

Original Article

Language Exposure and Willingness to Communicate in English among Grade 10 Students in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between language exposure and willingness to communicate (WTC) among Grade 10 students in public secondary schools in Paquibato District, Davao City. A descriptive correlational design surveyed 132 learners through a language exposure questionnaire across home, friends, school, and media contexts and a WTC scale across communicative self-confidence, situational context of L2 use, topical enticement, learning responsibility, and off instruction communication. Language exposure was extensive overall, with the highest exposure at school and through media. WTC was also extensive. Correlation showed a moderate positive relationship between exposure and WTC. Multiple regression showed that exposure domains jointly predicted WTC. Results support school and media strategies that expand English contact and strengthen readiness to speak.

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1. Introduction

Willingness to communicate in a second language refers to a learner's readiness to initiate or participate in interaction when opportunities arise. Research treats WTC as both a trait like tendency and a situation sensitive outcome shaped by confidence, perceived norms, and the immediate classroom ecology (Clément et al., 2003; MacIntyre et al., 1998). Within this view, communicative self-confidence and supportive interactional conditions support participation, which then expands input, feedback, and social affiliation in the target language. For many learners in English as

a foreign language settings, a key constraint is limited contact with English beyond planned lessons. Out of school and informal digital exposure has become a major source of input, with audiovisual media and social interaction offering frequent contact that can complement classroom practice (Tran & Miralpeix, 2024; Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025). Recent work links extramural English activity with higher WTC, especially when teachers help learners connect outside exposure with classroom tasks (Liu et al., 2024). These patterns align with evidence that sustained exposure to the target language in varied contexts supports vocabulary growth and ease of use, which can reduce anxiety and raise perceived ability to speak (Marian et al., 2007; Tran & Miralpeix, 2024).

In the Philippine context, English remains a key academic and economic resource, yet learners often experience uneven exposure across home, peer, school, and media settings. Some students encounter English mostly during formal instruction, while others gain frequent exposure through online platforms, entertainment media, or peer networks. This unevenness matters because WTC reflects both opportunity and confidence. When exposure is rare, learners may rely on scripted classroom talk and avoid spontaneous interaction. When exposure is frequent and purposeful, learners may build routines for comprehension and production that make classroom talk less risky. Prior studies on WTC emphasize that context specific factors, including classroom norms and perceived communicative value, can raise or lower participation even when proficiency is similar (Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2015; MacIntyre et al., 1998). At the same time, studies on informal digital learning of English show that repeated contact with media and online communication can support the affective and strategic conditions that make speaking more likely (Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025).

Despite the growing literature, limited empirical work has focused on Grade 10 students in rural or semi-rural Philippine settings where access to English varies by household resources, school practices, and connectivity. Paquibato District in Davao City provides a relevant context because learners come from diverse home language environments and face constraints that can shape both exposure and classroom participation. Establishing the link between exposure and WTC in this setting can guide school level actions that do not rely solely on additional class hours but rather on richer contact in academic and social spaces. Accordingly, this study assessed the extent of language exposure across home, friends, school, and media contexts and examined its relationship with students' willingness to communicate in English.

2. Methodology

This study used a descriptive correlational design to examine associations between language exposure and willingness to communicate in English among Grade 10 students enrolled in public secondary schools in Paquibato District, Division of Davao City. The sample comprised 132 learners selected through simple random sampling from a population of 225 Grade 10 students across participating schools. Data collection used a face to face survey administered during scheduled school hours

with coordination from school leaders and class advisers. Participation was voluntary, and respondents received an orientation that emphasized anonymity, confidentiality, and the absence of academic consequences for non-participation.

Two standardized questionnaires measured the study variables. Language exposure was measured through a 20 item questionnaire adapted from Lasanas and Escandallo (2024). The instrument assessed how often students encountered or used English in four domains, home, friends, school, and media, with responses on a five point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The source study reported acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach alpha = 0.89), and the current study achieved strong reliability for the overall scale (Cronbach alpha = 0.92). Willingness to communicate in English was measured through a 25 item scale reported by Mulyaningsih and Murtafi'ah (2022), which drew its questionnaire structure from Khatib and Nourzadeh (2015). The scale covered five dimensions, communicative self-confidence, situational context of L2 use, topical enticement, learning responsibility, and off instruction communication, with a five point response format from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The source study reported high reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.93), and the present study achieved high reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.95). Content validation used review by three language education experts, and a pilot test with 30 students from a non-participating school confirmed clarity and response time.

Data analysis used means and standard deviations, Pearson product moment correlation, and multiple linear regression at the 0.05 level of significance. Pearson r tested the association between overall language exposure and overall willingness to communicate. Regression estimated the predictive contribution of exposure domains, home, friends, school, and media, to willingness to communicate.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive results for language exposure. Students reported extensive exposure overall (M = 3.52, SD = 0.74). School exposure ranked highest (M = 4.04, SD = 0.83), followed by media exposure (M = 3.97, SD = 0.76). Home and friends exposure remained moderately extensive (Home: M = 3.21, SD = 0.78; Friends: M = 3.32, SD = 0.80).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for language exposure (n = 132).

Domain	Mean	SD	Descriptive level
Home	3.21	0.78	Moderately Extensive
Friends	3.32	0.80	Moderately Extensive
School	4.04	0.83	Extensive
Media	3.97	0.76	Extensive
Overall	3.52	0.74	Extensive

Table 2 presents the descriptive results for willingness to communicate in English. Overall willingness to communicate was extensive ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.70$). Learning responsibility and topical enticement showed the highest means ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.71$; $M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.78$), while communicative self-confidence and situational context of L2 use remained extensive but slightly lower ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.84$; $M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.81$).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for willingness to communicate in English ($n = 132$).

Domain	Mean	SD	Descriptive level
Communicative self confidence	3.99	0.84	Extensive
Situational context of L2 use	4.00	0.81	Extensive
Topical enticement	4.12	0.78	Extensive
Learning responsibility	4.14	0.71	Extensive
Off instruction communication	4.06	0.75	Extensive
Overall	4.06	0.70	Extensive

Table 3 shows a moderate positive relationship between overall language exposure and overall willingness to communicate ($r = 0.40$, $p = 0.000$).

Table 3. Correlation results.

Variables	r-value	p-value
Language exposure and WTC in English	0.40	0.000

Table 4 shows that the four exposure domains jointly predicted willingness to communicate ($R^2 = 0.176$, $F = 52.48$, $p < .001$), with each domain showing a statistically significant positive coefficient.

Table 4. Regression results.

Predictor domain	B	SE	Beta	t	p-value	Decision
Constant	2.50	0.60		3.52	< .001	Significant
Home	0.60	0.50	0.61	3.18	< .001	Significant
Friends	0.63	0.53	0.55	3.25	< .001	Significant
School	0.68	0.55	0.60	3.32	< .001	Significant
Media	0.65	0.52	0.63	3.28	< .001	Significant

4. Discussion

The results indicate that Grade 10 learners in Paquibato District experienced extensive English exposure overall, with the strongest exposure at school and through media. This profile fits current descriptions of extramural English, where audiovisual input and digital media provide frequent contact even when conversational use at home or with peers remains limited (Tran & Miralpeix, 2024). In contexts where English

functions mainly as a school language, strong school based exposure often reflects teacher language choice, class routines, and opportunities for structured talk. Media exposure may reflect access to English entertainment and online content, which can provide repeated input and lexical reinforcement. Prior research links media based exposure with gains in proficiency related outcomes that can support learners' perception of communicative ability (Marian et al., 2007; Tran & Miralpeix, 2024).

Students also reported extensive willingness to communicate, with learning responsibility and topical enticement as the highest dimensions. This pattern suggests that many learners perceive communication as part of learning effort and respond when topics feel personally meaningful. Such dimensions connect with the situational view of WTC, where perceived value of interaction and task relevance can move learners toward participation (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The present findings complement evidence that WTC can rise when classroom tasks support learner agency and provide supportive norms for participation (Clément et al., 2003). Teacher support may also help students connect informal exposure with classroom talk, which can raise comfort with spontaneous speech (Liu et al., 2024).

The moderate positive correlation between exposure and willingness to communicate supports the idea that contact and readiness to speak develop together. Repeated exposure can strengthen comprehension routines, provide models of discourse, and reduce perceived risk of error, which can support self-confidence, a key component in major WTC frameworks (Clément et al., 2003; MacIntyre et al., 1998). At the same time, learners who communicate more may seek more exposure through English media or online interaction, which may further raise practice opportunities. This reciprocal relation aligns with research on informal digital learning of English, where engagement in digital activities relates to communication behavior and emotion linked to speaking (Zadorozhnyy et al., 2025).

Regression results indicate that each exposure domain, home, friends, school, and media, contributed significantly to the prediction of willingness to communicate. School and media showed high mean exposure, but home and peer contexts also mattered even when exposure levels were moderate. This suggests that small gains in everyday conversational contact can still relate to readiness to speak. Schools can strengthen willingness to communicate through structured peer exchange, short presentations, and guided discussion that links lessons to students' experiences. Schools can also guide students toward purposeful media use, for example, extensive viewing with captions and short reflective tasks. Evidence from extramural English research suggests that teacher supported outside exposure can strengthen willingness to communicate more than unstructured exposure alone (Liu et al., 2024).

Future work can test causal pathways through longitudinal designs that track exposure type and willingness to communicate across the school year. Further work can also examine whether self-confidence or anxiety mediates the exposure willingness to communicate link, which would extend major WTC models and support targeted support for learners with low readiness to speak.

5. Conclusion

Grade 10 students in public secondary schools in Paquibato District reported extensive English exposure overall and extensive willingness to communicate in English. Language exposure showed a moderate positive association with willingness to communicate, and exposure across home, friends, school, and media jointly predicted students' readiness to speak. School programs that expand English contact, paired with guided media use and structured peer interaction, may strengthen students' confidence and participation in English communication.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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