynamic ratings when repeating the two types of tasks. During task repetition of the map tasks, Chen’s L2 WTC fluctuated more dramatically due to “many uncertainties” emerged in the process. When repeating the spot-the-differences task, however, his L2 WTC was stable. He had already known the way to locate the differences when doing it for the second time.

Chen stated that he was tired and hungry when performing the task, because he had just finished playing basketball with his classmates. He was not as talkative as in the previous task. Sometimes he just followed his partner and said nothing.

Wave 25 Second 119-162 (Case Chen, S1’ Task)

Excerpt 25

Li: 0 0 0

Em… have two birds?

Chen: 0 0 0

What… what’s your mean? No two birds.

Li: 0

No birds.

Chen: 0

On this… on this rabbit?

Li: 0 0 0

Just one bird on the… top of the stop.
Chen: 0 0 0
I have two. But… do you have stop?
0
Li: Yeah, stop.
0 2 3 2 3 3 3 2
Chen: I don’t have stop… Left is a big house, purple big house.
2 3 3
Li: Em… yellow. Oh, no., no., no., Red.
3 2 3
Chen: Oh red. Yeah. Em, left is a blue..
0
Li: Blue..
3 5 4 3 2
Chen: Yellow. Green, green.. em… the man…
1 0
Li: Two green house.
1 1 1 1 1
Chen: Two green house, yeah. The man hold a stick. Yeah?
0
Li: No.

The only spike and dip in Chen’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC in this task appeared in this excerpt. Before this fluctuation, there were several seconds when Chen did not respond to the software. Chen remarked that they were kept checking information at that time. When they successfully found the differences in their pictures, Chen’s L2 WTC began to rise. He explained it in the interview:

   It took us a long time to find this difference. We believed that there were some differences here. After a lengthy description of the details, we finally found this difference. We were very happy at that moment. This cheerful mood encouraged me to continue talking to find the next difference. (Case Chen, S1’ Task Interview)

His L2 WTC rose to the top (+5) when they began to check the colour of the objects in their pictures. Chen attributed it to his familiarity with the task:

   In the previous task (the S1 task), we had checked the same information. When I saw my partner began to check the colour, I became a bit excited. Because there was a difference here, I was eager to communicate with my partner to find the difference. (Case Chen, S1’ Task Interview)

The benefits of the experience in doing the task were indicated in the words they chose to communicate. During the conversation, they only described the colour and omitted the name of the objects. However, they were still able to understand
each other immediately because they had done the task before.

**S2 Task**

In the S2 task, Chen was active and played a dominant role in the conversation. Chen expressed his preference to the S2 task:

I like the picture in the S2 task because it is more organised. The house in the picture has three floors. It is easy for us to check the location. For example, we can say, “let us look at the first floor”, and then focused only on the first floor to describe the objects. (Case Chen, S2 Task Interview)

His mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 1.74, higher than the overall mean level of 1.23. He responded to the software more often this time. The graph, indicating the fluctuation in his L2 WTC, showed a general positive pattern. It took them 281 seconds to finish the task, and only nine seconds of idiodynamic ratings were rated negatively.

When asked whether he was influenced by his partner’s inactive performance in this task, Chen denied. He gave the following comments in the interview:

Although my partner said less today, he had given me all the needed information, so we found the differences quickly. I think that is enough. (Case Chen, S2 Task Interview)

The following wave was chosen to explain a spike in his idiodynamic ratings in L2 WTC.

**Wave 26 Second 97-140 (Case Chen, S2 Task)**
During this period, Chen’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC first dropped to -2, and then gradually went up to +4. Inspired by the previous spot-the-differences tasks, they believed that there might be some differences in the number of objects in the picture. So they started by checking the number of apples. When asked why he rated his L2 WTC as negative at the moment, Chen explained it in the interview:

I realised that I made a mistake in grammar when I said, “Where is four apple?” I felt awkward for a second or two. (Case Chen, S2 Task Interview)

However, these negative feelings went away quickly. Just after four seconds, his ratings went up again. He attributed it to a feeling of achievement and his familiarity with the interlocutor. Finding the difference encouraged him at that moment. He became confident in his ability in performing the tasks. Additionally, he was familiar with his partner. When making a mistake, he would not feel embarrassed.

Summary

Table 7.11 summarises Chen’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC and his
explanations about the features and changes of these figures. Interlocutor-related factors and perceived communicative competence in doing the tasks seemed to be major variables influencing his L2 WTC. As an active speaker, Chen demonstrated high L2 WTC over the six tasks. Similar to his partner Li, he also took a positive attitude towards the task repetition.
Table 7.11 *Summary of Case Chen’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>General attitude towards the task</th>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Explanations about Idiodynamic Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1 Task</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: difficult; 2. liked this task; 3. not in a mood to speak at first; 4. not satisfied with his performance in this task</td>
<td>No wave selected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M=1.64; SD=0.82; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’ Task</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: easier than the first task; 2. happy to repeat the task; 3. satisfied with his performance in the task</td>
<td>Wave 22</td>
<td>1. Increased L2 WTC: a feeling of achievement; 2. Decreased L2 WTC: disappointed and frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M=2.10; SD=2.00; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Seconds 192-228, Case Chen, M1’ Task)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wave 23</td>
<td>1. Increased L2 WTC: interlocutors’ response; 2. Decreased L2 WTC: felt bored and impatient; 3. Increased L2 WTC: new topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Seconds 454-526, Case Chen, M1’ Task)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M2 Task
(M=2.44;SD=1.81; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy
2. happy to repeat the same type of task

Wave 24
(Seconds 292-344, Case Chen, M2 Task)

1. High L2 WTC: well prepared;
2. Decreased L2 WTC: new topic; a limited vocabulary; lack of confidence;
3. Increased L2 WTC: a feeling of achievement

S1 Task
(M=1.95;SD=1.00; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

1. perceptions of the task: difficult;
2. liked this task;
3. satisfied with his performance in the task

No wave selected
S1' Task
(M=1.88; SD=0.95; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy;
2. happy to repeat the task;
3. not satisfied with his performance

Wave 25
(Seconds 119-162, Case Chen, S1' Task)

1. Increased L2 WTC: familiarity with the topic; a feeling of excitement

S2 Task
(M=1.74; SD=1.18; General Task L2 WTC: 100/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy;
2. liked this task

Wave 26
(Seconds 97-140, Case Chen, S2 Task)

1. Decreased L2 WTC: felt awkward; made grammar mistakes;
2. Increased L2 WTC: A feeling of achievement; familiarity with interlocutor
7.2.3.  Pair Three

This pair showed a relatively low level of L2 WTC over the six tasks. They had a negative attitude towards the effects of task repetition on their L2 WTC. Feeling bored and impatient in repeating the task, they did not think that task repetition helped improve their L2 task performance and L2 proficiency.

By triangulating the data on the questionnaires, journals and stimulated recall interviews, it is interesting to find that they always made different comments on their attitudes towards the same task. For example, while a high level of task L2 WTC was rated in the journal, a low mean idiodynamic rating would appear regarding the same task. This phenomenon is also a demonstration of the rapid changes in L2 WTC, which varies from situation to situation, task to task and even moment to moment.

7.2.3.1 Case VI: Hu- Afraid of losing face

In Hu’s case, face concerns were reported as the major factor that influenced her L2 WTC. Her Intensive English teacher Angel commented that she was particularly concerned about the impression made by her classmates and teachers. In the interview, the teacher mentioned:

Hu is an outgoing and sociable girl. She likes talking to her classmates. In the class, however, she remained quiet most of the time. She told me that she did not know how to do the task and was afraid of losing face in front of her classmates. If she knew the answer, she would become excited and volunteered to speak out her answer loudly. (Teacher Angel, Interview)

Hu repeatedly stated her adoption of a face-saving option when meeting different interlocutors, which may result in fluctuations in her L2 WTC. For example, she reported her different reactions towards different interlocutors when making mistakes:

It is acceptable when I make mistakes in front of my friends or someone that I am familiar with. I won't feel awkward at that time. If my interlocutor is a stranger, however, I will speak as less as I can. If I make some mistakes in grammar, I will feel awkward. I am always worried that the stranger will
laugh at my poor English. (Case Hu, M1 Task Interview)

She stated that she preferred to communicate with those with similar English proficiency. Sometimes she was unable to continue the L2 conversation because of her limited vocabulary. In this situation, she would not feel embarrassed when her interlocutor had the same level of L2 proficiency.

Hu perceived her English proficiency almost at the same level as her partner Xu, who was considered as one of the top students in the class. This perception was different from the comments made by her Intensive English teacher, who reported that Hu had a poor grammar and a limited vocabulary. It is evident that Hu’s perceived English proficiency was higher than her actual English proficiency. Because of this positive perception, Hu felt relaxed when communicating with her partner.

Figure 7.13 Profile for Case Hu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Former English learning:</strong> 12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overseas experience:</strong> one month, English learning and travelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside school:</strong> focused on enlarging vocabulary and improving spoken, listening and reading skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons for learning English:</strong> multiple reasons, such as to study in English-speaking countries, to get a good job in the future, to perform better in a future career and to travel abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Her perceptions of English proficiency:</strong> above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Her main concerns about English learning:</strong> grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive English Teacher Angel’s view of her:</strong> outgoing, sociable, like gossiping, low English proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hu reported that her L2 WTC was affected greatly by her mood when doing the tasks. If she felt happy or interested in the task, she would be willing to speak more, even in a difficult topic; if she felt bored or tired, she would tend to abandon speaking, no matter how easy it was. She also stated that her L2 WTC changed quickly because her mood varied from second to second.
Trajectory of Hu’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

Figure 7.14 demonstrates the trajectory of Hu’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC over the six tasks. In comparison with the other participants, Hu showed a low but stable L2 WTC in performing the tasks (see Table 7.12). When doing the S1 task, however, Hu’s idiodynamic ratings experienced dramatic fluctuations, with eight spikes and nine dips in total.

A large proportion of Hu’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC remained at zero in those tasks. She did not rate her L2 WTC frequently, except in the S1 task. In the interview, Hu commented on her behaviour in rating the L2 WTC:

When I rated my L2 WTC in the software for the first time, I thought only one press was needed to indicate my willingness or unwillingness to communicate. That is why there were only ratings of +1 and -1 in the M1 task. Then, the same mistake did not happen again. Whenever I pressed the button, it indicated my true feelings: how much I was willing or unwilling to communicate at that moment. If I did not press the button, it implied that I had no special feelings at that moment. (Case Hu, S2 Task Interview)

Table 7.12 Case Hu’s Variability in the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th># of Spikes</th>
<th># of Dips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1’</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.14 Case Hu’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks
**M1 Task**

Hu and her partner ranked the M1 task as the most difficult one among the six tasks. In this task, they were asked to draw a map route in the Instruction Follower’s picture. It took them more than 10 minutes to finish the task. Hu mentioned that it was difficult to indicate the location among various similar objects in the picture. She was not satisfied with her performance and explained that she failed to describe the picture on several occasions due to her limited vocabulary. Regarding the vocabulary, she gave the following comment:

I was unwilling to talk when I did not know how to describe the picture. Most of the time it was because that I did not know the words, especially the words to indicate the location. At this time, I wanted to speak Chinese instead. (Case Hu, M1 Task Interview)

Hu stressed the influence of the interlocutor on her L2 WTC:

I was surprised when my partner failed to draw the map route by following my instruction. I felt that I had described it very clearly. She should have finished the route. When I saw that she did not get my ideas, I did not know how to make it clearer. At this moment, I was not willing to continue speaking. (Case Hu, M1 Task Interview)

In the journal, when asked the moment that he was most unwilling to communicate during the task, she wrote, “the moment that I have to tell my partner about the location”. She found it difficult to choose the right words to indicate locations. In the interview, she commented:

When Xu said “on the boy” and “beside the boy”, I could not tell the difference. I did not know how to draw a line to indicate “on” and “beside”. It was really hard to understand (Case Hu, M1 Task Interview).

She expressed her feelings at this moment:

At this moment when I could not follow my partner or did not know how to draw the line, I became very upset and impatient. Sometimes I just want to
quit this task. I felt disappointed at myself. (Case Hu, M1 Task Interview)

She stated that she was more willing to communicate when performing as the Instruction Follower:

When I was the Instruction Giver, I had to describe a lot of details. If I failed to express myself, I would become very upset. As the Instruction Follower, however, I only needed to follow my partner and ask confirming questions. I do not need to worry about making mistakes, so I feel much better about myself when I was the Instruction Follower. (Case Hu, M1 Task Interview)

She commented that she was most willing to communicate at the end of the task. She found it easy to describe the finishing point and felt cheerful to finish the task.

They were almost -1 and +1 (only one rating as +2) in her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC in this task. As mentioned above, Hu had a misunderstanding in using the software, and only pressed the button once to indicate her willing or unwillingness to communicate at that moment. In this task, Hu only demonstrated three levels of L2 WTC: willing, neither willing nor unwilling and unwilling. When she did not respond to the software, it indicated that she was in a state of neither willing nor unwilling to communicate.

Influenced by her action, the mean idiodynamic rating produced by the software in this task was 0.38, lower than the overall mean level of 0.71. There was no fluctuation among the ratings.

M1’ Task

Regarding the repetition of the M1 task, Hu reported its benefits to her L2 performance. The experience in doing the task made it easier for her to repeat it. They were familiar with the topic and was more efficient in choosing the right vocabulary. Additionally, she and her partner had better cooperation this time and were able to understand each other quickly. In the interview, Hu gave an example regarding the choosing of vocabulary in a repeated task:

There were two boys in the picture. My partner always told me to draw a route “on the boy” and “beside the boy”. When I heard them for the first
time, I could not tell the difference and did not know how to draw a route. This time, I understood it immediately when my partner used the same words. (Case Hu, M1’ Task Interview)

However, she expressed that she did not like this repetition, because it was boring. She preferred a new task that may bring her a feeling of freshness.

In the interview, Hu also provided an interesting comment on her behaviour in rating the idiodynamic L2 WTC:

I did not think too much about whether I was willing or unwilling to communicate when I was speaking. It was until I saw my performance in the recorded video that I became to know how willing or unwilling to communicate at that moment. It was just a moment of feeling that I rated my L2 WTC up or down. (Case Hu, M1’ Task Interview)

This comment is useful in evaluating the reliability of idiodynamic method in understanding situational L2 WTC, which is further discussed in the Chapter 9. It is another evidence of the rapid changes in L2 WTC, which may not be captured even after a few minutes.

In the journal, Hu rated her general willingness in doing the task as high as 90/100. However, her mean idiodynamic rating was only 0.58, much lower than the overall mean level of 1.18. Similar to her reaction in the previous task, it fluctuated slightly, with the highest rating reaching +4 and the lowest reaching -3.

Wave 27 Seconds 343-399 (Case Hu, M1’ Task)
**Excerpt 27**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Hu:</th>
<th>So the line across the... some people, fix the camps, and big tree.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Xu:</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Hu:</td>
<td>OK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Xu:</td>
<td>And the line is, between the girls and the tree, or just?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Hu:</td>
<td>No, just, the line, it.. em... first line is across the people, fix the campers, and big tree, then, to behind the girls, reading, reading girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Xu:</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Hu:</td>
<td>Right of the car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Xu:</td>
<td>Em.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Hu:</td>
<td>And across the.. the nearly bridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower-Xu:</td>
<td>Em... the four squares?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver-Hu:</td>
<td>Yeah, the four squares. The left, that to, left and right, is left bridge across the river.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this wave, eight seconds were rated as negative and seven seconds were positive. The rest of the ratings remained at zero, which indicated that Hu did not press the button in the software at those seconds. Hu attributed his decreased L2 WTC to her partner’s unexpected reaction:

I had just described the line, and my partner replied “yeah”. At this time, I thought she had got my ideas. Then I was going to continue describing the route. However, she stopped me by asking the previous line again. At that time, I was a little upset. (Case Hu, M1’ Task Interview)

Hu became frustrated when she was surprised by her partner’s response. At first, she was going to describe the next object in the picture but was stopped by her partner who repeated the previous topic. At this moment, a feeling of frustration appeared to Hu. She had not prepared for the topic and began to doubt her ability in describing the line.

After overcoming these negative feelings, Hu stopped rating her L2 WTC. The
ratings remained zero for 24 seconds. Then, when it came to describe the bridge, a new topic, her L2 WTC rose to be positive for seven seconds. She explained it in the interview:

It is easy to describe the bridge because there are fewer things in this part. After describing the complicated route for such a long time, I was happy to meet an easy one. (Case Hu, M1’ Task Interview)

At this moment, the change in Hu’s L2 WTC was due to the change in the topic. Being tired of the previous topic, Hu was glad to start with a new and easier topic.

*M2 Task*

Hu found it easier to finish the M2 task, in comparison with the M1 and M1’ tasks. She illustrated three reasons: the task, her familiarity with the task type and familiarity with the interlocutor. She liked the picture in the M2 task, because the Chinese words below the landmarks made her feel relaxed. Additionally, there were fewer things in the picture, so it was easier to describe the picture and make her partner understand. Also, the experience in doing the map tasks enabled Hu and her partner to perform the task more efficiently. They had learned how to give or follow instructions to draw a map route and had better cooperation in task performance. They were able to make each other understood by using simple words, such as “up”, “down”, “left” and “right”.

In the interview, she mentioned that she was concerned about her partner’s impression on her:

I think it is impolite to give no or little response to my partner when she is talking. So I tried to ask her questions when she was the Instruction Giver. That would not make her feel negative about me. (Case Hu, M2 Task Interview)

Hu realised that she had different opinions about her willingness to communicate at the end of tasks. In the previous tasks, she had mentioned that she was more willing to talk at the finishing point because it was easier. However, she produced negative idiodynamic ratings in the last few seconds in this task but could not explain why. She commented it as “strange” and “difficult to tell the reason”. In
the interview, she said the following that related to the complex and dynamic nature of L2 WTC:

I do not know why...sometimes I was willing but sometimes I was unwilling to communicate at the end of a task. The feelings emerged quickly and then disappeared suddenly. It is too complicated to explain why. (Case Hu, M2 Task Interview)

In the journal, she rated her willingness in doing the task as 90/100, and perceived her ability in doing the task as 80/100. However, her mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 0.97, almost the same as the overall mean level of 0.95. As usual, she did not rate her L2 WTC often, especially in the first half of the task. She commented that her idiodynamic ratings were mostly influenced by the emotion of boredom and her interlocutor’s reaction. There was no spike and dip in the graph.

S1 Task

Hu and her partner both took a positive attitude towards the new type of information gap task. She explained the differences between the map tasks and spot-the-differences tasks:

I felt that we were more involved in the spot-the-differences task. It was more like real dialogue. I was more willing to communicate with my interlocutor because the task was interactive in nature. When performing the map tasks, it was only the Instruction Giver that described the picture. Sometimes I felt it was ridiculous. (Case Hu, S1 Task Interview)

Hu mentioned that she was satisfied with her performance in this task. She liked this task very much. It was a new type of task. The colourful picture was appealing, which brought her a feeling of freshness and excitement. She was interested in performing the task.

However, Hu’s mean idiodynamic rating in this task was only 0.98, lower than the overall mean level of 1.55. It was not consistent with her general willingness in doing the task, which she rated as high as 90/100. His idiodynamic ratings fluctuated dramatically (SD = 1.99), with eight spikes and nine dips.
Hu attributed her fluctuating L2 WTC mainly to her mood at a particular moment, which was affected largely by her interlocutor’s performance in this task. For example, she stressed that her high L2 WTC was enhanced by her interlocutor’s active involvement in this task:

My partner is in a happy mood today. She seemed excited and talked a lot during the task. It encouraged me. I was more confident in expressing my ideas. (Case Hu, S1 Task Interview)

And her low L2 WTC was due to her interlocutor’s minimal response:

After I described the house, I looked at her. But she did not give me any response. It seemed that she did not want to talk to me. At that time, I became upset and did not want to talk either. (Case Hu, S1 Task Interview)

The following wave was selected to explain one of the fluctuations within a short period of time.

**Wave 28 Seconds 229-274 (Case Hu, S1 Task)**

![Graph](image)

**Excerpt 28**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Xu:</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hu:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You mean her left side?

Yes, left side.

Having a thing, thing, house?

Three?

Thing.

Thing? House?
At first, Hu experienced a low level of L2 WTC in the idiodynamic ratings, and then a spike followed by a dip. She attributed this fluctuation mostly to her interlocutor’s reaction. The low L2 WTC emerged when her partner told her “there is a thing”, but she did not understand it. She thought her partner was checking numbers with her, and asked “three?”. Her partner did not respond to this question but continued to tell her it was a “thing”. Hu commented in the interview about her feelings at this time:

I have no idea what she was talking about. She said, surprisingly, “there is a thing”… I felt confused. (Case Hu, S1 Task Interview)

Soon, Hu’s L2 WTC rose as a response to her partner’s question. She was trying to describe the colour of the house. At first, she said it was brown. After receiving no response from her partner, she was not sure about the colour, so she was eager to give more information to her partner. At this time, she rated her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC high. However, it soon dropped to the bottom (-5) when she failed to describe it clearly. She commented:

When I said “brown”, my partner did not give me any response. I wonder maybe there was a difference here. So I want to check more information in order to spot the difference. I was trying to find an object with a similar colour but received no response at all. I stopped and looked at her. She was focusing on her picture. I do not know what she was thinking about. (Case Hu, S1 Task Interview)

It was evident that Hu was highly concerned about her interlocutor’s performance in the task.
S1’ Task

It took Hu and her partner only five minutes to finish the task. She said it was much easier because they had learned how to find the differences efficiently. She was relaxed when performing this task and confident in her ability in finishing the task. She rated her task L2 WTC as high as 90/100 and was satisfied with her performance in this task.

Her mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 1.48, a little higher than the overall mean level of 1.27. However, she did not respond to the software much. She felt more willing to speak in the previous task because her partner was more active when performing the S1 task. This statement was in contradiction to her low mean idiodynamic rating in the S1 task, which was only 0.98 and well below the overall mean level of 1.55 in that task. She remarked that her L2 WTC was greatly influenced by her partner’s performance and responses, because “it was a dialogue and it seemed strange that I kept talking when my partner did not want to speak to me” (Case Hu, S1’ Task Interview). Also, she mentioned that she preferred a new task to a repeated task:

I like a new task that may bring me a feeling of freshness. When repeating a task, I find that there is not too much to say. Sometimes I just feel that I am not interested in an easy task. I like more challenging tasks. (Case Hu, S1’ Task Interview)

S2 Task

Hu reported that she was in a negative mood that day and did not like talking. Her willingness was greatly affected by the emotion and her partner’s willingness to communicate.

She did not like this task because it was difficult to identify the objects in the picture. Her L2 WTC decreased on occasions when she could not identify the objects. The S2 task, though, was perceived to be more interesting than the S1 and S1’ tasks, because it described a scene that was close to her daily life.

She did not respond to the software much, which resulted in a low mean idiodynamic rating (M = 0.11) in this task, much lower than the overall mean level.
of 1.23. In the interview, she explained:

When my partner was speaking, I felt that I did not want to say more. Her description was much better than mine. What I need to do was to check the information and found the differences. (Case Hu, S2 Task Interview)

She commented that she was most unwilling to talk when they were describing the second floor. She said the following:

At that time, I felt it was too complicated to describe the second floor. Both of us could not make each other understood. It took us a long time to compare the differences between the pictures. I felt bored and impatient. (Case Hu, S2 Task Interview)

There was no obvious spike or dip in the graph.

Summary

Table 7.13 summarises Case Hu’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC and her explanations about the features and changes of these figures. She showed a generally low but stable L2 WTC in performing the tasks. The only exception existed in her performance in the S1 task, where she experienced dramatic fluctuations in her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC.

She expressed a general negative attitude towards the task repetition. She preferred new tasks that might bring her a feeling of freshness, though she reported that repeating a task might make it easier for her to finish the same task.
Table 7.13 Summary of Case Hu’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Attitudes towards the task</th>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Explanations about Idiodynamic Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1 Task (M=0.38; SD=1.04; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: difficult; 2. liked this task; 3. not satisfied with his performance in this task</td>
<td>No wave selected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’ Task (M=0.58; SD=1.72; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)</td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: easier than M1 task; 2. not happy to repeat the task; 3. not satisfied with his performance in this task</td>
<td>Wave 27 (Seconds 343-399; Case Hu, M1’ task)</td>
<td>1. Decreased L2 WTC: interlocutor’s unexpected reaction; a feeling of frustration; not prepared for the topic; 2. Increased L2 WTC: a new and easier topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M2 Task  
(M=0.97; SD=1.44; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy;  
2. liked this task;  
3. not satisfied with her performance

No wave selected

S1 Task  
(M=0.98; SD=1.99; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy;  
2. likes this task;  
3. satisfied with her performance

Wave 28  
(Seconds 229 -274; Case Hu, S1 task)

1. Low L2 WTC: confused  
2. Increased L2 WTC: eager to exchange information  
3. Decreased L2 WTC: interlocutor’s response and performance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Perceptions of the task:</th>
<th>Other Feelings</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>S1’ Task</strong></td>
<td>easy; not happy to repeat</td>
<td>relaxed; satisfied</td>
<td>No wave selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M=1.48; SD=1.14; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)</td>
<td>the task;</td>
<td>with her performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S2 Task</strong></td>
<td>easier than S1 and S1’</td>
<td>more interesting</td>
<td>No wave selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M=0.11; SD=0.42; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)</td>
<td>task;</td>
<td>not satisfied with her</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>does not like this task;</td>
<td>performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2.3.2 Case VII: Xu - An emotional student

Xu’s L2 WTC was greatly influenced by emotion, or mood at particular moments. She had just transferred to this international school from one of the best government-sponsored high schools in Beijing. She decided to study overseas after graduation from her school. Her Intensive English teacher Angel was positive about her and described her as a confident, energetic and bright girl. She commented that Xu was one of the top students in this school, whose English proficiency was well grounded. Xu always enthusiastically volunteered in the classroom activities.

With the highest perceived communicative competence among the six cases, Xu, however, did not study hard. She spent little time in enlarging her vocabulary, because she believed that she already had a rich vocabulary. In the questionnaire, when asked how many hours she spent on learning English after school every week, Xu wrote “zero”.

The effects of L1, which she repeatedly mentioned in the interview, were also found to be a factor influencing her L2 WTC. She stated that she felt strange when commutating with her Chinese teachers and classmates in English. She would prefer to speak L2 with foreigners whose native language was not Chinese. She made the following comments in the interview:

Whenever there are Chinese classmates nearby, I prefer to communicate with them in Chinese. Even in the classroom, when the teacher asked us to speak English, I would choose to speak Chinese in whispers with my Chinese classmates or choose to keep quiet. (Case Xu, Task S2 Interview)

Xu reported negative feelings about task repetition. She did not like repeating tasks because it made her feel bored. She would prefer new and challenging tasks.

A brief Profile for Xu is provided below:
Figure 7.15 Profile for Case Xu

Xu

- Former English learning: 10 years
- Overseas experience: 20 days for travelling
- Outside school: did not spend any time in learning English
- Reason for learning English: to study overseas in the future
- Her perceptions of English proficiency: above average
- Her main concerns about English learning: writing
- Intensive English Teacher Angel’s view of her: one of the top students in the class, bright, confident and energetic

Trajectory of Xu’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

Figure 7.16 shows Xu’s trajectory of idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC over the six tasks. Her L2 WTC was placed in the more assertive end along the continuum (see Figure 7.5), which indicated that her L2 WTC remained relatively stable, with slight fluctuations over performing the tasks. However, the only negative mean idiodynamic rating (M = -0.24) in this study appeared in the M2 task of Xu.

Table 7.14 Case Xu’s Variability in the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th># of Spikes</th>
<th># of Dips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1’</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1’</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.16 Case Xu’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks
**M1 Task**

Xu did not like the M1 task and was not satisfied with her performance. However, she rated her task L2 WTC as high as 90/100. In the interview, she made the following comments:

> I did not like the task. It was boring. At first, I was willing to communicate because I thought the task was easy. During performing the task, however, I found it was difficult to describe the location and make my partner understand. Then, I became unwilling to continue the task, especially when I failed to retrieve the vocabulary. (Case Xu, M1 Task Interview)

Xu was more willing to communicate when performing as the Instruction Follower. She emphasised the influence of L1 on her willingness to communicate. When communicating with someone also from China, she was more willing to speak Chinese. She said the following in the interview:

> When I was the Instruction Follower, I was ready to ask questions, so my L2 WTC was higher. When it was my turn to give instructions to my partner, I always wanted to speak Chinese because we are both Chinese. (Case Xu, M1 Task Interview)

She responded more often to the software in the second part of the task when she performed as the Instruction Giver. The graph of Xu’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC in the M1 task (see M1, Figure 7.16) showed these changes. She made a different comment on her role as the Instruction Follower and the Instruction Giver:

> At first, I was the Instruction Follower. I did not need to speak much. When it was my turn to be the Instruction Giver, I was excited. It was my first time to describe the map route. I wanted to have a try. (Case Xu, M1 Task Interview)

There are several occasions when Xu made a different comment on the effects of the same factor on her L2 WTC. For example, when commenting on the influence of an easy task, she held a different view in two interviews:
When it came to describing the car in the map, I was not willing to speak more so I rated my L2 WTC low at this moment. It was too easy. There was only one route there. I prefer a more challenging task. (Case Xu, M1 Task Interview)

When I began to describe the bridge, my willingness was high, because it was easy to describe. Before it, we had spent a long time describing the objects in the picture, and I was impatient. So when I saw the bridge, I found it was simple. (Case Xu, M1’ Task Interview)

An individual’s L2 WTC at a particular moment, as was suggested from the comments made by Xu, appeared to be affected by the influences from the previous moment. Xu stressed, in the last interview, that whether she was willing to speak or not in an easy task depended on the situation at that time.

Her mean idiodynamic rating in this task was only 0.28, lower than the overall mean level of 0.71. The graph showed a flat pattern, with ratings ranging between +3 and -3. It fluctuated slightly, without any spikes and dips.

M1’ Task

Xu was not happy to repeat the M1 task. However, she acknowledged the benefits brought by the task repetition on her L2 task performance. She stated that the experience in doing the task enabled her to choose a better way to communicate when confronting the same situation. In the interview, she made the following comments:

I realised that my partner Hu was always confused when I described the location of the two boys in the picture. When I did it for the first time, it took us a long time to make each other understood. This time, when I saw the two boys in the picture, I knew maybe she would get confused again. So I was eager to give her the correct information and make her understand quickly. At that time, my L2 WTC increased. (Case Xu, M1’ Task Interview)

Xu commented that her L2 WTC would increase when she found her partner was confused about the map route or misunderstood her description. At these moments, she was eager to provide more information to her partner.
Generally, Xu took a negative attitude towards the effects of task repetition on her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC. She reported her negative feelings, such as boredom and impatient, when repeating the M1’ task. In the second part of the task, she had a low level of L2 WTC and gave minimal response to her partner. She stated:

I was so tired of doing the same task. So when we had to do another version of the same task, I felt it was so boring. We did it several times. It seems that the task is too easy. I did not need to speak more. (Case Xu, M1’ Task Interview)

Her mean idiodynamic rating in this task was only 0.83, lower than the overall mean level of 1.18, though she still rated her general willingness to communicate in this task as high as 90/100. The idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC fluctuated slightly.

**M2 Task**

Xu rated her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC low because of her negative mood the day when she performed the M2 task. The mean idiodynamic rating of this task was only -0.24, which was the only negative mean rating in this study among the six cases.

She did not think that task difficulty influenced her L2 WTC. In comparison with the M1 and M1’ task, she stated that the M2 task was easier. By adding a Chinese name below the landmarks, which might increase the task difficulty, did not influence her L2 WTC.

It was until Second 80 that she began to respond to the software. She explained it in the interview:

I was not happy that day because of my personal reasons. At first, I failed to get myself in a mood. I just wanted to finish this task. At that moment, I was neither willing nor unwilling to speak. (Case Xu, M2 Task Interview)

However, she rated her task L2 WTC as high as 90/100, which indicated that she was generally willing to perform this task. She also expressed her preference for
this type of task. It appeared that her low idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC were mainly affected by her mood at particular moments.

There were 10 seconds, from Second 138 to Second 147, when Xu reported negative idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC, with the lowest rating reaching -4. The following wave gives more details.

**Wave 29 Seconds 122- 168 (Case Xu, M2 Task)**

**Excerpt 29**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giver-Xu:</th>
<th>Follower-Hu:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And go down to the temple.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah, it is below the temple.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah, And..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah, yeah, yeah.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And go, go up, to the crops.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The farm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Influenced by her partner’s task performance, Xu experienced low L2 WTC in this wave. At this time, they were describing “the abandoned temple” and “the wheat field”. However, when Xu said “temple” and “crops”, her partner did not understand. Xu was impatient to explain further to her partner. In her opinion, the two words were easy. She could not understand why her partner did not know them. Xu reported her feeling at this moment:

I felt rather impatient when my partner did not know the word “temple”. I was so surprised that she asked me whether it was “trash”…Her vocabulary was so limited that I did not know how to explain it clearly to her. When it came to “the wheat filed”, I did not know how to say it in English. So I said “crops”. But again, Hu did not know the word either. (Case Xu, M2 Task Interview)

After these low idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC, there were 20 seconds that Xu did not respond to the software. At that moment, she was trying to retrieve the vocabulary and looking for ways to make her partner understand. When she came out the word “farm”, her partner finally understood. Xu’s L2 WTC started to rise when they changed the topic and began to describe the next object “fence”.

\textit{S1 Task}

Xu was actively engaged in the S1 task. In the journal, she rated her task L2 WTC as high as 90/100. However, her mean idiodynamic rating in this task was only 0.79, much lower than the overall mean level of 1.55. She rated her L2 WTC
frequently in this task. The idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC showed greater fluctuations than those in the other tasks, with one spike and three dips totally. The following waves explain the fluctuations in her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC within a short period.

Wave 30 Seconds 53-72 (Case Xu, S1 Task)

Excerpt 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Xu</th>
<th>Hu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Is she's...</td>
<td>OK. ((laugh)) On his left(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During these 20 seconds, Xu demonstrated a high level of L2 WTC. At these moments, Xu and her partner were trying to find the differences from left to right in the picture. Xu was excited and eager to express herself:

When I realised that my partner was going to describe the picture from left to right, I was very happy. It was easy! What we needed to do was to describe the objects one by one. I had a lot of ideas in finding the differences. So when she was talking, I was eager to ask questions to check whether there was a difference. (Case Xu, S1 Task Interview)

When they finished the topic, Xu’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC went back to
zero again when she did not respond to the software.

Wave 31 Seconds 339-398 (Case Xu, S1 Task)

Excerpt 31

Xu: And grey pants.
Hu: Grey hats?
Xu: Grey pants.
Hu: Grey(2)((Confused, looking at her partner))
Xu: Grey.
Hu: Is dark colour or light colour?
Xu: Light.
Hu: OK. Light.
Xu: And the girl is running.
Hu: Running?
Xu: Running. Run.
Hu: No. The girl wear the blue running?
Xu: Yeah.
Hu: (Laugh) OK. Two different.
Xu: ((Laugh)) OK. Two different.
Hu: OK(3) And right of the girl has a green house…

At first, Xu’s L2 WTC was stable. She rated her L2 WTC only as +1 or -1. Most
of the time, she did not respond to the software. Before this wave, Xu and her partner had just found a difference and began to describe a girl wearing grey pants. Her partner did not know the word “pants”, and kept checking the details with Xu. However, Xu was not interested in this topic and did not give much response to her partner.

Then, Xu experienced an increased L2 WTC when she and her partner finished describing the girl and began to find the next difference. She expressed her feelings in the interview:

When I said “running girl”, my partner did not understand it at first. She asked again and again. Finally, she knew what I meant. I thought there was another difference. So I was excited to speak, hoping to find more. (Case Xu, S1 Task Interview)

Xu experienced a decreased dynamic L2 WTC, surprisingly, when they successfully found the difference. She explained:

I was a little tired at that time. When my partner started to describe the green house, I found it was difficult and boring. We had to check a list of details. (Case Xu, S1 Task Interview)

Xu’s L2 WTC was closely related to her emotion at particular moments. Sometimes she did not even know why she rated low idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC. She mentioned, “when I watched the recorded video, a thought may emerged suddenly and influence my ratings” (Case Xu, S1 Task Interview).

S1’ Task

Xu took a negative attitude towards the repetition of the S1 task. She was not interested in this task, and was tired of doing an easy task for the second time. She commented:

We did not need to say much in this task. We had done it before. It was easier for us to find the differences. We already knew where to find the differences. Using only one or two sentences, we can make each other understood. It was boring to repeat an easy task. (Case Xu, S1’ Task
Interview)

Because of personal reasons, Xu was not active in performing the task. She commented that she was not in a mood that day and did not want to talk. In the interview, she explained:

I am not happy today and was unable to be fully engaged in this task. Something happened earlier affected my mood…It was because of my personal reasons that I was relatively unwilling to do the task. (Case study, S1’ Task Interview)

Xu’s mean idiodynamic rating in this task was 1.20, close to the overall mean level of 1.27. She did not respond to the software much, which indicated that she was neither willing nor unwilling to communicate most of the time when performing the task. However, she still rated her general willingness in doing the task as high as 90/100. In her opinion, she was willing to do the task but was not “very happy” to do it.

The graph of her idiodynamic ratings demonstrated a positive pattern, with all the ratings being positive. This made us rethink about the behaviour of “not responding to the software”. As mentioned before, when one did not respond to the software, the ratings would go back to zero, indicating neither willing nor unwilling to communicate at that moment. However, it happens when the ratings of zero are more likely to demonstrate the participants’ relatively low willingness to communicate after data triangulation.

S2 Task

Xu preferred this new spot-the-differences task to the previous tasks and described it as “interesting”. She mentioned that the picture portrayed a scene of ordinary life and gave her a feeling of familiarity. In the journal, she rated her task L2 WTC as 90/100 and expressed that she was willing to communicate all the time.

However, her mean idiodynamic rating in this task was only 0.96, lower than the overall mean level of 1.23. The ratings fluctuated slightly, with only one spike in the graph. She did not respond to the software frequently. She expressed her feelings about performing the task in the interview:
I liked this task. But during the task performance, I found an interesting phenomenon. For example, I might be willing to commutate at one moment, but soon I would become unwilling to communicate just after a few seconds. The decision to communicate or not was just a momentary thought. (Case study, S2 Task Interview).

The following wave was selected to explain the only spike in the graph in this task.

Wave 32 Seconds 221-245 (Case Xu, S2 Task)

Excerpt 32

Xu: And do you have anything on the.. the table?
Hu: The.. the…?
Xu: Second floor.
Hu: Second floor?
Xu: Yeah.
Xu: Under the table?
Hu: Under?
Xu: Yeah.
Hu: Em? A lamp?
Xu: ((Casting a Glance on Hu’s picture)) Yeah, yeah. What colour is it?
Hu: No colour.
Xu: White?
Hu: Yeah.
During this short period, Xu experienced a rapid increase in her L2 WTC. At first, Xu and her partner were describing a table on the second floor. Xu rated her L2 WTC as -1 when she was tired of checking the information with her partner, who was always confused about the pronunciation of “under” and “on”. Xu had repeated them several times in the previous tasks and was reluctant to repeat them again.

However, the rating soon rose to +4 when they changed the topic. In the interview, Xu commented:

When Hu began to describe the lamp, I glanced at her picture. It seemed that the two pictures were different. So I was willing to speak at this time in order to find the difference. (Case Xu, S2 Task Interview)

It was the only spike in Xu’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC in this task. However, it lasted only a few seconds. Soon, the ratings fluctuated slightly, within 0 and +2 for the rest of the task.

Summary

Table 7.15 summarises Xu’s idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC and her explanations about the features and changes of these figures. Her L2 WTC remained relatively stable with slight fluctuations over performing the tasks. Her mood at particular moments and the interlocutor’s task performance appeared to be the major factors influencing her L2 WTC as situated in a task-based context. Similar to her partner, Xu took a negative attitude towards the effects of task repetition on her L2 WTC.
Table 7.15 *Summary of Case Xu’s Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC over the Six Tasks*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Attitudes towards the task</th>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Explanations about Idiodynamic Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M1 Task</strong></td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: difficult; 2. did not like this task; 3. not satisfied with his performance in this task</td>
<td>No wave selected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M=0.28; SD=1.40; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M1’ Task</strong></td>
<td>1. perceptions of the task: easier than M1 task; 2. not happy to repeat the task; 3. did not like this task; 4. not satisfied with his performance in this task</td>
<td>No wave selected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M=0.83; SD=1.28; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M2 Task
(M=0.24; SD=1.48; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy;
2. liked this task;
3. not in a mood
4. not satisfied with her performance

Wave 29
(Seconds 122-168, Case Xu, M2 Task)
1. Low L2 WTC: a feeling of impatient; interlocutor’s performance;
2. Increase L2 WTC: new topic

S1 Task
(M=0.79; SD=1.38; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy
2. liked this task;
3. in a good mood;
4. satisfied with her performance

Wave 30
(Seconds 53-72, Case Xu, S1 Task)
1. High L2 WTC: a feeling of excitement; eager to express herself
2. Decreased L2 WTC: finished the topic

Wave 31
(Seconds 339-398, Case Xu, S1 Task)
1. Decreased L2 WTC: feeling tired; complicated task
S1’ Task
(M=1.20; SD=0.41; General Task L2 WTC: 90/100)

1. perceptions of the task: easy;
2. not happy to repeat the task;
3. not in a mood;
4. satisfied with her performance

No wave selected
CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSIONS OF PART TWO

This part of the thesis discusses changes in L2 WTC that occurred on a per-second timescale, which capture the complex dynamic nature of L2 WTC. It examines the data on L2 WTC within a series of L2 communicative tasks using the idiodynamic method and L2 WTC process through real L2 communication in real time.

It aims to answer two research questions:

3) Are there any typical patterns in moment-to-moment fluctuations of their L2 WTC while performing and repeating six L2 communicative tasks?

4) How does Chinese high school students’ L2 WTC fluctuate when performing communicative tasks?

The following sections summarise the results and examine them in comparison with previous research literature in the field as discussed in Chapter 2.

8.1 Typical Patterns of Fluctuations in L2 WTC

Examining data using the idiodynamic method on a per-second basis identified variability in levels of idiodynamic ratings in L2 WTC but no patterns of fluctuation in L2 WTC among the six participants. Some cases fluctuated dramatically while others remained relatively stable over both the six tasks and within a particular task. Each participant, when in a similar context, appeared to be sensitive to different variables. For example, Lan repeatedly mentioned interlocutor-related variables such as vocabulary, PC and task-usefulness as the major factors that influenced her L2 WTC; Su cited self-confidence and vocabulary as the most important variables; Li reported that his L2 WTC was influenced most by his strong motivation to learn English, perception of task-usefulness, experience in doing a task, and lack of confidence in L2 communication; Chen identified interlocutor and PC as the main attributes affecting his L2 WTC; Hu’s L2 WTC was greatly affected by her interlocutor’s performance and her mood in doing the task, while her partner Xu was sensitive to
emotions which emerged suddenly at particular moments.

In conclusion, each case is unique in the degree of variability in dynamic situational L2 WTC due to the complex interaction among individual-internal and individual-external factors. Multiple variables from psychological, contextual, physiological and linguistic dimensions exerted a combined influence on the changes of their L2 WTC at a particular moment.

8.2 Dynamics of Variables underlying L2 WTC

The case study, adopting CDST as the theoretical perspective, particularly emphasised the moment-to-moment timescale through which to understand the dynamic fluctuations. The fluctuations appeared to be under the converging influence of learner-internal and learner-external variables at the time of the initiation of L2 communication. To examine the dynamic changes of L2 WTC, 32 segments of waves of L2 WTC in speech tasks, in the multiple-case study, were analysed. It was concluded that L2 communication is a fluid and dynamic process, reflecting unpredictable moment-to-moment changes in this construct when focusing on a per-second timescale.

The following sections include two parts: First, a general explanation appropriate for each of the participants, identifying variables influencing their L2 WTC, is presented. Based on cross-case analyses, this part compares the similarities and differences among the participants. Second, a description of the complex, dynamic and non-linear features of L2 WTC is provided to deepen the understanding of the combined forces (both driving and restraining) at a specific moment within an individual.

8.2.1. Factors Influencing L2 WTC

The frequently-mentioned variables in the present study include: interlocutor-related factors (familiarity with interlocutor, interlocutor’s performance, interlocutor’s participation and cooperation and interlocutor’s L2 proficiency); task-related factors (task repetition, task type, topic, task performance and role in a task); psychological-dimensional factors (PC, confidence, motivation, mood, tolerance of ambiguity), linguistic-dimensional
factors (vocabulary and reliance on L1); and physiological-dimensional factors (tired and hungry) (see Figure 8.1). Although all these factors were grouped into different categories, and explained separately for description and illustration, they interacted closely with each other and exerted a combined influence on L2 WTC fluctuations.

Figure 8.1 *Factors Influencing the Idiodynamic Ratings of L2 WTC in a Task-based Context*

8.2.1.1 *Interlocutor-related Factors*

Interlocutor emerged as one of the most commonly factors that resulted in changes in L2 WTC identified by the six participants. In this case study, interlocutor refers to the partner in a pair task; all the participants performed the six tasks with the same interlocutor. Consistent with Kang’s (2005) study, triangulated data
demonstrated that the participants’ L2 WTC fluctuated over time, even within a conversation session with the same interlocutor. Their L2 WTC was affected, specifically, by an interlocutor’s familiarity, performance, participation, cooperation and L2 proficiency. Data also showed that their L2 WTC appeared to be affected more by an individual’s perceptions of interlocutor-related variables (subjective perceptions of situations), than objective features of the interlocutor. Zhang and associates (2018) in their review and analysis of 35 empirical studies investigating situational components of L2 WTC, reported similar data.

*Familiarity with interlocutor*

Many previous studies have explored the impact of interlocutor familiarity on an individual’s L2 WTC (Asker, 1998; Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; Pawlak et al., 2016). Cao and Philp (2006), for example, concluded that learners reported higher L2 WTC when with friends than with unfamiliar classmates. Kang (2005) also found that students preferred talking with friends than with strangers or acquaintances. Data from the current study also indicated that participants were more willing to communicate with familiar interlocutors. The experience in L2 communication between the speakers would make easier for the pair to understand each other, and less anxious when making mistakes. As Kang (2005) commented:

> An interlocutor who had not had English conversations with the participants and did not know their English proficiency tended to make them feel insecure…this kind of insecurity appeared to originate from the participant’s fear of losing face by making mistakes. (p. 282)

Lan, in this study, reported that she was always unwilling to initiate L2 communication with strangers because she perceived her communicative competence to be low. Similarly, Su was afraid of making mistakes with someone with whom she was not familiar because she thought her accent in spoken English was strange and not easy to understand. Hu, meanwhile, stated that she would not feel awkward with familiar interlocutors; Chen also remarked that he did not worry about making mistakes with friends. In an example from Wave 28, Chen described how he experienced a decrease in L2 WTC because of negative feelings aroused by a simple grammar mistake. He soon recovered, however, because he
realised that, “it was not much embarrassed while making mistakes in front of Li, because we were good friends and familiar with each other” (Case Chen, S2 Task Interview).

**Interlocutor’s task performance**

It is evident that participants’ L2 WTC was affected by perceptions of the interlocutor’s task performance, which can be both a driving and a restraining influence when initiating L2 communication depending on the situation. High or increased L2 WTC may result from an interlocutor’s confusion as a result of unclear or lengthy descriptions and failure in establishing a common understanding. For instance, in Wave 2 (the M1 task) when Lan’s interlocutor seemed confused about what she had described, Lan’s L2 WTC increased because, in wanting to make her partner understand, she provided as much detail as she could. The same situation happened in Wave 7 (the S2 task) when Lan’s partner failed to understand what she was talking about. Lan commented:

> I guess there should be a difference in the details, such as the number of the sign of the musical notes, or the number of the sign of the snoring beside the sleeping women. So I counted them. However, it seemed that my partner did not understand me at first. So I was eager to explain it further. (Case Lan, S2 Task Interview)

In performing the six tasks, Li’s desire for more information always increased because of his partner’s unclear descriptions of the pictures provides another example. Li remarked in Wave 15 (M1 task) that his L2 WTC was much higher during that period because he doubted his partner’s description and asked questions. As Li commented in relation to instance in Wave 21 (S2 task):

> It was funny when he said there was a monkey in his picture. I could not believe that there would be such an interesting difference and I doubted maybe it was just because my partner could not tell what it was, because the picture was not very clear. So I was eager to check the information with him. (Case Li, S2 Task Interview)

Low and decreased L2 WTC may result from interlocutor’s failure to understand
or describe the picture, lengthy descriptions and repeated mistakes or questions, which can lead to negative feelings such as impatience, confusion and boredom. For example, Lan commented, “she (her partner) spoke for a long time, and it was boring. So I did not want to continue this conversation” (Case Lan, M1 Task Interview). Lan stated that she was frustrated and unwilling to communicate when her partner failed to understand the meaning of “towel”, and she became impatient having to repeat it several times. Xu also became impatient and unwilling to continue the task when her partner could not understand her and asked the same question several times. She said that she was tired of explaining it repeatedly.

Li provides another example of the inhibiting effects of interlocutor’s performance on L2 WTC. In Wave 17 (M2 task), Li experienced a drop in his L2 WTC. He was tired and unwilling to continue the task when his partner, Chen, failed to describe two landmarks in the picture because of a lack of vocabulary. In Wave 18 (S1 task), Li made a similar comment:

I thought we needed to check more information here. However, Chen just repeated and hesitated, and then he started with “black line” which was in my surprise. It was really hard to check all the trivial details, and I did not like it. (Case Li, S1 Task Interview)

Chen had the same experience in Wave 23 (M1’ task), he commented:

I felt a little impatient when Li asked me whether it was the right tree or the left tree. He was always confused about “right” and “left”. I have explained it several times. It was boring to repeat it (Case Chen, M1’ Task Interview).

Hu’s L2 WTC was similarly restrained by her partner’s failure to understand her instruction:

I was surprised when my partner failed to draw the map route by following my instruction. I felt that I had described it very clearly. She should have finished the route. When I saw that she did not get my ideas, I did not know how to make it clearer. At this moment, I was not willing to continue speaking. (Case Hu, M1 Task Interview)
An exception, however, appeared in Wave 9 (the M1’ task) when Su stated that her L2 WTC was not affected by her partner’s silences:

Lan’s silences did not affect my willingness. I was focusing on how to describe the right route and did not even notice that she was in silence for a few seconds. It was until I saw the recorded video that I realised maybe she did not want to talk any more at that moment. However, I did not think it was because of me. I guess she was just tired of doing the task. (Case Su, M1’ Task Interview)

In conclusion, the effects of an interlocutor’s task performance on participant’s L2 WTC appear to vary over unpredictable time and situational features.

*Interlocutor’s participation and cooperation*

Many researchers have reported that their participants are more willing to communicate with those who are cooperative and participate actively in L2 communication (Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; Syed, 2016; Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015). For example, Cao and Philp (2016) stated, “the interlocutor’s participation, particularly in dyadic interaction, was perceived as a major factor influencing WTC” (p. 488). Syed (2016), likewise, concluded that an interlocutor’s attention, interests and participation in a conversation tended to reduce or increase learner’s L2 WTC.

Hu, in this study, was concerned, especially, about her interlocutor’s participation and cooperation in performing the tasks. She remarked that her L2 WTC was influenced greatly by her partner’s response, because “it was a dialogue and it seemed strange that I kept talking when my partner did not want to speak to me” (Case Hu, S1’ Task Interview). She stressed that, when doing the S1 task, her high L2 WTC was enhanced by her interlocutor’s active involvement:

My partner is in a happy mood today. She seemed excited and talked a lot during the task. It encouraged me. I was more confident in expressing my ideas. (Case Hu, S1 Task Interview)

However, Su, whose idiodynamic ratings in L2 WTC were stable, had a decreased L2 WTC due to her interlocutor’s minimal response during the Wave 10 (M2 task).
At that time, Su’s partner Lan seemed tired of doing the task and did not respond to Su for a few seconds. Su commented that she was a little upset and did not know how to continue the conversation. Lan, however, had a different perspective. Her L2 WTC was encouraged by her interlocutor’s frequent and prompt responses, commenting:

When I watched the video, I saw that my partner always responded to me when she was an Instruction Follower. It encouraged me a lot and increased my willingness to express myself. However, I always kept in silence in the same situation and did not say any words. I knew it was not good. (Case Lan, M1 Task Interview)

Interlocutors’ L2 proficiency

Researchers have found that interlocutors’ L2 proficiency closely relates to learners’ L2 WTC (Kang, 2005; Syed, 2015). According to Kang (2005), interlocutors’ L2 proficiency has an impact on learners’ psychological feelings of “security”, thus affecting L2 WTC. In the current study, the influence of an interlocutor’s L2 proficiency on L2 WTC had been repeatedly mentioned. It is interesting to note that there is always a discrepancy between an interlocutor’s actual L2 proficiency and a participant’s perception of the interlocutor’s L2 proficiency; and it is the latter that exerts a significant influence on L2 WTC.

Chen’s case is a representative: He stated that he was much more willing to communicate with Chinese students with similar English proficiency. His active engagement in the task performance was partly because he perceived himself as having higher L2 proficiency than his partner Li. When communicating with Li, he was relaxed and confident, which led to a higher level of L2 WTC. Their teacher, who commented that Chen’s L2 proficiency was lower than his partner’s, however, held a different view of their L2 proficiency. Hu’s situation was similar. Although her teacher said that she had poor grammar and a limited vocabulary, Hu perceived her L2 proficiency as being almost at the same level as her partner, considered as one of the top three students in the class; because of this, she felt quite relaxed when performing the tasks with her interlocutor.

Chen also reported that he was unwilling to communicate with those whose
English proficiency was much higher than his, especially those whose mother
language was English. He claimed:

I do not like talking with those classmates who come from English-speaking
countries, and those from Russian and Indian who can speak better English.
Because their English proficiency is much higher than mine, I am not
confident in communicating with them. I am worried about making mistakes
in front of them. I do not want to lose face. (Case Chen, M1 Task Interview)

Lan, similarly commented that she was more willing to communicate with
someone whose English proficiency was lower than hers because it made her feel
much more confident and helped overcome the fear of losing face.

8.2.1.2 Task-related variables

A notable contribution made by this study is that it collected data from a specially
designed and lab-based case study and focused on the effects of L2 communicative
tasks, especially task repetition, on learners’ L2 WTC. Additionally, various
task-related factors underlying learners’ L2 WTC were explored in depth,
including task repetition, task type, topic, task performance, the stage of a task and
role in a task.

Task repetition

The effects of task repetition on the patterns of fluctuation differed among
individuals. In Pair Two, both participants were positive about the effects of task
repetition in increasing their L2 WTC. They repeatedly mentioned that the
experience of doing the task boosted their confidence in L2 communication,
reduced their communicative anxiety and improved their L2 communicative
performance, which led to a higher level of L2 WTC. In Pair One and Pair Three,
however, the four participants agreed that repeating the tasks did not guarantee a
better task performance and sometimes aroused negative feelings, such as
boredom and impatience. Although each of these participants held these attitudes
about the effects of task repetition on L2 WTC, generally, there were times when
they expressed a different view.

Comprehensive data from the six cases suggests that task repetition boosts learners’
dynamic situational L2 WTC by exerting influence on learner’s psychological conditions (e.g., communicative anxiety, confidence and motivation) and L2 communicative behaviours. Li, for example, about the M1’ task, stated:

I was not worried about the task this time. Because we were familiar with the task and we cooperated better in finishing the task. Last time, we did not know what to do and how to do. However, we had experience in finishing the same task this time. It was much easier, and I was much more confident in finishing it. (Case Li, M1 Task Interview)

I am confident that my English proficiency will improve by doing the same task several times. I performed better today because I did not need to worry about the vocabulary too much. When I did the task for the first time, I would be a little worried if I failed to speak the accurate words. However, I learned to use another word to describe it this time. This experience taught me a useful way to communicate with other people in English. (Case Li, M1’ Task Interview)

From these comments, it is evident that the experience of repeating the task enhanced Li’s confidence, and reduced his anxiety in speaking, as his L2 communicative ability had improved. His partner Chen made similar comments listing several benefits gained from the repetition: First, he believed that repeating the tasks would inevitably improve his English proficiency; second, he felt that his L2 communication skills developed because of the repetition.

The other four learners reported that task repetition aroused negative feelings. For Lan, whether repeating a task affected her L2 WTC depended on the task. If she liked the task, she would be willing to repeat it (such as the S1’ task, a repetition of the S1 task); otherwise, she would feel bored and unwilling to continue the L2 communication. For example, she expressed her unwillingness to repeat the M1 task that she did not like, saying that “it made me feel bored when following the same procedure and doing the same task again and I could hardly wait to finish it” (Case Lan, M1’ Task Interview). She perceived this repetition as “meaningless” as she thought her English proficiency would not improve by merely repeating a description of the route on the map. Her partner Su, also, did
not like repeating the M1 task and said she was tired of doing the task again and thought that repetition of different tasks, of the same type, would not lead to better task performance. Nonetheless, they were more positive about repeating the S1 task that was interesting. As Lan said:

This task was much easier than the previous task. I like this new type of task and was satisfied with my performance. (Case Lan, S1’ Task Interview)

I felt that I had a stronger desire to communicate this time. Because we were getting much more familiar with the task and knew how to find the differences. In the first few seconds, Lan and I had successfully found three differences, the same as in the S1 task. It made us feel happy and encouraged. (Case Su, S1’ Task Interview)

The participants in Pair Three were also unwilling to repeat tasks. Although they admitted that the experience of doing the task enabled them to communicate more effectively when in a similar situation, they said repeating the task did not increase their L2 WTC. Hu commented:

I like a new task that may bring me a feeling of freshness. When repeating a task, I find that there is not too much to say. Sometimes I just feel that I am not interested in an easy task. I like more challenging tasks. (Case Hu, S1’ Task Interview)

Likewise, when doing the M1’ task, Xu explained her L2 WTC was relatively low in the second part of the task. She attributed her response to a feeling of boredom caused by repeating the task, saying that:

I was so tired of doing the same task. So when we had to do another version of the same task, I felt it was so boring. We did it several times. It seems that the task is too easy. I did not need to speak more. (Case Xu, M1’ Task Interview)

Instead of being a factor affecting L2 WTC independently, L2 communicative tasks and repeated tasks interact dynamically with learner-internal and learner-external factors to exert a combined influence on L2 WTC. From a CDST perspective, L2 communicative tasks and repeated tasks can be considered as
contexts outside an individual, which are part of the ecology of the dynamic system of L2 WTC (Larsen-Freeman, 2015; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008a).

Task type

Recent studies examining L2 WTC during communicative tasks have suggested that the type of tasks can lead to changes in the level of L2 WTC (Eddy-U, 2015; Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2014; Pawlak et al., 2016). For example, Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Pawlak (2014) found that students preferred monologues to dialogues, while Pawlak et al. (2016) and Eddy-U (2015) concluded that participants most enjoyed game-like communicative activities.

In this study, two specific types of interactive tasks were chosen: a one-way information-gap task (M1, M1’ and M2 tasks) and a two-way information-gap task (S1, S1’ and S2 tasks). The major difference between these two tasks is the use of information. Chen explained his preference for SD tasks:

I liked this new task and was more willing to communicate because it was more like real communication. In this task, both of us have equal status in communication. In the map tasks, however, only the Instruction Giver has the useful information to finish the task. The Instruction Follower knows nothing. (Case Chen, S1 Task Interview)

This comment emphasises the importance of exchange of ideas in L2 communication and the effect of task type (i.e., one-way information-gap task and two-way information-gap task) on L2 WTC.

Hu, similarly compared the difference in how these two tasks affected her L2 WTC:

I felt that we were more involved in the spot-the-differences task. It was more like real dialogue. I was more willing to communicate with my interlocutor because the task was interactive in nature. When performing the map tasks, it was only the Instruction Giver that described the picture. Sometimes I felt it was ridiculous. (Case Hu, S1 Task Interview)

A task that is interactive in nature, and provides each of the participants with equal
opportunities to communicate, is more possible in boosting L2 WTC.

**Topic**

The topic here refers to the content being discussed during the task. Yashima et al. (2016) pointed out that “topic was by far the most frequently mentioned reason why the students could or could not participate in the discussion” (p. 120). It has been widely acknowledged that learners tend to be more active in L2 communication when conversing on a topic perceived to be familiar, interesting, easy and useful to them (Cao, 2013; Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011; Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak; 2015; Yashima et al., 2016). For example, MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) found that participants’ L2 WTC is higher when completing familiar tasks than unfamiliar tasks, whereas Cao (2013) concluded that learners had higher WTC, and easier to continue a conversation when the topic is of interest to them.

Kang’s (2005) multiple-case study also provides a detailed illustration of how participants’ L2 WTC fluctuated due to the influence of the topic they were discussing. The author reported that topics, with which the participants had experience and background knowledge, triggered their excitement in performing the task which led to a higher level of L2 WTC. Kang also claimed that perceived topic-usefulness increased the level of L2 WTC.

Findings from the current study support the view that participants are more willing to be involved in a topic related to their personal experience, or perceived to be appealing, easy or useful. It also found that topic change and the sudden emergence of a topic can have an impact on one’s L2 WTC. For example, in Wave 19 (S1 task), Li’s L2 WTC increased from a low level due to a change in the topic:

> I was tired of describing the houses. So when it came to describing the “sign”, I became more interested in the topic. (Case Li, S1 Task Interview)

Hu reported a decreased L2 WTC due to the unexpected emergence of topic initiated by her partner in Wave 27 (M1’ task). She described the situation:

> I had just described the line, and my partner replied “yeah”. At this time, I thought she had got my ideas. Then I was going to continue describing the
route. However, she stopped me by asking the previous line again. At that time, I was a little upset. (Case Hu, M1’ Task Interview)

Hu was not prepared for this topic and was surprised by her partner’s unexpected question, which aroused negative feelings and inhibited her L2 WTC.

Task performance

Task performance here refers to whether the participants succeed or fail in performing the tasks. As a communication behaviour, it is strongly associated with psychological feelings, such as confidence and a sense of achievement after successfully conducting a task, or depression and frustration after a failure to perform in repeated attempts. It can thus affect the level of the learners’ L2 WTC.

For example, Lan experienced fluctuations in her L2 WTC shortly after her task performance in Wave 5 (S1 task). At first, her L2 WTC was high, as it took them only 25 seconds to find the first difference. Lan was encouraged by this success and was willing to find the next differences. However, her L2 WTC fell soon after they failed to find a difference for a relatively long time. She commented on her negative feelings at that time:

"It took us a long time to check whether there were differences in colour. We described the objects from left to right but failed to find any differences. The process was frustrating. Though I did not want to give it up, I became very upset and disappointed at our performance." (Case Lan, S1’ Task Interview)

In Wave 9 (M1’ Task), Su had the same experience as Lan. After repeated attempts, Su became upset and impatient when they fail to find a difference, which led to a decreased L2 WTC. She commented that she did not know how to explain it further to her partner. In S1’ task, Su attributed her high L2 WTC at the beginning of the task to a successful experience in finding three differences in only a few seconds. As she described it, “it made us feel happy and encouraged” (Case Su, S1’ task interview).

Li’s L2 WTC also dropped suddenly in Wave 20 (S1’ task). He reported, “I was frustrated when we failed to find the difference repeatedly” (Case Li, S1’ Task Interview). His partner Chen, on the contrary, was encouraged by a successful
experience in performing the same task:

When we found this difference, we were very happy. This mood encouraged me to continue talking to find the next difference. (Case Chen, S1’ Task Interview)

In Wave 26 (S2 Task), Li soon recovered from a low L2 WTC as he successfully found a difference. He attributed his increased L2 WTC to a sense of achievement and confidence gained from this performance.

Another example was provided by Hu who described her unwillingness to communicate when she was disappointed at her performance in the task:

At this moment when I could not follow my partner or did not know how to draw the line, I became very upset and impatient. Sometimes I just want to quit this task. I felt disappointed at myself. (Case Hu, M1 Task Interview)

Role in a task

The current study’s findings suggest that learners’ perception of their role in a pair task, which appears closely related to the psychological feeling of “responsibility” in Kang (2005) study, can play an important role in facilitating or inhibiting their L2 WTC. For example, in Wave 2 (M1 task), Lan, when performing a task in which she was not interested, attributed her high L2 WTC to a sense of “responsibility” to deliver the information because she was the Instruction Giver at that time. She said, “If I kept in silence, then the task cannot be finished” (Case Lan, M1 Task Interview). Li made a similar comment on his L2 WTC in Wave 20 (S1’ task):

My partner looked tired and seemed not himself today. He spoke a lot during the previous tasks, but this time it seemed that he was tired and not much willing to communicate. At that moment, I felt I needed to do something because we were in a pair. If I did not do something, the conversation would end. (Case Li, S1’ Task Interview)
8.2.1.3 Psychological Variables

The most frequently mentioned psychological variables in this study include PC, confidence, motivation, mood and tolerance of ambiguity. As described in the above sections, contextual factors such as interlocutor-related variables and task-related variables exerted influences on L2 WTC fluctuation through the mediation of these psychological variables.

Many previous researchers reported that PC was a major influence of L2 WTC (MacIntyre et al., 2002; MacIntyre et al., 2003; Yashima et al., 2004; Hashimoto, 2002). Perceived communicative competence is not always consistent with their actual communicative competence, and it is the former that greatly influence one’s L2 WTC. As Baker and MacIntyre (2000) argued, that “it is not the individual’s actual skill that counts, rather, it is how they perceive their communication competence that will determine WTC” (p. 316). In this study, PC appeared to exert a strong influence on the participants’ L2 WTC. For example, Lan’s reluctance to communicate in a particular task was due always to her low perceived communicative ability. She repeatedly mentioned in the interview that she would have been more willing to talk if her English had been better. In contrary, Chen’s active engagement in the task could be attributed partly to his high PC. When performing the task, he said he perceived himself as having greater ability in L2 communication than his partner Li, thus boosting his confidence in performing the tasks.

Confidence, it is suggested, is a major predictor of WTC (Cetinkaya, 2005; Kim, 2004; Peng, 2007; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2015; Shimoyama, 2013; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004). In this study, it seemed that a lack of confidence was the main inhibiting force behind a participant’s low or decreased L2 WTC. For example, Li repeatedly mentioned that his L2 WTC was easily held back by a lack of confidence, which emerged suddenly at a particular moment. He described a situation when he lost confidence suddenly and was unwilling to continue the conversation:

Chen had described it several times. He was confident in what he was talking about. At first, I doubted his description and asked him several
questions. I thought I knew what he was pointing at. However, I could not follow him after his repeated descriptions. Then I began to doubt my English proficiency. (Case Li, M1 Task Interview)

Li’s preference for task repetition, also appears to be due to an increase in his confidence gained from experience in doing the task. For Su, whose spoken English had a strong accent, a lack of confidence was the major factor influencing her decision whether to initiate L2 communication. She admitted that she was not willing to volunteer to present in front of the class because she was afraid of losing face.

Another psychological variable, frequently mentioned as an important factor influencing fluctuations of L2 WTC, is motivation (Cetinkaya, 2005; Hashimoto, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Peng, 2007; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2004). In this study, Li’s strong motivation to learn English can partly explains his relatively high L2 WTC even when completing a difficult task. He was a motivated student as his goal in learning English was to study overseas, especially in English-speaking countries (such as the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia), after graduation from his school. He was always willing to grasp the opportunity to speak with foreigners.

Only a small number of previous studies on L2 WTC were concerned with the effect of learners’ mood. House (2004) concluded that the learner’s mood on a given day might lead to changes in their L2 WTC. Similarly, Syed (2016) found that the participants were more likely to talk when their mood was positive. Furthermore, a bad mood was reported to have a negative effect on L2 WTC. The current study supports this finding as the learners repeatedly mentioned that their mood influenced L2 WTC in a particular situation. For example, in Wave 3 (M1’ task), Lan remarked that she was not in a mood to continue the task at that moment, and wanted to end the task as soon as possible. Xu provides another example of the negative effect of a negative mood on her L2 WTC. In performing the M2 task, She was in a bad mood and rated her idiodynamic ratings of L2 WTC low, with a mean rating of only -0.24. She also said she was in a bad mood the day when she performed the S1’ task and attributed her low L2 WTC to this negative feeling:
I was not happy that day because of my personal reasons. At first, I failed to get myself in a mood. I just wanted to finish this task. At that moment, I was neither willing nor unwilling to speak. (Case Xu, M2 Task Interview)

Conversely, learners’ L2 WTC tended to be high when their mood was positive. In Wave 5 (S1 task), Lan’s L2 WTC increased due to her cheerful mood at that moment when a joke made her and her partner laugh happily for a few seconds. This emotion of happiness encouraged her to speak. Hu also stated that mood greatly affected her L2 WTC at a particular moment. If she felt happy or interested in the task, she would be willing to speak more, even when it was a difficult topic. However, if she felt bored or tired, she would tend to abandon speaking, no matter how easy the topic was. She also said that her L2 WTC changed quickly because her mood varied from second to second.

The term “tolerance of ambiguity” was first introduced to L2 WTC research by Wen and Clément (2003) in explaining Chinese students’ reluctance to take part in L2 communication. It was stated that “a second language learning situation can be considered as ambiguous” (Chapelle & Roberts, 1986, cited in Wen & Clément, 2003, p. 30) as “leaners are required to knowingly use underdeveloped L2 skills” (MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011, p. 149). According to Wen and Clément (2003), Chinese students, under the influence of rule-dominated and face-protection orientation, were found to have less tolerance of ambiguity. They described Chinese students’ L2 learning characteristic in the following way:

To Chinese students, any vague, incomplete, fragmented or uncertain element in language must fit into an acceptable place in grammar. They feel emotionally comfortable and secure only when they have worked out the meaning of every new word they have encountered and made clear rules that seem inconsistent. Guessing is not valued as a good learning strategy in Chinese culture. (p. 30)

The current study showed that learners’ decreased L2 WTC was always associated with their unwillingness to be in an ambiguous situation any longer. For example, in Wave 3 (M1’ task), Lan described an “uncertain situation” that impeded her L2 WTC at that moment:
What Su expressed was different from what I understood. For example, Su told me three points in drawing the route. However, I was not sure whether I had found the right place. At this point, I just wanted to have a look at the right route in her map and was not willing to continue the task because it made me feel frustrated. (Case Lan, M1’ Task Interview)

Lan’s partner Su had the same experience when performing the S2 task. She commented that her low L2 WTC was due to feeling uncertain when she could not tell exactly what was in the picture. Another example came from Li who reported he was overcome by a negative feeling in Wave 18 (S1 task) when he was in an unexpected situation:

I thought we needed to check more information here. However, Chen repeated and hesitated, and then he started with “black line” which was in my surprise. It was really hard to check all the trivial details, and I did not like it. (Case Li, S1 Task Interview)

Li also attributed his preference for task repetition to being a less uncertain situation when performing the task for the second time.

8.2.1.4 Linguistic Variables

Linguistic factors refer to “the linguistic resources that we necessary for engaging in classroom communication in English” (Peng, 2014b, p. 128). Many previous studies have explored the effects of linguistic variables, such as a learner’s L2 proficiency (e.g., vocabulary and grammar) and reliance on L1 on enhancing or inhibiting learners’ L2 WTC (Cao, 2009; Liu & Jackson, 2009; MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011; MacIntyre et al., 2011, Peng, 2014b). In this study, vocabulary and reliance on L1 were found to be important linguistic-dimensional factors that influenced the participants’ L2 WTC.

First, vocabulary retrieval has been identified as a key factor influencing participants’ L2 WTC (MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011). According to them, “ease of vocabulary retrieval plays a major role in dynamic changes in WTC, especially among speakers who are not particularly fluent” (p. 165). The findings in this study support this conclusion, especially for Lan and Su who perceived themselves
as having a limited vocabulary. For example, in Wave 6 (S1’ task), failure to retrieve vocabulary became the major factor influencing Lan’s relatively low dynamic L2 WTC for a short period. Similarly, Su described her negative feelings aroused by her failure to identify the right vocabulary in Wave 11 (S1’ task):

I did not know how to say “chimney”. My partner did not know either. However, when she said “the thing that smoke”, I understood it immediately. Then I wanted to describe the objects in another house. I thought there might be a difference there. I was trying to describe them, but I failed. I did not know how to make them clearer. (Case Su, S1’ Task Interview)

Failure in retrieving the vocabulary does not always lead to a lowered L2 WTC; at times it results in an increased L2 WTC. For Chen, for example, who could not retrieve the appropriate vocabulary to continue the M2 task, a high L2 WTC was evident. He explained it as:

I was focusing on describing the route. Lake, film (photo studio), and then…I did not know the English name of the next object. At this time, I was eager to express myself, though I did not speak the word. When I was still thinking about the vocabulary, my partner said the word “wood” (fence). We both laughed. Yes, it was the word that we could make each other understood. (Case Chen, M2 Task Interview)

Lan, Li and Chen also provided interesting comments about the role of vocabulary in L2 communication. They stated that accurate vocabulary is not always essential for the exchange of ideas when using L2. For example, both Lan and Chen remarked that “understandable” was more important than “accurate” when looking to convey meaning in L2 communication, as sometimes L2 speakers may exchange ideas even without speaking the words. Li had a similar opinion:

Sometimes, we could make each other understood even without speaking the name of the landmark. So I was not worried about the vocabulary, even not knowing most of the English counterparts of the Chinese characters under the landmarks. (Case Li, M2 Task Interview)

Reliance on L1, another linguistic variable, has been found to influence L2 WTC
(Cao, 2011, 2014; Peng, 2014b). In the current study, reliance on L1 relates mainly to the translation process between Chinese and English. Peng (2014b) similarly noted that trying constantly to find the equivalent words in two entirely different languages may result in a linguistic problem. For example, Lan stated that when she saw the Chinese words in the M2 task, her immediate reaction was to speak Chinese, which she then had to translate into their English counterparts, two of which were particularly difficult. This process of the translation made her feel depressed, especially when she could not find the appropriate words to continue the task.

8.2.1.5 Physiological Variables

Physiological factors concern participants’ physical state during the task performance, such as feeling tired, hungry and sick. In this study, feeling tired was frequently mentioned as constraining L2 WTC. Li, for example, gave a physiological explanation about his inactive involvement in S2:

I just finished playing basketball before I came here. I was really tired, so I did not speak much today. I just followed my partner’s description and tried to find the differences between the two pictures. (Case Li, S2 Task Interview)

Similarly, Chen was not as talkative as usual when performing the S1’ task. He explained that he was tired and hungry because he had just finished playing basketball with his classmates.

8.2.2. Complex, Dynamic and Non-linear Features of L2 WTC

Informed by the CDST framework, this section illustrates how the learners’ L2 WTC fluctuated on a moment-to-moment basis when undertaking L2 communicative tasks. It provides an explanation of the complex, dynamic and non-linear features of L2 WTC, which provides evidence that L2 WTC has the properties of a dynamic system.

8.2.2.1 Complex

L2 WTC emerges as a complex phenomenon, the result of multiple underlying
contextual, psychological and linguistic variables (MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Weaver, 2010; Yashima et al., 2016). Language learners may experience ambivalent moments before deciding whether to initiate L2 communication. For example, there are moments when the participant is both propelled by driving forces (such as high motivation, good mood, and cooperative interlocutor) and hindered by restraining forces (such as high communicative anxiety, limited vocabulary, and difficult tasks) simultaneously. A fluctuating combination of learner-internal and learner-external factors will either encourage the participant to initiate L2 communication or discourage him/her to reject an opportunity to speak the language.

In this part of the study, in which the focus has been on a specific moment in time, the complex dynamic and emergent process of L2 WTC is apparent. As both personal and situational variables jointly contribute to an increase or decrease in the level of this construct, it is evident that the focus of an investigation should be on the interaction of all parts, not the contribution of each independently. For example, in Wave 5 (S1 task), Lan’s increased L2 WTC was due to the combined influence of contextual factors (including task type, topic, task performance) and psychological variables (a happy mood and confidence). Which variable led to the high level of L2 WTC, cannot be identified because the result is a product of the combined forces.

8.2.2.2 Non-linear (unpredictable)

Predicting the specific behaviours of dynamic systems is limited, or at times impossible, because of the complexity of their processes. The emergence of a dynamic system such as L2 WTC is not a process with fixed cause and effect (MacIntyre & Serrous, 2015; Syed, 2015; Wood, 2016). A slight change in mood or anxiety can make a reticent L2 learner decide to initiate L2 communication, while at other times even higher motivation and PC will not result in willingness to speak the foreign language.

The case of Su provides a typical example. Although she experienced several driving forces, such as a feeling of excitement (successful task performance), an easy and interesting task and a familiar interlocutor, her L2 WTC was about zero.
for the first 100 seconds. Su explained that “I rated the level of dynamic L2 WTC as usual, Nothing special happened” (Case Su, S1 Task Interview).

8.2.2.3 Dynamic

L2 WTC constantly changes due to the dynamic interactions and variations of all its influencing factors (Kang, 2005; MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011). It is capable of changing at different timescales and is always in a state of flux because of the interconnectedness of its underlying components so that a minor change in one factor may affect other related factors (Yashima et al., 2018).

For example, in Wave 24 (M2 task), influenced by linguistic factors (vocabulary retrieval), psychological factors (a lack of confidence), contextual factors (difficult topic, interlocutor’s response and performance and task performance), Chen experienced a dramatic fluctuation in L2 WTC, between +5 and -3 within only 30 seconds. This example illustrates how quickly L2 WTC can change and how these changes are a result of fluctuating internal and external forces.

L2 WTC, therefore, should be treated as a complex construct that dynamically fluctuates due to a non-linear interaction of multiple influencing variables.
CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings of the current study together with a discussion of the contribution of the thesis to theory and research in the field of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English. Implications of the findings for pedagogy with recommendations for further research are addressed and the limitations of this study are identified.

9.1 Summary of the Findings

9.1.1. The Nature of L2 WTC

There was both consistency and variation in L2 WTC among Chinese high school students when different timescales were considered, as identified in Part One and Part Two. The students’ L2 WTC in the classroom remained stable over the six weeks after performing and repeating L2 communicative tasks, with no significant differences in their L2 WTC between tasks. However, remarkable changes were observed over 5-15 minutes when they were engaged in the tasks in the second part of the research. Most notably, it appeared that these moment-to-moment fluctuations in L2 WTC were a result of the complex, dynamic and non-linear interactions between contextual, psychological, linguistic and physiological variables. These findings suggest that L2 WTC, when examined on a second-by-second basis, should be treated as a complex construct which is dynamically changing due to a non-linear interaction of multiple influencing variables. The key variables specifically affecting the complex process of the emergence of Chinese EFL learners’ L2 WTC were identified as interlocutor-related factors (including interlocutor familiarity, performance, cooperation, participation and L2 proficiency); task-related factors (including task performance, task repetition, task type and role in a task); and vocabulary retrieval. The findings are consistent with MacIntyre’s (2012) metaphorical use of ocean “currents and waves” to describe two particular aspects of L2 WTC; that is, L2 WTC can be considered both as a trait-like predisposition and a dynamic situational construct, functioning at different levels of conceptualisation.
These findings suggest the importance of adopting different timescales to explore the nature of L2 WTC and to understand this construct at different levels of conceptualisation. The timeframe used in the study was pertinent for understanding the process of L2 communication, especially the dynamic nature of L2 WTC. This study identified the trait-like nature of L2 WTC that remained relatively stable over a period of time, revealing some stability in individual differences in the potential for L2 communication. For example, the participants’ classroom L2 WTC, measured by a self-report questionnaire on speaking tasks and situations common in EFL classrooms, showed no improvement over a period of six weeks. Likewise, their task L2 WTC, measured by a 0-100 scale soon after performing or repeating a task, which indicated the level of participants’ L2 WTC when doing the specific task, remained stable on a task-to-task basis. In other words, no effects of L2 communicative tasks and task repetition on learners’ L2 WTC on these two timescales were observed over a period of six weeks and from task to task.

In contrast, when focusing on a second-to-second timescale, there was evidence of the complex, dynamic and non-linear features of L2 WTC. The degree of L2 WTC, which was unpredictable due to dynamic changes of various antecedents, simultaneously rose and fell rapidly on a per-second basis. It is, evidently, too simplistic to describe a person as either willing or unwilling to communicate during L2 communication.

Taking these findings into consideration, the current study proposes a new understanding of WTC:

The definition of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) varies when considered at different timescales. It possesses both trait-like and dynamic situational nature, with the former indicating stable and persistent factors that result in an individual’s tendency in initiating L2 communication in the long run and the latter suggesting the complex, dynamic and non-linear interactions of all its underlying factors that influencing the emergence and fluctuations of this construct at a specific moment.
9.1.2. Chinese EFL Learners’ L2 WTC

It was concluded that most of the Chinese EFL participants were willing to participate in L2 communicative tasks as they had relatively high classroom L2 WTC, high task L2 WTC and generally positive idiodynamic ratings in L2 WTC measured on a second-to-second basis. Furthermore, the participants’ responses to the situations that frequently happened in a language classroom were similar. Participants were less willing to communicate in situations where they perceived there was a high risk of making mistakes or looking foolish. These included less-controlled activities such as a role-play in front of the class, and linguistically demanding situations such as speaking without notes or a textbook.

Patterns of fluctuation in L2 WTC among the six participants in the multiple-case study demonstrated great variability in their levels of idiodynamic ratings in L2 WTC. Some cases fluctuated dramatically while others remained relatively stable over the six tasks, and within a particular task. Each of the participants appeared to be sensitive to different variables, and for each individual there were stable and persistent variables underlying their fluctuations of L2 WTC. For example: Chen identified interlocutor and perceived communicative ability as the main variables affecting his dynamic L2 WTC; Hu’s dynamic L2 WTC was affected by her interlocutor’s performance and her mood in doing the task; and Xu was sensitive to her emotions which emerged suddenly at particular moments.

Interlocutor-related factors (including familiarity with the interlocutor and interlocutor’s performance, cooperation, participation and L2 proficiency), task-related factors (including task repetition, task type, topic, task performance, and role in a task) and vocabulary retrieval were found to be frequently mentioned variables that affect their L2 WTC fluctuations on a second-to-second basis.

9.2 Contributions and Implications

9.2.1. Contributions to Theory and Research

This study contributes to the existing literature on willingness to communicate in a second language, theoretically, methodologically and contextually.

Theoretically, the current study provides an in-depth understanding of L2 WTC
using CDST as the theoretical lens which identifies the complex and dynamic nature of L2 WTC. It is possible, thus, to integrate psychological, contextual, linguistic and any other potential variables, and their reciprocal non-linear interaction to explain the changes in participants’ L2 WTC within different timescales. The current study integrated both trait-like and dynamic situational L2 WTC in a Chinese EFL context, thus providing a fuller understanding of the nature of L2 WTC, especially its dynamic. This study describes the complex interactions and interrelationships between different variables from contextual, psychological, linguistic and other dimensions, which previously have been investigated separately.

This study also contributes to a theoretical understanding of L2 WTC in that it views this construct as situated in a task-based context. It investigates, specifically, the effects of L2 communicative tasks, especially task repetition on learners’ L2 WTC, using data collected from a specially designed and lab-based case study. Various task-related factors influencing learners’ L2 WTC have been explored in depth, including task repetition, task type, topic, task performance, the stage of a task and role in a task. Most notably, the effects of two information-gap tasks and three types of task repetition (i.e., repetition of different versions of the same tasks, repetition of different tasks but the same type and repetition of two information-gap tasks) on L2 WTC were also investigated thoroughly.

Methodologically, this study contributes to research in the field of L2 WTC by investigating the complex nature of variables that influence individual differences in L2 WTC by employing a mixed-methods approach. It combines an experimental study that aims to investigate the changes of this construct over a relatively long period and an innovative idiodynamic method to capture its moment-to-moment changes. Thus, this study may contribute to future research methodology that explores the complexities of a similar construct.

Contextually, the current research deepens the understanding of Chinese EFL learners’ L2 WTC and its fluctuation in relation to L2 communicative tasks. There has been minimal empirical research of L2 WTC in China, especially with Chinese high school students, in comparison with other Asian countries such as Japan and Korea. Replication of WTC studies in China, which has the largest population of
EFL learners in the world, is of importance to determine the generalisability of current L2 WTC theory.

9.2.2. Pedagogical Implications

From a CDST perspective, this investigation of L2 WTC through a task-based intervention provides some pedagogical implications. First, the current findings provide empirical evidence for the benefits of implementing L2 communicative tasks in enhancing EFL learners’ communicative behaviours and L2 performances (see e.g., Zhang, 2010; Zhang & Ben Said, 2014) at a time when the irrelevance of CLT to English language teaching in China has been argued (Hu, 2005; Littlewood, 2014). During the intervention, it was observed that the participants were willing to engage in L2 communicative tasks, especially tasks that were interactive and provided the participants with equal opportunities to communicate. Moreover, participants’ improved L2 performance, such as shorter time and better cooperation within the pair were observed after repeating the tasks. The results of this study, thus, suggest that L2 communicative tasks are appropriate to facilitate English language learning in China.

Second, L2 WTC, as a dynamic system, has variable degrees of stability. In other words, while it presents a trait-like nature that remains relatively stable over a period of time it is prone to fluctuations on a moment-to-moment basis. This implies that L2 researchers and instructors should be more aware of the nature of L2 WTC, consider the issue of time, and be well-informed about the multiple variables that may lead to an increase or decrease of L2 WTC among the L2 learners. They must be mindful, also, of specific variables to which individual learners may be sensitive.

Third, at the level of curriculum and syllabus design it is suggested that situations, in which L2 learners may encounter a high risk of making mistakes or losing face, should be avoided or reduced. Topics that relate to the learners’ personal experiences or perceived to be appealing, easy or useful, are suggested. L2 teachers, in an EFL context, are encouraged to create teaching conditions which ensure the emergence of the driving forces behind L2 WTC, such as confident in their communication competence, a feeling of excitement, an easy and interesting
task and a familiar interlocutor. It is suggested that conditions that lead to restraining forces, such as high communicative anxiety, a limited vocabulary, and a task that is too difficult are avoided or reduced.

Fourth, this study found that interlocutor-related and task-related factors play a significant role in Chinese language learners’ L2 WTC. Thus, policy makers and language teachers should carefully consider the issues related to learners’ interlocutor(s), task type and task procedures, to enhance language learners’ L2 WTC. Finally, EFL learners need to have a better understanding of their L2 communicative behaviours, a greater awareness of their L2 learning processes, and seek out more opportunities to initiate L2 communication.

9.3 Limitations and Recommendations

This study has several limitations that need to be identified.

The first limitation concerns the innovative idiodynamic method. Relying on data collected from self-reports (idiodynamic ratings and self-explanations by the participants) that are known to be potentially flawed, this methodology may not provide an objective perspective on L2 WTC (Ritchie et al., 2006, cited in MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011). Although the ratings and explanations were made only a few minutes after the task performance, there may be a fading affect bias (Ritchie et al., 2006, cited in MacIntyre & Leggato, 2011). The dynamic L2 WTC changes so quickly that the complex reasons behind ratings may not be relevant. As Shimoyama (2013) reported “there was a time lag between the time when they felt their WTC and the time when they rated it (p. 54). To reduce the bias, the current study chose two L2 communicative tasks that required only 5-15 minutes to complete with the measurement made immediately after the task. Another issue related to the idiodynamic method is the participants’ use of the idiodynamic software. During the research, at times participants forgot to press the button to indicate their L2 WTC at that moment. Thus misunderstanding of the use of the software or failure to explain ratings of L2 WTC in the stimulated recall interviews may have led to unreliable responses. To improve the accuracy of the data collected from the software, the researcher checked the participants’ L2 WTC at those moments, and integrated the available data to explain participants’
fluctuations in L2 WTC.

A second limitation is the fact that the data (trait-level L2 WTC and dynamic situational L2 WTC) were not collected from the same participants. Data for trait-level L2 WTC (classroom L2 WTC and task L2 WTC) were collected from thirty-two participants in a language classroom whereas dynamic situational L2 WTC was reported by six participants in three pairs. It was designed to measure the effects of L2 communicative tasks and task repetition on trait-like L2 WTC in a language classroom and on dynamic fluctuations of L2 WTC in pairs. Because each participant could perform the task only once, the participants were required to indicate L2 WTC at different timescales. The participants, however, were selected from similar learning contexts, which may increase the accuracy of this study.

The third limitation is related to the role of the interlocutor in L2 WTC research. As the primary purpose of the current research was to investigate the impact of L2 communicative tasks and task repetitions on L2 WTC, all the participants performed the tasks with the same interlocutor throughout the study. Consequently, not all characteristics concerning interlocutor(s) have been examined. Future studies, should examine L2 WTC or participants with different interlocutors within an L2 communicative task, to identify any other interlocutor-related variables. For example, the 4/3/2 repetition technique adopted in Nation (1989) allows the participants to pair up with different interlocutors to repeat the same talk with less time to do it each time. This repetition technique may explore more interlocutor-related variables underlying participants’ L2 WTC, such as the interlocutors’ personality and gender, appearance and familiarity with other interlocutors. The current study should have been supplemented with this kind of research adopting different types of task repetition which involves different interlocutors in performing the tasks.

Another limitation of the study is the generalisability of the study due to the limited types of tasks and task repetition involved in this research. As the main purpose of the study was to explore the dynamics of L2 WTC, the task-based context served mainly as an environment for an individual to experience multiple stimuli in their initiation of L2 communication. As an innovative attempt to examine the dynamic nature of L2 WTC in a task-based situation, this study
should be supplemented by further research to explore the construct with other types of communicative tasks. This should include other forms of task repetition, such as repetition of a task with the same L2 communicative goal but different content or interlocutors each time (Lynch & Maclean, 2000), or repetition of a task immediately or after several weeks.

A further limitation concerns the relationship between ethical considerations and researcher reflexivity. The researcher’s role and presence may have potential influences on the results. In the multiple-case study, the researcher spent a substantial amount of time with the participants and was being present in the research setting for a long period of time. This prolonged engagement helped the researcher to have “more than a snapshot view of the phenomenon” (Rossman & Rallis, 2011, p. 65) to triangulate and integrated data from various sources. However, it is also possible that the participants only talked about what they considered to be important for the researcher, especially in the stimulated recall interviews. Thus, it is argued that the researcher should “be reflexive in relation to interpersonal and ethical aspects of research practice” (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 277). In this study, the researcher had an ongoing awareness that her involvement in the research process might have an impact on the research participant and then developed the skills to respond appropriately.

In addition, the influence of research time on the results should not be ignored. The participants in the multiple-case study mentioned that sometimes they felt tired and hungry when they took part in the research because at that time they had just finished the afternoon activity classes, such as a dancing class or a physical education (PE) class. These feelings were described as a factor constraining their L2 WTC at a particular moment. It is possible that conducting the case study at another time may explore different variables that influence L2 WTC, such as sleepiness, anxiety, and emotion. However, the main fact found in the study that “L2 WTC should be treated as a complex construct that dynamically fluctuates due to a non-linear interaction of multiple influencing variables” would not change, as all the underlying factors of L2 WTC interacted closely with one another and exerted a combined influence on the fluctuations of this construct at a particular moment. In the current study, the research time can be treated as a learner-external factor that exerted a combined influence on L2 WTC with learner-internal factors.
such as the physiological variables (i.e., tired or hungry) and the psychological variable (i.e., mood).

Due to the restraints of the research context, only two intact classes were available for the experimental study and six participants voluntarily participated in the case study. With the concern that the participants who had already been exposed to an intervention might have responded differently from those who had not previously experienced it (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001), and for this reason, the current research did not involve piloting the treatment materials and testing measurements among the participants. It must be acknowledged that a pilot study can play an important role prior to conducting a full-scale research project, especially in checking whether the researcher has selected the best method, whether the wording, translation and the range of answers of the test/measure is appropriate, whether the participants understand the instructions and what changes can then be made to the procedures if necessary. To reduce the negative influence of the lack of a pilot study, the current study adopted and adapted measurements and testing materials from widely used studies with proven validation. Also, the main focus of the study is to investigate the complex nature of L2 WTC through triangulated data from different sources with results that emerged during the ongoing process, reducing the necessity to check the procedures.

Lastly, this study focused on the non-linguistic outcome (i.e., L2 WTC) of communicative tasks and task repetition in an EFL setting. The linguistic outcomes, such as L2 fluency, accuracy and complexity were not analysed or discussed in the current thesis. To get a fuller understanding of the role of L2 communicative tasks and task repetition in enhancing L2 learning, further research should explore both non-linguistic and linguistic outcomes. The relationship between the two aspects, for example, the relationship between L2 WTC and L2 fluency or the relationship between L2 WTC and L2 accuracy should also be included.

Despite these limitations, the findings from this study contribute to a more holistic understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of L2 WTC as situated in a task-based context. Based on various sources of data from traditional scales on trait-like predisposition of L2 WTC and the idiodynamic method on the emergent processes of situational L2 WTC, the current study, adopting the CDST approach,
explains the dynamics of participants’ L2 WTC at different timescales; it thus contributes an additional perspective to the existing literature. Future research in L2 WTC, following Yashima et al. (2018), should investigate both trait-like and situational L2 WTC in a particular context with triangulated data, and to combine the two at given moments. Such research could lead to a fuller understanding of the two aspects, as illustrated by the metaphor of “currents and waves”, of L2 WTC.
APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form for Principle of School

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET

To: Principal of School

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

My name is Li Wang. I am a doctoral student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of Auckland, New Zealand. My supervisors are Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang and Dr. Natsuko Shintani. I am doing research to investigate the relationship between task repetition and Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English.

I would like to seek your permission to allow me to conduct the research at your school. I would be very grateful if you could provide Intensive English teachers’ contact information and allow me to have access to potential participants.

A total of about 30 participants will be invited to take part in the research. Data will be collected by questionnaires, journals and stimulated recall interviews over nine weeks (one week for recruiting participants, eight weeks for collecting data). Participants will need to give a total of 240 minutes to the research.

Participants will be asked to repeat two types of specific interactive tasks in a language classroom or in a small room. Both types of tasks are reported to be effective for language learning.

The task performances in the case study will be videotaped using a mini-DV camera and the interviews will be audiotaped using a digital voice recorder only with the consent of the interviewee. The research activities performed by the participants in the experimental study will not be audio or video recorded. Students who attend the experimental study will be invited to write a learner journal after performing the task for six weeks.

The participants will have opportunities to perform and repeat communicative tasks. I believe this will be beneficial for their spoken English. The tasks to be used in this project might be partly unfamiliar to them but will not cause them
some discomfort.

Please be aware that some volunteers may not be chosen because the case study limits the number of participants or there are not enough volunteers in a class in the experimental study.

The collected data will only be for the doctoral dissertation, conference presentation and related publication purposes. The participants’ name will not be used in the research report and they will not be identifiable. The school will not be identified in publications.

All the data will only be available to my supervisors and me. Nobody else but my supervisors and me will have access to all the questionnaires, journals, self-rating WTC graphs and interview data. After I complete this study, I will store all the related data in a locked cabinet for a period of six years. The data might be used for related linguistic research within the six-year period. After this time, I will destroy all the information by deleting the files and shredding the hardcopies. Also the participants will have opportunity to decide if you want copies of the data, or if they want to look at the transcripts of the recordings, on their consent form.

Participation in the research is voluntary. The students have the right to decide whether or not to take part in this study. Whether they decide to participate or not should not affect their relationship with the school or grades. Those agree to participate will be asked to sign a consent form. They have the right to withdraw from the research in the first three weeks of data collection. If they withdraw in this period, I will remove all the information about them from the research.

Thank you very much for making this study possible. If you have any questions, please contact me:

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You may also contact the Head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Associate Professor Helen Hedges at h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz or +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48606.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 83711
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years, Reference Number 015055
CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPAL OF SCHOOL
THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English
Researcher: Li Wang
Supervisors: Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang & Dr. Natsuko Shintani

I have read the Participation Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I understand that the research will last nine weeks. Participants will need to give a total of 240 minutes to the research.
- I understand participation in the research is voluntary. I understand participants are free to leave the research in the first three weeks of data collection.
- I understand that participants will take a questionnaire comprised of 48 items twice.
- I understand that participants will perform and repeat two communicative tasks over six weeks.
- I understand that task performance of those participants in the case study will be videotaped only with their consent. I understand that they will be asked to self rate their own willingness to communicate in English and be interviewed by the researcher for six times. I understand that the interviews will be recorded only with the consent of the interviewees. I understand that the interviews will be audiotaped.
- I understand that the participants in the experimental study will be asked to write six journals immediately after they complete the task. I understand that the research activities performed by the participants in the experimental study will not be audio or video recorded.
- I understand that participants’ names and the school’s name will not be used in the research report. The participants and the school will not be identifiable.
I understand that data will be stored for 6 years in a locked cabinet on university premises and then the data will be deleted/destroyed by deleting the files and shredding the hard copies.

I understand that volunteers may not be chosen because the study limits the number of participants.

I understand that the data might be used for other research of the same topic within 6 years.

I assure that grades will not be affected by participation or non-participation in the research.

Signature: ___________________________

Date: ____________________________

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years,

Reference Number 015055
Appendix B: Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form for Intensive English Teacher

Faculty of Education and Social Work  
74 Epsom Avenue, Epsom, Auckland  
Phone: +64 09 623 8899  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland, New Zealand  

Participation Information Sheet

To: Intensive English teacher

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

My name is Li Wang. I am a doctoral student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of Auckland, New Zealand. My supervisors are Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang and Dr. Natsuko Shintani. I am doing research to investigate the relationship between task repetition and Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English.

I would like to seek your permission to allow me to conduct the research in your class and allow me to collect data in your class.

The students in your class will be invited to take part in the research. During this research, your students will be asked to fill out a questionnaire twice, perform and repeat two communicative tasks and write six journals about task performances. It will last nine weeks. A total of 240 minutes will be required. For those who decline to participate, they may be put temporarily in another class where he/she can receive normal lessons.

Participants will have opportunities to perform and repeat communicative tasks. I believe this will be beneficial for their spoken English. They have the right to withdraw from the research in the first three weeks of data collection.

Please be aware that some volunteers may not be chosen because the case study limits the number of participants or there are not enough volunteers in a class in the experimental study.

The collected data will only be for the doctoral dissertation, conference presentation and related publication purposes. Your students’ name will not be used in the research report and he/she will not be identifiable.

All the data will only be available to my supervisors and me. Nobody else but my supervisors and me will have access to all the questionnaires and journals. After I complete this study, I will store all the related data in a locked cabinet for a period of six years. The data might be used for related linguistic research within the
six-year period. After this time, I will destroy all the information by deleting the files and shredding the hardcopies. Also the students will have opportunity to decide if they want copies of the data on their consent form.

Participation in the research is voluntary. The participants have the right to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If they agree to participate, they will be asked to sign a consent form. Whether they decide to participate or not should not affect their relationship with the school or grades.

Thank you very much for making this study possible. If you have any questions, please contact me:

Li Wang  
PhD student  
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland  
New Zealand  
Email: li.wang@auckland.ac.nz  
Phone: +64 09 373 7599 ext.48255 (New Zealand); +86 010 58432674 (China)

Or my supervisors:

Lawrence Jun Zhang  
Professor  
Faculty of Education and Social Work  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland  
New Zealand  
Email: li.zhang@auckland.ac.nz  
Phone: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48750

Natsuko Shintani  
Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Education and Social Work  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland  
New Zealand  
Email: n.shintani@auckland.ac.nz  
Phone: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48463

You may also contact the Head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Associate Professor Helen Hedges at h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz or +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48606.
For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 83711
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years, Reference Number 015055
CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

**Project Title:** Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

**Researcher:** Li Wang

**Supervisors:** Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang & Dr. Natsuko Shintani

I have read the Participation Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I understand that the research will last nine weeks. Participants will need to give a total of 240 minutes to the research.
- I understand participation in the research is voluntary. I understand whether my students take part in the study or not will not affect my and my students’ relationship with the school or my students’ grades.
- I understand that my students are free to leave the research in the first three weeks of data collection without giving a reason.
- I understand that my students will take a questionnaire comprised of 48 items twice.
- I understand that my students will perform and repeat two communicative tasks over six weeks.
- I understand that my students will be asked to write six journals immediately after they complete the task.
- I understand that my students’ name will not be used in the research report and he/she will not be identifiable.
- I understand that my class may not be chosen because the study limits the number of participants or insufficient volunteers in a class.
• I understand that data will be stored for 6 years in a locked cabinet on university premises and then the data will be deleted/destroyed by deleting the files and shredding the hard copies.
• I understand that the data might be used for other research of the same topic within 6 years.

Your Name: ___________________________

Your Class: ___________________________

Date: _______________________________

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years,

Reference Number 015055
PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET IN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

To: Parents

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

My name is Li Wang. I am a doctoral student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of Auckland, New Zealand. My supervisors are Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang and Dr. Natsuko Shintani. I am doing research to investigate the relationship between task repetition and Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English.

I would like to conduct this research project in the Intensive English class, which your child has been enrolled in. It will last nine weeks. A total of 240 minutes will be required. I have applied to the University of Auckland, New Zealand for this research. It would be great if your child could participate in my research.

During the research, your child will be asked to fill out a questionnaire twice, perform and repeat two communicative tasks and write six journals about task performances. These tasks will provide many opportunities for them to communicate in English and consistent with the goal of the Intensive English course. Both types of tasks are reported to be effective for language learning.

The tasks to be used in this project might be partly unfamiliar to your child but will not cause your child some discomfort. Your child has rights to withdraw from the study in the first three weeks of data collection. If your child’s partner wishes to withdraw from the research, your child will have the following options: (1) to make a new pair with someone newly recruited by the researcher, or (2) withdraw from the research.

Please be aware that some volunteers may not be chosen because insufficient volunteers in a class.
The collected data will only be for the doctoral dissertation, conference presentation and related publication purposes. Your child’s name will not be used in the research report and he/she will not be identifiable.

All the data will only be available to my supervisors and me. Nobody else but my supervisors and me will have access to all the questionnaires and journals. After I complete this study, I will store all the related data in a locked cabinet for a period of six years. The data might be used for related linguistic research within the six-year period. After this time, I will destroy all the information by deleting the files and shredding the hardcopies. Also you will have opportunity to decide if you want copies of the data on your consent form.

Participation in the research is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study. If you agree to allow your child to participate, you and your child will be asked to sign a consent form. Whether you decide to let your child participate or not will not affect your or his/her relationship with the school or grades in any way. If you do not want to allow him/her to participate in this project, he/she will be put temporarily in another class where he/she can receive normal lessons from the same teacher.

Thank you very much for making this study possible. If you have any questions, please contact me:

**Li Wang**  
PhD student  
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland  
New Zealand  
Email: li.wang@auckland.ac.nz  
Phone: +64 09 373 7599 ext.48255 (New Zealand); +86 010 58432674 (China)

Or my supervisors:

**Lawrence Jun Zhang**  
Professor  
Faculty of Education and Social Work  
The University of Auckland  
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Auckland  
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**Natsuko Shintani**  
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Phone: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48463

You may also contact the Head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Associate Professor Helen Hedges at h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz or +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48606.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 83711
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years, Reference Number 015055
CONSENT FORM
FOR PARENTS IN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY
THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

Researcher: Li Wang

Supervisors: Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang & Dr. Natsuko Shintani

I have read the Participation Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why my child has been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I understand that the research will last nine weeks. Participants will need to give a total of 240 minutes to the research.
- I understand participation in the research is voluntary. I understand whether my child takes part in the study or not will not affect my and my child’s relationship with the school or my child’s grades.
- I understand that my child is free to leave the research in the first three weeks of data collection without giving a reason.
- I understand that participants will take a questionnaire comprised of 48 items.
- I understand that my child will perform and repeat two communicative tasks in their Intensive English course.
- I understand that my child will be asked to write six journals immediately after they complete the task.
- I understand that my child’s name will not be used in the research report and he/she will not be identifiable.
- I understand that my child may not be chosen because of insufficient volunteers in a class.
- I understand that data will be stored for 6 years in a locked cabinet on university premises and then the data will be deleted/destroyed by deleting the files and shredding the hard copies.
I understand that the data might be used for other research of the same topic within 6 years.

Please tick the following options:

( ) I would like to obtain a copy of my child’s data.

( ) questionnaire data  ( ) journal data

( ) I would like to have an opportunity to look at the transcription.

Your child’s name: ____________________________

Your name: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years,

Reference Number 015055
PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET IN CASE STUDY

To: Parents

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

My name is Li Wang. I am a doctoral student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of Auckland, New Zealand. My supervisors are Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang and Dr. Natsuko Shintani. I am doing research to investigate the relationship between task repetition and Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English. I have applied to the University of Auckland, New Zealand for this research. It would be great if your child could participate in my research.

Your child is chosen because he/she responded to the flyer of the research and expressed his/her willingness.

The research will be conducted after school. It will last nine weeks. A total of 240 minutes will be required. During this research, your child will be asked to fill out a questionnaire twice, perform and repeat two communicative tasks, self-rate his/her WTC in English and attend six stimulate recall interviews.

The task performances will be videotaped and the interviews will be audiotaped only with the consent of your child. Your child will be offered the opportunity to review the tapes in order to self-rate their L2 WTC and discuss noticeable changes in dynamic WTC. The interview transcripts will be offered to your child and his/her partner. If you do not agree with using the transcript for the analysis, you can request not to use the part related to your child’s task performance.

Your child will have opportunities to perform and repeat communicative tasks. I believe this will be beneficial for your child’s spoken English. The tasks to be used in this project might be partly unfamiliar to your child but will not cause your child some discomfort. Your child has rights to withdraw from the study in
the first three weeks of data collection. If your child’s partner wishes to withdraw from the research, your child will have the following options: (1) to make a new pair with someone newly recruited by the researcher, or (2) withdraw from the research.

Please be aware that some volunteers may not be chosen because the study limits the number of participants. The selection will only be based on the submission time of Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form.

The collected data will only be for the doctoral dissertation, conference presentation and related publication purposes. Your child’s name will not be used in the research report and he/she will not be identifiable.

All the data will only be available to my supervisors and me. Nobody else but my supervisors and me will have access to all the questionnaires, self-rating WTC graphs and interview data. After I complete this study, I will store all the related data in a locked cabinet for a period of six years. The data might be used for related linguistic research within the six-year period. After this time, I will destroy all the information by deleting the files and shredding the hardcopies. Also you will have opportunity to decide if you want copies of the data, or if you want to look at the transcripts of the recordings, on your consent form.

Participation in the research is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study. If you agree to allow your child to participate, you and your child will be asked to sign a consent form. Whether you decide to let your child participate or not will not affect your or his/her relationship with the school or grades in any way.

Thank you very much for making this study possible. If you have any questions, please contact me:

**Li Wang**
PhD student  
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland  
New Zealand  
Email: li.wang@auckland.ac.nz  
Phone: +64 09 373 7599 ext.48255 (New Zealand); +86 010 58432674 (China)

Or my supervisors:

**Lawrence Jun Zhang**
Professor  
Faculty of Education and Social Work  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92601  
Auckland  
New Zealand  
Email: lj.zhang@auckland.ac.nz  
Phone: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48750
Natsuko Shintani  
Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Education and Social Work  
The University of Auckland  
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New Zealand  
Email: n.shintani@auckland.ac.nz  
Phone: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48463

You may also contact the Head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy,  
Associate Professor Helen Hedges at h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz or +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48606.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The  
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of  
Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 83711  
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years, Reference Number 015055
CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS IN CASE STUDY
THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

Researcher: Li Wang

Supervisors: Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang & Dr. Natsuko Shintani

I have read the Participation Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why my child has been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I understand that the research will last nine weeks. Participants will need to give a total of 240 minutes to the research.
- I understand participation in the research is voluntary. I understand whether my child takes part in the study or not will not affect my and my child’s relationship with the school or my child’s grades.
- I understand that my child is free to leave the research in the first three weeks of data collection without giving a reason.
- I understand that participants will take a questionnaire comprised of 48 items twice.
- I understand that participants will perform and repeat two communicative tasks over six weeks.
- I understand that task performances will be videotaped only with the consent of my child. I understand that my child will be offered the opportunity to review the tapes. I understand that my child will be asked to self rate his/her willingness to communicate in English and be interviewed by the researcher for six times with his/her consent. I understand that the interviews will be audiotaped. I understand that the interview transcripts will not be offered to my child but a copy of task-performance video will be offered on an optional basis.
● I understand that my child’s name will not be used in the research report and he/she will not be identifiable.
● I understand that my child may not be chosen because the study limits the number of participants.
● I understand that data will be stored for 6 years in a locked cabinet on university premises and then the data will be deleted/destroyed by deleting the files and shredding the hard copies.
● I understand that the data might be used for other research of the same topic within 6 years.

Please tick the following options:

( ) I would like to obtain a copy of my child’s data.

( ) questionnaire data  ( ) interview data  ( ) video

( ) I would like to have an opportunity to look at the transcription.

Your child’s name: ___________________________

Your name: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years,

Reference Number 015055
Appendix E: Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form for Students in Experimental Study

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS IN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

To: Students

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

My name is Li Wang. I am a doctoral student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of Auckland, New Zealand. My supervisors are Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang and Dr. Natsuko Shintani. I am doing research to investigate the relationship between task repetition and Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English.

I would like to conduct this research project in the Intensive English class. A total of 240 minutes will be required. I have applied to the University of Auckland, New Zealand for this research. It would be great if you could participate in my research.

You are chosen because you are in an Intensive English class where the research is designed to conduct. You are warmly invited to participate in the study. Your participation will be highly appreciated.

During the research, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire twice, perform and repeat two communicative tasks and write six journals about task performances. These tasks will provide many opportunities for you to communicate in English and consistent with the goal of the Intensive English course. Both types of tasks are reported to be effective for language learning.

The tasks to be used in this project might be partly unfamiliar to you but will not cause you some discomfort. You have rights to withdraw from the study in the first three weeks of data collection. If your partner wishes to withdraw from the research, you will have the following options: (1) to make a new pair with someone newly recruited by the researcher, (2) or withdraw from the research.
Please be aware that you may not be chosen because insufficient volunteers in a class.

The collected data will only be for the doctoral dissertation, conference presentation and related publication purposes. Your name will not be used in the research report and he/she will not be identifiable.

All the data will only be available to my supervisors and me. Nobody else but my supervisors and me will have access to all the questionnaires and journals. After I complete this study, I will store all the related data in a locked cabinet for a period of six years. The data might be used for related linguistic research within the six-year period. After this time, I will destroy all the information by deleting the files and shredding the hardcopies.

Also you will have opportunity to decide if you want copies of the data on your consent form.

Participation in the research is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Whether you decide to participate or not will not affect your relationship with the school or grades in any way. If you do not want to participate in this project, you will be put temporarily in another class where you can receive normal lessons from the same teacher.

Thank you very much for making this study possible. If you have any questions, please contact me:

**Li Wang**
PhD student
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland
New Zealand
Email: li.wang@auckland.ac.nz
Phone: +64 09 373 7599 ext.48255 (New Zealand); +86 010 58432674 (China)

Or my supervisors:

**Lawrence Jun Zhang**
Professor
Faculty of Education and Social Work
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
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New Zealand
Email: li.zhang@auckland.ac.nz
Phone: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48750
Natsuko Shintani
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Education and Social Work
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland
New Zealand
Email: n.shintani@auckland.ac.nz
Phone: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48463

You may also contact the Head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Associate Professor Helen Hedges at h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz or +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48606.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 83711
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years, Reference Number 015055
CONSENT FORM
FOR STUDENTS IN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY
THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

Researcher: Li Wang
Supervisors: Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang & Dr. Natsuko Shintani

I have read the Participation Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

● I understand that the research will last nine weeks. Participants will need to give a total of 240 minutes to the research.
● I understand participation in the research is voluntary. I understand whether I take part in the study or not will not affect my relationship with the school or my grades.
● I understand that I am free to leave the research in the first three weeks of data collection without giving a reason.
● I understand that I will take a questionnaire comprised of 48 items.
● I understand that my child will perform and repeat two communicative tasks in their Intensive English course.
● I understand that I will be asked to write six journals immediately after I complete the task.
● I understand that my name will not be used in the research report and I will not be identifiable.
● I understand that I may not be chosen because insufficient volunteers in my class.
● I understand that data will be stored for 6 years in a locked cabinet on university premises and then the data will be deleted/destroyed by deleting the files and shredding the hard copies.
I understand that the data might be used for other research of the same topic within 6 years.

Please tick one of the following options:

1. (       ) I would like to obtain a copy of my data.
   a) (   ) questionnaire data
   b) (   ) journal data

2. (       ) I would like to have an opportunity to look at the transcription.

3. If your partner withdraws the research in the first three weeks of data collection, what would you like to do:
   a) (       ) make a new pair with someone newly recruited by the researcher
   b) (       ) withdraw from the research

Your name: ___________________________

Date: __________________________

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years,

Reference Number 015055
PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET IN CASE STUDY

To: Students

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

My name is Li Wang. I am a doctoral student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of Auckland, New Zealand. My supervisors are Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang and Dr. Natsuko Shintani. I am doing research to investigate the relationship between task repetition and Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English.

You are chosen because you responded to the flyer of the research. You are warmly invited to participate in the study. Your participation will be highly appreciated.

I would like to conduct this research project in a quiet and small room after school. A total of 240 minutes will be required. I have applied to the University of Auckland, New Zealand for this research. It would be great if you could participate in my research.

During this research, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire twice, perform and repeat two communicative tasks, self-rate your WTC in English and attend six stimulate recall interviews. The task performances will be videotaped and the interviews will be audiotaped with your consent. You will be offered the opportunity to review the tapes in order to self-rate your L2 WTC and discuss noticeable changes in dynamic WTC. The interview transcripts will be offered to you and your partner. If you do not agree with using the transcript for the analysis, you can request not to use the part that related to your own task performance.

You will have opportunities to perform and repeat two types of communicative tasks. I believe this will be beneficial for your spoken English. The tasks to be used in this study might be partly unfamiliar to you but will not cause you some discomfort. You have rights to withdraw from the study in the first three weeks of...
data collection. If your partner wishes to withdraw from the research, you will have the following options: (1) to make a new pair with someone newly recruited by the researcher, or (2) withdraw from the research.

Please be aware that some volunteers may not be chosen because the study limits the number of participants. The selection will only be based on the submission time of Participation Information Sheet and Consent Form.

The collected data will only be for the doctoral dissertation, conference presentation and related publication purposes. Your name will not be used in the research report and you will not be identifiable.

All the data will only be available to my supervisors and me. Nobody else but my supervisors and me will have access to all the questionnaires, self-rating WTC graphs and interview data. After I complete this study, I will store all the related data in a locked cabinet for a period of six years. The data might be used for related linguistic research within the six-year period. After this time, I will destroy all the information by deleting the files and shredding the hardcopies. Also you will have opportunity to decide if you want copies of the data, or if you want to look at the transcripts of the recordings, on your consent form.

Participation in the research is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Whether you decide to participate or not will not affect your relationship with the school or grades in any way.

Thank you very much for making this study possible. If you have any questions, please contact me:

**Li Wang**
PhD student
School of Curriculum and Pedagogy
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland
New Zealand
Email: li.wang@auckland.ac.nz
Phone: +64 09 373 7599 ext.48255 (New Zealand); +86 010 58432674 (China)

Or my supervisors:

**Lawrence Jun Zhang**
Professor
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Natsuko Shintani  
Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Education and Social Work  
The University of Auckland  
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New Zealand  
Email: n.shintani@auckland.ac.nz  
Phone: +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48463  

You may also contact the Head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy,  
Associate Professor Helen Hedges at h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz or +64 09 623 8899 ext. 48606.  

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The  
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599 ext. 83711  
Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz  

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years, Reference Number 015055
CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS IN CASE STUDY
THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Project Title: Effects of task repetition on Chinese high school students’ willingness to communicate in English

Researcher: Li Wang

Supervisors: Professor Lawrence Jun Zhang & Dr. Natsuko Shintani

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I understand that the research will last nine weeks. I will need to give a total of 240 minutes to the research.
- I understand participation in the research is voluntary. I understand whether I take part in the study or not will not affect my relationship with the school or my grades.
- I understand that I am free to leave the research in the first three weeks of data collection without giving a reason.
- I understand that I will take a questionnaire comprised of 48 items twice.
- I understand that I will perform and repeat two communicative tasks over six weeks.
- I understand that the task performance will be videotaped with my consent. I understand that I will be offered the opportunity to review the tapes. I understand that I will be asked to self rate my willingness to communicate in English and be interviewed by the researcher for six times with my consent. I understand that the interviews will be audiotaped.
- I understand that I may not be chosen because the study limits the number of participants.
- I understand that my name will not be used in the research report and I will not be identifiable.
I understand that data will be stored for 6 years in a locked cabinet on university premises and then the data will be deleted/destroyed by deleting the files and shredding the hard copies.

I understand that the data might be used for other research of the same topic within 6 years.

Please tick the following options:

1. (       ) I would like to obtain a copy of my data.
   a) (       ) questionnaire data
   b) (       ) interview data
   c) (       ) video

2. (       ) I would like to have an opportunity to look at the transcription.

3. If your partner withdraws the research in the first three weeks of data collection, what would you like to do:
   a) (       ) make a new pair with someone newly recruited by the researcher
   b) (       ) withdraw from the research

Your name: ___________________________

Date: __________________________

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 29-June-2015 for three years, Reference Number 015055
明明想说英语，却又不敢说？
明明不想说英语，却又不得不说？

加入我的研究吧！

我的研究致力于提高你的英语交流意愿
让你成为积极的英语使用者

你只需要：
完成一份调查问卷
与你的搭档一起完成6个英语口语任务
完成6个访谈

只需240分钟，4个小时

只要你的母语是中文

邀请你的朋友，一起来说英语吧

联系我: lwan447@aucklanduni.ac.nz
Do you want to be an active English speaker?
If so, be a participant in this study
This study is designed to help Chinese students to increase their willingness to communicate in English

What you need to do
After school
Fill out a questionnaire
Perform two types of communicative tasks in pair
Attend six simulated recall interviews
240 minutes / 4 hours

To participate in this study,
You must be a Chinese native speaker

Invite your friend to participate together!
Get the beautiful notebook

If you are interested
please get Participation Information Sheet at the Secretary of School (Office A 601)

If you have any questions, please contact Li Wang.
QQ: 837874219  Email: lwan447@aucklanduni.ac.nz
Appendix H: Questionnaire

Part One: Demographic information

Name: ____________  Gender:   Male _______  Female _______
Age: ____________  Grade: ____________

- For how many years have you studied English? __________
- Where have you studied English? How many years?
  Kindergarten __________ ________
  Primary school __________ ________
  Secondary school __________ ________
  High school __________ ________

- Have you ever been to an English speaking country (UK, Canada, USA, Australia, etc.)?  If yes, how long were you there? ________________________________
  What did you do there? ___________________________________

- Besides course work and assignments, what area(s) of English do you mainly study outside of the classrooms? (You may select more than one.)
  Speaking ______  Listening ______  Reading ______
  Writing ______  Grammar ______  Vocabulary ______

- Besides course work and assignments, how long do you study English a week?
  About ______ hours

- What’s your orientation (reasons) of studying English?
  ____ It will be useful in getting a good job.
  ____ It will help me understand the culture related to English-speaking countries.
  ____ I will need English for my career in the future.
  ____ I would like to go to study in English-speaking countries.
  ____ It will make me a more knowledgeable person.
  ____ It will help me if I travel
  ____ It is a required academic course in the school
  ____ It will help me to please my parents
  ____ Other reasons: ________________________________________

- Please rate your English speaking ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Fluent</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Fluent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Two: Classroom L2 WTC

**DIRECTIONS:** Below are 15 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate in English. Presume that you have completely free choice. Please use the 1-4 rating scale (with meanings shown below) to respond to the situations.

1. Definitely not willing;  2. Probably not willing;  3. Probably willing;  4. Definitely willing

**How willing or unwilling are you to engage in these situations/tasks?**

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Give directions to your favourite restaurant in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tell your classmates in English about the story of a TV show you saw.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Read about a two-way dialogue in English from the textbook.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Translate a spoken utterance from Chinese into English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interview your classmates in English asking your own original questions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interview your classmates in English asking questions from the textbook.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do a role-play in English at your desk (e.g., ordering food in a restaurant).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (e.g., ordering food).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Give a short speech in English about your hometown with notes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Give a short self-introduction without notes in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ask your classmates in English to repeat what they have just said in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ask the meaning of word you do not know in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ask your classmates how to pronounce a word in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ask your classmates in English how to say a phrase you know how to say in Chinese but not in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ask for instruction or clarification when you are confused about a task you must complete.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Three: SPCC

DIRECTIONS: Below are 15 situations in which you might need to communicate. People’s abilities to communicate effectively vary a lot and sometimes the same person is more competent to communicate in one situation than in another. Please indicate how competent you believe you are in communicating in English in each of the situations described below.

0% cannot do at all 50% moderately certain can do 100% certain can do

What is your level of ability to speak in English in these situations / tasks?

1. Give directions to your favourite restaurant in English.
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

2. Tell your classmates in English about the story of a TV show you saw.
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

3. Read about a two-way dialogue in English from the textbook.
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

4. Translate a spoken utterance from Chinese into English.
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

5. Interview your classmates in English asking your own original questions.
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

6. Interview your classmates in English asking questions from the textbook.
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

7. Do a role-play in English at your desk (e.g., ordering food in a restaurant).
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

8. Do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (e.g., ordering food).
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

9. Give a short speech in English about your hometown with notes.
   0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

10. Give a short self-introduction without notes in English.
    0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

11. Ask your classmates in English to repeat what they have just said in English.
    0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

12. Ask the meaning of word you do not know in English.
    0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

13. Ask your classmates how to pronounce a word in English.
    0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

14. Ask your classmates in English how to say a phrase you know how to say in Chinese but not in English.
    0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____

15. Ask for instruction or clarification when you are confused about a task you must complete.
    0____ 10____ 20____ 30____ 40____ 50____ 60____ 70____ 80____ 90____ 100____
# Part Four: CA

**DIRECTIONS:** Below are 15 situations in which you might need to communicate. Please indicate how nervous you believe you will feel about communicating in English in each of the situations described below using the 1-4 rating scale.

1. *Not at all anxious;*  
2. *Slightly anxious;*  
3. *Very anxious;*  

**How anxious you may feel when you speak in English in these situations/tasks?**

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<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part Five: Motivation

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate your opinion after each statement by putting a “✓” that best describe the extent to which you believe the statement applies to you.

1. If I were to rate how hard I work at learning English, I would characterise it as:

1_______________ 2_______________ 3_______________ 4_______________
Very little        Very much

2. If I were to rate my desire to learn English, I would say that it is:

1_______________ 2_______________ 3_______________ 4_______________
Very little        Very much

3. If I were to rate my attitude towards learning English, I would say that it is:

1_______________ 2_______________ 3_______________ 4_______________
Very little        Very much
Appendix I: Treatment Materials (L2 Communication Tasks)

Map Task 1  (Version 1)

A

B
Map Task 1 (Version 2)

A

Map Task 1 (Version 2)

B
Map Task 2  (Version 1)

A
Map Task 2  (Version 1)

B
Map-task 2  (Version 2)
A
Map-task 2  (Version 2)

B
Spot-the-differences Task 1
A
Spot-the-differences Task 1

B
Spot-the-differences Task 2

A

B

(The original picture is from:
http://www.zhuoku.com/zhuomianbizhi/computer-kuan/20080302175644%286%29.htm#turn)
Appendix J: Stimulated Recall Interview

Instructions:
What we are going to do now is to listen to the recordings from the class. I am interested in what you were thinking at the time you were talking. What I would like you to do is tell me what you were thinking, what was on your mind at the time.

You can pause the recorder any time you want. If you want to tell me something about what you were thinking, you can push pause. If I have a question, I’ll push pause and ask you to talk about that part of the recording.

Questions:
- How did you feel about the task? Did you enjoy it?
- Did you feel like talking when performing the task?
- I saw your WTC decreased dramatically when _________________
  a) Can you tell me why the change occurred?
  b) What did you feel at that time?
  c) What were you thinking right then?
- I saw your WTC increased dramatically when _________________
  a) Can you tell me why the change occurred?
  b) What did you feel at that time?
  c) What were you thinking right then?
- I saw you were laughing/looking confused/saying something there, what were you thinking then?
- What factors do you think affect your willingness to communicate in English when performing the task?
Appendix K: Learner Journal Framework

Date________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate the level of your willingness by circling the number that most corresponds to your feeling.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0     10     20     30     40     50     60     70     80     90     100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unwilling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **How many times have you ever done the tasks?**  (   )
  - a) One
  - b) Two
  - c) Three
  - d) I can't remember.

- **Do you think the task is easy or difficult?**  (   )
  - a) Easy
  - b) Difficult
  - c) I don’t know.

- **When did you feel most willing to communicate in English?**
  I really felt like talking when __________________________
  At that moment, I was (doing) ____________________________
  **Reasons:**
  __________________________________________________________________________

- **When did you feel least willing to communicate in English?**
  I didn’t felt like talking when __________________________
  At that moment, I was (doing) __________________________
  **Reasons:**
  __________________________________________________________________________
### Appendix L: Transcript Convention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pause Duration</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(..) 0.5 s</td>
<td>A.. small m.. on the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(…) 1 s</td>
<td>There is a very… a thick…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) 2 s</td>
<td>The start is, em(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(( )) other details</td>
<td>((Pointing at a box nearby))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from Richards, 2003, cited in King, 2016)
REFERENCES


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Dörnyei, A. Henry, & P. D. MacIntyre (Eds.), *Motivational dynamics in language learning* (pp. 1-7). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.


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