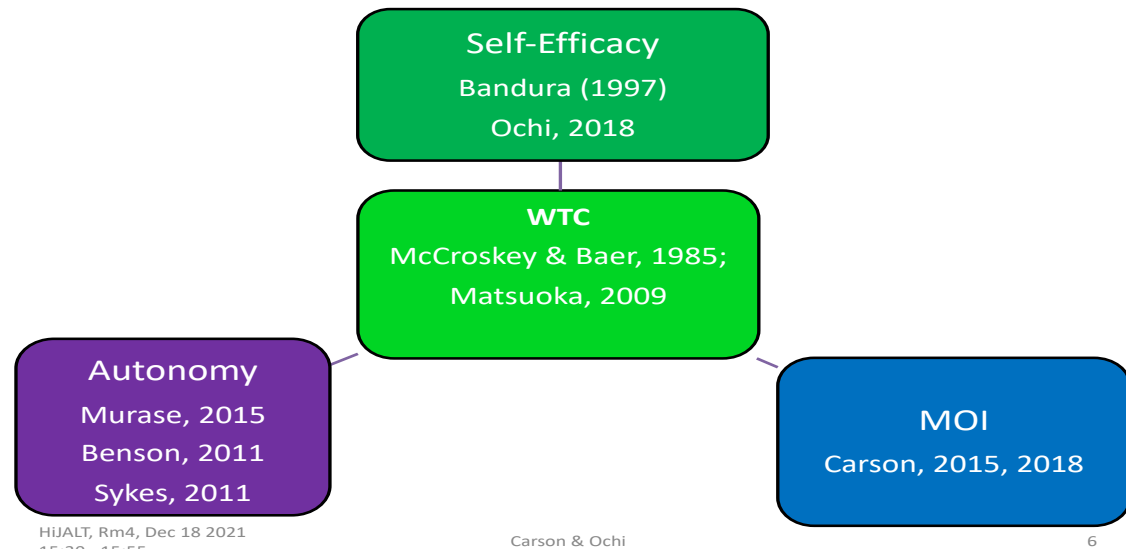


Background: Promoting WTC



The key to our research was learning what factors that teachers can manipulate can improve students' willingness to communicate. But why did we choose to study the influence of self-efficacy, learner autonomy, and medium of instruction on willingness to communicate?

First, please look at the green WTC box in the middle. Research on willingness to communicate in foreign languages was developed by McCroskey and his associates (ex. 1986). Matsuoka (2009) found that WTC was influenced by self-efficacy might be slow to change but could be modified by teachers in class. One thing that affects student sense of the ability to use English is their understanding of it, which is influenced by the language teachers use in class.

Next, please look at the blue box in the bottom right corner. This is about the Medium of Instruction, or language of instruction used to teach English in class. I (2018) found that students with low English proficiency usually prefer the most Japanese support and are often anxious in English class. The efficient use of Japanese support as needed might enable students to feel less anxious, more competent, and more willing to communicate in English in class.

Now, please look at the dark green box at the top. Students' self-efficacy beliefs, or the sense that they "*can do it*," are necessary for language production. Bandura (1997) found that students with good academic self-efficacy use good learning strategies. Ochi (2018) found that drawing students' attention to their self-efficacy beliefs using self-assessment reports can help students to notice and alter their beliefs and their language-learning habits.

Finally, please look at the purple box on the bottom left corner. This is about learner autonomy, which is the sense that students can control their own learning. Murase (2015) clarified LA constructs that matter to EFL students in Japan. Sykes (2011) found that learner autonomy skills can be taught to students in self-access support systems. In fact, Benson (2011) found that autonomy was influenced by self-assessment and teachers can encourage students' learning autonomy through self-assessment.

So, we think that students' willingness to communicate in class might be improved by providing Japanese support as needed to help students to comprehend unfamiliar English, taking steps to support their self-efficacy in class, and teaching them the power of their own learner autonomy outside of class.

Definitions

WTC = Students' Willingness to Communicate

LA = Learner autonomy, or students' understanding of how to efficiently and effectively study outside of class

SE = (Learner's) Self-Efficacy, or students' sense that they are capable of producing English in class

MOI = (Teacher's) Medium of Instruction, or the languages teachers use to instruct students (English or Japanese)

Take-Home Message for Improved WTC

1. Micro-debates can help motivate students to increase their WTC
2. Teachers can train students to develop LA and SE strategies and skills in class
3. LA materials chosen by students out of class contributes to SE of in-class work
4. Linguistic scaffolding as homework and reviewed in pair work
5. Self-assessment supports LA and SE
6. LA and SE contribute to WTC and ultimately language learning

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