

The Effect of General Trust on Willingness to Communicate in English among Japanese individuals across various situations

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English communication in Japan

- “In daily life, how often do you talk with English speakers?”
90% of the participants (2240 Japanese people in their 30s and 40s) answered “not at all” or “not so much” (Ito, unpublished)
- “Developing attitudes towards foreign language communication actively and autonomously” (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2023)



Challenging to achieve this goal due to the limited opportunities

Research on willingness to communicate

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Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

- **Willingness to Communicate (WTC):**

Readiness to enter discourse at a specific time with a specific person/s using a second language when free to do so

(MacIntyre et al., 1998).

⇒ **Strongest** factor in predicting a second language communication behavior

(MacIntyre et al., 1998).

- Ito (2021); Ito and Ueichi (2023):

Japanese people who have **higher in general trust** (a personal tendency of how much individuals trust others in general)

more likely to have **higher WTC in English**.

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Focus of the present study

- The effect of general trust on WTC would be different according to the various **detailed** situations because people evaluate the trustworthiness of others in many situations (Yamagishi, 1998).

- Ito (2021); Ito and Ueichi (2023) has measured WTC with only **ambiguous** situations, such as “Talking in a small group of acquaintances,” not being easy for participants to imagine the detailed communication situations.



The previous study has **not** examined the detailed communication situations and the effect of general trust on WTC in each situation.

Examining the impact of general trust on WTC in English, reconstructing the items of the WTC scale with a detailed communication situation.

- In the present study, the detailed communication situations of WTC in English are reconstructed from three perspectives:
 - 1, whether the conversation is developing or non-developing
e.g. developing: asking a hobby / non-developing: asking for directions
 - 2, whether the conversation is active or passive
e.g. active: asking a question / passive: answering a question
 - 3, whether the conversation partner is a native or non-native speaker

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- **Participants:**
500 Japanese individuals aged 20–60 years (250 men and 250 women; $M = 44.63$, $SD = 14.03$) registered with the online survey company.
- **Procedure:**
An online survey from February 1 to 3, 2023.
The survey links were distributed to participants by the survey company. They answered the general trust and reconstructed WTC scale.
Participants received monetary compensation after completing the survey.

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General trust scale

General trust scale (Yamagishi, 1998):

- Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with six items related to general trust on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) ($\alpha = .91$).
- Items such as:
 - “Most people are basically honest”
 - “Most people are trustworthy”
 - “Most people are basically good and kind”

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Reconstructed WTC in English scale

- Participants were asked to rate their willingness to communicate in English on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (strongly) across the 74 communication contexts ($\alpha = .96$).
- The detailed communication situations of WTC in English are reconstructed in the present study from three perspectives:
 - 1, whether the conversation is developing or non-developing
e.g. developing: asking a hobby / non-developing: asking for directions
 - 2, whether the conversation is active or passive
e.g. active: asking a question / passive: answering a question
 - 3, whether the conversation partner is a native or non-native speaker

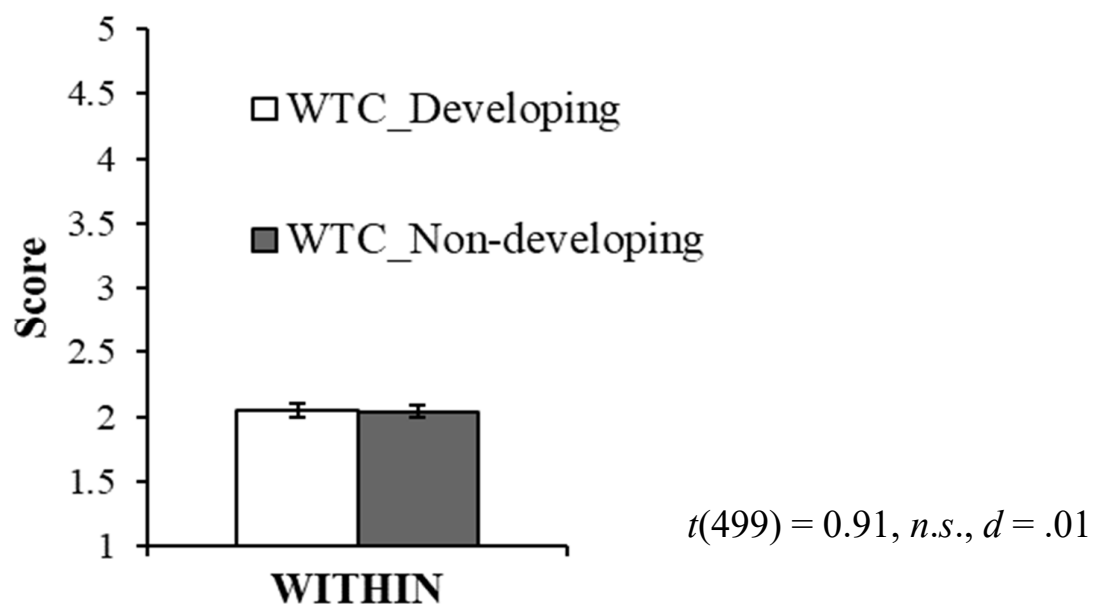
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Reconstructed items of WTC scale

- **Developing and active**
e.g. “Asking a question in English about their hobby to a person who attended a party”
- **Developing and passive**
e.g. “Answering a question in English about my hobby to a person who attended a party if they ask me”
- **Not developing and active**
e.g. “Asking a question in English about the menu to a waiter at a restaurant”
- **Not developing and passive**
e.g. “Answering a passenger who asked how to transfer in English at a station”

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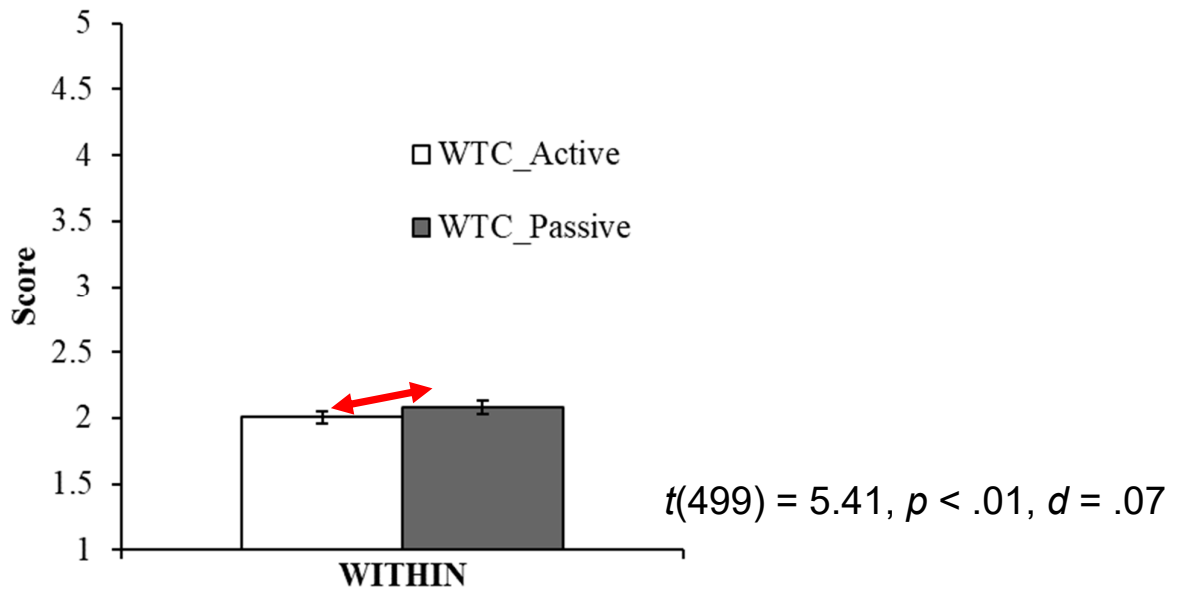
Result: The difference of WTC between developing and non-developing situation



People did **not** show varying degrees of attitudes towards English communication in either the developing or non-developing situation.

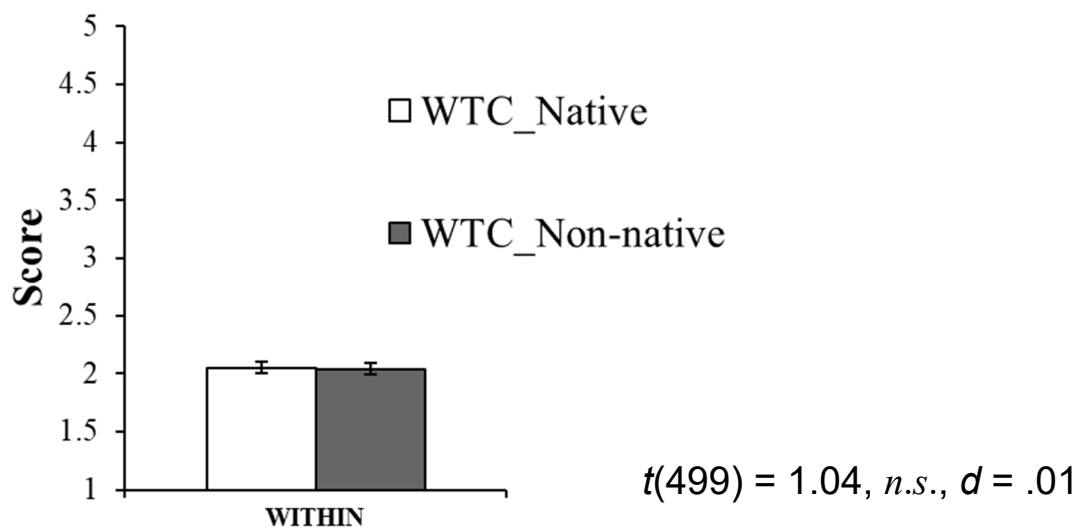
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Result: The difference of WTC between active and passive situation



Individuals in the **passive** situation showed a more positive attitude towards English communication than those in the active situation.

Result: The difference of WTC between native and non-native situation



People did **not** show varying degrees of attitudes towards English communication to either native or non-native speaker.

Main result: The effect of general trust on each WTC situation

	General Trust
WTC_Native	.12 **
WTC_Non-native	.15 **
WTC_Developing	.13 **
WTC_Non-developing	.14 **
WTC_Active	.13 **
WTC_Passive	.13 **
WTCNative_Developing_Active	.11 *
WTCNative_Developing_Passive	.12 **
WTCNative_Non-developing_Active	.13 **
WTCNative_Non-developing_Passive	.13 **
WTCNon-native_Developing_Active	.14 **
WTCNon-native_Developing_Passive	.15 **
WTCNon-native_Non-developing_Active	.15 **
WTCNon-native_Non-developing_Passive	.14 **

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .10$

Regardless of the variation in the situation of English communication, general trust had a positive impact on **every** WTC situation.

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Discussion

- A detailed analysis revealed that regardless of the variation in the situation of English communication, general trust had a positive impact on **every** WTC situation.
- Individuals with higher general trust showed positive attitudes toward second language communication in various situations.

Regardless of whether the conversation is developing or not, whether it is active or passive, and whether one is a native or non-native speaker, when people trust each other, they can contribute to creating a positive communicative society.

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Reference list

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